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The next Forum

This number will focus on success models of comprehensive schools. Charles Hannan writes on a Bristol comprehensive; Liz Thomson on one in Hertfordshire, while another concentrates on a Scottish rural school emerging from the 'omnibus' tradition. Each of these schools offer different aspects of 'good practice'. Our aim is to counter some of the ill-advised criticism of comprehensive education.

Continuing the current number's focus on teacher education, Pat Ashton contributes on the IT-INSET programme.

In addition Alan McKechnie writes on computer education, while Malcolm Skilbeck follows up our earlier curricular discussion with an article presenting his proposals for a non-divisive curriculum for the 14-18 age group — of particular concern in view of the MSC's latest initiative in this area. Brian Simon contributes a review article on the recent Scottish research publication **Reconstruction in Secondary Education.** If the inexplicably delayed HMI Middle School survey has been published in time, it will be the subject of another review article, by Lee Enright.

Prejudice rampant

By a series of insidious and separate moves in the first quarter of 1983, Sir Keith Joseph and his sycophantic advisers at Elizabeth House have been scheming to undermine schools' efforts to make education comprehensive beyond the age of 13. Indeed, he seems determined to change the face of our education system by reversing most of the trends that **Forum** has supported over the last two decades. For our first article Joan Simon's critique of his period in office provides the backcloth to his recent initiatives.

Probably the most immediate, if selectively local, damage will be perpetrated through the new Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI). Fourteen LEAs have now been identified by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), and approved by the Secretary of State for Employment, to launch pilot schemes for this project with 14-18 year olds that the Secretary of State initially announced. Such inter-departmental collusion for the sleight-of-hand takeover of part of the responsibility of one department by the other is surely unprecedented. At least the MSC's Youth Opportunities Programmes and its new Youth Training Scheme could be seen as some sort of provision for those over 16 whom the education service had hitherto neglected. The TVEI is designed to divide the 14-18 age group, hiving some off into distinctive secondary courses. Its full significance is examined in Maurice Holt's article.

The March White Paper, **Teaching Quality**, is a portentious step towards gaining central control over the content and structure of initial teacher training and the staffing of schools. The object is clearly to reinforce the traditional, academic subject-centred secondary school curriculum, as Nanette Whitbread argues in her article. Viewed on its own this White Paper might seem merely another shot in the populist attack on teacher training; but viewed in context it must be recognised as part of a larger strategy to deter schools from responding to the demands of comprehensive education in a democratic society and to restore exclusive, competitive academicism as their main focus.

Sir Keith Joseph has now removed LEAs' power to veto the transfer of 16 year-olds from maintained to independent schools under the Assisted Places Scheme. In his view, privatisation and the well-being of private sector sixth forms must be protected at the expense of the health of the public system over which he presides.

Taken together, the TVEI, the White Paper and the secured Assisted Places Scheme represent a return to the thinking characteristic of the Spens Committee 45 years ago. Three tactical points of leverage for undermining the comprehensive secondary structure have been seized upon.

Not content with intervening in initial teacher training, Sir Keith has taken steps to exert immediate control over what he perceives as priorities for in-service courses, through new earmarked INSET grants. This principle is markedly at variance with those inherent in the approaches to in-service work described in two articles by Stephen Rowland and Liz Thomson.

But this is intended as just the start in controlling the direction of LEAs' policies. At the end of March the Secretary of State declared his intention to introduce legislation in the next Parliament, after the general election, to secure control over about £35m of each year's rate support grant for redistribution as earmarked grants to selected LEAs which bid for them. Unlike the new specific INSET grants, no extra funds would be involved as the total would be found by re-allocating half a per cent from the collective LEA share, with those so favoured still finding 30 per cent for their approved projects. As the chairman of the Association of County Councils policy committee said, this 'would create a fundamental change in the partnership between local authorities and central government'.

The thrust of Sir Keith Joseph's exercise of power is determined by his desire to mould the education system in the cast of his prejudices while neglecting self-evident needs in the service of democracy. The Education Act 1981 came fully in force on April 1 this year. The 1978 Warnock Report's new concept of special educational needs accorded with the basic principle of comprehensive education in advocating integration rather than segregation and recognising that children with minor and transient learning problems also require special help. The legislation is to be cynically implemented without essential funds, in the context of financial contraction and against a background of evidence from HMI surveys that remedial provision in schools has already been decreasing. Only a third of LEAs intend moving towards integration and less than a tenth within two years. Sir Keith's response is to allocate one-third of his new earmarked INSET grant for sharing on the release of teachers for courses on special educational needs and all the various 16-19 developments in schools. Clearly, the MSC is to be encouraged to take care of most after 16, outside the academic sixth form.

Indeed, his desire to halt the evolution of more comprehensive sixth forms and his abdication to the MSC were compounded to produce bizarre confusion at the end of March. Impatient to seem to be doing something in respect of the 17+ Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education, Sir Keith suddenly announced interim endorsement of certain existing pre-vocational qualifications awarded by the City and Guilds, the Business and Technical Education Council and the Royal Society of Arts. Simultaneously, the MSC disallowed holders of these from acceptance on the YTS, just when employers are substituting YTS places for vacancies which such school leavers might look for. Ineptitude rather than conspiracy seems the likely explanation. The net effect, reinforced by financial disincentive, will nonetheless be to erode the trend towards a comprehensive new sixth or tertiary college.

Hitherto, progress towards making a reality of comprehensive principles has been possible even without official support. Now the threat of centralism, privatisation and archaic separatism demand that government policies be overturned to safeguard the fabric of the maintained education system for a democratic society.

Education, Morality and the Market

Redistribution according to Sir Keith

Joan Simon
Forum's occasional special reporter follows up her analysis of the New Training Initiative and Youth Training Scheme (vol 25 no 1) with a wide ranging critique of Sir Keith Joseph's reign in office.

'It is . . . widely accepted that it is a proper, indeed a major function of the state to shift income and savings from the richer to the poorer members of society . . . Redistribution is unwise. But it is also morally indefensible, misconceived in theory and repellent in practice.

'Archbishop Temple said that "the Christian conception of men as members in the family of God forbids the notion that freedom may be used for self-interest". This is quite simply wrong . . .

'There are few things, as Dr Johnson once observed, in which a man may be more innocently employed than in making money. And there are few things which are so natural to him as the desire to make money . . .

'There is no greater tyranny possible than denying to individuals the disposal of their own talents.'

Keith Joseph and J. Sumption: **Equality** (1979)

Relevant material on morals is sometimes hard to come by to improve morning assemblies or courses of general studies, so these texts, from a recent publication by the Secretary of State for Education and Science, may be welcome to schools. They could, even, figure usefully in examination papers. ' "To deny individuals the disposal of their own talents is the greatest possible tyranny" — discuss'. Only be careful not to raise the point on any course financed by the Manpower Services Commission or the grant may end as penalty for criticising government policy and unsettling the unemployed.

The slim volume from which the texts are drawn is not only framed to amend the theology of an archbishop of Canterbury but also as a response to R H Tawney whose title has been stolen. To grant the right of reply an extract from **Equality** (1931) is directly to the point — for so conservative is Sir Keith that he does no more than reiterate what was common form among the rich and successful half a century or more ago.

> When the question is raised whether some attempt to establish greater economic equality may not be desirable, there is a sound of what Bunyan called "doleful voices and rushings to and fro." They rear, and snort, and paw the air,and affirm with one accord that the suggestion is at once wicked and impracticable'.

Such is the case of this Secretary of State — a doleful man indeed — entrusted by a party leader well aware of his views and their likely effect on the welfare of other people's children, with the great Department of Education and Science.

In the circumstances active intervention to promote the publicly provided schools was hardly to be expected. Education 'suffers from a startling lack of leadership' the **Times Educational Supplement** complained on the last days of 1982.

> 'Sir Keith Joseph has not tried to give the lead which belongs to his office because he is determined to stand back and maintain a pained detachment, lest anybody should suppose him to be, in some small way, responsible for the shortcomings which he observes within the education system'.

Reports from the North of England conference — that important gathering marking a new year which has long provided ministers of education with a splendid platform for a programme — indicate the astonishment that supervened when this Secretary of State delivered last year's speech all over again — the more unfortunate since it dwelt on the need to dispose of 'irremediably ineffective' heads of institutions. A couple of weeks later his record in speaking up for the nation's schools was aptly acclaimed out of the mouths of babes, 2,800 of them aged 9 to 12, who were asked what job the man of this name filled. Only 1.7 per cent knew his office, a comment so devastating as to get Sir Keith into the news. So, in the same week, did a retrograde activity, the promotion of a plan to introduce vouchers for 'independent' schools intended in the long run, greatly to expand the private sector. Even the comics on the radio were gripped by this one. Sir Keith is looking for a source of finance for the private system, ran the bogus news bulletin — 'It's the state system!' Fade out.

> 'The English educational system will never be one worthy of a civilised society until the children of all classes in the nation go to the same schools'.

More specifically and up to the moment is the **TES** comment (12.11.82) when the scheme first resurfaced, for, of course, we have been here before.

> 'The commitment of the present ministers at the DES to the maintained system is now suspect'.

Down the years there have been some pretty bad presidents of the Board of Education, then ministers, then secretaries of state, unloved and unregretted when they went on their way. Never, I believe, has there been so blatantly uncivilised a policy earning so trenchant a comment from such a source. By comparison it is a relatively minor matter that the DES ministers have been proved, in so many ways, so hopelessly wrong, or inept in allowing particular policies through. Of late this has been particularly the case in relation to higher education, in the manner of cutting grants to universities so to the bone, for instance, that a U-turn had to be made with an offer of fresh funds — although this, of course, facilitated additional control in more than one way; or earlier, the raising of overseas student

fees to a level so adverse to the national interest that this step has also had to be reversed, by Foreign Office intervention.

New shifts are needed to keep up with educational development now that almost every related step is taken with profoundly political intent. It is not only a question of cutting back resources, and so opportunities, at every level from nursery to research institute — on the excuse of keeping within arbitrarily set 'targets for public spending' — which are no more than policies transmuted into and veiled by the monetary vocabulary. It is a case of managing, in the process, to tighten the central authority's hold on this sector of the machinery of state by deliberately setting aside the traditional form of educational administration. There was a time when the most important point to grasp was the pattern of diffused government, linking central and local authorities and bringing the teaching profession and other special interests into the picture. That all this has changed, has become steadily more apparent, but the educational world, in an apparently mesmerised state, remains at a disadvantage because unable fully to grasp what is happening with ruthless continuity.

Perhaps the moment of truth came for many with the superseding of the Schools Council. It has been the nearest thing to a national forum with representation not only from the traditional triumvirate — the DES, local authorities, teachers — but also parents, employers, unions, polytechnics, universities, FE, examination boards, churches, all of them contributing in one way or another. It may have been somewhat cumbersome, it could have been streamlined. In fact it is to be replaced, the DES ministers summarily announced, by two nominated committees, one to control the school curriculum, the other examinations, as if the two could sensibly be separated. There could hardly have been a more abrupt departure from accepted practice, nor one with more inherent dangers. As the Schools Council itself represented:

> 'The Secretary of State rejects the idea of partnership and, in place of a democratic system of representation, proposes to appoint his own nominees to both councils. To put responsibility for curriculum development and examinations in the hands of a small body nominated by one person, the Secretary of State, would mean giving future Secretaries of State huge powers to influence and control the country's schools'.

It is, of course, no more than is being done at the higher level at which the prime minister's extensive patronage obtains. Against all precedent offices are said to be filled — lately that of Governor of the Bank of England, Lord Chief Justice, the bishopric of London — regardless of expert advice in accordance with a proper response to the question 'Is he one of us?'.

To underline the departure from the traditional mode, it is worth glancing at a once standard text, dated 1957, written in the aftermath of the 1944 Act but before the creation of the DES. It is by W O Lester Smith, chief education officer of Manchester four years before becoming a professor at London University.

> 'This tradition of partnership is the outstanding feature of our educational administration. Although we have now endowed the Minister with great power, in practice he and his Ministry of some 3,000 officials function as members of a great fellowship — Ministry, Local Authorities, Teachers, Voluntary Associations — friends working together with mutual understanding in a great cause'.

Could it ever have been so? That any such atmosphere has been dispelled of late may be heard on all sides. Disgust and distrust have been steadily mounting under the rule of an administration whose only belief seems to lie in the virtues of manipulating money, subservience to 'the market', steps to transfer public possessions to private hands at the expense of the public purse. This form of redistribution evidently does not repel Sir Keith.

There is, of course, no mention in the passage quoted of the blunderbuss which has done much to blow the old pattern apart — the Manpower Services Commission, heavily endowed with the public's money in a manner never clearly explained and administered by a sub-bureaucracy of the Department of Employment. Oblivious of events over the horizon Lester Smith's account moves smoothly on.:

> 'The partnership has had its ups and downs, and there are often sharp differences of opinion; but they are mainly differences about means and methods, for there is a remarkable unity of aim and purpose'.

This conception has taken a particularly hard knock in more ways than one. Consider for a moment what is happening under the aegis of the MSC, in the matter of letting 'private enterprise' (read profit) in on further education and training. First the way is prepared:

> 'Government ministers have intervened directly in the choice of a new commissioner to represent the education service on the MSC, turning down the nominee of teachers' associations in favour of a candidate who will support their views' (**TES**, 10.12.82).

Originally intended to operate as a consensus the MSC once comprised proper representatives of the main interests — not any more, not even to ensure an adequate voice in favour of educational standards on a body setting out to handle the interests of hundreds of thousands of young people. As is well known the MSC aims to draft all jobless school leavers of sixteen into its Youth Training Scheme providing work experience for a year with thirteen weeks off-the-job training. The details have been left to the employers who will collect from public funds £1,950 per trainee taken on and pay out an allowance of some £1,400. This leaves a sufficient margin to have caught the eye of 'entrepreneurs who expect to make money and profits out of the unemployment industry'. One such, according to an article on **The Guardian** business page (9.11.82), rushed out a brochure to 200 employers, as soon as the YTS gained approval, advertising sub-contractor services to provide the bare minimum course required for any firm taking on sufficient trainees to provide fee income of upwards of £80,000. 'The MSC is relying on people like us', the director said, so opening up 'major business opportunities for commercial training companies' which set out 'to challenge further education colleges'. With the delighted addendum that this is 'the first time any organisation has been set up to buy part of the education service'.

A comment worth pondering on this, together with the mentality involved. When, in the business world, there is a traditional old firm for which the directors have no more use the decision may well be to sell it off — to the highest bidder is the natural follow-up phrase but not what actually follows today so far as the public sector is concerned. It has become a scandalous practice for the Cabinet to sell up shares in 'state-owned' interests at prices so low that city speculators regularly

make a 'killing', as robbing the next man — in this case the public — is suitably called. At what point, it would be interesting to know, does this mode of handling public assets become corruption at national level, as it undoubtedly ranks in local authority contract work? When FE colleges are deliberately weakened in advance by heavy cuts, to make way for commercial exploitation of youth's misfortune under the present government, the impression of malpractice is enhanced. In such a market place, shorn of the protection of educational law and a trained inspectorate, what chance have school leavers of a fair deal? Already it seems that apprenticeship safeguards have been thrown overboard leaving employers free to select from YTS trainees young people noted for pliability.

What has most directly offended the canons of the publicly provided school system — the one organised for the nation at large not the 'public schools' serving the moneyed — is the plan to introduce vouchers to finance the latter, many of which already enjoy charitable status, or, it seems, any private school an 'independent minded' parent may choose, from funds designed to support maintained schools and to their detriment. Traditionally the education service has been treated as a national resource and investment to be protected from market forces, if not to a sufficient extent, and a former Conservative Prime Minister, Edward Heath, has proclaimed undying opposition to a voucher system as having nothing to do with what education is about. It has nothing to do with saving money either. On the contrary, it will be costly until, so Sir Keith has been reported as saying, a larger private system has been created at the expense of the nation's schools.

It is easy to see why, to the poujadist cabinet of these later days, and Sir Keith who operates in its slipstream, the name of Tawney is such anathema. Even that of R A Butler is not to be conjured with. Did he not permit the introduction of secondary education for all as against restricting opportunity for most, the present watchword along with that other slogan of the market 'to him that hath shall be given'. The fundamental aim of education is not hard to state, Tawney said. Its purpose is to aid the growth of small human beings.

> 'Here, if anywhere, it should be possible to forget the tedious vulgarities of income and social position, in a common affection for the qualities which belong, not to any class or profession of men but to man himself, and in a common attempt to improve them by cultivation'.

It is this aim that makes teaching an honourable profession. That DES ministers should dishonour the tradition, with almost every move they make, is little short of stupefying and diminishes all concerned. This is now happening with sinister continuity on every front with promise of more to come. It is hard to imagine what teachers may be required to teach once control of the curriculum rests with committees nominated by ministers of the quality now in office, not to mention control of examinations about which, so far, there has been unending huffing and puffing. Moreover another paragraph from Lester Smith's little guide floats disturbingly into view, given progressive 'politicisation' and a tendency to classify the slightest criticism of the government, especially its head, as unethical. Only names have been altered in this standard form of declaration popular on the continent in the 1930s when more than one nation was dictatorially brought to its knees by leaders who knew they were always right and the only true guardian of national morale.

> 'Margaret Thatcher, we swear that we will train the youth of Britain so that they will grow up in your ideology, for your aims and purposes, and in the direction of your will. This is pledged to you by the whole British system of education, from the Primary School through to the University'.

It is a measure of the distance travelled over the past few years — especially during the closing months of 1982 — that this statement only sounds a little peculiar, rather than absurdly beyond the bounds of possibility. It is, of course, when formerly wealthy nations lose caste that the dangers are greatest, especially should a state of war inflame passions. 'What hope is there for humane teachers when their classes are fed on the virtues of bashing 'the Argies', asked the editor of the Historical Association's **Teaching History.** Society has enough problems without an 'irresponsible press generating its own nationalist tirade' to counter long efforts by teachers of the humanities to encourage an enlightened interest in other countries. 'All power, then, to so-called peace studies which have recently come under attack from various official and political quarters'. Not least, of course, by the least cultivated minister at the DES.

One final point from Lester Smith writing in the 1950s:

> 'Political thought has moved far away from the *laissez-faire* outlook dominant in the nineteenth century'.

Was it not on a Sunday TV show this very January that the Prime Minister, who now offers to continue pressing the nation into a prepared mould, professed a profound belief in the Victorian code down to permitting the wealthy to become so over-rich that they may charitably found institutions for those pressed into poverty by their excesses? May, mind you, not necessarily will, as against preaching the doctrine of self-help in the mode kept green by Sir Keith.

Not only are the rich not to be relied upon for humanity but a cabinet intent on fostering private gain cannot be trusted to refrain from priorities outrageously at odds with the public good. Its aim for the educational service is of a piece — to re-establish an hierarchical system of wealth. With a voucher system awaiting flotation, the 'for sale' boards up, the bullying and humiliation of elected local authorities, the nominated committees attending on the say-so of the executive, the kind of ministers in office at the Department of Education and Science, it may safely be said that no administration in this century has shown greater contempt for the educational world and all that is best in its tradition. It is the ultimate hypocrisy that all this has followed on a promise to 'roll back the frontiers of the state' and 'set the people free'.

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Times Educational Supplement under the editorship of Stuart Maclure.

Distorting Teacher Training

Nanette Whitbread
The co-editor of **Forum** has been engaged in teacher training for the past twenty years and is currently a member of the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers.

Teacher training must be geared to the curricular, social and educational continuum of primary and secondary schools so as to make a reality of comprehensive education. The promise of 'secondary education for all', and especially the advent of comprehensive reorganisation, necessitated ending the division of teachers into certificated, college-trained elementary or low status 'practical' and trained or untrained university graduates. This was just what gradually happened over the past twenty years, despite the severe cuts and college closures in the mid-1970s.

Now, however, a Secretary of State openly hostile to comprehensive schools has authorised further cuts that carve new dimensions within the initial teacher training system, and intends to impose on courses criteria that will inhibit appropriate preparation for a comprehensive system of education. Moreover, he appears to have enlisted support within the DES and among senior HMI for an attempt to subvert those very features of teacher training which evolved to serve the needs of a comprehensive primary and secondary school system. This conspiracy involves an attack on the BEd, manipulation of the balance between college and university sectors, and an intent to override the professional judgement of those who provide and validate courses leading to qualified teacher status. These moves are but part of a concerted attempt to undermine the principles and practice of comprehensive education by turning the educational clock back several decades.

A brief review of the response of initial teacher training during two decades of developing a comprehensive school structure will put the present threats in perspective.

Postwar expansion was first necessary to ensure a supply of teachers to implement the 1944 Act. The training colleges, which had already contributed significantly to the progressive transformation of elementary into primary schools, continued to provide primary teachers. The initially bipartite secondary system was supplied by a bipartite source of university graduates for grammar schools and training college certificated teachers for secondary modern schools. Lengthening the certificate course to three years and expanding postgraduate training signified belated recognition of the need for more highly skilled teachers to extend opportunity for all children to fulfil their educational potential. In the mid1960s a rising birthrate necessitated further expansion when comprehensive reorganisation was getting under way. The Newsom Report led many colleges to gear much of their secondary training towards teaching the 'average and below average' half of the secondary schools' population and begin preparing for RoSLA in the comprehensive context. Simultaneously, they built the new BEd degree onto the certificate course as recommended by the Robbins Report. This and the introduction of a postgraduate training requirement in 1973, albeit with exemptions, can be seen as further recognition of the professionally demanding task of making a reality of nonselective secondary education and the Plowden vision of the primary school.

It is worth recalling that the one-year PGCE was originally designed to train university graduates as subject specialist teachers for selective grammar and independent schools. With the advent of comprehensive schools it was clear that the task of secondary teaching was far wider in scope and more demanding. University PGCE courses had to be re-oriented towards comprehensive schools, while colleges not only further developed concurrent three-year secondary alongside primary courses, with increasing opportunity for a four-year BEd, but embarked on PGCE courses too. A few PGCE courses were offered for intending primary teachers and the PGCE mode expanded in both college and university sectors so that by 1975 over 5,000 were trained annually in each sector.

By the early 1970s a quiet revolution had largely broken down the historic divisions within teacher training in parallel with the gradual transformation of schools into a comprehensive primary-secondary continuum under the variety of LEA patterns allowed under **Circular 10/65.** Those engaged in teacher training generally accepted the challenge of comprehensive education and endeavoured to prepare teachers committed to enhancing *all* children's learning. These new teachers poured into comprehensive schools, two-thirds of whose staff had less than ten years' teaching experience at the time of the 1977 survey by HMI. The proportion of graduate and certificated teachers was almost equal in comprehensives, but graduates predominated in the remaining grammar schools where untrained graduates and certificated teachers were fairly evenly distributed as a minority. BEd graduates were so new that they accounted for only 6 per cent in comprehensives and 4 per cent in primary schools where 90 per cent were non-graduate certificated teachers.

In 1970 Edward Short, a Secretary of State for Education who had taught in schools, asked every Area Training Organisation (ATO) to review the courses run

in university departments and colleges. In sharp contrast with recent public utterances by Sir Keith Joseph, he told the House of Commons that much of the public criticism of teacher education was 'misconceived and based on inadequate evidence'. He gave more credence to criticism from within the teaching profession noting in his letter to ATOs that this reflected the fact that 'links between the schools and training establishments and between the teachers and those responsible for teacher education are still insuffienciently close'. He favoured a closer partnership and 'a two-way flow of ideas'. This was very different from Sir Keith Joseph's present reliance on HMI's interpretations and his habit of selectively rejecting recommendations from the widely representative Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers (ACSET) when these do not accord with his and HMI's views.

HMI has no record of great support for the principles of comprehensive education in their various national surveys. These have revealed an obsession with a narrow and static concept of 'ability' which implicitly precludes the possibility of accelerating learning except among those labelled 'more able', whom Sir Keith's Assisted Places Scheme is designed to remove from comprehensive schools. The HMI report, **Mixed Ability Work in Comprehensive Schools** (1978), offered no advice on how to teach non-streamed classes more effectively but, instead, warned against this except under unusually 'committed and exceptionally skilled' teachers whose skills they failed to analyse for the benefit of others. **Aspects of Secondary Education** (1979) uncritically accepted banding with setting for mathematics, science, foreign languages and English and suggested 'more homogenous' grouping for other subjects; and **Primary Education in England** (1978) offered no criticism of streaming within classes. HMI signally failed to take up the challenge of what comprehensive education is about.

Three years ago in an article in **Forum** (vol 22 no 3), Denis Lawton distinguished between the standards and testing ideology of the DES **Framework for the School Curriculum** (1980) and the 'more positive and ambitious' cultural analysis approach of HMI in **Curriculum 11-16** published in 1977, but noted signs that in their 1980 **A View of the Curriculum** HMI seemed, 'under pressure to get a little closer to the DES line'. This shift was already evident in **Aspects of Secondary Education** (1979), despite a passing plea for specialist teachers 'to break away from the isolation in which they commonly work.' By early 1982, when the first version of **Teaching in Schools: The Content of Initial Training** (1983) was being drafted, the humanists had lost out: a new senior HMI team for teacher training had just taken over and was intent on producing a document acceptable to today's political masters.

Sir Keith Joseph was known to be determined to exercise his legal authority as Secretary of State to discriminate in approving courses that confer qualified teacher status in order to prevent what he believes is a flow of incompetent teachers into the schools. He said so in a speech at Durham University last October and again at the North of England Conference in January. Unlike Edward Short, he makes common cause with populist criticism of teacher training, and is not willing to trust the co-operation of the training institutions. He has taken a public stance that he will *enforce* changes of *his* choosing.

The Advisory Committee volunteered to provide him with guidelines by July. However, HMI anticipated, and no doubt hoped to pre-empt, those guidelines by publishing its version in January under the guise of a discussion paper **Teaching in Schools.**

Throughout the past year senior HMI and DES officials have seemed bent on manipulating ACSET to proffer advice coinciding with the Secretary of State's policy. Contempt for and constraints on its advice was further demonstrated in March when the White Paper, **Teaching Quality** (Cmnd 8836) suddenly emerged from shrouds of secrecy to disclose criteria to be used for approving courses for QTS and appointing teachers to schools.

Although overtaken and overshadowed by that White Paper, **Teaching in Schools** is thus a significant and ominous document. It should be seen in the context of the apparently abortive DES consultative paper, **Qualified Teacher Status,** circulated last June — undoubtedly at HMI's instigation — which aroused such hostility among teachers, LEAs and validating bodies that it was then quietly dropped. The paper proposed restricting each teacher's licence to teaching a specific age range or a specific secondary subject. There can be no doubt that it is now the intention to achieve much the same objective by means of a new mechanism for approving each course for QTS on the basis of restrictive national guidelines for course content, selection of students, and institutional staffing, as proclaimed in Sir Keith's White Paper. His prejudices rather than the real needs of comprehensive education are to dictate how teachers will be trained..

The twin emphases in **Teaching in Schools** are on academic knowledge in a main teaching subject and restriction of professional training to a defined age range. 'It seems right to expect all initial training courses . . . to achieve a minimum standard of effective mastery of the main teaching subjects for all their students' and 'sharp differentiation of phase specialism in the content of the course is essential to its quality'. The teaching profession's unequivocal response to the June draft and the DES paper has resulted in some re-phrasing and toning down of these emphases, with much play made of strengthening the 'partnership between initial training institutions and schools'; but this should not blind us to the mainly backward-looking message echoed in the White Paper.

Unsurprisingly, there is no mention of the needs of comprehensive schools. The paper purports to draw on the findings of the HMI surveys of primary and secondary schools undertaken from 1975 to 1978 and the 1981 survey of probationers, **The New Teacher in School** (1982). It does so highly selectively and in places inaccurately, claiming that many teachers were ill-informed in the subjects they were teaching and implying that initial training courses 'contribute to ''hidden shortage'' by sending out new teachers who are inadequately prepared.' No reference is made to the embarrassing series of HMI surveys on the effects of public expenditure cuts in creating problems of curriculum coverage. The primary survey found three-quarters of teachers were teaching the age range for which they had trained and even 'where teachers were

teaching an age group other than that for which they were initially trained there was no evidence that this affected the standard of work achieved by the children.' Teachers' lack of knowledge was remarked on only in the case of science. The main criticism was of 'a widespread tendency to underestimate the capacities of all groups of children' in subjects other than mathematics, language and PE. In the secondary survey the weight of HMI criticism bore mainly on schools' curricular policies and specialists' lack of 'a view of the school curriculum as a whole', rather than on teachers' knowledge and competence. None of this supports the present implied attack on training courses nor the pressure for greater emphasis on main subject study.

The 1983 cuts and course allocations, finalised last November, were clearly a means of implementing the same reactionary aims. **Qualified Teacher Status** asserted that 'primary schools need more PGCE trained teachers'. The new allocations mean that by 1985 a quarter of all new primary teachers will be postgraduate trained, with a greater proportionate increase in university departments than in the colleges within an overall switch to increase primary training at the expense of cutting secondary to match demography. The elitist preference for PGCE over BEd and for universities over colleges is reflected in cutting the colleges' secondary BEd by 900 and their PGCE by 2,100 in contrast with respective cuts of nil and 1,000 in the university sector. As a result less than a fifth of secondary teachers will be BEd trained and these confined to 'non-academic' subjects such as craft, home economics and PE, apart from RE in voluntary denominational colleges. The scale of the secondary cuts and their imbalanced impact on the colleges were not in ACSET's advice but were arbitrarily imposed by Sir Keith Joseph with advice from HMI and DES.

The initial teacher training scenario so imposed represents a return to the stereotyped, traditional division and negates the pioneering development of the BEd for teaching in comprehensive schools. Subject content in a BEd course is chosen for its relevance to contemporary developments in the school curriculum and there is time both to build a sound theoretical basis for methodology and wider professional studies and to provide extensive and varied school experiences. Nothing in the primary and secondary surveys supports a shift from BEd to PGCE, with closure of even primary BEd courses. Indeed, **The New Teacher in School** contains evidence of greater confidence and 'mastery of teaching skills' among four-year BEd compared with PGCE teachers in primary and secondary schools, while 'greater mastery of the subject-matter of lessons' was evident only for secondary PGCE. As noted earlier, four-year BEd graduates had hardly begun to enter the schools at the time of the primary and secondary surveys, so the new evidence of their teaching skills is relevant to any judgement on the best mode of training to foster within the system. Since postgraduates' subject knowledge relates to their degrees prior to training it cannot be seen as evidence of the success of one-year training. Any serious appraisal of initial training would point to the need to extend all BEd courses to four years and lengthen the PGCE. If the positive prescriptions in **Teaching in Schools** — and there are some — are to be incorporated in all initial training, this is the only way. But to do so would conflict with Sir Keith's other objective of reducing expenditure on teacher education and training.

Further subversion of the progressive evolution of teacher training for comprehensive education is to be achieved by a populist, anti-intellectual and anti-theory attack on professional content. Sir Keith said as much in his Durham diatribe and, to their discredit, HMIs have taken the cue in **Teaching in Schools.** Despite the unexceptionable if simplistic shopping list for 'professional and educational studies', the focus is on assessable practical teaching competence. This ties in with prescriptive time allocations for certain components of courses. As in the 1980 DES and HMI school curriculum papers mentioned earlier, a 'factory model' of training is presented which, ironically, emulates the 'product' model promoted by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). Sir Keith's hostility to 'the kind of high theory' that he attributes to teacher training courses presumably stems from his own idiosyncratic and prejudiced rejection of educational and other social science research, and the undoubted fact that much of it has provided evidence to support the case for a transition to comprehensive education.

Suspicion that the DES and HMI have sold the pass on 16-19 year olds, except for the elite minority on traditional sixth form or technical vocational courses, is strengthened by the admission that 'the particular problems of pre-vocational education in schools, and 'the particular needs of the 16-19 age-group' were deliberately omitted from consideration in reviewing teacher training. This may partly explain HMI's preoccupation with traditional subject knowledge 'input' which reflects a view of teaching that fails to recognise education as a *process*, and hence is at odds with the humanist philosophy of comprehensive education.

HMIs collectively have remained out of empathy with the fundamental principles of comprehensive education, as their school surveys have shown, but hitherto have not been directive. A new stage has now been reached when they seem willing to accept political direction in presenting compliant advice on the provision and content of teacher training. This harnessing of the inspectorate to the executive threatens the integrity of HMI as directly as was the case with their predecessors in the era of the Revised Code — without the extenuating circumstances. This retrograde development in a carefully orchestrated attack on the teacher training system is not as yet generally recognised, but is one the teaching profession should unite to resist — particularly those who care about comprehensive education.

Sir Keith Joseph, whose only achievement at the DES has so far been to reduce education's share in the budget, urgently needs a claim to fame. He has seized on teacher training as a strategic point in the control of education, along with the Schools Council's influence on the curriculum and examinations. At issue is a bid by an anachronic Secretary of State, aided by a docile team of watchdogs, to assume the 'untrammelled power' over teacher training that he has speciously accused the training institutions of exercising.

Mixed Ability in Comprehensive Schools (1978) and **Primary Education in England** (1978) were the subjects of two review articles in **Forum** vol 21 no 2 (1979).

PGCE — A Personal View

Judith Hunt
Business Manager of **Forum** since 1971, Judith Hunt then took a one-year PGCE course and is now in her first year of secondary school teaching. Here she reflects on her training course.

I was probably not a typical PGCE student. I was a 'mature' student, thirty-four when I began in September 1981. I had had the valuable experience of bringing three children up as far as twelve, ten and eight. I had also done three years part-time unqualified teaching at a College of Further Education, and was continuing to teach an 'A' level evening class while I did my course. I knew something about education, being married to a teacher, and with ten years of being the Business Manager of **Forum** behind me.

I chose a college near home which offered the largest proportion of teaching practice in school — three separate periods of four, six and seven weeks, one in each term. I was taking a secondary course with History and English as my subject options.

I spent the week before term in useful and enjoyable observation of a local comprehensive school, where they were in process of changing the History syllabus to one based on the Schools Council History Project. I was somewhat surprised when they began by studying the contents of a dustbin but the children appeared to enjoy it, and I began to see how History teaching had changed. I observed some very different kinds of teaching, and began to grasp how the average school operates.

After an initial failure to get hold of the books on the reading list (I went over to college in the holidays bearing proof of my acceptance on the course but was told that I could not borrow books until I had filled in the right forms) we began the term, with three days of form filling. Our timetable consisted of six hours each of the two subject options, five of Education to be composed of one or two lectures a week followed by discussion in groups, and two hours of Educational Technology. We had two afternoons and one morning free, otherwise the timetable appeared to be quite full.

We were to be continuously assessed, on an education essay and on two special subject essays in the first term, two more special subject assignments and a curriculum project carried out during teaching practice in the second, and a final assessment of the third teaching practice.

As I look at the diary I kept during the course I find that the first week turned out to be typical of all that was to follow. It began with an education lecture, all the PGCE students together, on the role of the teacher, and discussion groups later with an education tutor. Having borrowed a copy of Hoyle's **The Role of the Teacher** I was able to contribute a certain amount, and being older was prepared to stick my neck out. I wondered if the rest had managed to read any of the reading list beforehand. Comparisons with other groups showed that we were reasonably fortunate in our tutor.

The contrast between the ways in which my two subjects were taught was immediately apparent. In History we went round the class giving a potted biography of ourselves, then were asked how many names we could remember; first object lesson in how to teach. The history tutors were throughout extremely well organised and prepared, friendly, interested and interesting. In English we had an introduction from the person who was to take us for the whole year, then given a time to appear for a five minute interview with him. He never learnt all our names, and we were far less cohesive as a group than the History lot.

I had high hopes of learning much from Educational Technology, after struggling with a defective duplicator at my FE College, and having seen some of the sophisticated machinery that is in use in schools. The first session of two hours consisted of a film of a utopian junior school where the children were operating the educational machines without any apparent supervision, followed by a *talk* on the Banda machine which was given without demonstration, or even that educational machine being in evidence. It was two Educational Technology sessions on the Banda later that we actually handled the machine ourselves. We had so many possible hazards pointed out to us and so little chance to try the machine out that I ended up less able to operate it than I had been before. The same was true of the other machines discussed.

The term continued in much the same way. Education lectures were unspecific and consisted of what seemed to me to be glorified commonsense made less intelligible by the use of socio-educational jargon, and a few visual aids in the form of a diagram or two on the OHP. Subsequent discussion was sometimes fruitful, more often exasperating in its generality. Occasionally we had a film, of a mock Victorian school to illustrate the history of education, one also of a school where everything was manifestly going wrong which sparked a useful discussion on the causes, but hardly gave us confidence for our approaching teaching practice.

History sessions were lessons on how to teach in themselves, and led us in a logical sequence up to the first teaching practice. This was the only part of the course which prepared us in any way for the business of facing the children for the first time. We justified the teaching of History to ourselves, looked at resources, discussed a model lesson plan, and were given a topic on

which to prepare a plan of a lesson ourselves, which we then delivered in an abbreviated form, with copious visual aids, to our fellows. This immediately taught us the supreme importance of adequate preparation, made us think about the level at which we were pitching the lesson, timing, vocabulary, use of blackboard, and many other basic but crucial things. We learnt both by preparing the lessons ourselves, and by watching the others, those who dried up through lack of adequate preparation, the Girton girl who Went Over the Top at the Somme in language we found hard to grasp and at a pace we could not keep up with, and those who were able to transmit their enthusiasm and involve the whole group through their questions.

English was frequently a monologue from our tutor, who admitted that he didn't propose to cover mixed ability teaching as he did not subscribe to the theory, but gave us two books to read to redress the balance. **Every English Teacher** by Andrew Adams and John Pearce I found useful, less so the sessions when our tutor read aloud extracts from the chapter we had been asked to read before the session: the other book was out of print. We had an English syllabus read out to us module by module which appeared to take several two-hour sessions; we had the history of the Joint Matriculation Board from 1907 blow by blow to the present day, which included some inaccuracies about the various language papers currently set. After a month I made a list of the things I felt should be covered with a plea for more practical sessions and some discussion of topics such as the teaching of reading, oral work, organisation of a classroom etc. The answer was that these things would be covered later on in the syllabus: some of them were touched on, and some helpful ideas were suggested, but none of us felt really qualified to teach English by the end. The contrast with the History teaching was useful; in the one we learnt how to teach by involving the students and getting them to use their own experiences, in the other we learnt how quickly students can become bored and alienated. However some of the class were not taking History with English, and had no such contrast.

Planning schemes and lessons for teaching practice, getting together resources, etc., was a welcome practical exercise, and the practice itself, only four weeks long and with a very limited timetable, I found very enjoyable. I learnt here the beginnings of discipline and organisation in the classroom, and had time to observe quite a lot of teaching in my two subjects and in others. I was introduced to the curious phenomenon of assembly, taken round by a friendly form teacher, and was beginning to know some children when I left. My tutor from college came out to see me each week and made encouraging and constructive noises, but I found the comments and suggestions from the teachers who sat in on my lessons more helpful; devastating at times, but pertinent.

We had a week back in college before the end of term, in which experiences were exchanged, a useful and comforting time which was not repeated in the other two terms. We also had to fill in forms about the usefulness of the education lectures, which now seemed irrelevant and unmemorable.

Next term continued much the same, only in English we had some variety with two really stimulating drama sessions from another lecturer who got us up on the platform acting, made us think what drama we might do with children, and gave us an exhaustive reading list. Also in English we had a lecture on 'Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages', in which we learnt little else but how to buy a cauliflower in English, a task most of us were able to perform already. We had another English essay to do, but in History we had to assemble an audio-visual kit on a topic of our own choice, a practical exercise which forced us to think about the construction and use of work cards, wall displays, questionnaires and the like.

In education we did have two interesting lectures on Multi-Racial Education, very important given the nature of most of the schools we were going into, but little practical help could be given in so short a time. A back-up course would have been useful here to most students.

My second teaching practice was at a Girls' Grammar School, a placement which was hardly typical of the kind of school I was likely to end up at, but I decided against protesting as I was interested to see what such a school was like. It took me back twenty years, and into my gym tunic again, but I learnt an important lesson, what bright children can achieve, even when resources are limited and facilities antiquated.

I had to do my curriculum project during this practice, and my tutor suggested that I should contrast three ways of teaching the Indian Mutiny. I had to produce a situational analysis and statement of intent, a commentary on what was happening in the lessons, and a conclusion which related my observations and deductions to educational theory. It was here that I fell down, I could easily have written 7,000 words on the Indian Mutiny, but I had difficulty distinguishing the ways in which I was trying to teach it, and had not got to grips with enough educational theory to be able to label what I was trying to do. My history tutor had put me on to Bruner which I found very helpful, and I had enjoyed several other 'history teaching' books such as Margorie Reeves' **Why History,** but the majority of books suggested were either unobtainable or very academic. I found it hard to relate **A Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in the Cognitive Domain** to 3C on a wet Friday afternoon, last lesson.

Next term we had only three weeks in college. We had a detailed analysis of School Certificate in English, and touched on CSE. In History we did some field work, and in Education we had some outside lecturers on relevant topics such as the probationary year, and the use of television in schools.

The last teaching practice (in a small comprehensive eleven to sixteen school) lasted for seven weeks and was disrupted by half term, exams, school trips etc, but it gave me an idea of the normal pattern of school life, and again I learnt from my mistakes and the advice of the teachers and sometimes the pupils. My tutor's main comment was 'I am glad you have tumbled so quickly to the idea of getting them to put something in their exercise books', so we concentrated on discussing the menu at his college's reunion dinner, and what he should grow in his greenhouse during his rapidly approaching retirement.

Two days of college before term ended served merely to hand in library books, collect our DES numbers, do an evaluative exercise on the course, and find out who had jobs. A fair number had, and I did the week after,

At the point of Induction

Michael Clarke
A member of **Forum's** Editorial Board and Head of a primary school considers the changes that have occurred in primary schools over the past decade and their implications for teacher training today.

The James Report of 1972[1], identified and described three cycles in the continuous process of teacher education. The first cycle involves personal study; the second includes pre-service training and induction, bridging the college/first-school-post gap; and the third encompasses in-service training throughout a teacher's career. I believe that this sequence offers the best hope of the teaching profession achieving full and realistic professional status and development.

What I am concerned with here, is an appraisal of what stage intending primary school teachers might reach by the time they begin their induction period. For this purpose I shall bear in mind two points:

a. That central to the whole process to which the training cycles (2 & 3) must relate is the organisation and structure of primary schools.

and

b. A total career pattern, which will allow one to determine what aspects of a teacher's career-needs can best be met during each cycle.

Although various innovative teaching systems have been tried, largely along the lines of specialist or team teaching, in essence little has changed in the responsibilities of teachers at this stage. Each teacher is still required to be able to take charge of a group of children and be responsible for their welfare and progress over a period of time, varying from one to seven years. The extent of this period will depend on the size of the school or school policy, and progress will relate to all aspects of children's development and to all subjects.

My observations of the career development of twenty-two probationary teachers over fifteen years have shown clear stages which fit very closely with those summarised in the Report on In-Service Education and Training of Teachers[2] by Dr R Bolam.

> 'The concept of a career profile (includes) the following key stages:
> the induction year;
> a consolidation period of four to six years, during which teachers would attend short specific courses;
> a re-orientation period, after six to eight years experience which could involve a secondment for a one-term course and a change in career development;
> a period of further studies, in advanced seminars to develop specialist expertise;'

Plus two more stages concerned with leadership and management roles.

These stages are related to the needs of teachers in the practical situation and to what their experience level will be able to assimilate and understand.

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but I wondered how many of them felt really well prepared.

I find it hard to see what was being aimed at over the year; someone suggested that it was to let us down gently from the academic heights just scaled to school level. I would probably have got more out of it, and certainly have read more, had I been doing fewer other things at the same time. Parts of the course, the history teaching and the teaching practices in particular, convinced me that it could be a really useful year; other parts merely exasperated me and put me off the higher realms of educational theory. I think I would have been happier had the academic part been more demanding, after all we were graduates. We were subject to educational discursions, but were surely capable and indeed in the habit of doing some intellectual work ourselves. I wanted Piaget, not potted Piaget, if I was to have him at all.

However, I gained valuable experience at three very different schools and appreciated the support I received from college. Some contribution from practising teachers apart from what we experienced individually in schools would have been good, some practical experience of educational hardware, rather than lectures on it, some first aid, a look at a junior school, some analysis of the structure of schools, the duties of a head teacher, head of department etc, some light shed on the workings of the LEAs, the relationship with the DES, some real comparison of mixed ability teaching and streaming, banding, setting — all these would have been useful. I cannot give a complete list of what was left out until I have been teaching for a while. Perhaps some of the copious notes I wrote on the description and stipulative definitions of education will prove useful, but I suspect that a closer definition of a disruptive pupil and what to do about him or her would have been more to the point.

I realise that my experience may be very different from those at other institutions, but I suspect that some elements will be similar elsewhere. I cannot provide an answer, only make a plea for a hard look to be taken at Post Graduate Certificates of Education all over the country at a time when it is of crucial importance for teachers to be trained in a way that will qualify them to cope with the immense problems that the present government is forcing upon them.

The induction year — James style — would be concerned with learning to teach in a realistic setting over, at least, a full year. That is learning to fit teaching into a particular school, with specific curricula guidelines and learning those skills of group control and organisation which enable effective teaching to take place.

The second of the key stages I see as a time to build up a repertoire of activities and techniques to acquire knowledge which will enable a teacher to match work to pupil groups in such a way that they are fully motivated and effectively taught.

The other key stages deal with work which has obviously been beyond the scope of an initial college course.

Taking the above from the initial training stage (James' 2nd cycle — 1st year) what is required of it?

The first requirement is that intending teachers should have been carefully selected, bearing in mind characteristics which are unlikely to change over an extended period. The HMI document **The New Teacher in School** states that '. . . a number of teachers who are temperamently ill-fitted for the task, find their way into the classroom'. Here both colleges, advisors and inspectors need to take more account of Head Teacher observations. Temperament is seldom an issue when final assessments of probationary teachers are made. More clearly identifiable evidence of behaviour carries most weight eg powers of pupil control and diligence over marking. Are HMIs saying that this aspect of assessment is entirely a college affair?

Schools are not looking for a uniform product. Eccentrics have always been an essential ingredient in any lively school staffroom. But what we must have are self-motivating, emotionally mature people who are capable of accepting criticism and who show a willingness to work towards changing their behaviour patterns, should that be necessary.

Teachers need to be enthusiasts, not to be confused with exhuberant extroverts, and to have a sense of adventure, as opposed to a fear of what is new or unknown. They should also be physically robust. Finally they should be capable of keeping personal problems and domestic trivia in perspective. As Professor Tibble wrote in his pamphlet **The Role of the Teacher,** the teaching profession should not be a 'bolt-hole for the rabbit'.

Before they take up their first school post, students should have acquired the communication and learning skills necessary to take advantage of the envisaged new style induction period. The view of Norman Evans[3] that initial training should include training for the induction year is vitally important. This training would involve learning to work with other professionals in a variety of situations 'seminar/discussion/support groups' in order to achieve a collective aim '. . . experience of working in this way as part of initial training leads naturally away from the solitariness which afflicts so many teachers in schools when professional pride or personal diffidence incarcerates them in their own classrooms'. The oft heard remark, 'I would rather sort out my problems by myself', is indicative of how insular teachers have been and shows why so many have progressed slowly or not at all.

With this background of working in a team, teachers should be capable of contributing to school development right from the start of their career.

Colleges of the pre-1973 era were able to prepare students for their probationary year quite adequately. Until the mid '60s most primary schools in this country were still following a fairly uniform and small range of methods which students could be specifically trained for. Since that time the range of techniques, methods, age groupings, building styles and subject areas has increased enormously. It would be unrealistic to expect a new teacher to have covered all the ground necessary to begin to teach adequately and in total control of a class in any one of the many situations which primary education now encompasses.

I believe that a lengthy school practice of the traditional type is now counter productive in most cases. Nearly all teachers begin their career as though it was a continuation of their final school practice, without regard to the differences in the two situations. I would prefer to employ a teacher who had knowledge of the wide range of situations that can be found in schools and an awareness that each requires a carefully planned approach suited to the specific circumstances. It would be more useful to students to have had numerous short experiences designed to give them the feel of the problems encountered in different situations than to have had a long teaching practice in one school, which type they may never experience again. The longest settling-in periods in my school have been a feature of those students whose final school practice was in a very different type of situation.

Many newly qualified teachers find that they are ill equipped to cope with vertical groupings, mixed ability groups, open plan schools etc, and it would be unreasonable to expect them to have the necessary skills to do so at the beginning of their induction year.

The HMI findings that the commonest weakness among probationers was their failure to match their teaching to the pupils' needs in respect of age, ability, cultural background etc is indicative of the same point. In my experience young teachers haven't the knowledge of a sufficiently wide range of methods, their advantages and limitations which would allow them to select the most appropriate one for any particular situation. If they had that knowledge, along with experience of seeing the methods being applied, then school-based training could turn that knowledge into skills.

When students prepare for a teaching practice their over-riding concern is to get through each day as smoothly as possible, without major confrontations or catastrophes. The fact that their planning should take place within the framework of the school's guiding philosophy and conform to school methods is one which they are seldom either aware of or capable of taking into account. As Norman Evans put it, on teaching practice 'Were students part of the school or were they trying to borrow it?' In my experience, they were always trying to borrow it. They couldn't really be expected to do any other and the children suffered to varying degrees as a result.

Students beginning their induction year should know the content of the contract they will be agreeing to work under. They should be aware that schools have policies aimed at achieving continuity and consistency of treatment for children and what categories of behaviour these policies will cover. They should know what

teachers' career structure is and how this affects the responsibilities of staff. They should know their legal responsibilities in such areas as Health and Safety, discharge of supervisory duties etc. They should be aware that every school has to have rules controlling the distribution and use of teaching aids, apparatus and equipment, materials and books, so that these things are neither lost, nor broken, nor used in a way dangerous to pupils.

The latter point is one which is of particular concern to Headteachers. Many accidents occur in schools because teachers are unaware of, or lack knowledge of, the dangerous nature of various activities, materials and equipment. All students should be familiar with operating audio-visual aids and be capable of correcting minor faults. In fact few are able to do so, though practically all think that they are. Other areas of concern are the use of craft tools, aerosols, science equipment, PE and games, and the organisation and control of groups making educational visits or engaged in out-door pursuits. It is especially important that students follow a comprehensive course in first-aid.

If students were made aware of the problems associated with the above activities and were given ample personal experience of them, they would be able to plan activities more thoroughly and know when to ask advice of senior colleagues. Teaching practices cannot cover all the possibilities and many are so important that they cannot be left to trial and error learning.

I have stated that primary schools are unlikely to change in the near future from the practice of giving pupils security by putting them in the charge of one teacher for all activities over a period of at least one year. This system requires teachers to be capable of teaching all subject areas of the curriculum. This does not mean that teachers should be familiar with vast amounts of facts in relation to those subjects. It does require them to understand the underlying principles which makes each discipline discreet and how various disciplines are related. It also means that they must be familiar with the modes of recording associated with each discipline eg maps, graphs, 2D and 3D visual forms, mathematical symbols, music notation, etc.

It is surely time that we removed from the teaching profession the myth that music and PE are totally specialist subjects. Perhaps this indicates my view that a selection criterion for choosing intending primary teachers should be versatility.

There are a number of aspects of our social life about which each teacher must at some time reach personal conclusions eg religion, racial relations, the nature of intelligence, the role of authority and equality. It is not enough to have studied theories. Students must have crystalised their views and realise the implications for the teaching situation. Many problems in the classroom occur because teachers are in ignorance of the fact that they are operating under certain unexamined assumptions about these fundamental facets of our social life. Students of the eighteen to twenty-two range may not have the experience to reach conclusions in these areas but they should be aware of that and should realise that school policies will be based on particular views.

Conclusion

I haven't commented here on the James' Report first cycle but I would want it to result in a person having a keen interest in continuing their own education and having knowledge which wasn't narrowly academic. I have assumed that the present trend towards school based in-service training will continue and that this will prepare the ground for a meaningful induction period. It is not clear in the HMI's discussion paper **Teaching in Schools: The Content of Initial Training,**[4] whether support is being given to the James' Report's basic conclusion that the induction period should be part of initial training. James' induction period does not include 'full time responsibility in the classroom'; the HMI period does; the White Paper, **Teaching Quality,** states there should be 'a systematic programme' for induction. Once again the resources necessary to implement it in the James way are not promised. The content of initial training in College depends very much on how the induction is operated. I believe that professional skills are best learnt in a realistic environment which allows students to relate to the continuous process of child development and therefore I base my views on the James' model.

At the point of induction then, I would want students to:

1. have the temperament to cope with the pressures which arise in that emotionally charged atmosphere which all schools present; be self-motivating and sufficiently mature to take on the role of an adult acting in *loco parentis.*
2. have the attitude which welcomed continual training and have the necessary skills to contribute to a team exercise in school management and development.
3. be aware of the wide range of situations which can occur in schools and to have had experience of some of the problems which they present.
4. be aware of and to have observed, the wide range of possible methods and organisational strategies which might be used to solve those problems and to understand the theories on which they were based.
5. realise that each school operates as a unit with an overriding philosophy which must be borne in mind when planning work and that policies arising from this are aimed at giving continuity and consistency of treatment throughout the school.
6. have knowledge of those practical situations which have inherent dangers and know how to deal with them.
7. have knowledge of the principles involved in studying all the subjects to be taught in a Primary School.
8. have considered and reached a conclusion (albeit tentative) about those social issues which are fundamental to the teaching situation.

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Teachers as Learners

Liz Thomson
Leader of Longmore Teachers' Centre since 1978, Liz Thomson's early teaching experience was in primary schools in Stevenage. Later she was Senior Mistress and Head of English in a Bedfordshire Middle School. She writes here of her work at the Teachers' Centre.

Working at a Teachers' Centre, I am directly involved with teachers as learners. Their need to know more is manifested in a variety of ways; ranging from the very basic 'tips for teachers' course, to the kind of group who focus in depth over a long period of time on significant issues in the development of their thinking about the processes of teaching and learning.

The work of a Teachers' Centre has been described as:

> 'a long term contract between a local education authority and its teachers to create opportunities in context, which will lead to the development of teachers and the curriculum and therefore an improvement in classroom practice'[1]

In many ways it is more than that, for the contract is dependent upon the view the teachers and the authority have of the Centre and what it can do for them. The very name Teachers' Centre, implies that such institutions were set up *for* and, one must also add, *by* teachers. Unlike schools and colleges, the governing body or committee of most Teachers' Centres is made up of teachers. Some may include advisers, inspectors and Education officers, but they are often present in a consultative, rather than voting capacity. Teachers' Centres have consciously been developed to meet the needs of teachers, they also create a context where such needs can be expressed, discussed and acted upon.

As a Teachers' Centre Leader, I am concerned to create learning contexts for teachers in all the in-service work I am involved in. I believe that Teachers' Centres should offer environments where teachers can develop a consciousness of how they operate as learners; where each person is able to have the security to be wrong. For it is only through the development of such a consciousness that we are able to begin to understand something of the processes involved in that complex interaction which occurs in teaching and learning; and, more specifically, relate it to the kinds of learning teachers aim to promote in their classrooms.

This article describes some of the ways of working which have been developed at Longmore Teachers' Centre. The contexts described are essentially local and may not necessarily relate to teachers elsewhere. However, the underlying principle of 'starting from where teachers are' as learners can relate to all teachers, and it is in this spirit that the different examples are offered.

Longmore Teachers' Centre is situated in Hertford and serves all the schools and colleges in East Hertfordshire, which is, both geographically and numerically (in terms of schools, teachers and pupils), the largest educational division in Hertfordshire. The Teachers' Centre is not situated centrally in the locality, nor is it easily accessible for many of the teachers it serves. These considerations have affected styles of working, so that we now tend to be less Centre focused and more concerned with taking courses and meetings out to teachers in their schools; to both supplement and complement what is offered at Longmore.

When I started working at Longmore in 1978, my general impression was that Teachers' Centres were more concerned with beginnings in all areas of the curriculum. They tended to run a large number of introductory courses on different topics, but did not appear to be consciously looking at areas of in-service education which could develop and extend experienced teachers. I was particularly interested in relating educational theory to classroom practice, as my own teaching experience has shown how practices can illuminate theory and *vice versa*. I must also confess to a certain amount of 'missionary zeal'; insofar as I really believe that teachers should not only be concerned with *how* they teach, but should also understand *why* they work in particular ways as well. This thinking has underpinned ways of working from the Centre; whether the activities are Centre based, local based, school based or school focused.[2]

I have also been aware for some time that in-service development need not be bound or constrained by an institution. The kinds of support teachers need are often informal in their nature and may well be effected simply by setting up systems of self-help and mutual sharing. It is this knowledge which has contributed to the development of a wide range of Teacher Groups: planning groups, working groups, discussion groups and study groups, who all use the staff and resources at the Centre to co-ordinate and support their work. The kinds of support we offer from the Centre relate directly to our resources and staffing. This means that we can provide secretarial support and reprographic facilities which might not otherwise be available.

Another factor in the development of such groups has been the active involvement of both myself and the Deputy Leader, Jan Minchella. Although our aim is to encourage self-help groups to become truly autonomous, we are directly concerned and involved in their work. We see ourselves as having a professional concern to both facilitate and innovate, and believe that this cannot be done effectively from outside. We also need feed-back from Teacher Groups so that we can monitor and evaluate what we are offering. This is

crucial if we are to recognise and respond to the changing needs of the contexts for learning we make possible.

I have already indicated the range of Teacher Groups we co-ordinate and support. I would now like to give examples of the kinds of in-service education which occurs in some of the groups referred to.

If a Teachers' Centre is truly to reflect the needs of its teachers, then it should listen to how such needs are expressed. At Longmore this occurs via the Governing committee; the Divisional INSET committee; the Teachers' Centre representatives; and through the different curriculum and senior staff planning groups. Curriculum planning groups cater for all stages of schooling and cover such areas as maths, literacy, science, environmental education, religious education, microcomputers, audio visual aids, special needs and health education. Senior staff planning groups cater for the needs of headteachers, deputy headteachers, subject co-ordinators and heads of department. Such groups give interested teachers the opportunity to become active agents in the development of their own learning. Each year teachers are able, through these groups, to plan a range of courses, meetings, conferences and workshops to be held at the Centre or in different schools in East Hertfordshire. The following account shows how the literacy planning group organised meetings and courses for the current school year.

This group met three times in June and early July 1982, to discuss and plan for in-service needs in literacy. At the first meeting we formed sub-groups to focus on the different aspects of literacy we hoped to develop. We agreed to bear in mind any needs expressed by local groups of teachers; particularly those who were some distance from the Centre. The sub-groups were concerned with the following aspects: Literature, Reading Development, Reading for Learning and Drama. The decision to focus on these aspects was partly due to feedback from other meetings, such as the Language Co-ordinators conference held in March 1982, and comments picked up by me when visiting schools.

Although planning group members were involved in only one of the four sub-groups, they were kept informed about the progress of the others. Notes charting the progress of each sub-group were circulated after the meetings — this gave a written record to act upon and informed others of specific developments. The outcome of these particular planning meetings were: a six-session course on Reading Development in Bishop's Stortford (Autumn and Spring Terms); two three-session courses at Longmore on teaching literature (Autumn and Spring Terms); one three-session course on Reading for Learning in Cheshunt (Spring Term); a book seminar on 'Drama and the whole Curriculum'[3] in Cheshunt (November); a three-session course on Learning through Drama in Cheshunt (Spring Term). Two of the courses were organised and led by members of the planning group; others required expertise from outside. The next phase will occur during Summer Term 1983, when we will re-convene to assess this year's programme and start planning for the next school year.

Earlier I referred to the kind of study group who focus in depth over a long period of time. One such group has been meeting regularly at Longmore since January 1980. Their starting point was the Schools Council's **Match and Mismatch** in-service materials.[4] These materials include videotapes, audiocassettes and filmstrips, and are designed to show how learning experiences in science can match the individual development of five to thirteen year olds.

Whilst working through the materials, several members commented on the need to know more about the total context of the different situations shown. They felt frustrated by the inevitably speculative nature of their discussions and the analyses of transcriptions. Conscious of these constraints, we decided to develop self-observational techniques, so that group members could go on to look at and discuss the teaching and learning in their classrooms. These included keeping diaries, log books or journals, audio taping and video recording teaching and learning episodes.

We have been able to develop this further with support from the Hertfordshire Educational Television and Audio Visual Unit and the Schools Council. The teachers involved have all conducted intensive observations on the different interactions which occur in their classrooms. Some of their findings have now been written up as case studies for a report called 'What Learning Looks Like'[5], which will be published by the Schools Council later this year. In that report they discuss the value of their regular fortnightly meetings and show how the framework for mutual support created by the Teachers' Centre has helped them to develop as thinking, learning teachers.

Again, as with the planning meetings, the Teachers' Centre has kept group members informed of developments by circulating minutes and notification of meetings. It has also drawn on support from outside which has validated the investigations of these teachers and has given them the confidence to continue. All the teachers involved feel that what they have to say will be regarded and may well form a basis for future developments.

Hearing teachers' voices

Such considerations are important to the development of learning teachers. I wondered whether I should sub-title this article, 'Hearing Teachers' Voices', because I feel that this is an important outcome of much of the work at Longmore. The two examples I have mentioned show how teachers' voices can not only be heard but can also be communicated to a wider audience. We now have several groups who are prepared to publish and share their findings with others. This may occur through case studies (as with the Match and Mismatch group), or through sharing materials and building banks of teacher produced resources. It might be the result of argument, questioning and reflection, evident in the work coming from a group of teachers who have been looking at ways of documenting and researching children's development in writing.

I believe that the ways of sharing described are important because they show teachers talking to teachers. At Longmore we have tried to reinforce this by establishing a written dialogue between the Centre and its teachers in our termly booklet. This contains information on forthcoming courses and meetings as well as reports, comments and articles by teachers on what has happened the previous term. The purpose of this is to show how teachers, using their Teachers'

Educating Ourselves

Stephen Rowland
After teaching in primary schools, Stephen Rowland spent two years combining the roles of teacher and researcher in order to investigate how children's concerns, interests and abilities are expressed in the classroom. Since 1981 he has co-ordinated the Leicestershire Classroom In-Service Education Scheme.

The most frustrating thing about running a classroom is the lack of time you have to think about what you are doing. We are expected to be accountable for what learning takes place under our supervision, but have little opportunity to reflect upon it as it takes place. Do report forms, record cards and tick lists — laborious though they may be to complete — really provide evidence for ourselves, parents and colleagues that we have our finger on the pulse of the child's intellectual and social growth? Children learn while we teach, no doubt. But our understanding of the relationship between teaching and learning seems to be governed more by tradition or fashion than by a close examination of children while they are learning in the classroom.

I was therefore lucky to have the chance to spend two separate one-year periods working as part of a teaching pair in single primary school classrooms.* In each case we used the year to share the tasks of teaching the children and examining their activity and work much more closely than would be possible on one's own. The main conclusions which I drew from this experience may be summed up thus:

1 A necessary condition for successful learning is that the learner is able to exert a degree of control over the purpose, structure and content of his activity.
2 The principles which govern the child's learning are the same as those which govern the adult's learning.
3 The process of analysing children's learning has a direct and positive influence on one's competence as a teacher.

If there is any truth in these propositions, their implications for in-service school-based teacher education are far reaching. For it would follow from them that not only would the teacher develop his/her competence by conducting classroom 'research' (if that is an appropriate term to describe our systematic reflection about classroom activity), but also (from 1 and 2 above) that it is teachers, rather than professional researchers, who should exert a controlling influence over the purposes, content and structure of this 'research' activity as a condition for their own successful learning. This suggests a need for us, as teachers, to develop supportive structures for educating ourselves about learning in our classrooms, and disciplined strategies for reflecting upon and analysing that learning as it takes place.

An INSET scheme

With the support of Leicestershire Education Authority and Leicester University, this is what we have been attempting to put into practice in the Leicestershire Classroom Research In-service Education Scheme. The origins of this project go back to 1978 when a group of about fifteen teachers, from a variety of primary and secondary schools in the county, expressed an interest in the classroom studies that Michael Armstrong and I were conducting. We decided to form what we called a Research Consultative Group (RCG) whose aim was to provide a sounding board for the ideas about children's learning that were emerging from our 'research'. By sharing our analyses of children's stories, paintings, investigations and so on with a broader group of teachers we hoped to see how our ideas might be corroborated, modified or disconfirmed by the experience of others. At the regular monthly meetings of the group (which met, with the LEA's support, during working

Centre, can both reflect on their learning and share it with others.

I am conscious that the examples offered reveal only part of the work of our Teachers' Centre. However, I hope they show some of the kinds of development possible when teachers construe themselves as learners. All too often we regard teaching as something that we do and learning as something that they, the pupils, do. By actively engaging ourselves as learners, we become more aware of the interactive nature of the process. And it is this interchangeability, occurring between teachers and learners, which forms the dynamic for growth in both spheres.

References

1 Ray Shostak 'Teachers' Centres' in **A Teachers' Guide to Action Research** edited by Jon Nixon, Grant McIntyre (1981).
2 By the following terms I mean, *Centre based* — courses, meetings etc actually taking place at the Teachers' Centre; *Local based* — can refer to courses and meetings held in a particular locality, eg Cheshunt, and open to all teachers in that particular area; *school based* — refers to courses or meetings specifically planned for a small group of schools which are only open to teachers in those schools; *school focused* — refers to the particular in-service requirements of one school.
3 Jon Nixon (ed) **Drama and the Whole Curriculum,** Hutchinson (1982).
4 Wynne Harlen *et al,* **MATCH AND MISMATCH — Raising Questions & Finding Answers,** Oliver & Boyd for the Schools Council (1977).
5 Liz and Alan Thomson (editors) **What Learning Looks Like** — forthcoming publications — Schools Council 1983.

hours) we presented illustrative examples of our work for discussion.

These appeared to meet with considerable support from the teachers in the RCG. As two teachers who had had the opportunity to analyse in more depth than is possible for those in normal circumstances, our interpretations of the meaning and significance of the children's work were often thought to be plausible and interesting. But increasingly during that first year, I became aware that the discussions of the group were insufficiently critical to provide a useful corroboration of our work. Underlying the interpretations we presented were a number of unarticulated, and perhaps unarticulatable, assumptions about how we interpret children's activity, how we select what to interpret, and other complex but vital issues. The group was being presented with descriptions of classroom life which, however detailed, were necessarily selective, personal and constructed by our own particular perspective.

I am not saying here that we should have presented more 'objective' accounts. To aim for objectivity in accounts of classroom life leads inevitably to either misleading oneself and one's audience, or to excluding from the analysis much that is significant. Even quantitative measures of, for example, classroom interaction, depend in the final analysis upon a set of values which determines what shall be measured and how. No, the problem here was not that our descriptions and analyses were unjustifiably biased, but that the group was being presented with a classroom life as viewed through our personal spectacles, spectacles whose tint and focus could not be ascertained by the group.

Wider involvement

The only way to overcome this problem — one which besets any attempt at qualitative or critical analysis — was to involve the Research Consultative Group in its own collection and analysis of material from their classrooms. Only then could the group begin to appreciate and debate the theoretical and philosophical perspectives that play such a determining role in this type of analysis. Furthermore, by collecting material from their own classrooms, the range of schools from which children's work could be examined was broadened, thus extending the applicability of our emerging ideas to a more general sample of classrooms and teachers.

It also became clear to many of us that the value of what we were doing was not only determined by the 'results' of our enquiries — our developing understanding of children's classroom activity — but by the process of enquiry itself, which seemed to sharpen our awareness of how our teaching relates to learning. Thus by extending the group of teachers who contributed (albeit in a small way) descriptions and reflections upon work from their classrooms, we were not only strengthening the 'research' base of the project, but were, in effect, embarking on an in-service education programme.

Appreciating the in-service potential of our classroom enquiries, Leicestershire Education Department in 1980 agreed to support an extension of our work. Having completed my own one-year study, I am now appointed to co-ordinate the Classroom Research In-Service Education Scheme until 1985. The Authority agreed to provide for at least two additional teachers each year to conduct 'teacher researcher' studies on secondment studies in colleagues' classrooms. In addition, the Research Consultative Group of classroom teachers has been extended to twenty-five teachers who meet for three full days each term. Leicester University agreed to consider proposals for the seconded teachers' studies to be reported in the form of research MEd degrees, and provided additional practical and academic support.

As the project expanded, so the variety of the studies of the seconded teachers and the smaller scale studies of the other members of the RCG diversified. Themes ranged from an investigation of the cultural influences in the art work of a multicultural primary classroom, to the development of scientific understanding in a group of fourteen-year-olds. The meetings of the RCG have become a forum for the analysis of a range of material from the classroom. We have studied closely observed accounts of a child filling yoghurt pots at the sink, listened to stories young children have made up on to a tape recorder, tried to interpret the paintings of a talented adolescent artist. All this is the kind of material that can be collected from the ordinary classroom. But to consider it with others in a reflective and supportive atmosphere leads to insights missed in the hurly burly of classroom life, or inaccessible by only solitary reflection.

A finer focus

But there have been problems. It became clear during last year that the meetings of the group, and the intervening collection and discussion of material from the classroom, meant different things to different teachers. For some it provided an opportunity to evaluate innovations that were being tried out in their classrooms, others were more concerned to develop appropriate methods for gathering and analysing material concerning children's understandings, yet others wanted to articulate the implications for good classroom practice. In accordance with the principle that teachers should determine the purposes and methods of their own studies, it was important to allow for this diversity of aims. We therefore split the RCG into several sub-groups, each of about six teachers, which defined their own themes for investigation. While these sub-groups work autonomously, part of the RCG's meetings is devoted to the sub-groups sharing their work with each other by making presentations of papers and classroom material.

Each of these sub-groups consists of a mixture of teachers from primary and secondary schools and from different disciplines. This has led to an interchange of ideas which is not normally possible. It has enabled us to see that many aspects of children's learning and understanding are not specific to any particular age or curriculum area. We have begun, I believe, to dispel many of the myths concerning the differences between primary and secondary aged children, or between the arts and sciences; myths determined more by the institutions of schooling and society than by the human needs which they supposedly serve.

While the studies of the RCG are necessarily limited by the pressures of time on the classroom teacher, the work of those seconded to conduct fieldwork alongside

colleagues can develop more or less freed from the normal pressures. Those who are presently seconded, or were during the previous year, meet for one morning a week to present papers, observational accounts and samples of children's work for discussion. Sometimes, at these meetings, we will sit around a child's painting trying to pick out the significant features in it. At others we grapple with such notions as 'consciousness' and 'intention' (as, for example, in the question: Was the child consciously intending to paint this feature in this way?'). Such discussion soon becomes philosophy. But it is a philosophy whose application to the classroom is immediate and therefore whose ideas can be appropriated by us. In this way we hope to have created for ourselves the kind of learning context which we would aim to build for the children.

Context and form

But an 'open' in-service education programme demands the same kind of struggle as the 'open' classroom. As the distinctions between teacher and learner are blurred, so a higher investment is demanded from all the participants. The functions of production and consumption in educational research, traditionally separated by the institutions of research and schooling, become finely interwoven within a new social context. One aspect of this demand is that we, as teachers, must learn to write about our experience of the classroom, our interpretations of the children's work, our educational values, with the confidence that we have something significant to to say and that our experience is valid. For most of us our own schooling has not prepared us for this. Many of us in the group have experienced a profound resistance to writing which cannot be explained merely by the lack of motivation or 'technical' ability. It has more to do with the fact that the majority of our writing experience in academic institutions has been for the purpose of being judged by others, rather than as part of a genuine communication of ideas. We have to learn that we each have something to write about classroom life. As we begin to do that so we shall be building for ourselves and our students the most powerful tools for improving the quality of that life.

Is not our problem here like that of the children at school whom we expect to write from their own experience? To give them a better start than we have had, we must appreciate and respond to their writing as an act of communication, rather than as a product to be measured and graded.

Like many of the themes we have explored within the Scheme, we find the children's difficulties reflected in our own. The struggle of learning is in principle the same. That's why we must educate ourselves if we are to be responsible for educating others.

*The first year was spent with Michael Armstrong and is recorded in his **Closely Observed Children** (1980). The second year with Chris Harris was reported in 'Enquiry Into Classroom Learning', MEd thesis by S. Rowland, Leicester University (1980).

Discussion

Bridging the Gap

Bridging the gap between primary and secondary stages of schooling has long been an accepted and desirable educational aim, frequently being paraded in official reports and documents. Yet on the ground, contact has generally been confined to the annual transfer of children, with any further links being left very much up to individual initiative.

Ironically, falling school rolls and financial cut-backs look like offering an opportunity to change all that. Many secondary schools are beginning to experience the effects of the declining birthrate, and, unless they can attract as many of the available children from their catchment area, that is, not lose them to private schools or other state secondaries, they will have to suffer staffing cuts. Self-preservation is a marvellous motivator, and the climate is now right to initiate primary/secondary liaison activities that, in attracting more primary pupils to transfer to their local secondary, also begin to harmonise the middle years' curriculum and create a catchment identity between all the neighbourhood schools.

One such approach has been developed, over the past few years in Wiltshire, in response to requests from teachers for a more organised programme of contact. A neutral person, such as an adviser or education officer (neutral in the sense of not being from the locality), has sounded out opinion in an area and then, in conjunction with the secondary and primary heads, convened a meeting, that included the senior management team from the secondary school. The main purpose of meeting has been to clarify the aims of primary/secondary liaison and to accept the principle that more contact would be beneficial. Soon after, an open forum has been held for primary and secondary teachers and has attracted large numbers, over 100 in one case. Under these circumstances, all the meeting can hope to achieve, once the aims have been explained, is to throw out a wide range of activities that could be undertaken and to appoint a small working party to organise a programme.

The results have varied in ambition but some of the most successful have centred on the establishment of a permanent classroom-base in the secondary school for use by visiting primary children and their teacher. A surplus room has been timetabled out and then fitted with all the accessories of a junior classroom, including reference and fiction books, equipment and consumables. The LEA has helped with a small initial pump-priming grant but the feeder schools and the comprehensive have covered running costs from their capitation and school funds.

The primary 4th year children visit the secondary school on three or four occasions during the year, beginning with a day in the autumn and ending with up to four consecutive days in the summer. To get the most from the exercise, the primary teachers have found it essential to liaise with their secondary colleagues to discuss the curriculum content of the visits. Secondary teachers have then been able to prepare and take specialist lessons, using the more sophisticated resources available to them, with the primary children. As far as the transfer and induction of primary children into the secondary school, there has been a noticeable fall in both parent and child anxieties and a smoother start to the new school year. Yet the real spin-off has been the growth of in-service sessions on different subject areas across the middle years of schooling. Catchment meetings of primary and secondary teachers have been well attended and discussion has been based on the shared experience of those teachers who have co-operated in the primary/secondary classroom. Although these are early days, such discussions have fared far better than those convened in areas where inter-school contact of this kind has been less.

Contacts between teachers in a catchment area have generally blossomed after the first year's use of the primary/secondary classroom. Subsequent programmes of link activities have included: joint sporting events, music, art and drama festivals, sharing of resources such as libraries, computers and practical rooms, exchange of teachers on a regular basis, and educational/social events for teachers and Governors.

Often it becomes difficult to monitor the extent of this growth once the practice of closer contacts has become established. For this reason, the open forum of teachers is re-convened annually to review developments and choose the working party to plan the next year's programme.

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Vocationalism: the new threat to universal education

Maurice Holt
Director of the Curriculum Development Support Unit at the College of St Mark and St John, Plymouth, Maurice Holt was the first Head of Sheredes School, Herts, where a common 11-16 curriculum has operated since 1969. He has also been a freelance education consultant, and began his career as a research engineer in industry.

A fundamental decision we have to make about education is whether it should transform the mind so as to equip us for independent judgement and rational action, or whether it should be directed towards practical skills for particular ends. This is the distinction between liberal education — education for freedom, for tackling problems as yet unknown — and schooling as training, for instrumental tasks as they are currently perceived. In his 1976 Ruskin College speech, James Callaghan plumped firmly for training: education should 'equip children . . . for a lively, constructive place in society and . . . fit them for a job of work'. Both aims discount education as a good in itself, in favour of education for fitting in as a 'constructive' (presumably, non-dissenting) person with existing society, and for the vocational needs of specific jobs.

The same emphasis is evident in the subsequent 1977 Green Paper from the Department of Education and Science, and led to a great vogue for links between school and industry. (In 1973, the Schools Council refused to find £20,000 to support the admirable West Midlands 'Understanding Industrial Society' project; three years later, it produced a quarter of a million for the Schools Council Industry Project before even a firm proposal had been prepared.[1]) It became a fashionable assumption that the more school reflected the concerns of industry, the better for everyone.

Meanwhile, as Joan Simon explained in last autumn's **Forum**, the Manpower Services Commission had been set up in 1974 by the faltering Health administration as a quasi-autonomous body funded by the Department of Employment. In 1978 the Callaghan cabinet, faced with growing youth unemployment, rejected a DES proposal for a Youth Opportunities Guarantee in favour of the Youth Opportunities Programme advanced by the MSC. Ever since, the DES — and with it, the case for education — have lost ground to the trainers and to the industrial lobby. In the event, unemployment rose steadily despite YOP, which generated its own dissatisfactions among many of its recipients.

An American study[2] has suggested that vocational pre-vocational schemes like YOP are an unsatisfactory solution to youth unemployment. From experience in the US, it concludes that 'There was substantial evidence that trade and industrial training had no economic pay-off . . . Training programmes uncoordinated with specific and permanent jobs may be no more relevant to jobs than school-based programmes'.

This lesson has yet to be learnt by the MSC, by the Further Education Unit and by many politicians and educators on this side of the Atlantic. The new Youth Training Scheme, which will replace YOP this autumn, is based firmly on workplace training and in the view of Youthaid[3] 'will not be the much-heralded "bridge" between school and work, but a "gangplank" between school and unemployment for more than half its graduates'.

Yet the vocational rhethoric appeals to politicians of all parties, and with the government's recent decision to by-pass the DES and channel £7m of MSC money into vocationalising the secondary school curriculum, all who believe that liberal education is worth defending must be ready to mount the barricades. The **New Training Initiative** reaffirms, without reservation, an instrumental view of education[4]: 'The government is seeking to ensure that the school curriculum develops the personal skills and qualities as well as the knowledge needed for working life'. Despite the pervasive lack of work — and the inevitable future changes in our concept of work in a post-industrial society — 'working life' is to determine both the knowledge and the personal qualities addressed by the school curriculum.

Suddenly it takes an effort to remember that, back in 1977, the HMI in **Curriculum 11-16** spelt out its 'eight areas of experience' model which, despite some flaws, at least recognised that education was to do with personal development and autonomy: 'Pupils are members of a complicated civilisation and culture, and . . . have nothing less than a right to be introduced to a selection of its essential elements'. There will be little room in which to exercise that right when the curriculum is assembled from life-skills packs and modules on technical skill and wealth creation. Now, it is suggested,[5] the HMI model 'has become increasingly out-of-tune with an environment dominated by falling rolls, straitened resources, permanent youth unemployment and the *de facto* raising of the school leaving age to seventeen . . . It is essentially academic in nature and hence for the few, and it is inappropriately age-related. This logic of a 13/14-19 curriculum is becoming increasingly compelling'.

I find the logic of a 14-16 or 14-19 curriculum totally uncompelling, if our concern is education rather than short-term political convenience. For the 11-16 years are the years when schools can promote a common curriculum which offers all pupils those insights into our culture without which personal and moral autonomy will be denied them. These are the culminating years of guaranteed education, when pupils possess the wit and maturity to look critically at the

forms of knowledge and experience which inform action and judgement: if our society offers them less than this, it sells them short and threatens its own future. Post-16, the climate is different; personal and vocational interests will shape a programme of general education, which must continue if students are to learn how to go on adapting in a changing society. The pre-vocational bias currently favoured for post-16 programmes is itself misconceived, and to suggest that this bias should have a deliberate backwash effect pre-16 is to compound the error. It is rather the other way round: a liberal 11-16 education should feed forward post-16 and broaden what will otherwise be a narrow straitjacket of skills and competencies.

Along with the vogue for a 14-16 vocationally-led curriculum goes a modish preference for graded tests and pupil profiles, and the suggestion that the existing 16-plus system is beyond retrieval. Yet in Queensland, the Australians have transformed a conventional 16-plus and 18-plus examination system by making it school-based (with external moderation), and freeing it both from university controls and the tyranny of the normal distribution.[6] It would be far better to improve the system we have — since *some* system is clearly a political necessity — than introduce one which depends on relentless performance testing and the complex apparatus of profiles.

The result of these well-meaning prescriptions will be more, not less assessment. The first HMI report on graded tests in modern languages teaching finds that, in an authority which has pioneered these methods for some years, 'too many schools are blindly teaching youngsters . . . how to pass the tests rather than how to acquire a deeper and more practical grasp of languages.'[7] And this is in a subject which can readily be reduced to a skill, giving criterion-referenced tests some kind of educational justification. The prospect in subjects like English and mathematics, where understanding is paramount, looks gruesome. To base an educational programme on output measures will bring in its wake all the well-known disadvantages of the production model of schooling — of behavioural objectives and means-end planning.

False assumptions

Output-led curriculum models will inevitably be preferred by those who see education as directed towards ends outside education: for the ends define the activity. And they have the political virtue of sounding logical. But apart from distorting the educational process, they don't work: President Reagan has announced federal funding for crash programmes to improve science and mathematics teaching, yet the teaching in the US of both these subjects has for some years been dominated by performance tests, in the belief that only testing can make teaching efficient!

The difficulties which attend profile schemes have been ably chronicled by a Scottish study.[8] All their supposed benefits can be secured by the simple device of allowing half the marks in a common 16-plus examination system — extended to cover the whole ability range — to be awarded for course work. There is ample successful experience here on which to build.

The assumption behind all these vocational approaches — that school must ape life — needs to be challenged. It rests, as Peters[9] has pointed out, on a false distinction between 'education' and 'life': 'Those who make it usually have in mind a contrast between the activities that go on in classrooms . . . and those that go in industry, politics, agriculture and rearing a family. The curriculum of schools is then criticised because, as the knowledge passed on is not instrumental in any obvious sense to "living", it is assumed it is "academic" or relevant only to the classroom . . . What is forgotten is that activities like history . . . involve forms of thought and awareness than can and should spill over into the things that go on outside, and transform them . . . As a result of them what is called "life" develops different dimensions.'

The HMI secondary survey [10] shows plainly that our secondary schools are dominated by the grammar-school curriculum: its phoney academicism fails all too often to 'spill over' in the way Peters indicates. Moreover, its preoccupation with decontextualised knowledge makes it a travesty of what a liberal education should be. Yet — as the HMI and others have argued, and as some schools demonstrate — it is perfectly possible to adapt existing subjects to serve ends beyond themselves, and to modify O-level and CSE so that the curriculum comes first. It requires a thoughtful staff who think about curriculum, and who value intentions above measured outcomes: for a liberal education is fuelled by ideals, not ends. It requires school-based in-service support on a considerable scale: but let us not forget that the apparatus of life skills modules, graded tests and pupil profiles does not come cheap.

Above all, we must not forget that — by a rich irony — a vocationalised curriculum ill-serves its pupils in precisely those respects in which it claims to be strong. For it claims to prepare them for jobs in tomorrow's society by basing a curriculum on the skills seen as necessary today. Yet the incontestable fact about tomorrow is that it will be different from today, and will present quite new problems. New problems can be solved only by those with the personal and moral autonomy to interpret our culture — by those who have enjoyed a liberal education. Pupils who have never gone beyond the skills-based programmes which break down knowledge into testable elements will never have transcended the present or understood the past.

Some might agree that all pupils should have a common curriculum as the basis of secondary schooling, but would argue that by incorporating MSC-funded technical studies 14-18, they will satisfy the government and collect the cash without compromising their ideals. They should pause, and note that the MSC's criteria for accepting programmes within its Technical Education Initiative include 'clear and specific objectives . . . with a technical/vocational element throughout . . . broadly related to potential employment opportunities (with) arrangements for regular assessment.'[11] For sure, the 11-16 curriculum should include techno-aesthetic experience: the neglect of this and the expressive area is one of the tragedies of the grammar-school model. But it should stem from an educational appraisal of key forms of doing and making, not from vocational pressures and employment-led skills.

The decisions we take about the curriculum now will affect our children much more than they affect us.

Hence the importance of holding fast to true educational values, and not yielding to false arguments. For it is simply not true that a vocationalised curriculum either secures jobs, or increases economic wealth. A report for the Department of Environment[12] has found that vocational preparation and training have 'only a marginal effect on levels of employment'. Japan — a country much admired by the technocrats — has secondary schools with 'no vocational courses for 14-year-olds, no work experience for 15-year-olds . . . Technology teaching is primitive . . . there are no computers in the classroom . . . All children follow a broad, general course.'[13] And it is worth noting that in Sweden, 'direct vocational training cannot by law be provided in the pre-16 comprehensive schools.'[14]

If the dire toxin of vocationalism spreads through our secondary schools, it will bring in its wake only social divisiveness and deficient forms of schooling. But it can only spread if teachers succumb to its seductive but meretricious message. Schools should do all in their power to resist the fractured logic of the 14-18 curriculum, to strengthen the boundary at 16-plus, and to devise school-based 11-16 core curriculums which build not on differentiation but on unity. Nothing less will equip their pupils for the world which lies ahead.

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The Teacher's View of Testing

Stephen Steadman and Harvey Goldstein

Stephen Steadman and Harvey Goldstein report here on material derived from the Evaluation of Testing in Schools project, funded by the Social Science Research Council at the Institute of Education, London University.

> 'There is no standard of comparison which can surpass or supercede the considered estimate of an observant teacher, working daily with the individual children over a period of several months or years. This is the criterion I have used'. (Burt, C. **Mental and Scholastic Tests,** LCC, 1921, p.199)

> '. . . when all the teachers were considered together, almost half of them (forty eight per cent) were inconsistent estimators, who over-estimated about half their pupils' performances, while under-estimating the rest. Of the remaining fifty two per cent of the teachers, about two-thirds were under-estimators, the rest being over-estimators'.
>
> (Southgate, V., Arnold, H. & Johnson, S. (1981) **Extending Beginning Reading,** Heinemann Educational Books, p.93)

We can no longer be sure whether Cyril Burt actually did what he said, but the contrast between his expressed attitude and the attitude behind the work of the Schools Council team — which contrasted teacher estimates of reading age with those derived from Schonell's Graded Word Reading Test — is dramatic and unmistakable. For Burt, test results should give way in the face of teacher estimates; for Southgate and her team, 60 years later, the teachers' estimates were judged less accurate than a test result.[1] This article describes our findings on the question of how far teachers are prepared to believe test results.

The Evaluation of Testing in Schools Project (ETSP) was funded by the SSRC for three years from January 1980 as a part of the SSRC's programme of research into aspects of accountability in education. The project's general aim has been to determine the extent of standardised testing in schools, the reasons for introducing testing, the uses to which test results are put, and the effects of testing on schools in the broad sense. Two particular foci have been an evaluation of the work of the DES Assessment of Performance Unit[2] and LEA test programmes which typically set out to 'screen', 'monitor' and 'aid transfer' as well as having accountability purposes.

Early questionnaire surveys and visits to LEAs showed that almost eighty per cent of all LEAs test at least one age group, mostly using 'blanket' or saturation testing.[3] Reading is the most commonly tested skill and there is evidence that, since the recommendations of the Bullock Report, newer and better tests are being used by LEAs.[4]

More recently we have conducted an interview survey in a random sample of 20 LEAs to obtain heads' and teachers' views about testing at local and national level. The sample of LEAs was drawn from the seventy eight LEAs known to have testing programmes using standardised tests. In each LEA a random sample of four schools with junior age pupils was visited. All the

LEAs tested at junior age levels; a minority also tested at the secondary school level. Within each school we sought interviews with the head and two teachers. In principle the teachers were those who taught the age group(s) at which the LEAs did their testing. (LEA testing is most often done in the first and last years of junior schooling.) But, in practice, this was not always possible because of differences in school organisation and size. The sample produced interviews with eighty heads and 158 teachers. This article presents some preliminary results from an analysis of these interviews.

Teachers who disagree with test results

The heads and classroom teachers were asked about their attendance on initial or in-service training courses on educational testing, since we felt that knowledge about the nature of testing would help teachers make a more rational use of test results. In the event about two-thirds of the heads and class teachers had been on a course at least part of which was devoted to testing, and about a third of the heads and a fifth of the class teachers had been on a whole course specifically devoted to testing.

We were interested in teachers' trust in test results. They were asked firstly whether they ever found discrepancies between their own ratings of children's attainments and the results of a test. Over ninety per cent said that this did occur. We then went on to examine what teachers did when this occurred — whether they tended to believe the test or their own judgement. The same questions were asked of both heads and class teachers. 'If the test score is higher than you expect, what is your reaction?'. An equivalent wording was then used to ask about reactions if the score was lower than expected. Answers ranged quite widely in the amount of detail given, with the headteachers being generally more fluent, and mentioning more possibilities in their replies than did the class teachers. Also the headteachers tended to assume that verbal reasoning tests were the subject of discussion, whereas teachers more often referred to reading tests. This may reflect who does what in primary school testing. One head teacher said that, if the test score was higher than he'd expected, his reaction would be:

> 'That he's a lazy little devil! It would be rather a blow to my professional judgement . . . I'd be nonplussed really, if the child scored *very* high and I was taken by surprise. I don't regard these scores as sacrosanct though. I think, within five or ten points, you can *expect* little variations'.

And if the score was lower than expected:

> 'I tend to be sympathetic. I'd think — and say, well, perhaps he wasn't feeling very well that day. I try not to place too much weight on a low score'.

Another head had a less relaxed view. If the score was unexpectedly high he'd:

> '. . . believe the child is underachieving and find out why — (I'd) retest. Maybe call in the educational psychologist or remedial (advice). . . . see (the) home and check there. Talk to (the) parents'.

And, if the score was unexpectedly low, he'd:

> 'Check health and nervousness. Children can overachieve, I suppose. Talk, and find a consensus about the child. Retest with another test to check with other teachers'.

The interview schedules carried pre-coded categories of answer and it later proved possible to add further categories by inspecting the answers which the interviewers had been instructed to note down verbatim. We also used the open ended replies to form a judgement as to whether the discrepant scores were believed or not, although sometimes a clear-cut decision was not always possible.

If we confine our interest to those 48 heads and 106 class teachers where a clear decision was possible, and compare reactions when the score is higher than expected with reactions to lower than expected scores, an interesting result emerges. When the test score is higher than a teacher's own expectation, about three-quarters of the heads and half the teachers believe the test score to be correct and when the test score is lower than expected the same percentages believe it. However, among the heads, nearly all maintain a consistent attitude, either believing the test both when higher and lower than expectation or refusing to believe it whatever its result. Some class teachers on the other hand have an apparently inconsistent attitude. About one-sixth believe the test score when lower but not when higher than expected, and a similar percentage believe it when lower, but not when higher, than expected.

Thus we have a picture of heads more ready to trust tests than teachers, perhaps a reflection of their relative distance from the classroom situation. In addition they are consistent in their views. Class teachers on the other hand exhibit more doubts. Those who believe the test score when higher than expected, but not when lower, could be said to be exercising their professional judgement to give a child the 'benefit of the doubt' in the realisation that it is better to have a routine anticipation of higher achievement even if 'in error'. Those who believe test scores when lower than expected, but not when higher, could well be those whose expectation is based on what they know is the child's best achievement, rather than his average performance. Such teachers would thus view with suspicion a test score higher than such a high expectation but would have no difficulty with a lower than expected score.

In order to try to probe these attitudes further we studied teachers in terms of the amount of exposure to courses on testing and their teaching experience.

When broken down by whether the teachers had been on any course or not, substantially the same picture emerged, but when classified in terms of years of teaching experience some interesting differences appeared. For the heads, classified into those with 0-20 years experience and those with twenty one years or more, those with less experience tended to show more 'inconsistency'. About one-fifth especially tended to believe higher than expected scores and disbelieve lower than expected scores. Among the longer experienced, there were no inconsistent heads. For the classroom teachers, classified into those with ten or less years experience and those with eleven or more, the opposite was the case. For those with less experience, there was an overall higher tendency to believe the test with only one-sixth showing 'inconsistency'. For the more experienced, only about half believed the test, the remainder being 'inconsistent'.

Conclusions

We are continuing to analyse these results (Gipps *et al*, 1983),[5] but already some preliminary conclusions are in

order. Teachers' responses to a child's standardised test score are not simple. There are teachers who appear to accept these scores, even when contrary to their own judgement, and we have suggested that this may be related to the teachers' image of a child and how he or she frames their expectation. Head teachers seem more inclined to believe test scores than class teachers, especially those heads with longer experience. On the other hand, class teachers with longer experience are inclined to be more sceptical about the test results. Within our data there is no simple way to provide an explanation of these findings, and the following commentary makes only tentative suggestions.

There is other research from the United States which tends to corroborate some aspects of our findings. Very similar investigations to our own have been conducted by the Universities of Pittsburgh and Carnegie-Mellon. The work has included an interview survey of practising elementary school teachers and the most directly comparable findings have been summarised by Leslie Salmon-Cox[6] as follows:

> 'When a test score indicates performance below that which a teacher would predict from classroom performance, the score tends to be discounted. When a child scores *higher* than might be predicted, it seems to serve as a "red flag" indicating that the teacher has missed something'.

So far as we are aware, this 'inconsistency' has not been investigated further by the Pittsburgh group. In commenting upon these findings, Cox says that standardised tests fall short, as far as teachers are concerned, in two ways. They only measure certain aspects of teachers' cognitive goals — almost nothing of the social goals which teachers rate highly — and they are not the broad-based kinds of measures that teachers prefer. George Madaus[7] has remarked upon the anomalous position of standardised tests.

> 'If the results of the tests differ greatly from teachers' perceptions, the tests run the risk of being ignored on the grounds of inaccuracy. If, on the other hand, test results correspond closely to teachers' perceptions, the tests run the risk of being dismissed on the grounds of redundancy'.

Compared to our results, it would seem that fewer American teachers believe a test score which is lower than their expectations. It is possible that this is related to the increased exposure to testing and hence sophistication about tests of US teachers, although we are unclear as to how this would operate. If our earlier suggestion about expectations is correct, it would suggest that upgrades tend to be formulated differently in the two counties.

There are a number of ways in which discrepancies between test score and teacher expectation can arise. Most obviously, the test may be examining aspects of performance only loosely related to the curriculum in operation. Even where the test is relevant, however, the random 'measurement error' in some cases will be large enough to indicate a difference from expectation. Some heads and class teachers were aware of this effect, referring to it as 'a freak result', 'an element of luck' or 'a fluke'. More importantly than either of these two explanations perhaps is the likelihood that the teacher will be judging the child by local criteria — both in terms of curriculum and by comparison with other local children, whereas most test norms are national. In addition, the mismatch between these aspects will vary according to the test used.

We see therefore, that there will be many occasions where the test and teacher expectation will legitimately differ and there was recognition of this by some of the teachers in our study.

To ask which is the 'right' assessment is to ask an irrelevant question since the two types of assessment have different aims. Nevertheless, we suspect that this is often not the description of testing which gets emphasised in courses and in some quarters there is often an assumption that a test is an 'objective' standard against which to measure the teacher. Our own view is that while tests have a part to play in assessment, both for 'monitoring' and 'screening', their role is not widely understood and nor is their actual mode of use. The present study has, we hope, indicated some of the extent of this deficiency.

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OBITUARY

RAYMOND KING

The death of the chairman of our Editorial Board, Raymond King, will be felt as a sad loss by several generations in the mainstream of progressive education. Long associated with the English New Education Fellowship and **New Era**, Raymond was a founder member of **Forum's** editorial board, contributing a major article, 'The London School Plan: the present stage', to the first number of **Forum** 25 years ago. He became chairman of the board in 1964, guiding discussion with wisdom and humour for nearly 20 years.

Raymond was an influential leader in developing universal secondary education. Appointed a grammar school head in 1926, he was part of a caucus of London heads planning a vision for the future in the 1930s, chairman of the standing Conference on the Democratic Reconstruction of Education in the next decade and wrote the ENEF pamphlet, **The Comprehensive School**, in 1950. Six years later he began turning Wandsworth School into a full comprehensive. In his last major **Forum** article (vol 22 no 1) he surveyed five decades in the evolution of comprehensive education from his own central standpoint. *Ed.*

OBITUARY

Margaret Gracie

Maggie, as she was known to all her friends, died prematurely of cancer just before Christmas last year. For many years she was a valued member of **Forum's** Editorial Board.

After graduating in sociology at Leeds University, Maggie took her PGCE at the University of Leicester and started teaching at Bushloe High School, an innovatory Leicestershire school where the first year teachers worked as a team in a specially designed resource based centre. When Countesthorpe opened in 1971, Maggie was among the original staff working with Tim McMullen, Michael Armstrong and others who will be known to **Forum** readers. She was then appointed Warden of the Blaby Teachers' Centre in Leicestershire. It was when she was at Bushloe that she wrote a brilliant article for **Forum** entitled 'Teaching Social Science' (Vol.12 No.3). A later article (Vol.19 No.3) on 'The Role of Play', based on close observation of an infant classroom, was derived from her work for a Master's degree at the University of Leicester. Readers may remember her long review article on Michael Armstrong's **Closely Observed Children** in Vol.23 No.2.

Maggie was a brilliant and unusual teacher — and personality. An Australian friend (Gwen Dow) writes 'She is imprinted on my mind as one of the most brilliantly witty and warm teachers I've ever had anything to do with. Her wit, of course, was linked with her true originality in approach to teaching.'

Maggie was a dear friend of Lawrence Stenhouse, whose death we recorded in our last number. She worked closely with Lawrence and Jean Ruddock on in-service MACOS courses for practising teachers.

Maggie's many friends — in teaching, race relations, and in other fields — will miss her deeply. Plans are being made to publish a memoir of her work and personality.

Lee Enright writes here of her time as Deputy Head at the West Moors Middle School, to which she was appointed in 1977. (Maggie organised and prepared the description of the work and approach of this school under the title 'Time to Look into the Water', which appeared in Vol.23, No.1.)

Maggie Gracie and I were both appointed to the new West Moors Middle School in 1977, Maggie as deputy head to Frank Jacobs. The job of deputy head is not an enviable one — indeed, Maggie had more than once been advised to 'skip that bit' of the profession. In the event she did the job superbly, combining the job of working with children with the more difficult one of promoting staff professional development.

An important task she had to face when we first began as a school was to co-ordinate the construction of our curriculum. We had endless staff meetings about curriculum, and there were times when an exhausting day in the classroom left one unable to bring much energy to them. But she insisted that the curriculum was not something that could be imposed on those who were to teach it, and that teachers had a responsibility to be involved in the decision-making process. Indeed she felt that a curriculum that did not come from the staff could never fully be implemented by them.

Jerome Bruner and **Man: A Course of Study** were strong influences in her work, yet even as she helped introduce MACOS to our school she was also pointing out its weaknesses. Such an attitude could not help but disarm those who thought that Maggie was a blind devotee of the course.

Frank Jacobs has spoken of Maggie's razor-sharp mind which would cut through any humbug. But he also agrees that she was essentially a modest person — something which many people who knew her slightly failed to appreciate. At the first staff meeting of our new school, when ideas flowed fast and free, Maggie said very little. It was not until I tackled her about this much later when she told me how she had learnt to control her impetuosity, to give others a chance to speak, especially when she might be perceived to be in a position of influence. She told me how the years had shown her that if she kept quiet long enough, someone else would say exactly what *she* had been thinking. She always felt it was more important that other people should be given the chance to develop their own ideas in discussion. At school, she never claimed special treatment by virtue of her status, an approach which had important ramifications for staff relationships.

Maggie's real joy came from working in the classroom. She believed in Bruner's idea of the teacher as a model of a learner, and spent hours with the children, in and out of school, trying to learn as much as she could about their Dorset environment. She submerged herself in a search for understanding about lizards, snails, fish and frogs. She saw the children as scientists, artists and writers, and treated them with the respect such people deserve. Some children found this odd at first, but many were amazed and delighted to be taken so seriously about something which they thought they 'just knew'.

I worked with Maggie for just three years before she felt that she had other work to do. After she started her law course, she regaled me with stories about how she had tried to help her lecturers towards a Brunerian approach but without any success!

Maggie left our school three years ago, but as recently as a month before she died, she answered a letter from Frank who wanted her advice about a problem concerning the education of travelling children. Her interest in our welfare and her ability to get to the root of a problem continued right up to the end.

I felt I lost something very important the day Maggie left. But her theory of learning prevailed — she believed in the idea of alternative pathways to a knowledge which was always provisional. She left nothing 'finished' at West Moors. Everything is there for us to continue and develop along our own paths to knowledge.

Lee Enright and *Brian Simon*

Reviews

HMI view

Education 5-9. An Illustrative Survey of 80 First Schools in England. DES (1982).

'The copying kept the children busy and produced work of an apparently reasonable standard but it did not . . . reveal what the children had remembered or understood.' Taken from the above survey this should have been penned with the steel nib and watery ink of the 1880s; written as a comment on a fairly usual practice in First schools in the 1980s it is shaming evidence of either a lack of understanding or a lack of caring. There is little excuse in a profession for the former; the latter we have always with us. This survey, crisply written and with the usual admirable lack of jargon, does not hesitate to censure what it feels is poor practice; neither does it hesitate from giving praise where due. The reason for such judgement is justified by an overriding appeal as to whether or not such practices enhance and further the development of a child's learning and development. The strength of an illustrative survey such as this one is that it can give very clear examples of good and bad classroom practice and even children's work, which are instantly recognisable as genuine.

As the report itself admits, the fate of first schools will not ultimately depend on whether they are found to have fulfilled the expectation of the Plowden report. Changes in the birth rate, consideration of the cost or effectiveness of middle schools will ultimately have as much influence as anything else. Although the survey gives some encouraging examples of a number of excellent schools alongside those of depressingly low standard, one doesn't gain an impression that there is such a thing as a First school 'ethos': there do seem to be interesting differences, however, between those schools designated 5-8 and those 5-9. The former seem to have more of the infant school about them, the latter more influenced by junior school practice. This is also reflected in the background experiences and/or training of the headteachers. Nonetheless the survey repeats the comment in several places that they feel that the older children are 'insufficiently challenged, especially in reading and writing which does not always match their ability'. This also seems the case with regard to the creative arts:

> not a single school is mentioned as providing woodwork and only 'a few' have clay. One particular school, bringing down one of the severest notes of censure to be found in the survey, happily had its 7+ girls making gingham aprons in its 'art & crafts' (*sic*) sessions and the boys making paper lampshades . . .

Few examples are given of any of the children's 3R work being based upon their creative work in the first instance; and there seemed to be an almost obsessional reliance upon the wonders expected of workcards: '. . . in many schools there was an excessive and purposeless use of the material' (English workcards).

The least satisfactory and most ambivalent part of the survey deals with assessment. Although some schools keep the kind of records that enable them to use the information to plan future work, '. . . in the majority of schools little use is made of them'. In practice, much detailed record-keeping, often 'tick-lists' in effect, are often ineffective and misleading although the impression gained from the survey is that they are still regarded as a Good Thing. There is no suggestion of alternatives, such as a cumulative data-bank of children's own work and detailed examples of their behaviour in various situations. In all other respects, for inspiration, confirmation and the sharp reminder, this is essential reading for all those concerned with the education of children aged 5-9.

Annabelle Dixon
Chalk Dell Infant School
Herts.

APU view

The Language Monitors: a critique of the APU's primary survey report 'Language Performance in Schools' by Harold Rosen. Bedford Way Papers No.11, University of London Institute of Education and Heinemann Educational Books (1982), £1.95.

Harold Rosen's **The Language Monitors** is a political pamphlet, carefully timed to influence policy, and none the worse for that. The Assessment of Performance Unit was set up by the DES nominally to 'identify the incidence of under-achievement in schools' but in fact (no doubt) to persuade some sections of the public that all is well in the schools — or at least well enough to justify the continued allocation of large sums of public money. That it has had a sour kind of success is testified by the lack of interest in its reports shown by those newspapers who have so vociferously proclaimed the corruption and ineffectiveness of schools.

Harold Rosen's central criticism is that large sums of money should have spent on monitoring language performance where there would have been far more value in detailed studies of the processes of reading, writing and talking. Many of his other criticisms follow from that. He demonstrates persuasively for example some of the inadequacies in the model of reading chosen for testing: searching a book for information relevant to your own concerns and purposes is indeed different from answering someone else's questions about it; selecting from the bland options of a multiple choice question is an inadequate match for a good class-room discussion about the language of a story. Such over-simplifications and misrepresentations are probably inherent in mass testing. It is never possible to test human behaviours in their full complexity: testing is always a matter of 'indicators' that select and simplify. For the most part, Rosen is not asking for better testing, but for no testing.

At one or two points the APU is berated for decisions which in other contexts Rosen would applaud. The testing of spoken language was delayed for several years in order to give the NFER team the time to develop a range of tasks; he cannot really hold it preferable to rush in and use whatever methods are to hand. He even manages to make it seem reprehensible that 101 out of 115 primary school headteachers commented favourably on the style and presentation of the reading materials. But that is how it is in wholehearted polemic.

Have the APU tests done harm? Rosen surmises that they may have encouraged some teachers to do things they should not have done. But his real complaint is of the misapplication of funds which would have been better used for purposes more directly useful to teachers, informal studies of talking, reading and writing closer to the complexities not only of those activities but also of the contexts in which they take place in schools. And in that complaint, I would be disposed to join him.

Douglas Barnes,
University of Leeds

Critical issues

New Directions in Primary Education. Ed Colin Richards. The Falmer Press (1982), 310pp. £6.95 paper. £11.50 cloth.

This is one of the Falmer Press's 'New Directions' series, covering different areas of education. It is basically a Reader, consisting largely (but not entirely) of articles which previously appeared in **Education 3-13** and elsewhere. This does not detract from its merits. The editor's claim that the contributions 'illustrate the increase in quality, sophistication and acuity of recent writing in the primary field' is fully justified.

The book is designed for 'serious students of primary education, not for laymen'. It includes a number of stimulating and controversial articles — for instance, those by Barry Macdonald and John Elliott on evaluation and accountability respectively, both highly critical, incidentally, of the whole APU enterprise. **Forum** readers may be particularly interested in Stephen Rowlands (commissioned) article 'Progressive Education: a reformulation from close observation of children', which articulates his approach very effectively, and Maurice Galton's contribution 'Strategy and Tactics in junior school classrooms', an exposition of the ORACLE research.

Both these are in Part 5, 'Studying Primary Classrooms: the end of the black box'. Other

parts cover the curriculum; evaluation and accountability; and 'Policy and Organisation and Management: the end of teacher autonomy'. There is a very competent and lively introductory overview by the editor, together with a postscript, by Tom Stonier, predicting the end of primary schooling.

B. Simon

Tolstoy

Tolstoy on Education: Tolstoy's educational writings. 1861-62. Selected and edited by Alan Pinch and Michael Armstrong (translated by Alan Pinch). The Athlone Press (1982), 335pp. £18.00.

This is a superb book and all educators will gain something from it — especially **Forum** readers who, perhaps unwittingly, may have been influenced by Tolstoy's approach through Michael Armstrong's writings in this journal, and in his **Closely Observed Children** (1980). Although expensive, the book is beautifully produced by the Athlone Press, while its contents are certainly remarkable. Libraries, institutional and other, should be persuaded to take it on board, so that it can become widely available.

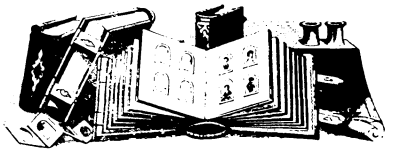
The book certainly supercedes the reprint, by the University of Chicago Press in 1967, of Leo Wiener's 1900 compilation under the same title. Though this was a valuable collection of some of Tolstoy's writings, the translation was very poor, since Wiener was not fluent in English. It is not only that Alan Pinch's translations have a vividness and immediacy that is quite new and really brilliant. It is also that the new book includes several pieces highly relevant to our understanding of Tolstoy, particularly as a practising teacher, which did not feature in Wiener's collection. These include Morozov's (Fyedka's) reminiscences as a pupil at Yasnaya Polyana and the reminiscences of another Morozov who was a successful teacher there with a particularly close relationship with Tolstoy. In addition, as well as the famous article 'Should we teach the peasant children to write, or should they teach us?' perhaps Tolstoy's most remarkable essay on the process of creative writing by his pupils, the two stories by his pupils, 'He feeds you with a spoon and pokes you in the eye with the handle', and 'The Life of a soldier's wife' are included, both of which are analysed in detail in Tolstoy's own essay.

The collection also includes Tolstoy's own, detailed description and analysis of the Yasnaya Polyana school, dealing with its general character and teaching, the activities of the pupils and so on; the essay on methods of teaching reading, and the long semi-philosophical essay entitled 'Training and Education'. Evidently, then, this book is a treasure house, or quarry, taking us inside the mind and teaching activities of one of the most remarkable people ever to give his full energies and thought to the matter of teaching and learning — in this case of normal peasant children in Russia well over 100 years ago.

The two introductory essays are first class, written with economy, wide knowledge, and a real concern to explicate both the context and the nature of Tolstoy's sudden, meteoric activities as a teacher. Alan Pinch sets out the historical background, both in terms of the actual situation in Russia when Tolstoy got so thoroughly involved, and in terms of Tolstoy's own involvement and activities, together with his sudden loss of interest, as, at last in 1862, 'the vast inchoate mass of images and ideas' which was to become **War and Peace** took shape in his mind. The second part of the introduction, 'The pedagogy of freedom', by Michael Armstrong, wrestles with Tolstoy's ideas, explicates them effectively, shows their relevance to our problems today (particularly in primary education), and concludes with his own interpretation of the problem of knowledge as discussed by Tolstoy.

There is much that is still mysterious, almost incomprehensible, in Tolstoy's extraordinary experience, especially with Fyedka (but also, according to Tolstoy, with many others of his pupils). Where and how did Fyedka derive the power of creative and critical judgement to which Tolstoy — and the stories — bear witness? Was it (is it?), as Michael Armstrong puts it, 'in some sense native to the mind, intrinsic in its activity at every stage of growth?' Armstrong attempts a specific interpretation, related to the child's own experience and limited grasp of language, while adding that 'children are not imprisoned within their experience' so that growth is possible. But it is impossible to do justice to the argument here. Those who wish to grapple with this central problem in education are strongly recommended to get hold of this book, and to live with it, if possible when sufficient leisure is available to absorb its meaning — and message.

Brian Simon



What does the community want?

Community education: its development and management by Cyril Poster. Heinemann Educational (1982) £9.95.

This book promotes school-based community education — a form that has become particularly associated with Leicestershire. Indeed, County Hall has taken the unusual step of issuing a review of the book suitable for inclusion in community newspapers.

Traditionally, voluntary groups have regarded the Leicestershire education department as 'monolithic'. Poster does drop one tantalising hint that a rapprochement between governing bodies and community school councils 'is not enough'. Can the voluntary groups really hope to see a transition from a school-based to a community-based service?

Unfortunately, the best examples of the informal community education that Poster is concerned to promote are found *outside* the school-based service that Poster favours. He argues that the new ILEA community schools will develop family-based extension activities and so add the missing informal element to London's Youth and Community Service. In fact, this service was developing these very activities fifteen years ago in the third (evening) session in Deptford primary schools. The ILEA Adult Education Institutes' family craft workshops must be one of the best (and more lasting) examples of informal community education to be found anywhere outside of adult literacy provision.

How does the system that Poster promotes work out in practice? Leicestershire's excellent statistical returns provide the kind of overview of the service that Poster rightly demands. Community school programmes do seem to present a lack of challenge when compared with the programmes of Authorities with non-school-based centres (with notable exceptions such as the Groby Community College Weather Satellite Project). In most community schools O-levels and physical recreation classes dominate the programmes. If you want to learn about gay rights, Marx, glue sniffing or school choice appeals, you will almost certainly have to look *outside* the community school.

Poster finds it necessary to defend the right of young people to socialise. 'What they do, provided it is not violently anti-social, matters not at all'. It is very difficult to promote this concept within a school-based service where the community (and prospective parents) want to see young people purposefully engaged. Poster fails to explore the advantages arising from a youth wing or free-standing youth club.

The pressure to retreat to activity-based youth work and to develop non-controversial programmes almost certainly does not have its origins in an inability to cope with controversy. It is the concept of self-financing that has stultified the growth of a balanced and challenging programme. All Poster's examples of good practice in activity organisation, time-tabling and arrangements with voluntary groups seem to be designed to limit tutor-student contact (and the money paid to the part-time worker). In the self-financing community school, provision drifts to where the money is. The success of the ILEA family craft workshops in attracting the non-user owes most to the quality and quantity of tuition available. Informal community education may well be more expensive than formal adult education.

Poster does not deal with the compounding of inequality endemic in self-financing. It is superficially attractive to keep money generated by letting the sports complex or conference centre out of the pocket of the Council Treasurer. Sooner or later, those who have no chance of developing work in anything other than classrooms will come round to the view that the Council itself ought to redistribute money generated by letting Council facilities.

In its purest form self-financing in community schools resembles 'each village caring for its own poor'. Following staff initiatives and post-dating Poster's book, Leicestershire has now developed a system of positive discrimination which takes the form of Council funding for work with specific groups of low income students.

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