

FORUM

FOR THE DISCUSSION OF NEW TRENDS IN EDUCATION

Autumn 1975

Volume 18

Number 1

50p

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Forum is published three times a year, in September, January and May. £1.50 a year or 50p an issue.

Alerting Fred Mulley

An obstacle to the creation of a fully comprehensive school system may largely disappear by the end of next year as the 171 selective direct grant schools decide during this autumn term whether to make declarations of intent to become maintained comprehensives or forego their share of the £13 million annual subsidy. Their continued presence has sabotaged comprehensive reorganisation plans in many local authority areas and deprived neighbourhood secondary schools of a creamed-off select minority of pupils. Mr Mulley's move to phase out direct grant schools is welcomed by **Forum** as a significant step forward in education policy-making that began with Circular 10/65. Another welcome measure is the earmarking of £25 million in next year's £186 million school building programme for 'smallish extensions' needed to facilitate conversion of existing schools into comprehensives. Together these actions demonstrate commitment to comprehensive reorganisation, despite Opposition war-cries.

This reorganisation is but a pre-condition for opening up continuing opportunities for all children to discover and develop their full potential as educated human beings. It is what goes on in the comprehensive schools that then encourages or selectively discourages pupils' educational progress. **Forum** has long advocated extending nonstreaming beyond primary school and upwards through the comprehensive secondary school, and to this end has promoted exchange of ideas and experience among teachers who are pioneering this logical development of the principle behind comprehensive education. In co-operation with the Campaign for Comprehensive Education we held a day conference in June on 'Non-Streamed Teaching in the Comprehensive School', which is reported in this number.

It was abundantly evident at this conference that for successful teaching in the nonstreamed situation teachers must get to know their pupils as individuals to assess their learning needs, and must redesign much of the learning materials currently available in textbooks, courses, resource kits etc to suit the new circumstances. Moreover, submission of Mode 3 GCE and CSE syllabuses seems the practical way to avoid pre-selection at 14 or 15 for external examination classes—until there is a common examination.

All this is costly in time and money.

Teachers can have time for all this if there are enough of them for a reasonably favourable teacher-pupil ratio. Thus an implication of going comprehensive and really extending educational opportunity through nonstreaming is an enlarged teaching force.

Yet, just when this is in sight and when the second post-war 'bulge' is proceeding through the secondary schools, the DES has insisted on reducing the 1976 student-teacher intake by 10,000—a dramatic reduction of a third on 1975—and some LEAs are unilaterally cutting local teaching forces. Other cuts in back-up support — technicians, ancillary services generally as well as material resources—will hamper teachers in their efforts to maximise the potential advantages of comprehensive schools.

To further genuinely comprehensive education Mr Mulley must ensure the means, from buildings to staffing and resources.

He could also see that research is at last officially sponsored to help forward nonstreaming in comprehensive schools. The Schools Council's conniving at streaming as the norm has been a disservice; but perhaps Colin Lacey, as the new research and development consultant, may shift its orientation.

Mr Mulley will have an opportunity to discard another bipartite relic by acting on two reports concerning a common 16-plus examination now before the Schools Council. One is the feasibility study of the pilot common examination and the other is on reorganisation of GCE and CSE boards. The two reports and the Council's recommendations will need careful scrutiny, but the chance to unify these examinations must not be lost; for the dual examination structure has been a major deterrent to continuing nonstreaming into fourth and fifth years. Schools which have nevertheless thus extended nonstreaming have shown how obsolete is the notion that 40% are incapable of success, just as 'open access' sixth forms and FE have disproved the validity of pre-selection at that stage.

A Secretary of State committed to comprehensive education must be alert to a host of factors that are conducive or prejudicial to forwarding the inherent aim of keeping opportunity open to all who wish to benefit.

A Third Source of Learning

David Hawkins

Professor Hawkins, of the Mountain View Center for Environmental Education at the University of Colorado, who has previously contributed to **Forum** vol 12 no 1 and vol 16 no 1, replies to Michael Armstrong's articles in vol 17 no 2.

Michael Armstrong has correctly grasped my intent in arguing that the improvement of education requires a constant investment in the reconstruction of knowledge. As to whether that argument leads toward or away from the views of Jerome Bruner, I cannot say. We certainly orbit around some of the same large questions, though perhaps somewhat out of phase.

A great deal hinges on the meaning of 'reconstruction' as applied to systems of knowledge. I am grateful for Michael Armstrong's carefully chosen example, that of sixteen-year-old Carol's first experience as a teacher in a good primary school. His story hits directly on the relation of theory and practice, that of discursively formulated 'conceptualisations and generalisations' in relation to 'the intuitive grasp of particularity'. After some failure and suffering, the story goes, Carol invented a successful strategy for communicating with a group of children and this strategy was a variant of the very one he had tried, unsuccessfully, to communicate to her. In Carol's mind this strategy depended on an 'intuition of particularity'. In her teacher's mind it was linked no doubt to similar learnings in his own past, but underlined and supported by a circle of consciously held conceptualisations and generalisations, in turn underlining many other sorts of experiences in the art of teaching. For this reason he can resonate with his student on an intuitive level—as could good teachers generally—and he can plan for her further education with increased confidence and precision. Such planning involves theory in a conscious explicit way; wider practical experience is not enough.

The example is particularly nice because it deals with the very sort of successful practice and theory we here are trying to conceptualise and generalise about. My own examples are likely to come from a different part of the forest.

The story of Carol is useful to me also because it suggests an inadequacy in my own formulation of the two sources of learning, tradition and personal experience. When these two sources are far separated the power of education is impaired; tradition becomes form without living content, intuition turns blind. So far so good. But to say there are only these two sources—as

perhaps I implied—is to oversimplify. For there are many way-stations in learning, and some of these are underground. Each is, in a proper sense, a secondary but original source, some synthesis of experience and tradition whose origins we cannot fully trace, unique in some way to each learner. That mystery is no hardship for a teacher, whose job is to take and test each level of achieved learning as something freshly given and freshly suggestive. Michael Armstrong comments that he does not know the sources of Carol's invention. His need is to describe it well, but not to explain it—surely not to explain it away.

So I think I should list a third source of learning besides tradition and fresh experience—reflection, reflective abstraction, the label does not matter. What matters is to recognize the capacity of the mind to retrieve from its bank something *different* from what has in any obvious sense been previously deposited there from any external source. This does not mean we retrieve *more* than has been learned. What matters indeed is that we can at times retrieve *less* than our accrued learning, carving away what is freshly seen to be irrelevant in a new situation. By this carving out from past experience, what we finally summon up as intuition may indeed look strange and unfamiliar; we simply do not know our own resources until they are called upon. One need not be a disciple of Plato to credit this kind of internal source, or resource, in learning (he at least made it visible).

But I don't wish to invent any unnecessary mysteries. Insight and intuition do not come ready made but through work, and an important part of such work is dialogue, dialectic—conversation. In a somewhat exalted mood Plato hints at a level of truth which books and lectures can never convey, and in a lighter mood of irony his book makes fun of books—when you put a question to them they only repeat themselves, stupidly. I don't think Plato is being mysterious at all, he is only making the kind of remark which any good teacher would make when oppressed by the standard academic rhythms and the demands of the formal texts. Books and lectures do not contain or convey knowledge at all, they are only useful—unevenly so—in helping us to

acquire it, and then to reconstruct it.

So, the reconstruction of knowledge does not mean primarily the organisation of new courses or the writing of new books, though it may fruitfully lead to that in some cases. The road map is a far better image. It implies the possibility of getting from anywhere to anywhere else by a variety of routes and it invites the exploration of new ones which may better enlist the talents and invite the commitment of particular groups of children, starting where they happen to be rather than herded together at the beginning of some royal road. The royal roads have their place among the network of lesser roadways—and that place needs redefinition too.

But of course the detailing is too rich for any literal cartography. The map is only an image, and may misleadingly suggest an awful and confusing complexity. What it correctly implies is a need for fluency; orientation and imagination of kinds our own schooling has often neglected. The college education of us teachers fails mostly to lead us into the riches of elementary subject matter, but hurries on toward superstructures with weak foundations.

Children's knowledge

Faced with the contrast—and too often the conflict—between children's native ways of learning and the more or less formalised organisation of knowledge, educational anarchists and educational conservatives tend to accept this opposition as ultimate. So one side deprecates knowledge, the other deprecates children. Neither side can have seen children fully involved with fresh subject matter, and thus do not appreciate their remarkable power. Both tend to confuse knowledge with its codified, irredundant expression, the one being willing to minimise its importance, the other standing guard over it with the questionable passion of a Chauvin.

In the meantime there is a goodly band of people, mostly teachers, who work at reconstruction—of schools *and* of knowledge. They have often shown, at least in local context and a piecemeal fashion, that the opposition can be dissolved. My own school experience is mostly related to early science and mathematics, and I know that I have been at least partially re-educated myself by association with such teachers. They and I need, in turn, the association of the best and most

playful minds in professional fields of knowledge. That association is far too rare; such fields are still dominated by the belief that elementary subject matter is mean and boring. Still there are resources for good beginnings.

Recently I have seen a few twelve-year-olds make a series of flights and perchings which go as follows: The beginning came on a cloudy day when we couldn't track the shadow of the sun, an investigation of day-time astronomy. So we fell back on some uses of graph paper. A random walk caught hold; perhaps only, at first, because it involved tossing a coin at every turn. This led to the counting of possible pathways, and to the combinatoric numbers I once learned to call binomial coefficients, Pascal's triangle. This went on (I nudged) to the geometrical pattern of odd and even coefficients. Some real mathematics came with the discovery that this Pascal triangle, modulo 2, could be constructed *without* the heavy addition which, good practice though it was, we had begun to find fatiguing. This led in turn to other moduli (3, 5, 10) and the invention of addition tables for modular arithmetic, done now with the colours from felt pens rather than with numerals—'red plus green equal yellow!'

Today I saw a large carefully coloured version of Pascal's triangle modulo 5, in five bright colours and I covet it for framing. Today also I saw another large elegant pattern evolved by quasi-biological 'growth rules' which happen to coincide (as I discovered to my own surprise not long ago) with the modulo 2, odd-even version of Pascal's triangle. One or two children may be ready to plumb the depths of that one, I do not yet know. No part of this sequence is new, though I would not expect to see the sequence itself repeated, there are too many other possibilities. The sequence is a bit contrived, perhaps, a little hurried, and under other circumstances there would need be less nudging.

Teacher's skill

This development would not have been possible at all except for Mrs G, the teacher, who for some time has been extending her own talents as an amateur of elementary mathematics. Because of her skill the romance of number patterns was already abroad in the class when I came, and for the same reason our extension of it has just now reached everyone in the class, touched them at least. Such a context is cumulative,

Attributes of the Integrated Day

Maureen Hardy

Maureen Hardy taught for eight years at Church Hill School, Leicestershire, and has since been a First School tutor in two colleges of education. She contributed to *Forum* vol 10 no 3 and to *At Classroom Level*.

Lack of definition has rendered progressive education vulnerable to distortion. Resultant weak imitations, based upon misconceptions, have masked its achievements and provided ammunition for its opponents.

This article attempts to locate the significant features of a single innovation—the Integrated Day—concerning which Robert Dearden comments that ‘no authoritative original doctrine . . . of the “real meaning” of the term’ exists . . . and which in practice ‘may represent anything from an embryonic University . . . to . . . “a wet playtime all day”’.¹ The aim is to identify the achievable criteria in normal school conditions. Curriculum content is not considered because the focus is on the approach itself, whether used in the First School, Middle School or beyond. The related innovations of vertical grouping, team-teaching and open-plan, merit separate definition.

Dearden suggests the following possible attributes: ‘more individualised learning’, ‘developing the skills of learning for oneself’ and the development of ‘personal autonomy and self-direction’.¹ To this list, the writer adds ‘developing social cohesion, tolerance and mutual respect’, which represent the responsible aspect of

autonomous behaviour. Professor David Hawkins has defined an important dimension—‘the reconstruction of knowledge’: ‘What the best traditions of early education have done amount to a major reorganisation of subject matter into a common coherent framework’; ‘Skilful’ teachers ‘see order and number, geography and history, moral testing grounds and aesthetic qualities in all the encounters of young children with the furniture of a rich environment’.²

The approach should change the focus from class teaching to individual learning. It should involve a degree of choice, so that natural, unconditioned behaviour may be observed. The teacher should learn as much about the children who choose to opt out or who appear bewildered as she does about those who apply themselves with enthusiasm or perseverance; thus learning to gauge the amount of stimulation or positive direction each child requires in both general and particular circumstances. Such observations, carefully recorded, should assist planning for individual differences, thus facilitating adequate provision for the willing and the unwilling amongst the average, the gifted and the slow-learners. This is no easy task, but there is a fascination in the study of growing children which can prove self-motivating. Individualised learning is often associated with the development of children’s own interests. In reality this constitutes only an added bonus; but alert teachers can seize such opportunities as motivating content to be harnessed to their own developmental and skill objectives.

Self-directed learning should be fostered, since the more capable the children become in organising themselves and working without constant supervision, the more time is available to observe reactions and offer individual guidance and instruction; also, for listening and discussing and so learning about children through active participation. However, the children’s ability to work independently depends directly on the quality of the teacher’s organisation and structuring of the resources; the training she gives the children in organising their materials and knowledge; the standards of effort, concentration and presentation she accepts; plus the quality of her instruction for developing competence in literacy, numeracy and other essential skills.

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and it leads to new beginnings. The following have come to me: Where will square numbers appear in the Pascal triangle? How often? What about Fibonacci numbers in the triangle? These learned questions have been explored but will not find easy final answers.

When told a similar story about a child’s investigations concerning perfect numbers, one eminent number theorist said, ‘Ah, only last year I wrote a paper on that. I must meet this epsilon.’

If such meetings were more frequent we would all benefit.

Next year Mrs G hopes to embark on a study of snowfall and drainage, a vital subject in our arid region. A different kind of mathematics will come along with that, as will much else. The books will help, but only in a network of concerns which develop among the teacher, the children and the very land they live in. In its evolution there will be a lot of reconstruction.

Learning how to learn requires the development of skills connected with formulating relevant questions and seeking possible answers through practical experiments and the study of related literature; techniques which are best taught individually or in small groups and so should be facilitated by the approach.

A flexible situation should present possibilities for developing self-direction and autonomy, because scope should be offered for children to practise decision-making and test the consequences. Independent study should foster self-reliance, while self-confidence should be assisted by ease of communication with an encouraging teacher and the chance of tasting success in any area where self-motivation is strong. However, the situation only provides opportunities: satisfactory outcomes are dependent upon teacher manipulation. As Dearden comments, 'autonomy . . . needs its own kind of firm training, guidance and encouragement'.¹ Also, it must develop alongside, not in place of, the equally important ability to comply and to follow prescribed instructions, even when self-motivation is weak.

Security and participation are vital to the development of independent thought and action. Autonomy should be encouraged within an atmosphere of community, since without a sense of social responsibility it becomes empty self-assertion. To encourage social cohesion, the teacher must initiate shared experiences and common activities. To foster tolerance and mutual respect, she must be seen to accept all types of children equally. She should help the children to become responsible for themselves, each other and their shared environment. Also, without loss of authority, she must learn to delegate community responsibilities and involve children in planning and rule-making—not a difficult task, since she has the manipulating advantage of age and experience.

Michael Armstrong states: 'the process of education should imply a dynamic relationship between teacher, pupil and task, out of which knowledge is reconstructed for both teacher and pupil, in the light of shared experience'.² The 'reconstruction of knowledge' is the essence of the Integrated Day. The teacher, in opening her mind to seek out new connections between areas of knowledge and in sharing her ideas with her pupils, may discover that their less-conventional and less-sophisticated minds lead her into new insights, with the result that both parties move nearer to the goal of 'fluent human understanding', which Professor Hawkins describes as a 'richly interconnected network of ideas and stored knowledge evolved by abstractions from

many passages of experience'.² I can testify that this is an exhilarating experience, which keeps the learning situation fresh and alive and presents knowledge in a form easily grasped by the young, as the following examples illustrate.

A five-year-old's forthcoming visit to hospital inspired her teacher to invite a children's nurse to talk to the class. Afterwards the children discussed and illustrated the topic and with the teacher's help produced an attractive wall story. The Wendy House became a hospital, in which the situation was dramatised, many fears dissipated and an attitude of caring fostered. The construction of a model hospital ward had both creative and play value and aided the development of dexterity. Also, the teacher skilfully used the activity to assist mathematical understanding, since counting, measuring, one to one correspondence and grouping into sets constituted a logical part of the construction. Thus, one item of relevant content was utilised to fulfil several educational objectives.

An eleven-year-old's visit to a castle enthused a group of friends to draw a scale plan and produce a detailed model. They experimented to discover how to construct a moving portcullis, drawbridge and realistic moat. A teacher-stimulated discussion led them to compile a questionnaire concerning the domestic and defence properties of the building. Answers were sought in the school and local library and maps were studied to seek the physical features relating to the siting of castles. Eventually, two attractive topic books appeared in the book-corner, one factual and the other of related stories and poems, some written by children outside the immediate group. The teacher had encouraged the boys to talk to the class and had suggested the topic as suitable for drama, art and creative writing. Some even developed the theme in musical composition and dance. Eventually, the now fascinated and informed class considered that they had persuaded the teacher to arrange an appropriate visit. The difference between this approach and a traditional project is the initiative displayed by the children. The teacher's activity was positive, but subtle. Simultaneously both teacher's and children's objectives were fulfilled.

The Integrated Day is a child-centred approach, but for successful operation the teacher must play a positive role. No matter how much freedom and spontaneity is granted, the teacher remains the central influence, responsible for generating the stimulus and preparing her pupils to extend their experiences, build upon them step by step and link them together into

coherent wholes. Responsible, too, for creating the social cohesion which assists children to live and work together satisfactorily, aiding, not hindering, their own and each other's progress. Further, responsible for ensuring developing competence in communication and decoding skills which release children from teacher dependence. Effective flexibility necessitates a firm sub-structure. The teacher must structure the situation to facilitate simultaneous growth of formal skills and creativity. This task involves the development of efficient and economical methods of recording individual progress and the balancing of structured, open-ended and self-initiated assignments—a rhythm which aids organisation, since at any one time only part of the class require the concentrated attention of the teacher and the remainder minimum supervision. Organisation may be flexible and discipline democratic, even unobtrusive, but both must be positive, or the situation deteriorates into a negative 'wet playtime'.

Brown and Precious warn that 'An integrated day will fail completely if the teacher does not provide a rich and stimulating environment' and 'if she is not enthusiastic and spontaneous in her involvement with the children and development of their activities'.⁴ To this, I would add that it will fail if the teacher is not clear about her goals and concerned for their achievement. Curriculum development theory can assist here. Relevant aims can be analysed into long-term objectives, progress towards which can be charted on continuums ranging from possible inability to complete mastery. Specific objectives and learning experiences can thus be formulated which will lead gradually towards achievement of the implied goals. Experience has shown me that the essential skills can be acquired by patient perseverance. The children gain from responsible experimentation, because the focus on individual progress leads to swift detection of errors of judgment and ineffective practices; also motivation towards improvement is ever present. The task is demanding, but it is also exciting, rewarding and worthwhile.

As a check-list to help teachers evaluate the success of the Integrated Day, I suggest the following long-term objectives.

The children will demonstrate gradually increasing ability to:

- (a) co-operate in a community, with minimum rules and choice of activity.
- (b) take responsibility for sharing and maintaining

resources and contributing to the material and human resources available.

(c) show adaptability, applying themselves profitably in various social situations—alone, in pairs, small groups (friendship, teacher-structured and common interest), larger groups (eg class).

(d) concentrate on the task in hand, within an active environment, persevering when difficulties arise.

(e) plan time purposefully to facilitate completion of both compulsory and self-chosen assignments.

(f) present their best work continually and learn to record own progressive mastery of basic skills, eg literacy and numeracy, and other achievements.

(g) formulate problems and seek to solve them, involving decision-making, follow through and consideration of results.

(h) make connections between aspects of growing knowledge and developing skills inside and outside the classroom.

The teacher will demonstrate gradually increasing ability to:

(a) control positively without domination, delegating effectively.

(b) create a sense of community, involving respect for each other and the environment.

(c) structuring the resources to facilitate self-directed learning and give appropriate training to the children.

(d) continually present fresh stimulus and resources and encourage the children to do likewise.

(e) observe and record effectively and plan to meet individual differences.

(f) set standards of effort for all and progressive standards of achievement for each child.

(g) ensure that each child makes continuous progress in literacy, numeracy and other essential skills, facilitating proficiency and comprehension.

(h) ensure that each child experiences some form of success.

(i) preserve a balance between teacher-directed and child-directed activities and between class, group and individual situations.

(j) prepare thoroughly, but show adaptability to meet the fluctuating needs and moods of children.

(k) participate in the children's interests and be willing both to lead and follow their lead into fresh related experiences.

(l) seek connections between experiences and areas of knowledge inside and outside the school.

Non-Streamed Teaching in the Comprehensive School

Conference Report

Teachers from schools working out a common course for the first three years in comprehensive schools—and from some extending the principle to the fourth and fifth years—attended the annual conference convened by **Forum** and the Campaign for Comprehensive Education (on 7 June at Friends House, Euston Road, London) to discuss non-streamed teaching. Well over half those present had experience of non-streamed teaching—on a show of hands asked for by one speaker; a bare half dozen indicated disapproval, though debate later brought to light 'don't knows', particularly in relation to the 14-16 age groups. But it was on ways of realising a generally accepted educational principle in different subject areas, on sharing experience and identifying problems, that attention focused.

Opening the conference the editor of **Forum**, Professor Brian Simon, recalled another on the same subject nine years ago, when the move away from streaming, however well set in primary schools, was at an early stage at the secondary level (**Forum**, vol 9 no 1, 1966). With comprehensive schools well under way, unstreaming is a logical development, coming from teachers themselves as they transform content and methods in accordance with comprehensive educational aims. To rethink the curriculum, in terms of the common core desirable for all children, is necessarily to rethink modes of grouping children and presenting subjects. Not only does this pose immediate problems, but, as these are solved, new questions arise. Hence this discussion to map outstanding questions, rather than provide solutions, first in relation to the 11-14 age range and then that of 14-16.

Several important points emerged from the morning expositions covering the first three secondary years. These were by Roger Seckington, member of the **Forum** editorial board and head of a Leicestershire high school and community college who teaches in the humanities

area; and by two teachers from London schools who head two of the more problematical departments, mathematics and French, Peter Roper of Abbey Wood and Pat Brockbank of Hackney Downs.

In moving over to non-streaming and the evolution of a common course for the 11-14s, it is vital to evolve a flexible form of organisation within which subject areas, or departments, can move in relation to particular needs, at their own pace and with the full agreement of the staff involved.

At Heathfield High School (an 8-form entry school for 11-14s) each year six populations of about 120 children are formed and there are seven subject areas, each with its team of teachers—English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Sciences, Modern Languages, Design, and, linked organisationally, PE, Games and Music. Timetabling is, therefore, comparatively straightforward. Teachers in one department are always free together which enables planning and discussion during the working day. Children spend the same amount of time in each subject area, but within departments there can be considerable choice. While most departments make no differentiation between pupils throughout, French and Mathematics set after the first term—though this will probably soon be superseded.

Also of general importance are arrangements to overcome the fragmentation of the school day, and the organisation of a good resources centre. At Heathfield the model is a day of four equal sessions, with allowance for some half periods—modern languages demand a 'daily dose'. In the resources centre library facilities, reprographic, audio-visual and other materials are combined; and all staff are involved in decisions about dispensing cash in this area, an important aspect of decision making.

There was much emphasis on the importance of preparing course materials within the school, suited to its particular needs. Heathfield's experience has been that such outside schemes as SMILE and MACOS are invaluable for triggering off new ideas. But as courses develop ready-made schemes do not fit, particularly those which impose a particular pattern and emphasise the written word. Work cards or work sheets, prepared by teachers who know their classes well and the relation of parts of a course to the whole in a particular school, are the general pattern along with other methods.

As for remedial work, Heathfield has two remedial teachers who organise their activities on three main lines: working with small groups withdrawn from subject areas, or alongside children with the subject teams,

References for pages 6-8

1. Dearden, R 'What is the Integrated Day?' in **The Integrated Day in Theory and Practice**, ed J Walton (Ward Lock, 1972).
2. Hawkins, D 'Two Sources of Learning' in **Forum**, Vol 16 no 1 (1973).
3. Armstrong, M 'Reconstructing Knowledge, an example' in **Forum**, Vol 17 no 2 (1975).
4. Brown, M and Precious, N **The Integrated Day in the Primary School** (Ward Lock, 1968).

or in an in-service role among the staff to bring to the fore the problems of the disadvantaged child, particularly reading difficulties. In this connection it was interesting to learn, from a remedial adviser from Warwickshire, that there had been special plans there to prepare the way for unstreamed teaching: namely a concerted drive to improve reading skills which had resulted, over five years, in halving the incidence of backwardness.

Maths, science and French

On the other hand, there is no remedial withdrawal from classes at Abbey Wood, owing to lack of teachers, and the science and mathematics department uses various methods to help backward readers or slow learners—tape recordings, slide projectors and so on. On this point the head of a middle school observed that the nonstreamed class can be taught as a class without undue difficulty up to the point when a demand for reading or writing affects pace and comprehension; it is at this point that alternative approaches are called for.

The French department at Hackney Downs teaches right across the year group for the first three years. Formerly a boys' grammar school, it now has an annual intake, still single sex, of 180, of whom only 15 would formerly have gained a grammar school place and 70 have a reading age below 8½. But only about 15 are withdrawn for remedial work, those with a reading age below 6.5 who, after a trial period of three weeks, have been unable to participate. Evidence of the popularity of French is that, when options are exercised for the fourth year, 40% of boys choose to go on with it in a course ending with a combined 'O' level/CSE exam. The initial common course begins with oral work and provides both a self-contained course for those who do not continue and a sound basis for subsequent work for examinations. Differential learning in French relates to long-term memory, but does not reduce day-to-day achievement by the majority in acquiring the language if presentation is adapted accordingly. Work sheets and other written work include a 'stretching' section requiring more extensive writing and encourage long-term retention.

Peter Roper referred to the switch to making learning the central point, which in turn calls for a choice from among 'independent learning' techniques geared to three

levels. Selection depends on the subject, the nature of the class and so on; 'long' providing an independent route for the child for a term or a year, 'short' relating to a single lesson, and 'medium' a stage in between. For science the 'short' technique fits best, given experimental work and apparatus. For mathematics Abbey Wood uses a 'long' version, dividing the syllabus into areas each of which is assigned to one of the team of teachers so that each teacher takes the lead as his particular aspect comes to the fore. Work cards are prepared by the team and children are free to work out their own route through the chosen scheme for a whole term: most enjoy finding their own way and readily seek help in difficulty; where this is not so there can be subtle guidance. Two or three schemes operate at once so that children can switch, additional material can be brought in, and an exposition given to the class at intervals as required. Teachers keep careful records of each child's progress, ensuring it is at an acceptable level and that children, often working in groups, are gaining in social terms and acquiring self-discipline in the process of learning maths. Much more is achieved by this method than by traditional teaching as each child, working at his own rate, gets immediate reward in the completion of an assignment.

Beyond fourteen

In the afternoon, with Dame Margaret Miles in the chair, the focus was on the fourth and fifth years when the problem of examinations tends to dominate the scene. The discussion was opened by W F Quin, deputy head of Hedley Walter School, Braintree, Essex—a school invaded by enquiries and visitors after a BBC television programme in the series 'ROSLA and After'. Developed seven years ago from a co-educational secondary modern school the Hedley Walter comprehensive school evolved present methods four years before the changeover. Up to and including the fifth form classes are unstreamed in all subjects, except modern languages, and there is an open sixth form for which a full range of A-levels is available. The result has been socially beneficial besides raising standards of academic performance, particularly in relation to the middle range pupils so often forgotten while comment concentrates on the top or bottom.

The pattern outlined, in relation to planning the humanities course by teams of teachers, approximated to that discussed in the morning, except that there is

more integration of subjects. A compulsory humanities core comprising four traditional subjects—English, History, Geography, RE—is allotted a third of the week. The team of four teachers responsible is drawn from each subject area, but for the fourth and fifth years a sociologist is added; each such team is assisted for part of the time by a remedial specialist. This school has a full-time Resources Officer (obtained by giving up one lab assistant) running a teacher-based centre to assist teams in preparing courses.

Structured work sheets

The key to the whole approach is the work sheet, containing a variety of questions at different levels plus enquiry and research questions designed to facilitate both group and individual work. Other important aims are to facilitate the learning of necessary concepts, skills, techniques, and to provide wide choice to stimulate individual enquiry. So the work is very highly structured—which gives the direct negative to those who, without evidence, condemn new methods as ‘flabby’. As a matter of principle work sheets are revised each year. Some eight years ago, when plans were laid to extend these methods into the fourth and fifth years, it was recognised that the examination problem must be tackled. Accordingly there were negotiations with AEB and, after some prodding, the Schools Council set up a special committee to review the matter—the outcome of which was the first Mode 3 ‘O’ level Humanities course. Then the same syllabus was submitted to the regional CSE Board and accepted—with the result that a course could be run examinable over the whole range from CSE Grade 5 up to ‘O’ level Grade 1. Pupils can gain certificates in the four subjects involved in either GCE or CSE, or both. Moderators from both Boards are involved and results have been outstanding. Particularly pleasing has been the large number of ‘O’ level successes from the middle and lower ranges; that is, by children who on entry scored in the 80s or 90s in intelligence tests, and who, in a streamed situation, might not have been judged capable of CSE. Since ROSLA, 20 of the 260-300 pupils do not take an exam and constitute a special group for the last two terms of the fifth year.

It was from the angle of science teaching that Colin Yardley, of the biology department at Crown Woods, Eltham, spoke next. He moved straight in on the point that, to switch from class teaching, which assumed

homogeneity, to individualised learning, may be to lose out on the great value of small group work and whole class interaction. Whatever the value of resources and work sheets, teachers are still central and more conscious than they were of the influence of ‘teacher expectation’. They still have to judge the pace, find strategies for getting across to pupils, ensure that they are aware of something attained, a bench mark made.

There is a danger in such schemes as Nuffield Science, depending on ‘discovery’, if children do not know what they are discovering. The work sheet is one contrivance for keeping all children well occupied and allowing time to give help to those needing it. For new teachers it can be the breath of life. It encourages reading, provides necessary factual information, is thought provoking, a basis for homework and so on. At Crown Woods they have their own science scheme, now on its fourth rewrite; but this does create an immense amount of work and were ‘right’ materials commercially available they could well be bought in.

Talk is vital

Perhaps the most important point at which this scheme is ‘right’—in addition to proper scientific content and relation to classroom problems—is that the language is suitable. Oral work comes first in ‘mixed ability’ teaching, then written work, and there are two additional emphases. It is vital for the learner to be aware of, or trace, steps from one idea to a new one—a journey in thought, for himself, which may involve thinking aloud. Teachers must create conditions for pupils to be induced to think aloud. It may be that ‘speculative talk’ goes wrong in relation to science, but then there is not necessarily a direct answer that is dead right for the particular child at the particular time.

In speculative talk the teacher elicits how to construct a question, how to formulate an hypothesis, how to evaluate alternative hypotheses, how to think up more than one explanation of a phenomenon. This is the very stuff of science, among scientists, which should find a place in school. It is in dependence on achieving this that methods or forms of grouping should be selected. A well organised and controlled classroom is a necessity.

Children should also be coaxed to write, and at length, which means providing three broad sets of problem. 1) Non-specific: Find out as much as you can about . . . Explain what water molecules are doing in

ice, water and steam . . . 2) Open-ended questions which are the only parameter of scientific relevance: How would you find out whether a fish gives out bodily heat? 3) The question calling for a closely defined answer. Science teachers must be ready to accept expressive personal writing to begin with. Children will in due course pick up a scientific style as they appreciate the need for it. In this connection the curriculum project at the London University Institute of Education has a good deal to say of use.

Answering questions, Colin Yardley explained that combined science was taught in the first two years, then separate sciences in the third year in the middle of which children choose their fourth year subjects. There is guided choice to the extent that if no normal science subject is chosen geology is suggested, and if not that environmental studies. Physics is a popular choice.

Children who work faster during the common course may tackle a subject more deeply and not necessarily finish first as there is additional material for those who need it. It cannot be said that work sheets make teachers lazy when they are the product of the staff collectively. He strongly defended the common science course covering basic essentials and the most important concepts, as against such monstrosities as the 'science of cosmetics' for girls. There is no need to include such items as those parts of the Nuffield course which are pitched unnecessarily high and can be taken later.

English and exams

An impromptu intervention by an English teacher from a Braintree school raised doubts about the fourth to fifth year common course, about work sheets which may encourage an extract mentality as against the wide reading required, about the difficulties where a school had no resources centre. His school had a three-year common course on the basis of which fourth year GCE classes were doing work of a higher standard than in a streamed grammar school of which he had earlier had experience. CSE classes were enjoying group work but not doing Shakespeare. Both profited from the separation, which was necessary given the examination structure. Strong exception was taken to this view by Mr Quin who argued that it shuts the door on CSE groups when the whole idea is not to bar any. How could you

justify sets when children with an IQ of 84 had achieved 'O' level in grades 4, 5 and 6?

Speaking of a Suffolk school, half of whose pupils are local and half from a 'new town' area peopled by the GLC, another English teacher said that after two years' experience they were postponing the move from 'mixed ability' grouping. In English there is no differentiation until at least the end of the fourth year—there seems little point, in a subject not concerned with getting content across so much as fostering skills, imagination, personal reading and so on. Opportunity for relations in a group to establish themselves is crucial, and they are seeking strategies to make language a concern across the curriculum. As for 'speculative thinking', this is very much what English is about and one of the justifications for 'mixed ability' groups which exchange varied experiences and get to know each other well. It is precisely in developing the capacity to communicate, talk of all kinds, that English can help redress the balance after over-emphasis on written work—in which so many fall down.

One of several representatives from Yew Tree School, Manchester, argued that if it is impossible to lay down for any one teacher what he can best do, it can be contended that principles viable for the early years are as viable for the fourth year. The key question is attitudes to children, a recognition that the co-operative acquisition of knowledge is a value as well as work towards ever rising standards.

Summing up, Mr Quin thought too little had been said about examinations which are a central problem. After all, the Norwood Committee, back in 1943 when first advocating the GCE examination, had said it should wither away after seven years. Advocates of the common course should take this up and push for school-based examinations as the way to an enlightened curriculum. Colin Yardley stressed that the major change required was the establishment of a single examination at 16 plus. This he claimed, was essential if the middle years of the comprehensive school were to be unified.

Discussion continued after the session in several small groups. Following a suggestion from the floor, forms had been provided where teachers willing to answer questions or receive visitors to classes in different subject areas left their names and schools; so ensuring that interchange of experience will continue, in the more intensive way necessary to clarify both problems and the methods now evolving in so many schools.

On Moving to Mixed Ability Teaching

D Thompson

Dr Thompson has written about the Woodlands School experience of the positive effects of unstreaming on the voluntary staying on rate and examination results in *Forum* vol 7 no 3, vol 11 no 2 and vol 16 no 2. We now publish a shortened version of his talk to a DES course on 'Teaching Mixed Ability Groups' last summer.

Whether non-streaming works may have something to do with other things than merely forming unstreamed work groups and the activities associated with the preparation of syllabuses and teaching methods. It may, in fact, have a great deal to do with the general ethos, the tone and morale of the school as a whole, with the management structure of the school, with the organisational procedures and efficiency of communication within the school, with the quality of the staff/pupil relationships and with the role which the Head plays in the day to day life of the school. I will go so far as to say that it will be these other things that will largely determine success or failure of attempts to introduce mixed ability teaching into the secondary school.

Assuming one is moving from a streamed to an unstreamed situation, there are several steps one has to take. These can either be taken singly at different stages and well separated in time or one can attempt to tackle them at the same time and move, overnight as it were, from a streamed to an unstreamed form of organisation.

Those who attempt to unstream overnight are braver souls than I am. I would advocate a cautious and realistic approach in introducing mixed ability learning at the secondary stage, whether it is a new school or one that is rigidly streamed or one that is banded. Incidentally, I regard setting by ability and banding as forms of streaming and do not recognise the merits in either of these procedures that some heads do.

The advice, therefore, which I would offer to a head is to introduce non-streaming in stages, but with determination. Most human beings are fearful of the unknown and often the mere thought of facing an unfamiliar situation will cause feelings of insecurity to arise which the mind then counteracts by offering rationalised arguments to explain why the new situation should be avoided at all costs.

I have spoken to many heads who have wanted to unstream and in almost every case it has emerged that one or more of their senior colleagues has expressed a desire either to opt out until it has been seen to work successfully in other subjects or to adopt some form of setting, the implication being that certain subjects are 'special' in the sense that it is more difficult to teach

them in mixed ability groups. For some time I was prepared to consider this as a possibility, but I now suspect that it is not the case and that all subjects can be taught successfully on a non-streamed basis. It might well be that there are certain subjects in which a below-average teacher is less likely to succeed initially than would a below-average teacher with another subject, but that is no argument for not unstreaming. Much more important than the subject is the attitude, understanding, enthusiasm, capacity for self-criticism and compassion of the teacher.

A trial period

I would say, therefore, to a head whose colleagues put forward pleas for special consideration, 'You should, if the process is to be completely successful, insist that all subjects come in on an equal basis.' If you do not, as soon as Mr X sees Mr Y opting out, he also will want special terms and you will finish up with something far from satisfactory. Of course, some staff will have reservations about going the whole way with unstreaming, whether initially or when the time comes for the final step to be taken, and I would suggest the best approach is to ask them to try it out for a limited period, on an experimental basis, and then if it is found not to work, to agree to revert to the previous way of doing things. After all, it is rather unscientific to make up your mind, before attempting an experiment, what the results are going to be—and this is what people are doing who say beforehand that unstreaming will not work. At the same time, it is the sense of finality that is so disturbing to some, and if it is clearly understood that the step being taken is not irreversible, then you are much more likely to carry all the staff with you.

What are the stages that one might expect to go through, assuming the move to non-streaming is approached steadily as opposed to effecting a sudden transition?

(1) The first stage is one which involves carrying the staff with you. The attitude of the teacher may be the most important single element leading to the success or otherwise of the venture. If a member of staff has decided that it will not work, then it certainly will not

work. Somehow a head must ensure that none of his staff actually want the thing to fail and are prepared to throw spanners into the works to ensure this. It doesn't matter too much if there are a few lukewarm ones in the first instance.

(2) There are then the actual management processes concerned with the formation of the mixed ability groups for teaching purposes. Quite obviously a mixed ability group implies being homogeneous in some respects compared with the other groups in the same year. If you asked most teachers in what respect they are to be homogeneous they would answer, 'In respect of general ability so as to include in each group a similar cross section of the whole ability range.'

(3) The next stage is the preparation of staff to meet the new situation. This is the point at which I depart from most, if not all, other heads who usually take the view that planning must take place on a grand scale for several months beforehand with staff heavily committed to visiting other schools where it is all happening, in working out new syllabuses, schemes of work, buying new types of equipment and text books, adopting new methods of instruction and generally doing their best to discard classroom techniques that for many teachers have proved successful. Little wonder that older teachers are suffering on a grander scale than before from stress symptoms in our large schools. All this may come, eventually, but to attempt it at one fell swoop before you have ever faced a non-streamed class, in the belief that you know beforehand what the problems are going to be and how they can best be met, is not only unscientific but arrogant.

An empirical approach

It is because of the impossibility of predicting what problems will have to be met when classes are taught in mixed ability groups that it is important not to work out beforehand on an extensive scale new methods of approach. Of course new approaches will become necessary, but they will not be the same in all subjects. Syllabuses will have to be rewritten but in ways that cannot be clearly foreseen. In carrying out any experiment I have always found it unwise to change initially too many of the conditions; for if, in addition to changing the structure of a system, entirely new techniques are adopted, it is impossible to decide whether the results achieved are occasioned by a change of structure or of method.

But there is another, more powerful reason why too much consideration should not be given initially to long-term planning. I have seen below-average teachers become above-average teachers as a consequence of facing up to the demands of non-streaming and sorting out the problems for themselves and in consultation with their colleagues. Herein, indeed, lies the secret of success in non-streaming—that staff should face up to and solve the problems as they arise. For the most part they will arise singly and they can then be tackled without a feeling of being overwhelmed. But it is precisely in the process of facing up to the real classroom situation, as opposed to the imagined one, that a teacher becomes more skilful and confident in his approach to unstreaming. The empiricist is much more likely to be successful here than the theoretician.

What I am really saying is that a move to non-streaming should be seen as part of the activities of an in-service training programme for the staff. The alternative is that staff will expect to be told what to do in the new situation when they should be finding out for themselves in collaboration with their colleagues. It is not only children who do not learn by being told.

Leadership and support

It is important, however, that individual members of staff do not feel they are on their own. Some teachers are 'naturals' and will cope with almost any work group situation. Others, particularly those fresh from college or university and those in the second half of life who have been trained and have taught for many years under a traditional system, are the most likely to need help. This is where the leadership and inspiration of a good head of department becomes all-important. There must be, during the transition period from streaming to non-streaming, frequent departmental and inter-departmental meetings where staff can pool their experiences and together find answers to the questions that will arise. It will not, in fact, be so much a question of solving problems, as of constantly carrying out a reappraisal of the situation and of exercising self-criticism, with a view to becoming more efficient technically and more successful in the art of communication and in the building of bridges where previously only tightropes existed. 'Unstreaming' is, in short, another word for 'communication' and is one of the finest ways I know of improving the standard of teaching and the quality of teachers, for the simple reason

that it is in the facing up to new situations, in the sharing of another's difficulties and in the successful surmounting of them as a corporate act that human beings become better human beings and teachers become better teachers. Here, as elsewhere, success breeds more success.

When the staff have been in contact with the new situation for some time, you will find that many of them will still be using techniques and approaches that do not differ overmuch from those used in former days, whereas others either individually or collectively, will have adopted new techniques that they regard as more appropriate to the non-streamed situation. You may even find one department, as I did, that had made so much progress and was showing such expertise as to astonish, surprise and hearten you. If you are wise, whilst all this is going on, you will seek the assistance of someone from outside the school, preferably Her Majesty's Inspectors or LEA Advisers, in visiting the school say every 18 months to offer an objective and non-punch-pulling assessment as to what is actually happening in the school. An outside assessment, free from the blinkers which every member of the school staff, including the head, carries, is most important. This in our profession is called Continuous Assessment.

Likely developments

What will be the things which you may expect staff to discover for themselves during the period when you throw them back on their own resources and they are facing up to the implications of teaching mixed ability groups? They might well be expected to include the following:

(a) That teachers are prone to a habit which consists of going into their own little boxes whilst remaining almost totally unaware of what is going on in the other little boxes. The realisation that teacher isolation is a stumbling block in the new situation and that more communication, both formally and informally, must take place between staff. It will eventually be necessary to set up a formal management structure to ensure that it actually takes place in school time, first on a voluntary basis, both within departments and across departments. Heads of Department play a key role in this operation.

(b) The second thing that may emerge is that some staff may realise that the role of the teacher cannot be the

same in the non-streamed situation as it was in the streamed situation. No longer can the teacher be regarded as an authority figure who knows all the answers, who gives out information to pupils who, in turn, learn it and are then tested to discover whether they have learned it. Some staff will quite early get round to the notion that the teacher has to discard to some extent previous roles and regard himself less of an authority figure who teaches and more of a manager of the learning situation. The emphasis, in other words, moves from teaching by the teacher to learning by the pupil.

(c) Some staff may realise that pupil learning as opposed to teacher teaching implies more activity on the part of the pupil and less use of chalk and talk on the part of the teacher. Exercise books and text books may be seen as not constituting a sufficiently wide range of resources for learning as staff recognise the truth that human beings learn best by 'doing' rather than by writing things down and trying to remember them. From that point on staff will enlarge their ideas as to what constitutes resources in the learning situation.

(d) When this point is reached, staff may discover that there is not sufficient room in the classroom for them to store their resources and they will see that the next logical step is the development of a resources centre. Not a grand one somewhere in the middle of the school but one that is conveniently situated in their own department to which staff and perhaps pupils may have ease of access. Some of the items in the resource centre will be those coming under the general heading of educational technology, some of which staff may be afraid to use for fear of damaging them or quite unable to use because they are not skilled in the techniques. It will then be necessary to provide courses in the use of such equipment, including, for example, the preparation of acetates for use with overhead projectors. At this point the need to recruit on to the staff an educational technologist, preferably a teacher, may be seen and it should be part of his job not only to instruct staff in the use of equipment but to offer them a back-up service with regard to such things as the preparation of cassetted radio programmes.

(e) Other staff may by now have got round to the idea that they could well do with individual work sheets or work cards, laminated with a clear plastic covering for protection, for distribution to pupils in particular lessons. They will, in effect, be demanding a back-up service in the form of a school-based reprographic unit which can provide at relatively short notice a stated

number of copies of work sheets from material submitted by them.

(4) Eventually, there may come a point where there is enough expertise amongst the staff to utilise for the benefit of the whole school. You are now faced with the problem of how to utilise for the benefit of the majority the excellence of the minority. When this point has been reached, this can be done through an in-service training programme organised within the school and using largely but not entirely, the staff of the school.

(5) By this time the most forward looking of the staff may have come up with the idea that non-streaming logically leads to individual learning. A few staff may even proceed to plan their programmes on this assumption and it might even be possible to find a department where child-based learning is taking place with programmes being built round the individual pupil who plays some part in the defining of the programme, the setting and assessing of objectives associated with that programme with the minimum of direction and control by the teacher.

(6) Finally, some staff may even come to the conclusion that a change of attitude towards the slow learner, the pupil who is commonly regarded as requiring remedial teaching, is necessary. No longer may he be regarded as someone who is a nuisance because he cannot be

taught alongside ordinary children and should be sent somewhere else to be taught. He may now be regarded as someone who is to be accepted with all his limitations and catered for within the department, on the basis of the skills and interests which he does possess, instead of constantly thinking about his deficiency in those skills which he does not possess and probably never will.

The whole concept of remedial teaching may have to be looked at afresh at some stage within the context of the non-streamed situation so that resources both human and material that are at the moment being wasted on so-called remedial teaching may be directed to more productive ends with less hindrance to the personal development of the child.

Average teachers ought not, perhaps, to become involved with mixed-ability teaching if quick results and excellence of achievement are being looked for. The challenge for those of more than average potential can provide an incentive and a focus of interest that may well enable them to share their expertise with the rest. The collective effect of this across the whole staff may eventually become evident and cause the discerning visitor who returns to the school to ask why it is that the staff appear to be more competent than they were when he last visited the place.

Exchange of Information

The following notified willingness to exchange information with others teaching nonstreamed classes in particular subjects in comprehensive schools, at the June conference organised by **Forum** and the Campaign for Comprehensive Education; and, in most cases, are willing to receive visits by arrangement.

SCIENCE

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Roy Pearce, Anthony Grell School, Wirksworth, Derbyshire

Alan Winfield, Impington Village College, Cambridge (Histon 2835)

John Harrop, Ongar Comprehensive School, Ongar, Essex (Ongar 3232)

Peter Roberts, Great Cornard Upper School, Sudbury, Suffolk (Sudbury 75232)

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John March, Stuart Lunn, Belper High School, Derbyshire

G W H Hawkes, Wakeford School, Havant, Hants

Ruth Frow, Alisa Stewart, Yew Tree High School, Sale Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester 22

The Teacher in In-Service Education

Maggie Gracie

Maggie Gracie is Warden of Blaby Teachers' Centre, Leicestershire. She has taught in two Leicestershire secondary schools and is a member of the National Training Committee for **Man—A Course of Study**. She wrote on 'Teaching Social Science' in *Forum* vol 12 no 3.

In a recent *Forum* (vol 17 no 2) teachers from Heathfield High School discussed their school's experiences using the American curriculum project, **Man—a Course of Study**. They referred to the change in teaching style implicit in the course and mentioned the local teachers centre where they had attended training sessions to prepare for the course.

Man—a Course of Study is a unique curriculum project because a condition attached to the purchase of the materials is that teachers undergo 'training'. This is because **Man—a Course of Study** is not a curriculum package and it is not intended to be teacher-proof. It invites teachers into two areas of innovation, simultaneously. The first is the curriculum material which is drawn from disciplines unfamiliar to many teachers; the study of Man's nature as a species using contrasting and comparative data from animal behavioural science and from anthropology. The second is the nature of the learning process, the role of the teacher and the means of stimulating discovery learning.

It is only in a trivial sense that one gives a course to 'get something across', merely to impart information. There are better means to that than teaching. Unless the learner

also masters himself, disciplines his tastes, deepens his view of the world, 'the something' that it got across is hardly worth the effort of transmission.*

The teacher of **Man—a Course of Study** is trying to create a learning environment in which he is a participant and in which each student develops a respect for the materials and for each other student's viewpoint, so that each is free to form his own hypothetical view of Mankind. The teacher is a facilitator of learning and a learner himself. There is no ready recipe for such a change in the role of the teacher, because there are few, if any, teachers who could claim to have been successful in this style of learning. It follows that teacher training in its usual form will be unsatisfactory because the body of expertise is still in process of being built up.

Our experience in Leicestershire may be helpful in outlining some of the difficulties and successes of our training workshops. It was two years ago that the Education Authority decided to help schools wanting to use **Man—a Course of Study** by purchasing the film material and by sending several teachers and advisors to a National Training Workshop. Four people attended workshops organised by the CARE unit at the University of East Anglia, and they assumed the responsibility for planning and staffing local training for the teachers in five Leicestershire schools who would begin to use the course in autumn 1973.

The five schools were in many ways quite similar. Four were High Schools for pupils aged 11-14 and one for 10-14; they were all unstreamed, had established social studies/environmental studies courses, had been involved in preparing their own resource materials and in individualising the learning process. Two of the schools had previously obtained samples of the **Man—a Course of Study** materials and had attempted to organise courses using elements from these and the philosophical approach found in the writings of Jerome Bruner. Few of the teachers, then, were completely unfamiliar to the teaching strategy of 'Man'. However, the pattern of in-service education for secondary

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Discussion

Professional Tutors

In recent months the question of the position of the professional tutor has been raised in several articles in the educational press. Many of us in the teaching profession have seen similar reports placed before us throughout the years and then seen them gather dust on the shelf through inactivity and lack of support by the majority of those involved, namely the teachers themselves.

As in all reports, however, there are certain points which are fundamental to the development of our education service and the concept of the professional tutor seems to me to be one of them. As the discussion document - prepared by the Joint Council of Heads in October 1973 states - 'Every school, whatever its size, should have a school-based Professional Tutor, knowing the school intimately, always being there for reference, teaching there, and facilitating the induction process within that school'. Particularly in a school as large as mine is this so. We have almost one hundred staff of all ages and experiences, including our normal share of probationer teachers. In addition, throughout the school year we receive from our feeder Colleges of Education our share of students on teaching practice. More especially we are attempting to develop new teaching techniques in response to mixed-ability grouping, so that the three main factors involved in the concept of a professional tutor are contained within the teaching fabric of the school.

What then are these people to do? Firstly, I am convinced that it is wrong to criticize our Colleges of Education for the poor quality of our students, which seems to be a common complaint, without the schools taking upon themselves far more responsibility for their development on the professional side. We must provide

within the school help and skills to make them better teachers through better liaison with the College tutors, through better links for my staff and the College and for a better combined approach to teaching practice as a whole. We must find out more about our students before they arrive and then build on their strengths and help improve their weaknesses through direct in-service training for them whilst they are in our schools. Our assessment techniques too must be improved. This is also particularly true for our probationary teachers. Far too often our Heads of Department have too much on their plates to be able to give them the support they deserve and need, and as a consequence they receive too little, or none at all.

Secondly, there is the question of in-service training. All too often in our schools do we embark on schemes without adequate discussion and preparation, without the supporting services such action requires. So often do we expect staff to carry out the implied policy and philosophy of the school without even knowing what this is. So often discussions are held in school in a fragmented way when with proper organisation a great deal of work could have been integrated overall - this is particularly so in the case of departmental curriculum content.

Thirdly the question of staff development is beginning to be a more important one, especially in the large school. All too often the only way in which one has gained promotion has been to move to another school. In some cases this must be inevitable, but at the same time this can be a very wasteful exercise, both in terms of expense and time, but in the long term it may not be the best thing for the member of staff concerned either. In terms of job satisfaction a lateral move rather than an upward move may be a better move altogether - though of course one must recognise the financial element and its significance in terms of promotion. Yet I am sure that with

proper guidance and help within a school a change in role may be the successful outcome rather than a move to another school. The provision of details about courses which will prepare staff for such lateral movement and the ability to give advice must be an important part of the Professional Tutor's role in school. It should be clear, however, that the Professional Tutor is accountable to the Head for the implementation of his policy for staff development, indeed the two should work very closely together to ensure that this section of the work is carried out properly and tactfully.

The basic problem confronting us remains - how to establish criteria for the schemata we wish to pursue? I and my Professional Tutor have many ideas we wish to promulgate but there is little precedence for our actions. I am very concerned to hear from any school which is attempting its own programmes in relation to:-

- (i) teaching practice
- (ii) probationer teachers/and links with Colleges of Education and their assessment
- (iii) pre-teacher courses
- (iv) in-service training schemes
- (v) school induction courses
- (vi) staff development

Such information will be treated in strict confidence and I am prepared to pass information I receive to others who may be similarly interested.

RONALD FELL
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Horwich*



Pupil Alienation

One of the major challenges of teaching is to effect a change of attitude in the pupils so that his intellect can develop and grow. Some pupils are clearly willing enough, but what of those who are not?

It would seem that the problems of alienation or disaffiliation have been to some extent compounded since the advent of comprehensive education. Of course, comprehensive education cannot be used as the scapegoat for all educational ills. Indeed, there are the means in a truly comprehensive school of alleviating disassociation from school values. However, the problem of alienated youth in schools continues to clearly manifest itself, as it does in society. Evidence in many schools can be seen of:

- (i) overt opposition to the school's authority structure and rules;
- (ii) destruction and/or disregard for property;
- (iii) increased graffiti, with girls featuring as miscreants as well as boys;
- (iv) stubborn refusal to see hard work as a virtue (an anti-Protestant ethic movement);
- (v) underfunctioning intellectually through apathy and boredom.

It becomes clear that schools, as a result of developments in society, have become centres of potential conflict since they represent in the pupils' eyes, in many respects, 'old' values and standards. The problems of society at large are thus in miniature reflected in the school society.

Alienation is exacerbated by the fact that the maturation level of adolescents has dropped due to an improved standard of living, yet to be equipped with the necessary skills to survive in a complex world, relatively sophisticated youngsters are compelled and need to stay on at school. Hence ROSLA and its much publicised problems. To make school more

attractive and relevant to young people a radical re-examination and reconstruction of knowledge and values is needed. Never before have young people been required to learn so much, so fast, so well.

When asking ourselves what is the quality of education in our schools, we have to look at the problem not only from the standpoint of the teacher but from that of the pupil too. We could make a small beginning by asking ourselves the following deceptively simple questions: Do we interpret our rules and social system to our pupils? Do we really offer choices? Is there a 'divided' curriculum?

A 'divided' curriculum could produce deep-rooted alienation, especially in those groups of pupils with educational difficulties. If a sector of the school population study subjects which separate them from the rest of the school community, they are quick to detect this divisive process, and many schemes which set out to help pupils might succeed not in capturing their interests, but in alienating them from their school and that very scheme. Projects designed with the best of intentions for ROSLA (where disassociation is most likely to occur) could now be a contributing factor in the causation of alienation.

Frequently, in schools we give with one hand and take back with the other. Many of the 'new' approaches to learning depend upon problem solving techniques. We encourage this in the learning situation and then are disturbed when a like response spills over in the field of personal relationships. In other words, in some situations, the pupils have to be good, pleasing and passive, and, in others active and inquiring. The situation is rife with potential conflict since two opposing sets of expectations are at work.

Teachers in schools of the 70s and 80s will have to learn to manage conflict effectively whilst maintaining authority in their pupil/teacher relationships. Pupils reared on a diet

of problem solving and child-centred approaches are *not* going to respond to a 'telling' culture. We may think we are winning because duly upbraided pupils meekly hang their heads, but more often than not they know which signals to send us to quietly slip off the hook and escape!

Adolescent development problems viewed against a backcloth of crumbling supports in society clearly further contribute to the problems of alienation. The school, in fact, could be the most 'perfect' of institutions but to some pupils it would still be a school and therefore something to 'kick' against. Most 'normal' adolescents, in a struggle to establish their identity, need a secure environment in which to reach independence, and in schools we have to possess the maturity to attempt to cope with the more usual adolescent problems, and help our pupils progress not regress. It is not unrealistic to envisage the school taking over increasingly, the functions of the family and the counselling roles of the church, as the Christian ethic, in its present form struggles for survival and divorce rates creep up.

In conclusion, we are meeting a little more than the traditional pupil reluctance to learning. Pupil-teacher relationships need increasing analysis and we will have to work harder at relationships if we, as educators, are to usefully harness the energies of Dionysian man embodied in modern youth. We cannot afford to sit back and complain using 'society' as a scapegoat. If schools are to challenge and encourage alienated youth to learn then they must be prepared for blows to their values and self-esteem, but be resolved to fight back with repeated determination and tackle the problems of disaffiliation. There will be failures, but as students of human nature did we really ever expect a rose garden?

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teachers of social studies in Leicestershire was far from the model we hoped to establish. Day courses and residential courses had usually had a materials-based theme, 'Local Studies', 'Making Resource Materials', and so on. They added to the teacher's knowledge and resources were offered without a reciprocal obligation on the part of the teacher to contribute to the common learning process.

The alternative model for in-service education was that of the National Training Workshops for **Man—a Course of Study**, organised by Lawrence Stenhouse and his team at CARE, University of East Anglia. These resemble the Humanities Curriculum Workshops with which many teachers are familiar. They set out to create, at an adult level, an inquiry-based investigation of the course materials and their philosophical basis in the theory of knowledge. During the summer of 1973, Blaby Teachers' Centre was used as a base for these workshops. They were held in afternoon and evening sessions with a group whose composition varied according to the demands of the timetable in their schools. Each session took its theme from the course materials and we attempted to start discussion of the content, its relevance to the course, and the teaching strategy. We felt that the impact had been slight. The teachers were most concerned to familiarise themselves with the course materials and regarded the teaching strategy as a separate issue. As a result, the teachers were still very much on their own when they began to teach **Man—a Course of Study** at the beginning of the autumn term. They reported that they could barely manage to keep up with the day-to-day planning. Many were dissatisfied that the pressure to become familiar with the course materials and to plan classroom activity had meant a step backwards in their teaching method. There was an observable swing back towards 'class teaching' and some of the value of the course, to stimulate inquiry learning was being lost.

The next stage in local training was a residential course held in the autumn 1973 for four days, and attended by over 50% of the teachers involved in 'Man'. The programme, leadership and organisation was again provided by the four teachers who had attended a National Training Workshop. Some outside experts were invited, a teacher from Norwich who had used the course for one year came to discuss the course in practice, and a primatologist from Twycross Zoo came to provide information about primate behaviour. The course has remained a high spot in the memories of the participants. Its success was in forging a link between

the five schools, enabling them to discuss and share problems without the familiar accompanying element, competition between schools. The failure was that the 'experts' who had been trained retained the initiative and dominated many of the sessions. This failure arose partly through our urgent concern to help teachers in the classroom, and partly because we lacked the experience and confidence to throw the ball into the teachers' court and ask them to identify and investigate the aspects of the course which worried and interested them.

During the rest of the year, afternoon sessions were held at the Teachers' Centre, an exhibition of children's work was organised, and each school was asked to make a written evaluation of their year's work. There were three predominant themes in the reports: the practical difficulties involved in sharing the film resources, of having insufficient printed material and of having insufficient time for preparation; disappointment that the course had not easily lent itself to individual and group work; and concern about suitable approaches to extend the work of 'Man' into subsequent school years. The reports and teacher's comments pointed out the need for a further stage in 'training'.

Towards a new model

In autumn 1974 financial approval was given for a further residential course to be held in February 1975. It was a course for those who already had experience of teaching the 'Man' course. Expertise was now of two kinds. There were five 'trained' teachers, two of whom were advisory staff and not teachers in the schools; and there was a group of teachers who had used the course for a year. Only two teachers fell into both categories. One of these suggested, at an early planning meeting, that if the initiative for planning were to remain in the original group, then some time in the future when those individuals left the authority, there would be a lack of people able to carry on training for new and experienced teachers. The result was a planning committee representing each school with a brief to organise the content, staffing and methodology of the forthcoming residential course. The implications of the change in planning structure was of major importance because it offered an opportunity to break the distinction between teacher and learner and laid the foundations for a course 'of the teachers, by the teachers and for the teachers'.

Each teacher on the planning committee brought ideas for the conference from their school team and a programme emerged clustering around three themes: the nature of discovery learning; the philosophical status of **Man—a Course of Study**; and future direction of curriculum innovation in the schools. Each session was more-or-less mapped out and individuals designated to chair each session and provide the necessary support and resource material for it. The role of the Education Authority, its advisory service and other outside support was interesting. The LEA provided the financial support for the conference and supportive approval which was manifested without an intervention in the planning or arrangements for the conference. The Warden of Hugglescote Teachers' Centre arranged meetings, undertook administrative chores and detailed conference arrangements, but did not take a leading role in the planning or the conference. A secondary school advisor was invited to participate in the conference and made a contribution in the spirit of the conference. Two members of the National Training Programme Committee for 'Man' were involved in the planning and in chairing some sessions of the conference but did not set out to have a distinctly different role from other members of the conference.

The first session was based on the written reports which each school made for their first year. Each was amplified and the discussion highlighted the problems which teachers wanted an opportunity to explore at the conference. The sessions in the following two and a half days were a mixture of discussion and practical workshop activity. Themes for discussion were Evaluation of the Course, Discovery Learning, The Next Stage in Curriculum Innovations and the Philosophy of **Man—a Course of Study**. Three sessions were devoted to the problem of children with reading difficulties, led by a remedial specialist from London, and resulting in four outline plans for supplementary material to help such children. The sessions were characterised by a real drive to explore each issue and a willingness from all the participants to put in and take out in equal measure. The way in which a team of two teachers from one school contributed detailed plans and examples of resources they intended to use as a follow-up to 'Man', knowing that they would be criticised and compared with the 'Man' materials is one example of the way in which the conference began to create a community of knowledge and inquiry which went far beyond the individual concerns of teachers there, and overcame the defensive resistance to the sharing of ideas which so

often characterises teachers' discussion groups.

The last session of the conference was called 'Solutions to the Problems?' We reviewed the questions which had been posed in the first session. We did not reach many conclusions but were agreed that our discussions had provided a basis on which we could continue to reflect. Although we left with many of our original questions unanswered we were realising that it was not answers we wanted so much as a framework in which to pursue our inquiry. A decision was taken at this final session for the planning group to organise a further series of one-day workshops so that we could return to some of the problem areas. One such workshop was planned for May, and already the planning group of teachers is organising an introductory, residential conference for teachers new to the Authority or new to 'Man', to be held in the early autumn.

Planning with teachers

One lesson of this experience is plain; that teachers are the most important group to be involved in planning organising and contributing to in-service education. The conditions under which it can happen are hard to replicate. A happy set of circumstances surrounds the Leicestershire experience, and some of these were unintentional. There was a group of enthusiastic teachers who were prepared to give up their spare time to plan a conference; the authority backed the group morally and financially; the group had a real interest in and a utilitarian use for the course they were planning; and they are able to obtain most of the resources and facilities to put their ideas into practice in the classroom. This makes me reflect about the value of the courses I have been involved in planning which are attended more from a sense of obligation than interest, and which are often remote from teachers both in their planning and in their application to the classroom.

* J Bruner, *Towards a Theory of Instruction* p. 73.

Useful Reading:

Man—a Course of Study—Teachers' Handbooks: Talks to Teachers, Evaluation Strategies, Curiosity, Competence, Community.

J Bruner: **Towards a Theory of Instruction.**

John Elliott, Clem Adelman and Tina Reay: **Hypotheses and Experimental Ground Rules for the Inquiry/Discovery Classroom**, available from Ford T Project, CARE, University of East Anglia, Norwich.

In Defence of Large Schools

Clyde Chitty

Clyde Chitty is a member of the Editorial Board of *Forum*. He has taught in both large and small comprehensive schools, and is at present second Deputy Head of a growing comprehensive school in south-east London.

The Caterpillar was the first to speak. 'What size do you want to be?' it asked.

'Oh, I'm not particular as to size,' Alice hastily replied; 'only one doesn't like changing so often you know.'

(Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*)

It has now become fashionable to argue that small schools are good and big schools are bad. It would, come to think of it, have made a good chant for the sheep in Orwell's *Animal Farm*. And we might extend the analogy a little further, for, as a slogan, as a precept, it is surely as meaningless and moribund as 'four legs good, two legs bad'.

Of course, so much of our current preoccupation with the size of school issue is little more than thinly-disguised political propaganda, aimed at discrediting the comprehensive reform. In the mind of many people—right-wing educational journalists, members of anti-comprehensive pressure groups, and so on—comprehensive schools must, almost by definition, be big schools. If big schools can be shown to be bad, *ipso facto*, comprehensive schools are bad. The reasoning is false—and for two very good reasons. Comprehensive schools do not necessarily have to be big; and, if they are, there is no unwritten law which dooms them to failure.

Before taking the argument further, we need perhaps to define our terms. What do people really mean when they talk about small schools and large schools? In this article, I shall be discussing the advantages of schools between 1,000 and 1,500 pupils. I have no direct experience of schools going beyond 1,500, though I would imagine much of what I have to say would apply equally well to them.

Pastoral organization

In the first place, large schools are not 'inhuman sausage machines', indifferent to the well-being of the individual pupil. On the contrary, it is precisely these schools which have since the late fifties and early sixties pioneered new patterns of pastoral organisation designed to provide attention for every pupil that is far superior to that appertaining in the majority of small schools.

In grammar and secondary modern schools, form teachers often provide *all* the pastoral care. I have known small comprehensives where heads of departments are expected to double up as unpaid, part-time year masters or house masters and end up doing neither job particularly well. Schools with over 1,000 pupils have to formalise their organisation; and there are positive merits in this. Because most teachers working in large schools are so aware of the size factor, nothing is allowed to go unrecorded. Information, which might in a small school get passed on by word-of-mouth and then be forgotten, is filed and preserved, not as part of some bureaucratic game, but in the interests of the children themselves.

House systems, year systems—all serve the same purpose: they enable the large school to make adequate provision for every child to be known as an individual and guided as such through the difficult years of adolescence. In solving the problem of size, therefore, large schools have moved beyond purely negative reasoning and made a positive contribution to the welfare of the young. The point was well made in a *Forum* article of 1970 written by Peter Brown, the then Headmaster of Walworth Comprehensive School in London. He argued that 'one of the greatest merits of the comprehensive movement in education is the generous commitment to pastoral work that it has evoked. It is by no means a new thing; but applied on such a scale as it now is, it bids fair to rank as a major service to youth'.¹

It would, of course, be foolish to deny that there are some large schools with very real discipline problems. The majority of these are situated in inner-city areas where social problems—high immigration concentration, poor housing and so on—are considerable. More often than not, they are flanked by grammar schools which have prevented them becoming truly 'comprehensive' anyway. In a relatively short space of time, they have acquired an unenviable reputation for being ungovernable 'sink' schools to which no caring parents would wish to send their children.

Yet, as I have argued elsewhere,² it is far too easy to blame everything on the size factor. The problems were there long before the advent of the big comprehensives.

The point is that while they are confined to the small secondary modern schools in the forgotten areas of our cities, they passed unnoticed by the popular press and could hardly be exploited by the anti-comprehensive lobby. Now we are in serious danger of exacerbating the situation by overstating the difficulties. I do not believe that, given effective leadership, good teaching and more balanced intakes, truancy, violence and indiscipline need be unavoidable facts of life in large schools, even in those situated in decaying inner-city zones. And it is worth reflecting that the vast majority of large schools, in rural and suburban areas, are never taken into account in the size of schools debate.

Curricular options

In the area of curricular choice, large schools have obvious built-in advantages. They are able to offer more diversified teaching and wider subject programmes. I happen to feel that it is very important for schools to be able to cater for minority interests, particularly at the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-form levels. Correspondence courses, linked courses in colleges of further education, and all the other devices used to off-set the curricular constraints of small schools, clearly serve a useful purpose, but they compare unfavourably with school-based learning situations. In catering for the post-sixteen age group, comprehensive schools should ideally be in a position to provide between ten and twenty A-level subjects, separate 'O' level and CSE repeat courses, together with a number of general or vocational courses for those who may not wish to work for examinations. Only the large school can provide these opportunities without needing to call on the resources of other schools and colleges.

Leisure pursuits

When we come on to consider extra-curricular and recreational pursuits, the possibilities in large schools are almost limitless. Writing in *Forum* in 1968, Eugene McCarthy, the then Headmaster of Malory Comprehensive School in London, pointed out that large schools such as his were in a position to offer such an astonishing range of activities that 'the list sometimes reads like London's **Floodlight** of evening classes'.³ This rich diversity of clubs and societies is a testimony to the hard work of hundreds of teachers. There is, how-

ever, one pitfall to be avoided: the pursuit of excellence may cause some teachers, who can pick and choose from a large number of pupils, to set the standard of performance—in, say, music or drama—so high that only the really gifted can participate.⁴ When a club or society becomes the exclusive preserve of a certain section of the school, any fame it may acquire is won at too high a cost.

What, then, are the general advantages of large schools for both teachers and pupils? In formulating my views on this question, I have benefited greatly from discussions with Geoff Lawes, Headmaster of the Weald Comprehensive School in West Sussex, a school of some 1,200 pupils, and with sixth-formers, past and present, from a number of London's larger comprehensive schools.

If we take as our model a school of between 1,000 and 1,500 pupils, with a full-time teaching staff of between 75 and 100, it offers scope for structured in-service training amongst the staff, while justifying and making practicable properly thought out induction procedures for probationers. Professional tutoring at all levels need not be left to chance—which is more than likely to happen in the 'small budget context' of a small school. At the same time, a large staff enhances the overall quality of professional discussion and provides a rich variety of informal situations in which this can operate. It may not be too unfair to suggest that it is fear of exchanged ideas which encourages some conservative thinkers to urge the retention of small schools!

More going for staff and pupils

In a large school, every member of staff has ready access to a denser level of experience. There is more going on around him, more people to talk to, more advisers visiting, more experiments happening, more school journeys being organised, more pupils getting into more various kinds of trouble and achieving more remarkable and more varied successes. Such a member of staff is likely to know much more on promotion (internally or externally) and to have a wider, more open-minded approach to educational strategies. It is all too easy for a small staff to acquire a built-in resistance to change, or to be dominated by those with a vested interest in preserving the status quo.

For the pupils, there is no reason why large schools should mean anonymity or rejection. We all know the story of the two boys who were taking a scholarship at

Oxford: 'Which school do you come from?' 'Manchester Grammar School.' 'So do I.' One sixth-former at a large London comprehensive tells how when she is walking through the school, kids come up to her and ask if she is a teacher. Though tempted sometimes to say 'Yes, now get along to your lessons', she always manages to resist the urge to be authoritarian. Funnier still, perhaps, to learn how a head of department in this same school told a new member of staff to 'put that cigarette out and get going, sonny'. This type of error is due, admittedly, to the size of the establishment, but it is, I would suggest, as harmless as it is amusing. It is impossible for every pupil to know every member of staff, or for every member of staff to know every pupil. What matters is that every pupil has at least a group of teachers to whom he can relate and for whom his happiness and well-being are important. Looked at from a more positive angle, it is surely likely that amongst a large staff a difficult or disturbed pupil will find at least some teachers who can communicate with him—even if it occasionally means changing sets or option groups to avoid time-wasting clashes of personality.

For many young people who have been to large comprehensive schools, life is apparently never quite as exciting again. They recall that there was always something going on at school: matches being played, concerts being arranged, plays being rehearsed, and so on. There was the feeling of being part of a vigorous, energetic community, in comparison with which the adult society they move on to experience after leaving school seems unutterably dull. What they remember may be an essentially intangible quality, but it is clearly one which makes the five or more years spent in a large school a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

Yet all such feelings are subjective, and one must beware of generalising from the experiences of a successful minority.

The purpose of this article has been simply to argue that large comprehensives can be successful and that there are areas where they enjoy distinct advantages over smaller units. In the last analysis, there are, of course, many factors which contribute towards the success of a school, and size is only one of them. And whatever consensus of opinion is reached on the size factor, it is obvious that the opponents of comprehensive education will still find something to complain about, even if it means drastically shifting their ground. As Caroline Benn has argued in a recently-published article in *New Society*, 'the next ten years will probably

see the size of schools stabilising because there isn't much money around to extend existing schools or build many new ones. In all probability, the anti-comprehensive lobby will replace complaints about bigness with the argument that schools are far "too small" to be properly comprehensive—that is, to offer the full facilities'.⁵ In other words, tails I win, heads you lose!

So let us forget about our critics—they will never be appeased. What matters is that in conducting the debate among ourselves, we do not allow sincerely-held differences of opinion to impede the process of consolidating and extending the comprehensive reform in this country.

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The Community School: how large a role?

Peter Brown

Peter Brown has worked in comprehensive schools since 1962. As Head of Walworth School he became involved in problems of social action in an urban community under the stress of 'redevelopment' and wrote on house systems in comprehensives in *Forum* vol 12 no 3. In 1971 he succeeded John Sharp, the founder-Head of Wyndham School, Egremont. Opened in 1964 it became one of the main exemplars of the large community school.

Buildings have dominated the evolution of the community school. When Henry Morris was setting up the Cambridgeshire village colleges, he endeavoured to convey his aims and ideals through the imagery of the architect. An integrated community in handsome and harmonious interdependence was embodied in the design of the buildings. Of particular significance: the schools contained in these colleges for the community were not so large or so obtrusive a part of the whole as to enforce a dominion of the pedagogue or of the school caretaker. But what of our latter-day comprehensives, for anything up to 2,000 school pupils, then further enlarged to provide for community use? These are the conglomerates that earned the title of 'Multi-purpose hybrid monster' in a recent article.¹ The term 'multi-purpose' is, however, rarely justified for these institutions. For all to behold there is an enormous school, with appendages—a modified monolith. 'The school was designed essentially to look like a school', was a verdict on a much-studied community school.

The traditions within which school buildings have evolved places them within a class including monasteries, mansions and prisons: institutions designed to keep separate and safe the dedicated, or the privileged, or the vicious. All or any of these attributes may of course be ascribed to school pupils, according to fancy. I see three main and closely-related factors which make it very difficult for such forms to evolve further into truly multifarious usage.

Dictatorship of edifice

The first is a principle of conservation of buildings (alternatively referred to as 'school places'). Most buildings are themselves embarrassingly long-lived. The refreshing transatlantic candour in error which takes the form of dynamiting gargantuan disasters—housing blocks, hospitals (have any schools been blown up?)—has not yet caught on here. School arsonists occasion-

ally find the right target, but some of our worst buildings are forbiddingly fireproof. Even at times and in places where new buildings have been installed, they usually have to accommodate themselves to an existing establishment of usage and expectation. And where the new educational building comes as part of a new community, a defective ideology for the community as a whole prevents the new installation from moving far from the old patterns.

Perpetual congestion

The dominion of student places is the second of my three factors inhibiting movement towards multi-purpose functioning. Quotas of places predetermine not only the quantity of building, but the curriculum and administration as well, by imposing a condition of congestion. This condition is particularly likely to occur in new buildings serving new communities; for it is only after a decade or so that communities may age and diminish, leaving their schools intact and increasingly spacious. So it is often the new establishment that is hamstrung for lack of reserve space. In an open-plan school with its available spaces taken up, it is very difficult to provide and operate important stimulus areas such as for science and mathematics, or even for secluded reading, so that children may use them selectively. Instead, the same rule goes for such a school as for the family all in one bed: 'When Nellie turns, we all turn.' Similarly, with senior schools whose teaching areas double, triple and quadruple as tutor bases, social areas and dining spaces.

The preoccupation with schools as containers to be kept as full as possible has enormous significance, not only for formal education but for community activity also. The term 'activity' is critical. If we are seeking the prerequisites for human activity that is purposeful and relatively self-directed, then we should do well to examine models deriving from holidays. Free space/

time is clearly of great importance. Where the holiday-maker is confronted with regimented space/time, there is trouble. We could think of the holiday b and b that turns the 'guests' out at 10 am; or offers the TV lounge in return for passive good behaviour. Such institutions are apt to be destructive of the recreative purposes they allegedly serve. The most satisfactory holiday models, it seems to me, have little or nothing to do with buildings (which tends to enforce my general thesis). Children and teachers on an outing together usually conspire with a marvellous tact to determine the amount of freedom their outing requires, without sacrificing either its objectives or their security. People are highly adaptive once they have found common ground together; institutions dominated by buildings are not. Indeed, buildings can estrange: a very serious matter for those who see community schools or colleges as bonding agents. Be this as it may, my view is that if buildings are planned to be fully occupied with groups who are to move about inside them, you end up with (or rather, never get away from) a régime that is constrained, exclusivist and conservative, and with clients of whom those with a statutory entrée are kept as passive as possible, and the others relegated to a 'safe', segregated range of usage. The safeguarding of possessions and possessors remains the major preoccupation.

Caretaker mentality

Thus I come to my third major constraint against community development: the custodial function of those 'in charge'. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the caretaker-mentality pervades the mental as well as physical fabric of our education service. School authorities may blame the LEA officers, governors or managers, ceremonial visitors, rates-pinching committee-men, or perverse local pride. There are whipping-boys aplenty. Still, we Heads who reckon to be guiding human institutions rather than preserving bricks and steel and glass are much at fault too. We allow ourselves to be saddled with a custodial role that goes beyond the safekeeping of buildings to the care and protection of our young people—and allow this role to predominate, in law and in public expectation. Such is the schoolteacher's 'duty of care': bodies before minds and spirits, and edifices before education. The parable of the buried talent is enacted within every custodial institution.

It seems to me that we have to devise strategies for

organised education, culture and recreation that depend much less on costly, congested plant. It is said that typically a firm may spend 25% of its capital outlay on the factory building, 75% on equipping it. A large comprehensive school is likely to require 80% of capital for its building alone. So we need to settle for simpler, cheaper buildings, and use them less intensively (though by all means continuously). We could then make use of other locales, including the home, as affording valid milieu for pursuits we wish to sponsor. Years ago the ailing Youth Service was adjured by the Albemarle Report to give up its obsession with protecting buildings, and instead go seek out young people. This message still applies over the general range of the educational service to the community, including school-age pupils.

Ideology of compromise

I should like now to pick up the topic of an ideology for the community centre. Such centres are often found in new estates or in redevelopment areas. But in such areas it is much easier to prescribe unilaterally what should be the character of centre-community interaction than to find a dialogue of prescription in being. When the Community Activities Organiser of Lawrence Weston School, Bristol took up his appointment,

six thousand questionnaires were sent out asking people on the estate what needs they thought the school might provide for. Only three replies were received!²

In my experience, the character of usage of school-based community centres tends to be settled as an equilibrium between on the one hand the professional Head's preoccupations and tolerances and on the other hand the power and adroitness of idiosyncratic groups within the community. On neither side can we observe any attempt to fulfil a general programme of community development (whatever that may mean). The matter can be put to the test by looking at a general formulation, and then checking our practitioners against it. This is by Professor William Taylor:

... society's continuous need to reconcile on the one hand opportunities for privacy, autonomy, self-development and personal achievement with, on the other, communitarian (rather than collectivist) values, social welfare, equity, the avoidance of unjustified forms of discrimination and help for the unfortunate.³

The earlier parts of my article make it evident that I see the main preoccupations of the professional Head as being with buildings and with the administration necessary to cope with the constrained gyrations of the school-age pupils in those buildings. There is not much chance that an ideological model such as Taylor's will obtrude itself far into his strategies. The same is likely to be true of the user groups who voluntarily exploit the centre. They will be adult rather than juvenile, probably dominated by people between their thirties and fifties, relatively the better educated, articulate, and well versed in bureaucratic procedures. They are such as derive pleasure and prestige from debating, from canvassing, from committee-work, and even from membership of passive talked-at bodies. They are more powerfully actuated by group self-interest than 'avoidance of unjustified forms of discrimination and help for the unfortunate'. They are also apt to use their own community-spirited service as hostage against intrusive groups or ideas. In short, active community groups tend to be ideologically conservative and exclusive,⁴ whereas the institutional centres specifically directed to community action are (at least potentially) liberal and innovative. For example, the stated aims of the Sidney Stringer Comprehensive School and Community College, Coventry, include 'to help residents to improve the quality of life in this area working alongside them and the other professional and political agencies'.

New strategies

It will be clear that any meliorative ideology such as we have been considering is likely to disturb the equilibrium between professional Head and overt community groups. Readers will be well aware that the whole balancing-act is in reality far more complex than I have represented, with teacher-groups, social workers, various pillars of society, parent-bodies and others all to be held in equipoise. Therefore if an ideology for community expression and development, and appropriate strategies for this, are to emerge, then the large school can only be instrumental if it is modified. The school buildings must be eased of young pupils by perhaps one-third of the complement. A larger part of their formal education will be sought outside the school precincts, in other institutions, including the home, public buildings, offices and factories. Once students are seen as a working part of the community, not as

persons withdrawn from it, then the school itself may be seen as a community institution.

Still, the hegemony of the monster, the monolith, remains disturbing. Why must the community depend upon an enormous boss (in either sense) for its centre? The answer is, it mustn't and it doesn't. The natural reference points for group identity and group purposes are probably nearer at hand and more familiar: the local hall, junior school, church, pub. Indeed, it may be more to the purpose to identify the nodal person than the convenient place. And that person may not need to be an imported professional 'Community Warden'. The best communicator, mediator and promoter may simply be someone well regarded living in the village or district or block of flats. On the other hand, the result of going exclusively for grassroots alliances and 'direct action' may be to grow no grass, as the history of some Community Development Projects has shown. Growth-promoting resources as well as the machinery for collective action are stored in public organisations; and the community can't afford to be without these. Furthermore, even if the complacent inertia of the local council merits a crusade, it doesn't follow that disgruntled or deprived people want to be crusaders. The man who wants a zebra crossing and the woman who wants a house and the old couple who are just fed up and lonely are unlikely to sustain solidarity for any length of time, however earnestly they be brought to it. For the beginning and end of community affairs is the recognition of differences, just as the richness of a community lies in its variousness. 'Ce sont des différences qui rapprochent,' remarked Valéry of the greater community of Europe.

Potential interaction

The neighbourhood school, if it attends to the business, has enormous potential for benefiting its community, quite apart from the gift of its physical resources. It has unrivalled access to knowledge of people and places; it has a ready-made network through children's families for informal communication, and through its own position in the establishment for formal contacts. It can inform, it can guide, it can support, it can enable. Within its own precincts, it will be a frequent meeting-place for no more than an arbitrary section of the community, a rare one for truly large numbers. Nor should it pretend otherwise. But if school

Comprehensive Schools in Sweden

Jane Thompson

Jane Thompson contributed to *Forum* vol 13 no 3 when she taught at the David Lister School in Hull. Now a Lecturer in Education at Coventry College of Education, she visited Swedish comprehensive schools earlier this year.

It is strange to find Swedish teachers who feel they have something to learn from us. Disappointing when that 'something' so often turns out to be our procrastination over comprehensive reorganisation.

In a few years in Sweden, the movement towards comprehensive education has been deliberate and rapid.

After a short period of experimentation in the 50s, Sweden's first School Act was passed in 1962 and a fully comprehensive system of basic education was established. It was to be compulsory between the ages of 7 and 16 in nine-year comprehensive schools (*grundskola*), divided into three, three-year levels, junior, middle and senior. From the beginning mixed-ability groupings in years 1 to 8 was the norm with division into different 'lines' (courses of study) only taking place in year 9, as a preparation for higher secondary education.

In the early 60s only 30% of pupils stayed on at school after 16 in one of three types of school—gymnasium, professional schools or vocational schools—each of which was concerned with a different type of education. The late 60s saw the merging of the gymnasium and some of the vocational schools and by

1971-72 legislation was passed to provide for a complete integration of secondary education into a single, multi-purpose gymnasium, offering more than 20 different courses of study for 2, 3 and 4 years. The aim was to remove what were felt to be artificial divisions between academic and practical education and the connotations of superiority and inferiority that went with them. Only if different subjects and skills were shown to be of equal status and worth could pupils genuinely choose according to interest, aptitude and need. A by-product of this development was the abolition of streaming in grade 9 of the *grundskola* and an open access policy in recruitment to the gymnasium. Today, 90% of the 16+ age group have chosen to remain in full-time education—revolutionary by our standards.

Other facets of the Swedish system in operation without any visible signs of chaos are practices still passionately defended and attacked by opposing camps in Britain.

There is no uniform and no corporal punishment. There are no examinations even as qualifications for university. Marks which monitor pupils' progress are currently under review. Their abolition has been shelved for the moment but the number of occasions on which marking takes place, especially in the compulsory school, has been drastically reduced to two or three times a year.

Class sizes above 25 in junior schools and 30 in middle and senior schools are forbidden, and in practice are often much smaller.

Sexual discrimination in schools is forbidden. All junior and middle school pupils receive handicraft lessons in the same groups, and for senior pupils domestic science and child care also become compulsory subjects for both boys and girls. The type of sexist picture and textual content currently under attack in British school-books is already forbidden in Sweden.

School meals, medical and dental services are free. Transport to and from school is free. For children who live in scattered country areas—Sweden has a population of eight million or so in an area twice the size of Britain—dormitory accommodation in town during the week is provided free.

There are no permanent remedial departments.

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comes to mean the total educational resources of the community, and community comes to mean wherever there are purposeful gatherings of local people, including within school precincts, then new dimensions can be explored.

References and Notes

1. *Education*, 14 February 1975. From a seven-part series, beginning 7 February, on 'the community concept and its application in different authorities'.
2. Reported in 'Community School', *Trends in Education*, April 1967, p. 31.
3. Cantor Lecture on 'Teacher Training', Royal Society of Arts, reprinted in *Journal*, June 1975, p. 415.
4. To make clear the scope of the observation, I may say that I have seen this tendency strongly marked in a teenage group of low socio-economic status who were entrusted with a premises in Walworth to develop as a youth club.

Children are withdrawn to 'Klinics' for special help in small groups or visited by specialist teachers in their normal classes. The addition of special toilets and lifts, ramps, wheelchair facilities, rest rooms, hearing and visual aids all mean that handicapped children can be comfortably accommodated too.

The Swedish authorities seem particularly conscious of the physical environment and its effect on behaviour and attitudes. The light airy classrooms, each equipped with its own hardware and resources, show little signs of damage or abuse; and for teachers, reference centres, a resource area for each department with desk and storage space for every teacher to work, dining rooms, conference rooms and staff rooms fitted out with the kind of well-designed furniture and fittings most of us see only in colour-supplement homes, are typical.

A centralized system

Perhaps the most significant feature of the Swedish education system is that it is a government concern. This can and does have drawbacks. But so long as education is seen as a crucial vehicle for social engineering—and its significance in helping to provide a 'good society' in social-democratic terms has been a major conviction of Swedish government since the war—then like the social services it is treated as a financial priority, and receives money in preference to most other competitors.

The goals, scope and economic boundaries of the schools are decided by the government and parliament and administered by the National Board of Education. Management at a local level is the responsibility of local authorities, but the framework within which schools, and even subjects, should operate is decided centrally. This means in practice that all schools follow the same curriculum at the same time, using more or less the same text-books and resources. Even the guidelines as to content and methods of instruction comes from the National Board of Education, though it is claimed that teachers can interpret and reinforce them in individual and varied ways.

But government concern also means government control. In 1950 the government accepted in principle the idea of a nine-year school and stimulated a period of experimentation. It made clear that 'the internal work of the school should be subject to continuous change and adjustment' and this principle of 'con-

tinuous educational reform' emanating from the centre and imposed upon all schools, at the same time and in the same way, has been the pattern of comprehensive development in Sweden over the last 25 years.

In the 60s pupils were allowed a good deal of choice in the subjects they studied but it was felt that this often led to 'selective practices' with minority options creating an inefficient use of resources. As a result the principle of 'continuous educational reform' was used to make modifications.

A common curriculum

The present curriculum structure for compulsory schools **Lgr 69** which came into force 1970-71 simplified school organisation, removed many of the options and made more subjects compulsory. English, for example, became compulsory from year 3 (9 years old) and throughout the senior level. It was now held that the individual development of children could best be met by individualised learning and improved teaching techniques within a common compulsory framework. The only concession to non-mixed-ability teaching was at the senior level in English, French, German and maths, when pupils could choose between a general (easier) course and an advanced course. Teachers were officially 'not allowed' to advise pupils which course to take.

At the senior level the common curriculum still held though each pupil could then choose one of four optional subjects—languages (French or German), economics, technology or art. And each must do two hours of 'freely selected work' of general interest and not subject to assessment.

Lgr 69 also provided for limited integration of subjects, roughly corresponding to our social studies, and the possibility of double lessons in which to teach them. So far as content was concerned, teachers of Swedish were told to devote more time to drama, film and television; teachers of maths to relate their subjects more to the pupils' own experiences and to base their lessons on more concrete material. For all teachers increased time was to be given to questions of environment, sexual and other relationships, sex roles, international problems, road traffic, alcoholism, drugs and tobacco. Pupils were to be more involved in democratic decision-making in the school through student councils (compulsory in the gymnasium and common in the *grundskola*) and joint committees with teachers, local officials, administrators and parents.

Post-16 options

The new structure for the gymnasium **Lgy 70** came into force in 1971-72. This provided for multi-purpose schools which could offer an impressive variety of academic and vocational courses. Though different in orientation, all the courses in the gymnasium were considered to be of equal worth. The aim was to make secondary education available to all Swedish youngsters and the satisfactory completion of any of these courses was to be regarded as sufficient qualification for entry to higher education.

Now all this sounds fine—to an extent. The frameworks of the schools are simple and uniform throughout Sweden. Pupils transferring schools in mid-course can take up where they left off and all children, regardless of environment, background and ability can be exposed to the same information and opportunities in the compulsory school. And the increase in the number of pupils moving to the gymnasium is some indication of the extent to which education in Sweden has stopped being a servant of social segregation in quite the way it is in Britain.

Causes for concern

In practice, though, I was disappointed by much of the teaching I saw in Swedish schools.

I would have expected that more than ten years of mixed-ability teaching would have stimulated impressive individualised learning schemes tailored to the individual needs and interests of the pupils, more resource-based learning, children involved in a variety of activities, making use of different media and equipment, flexible groupings, enquiry-based learning, etc, etc. Instead I found teachers who complained that they were 'told' to teach mixed-ability groups but given no help in how to do it.

I saw far too many class lessons using a single textbook. Government concern to cut out profiteering in school publishing is commendable but to replace a variety of complementary books by a choice of one or two standard-works seems to militate against individualised learning. Extra resources like films, tapes and records are available in municipal teachers centres but with every 14-15-year-old in Sweden 'doing the

Romans' at exactly the same time, most teachers have long grown tired of trying to beat the rest to communal resources.

Custodial practices

Pastoral concern for the pupils also seemed less well-developed than I'd expected. Each school had its nurse, doctor, welfare officer and visiting psychologist but I was more concerned about the day-to-day relationships between staff and pupils. A gymnasium student complained that the teachers always seemed so busy. Certainly, in an attempt to provide good working conditions for the teachers, the government has taken pains to ensure their 'off duty' privacy. Free lessons are blocked together as far as possible and when not teaching they go home. The staffroom is sacrosanct and lunch is taken separately from the pupils in a special dining-room. Junior and middle school children have the same teachers for most of their lessons but in the senior part of the *grundskola* and in the gymnasium there are few opportunities for informal contacts with teachers. All doors in the schools are locked. The change of lesson bell allows five minutes for classrooms to be locked and unlocked. Even libraries and relaxation areas are locked. In the morning, before school, children wait in the cloakrooms and corridors for the first lesson to begin. Even gymnasium students, a significant number of them adults who have returned to school, are obliged to wait on teachers with keys in this way.

Teachers' doubts

In the privacy of their staffrooms teachers confess anxieties about their teaching. 'Some of the children don't want to learn.' 'They truant from school or arrive drunk in the morning.' 'Teaching in Stockholm is impossible.' As one who searched almost in vain for the seamy side of Swedish society, I found their neurotic obsession with problems of drunkenness, vandalism and aggression laughable in comparison to the realities of most cities in Britain. But anti-social behaviour in a society committed to peace, co-operation and material well-being is a constant fear, and preventive action in terms of social and economic policy is clearly a government preoccupation.

In terms of schools, a number of experiments to increase extra-curricular activities before, during and after school have been tried and are on the point of being extended to all schools. This seems to be official recognition of the need to foster better pupil-teacher relationships and to develop the community context of the school. But the reaction among teachers I spoke to was one of cautious scepticism.

Equality by bureaucracy

Few teachers would actually deny the enlightenment of the National Board in educational terms. The Board's declared aims to provide education which is child-centred, democratic and intent on increasing the quality of life would appeal to most Swedes, but in creating equality of opportunity by a highly centralised, highly bureaucratic machinery from above, something in the guts of grassroots impetus for change has been lost.

The way ahead

If an increasingly instrumental attitude to teaching and indeed learning is to be avoided it seems important within the framework of common schooling to 'personalise' the system more. Teachers should have more opportunity to exercise initiative and responsibility in their own teaching and in relation to colleagues. This means a de-centralisation of power, participatory democracy rather than representative democracy.

Children too, if the reports on truancy and alienation are even half true, may well be reacting to the orthodoxy of egalitarianism in significant numbers. A school system which effectively denies individual differences in temperament, attitudes, skills, interests and needs in the name of equal opportunity misses the point as stubbornly as our élitists who, given half a chance, would delight in separating children into different streams and schools, to institutionalise their differences.

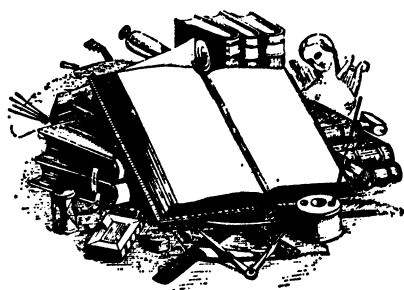
Pupils in school, in any class, have different qualities, different abilities, different needs. Some require more help than others to get by. These differences need to be recognised in the teaching-learning experience, in the

quality of pupil-teacher relationships, in the variety of work they are required to do.

And this is now the main task of educators in Sweden: to provide genuine child-centred individualised learning experiences, so persuasive that they overrun the arbitrary distinctions between subjects, the class lessons, the standard texts, the no-man's-time of lesson changes, the locked doors. Certainly Swedish teachers are in a good position to do this. The attention of the National Board is being turned to pre-school provision and adult education which should leave schools free from government paternalism for a time. Buildings and resources are good, class sizes manageable, the most prosperous standard of living in the world and enlightened social-welfare benefits which have virtually eliminated poverty and its implications for children in schools, 25 years of commitment to comprehensive education, in full operation now for 13 years: all of these mean that new developments in teaching-learning techniques could be tried from a position of strength. None of the frustration of British reformers trying to run races with horses nobbled from the start. Let's hope that the principle of 'continuous educational reform' will now be taken up by the teachers to remove this last great anomaly.



Reviews



Authority and Organization in the Secondary School, by Elizabeth Richardson. Schools Council Research Studies, Macmillan (1975), pp 146, £2.25.

Here we have the eagerly awaited second report based on Miss Richardson's Schools Council project (1968-71), 'Change and Innovation in an Expanding Comprehensive School'. For three and a half years the author worked with the headmaster and staff of Nailsea School in Somerset, examining the processes of change in which the school was then engaged. Her first published report, **The Teacher, the School and the Task of Management** (1973) was a detailed case study of management structures and role relationships in the staff during that period of change. The shorter volume now published sets the original research project in a more general perspective and considers the implications for other similarly developing schools. The author acknowledges that her general approach has been profoundly influenced by her earlier experience of working with the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, and this influence is evident throughout, giving the whole book a greater depth than a number of others which deal with similar topics.

In every chapter we find the author probing beneath conventional assumptions and asking awkward but

fundamental questions. For example, what do people actually mean when they ask, plausibly enough, whether some new course or other is being 'successful'? We have heard about the 'generation gap', but is such a gap not found even more critically between younger and older teachers on the same staff? Whence the fantasy that all management of large institutions has to be rather inhuman? Or that other fantasy, that educators work in a society in which sexual feelings must be ignored?

Miss Richardson makes a strong point of the apparent split, in so many comprehensive schools, between 'subject-centred', demanding, challenging, managing functions on the one side, and 'pupil-centred', caring, supportive, enabling functions on the other; and she tends to identify these with the masculine and the feminine aspects of authority respectively. Of course a balance has to be struck, and can be, all the more effectively, if every head and every teacher recognises these contrasted yet complementary aspects of his own personality, and accepts that at different times one or the other will necessarily come to the fore.

In fact the main theme of the book is just such an acceptance of complexity and even ambiguity, and an avoidance of stereotyping and over-simplification. Teachers must help pupils to recognise the ambivalence within themselves. 'We all seek dependable leaders who can somehow work with our rebelliousness rather than merely crush us (or allow us to crush them) when we rebel—leaders who do not treat us simply as rebels, but who try to understand us and relate to us as persons who will inevitably at times feel rebellious towards them, and at other times feel over-dependent upon them, making demands on them that they cannot satisfy. We sought this kind of dependability from our parents when we were little children; and we continue to seek it all our lives from people who have authority over us'.

And then again: 'To deny complexity is to deny richness; to deny conflict is to refuse the possibility of new growth'.

In the chapter 'The school and the community' the author gives a daunting account of the manifold pressures making urgent and sometimes contradictory demands on the head of a large comprehensive school, who must walk a perilous tightrope between the opposite extremes of virtual dictatorship and virtual abdication, while accepting that he is almost bound to be accused of one or the other, or both! Training for headship is needed, and must include a study of deep-seated feelings which conventional management ignores at the cost of finding its objectives thwarted by unconscious processes. For example: 'Anger and distrust, like dependency and blind faith, take up the apparently lost and forgotten feelings of childhood even when they are being experienced and expressed by adults'. The head must understand these things and increasingly enable his staff to understand them too.

This is no simple matter. Teachers, including heads, are human, and to human beings status and security are important: we like things to be as we perceive them, we like to 'know where we stand'. But in truth we cannot really 'know where we stand'—certainly not as clearly or as permanently as we like to imagine—and this all too human craving for an illusory security can seriously inhibit growth, learning, initiative—and sheer joy. Education is not anti-joy, though from the grim attitudes of some teachers and some pupils it might well seem to be. I have been a headmaster myself for longer than I have had any other job; and I would have understood much more clearly, in the early days, the nature of the undertaking I was engaged upon, had this wise and stimulating report been available fifteen years ago.

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Sharing experiences

The School as a Centre of Enquiry: A volume of Essays and Papers from Banbury School. Pubansco, Banbury School, Banbury, Oxon. 70p.

This is a thoroughly worthwhile collection of eight essays and papers 'which have emanated from one school in one year'. Whilst not unique it is certainly a rare book and offers a chance to share in 'examples of school-based research'.

The longest contribution, 'Mixed-Ability or Streaming?' by David Newbold, is essentially 'a short survey of the design of the first Phase of enquiry, and its place in education research'. It is difficult not to be slightly disappointed that only hints can be given of the trends in the results of research so far, but it certainly makes one eager for the final conclusions to come in two or three years time. 'The study has shown that in the 11-13 age range, the relative effects of the different systems of ability grouping on academic progress are small in comparison with other factors'. 'Friendship patterns have been examined and have shown that in the heterogeneous system they are less closely identified with social class and academic factors'. The study has shown that 'less able children are more content with their situation in the heterogeneous grouping at Banbury'.

Practising teachers will welcome the practical comments made in some of the remaining contributions. A detailed job specification and description of responsibility of the professional tutor is found in appendices of 'The Professional Tutor' by George Katerinas. The categories of a 'questionnaire which would identify "disadvantaged" children' and the recommendations of the working party

found in Val Norman's contribution with be of particular interest to those concerned over 'the extent and nature of the problems of children who might be considered "disadvantaged" and an appraisal of the resources of helping them'. Further useful ideas and material relating to 'the extra year', links with a Technical College and work experience are found in three contributions.

Staffrooms should find this a useful book both in provoking lines of enquiry and stimulating discussion.

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A mixed bag

Case Studies in Mixed Ability Teaching, edited by A V Kelly. Harper and Row (1975), pp 207, cloth £4.85, paper £2.25.

This collection of case studies is intended to make the experience of teachers who are familiar with the problems of mixed ability teaching available to those who may be preparing to work with mixed ability groups.

The introductory chapter, written by

A V Kelly, is concerned with the key issues of mixed ability organisation and practice. This is followed by a section which is composed of five case studies written by headteachers about their schools. The final section brings together six case studies under the title of 'The Teachers and the Subjects'. The sequence is logical; it suggests that the headteachers might take up the key issues raised by the editor and relate them to their own experience in their own particular circumstances. Unfortunately there is not the direct relationship between the leading chapter and the case studies which might be expected. It would have been interesting to see how the headteachers responded to the problems and possibilities of the key issues. If the editor had provided his workmanlike summary of the issues as part of a guiding brief then the accounts which follow might have been less diffuse. As it is, the first case study of Northcliffe Community High School embraces a variety of themes in a style which spans the headteacher's report on Speech Day and the chat which repetitiously refers to pupils as kids.

At Northcliffe progress to mixed ability teaching was via broad banding. Surprisingly the headmaster still identifies 'sixteen-year-olds of the ROSLA group'. Most of the case study is devoted to block timetabling, a new humanities curriculum, team teaching and new methods of examination assessment for the GCE and CSE. The writer 'takes for granted that the direct connection between mixed ability groups and the changes we have made in the curriculum is apparent and logical'. There are so many innovations at Northcliffe that the tentative unstreamer might not be able to see the mixed ability wood for the curriculum trees.

The study by the Head of Fairlop School is written with more precision and the relation between an interdisciplinary approach and unstreaming is made much more explicit. Dissatisfaction with the fragmented subject curriculum appears

to have been the primer for change: unstreaming made possible the required flexible organisation for the dominant curriculum change.

Miss Hoyle, writing about Vauxhall Manor, deals with both problems and possibilities. Her long experience allows her to relate ideas and objectives to classroom situations. She has many valuable comments about in-service training and the demands on teachers, about the need for resources and remedial provision. The practical innovator will find the practical questions posed and will surely be encouraged by Miss Hoyle's modest and sensible suggestions of partial solutions. The study of mixed ability organisation at the Sir Leo Schultz reveals the pragmatic approach of A M Hunt. There is much to value in the closely directed study of unstreaming in his own developing school which lays particular stress on the quality of human relationships which play a great part in the success of any unstreamed system.

The final study by a headteacher is by Tom Gannon and deals with Milefield Middle School. Mixed ability teaching is only one of his concerns but he blends philosophy and practice in elegant prose which makes for pleasurable reading. He is aware of the problems of subject integration which may add to the problems of mixed ability teaching and so redresses the impression that the two are inevitably paired which earlier contributors might suggest. He has reservations about unstreamed mathematics and French yet clearly believes that teaching and learning via mixed ability groups is the logical approach to adopt. Innovators still troubled by doubts might take comfort from his general support for unstreaming precisely because he is frank about his fears.

The final section of the book contains the studies on 'Teachers and Subjects'. The Study on Art and Graft in the Middle School refers to Milefield. It is informative and wide

ranging but not closely related to the key issues of Kelly's opening chapter. The study of Humanities at Northcliffe provides more detail on the integrated studies outlined by the headteacher.

The 'flexibility of syllabus, utilisation of different disciplines and the growth of the philosophy of the school', it is claimed, gives a head start in catering for mixed ability groups. However, the essential practical details of mixed ability teaching are inadequately covered. English at Northcliffe has more positive suggestions to make about providing for the basic demand of literacy. The writer deals with problems of remedial children, assessment, examination courses and the role of drama though references to the tailor-made ROSLA courses starting at fourteen strike an odd note in a school presented with a mixed ability image.

The Social Studies case study of Fairlop School provides the outline of a course, tells us rather more about the teacher and includes a concluding paragraph which might be charitably described as confused. Fortunately the studies by Prettyman and Haslam on Mathematics and Science which follow the Sociology are specific, detailed and closely directed to the problems of unstreamed teaching. They provide the modest, self-questioning guide which teachers faced with change will find most useful. The final study deals with French, the traditional bogey of all unstreamers. There is not much about classroom techniques but R S Walmsley's account of the gains and losses, as he sees them, may persuade some of the linguist brethren to try unstreaming in the first year. Even that will be a gain.

This collection of case studies has a contribution to make to the discussion of unstreamed teaching. However, its uneven quality may reduce its effectiveness in comparison with other publications on this theme which are now appearing.

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Peopled classrooms

Interpersonal Relations and Education, by D H Hargreaves. Routledge & Kegan Paul (1975). Revised Student Edition, pp 260, £1.95.

This is a shortened and considerably re-written version of the original 1975 edition. Part I is a lucid exposition of symbolic interactionist theories in social psychology. Thus Hargreaves explains development of the self 'from the social experience of interacting with others', examines how people perceive each other, take on a variety of contextual roles, interact and communicate; and finally analyses many features of groups, group culture and leadership. Throughout this theoretical section there are references to teachers and school situations, with more than a hint at the everyday relevance of the matter to the classroom.

As Hargreaves states in his Preface: 'The heart of the education process is in the classroom'. Part II is accordingly devoted to applying theory to the classroom situation, but without stretching points to make exaggerated claims. In discussing three classroom problems as examples, he admits when 'the diagnosis is easy and the cure is difficult' and the teacher must 'face the fact that no short-term solution is to be found'.

The focus is on teacher-pupil relations and empathetic understanding of pupils' perceptions of school situations. The soundly realistic chapter on discipline, read in the context of the book as a whole, should prove helpful to student and probationary teacher.

All who are concerned with guiding young teachers will find much that is pertinent in this book.

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A common curriculum

Class, Culture and the Curriculum, by Denis Lawton, Routledge & Kegan Paul (1975), pp 124, cloth £3.00, paperback £1.25.

From the starting point that curriculum theory and practice require an inclusive anthropological definition of 'culture' Denis Lawton in **Class, Culture and Curriculum** mounts a formidable attack on relativism. This major influence in education has four mutually supporting sides to it. One is the ahistoric notion that a culture (or sub-culture) originates, generates and regenerates itself and that therefore a particular, relevant curriculum is required for its proper 'functioning'. Class society is then seen as being 'multi-cultural' and a range of different curricula for different social strata is theoretically justified. Against this a purely sociological argument could have been used—such as Dahrendorf's proof (after Weber) that it is utopian. But there is no doubt in my mind that Lawton's involvement of E P Thompson and R Williams is more effective and therefore preferable.

Another element is that one culture cannot be evaluated against another because each is valid in its own right and for its own time. In the 1930s and '40s it was enough to ask how to apply this theory to the problems posed by the culture of Naziism to expose the inadequacy of relativism. Lawton reminds us that it was Morris Ginsburg who dealt with this issue precisely in that way and who showed us, implicitly, that the expression 'social change' is not as value-free as it sounds. We are encouraged then to understand that design in educational policy or in curriculum can be progressive or reactionary. It would be no bad follow-up to revive study of Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsburg's

Institutions of the Simpler Peoples for techniques of discovering criteria of progress from socio-historical evidence.

Lawton's attack on the third strand of relativism, that sub-cultures in a given society exist as parallel systems, is not so strong. To a degree this is because he does not adhere rigorously enough to his chosen meaning of 'culture'. What requires emphasis is that each sub-culture is defined by every other: the slave-owner predicates the slave. It is not simply a matter of 'owners of capital (the bourgeoisie) . . . and non-owners (proletariat)'. Capital is a social process in which wealth is transformed—via wages—by capitalists into labouring activity on the part of proletarians to make and secure more wealth. This view establishes the complementarity and antagonism of the two social classes, breaks working-class-consciousness from the particularistic setting imposed by relativism and shows the culture of poverty to be a culture of exploitation.

Thus too Lawton would have been able to identify 'the specific ways in which proletarian culture is to be regarded as superior'. The superiority lies in the historic role of the working class to abolish both bourgeois and proletarian: to inaugurate the classless society. Specifically that direction inheres in (i) its institutions of class struggle and power. (ii) its internationalism. (iii) its anti-colonialism. (iv) its condemnation of division between mental and physical labour. The proletariat long ago took over the practical-political responsibility for the preservation and advance of human achievement. If, then, culture is to have the inclusive significance which Lawton initially insists upon, the problem is to understand the ways in which the proletariat (in its historically evolved national formations) can carry this responsibility forward to the establishment of *socialist societies* and their concomitant cultures.

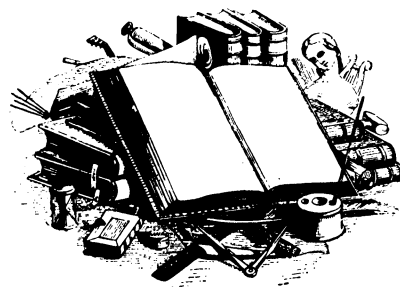
Such an orientation would have

added power to what is already a very strong case for the common curriculum derived from the common culture. For Lawton theoretically destroys relativism's fourth thesis that knowledge is 'nothing but a social construct'. The argument is that knowledge is not *only* a social construct—that it corresponds *also* to a natural (and social) reality.

A major fault is Lawton's imitation of M F D Young's treatment of Marx whose importance concerning knowledge and curriculum was proclaimed by Bernstein at the 1970 Durham BSA conference. Young and Lawton follow the fashion but neither shows first-hand familiarity with Marx's writings, as their bibliographies confirm. It is a great pity that Lawton—close to a Marxist treatment of his subject—should have to use Young's version of Marxism, including an unidentified quotation. Direct study of Marx, Engels and Lenin by sociologists of education is long overdue.

The concluding chapters consummate Lawton's theoretical analyses with an offering of guiding principles for common curriculum construction and with outlines of such curricula currently in practice. Taken as a whole the book is a welcome addition to the literature.

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