

FORUM

for the discussion of new trends in education

Autumn 1986

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This issue

**Goodbye to Sir Keith
Children's learning
The Fourth Dimension**

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Contents

Vol.29 No.1

Autumn 1986

The Editors	The Legacy of Keith Joseph	4
Norman Barlow	TRIST and the future of In-Service Training	6
David Pavett	The Joint Boards and CPVE	9
Michael Armstrong	Thinking about Children's Learning	11
Patricia Potts	Equal Opportunities: the Fourth Dimension	13
Josie Levine	A Teachers Research Group	16
Pat Jones	Teacher Appraisal: Threat or Promise	18
Caroline Roaf	Whole School Policy: Principles and Practice	20
Sylvia Richardson	Curriculum Change in a County	22
	Forum and Primary Education	24
Reviews	Quantum Leaps	25
	Media Education	26
	Computer Optimism	27
	Afro-Caribbeans	27

The Next Forum

The next **Forum** is to be a special number on primary education. Nanette Whitbread presents a critical look at existing pressures towards a subject based curriculum, while Brian Simon contributes a review article on two outstanding recent books on primary education (Robin Alexander's **Primary Teaching** and R.J. Campbell's **Developing the Primary School Curriculum**). Michael Armstrong is concerned to develop a rationale for progressive primary education, while the ILEA research team responsible for the most wide-ranging research studies in this field contribute an article on important factors found to result in effective schooling. In addition, John Hallett writes on the work of UPTEC (Undergraduate Primary Teacher Education Conference), highly critical of CATE and its criteria.

There are also articles on secondary education. Roger Seckington contributes a restatement of comprehensive principles; Gaby Wiener writes on her work for EOC on reducing sex differentials in schools, and Jan Hardy on a key issue concerning multi-cultural and anti-racist education.

Thatcher's Educational Perspectives

The Tory 'Radical Right', who to some extent hold the reins of power, represent a continual threat to our publicly maintained system of schools, and to our comprehensive schools in particular. This, of course, is nothing new. Fourteen years ago, when the present Prime Minister was Secretary of State for Education, **FORUM** felt impelled to publish, as a separate pamphlet, a lengthy and close analysis of her actions in relation to comprehensive education under the title **Indictment of Margaret Thatcher** (now, unfortunately, out of print). This analysed her very questionable actions on a number of cases where she used her powers to sabotage local authority plans for the transition to genuinely comprehensive systems of secondary education. In fact during those years (1970 to 1974) there was a rapid swing to comprehensive schooling, which had massive grass roots support, and which was the result of the fruition of many local authority plans developed during the late 1960s. The movement to comprehensive education could not, then, be halted; but spanners could be thrown into the works to prevent its full realisation. This is precisely what Margaret Thatcher did.

As we go to press, the Prime Minister has set out her views on education in a number of interviews in the press. These indicate a sustained hostility to comprehensive education, and a determination not to allow such a system to develop its full potential. In a 'candid interview' with Graham Turner (*Sunday Telegraph*, 27 July 1986), Mrs Thatcher is reported as saying 'People were paying vast sums of money for our schools, and yet they were not getting the education for their children which they wanted'. They had to go to the local comprehensive. She wanted to give them the chance to go to a different school (so how could people say she was inflexible, she went on).

What sort of 'alternative secondary schools' does she have in mind? We are not told. All that comes through from this interview is a distaste (to put it at its mildest) of local comprehensive systems. But the intention behind it, of course, is clear enough. It is, if possible, to destroy such systems by some variant of the discredited voucher system which, as **FORUM** has consistently argued, would, if brought in, inevitably lead to the development of a hierarchy of schools instead of a system of schools of equal status (and resource provision). In an earlier interview with Hugo Young published in *The Guardian* (10 July 1980) somewhat similar points were made. 'I launched the Prime Minister on to the subject of education', writes Hugo Young. 'What, if she got a third term, would the education system look like at the end of

it?' It was significant, Young continues, 'that the first thought in her mind concerned not resources or even, directly, structures, but took us instantly back, once again, to the Bernie Grants'. She said 'we have got to get in many places, particularly in inner cities, alternative schools to some those the local authorities are running', going on to make a series of totally unsubstantiated charges of political indoctrination. Some local authorities were good, she conceded (for instance, Grantham), these should be allowed to continue running their systems, the problem was, however, of 'somehow taking over from the bad ones' — to ensure that the money goes into education — 'It may go to indoctrination'!

These, then, are the sort of preconceptions about education that concern our Prime Minister. They are in tune with the advice she has recently received from her former 'guru', Sir John Hoskyns, director-general of the Institute of Directors. His radical third-term programme, as it is described (*Sunday Telegraph*, 27 July 1986) calls on Mrs Thatcher to 'create a rumpus' by backing wide-ranging 'radical' schemes covering a wide area. In his 'second phase' to be carried out within a year or two after winning the next election, Hoskyns proposes not only that tax relief should be given for fees for private health and education, but also that the government should 'Force education authorities to operate an "open school" policy, where parents' first choices for their children must be honoured and allow successful schools to expand to meet demand'. He also proposes that all educational costs should be borne by the central government, thereby, presumably, abolishing any local authority involvement in education. Sir John Hoskyns was head of the Prime Minister's Downing Street policy unit from 1979 to 1982.

We titled our editorial in our last number **Save Our Schools**. This was our response to the maverick ideas then being pressed by the Tory right about education. From this latest series of interviews, programmes, and etc., it is clear that, from now on, this must be a continuous campaign, and one to which the mass of the people of this country need to be alerted. The school system today needs the most powerful defence organisations that can be established. That is why the recent organisation known as **PARENTS**, which unites parents and teachers organisations in a campaign for the defence of the publicly provided system, as well as the TUC led **EDUCATION ALLIANCE**, need the fullest support. The implications of the policies of the radical right need to be thoroughly understood. **FORUM** will certainly play its part in this action.

The Legacy of Keith Joseph

The Editors

The Editorial Board insisted that the demise of Sir Keith Joseph as Secretary of State for Education and Science should not go unremarked in FORUM. The Board has found itself out of sympathy with almost all the initiatives from the DES since Keith Joseph took office. The Editors were deputed to give expression to the Board's concern.

Sir Keith Joseph's eventual departure from office was marked by obituary-style attempts to construct a myth of greatness for posterity. A Secretary of State who sought to impose so many of the Black Papers' recommendations could expect tributes from that quarter; but some others, who should have known better, were eager to fall in step. The titles of his White Papers, **Teaching Quality** (1983) and **Better Schools** (1985), provide epitaphs to signify his hijacking of concern for high educational standards, while his obsessions and obduracy may be seen as integrity and determination. As Secretary of State for over four years he set his personal stamp on the service as a whole. His influence will persist for a long time: it was his intention so to ensure. His successor, Kenneth Baker, is already building on his initiatives and the general thrust he gave to education. Hence the importance of evaluating the legacy of Sir Keith Joseph.*

In the first place it is necessary to say, loud and clear, that Keith Joseph inflicted enormous damage on the education service of this country. In particular he succeeded, through single-minded pursuit of doctrinaire monetary policies, in alienating not only the great bulk of the teaching profession, but also the local authorities and others concerned in the service. During his period of office the schools and colleges have systematically been allowed to deteriorate in terms of buildings, maintenance and equipment, to levels never previously known. At the same time a consistent and ruthless thrust towards centralised control — over the curriculum, initial and in-service teacher training and in many other ways — has eroded not only traditional partnership patterns, but, as an inevitable concomitant, wrenched the heart out of both local authority and teacher led initiatives. The pressure to bring all such developments within the control of central authority, the DES, has been relentless.

Simultaneously, Keith Joseph clearly connived at the sell-out to the Manpower Services Commission of any clear *educational* control over the opportunities available to young people over the age for compulsory schooling — and the consequent erosion of full-time education for the 16 to 19 age-group. Through the Youth

Training Scheme, the combination of education and training which progressive thinking has been demanding for the last 40 years has resulted in control by an agency, outside democratic control, whose knowledge and concern with the educational aspects of these two crucial years is minimal, to say the least.

This abdication of educational responsibility for the majority beyond sixteen was reinforced by illogical separation, under MSC auspices, of so-called 'work-related' from the rest of non-advanced further education and by hiving off the otherwise opportune Review of Vocational Qualifications to exclude any consideration of GCSE or GCE 'A' Levels. Such divisiveness undermines the ability of LEAs, along with their schools and colleges, to engage in coherent planning and development of any comprehensive educational systems beyond sixteen.

Joseph further connived, again with the MSC, in the funding of TVEI — a highly dubious initiative, and one threatening to introduce vocational (or 'pre-vocational') training for named groups of students within secondary schools from the age of 14. Moreover the scheme introduced discriminatory funding among schools in participant LEAs.

Finally, Joseph's continued emphasis on the need for 'differentiation' **within** schools — a deliberate attempt to counter perhaps the most positive and hopeful development in the swing to comprehensive education — has found expression in his insistence on differentiation as a crucial aspect of the new GCSE, with its seven grades in each subject, each with its defined 'grade related criteria'; through TVEI, and through his DES funded research into the development of special low-level curricula for the supposed 'bottom 40 per cent' of pupils — actually an enormous section of school pupils. All this points to the imposition of a new tripartitism within the single, or comprehensive, secondary school. Each and all of these strategies are designed to counter the evolution of a genuinely comprehensive system.

But this is not all. Of great significance has been the imposition of a new form of differentiation **between** schools through the cynical and damaging tactic of resource starvation. This has, in fact, been Joseph's special contribution. By this policy, Joseph has created a situation which ensures that schools can only function effectively if they have greatly enhanced parental support in funding. Only by these means have schools been able to procure the books and other materials

*For instance, in the draft Circular of 12 June on Local Authority Training Grants Scheme which sets the future INSET funding system; in the White Paper 'Working Together — Education and Training' jointly from DES and the Department of Employment, which extends TVEI, does a hard sell on 2-year YTS, and etc., and of course through the Education Bill recently passed through Parliament.

required for high quality education. This has meant that schools in affluent middle class areas can in fact function effectively. The others — of course the majority, whose parents cannot afford this support — are allowed to deteriorate in respect of both buildings and resources for teaching. This is where our 'enterprise' society, so strongly supported by Joseph, leaves the schools — as we now see in practice in every part of the country, and as has been clearly documented by HMI.

It is well known that Joseph, during his term of office, was the only spending Minister who **never** went into the so-called 'Star Chamber' — the Cabinet Committee which finally arbitrates on budgetary expenditure — to argue for more money for education. This is because, as a confirmed monetarist, he simply could not bring himself to make such a plea — or case. As a result not only have the schools been allowed progressively to deteriorate but also the conditions created whereby the teachers' year-long action was allowed to build up and continue — while Joseph continued to dig his toes in his demand for his cherished management changes (appraisal, a new structure, and etc). Thus Joseph literally created the situation where alienation, low morale among teachers and an increasing distrust of officially inspired initiatives were the inevitable outcomes.

There was also much concern with Joseph's personal style, and the way in which he abused his position as Secretary of State to express his own idiosyncratic, political-ideological views on the curriculum, and in that sense on the objectives of schooling. Schools should 'preach the moral virtues of free enterprise and the pursuit of profit', he argued to an annual conference of the Institute of Directors; not surprisingly 'drawing applause' — the child's imagination 'has to be seized by exploring the role of business in the modern world' (**Times Educ Supp**, 26.3.82). 'Sir Keith calls for national values in study of history', reported the **Times Educational Supplement** (15.4.1983) — this was a contribution to considering the role of history in a multiracial society. 'History must also promote the national myths by which British people live' headlined a leader in the same journal commenting on Joseph's views (15.4.83). 'Political ban by Sir Keith angers science body', reported the same journal in August 1983 (19.8.1983) — this was concerned with Joseph's reaction to draft criteria for GCSE physics, which included matters relating to the socio-economic implications of scientific developments. All such issues were to be banned from the criteria. No wonder the **Times Educational Supplement**, in a main editorial commenting on these pronouncements, headed its leading article 'Wrong tone of voice — wrong voice'.

From the start of the present government's term of office, FORUM has consistently drawn attention to the threat its policy has posed to education. This was evident already when the Education Act of 1980, introducing the Assisted Places Scheme, signalled the new government's determination to support and encourage the private sector at the expense of the publicly maintained school system. The parental choice clauses of the same Act were an early attempt to build in differentiating procedures between schools within local comprehensive systems. Since then the direction of policy has become increasingly clear, particularly with

policies pressed through since Joseph took over in 1982. A major thrust has been towards increased central control — involving the downgrading both of local authorities and teachers. The abolition of the Schools Council, its substitution by two nominated quangoes to carry out government determined policy on curriculum and examinations, is a case in point — manifesting a contempt for the involvement of others in the determination of these crucial educational questions. The abolition of the Central Advisory Councils, in the recent Education Bill, is another case in point — and this without any suggestion for the establishment of any organisation which could draw both on expert and public opinion and act in an advisory capacity to the politicians and civil servants. These, under Joseph's aegis, have attempted to grasp all important decision-making powers in their own hands. It will take a very determined battle to reverse this trend.

Towards the end of his term of office matters reached such a point that the Secretary of State nearly brought the entire edifice crumbling down around him. The long swan-song (from February 2nd when he first announced his retirement to the end of May — nearly 4 months) brought demands right across the spectrum — from the **Daily Telegraph** to the **Guardian** — that he should go, and go quickly. Then suddenly in March, education became a national issue. Now for a couple of months right-wing Tory politicians and press had a field day in the promulgation of every kind of hare-brained scheme — in particular several variants of voucher schemes, alongside the witch's brew apparently thought up by Joseph — 'Crown schools', direct grant inner city primary schools, selective technical schools and the like. The municipal elections in early May, however, injected a note of realism. The shocking state of the schools throughout the country was, all commentators agreed, one of the main reasons for the massive Tory defeats. Such was the real outcome of four years of Josephism — its clear rejection by the voters throughout the country.

So what is the legacy of Sir Keith's long tenure at the DES? **First, an enormous mass of under-resourced and deteriorating ('crummy' in Joseph's phrase) school and college buildings throughout the country** — a deterioration that will take years to overcome. Spending on school buildings has in fact fallen by 35 per cent in the past five years, so that the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and the Arts has estimated that a back-log on maintenance of £700,000,000 has now built up. Joseph argued that high quality education can go on in 'crummy' buildings. The devastation is such that these are becoming the only buildings.

Second, an alienated teaching profession. In his speech to the North of England conference in January 1985, Joseph's managerial view of teachers was stressed at the start: 'Today I shall speak mostly about teachers, the main agents for the delivery of the curriculum'. As Jackson Hall put it in his FORUM article (Vol.28, No.1), the Secretary of State should seek to have 500,000 allies, not 500,000 'agents'. This contempt for teachers and their role came out very clearly in Joseph's statements about the need for 'appraisal' and his early (and fatal) linking of this with the need to weed out bad teachers; also in his continued linking of appraisal with differential rates of pay. Joseph was apparently incapable of saying a good word for teachers — of

implying any degree of respect for them and their work. This attitude lay behind the hard line he took on the pay issue, leading to the year long teacher action. The net outcome has been a more or less total alienation of the profession. This was some achievement for a Secretary of State for **Education**.

Third, enhanced centralised control. The damage done to the concept and practice of 'partnership' will continue to reverberate far into the future. Yet a healthily functioning partnership, in which the contributions of both local authorities and teachers are welcomed and encouraged, is and always has been, crucial to the health of the education system of this country. This part of Joseph's legacy may, in the long run, prove to be the most damaging — unless through radical and determined effort the 'partnership' can be reconstructed along modernised lines (and HMI refutes its apparent subservience by reasserting its political independence).

Fourth, instead of a common, comprehensive curriculum for all at the secondary stage, the imposition of new divisions and new forms of differentiation including the use of the MSC to achieve objectives that many view as profoundly anti-educational. To achieve such divisions was certainly one of Joseph's aims, as we have reported and recorded consistently in this journal. We need, in Bernard Barker's words, to 'rescue the comprehensive experience'. We also need to rescue large sections of education from the MSC. In terms of Joseph's legacy, this now demands a new clarity and consensus as to objectives — and again radical and

determined action by teachers and local authorities in particular, aimed at developing local systems of secondary and tertiary or further education as fully comprehensive in their procedures and practice, and under democratic control.

There are other aspects of Joseph's legacy which we have not space to enter into here (for instance, initiatives in the fields of teacher education, primary education, and higher education). But enough has been said to set the record straight. Among the crocodile tears in the press at Joseph's departure, valedictory notices tended to stress the view that Joseph was a man with brilliant ideas and a charming character, who unfortunately ran into difficulties. We cannot comment on his personality; but in our view the damning evidence of his 'achievement' lies all around. That legacy is uniformly antagonistic to the positive development of education in this country. Not only should we not follow up and build on Joseph's ideas and actions in the future, these need to be rejected in their entirety, and in no uncertain manner. Instead, the emphasis must be turned to ensuring enhanced democratic control over the education system as a whole, its rehabilitation following what are now several years of deliberate and even cynical neglect and fragmentation, and the full involvement of teachers, local authorities and parents in the reconstruction of the system — a reconstruction based on the acceptance of **educational** and democratic principles — and consequently the rejection both of monetarist concepts and centralist measures in the determination of policy.

TRIST and the Future of In-Service Training

Norman Barlow

On many occasions in the last few years, FORUM has expressed its concern at the increasingly ruthless centralising thrust of the Secretary of State (Keith Joseph) and leading officials at the DES. Here, Norman Barlow, Chief Inspector at Walsall since 1983, expresses a similar concern about current DES initiatives in the field of In-service Training. Norman Barlow taught earlier at Chorley College of Education, after teaching in a variety of schools in Lancashire.

The Background

In March, 1985, a Government Document '**Better Schools**' announced that the Secretary of State, encouraged by "enthusiastic co-operation from LEAs, schools and colleges in the TVEI" was considering wider applications of its lessons. Strangely, in some ways, for a Secretary of State committed to the principles of effective monitoring to ensure value for money, evaluation of TVEI both at national and local level

appeared to be being pre-empted by the expression of a view that it was already evident that further developments relating to the TVEI would advance the aims of the curriculum based on the principles of breadth, balance, relevance and differentiation. To further such developments the Manpower Services Commission was to be charged with the task of administering a scheme for the extension of In-Service Training in these TVEI related areas. Additional resources were to be made available for this purpose. So

TRIST was spawned and in May, 1985, LEAs received the first details of the scheme.

In summary the scheme required LEAs to put forward detailed submissions to the MSC by noon on Monday, 24th June. Such submissions were to specify the LEAs' policy and in-service training programme for 1985/86 — not an easy task in itself at a time when the programmes of most LEAs had been decimated through industrial action. In these submissions each LEA was required to put forward a proposal for a programme of in-service education which was additional to, *not* instead of, the Authority's programme. This programme was required to be an attractive list of recommendations as part of a creative approach to in-service needs within an Authority. A programme had to be balanced and should address itself to methods of training, delivery of content and management. An amount of money was identified for each LEA in advance of submissions for grant so as to avoid any suggestion of there being competition for distribution of funds.

In spite of the considerable heart-searching and grinding of teeth, I believe it is fair to say that most Authorities have managed to conjure something of value from this initiative. The heart-searching centred, yet again, on the inescapable compulsion to acquiesce in the increasing interference from the MSC into the school curriculum at the expense of local control. This concern was linked with well-founded scepticism about claims that fundamental change could be bought in such an easy way as this. The gnashing of teeth arose quite simply from a total disbelief that anyone charged with initiation of such a scheme could possibly have launched it with such an impossible time scale on an already overburdened and stretched Education Service in a time of severe crisis.

It says much, I feel, for the effectiveness of LEAs generally that relative success rather than chaos has resulted from all this. Many LEAs have been quite successful in putting together imaginative submissions which have gone beyond the requirements. Submissions, that is, that range across the whole curriculum, not purely TVEI related curriculum areas, (for example, CDT, Electronics, Business Studies, etc.) and also influence the whole ability range. In the Authority for which I work, for example, the resulting submission sought to establish a series of one-term secondments designed to promote problem-solving as a cross-curricular activity, deserving development as an ingredient of successful classroom practice. The secondments currently being operated have three parts:- (a) a general introduction shared by all the LEA in the intentions and implications of the term's secondment; (b) participation in a short-term intensive course where teams of teachers and industrialists are set problem-solving tasks which exploit a wide range of technologies. Tasks are biased towards but are not exclusive to the commercial and industrial world. This takes place at an Industrial Training Centre in the Midlands; (c) the remainder of the term secondees spend at an Institute of Higher Education and back in their own school. Particular attention is paid to the assessment of pupils who take part in problem-solving tasks and to the evaluation of such techniques as strategies in the development of good classroom practice.

This exemplifies, in my view, the quality of response

which MSC and Central Government have received to this initiative. What are the lessons to be learnt for the future — and what of the future itself?

Lessons to be Learnt

The first lesson is sadly that the wailing and gnashing of teeth were more than fully justified. It is perhaps an irony that the ones who have proved arguably least capable of meeting the time scale have been the ones who created it in the first place. In the event, though LEAs met the deadline and though schemes were scheduled to commence in September, 1985, the majority of such proposals were not able to be implemented until January in the following year, and, indeed, MSC contracts were not received in many LEA offices until much later in the Spring Term. This was due entirely to the fact that MSC had miscalculated on the amount of consultation in which they would be involved with LEAs. In the same way there was never any appreciation of the amount of time needed for the exercise if LEAs were genuinely going to match the criteria. TRIST assumed the existence of LEA plans for INSET which had been devised as a result of appraising needs and making choices. These did not exist in many LEAs and where arrangements and structures did exist for such purposes, industrial action had almost entirely frustrated them in the academic year with which we are concerned. The inevitable result has been that many TRIST submissions have emanated from Officers and many reflect a top-down approach to INSET which fails to draw effectively upon accounts of school needs and experience. This has also led to situations where, from time to time, neither schools nor individual teachers have been "ready" for some of the proposals which have been made. The care which is needed in selecting teachers for INSET and in matching INSET requirements to appropriate training sources had just not been able to be exercised because of insufficient planning time. In general, it seems to me that higher education and traditional providers have also not found it easy to respond to the TRIST requirements of LEAs. Again it is strange that all this should have happened with an initiative which had as one of its main objectives an intention of bringing greater planning and structure into the process of INSET provision.

One final point and a disturbing one. Initially, I believe that many LEAs welcomed the opportunities which TRIST provided to recruit staff cover for teachers participating in INSET work. This promised to be a new and welcome departure from past practice in many cases where traditionally, INSET had only been provided out of school hours, or if staffing arrangements in a school permitted it. In reality this has failed to materialise in the way in which it was intended. In many LEAs teacher shortage in some areas, again ironically in those areas which were intended often to be the first beneficiaries from the grand design, has made it well nigh impossible to recruit adequate supply cover. When cover has been found it certainly has not been at the level of expertise or even in the same field of expertise as the secondee. An extension of this concern has been the added incidence of pupils increasingly being taught for considerable parts of their time by teachers with whom they were not originally timetabled at the beginning of the academic year. One survey recently revealed that third year pupils

in a secondary school were actually receiving tuition for only 30% of the time from their original teachers at the time the survey was conducted. This is, in my view, too high a price to pay for in-service training, no matter how high the quality might be.

INSET and the Future

Having said all this, TRIST was never intended to be anything more than an interim measure pending the introduction of the new in-service training grant arrangements which are currently before Parliament. In **Better Schools** the Secretary of State acknowledged his support for the position of ACSET in arguing the need for a more systematic approach for the planning of In-service Training at school and LEA level. The Government had already, at that time, concluded that the most effective way of achieving these aims would be through the introduction of a new specific grant to support LEA expenditure on most aspects of in-service training.

The result has been first of all a position paper from the DES in September, 1985, on the proposed specific grant arrangements. This has involved a good deal of toing and froing of HMI, LEA Officers, HE Tutorial Staff, to conferences and meetings up and down the country. Now, most recently, a draft document has been received in advance of the definitive statement which is expected to arrive in Education Offices at the end of July to coincide with the annual trek to the seaside or into the country for most Officers. Again the exercise seems as much about imposing a new system as about anything else and again the system to be imposed amounts to a further extension of DES central control. At present we have no information about the amount of money to be available but we are told submissions for grant will have to be with the DES by 3rd October, so in this respect at least, lessons of TRIST have clearly been ignored and the same feelings of disquiet and alarm are again reverberating around many LEA Education Departments.

The scenario this time is that expenditure eligible for grant will fall into two categories:-

- (a) expenditure incurred in relation to training in certain selected national priority areas;
- (b) expenditure incurred in relation to training which is provided in response to locally assessed needs and priorities.

This division represents a departure from ACSET proposals endorsed to a degree in **Better Schools** and is further evidence of the Government's commitment to buying change in those areas where it deems change to be necessary. Whatever happened to the notion of partnership I wonder? What has been or will be the extent of consultation in determining these national priorities, I ask myself. Rumour alone suggests, furthermore, that to correspond to these two categories there will also be two levels of funding. In ACSET all parties agreed that the proposed grant should be at the level of 90% from central government, the balance (10%) from each LEA. This in itself marks a significant difference from the 100% funding allocated through TRIST. It seems likely that funding for the second category, that is for locally assessed needs and priorities,

will be at the level of 70% from central government, the balance (30%) from each LEA. Such a proposal would seriously jeopardise some developments in this category. There is ample evidence that a number of Local Authorities have withdrawn commitments to ESG projects (funded on a similar basis) at a late stage when faced with harsh financial decisions, particularly at rate-making times of the year.

However, in respect of finance the main concern must be, at this stage, that central government has singularly failed to give a clear indication whether significant "new money" will be available for this development. Assurances have been given that the new arrangements will not provide a lower level of expenditure on pooling, plus INSET grants, plus TRIST, and so commitments embarked upon at the start of the 1986/87 Academic Year *should* be assured of support into the third term. The truth of the matter is, however, that preparation for this radical change is taking place in an atmosphere of speculation and this must cause doubts about the effective administration of the whole exercise both nationally and locally in the early stages.

Will this new system result in increased opportunities for professional development? The question-mark is, of course, very significant. Will this be another GCSE fiasco which produces lots of demands and inadequate resources to meet them? I have to confess to some scepticism on the basis of the figures currently being bandied about. None of these look particularly generous, particularly if LEAs choose to administer inherent costs of INSET, for example Advisers' time, Teachers Centres, etc., so that little cash actually remains by the time it reaches the teachers and the classrooms. Furthermore, what will the reality be in terms of assessing and meeting individual needs both of teachers and institutions, especially if those institutions are small primary schools with no effective means of drawing attention to themselves? To what extent will the bureaucracy of national, regional, LEA and even school priorities be able to cope with the highly individual needs of any one Scale 1 teacher, particularly when resources are limited? To what extent too will the need to ensure "value for money" mitigate against staff development which has little identifiable and measurable outcome? Where will the philosophers, historians and comparative educationists of the future come from I wonder? Will the same hierarchy of experiences which clearly reside in the curriculum of many schools be reflected in the INSET programmes of many LEAs? Will Institutions of Higher Education be flexible enough to be able to respond to the changing demands made by LEAs, schools and teachers? Will those selected for development be ready for it? Will sufficient time be devoted to distinguish between expressed wants and genuine needs?

None of these questions are new ones. It is the context in which they are now being raised which is new. Certainly these new proposals have in them the potential to heighten awareness again of the issues surrounding effective staff development within the Education Service. Whether they have the potential to provide any more of the answers than an improved adaptation of our present system could offer, remains for me, at least, an open question.

The Joint Boards And CPVE: Cobbler Wear Thy Shoes!

David Pavett

The jargon linked with the so-called 'New FE' and with CPVE in particular is the target for David Pavett's broadside in this article. But important educational issues lie behind the language used. We are glad to include this contribution from the field of further education. David Pavett teaches at Hounslow Borough College.

Problem? What Problem!

The arguments in favouring the CPVE approach to curriculum reform repeat endlessly that the purpose of the exercise is to enable the students to become autonomous learners. The students are to learn to take charge of their own learning process. The purpose of many of the core objectives which are laid down in the material sent out by the Joint Boards is to enable the students to develop a sense of judgement so that they can think things out for themselves. Who can possibly object to that without placing themselves firmly in the camp of the educational reactionaries? I have more than a sneaking suspicion that the lack of critical material on the all-too-evident difficulties (not to speak of the pages of educational gibberish) is in part because of the fear that one will thereby be judged to have forsaken progressive education. When armies set up camp the price of the land in between them collapses.

The upshot of this situation is that it is very difficult indeed to get a reasonable discussion going on the many serious problems that the transition to CPVE will throw up. My own experience of attempting to get such discussions going with CPVE enthusiasts has been poor. They have resisted critical examination of the many problems preferring to spend valuable discussion time making outrageously unresearched generalisations about "traditional education".

And yet real problems there are in plenty. For example, we still do not know at this late stage exactly how profiles will display student achievements. The pilot courses were allowed to run without clear guidance on this. We do not even know how we will use CPVE qualifications as a guide to further study. And yet "progression" was supposed to be one of the main aims of the "curriculum framework" that CPVE provides (a notion that itself would merit rather more attention than it has received so far). There is a great deal to cause those who are concerned for the target population (the *real* one which will consist overwhelmingly of low achievers, not the imaginary one of the initial **Consultative Document**) to take a critical attitude to these developments.

From Mao to Modules

In the mid 60's 'revolutionary' student friends of mine were momentarily infected with Maoism (a popular political ailment at the time in some circles). One of the best methods of curing them of this rather sorry affliction was to get them to read **Peking Review** from

cover to cover. When they did that the majority of them found it impossible to sustain their Maoism. They were too intelligent for that.

I think that we have a similar situation with the so-called New FE in general and with CPVE in particular. There is a great resistance on the part of those who clearly have a sense of mission, not unlike that of my Maoist friends, to read *and discuss* the copious material that is being pumped out by the CPVE machine. I have been told "The time for all that philosophical and sociological discussion is over". When I ask "When and where did it take place?" I get no response. On other occasions the line has been "It is perfectly valid to engage in critical discussions but some of us just want to get on with the job". To this I have replied "If anyone can tell me with any clarity what 'the job' is I might be able to understand that position".

An Antidote For Zealots

So, what should a CPVE zealot read to be weaned from some of the silliest educational verbiage that we have had to put up with in recent years? I would suggest that an effective antidote kit should consist of the following:

(i) **The Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education — Consultative Document (1984)**; (ii) **The Certificate of Pre-vocational Education — Part A. Framework and Criteria for Approved Schemes (blue book, Jan. 1985)**; (iii) **The Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education — Part B, Core competences and vocational Module Specifications (blue book, Jan. 1985)**; (iv) **The CPVE Handbook — Case Studies (Autumn 1985)**; (v) **CPVE in Action (FEU, 1985)**; (vi) **The CPVE Handbook — Individual Negotiation and Discussion with learners (Autumn 1985)**; (vii) **The CPVE Handbook — Ammunition for Rebuffing the Cynics (This is for real I did not invent it! — DP)**; (viii) **Basic Skills (FEU Nov 1982)**.

Items (iv), (vi) and (vii) are from a twenty volume series (some are *very* thin!). These are the ones that I happen to have read. I should think that any other selection from this material will have the same curative properties.

It will probably help to make matters clearer to someone unfamiliar with this material if they read (ix) **A Basis for Choice (FEU, June 1979)** and (x) **Vocational Preparation (Jan. 1981)**. If you cannot read both the second contains a useful summary of the first. Familiarity with the jargon that has been developed

around the "New FE" is a matter of some importance. The enthusiasts have developed a battering ram of terminology and although it will not stand much questioning it can be used to overwhelm people who do not know it. They can be given the impression that profound thoughts are being expressed when what they are confronted with is in fact nothing other than jargonised opinion prejudice.

The Further Education Unit at the DES which was responsible for the last two publications mentioned has a lot to answer for in this respect. They turn out educational gobbledegook at an unbelievable rate (which should not obscure the fact that they have some useful publications on their list — it's hard to be wrong all the time!). Their forte is repeating the same things over and over again, producing endlessly rehased checklists. For an outstanding example of the poor quality of the material available see **Preparing for CPVE** by Michael Oakes (FEU, April 1985).

I suspect that there is only a small minority of teachers who can read carefully the publications on CPVE listed here and say afterwards "I think that this is a well-thought out approach to education and I believe that its basic principles are sound".

Can We Take the Joint Board Seriously?

There are so many serious flaws in CPVE that any critic has an 'embarras de richesses'. I will use the limited space to comment on one point: criteria for assessment. It is a remarkable fact that throughout the mountains of paper generated by the Joint Board when it comes to criteria for assessment all one finds is passing references and promises of packages to be sent at a later date. The fact is that the Joint Board do not know what they are doing on this question. This is not difficult to understand. The educational "philosophy" that informs(?) the CPVE holds that a deficiency of previous systems of assessment is that they graded people and put them through tests that they passed or failed. CPVE, we are told, is to be a certificate with "national currency" and is to be based on "agreed criteria". Now, it is clear, is it not, that if students are assessed according to agreed criteria for a certificate with national currency some of them will reach certain levels defined by those criteria and some will not. The Joint Board has a contradiction on its hands. We need to see the colour of the Joint Board's criteria. Without that I do not see how we can be expected to take the Joint Board seriously as an agency involved in curriculum reform.

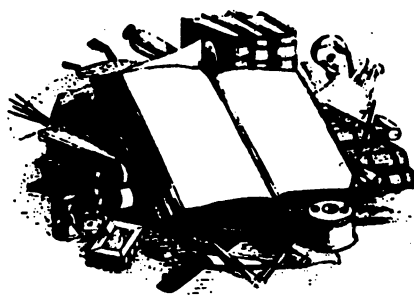
Should Colleges and Schools Start CPVE Courses?

In my opinion FE colleges do not really have a choice although the situation may not be the same for schools. CPVE courses are the only way in which the colleges will be able to reach a section of the post-school population who are their legitimate concern. Is there any point in making a fuss then, if we are going to agree to run the courses anyway? I think that the more we discuss the issues in an open-minded way the less likely we are to be sent down educational cul-de-sacs by the confusing and confused material being put out by the Joint Board. Making our own assessment of the value of this material will enable us to say with confidence what we can use and what we cannot. It will therefore free us from

unnecessary constraints on our professional judgement. I think that it is the only way that we can serve the best interests of the students who will come on our CPVE courses.

Some people involved in the debates I have participated in have found it hard to understand that, in order to do something to the best of your ability, you do not have to take an uncritical stance. I do not expect my doctor to be uncritical of the NHS to do what he does well. I expect him to consider the way he carries out his duties carefully. If a new drug is put on the market then I expect him to make a serious effort to know what the arguments for and against it are before he starts to administer it. If we expect doctors to review critically what they are doing before they mess around with our bodies then we should surely expect teachers to make similar efforts when dealing with young people's education and attitudes.

As far as the attitude of the Joint Board is concerned it is not unreasonable to ask that they show more sign of having thought through the implications of the "curriculum framework" they are giving to schools and colleges. Should we not expect that they are able to give an account of themselves and to attempt at least to give adequate reasons for that which is new in their framework? The core studies aim to make students into people who take increasing responsibility for their own learning process. This means they learn to evaluate their position at any given time and that they are able to recognise their shortcomings with respect to the aims that they have set themselves. Having read a great deal of the Joint Board material and listened to their official representatives, "Cobbler wear thy shoes".



Thinking About Children's Learning: Reflections on an Enquiry

Michael Armstrong

In his remarkable book, *Closely Observed Children* (1981) Michael Armstrong, a long-standing member of our Editorial Board, pioneered a new approach to classroom observation and enquiry. We are glad to include here some notes written for a symposium on teacher-led research at the annual conference of the British Educational Research Association in August 1985. This symposium, addressed by several speakers, was, incidentally, quite easily the best attended symposium of the entire conference.

For the past ten years I have been intermittently engaged on an inquiry into the thought and action of young children within a classroom setting. For two years, between 1976 and 1977, I worked on the inquiry full time, and it was out of the investigations of those years that I wrote the book *Closely Observed Children* which was published in 1981. Since then I have continued to study the issues raised in that book though in less leisurely circumstances. In due course I hope to embark on a new round of more intensive inquiry addressed to the same set of problems.

I will try to summarize the approach which I have taken to my research — if research is the appropriate word to describe my activity. I want to say something about its origins, its methods, the goal of its inquiry and the programme of studies to which it seems to commit me and those fellow workers, friends and strangers, who are exploring the same theme in more or less similar ways.

Origins

The origin of my inquiry was a desire to make more coherent, at any rate to myself and with luck to others, the progressive ideology to which I subscribed and which I tried to practise in my classroom: in shorthand the ideology of the Plowden Report, or its equivalent for the world of secondary education. The way seemed to lie in exploring the growth of understanding in children, for it was a certain view of the character and direction of intellectual growth that seemed to me to underlie the best of progressive practice. I would hope that in the end my inquiry has transcended its origins, but I would not want to lose sight of them.

Method

My chosen method was description. I wanted my inquiry to grow out of a classroom teacher's developed and developing skill at observing, reflecting upon, and interacting with children's learning. (I use the word 'learning' here as naming both an act and an achievement.) My method sought to intensify those skills, by creating a research space — by stealing time — within the classroom for more sustained observation than teachers (myself at least) normally manage. For

one brief school year — 1976-1977 — I achieved the space I sought, by working as a supplementary teacher in another teacher's classroom. (Doubtless this is only one among several ways of creating a space for descriptive inquiry.)

As far as I was concerned — and I think the same will be true of many other descriptive inquiries, though not necessarily of all — description was realised above all in the act of writing. It was during the two to three hours which I would spend at the end of a day writing about my experience of that day's events that description was made manifest. Later on particular descriptions might be discarded or assimilated into further writing — finally of course into my book — but the daily act of writing was, for me, decisive in shaping observation and reflection.

Some years after I had started my inquiry, I discovered in two aphoristic remarks of Goethe the neatest summary of my methodological aspirations:

1. "There is a delicate form of the empirical which identifies itself so intimately with its object that it thereby becomes theory."
2. "For merely looking at an object cannot be of any use to us. All looking goes over into an observing, all observing into a reflecting, all reflecting into a connecting, and so one can say that with every attentive look we cast into the world we are already theorising."

There is a familiar problem about the relationship of description to theory. As my fellow worker Stephen Rowland has suggested, the particular dilemma of descriptive inquiry is that "No longer can we state precisely an educational theory, or hypothesis, and then test it through impartial and reproducible observation. But neither can we describe classroom events as if from a theory free stance and from these derive an educational theory." The problem is to provide as it were a theory of description, a task which for me would mean to elaborate Goethe's insights. It is a task which sometime I would like to attempt. Meanwhile I have chosen to come to terms with the problem as I go along, describing.

I would only want at present to draw one tentative conclusion: that description is denser, more compelling, and of greater significance than the theory which underlies it. It is often said that the role of description is to illuminate theory. I think that is misleading. If anything I would like to propose the opposite: that the role of theory is to illuminate description. Perhaps this is why I have come to regard the study of children's learning, or at any rate those aspects of such a study which interest me, as a humane rather than a scientific inquiry, grounded in the act of teaching and demanding the arts of interpretation rather than the methods of science.

The Goal of Inquiry

Ultimately, the goal of descriptive inquiry into children's learning is, as I see it, to construct, piece by piece, a history of the growth of mind. (I am not, of course, thinking simply of my own work but of the work of all those who share a similar descriptive concern). To the objection that this goal is altogether too remote from the urgent political issues that press in upon education from all sides at the present moment, I would reply that even those fragments of description which are all that we possess as yet are potentially revolutionary in their implications — whether for the distribution of educational opportunity, the organisation of schooling, or the structure of knowledge.

Two theses have begun to emerge out of the descriptive work that has already been accomplished. The first is this: that the exercise of judgement is embedded within children's experience of art or science, literature or mathematics, or any other characteristic intellectual pursuit, right from the start. Experience is at once engagement, and the child's earliest engagement is for real; it is neither a pretence nor any kind of drill. A child who paints or writes or 'speculates' is already, however crudely, artist, poet or philosopher. Part of what this means is that children, even young children, show a deep concern for the constraints implicit within different modes of thought, for their grammar and syntax as it were. Another part of its meaning is that the rudimentary character of children's skill, knowledge and experience is more than a liability, a barrier to intellectual expression. It is also an opportunity, presenting children with a distinctive intellectual challenge which they exploit in characteristically distinctive ways.

The second thesis derives from the first and is this: that intellectual growth is the outcome of practice, where practice means, not drill or training in technique, but rather the sustained engagement in successive enterprises of the kind described by the first thesis, — enterprises, that is to say, in which the exercise of judgement is embedded as a condition of performance. It is the continuing effort to practise the arts and sciences in this sense that leads children to new levels of mastery, while failure to practise brings intellectual development to a premature close. Of special significance, it seems to me, though hard to detect and to describe, is the critical moment of reconstruction when children, having achieved a certain success within a given set of limitations and opportunities, become dissatisfied with their present achievement and begin to attempt to incorporate new experience and more advanced

techniques into their intellectual enterprises. Their earliest attempts at such times to move beyond the given often lead to a temporary falling off of interest and skill, sometimes apparent, sometimes real. Children have to struggle hard to reconstruct their achievement in the face of new demands. It is the moment at which the teacher's intervention carries most weight and most risk.

Programme

I have spoken of these two theses as *emerging* from descriptive work. They are at once assumptions out of which description has grown and conclusions towards which description points. Together the two theses set out, for me, an exploratory programme of further inquiry. Previous work has gone some way towards making the first thesis coherent and plausible and grounding it in reflective observation among a variety of children in a variety of settings. In pursuing this first thesis further, perhaps the most urgent task is to explore it across the economic, social and cultural divisions of class, race and gender. However, the second thesis, in many ways the more crucial from the standpoint of education, is as yet largely unexamined and it is here, I believe, that the chief emphasis of descriptive enquiry now needs to fall.

How then to proceed? Understanding the relationship between intellectual practice and intellectual growth requires longitudinal study, — a set of inquiries in which the thought and action of particular children become the object of scrutiny over many years. The appropriate setting for inquiry is, in my view, the classroom and the appropriate scrutineers are the classroom teachers, their pupils and their pupils' parents. One way of envisaging the task is to think of assembling a series of archives, each related to one particular school over several years and comprising among other things annotated collections of children's work, teachers' descriptions of children's thought and action, children's autobiographical notes, recorded conversations and discussions, the reflections of parents, the observations of visitors, diaries, plans and reminiscences. As it happens, the material contained within such an archive is relevant as much to the particular record of individual achievement which any good school might hope, at best, to keep, as to a general inquiry into the course of intellectual growth. Indeed the archive would in effect be no more than a school's record of achievement (and, of course, of failure) viewed in the light of the wider and more self-conscious considerations to which, for any student of children's learning, that record gives rise.

I am sure that there are many other ways of examining descriptively the course of intellectual growth within a classroom setting, but for myself, at the present moment, it is the idea of an archive that appears the most attractive. Of course the self consciousness required of a study such as this makes its own demands: on teachers' reflective skill both as regards the subject matter which they teach and the children whom they teach; on the time available for the scrutiny of individual activity; on the pupil-teacher ratio therefore; on the school's resources for recording, storing, retrieving and administering its archive; and above all on the school's intellectual openness and curiosity. How could a primary school hope to meet these demands? I think again of the school in which Stephen Rowland and I,

Equal Opportunities: The Fourth Dimension

Patricia Potts

FORUM carried a full discussion, or symposium on the Hargreaves report ('Improving Secondary Schools') in Vol.27, No.2. We also carried a critique of the Thomas report ('Improving Primary Schools') in our last number. Both these reports were commissioned by the Inner London Education Authority. The third report on special educational needs entitled 'Educational Opportunities for All' (the Fish report) was published last year. Here, Patricia Potts contributes a critique. A special school teacher in London for eight years, the author is now a member of the special education group at the Open University.

The Inner London Education Authority is explicitly committed to comprehensive education. Recent policy initiatives designed to halt the underachievement of children and young people whose opportunities are restricted because of their race, class or sex confirm this. Now, by forging a link between comprehensive education and meeting special educational needs, **Educational Opportunities for All?**, the report of an independent review committee, chaired by ex-HMI John Fish, on special educational provision in the ILEA, has added a dimension which is just as vital for the development of a non-discriminatory system of education.

In an introductory section headed "Basic Principles", the Fish Report argues that the educational right of children and young people with disabilities or difficulties in learning should be seen as part of a single aim of securing equal opportunities for all pupils within one, diverse, comprehensive system: "these children and young people, like all others, whatever their race, class and gender, must be acknowledged as participants with current and potential abilities to contribute to society" (1.1.23.). "The aims of education for children and young people with disabilities and significant difficulties are the same as those for all children and young people" (1.1.22.)

The Fish Committee was asked to review the "range, quality and coherence" of special educational provision within the ILEA "in the light of the Warnock Report and the 1981 Education Act, and the Authority's initiative to promote equal opportunities and combat underachievement of children from all backgrounds" (1.1.2.). The Report was published in July, 1985, and follows the Hargreaves Report **Improving Secondary Schools** (March, 1984) and the Thomas Report **Improving**

Primary Schools (January, 1985) as the third, and longest at around 300 pages, in a series aimed as a whole at redressing educational imbalances.

The central concern of both the Hargreaves and Thomas Reports was the underachievement of working class and female pupils in ordinary schools and their recommendations are related to four "aspects of achievement" defined by the Hargreaves Report and endorsed by Thomas: "the capacity to express oneself in written form"; "the capacity to apply knowledge"; "personal and social skills" and "motivation and commitment". These were designed to clarify the meaning of "achievement" and provide a broad basis for improvement. Neither Report contains a section which corresponds to the "Basic Principles" of the Fish Report, although the preface to each one does include a statement of the ILEA's commitment "to the ideal that schools and other educational institutions should be open to all".

The Fish Report, in contrast, adheres to an explicit philosophical position, which is used throughout as a fundamental evaluative yardstick: "the process of integration should form an essential element in all education wherever it takes place" (1.1.27.). This means that "all those responsible for providing services to children and young people, whether or not they have specific responsibilities for those with disabilities and significant difficulties, should accept the aim of integration for all" (1.1.24.).

A cornerstone of the Committee's approach is that educational needs are relative, not fixed personal attributes: "they are relative to the ability of schools and colleges to meet the range of individual needs of children and young people who attend them. This approach involves all teachers in understanding how special

(continued from page 12)

with the help of other teachers, carried out our provisional inquiry in 1976-1977. Two of us taught in a class of 32 children, one of us chiefly as the inquirer, the other as the class teacher, but both of us involved in each other's concerns. Imagine now that for every four classes of say 25 children each and one teacher, a fifth teacher is made available. Suppose that the five teachers construe their task as both to teach the 100 children committed to their charge and to investigate descriptively the intellectual growth over time of those

same children. Imagine a primary school, its pupils between five and eleven years old, made up of two such teams, a school of some 200 pupils. Suppose that this school were able to sustain its inquiry over some five to ten years. How rich an archive that could be!

Now imagine, if you can, an LEA which was prepared to take the risk. Imagine even a government which welcomed and promoted such initiatives. The time is ripe. Will anyone provide the opportunity?

educational needs may arise and how their work may influence whether they arise or not" (3.16.5.) The Report emphasises collaboration and increasingly generic roles for professionals: "it is necessary for a variety of professions to accept common aims. . . If all inspectors, teachers and professionals in allied fields are to understand and work together to meet the special educational needs of children and young people, joint planning and inter-professional training are vital" (1.1.43.).

As a way of breaking down the barriers between different kinds of provisions the Report takes the idea of "clusters" of neighbouring primary schools from the Thomas Report and extends it to include the entire age range up to 19 (13.16.27.). Clusters would not just consist of the schools within a given catchment area but would also include peripatetic support services and presently existing off-site provisions, in an administratively unified structure. Sharing professional responsibilities, planning for a child's educational career as a whole, delivering specialist services to mainstream settings and increased parental involvement would all be made easier in such a devolved and simplified system.

In 1984/5 the ILEA spend £57 million on special educational provision out of a total budget of £878 million. The Fish Report recommends that at least the same percentage of any budget be committed specifically to special educational provision in the future (3.17.3.), and that "resources released by changes in special school provision be devoted to building up services to nursery, primary and secondary schools and colleges and supporting individuals with special educational needs in them" (3.17.5.). An important consequence of this re-allocation of resources would be that the expertise of those in special schools could then be used constructively in the development of integration.

The Fish Report has been greeted with excitement, approval, caution and anger. Particularly noticeable within the ILEA itself is the opposition, not only of those working in segregated settings, but also of teachers working in comprehensive schools who are avowed supporters of the Authority's other moves towards equal opportunities. The Inner London Teachers Association Newsletter for January, 1986, contains an article written by John Bangs, chair of its special education sub-committee, headed "No Implementation of the Fish Report".

ILTA's response to the Report, together with its own views on the future of special educational provision, are set out more fully in a ten-page document. Early on, ILTA criticises both Hargreaves and Thomas for their "lack of Special Education emphasis" and the ILEA for commissioning a separate review of each sector: the three reports "do not project a "whole service" approach for the future of education in ILEA in a totally coherent way".

ILTA's main point is that the integration-segregation debate is not the central issue. The location of special educational provision is less important than the question of "how the Authority could best deliver a service to each pupil with special educational needs."

ILTA argues that the Fish Report represents a devaluation of special school staffs, for it believes that special schools are valuable educational communities,

that they constitute positive discrimination for their pupils and that the "pastoral continuity" they provide is particularly important for students aged 16-19. The Fish Report favours transfer to mainstream FE at 16+ for students with special educational needs, whereas ILTA argues that the "best 16-19 educational offer is one that comes from an equal and flexible tri-partite relationship between special schools, secondary schools and FE" (ILTA newsletter).

ILTA rejects the idea that special educational needs are relative: "there are pupils whose disabilities and educational difficulties transcend and would transcend the ability of a "mainstream" institution in any conceivable altered form to provide the educational opportunities that the Committee envisages". Listed as examples of "absolute" special educational needs are "pupils with severe physical disabilities, some emotional and behavioural difficulties and school rejection because of wider social circumstances".

ILTA therefore also rejects the plan for comprehensive school sectors, within which special services are included, in favour of an expanded "Special Education Service" protected by proportionately increased resourcing. The arguments put forward by the London teachers reflect a complex and critical situation. Any amalgamations between educational institutions tend to be seen as ways of making public expenditure cuts and therefore to be resisted. And many mainstream teachers argue that their classes are under enough pressure as it is.

One ILEA infant teacher said that he would welcome the redirection of specialised support services to ordinary schools, but that he would have reservations about the re-integration of pupils, especially those who had been categorised as disruptive. He wanted to retain the option of a special school referral. A top junior colleague described the atmosphere in her class as fragile and argued that a wider diversity of needs could not be catered for.

ILTA is strongly opposed to what it sees as the "top-down" imposition of policies, as well as consultation procedures which do not give teachers, parents and students a guaranteed say. The original period for discussing the Fish Report, Autumn, 1985 to Easter, 1986, has been extended by a term. An identifiable Special Education Service could, ILTA argues, become part of a democratic process "which is the result of genuine negotiations on an equal basis between ILEA, special and mainstream teachers, parents and pupils" (Newsletter).

Towards the end of 1985 the ILEA Special Education Inspectors produced a consultation document on the Fish Report. ILTA accuses it of being "an extremely prescriptive paper largely using the models of on-site primary and secondary units to replace eventually special schools". Reading through this document, however, I could see no end to special schools in their proposals:

The Special Education Inspectors support the recommendation that the Authority should adopt a policy "which aims to meet all children and young people's special educational needs within nursery, primary and secondary schools and colleges" (3.16.9.). But: "the Special Education Inspectors note that a wider range of provision

may well be needed to meet the special educational needs of all children". (p.3,2.2).

It is envisaged that where special schools are retained they will assume a new support and resource centre role. This should be the focus for the unified support service within or across divisions (p.4,3.1).

The notion that within an ordinary educational setting emotional problems are always relative to the particular school organisation is meaningless. Without discussing causation it is evident that some individuals who are severely emotionally disturbed cannot be accommodated or helped in any ordinary social setting, including school. They bring with themselves a level of disturbance requiring skilled intervention. Such children deny themselves the opportunity of access to the curriculum (p.10,1.1).

In many respects the Inspectors' views resemble those of ILTA, for while it is true that the Inspectors describe a change towards greater integration for an increased number of children and young people with disabilities and difficulties in learning, they outline an overall system whose structure remains unaltered. Communication and liaison are to be improved, but specialist services are retained for identified pupils. There is no discussion of a revised definition of "learning difficulty" nor any consideration of the possibilities of mixed ability teaching and learning in diverse mainstream groups. The Senior Staff Inspector for Special Education in the ILEA said at a meeting that he supported integration "as an option", not as the direction in which provision should move for all children and young people.

Debate within the ILEA has focused on the politics of decision-making and resourcing rather than on the force of a principle of integration as an aim for all children and young people. The need to preserve existing school communities and jobs is seen as more urgent than the need to make schools more comprehensive.

Published reactions to the Fish Report from outside the ILEA have a more vocational flavour: "Remember that at the end of all the reports, recommendations and actions there is a very vulnerable person — the child with special educational needs" (Margaret Manton, letter *TES*, 26.7.85.). "A child who is confined to a wheelchair, and who is placed in a special school is, in effect, in a normal society. Put the child in a mainstream educational establishment and the developmental stimuli are restricted. He or she is unable to acquire those experiences necessary for normal emotional and social maturity" (Gerald Leach, letter, *TES*, 23.8.85.). "Some special schools with their ethic of respect for human personalities, like some mediaeval monasteries before them, stand out like beacons in a sea of barbarism" (Douglas Cohen, letter, *TES* 23.8.85.).

For these writers, integration is a deprivation, sometimes amounting to physical abuse: "can the confirmed integrationists among your readers explain how in the short run such victimisation is going to be extirpated without further victimising of these children with already apparent special needs? Can they explain the sudden signs of joyous relief shown by such victims once released from their places of emotional and mental torture — even, at times, physical constraint and abuse?" (P.F. Simpson, letter, *TES*, 20.9.85.).

These views contradict the Fish Committee's statement that the aims of education should be the same

for all children. They derive from the belief that the way in which pupils of widely differing abilities learn is characterised by processes which vary in both kind and rate. If you subscribe to this view you may well believe that integration is unprofessional.

If you believe that there is a qualitative difference between human beings on the grounds of ability, then the adoption of an inclusive principle on which to base an education system is bound to seem insensitive to individual needs; many critics of the Fish Report talk about "slogans" and "sloganisers" whose needs are being gratified at the expense of the pupils involved. Such critics believe that segregation should not be seen as a moral yardstick at all but as a pragmatic "rule of thumb" (ILTA).

The Fish Report is long and expensive; it would be hard to guess how many readers it has had outside the ILEA. The view of integration as a desirable option for some pupils rather than a process involving them all is a widespread orthodoxy at the moment. However, it is also the case that schools and LEAs across the country are extending their learning support services within mainstream schools and identifying inappropriate curricula as a source of difficulties in learning and disaffection. Some LEAs particularly in Scotland, have argued that the withdrawal of pupils from mainstream classes for learning support is both stigmatising and ineffective, thus acknowledging the rights issue and equating integration with increasing the participation of all pupils in mainstream education.

Some of the responses to the Fish Report represent significant stumblingblocks to the development of comprehensive schooling. The ILEA is keeping its distance and it remains to be seen what is left of the report when the consultation period finishes (July, 1986).

In his book **Special Education: The Way Ahead** (1985, Open Univ. Press), John Fish argues that "it is necessary to recognise that fostering the process of integration is a natural consequence of the situational and relative concept of handicap. . . To place individuals into separate special schools and institutions is to isolate them from natural interactions with their contemporaries. . . Effective teaching and care are no longer enough. Without natural day to day interaction with their contemporaries many of those with disabilities may get false notions of the real world and prejudice and myths may be built up by those ignorant of them as individuals" (p.18).



A Teachers Research Group

Josie Levine

A further contribution to our series on teacher research or enquiry groups is here contributed by Josie Levine, member of the Joint Department of English and Media Studies, University of London Institute of Education. Her own research interests lie in the areas of the mainstreaming of the language education and learning of bilingual pupils and in teacher education. She is convenor of the Teachers Research Group described in this article.

Our Teachers Research Group is a direct outcome of the Schools Council Programme Three Activity, Language for Learning, co-ordinated by Jean Bleach and directed by Harold Rosen. The brief of the project was to look at the relationship between talk and learning; the method of investigation was necessarily classroom based teachers' action research, whereby teachers individually or in a team teaching situation investigated the relationship between teaching materials, pupil talk, teaching roles and learning. The project afforded many teachers insights into what children learn, or do not learn, and why, and it allowed teachers to meet and discuss good practice and the conditions necessary for good practice in terms of pedagogy, content and the sorts of interventions and interrelationships necessary for an environment 'hospitable' to positive learning and development. Through the project many teachers and teacher groups became involved in what they considered to be valuable teacher action research.

Those simple facts of history are important to us in two ways. First, the founding members of the group had all been connected with that project and had enjoyed the style of work it had developed: for most, and for the first time, they had had the exhilarating experience of directly owning curriculum based research. They were not going to give such ownership up lightly, and they were certainly not going to do so — and this is my second point — just as their work was beginning to come to fruition, just because Sir Keith had decided to axe the Schools Council. At the final conference of the Language for Learning Project (March 1983), they called for a means of allowing such work to continue. the result was the setting up of TRG.

One of the grounds given for closing down the Schools Council was that the Council did not fulfil its purpose nearly well enough; that teachers made very little use, relative to expenditure, of the curriculum development the Council sponsored. It is ironic, therefore, but totally understandable within the present government's relationship to education that the Council should be axed just when it had moved into a form of organisation (networking and teacher action research) that had the potential for achieving just what Sir Keith ostensibly so much lamented the lack of.

The aims of the Teachers Research Group are as follows:

1. To provide teachers, in all phases of education, who are interested in teachers' action research with a contact network of other teachers and educationalists

interested and/or experienced in teachers' action research.

2. To hold meetings for teacher researchers to:
 - (a) discuss and help organise the setting up of teacher research projects
 - (b) to discuss and support research in progress
 - (c) to exhibit and publish significant outcomes of teacher research projects
3. TRG locates its work within the institutional and other constraints under which teachers work. It recognises the broad spectrum of educational politics. Nevertheless, TRG's research is directed towards outcomes which can help facilitate children's learning and teachers' understanding within an anti-racist, anti-sexist, egalitarian and collaborative framework.
4. Any teacher or educationalist interested in the aims and objectives of TRG is welcome to join the Group. The Group is affiliated with the Joint Department of English and Media Studies of the University of London Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL and its administration and organisation is carried out by an elected Chairperson, Secretary and Financial Secretary.¹

Undoubtedly, what attracts teachers to the Group is its ideology and the practices which stem from it. First, TRG is a forum where teachers can discuss their practice, implement some sort of investigation into it, develop ideas and understandings about it, and, at the same time, should they so wish, move towards wider publication — all, and distinctively so, in discussion with rigorous but sympathetic, non-competitive colleagues. Thus there is not only the possibility of their own practice improving in relation to better understandings about learning and teaching, but also of their work having wider influence both locally (through shared discussion in the group) and beyond (through the publishing of papers). Second, the informal nature of our network cuts across the boundaries of LEAs and other institutions. This provides teachers with the welcome opportunity of working with others not only from schools and authorities outside their own, but also across age ranges. Often, through this, they find support and encouragement for thinking and practice they are unable to find 'at home'. Equally people are in a position to learn from educational developments and practices in age ranges other than the ones in which they themselves may be working. All of which adds up to a practice which affords a useful co-ordination of insights which would not otherwise be available — and one to which we owe

one of the initiatives in our second phase of work. Third, we are unfettered by sponsorship (which is one way of saying we are unfunded, except by our own donations and efforts, and hard up). Nevertheless, this fact, along with the previous one of not being tied to a particular institution, means we have a freedom of analysis that participants in TRG value very highly indeed.

Organised by teachers for themselves, TRG needs to be, can afford to be, and is able to be flexible. In the beginning, we attended to what, in many cases, was work carried forward from the Language for Learning project, or we were joined by groups who, again, brought with them work in progress. The termly meetings were organised so that we could be a constructive, listening forum for each other. However, at the point where we usefully and constructively came to the end of this, our first year and first phase, we were concerned that it had been difficult for some individual member of TRG to see how they could get their own work into the Group's programme. If we were going to maintain their interest and also enable access to newcomers, as we wished to do, we needed to extend our structure so that there was space to develop both the creative, flexible, responsive way in which we were already working and also encourage a programme of research enterprises to which members of TRG could contribute in ways that suited them best. It is this second phase within which we are now working.

The following work² was undertaken during the first phase:

- Design technology: the role of talk in creative planning,
- a Books and Young People project,
- a Learning through Drama project with a draft paper produced,
- discussion of a grid for assessing progress in mainstream classes of bilingual pupils.

The new initiatives in our present, second, phase have brought us to a more complex organisation. We maintain our termly meetings for the sharing and discussion of ideas and of data gathered and of drafts written to date. In addition, though, each initiative is a sub-group in its own right with working members and a convenor, calling additional meetings as often as suits the group's working pace. Careful minutes are kept of all meetings, and each sub-group convenor is a member of TRG committee. This way, networking between groups can be maintained. A TRG Directory of members and their research interests is shortly to be published.

In addition to those people carrying their work forward from the first phase, (the Books and Young Readers project is currently being written up, and work relating to the assessment of progress for bilingual learners is continuing), the following is a list of TRG undertakings

- language/reading development; this group works at a number of levels across the age-range from early schooling onwards
- client-centred adult literacy: process and product
- policy initiatives for achieving change in secondary school curriculum and organisation
- bilingual pupils in the mainstream: reading development of bilingual learners, co-operative teaching; using mother-tongue support in the

mainstream; developing assessment profiles
— exploring the problems teacher-researchers face in collecting data and making use of it.

One of the problems of a joint enterprise like TRG is exemplified in the writing of this article. I have not properly demonstrated the way in which as individuals we have interacted and so contributed to the development of both the content and organisation of the group. Here it is a problem of space. In our own publications, though, we hope to do better. We exist to promote the value of joint enterprises and co-operation. The role that discussion with colleagues plays in furthering the thinking of ourselves as writers/researchers is therefore salient. It is unquestionably part of our research. We intend to ensure, therefore, that everything we eventually publish shall demonstrate this process by including in our text data that demonstrate the ways in which end products have emerged from our debates.

As readers of this journal will know we are not the only group of teachers engaged in initiating and carrying out our own action research.³ Such work has been going long enough for us to know of its pay off in teachers' professional development, and long enough for teachers to value the opportunities groups like our Teachers Research Group afford them. And yet, despite its benefits, teacher action research never has achieved the status it deserves. Is that because it is teachers doing the work? The current climate and the constraints engendered by it intensify this under-evaluation.

It is a good thing — and surely a new trend in education — that teachers are in a mood of resistance, not only in terms of employment, but also in relation to maintaining responsibility both as individuals, for their own professional development, and collectively, for the development of their profession. It is important that groups like ours exist so that there remains a place for so much determined industry. But, it is wrong that such formative work with such potential and actual capacity to contribute to the development of educational thinking and practice should exist on a shoestring, and that teachers should be doing the work unresourced and unrecognised even in timetabling arguments.

Notes

1. Up to this point, the article has relied heavily on the TRG document **TRG Network and Aims** produced for TRG by Helen Davitt, Head of English, Sir Walter St John's School, ILEA.
2. It is not possible to mention by name in the space of this article all colleagues who convene and work in TRG sub-groups. Details of all or any of them, and information about TRG meetings, can be obtained from Josie Levine, Joint Department of English and Media Studies, University of London Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL.
3. I know of David Jackson and Peter King's East Midland Network, Pat D'Arcy's Wiltshire Group, Steven Rowland's Leicester Group.

Teacher Appraisal: Threat Or Promise

Pat Jones

Teacher appraisal is apparently not now to be imposed by law, as clearly proposed by Sir Keith Joseph when he was Secretary of State. Here, Pat Jones recalls a private scheme he developed with his own department in a comprehensive school seven years ago; that is, two years before Sir Keith became Secretary of State. It is, perhaps, a measure of the damage done during his term of office that Pat Jones's article inevitably appears somewhat nostalgic, since the experience pre-dates the erosion of morale, trust, goodwill and job satisfaction that characterised the Joseph years. But the experience reflected here may prove to have relevance for the future. Pat Jones is currently on secondment as a Teacher-Fellow at Nottingham University.

It concerns me that during the last few years the DES has lost so much credibility with teachers that the current spate of initiatives it has sponsored are in danger of wholesale rejection by an embittered profession. Though **Better Schools** has its misguided aspects, the document for all its faults expresses a welcome need for "whole education thinking" and offers a range of positive initiatives (merit certificates or A/S levels excepted). Several of these, for example the common 16+ exam, profiling, more active learning approaches have emerged from a background of enlightened thought and campaigning. How ironic that it is now this particular government that is pushing for them and the profession which is shaping to hold them up. It is my fear that despite the acceptability of many of the proposals in **Better Schools**, the gold in them will turn to stone as like a kind of Midas-in-reverse, the enervating hand of the DES applies its deadly touch.

I want in this article to concentrate on the potential merits of one of the more contentious ideas contained in **Better Schools** and subsequent proposals for legislation. The motive behind the advocacy of teacher appraisal has been mildly threatening: to root out "poor" or incompetent teachers whilst rewarding those who conform to centrally-agreed definitions of "good".

The relevant section in **Better Schools: A Summary** on teacher-assessment reads as follows:

All teachers need help in assessing their own professional performance and in building on their strengths and working on the limitations identified; all teachers need to be able to engage in in-service training relevant to their teaching programmes and professional needs.

Now who would quarrel with that? But subsequent sentences become increasingly threatening as they refer to "regular and formal appraisal of the performance of all teachers" and to proposed legislation to "require" local education authorities to do just that.

Another one bites the dust?

Before it does so perhaps I could offer some justification for that idea, or a constructive conversion of it, based on a real life example of a scheme falling within the scope of teacher evaluation, that I experienced as Head of the English Department of a West Country comprehensive school several years ago.

The department had a long tradition of open

discussion and decision making. Probationer teachers were well looked after and were linked with particular department members who met with them regularly to go over lesson preparation and to talk through problems. The first year teachers valued such "regularized" support in their early, potentially traumatic terms and appreciated that being given the airy (though well intentioned) invitation to "come and see me if you want any help" was an inadequate framework for genuine support. For on that basis a probationer might feel that he or she could only seek advice if difficulties arose. That seemed too much like an admission of failure. What was needed was a regular, fixed occasion to go through things — at first on a weekly basis at an appointed time, later at increasingly wide intervals; but always at an agreed, fixed period.

Eventually in those heady days when we could expect one or two probationer teachers a year, six out of the eight members of the department had grown up through this system. At this stage it was suggested that such a "structured" dialogue could usefully continue beyond the probationary year and, with somewhat altered purposes, could be a useful tool for the continued development of the teachers and of the work of the department as a whole. A pilot scheme was agreed, trialled and the approach described below emerged as a result.

Each half term (we weren't unduly rigid about that) members of the department were asked to submit a confidential "Teacher's Report" on their work. Offered headings invited comments on:

- The general state of each class
- Ways in which the department can help and support you in your teaching
- General feelings about your work and the department
- Ideas for developing the work of the department

The reports averaged about three pages, took about an hour to write and took the form of a kind of freewheeling diary. I then read them, added my comments and arranged a time in or out of school to sit down with the teacher, go over the report and agree on things we needed to implement or take action about, as a result.

The system worked very well and became an integral part of the work of the department. On reflection its values were as follows:-

1. Though the department met and talked and worked together all the time, we worked at such a pace that there was rarely time to sit down and talk things through seriously and thoroughly with particular individuals. The reports became, for me at least, a valued channel of communication, keeping me in touch with how all classes were progressing. For example:

Still the basic problem. There's wasted potential but not sure I'm not being over-anxious. Somehow they don't work together. They're keen, nice and quite bright yet their work consistently disappoints. Perhaps they're so sparkling verbally they never get it on paper. Hopeless at coming in and settling down — the noisiest I've had.

A collection of such comments from the seven different teachers helped to give me an invaluable overview of how things were going, as well as pinpointing problems and difficulties we needed to tackle together.

2. Besides the bread and butter of classroom work I was also able to keep better in touch about the way teachers were feeling about the job (and themselves). There was a diary/confessional element in the reports. A relaxed, thoughtful mode of writing can at times enable people to think new thoughts. Somehow things were easier to write than to say, particularly when teachers felt critical of themselves:

Am feeling stale, stagnant, and a failure! It's true — I don't carry things through properly. Organization still lacking — foresight too.

Such jottings provided a natural opening to talk through feelings and to suggest and agree ways forward, including in-service needs.

3. The reports became a valuable running commentary on the work of the department, directly relevant to my role as its head. In one sense I too was being appraised, though not in any threatening way:

We've really got to be better organised in 5th teacher options. Things need to be floated and discussed much earlier so the kids can plan their choices.

4. I need look no further for ideas for development and resourcing of the department. Rather than the annual brain-storming about what we should spend money on or try to wheedle from the head I was made constantly aware of general and particular needs from ideas for books and equipment to suggested syllabus revisions.

5. The system provided a natural context for keeping in touch with aspects of my responsibilities as Head of Department which had necessarily been delegated to others (sometimes with scale posts attached).

The bookshop is virtually at a standstill — suffers like the tuckshop from exams, block release and sunshine. It has got to be moved and/or open every lunch hour.

6. Teachers used the reports too as a way of sounding out career intentions early on:

I think I should leave next year for a change. . . I don't give a damn about scale or kudos but I do like new things to do — a challenge. . . I'm not definitely leaving — it's just that I ought to start looking around. Don't you agree?

Such comments provided the basis of a less piecemeal approach to career development than usually obtains in a large and hectic department.

There were other benefits; I was made aware of tensions between individuals that enabled me to be more sensitive and less blundering than usual.

I have already hinted that the appraisals gave me direct feedback about my work as Head of Department. At the time I didn't fill in a report of my own in quite the same way though on reflection I could and should have — perhaps rotating it round different members each time. Instead I chose to be "accountable" by presenting a report on the work of the department to them at special meetings twice a year and, in the light of their comments and criticisms, converting this to a written report to the Head. The school had set up a "Curriculum Development" group which was pleased to receive such reports, sometimes commissioned them, and used them as a basis of a constructive dialogue aimed at effecting improvements and meeting needs. Again, a non-threatening and very positive approach to appraisal.

I do believe that the arrangements described above were very successful. But any success we had depended on the following factors:

1. The system was a mutual one agreed by the teachers.
2. It was carried out by and within the department.
3. It took place in the context of open and supportive professional relationships.
4. The teachers were in control of what was said and of any outcomes.
5. It was not linked in any way to pay or promotion.
6. The whole aim of the exercise was understood as twofold:
 - i) to keep me and each other more closely in touch with the work and needs of the department
 - ii) to determine what support (in terms of specific classes and general career development) teachers needed at particular moments in their working lives.
7. The reports were confidential to me and could only be referred to elsewhere with the specific permission of the writers (as I have done in this case).

This all happened seven years ago. Writing about it, reading through the file of reports, has been a nostalgic experience. Does it all now seem rather quaint — archaic, even? Would such a system be scuppered in the present climate? Perhaps it's just an echo of balmy days never to be rediscovered in the new, cold realities. Yet the needs are constant and the aims remain fresh. Can we all agree that teachers need to find effective ways to think through, to evaluate their work and to discuss ways forward in a constructive and supportive context? Isn't that the best way by which teachers can have some control over the development of their professional lives and become better at their jobs? It would be a great pity if an (understandably) suspicious profession were to throw such positive benefits out with the bathwater.

Whole School Policy: Principles into Practice

Caroline Roaf

An article by Brian Boyd on 'Whole School Policies' (Vol.27 No.3) was our first on this specific topic. Here, Caroline Roaf develops the discussion further. Head of Special Needs and ESL at Milham Ford School, Oxford, Caroline Roaf made a special study of W.S.P. during a year's secondment at Oxford University Department of Educational Studies.

Brian Boyd's article on whole school policy (WSP) in a recent issue of this journal was timely, particularly in its treatment of the subject in general terms as a concept in its own right rather than as an approach or policy attached to a particular issue, for example, multi-cultural education or special educational needs. A broader perspective leads one to ask questions about the subject in general — 'What is policy? And what is whole school? Is unanimity necessary? What is the relationship of WSPs with concepts such as climate, organisational health, the hidden curriculum and ethos?' These are questions raised by Boyd, who further asks how the term has come to occupy such a central place in influential reports and why there has been so little attention to the management implications of this. And there will be those who will wonder who needs WSP anyway.

In my own experience of WSP I have found that, although increasingly used, WSP is a term so far without clear, or indeed any definition. This (confirmed by attendance at conferences and interviews with teachers) seems unfortunate: either we should accept that the term is more than a useful catch phrase, and thus worthy of further study, or we should abandon it as an unnecessary piece of jargon. Judging by the enthusiasm with which the phrase is being used there seems to be a good deal to suggest the former.

In examining the meaning and purpose of WSP we also find that certain aspects of a WSP in one area can be defeated by the operation of aspects of other policies in other areas. This seems to happen, firstly, because policy making structures tend to be poorly developed in schools and secondly because we do not look closely enough at the interrelationships between different policies.

What happens, for example, when a school introduces more than one WSP within the space of a very few years? This is not uncommon, particularly in a multi-ethnic school, yet it is also quite common for these policies to be treated as independent and there may even be a good deal of suspicion and misunderstanding between them. In the case of multi-cultural education and special educational needs this has been specially true and although there have been very good grounds for it in this particular case, it would be a pity if this suspicion were to be allowed to continue unexamined, since it is the failure to see WSPs in each other's context which can result in their becoming self-defeating.

For example, a school developing a WSP on special educational needs which has switched from a withdrawal

model to a less stigmatising one based on in-class support needs to look carefully at what is happening to the ethnic minority children who are receiving ESL help (often provided, incidentally, by a different group of teachers and funded by the Home Office rather than the D.E.S.). What model is being used there? 'If I paint my face black, can I come with you?', one ESL teacher was asked by a primary school child. In another school, in which ethnic minority children were distributed in equal proportions through all the sets of a tightly setted English department, a recent immigrant with only a limited command of English had to be withdrawn from the top English set — in this school, where withdrawal was unusual from a top set, perhaps more consideration should have been given to the development of mixed ability teaching. If children are being withdrawn for individual or small group help, is this a form of provision which is normally available across the full ability range? If a support teacher or extra resources are brought into a classroom, to what extent is this seen, again, as a resource for everyone?

Of course particular children need special provision in certain contexts but we owe it to them to see that the way in which it is given does not negate the purpose for which it was arranged in the first place. In a bare and under-resourced classroom, to bring special resources in for one child is to cause him or her to wince with embarrassment and reject the help.

There are many such examples where the failure to recognise the inter-relationships between different policies and methods of implementing them contribute to the school's failure to realise its aims. Is an anti-racist policy operating in isolation from an anti-sexist one to the detriment of black girls? And both in isolation from a policy on class or handicap? A recent article by Hazel Taylor² develops this theme. If, therefore, a sound conceptual framework for the integration of WSP could be developed, it would assist schools both in realising their aims and in developing them further.

The attempt to give meaning to this term and to analyse it in its various contexts is, therefore, unavoidable and is useful in opening up a line of inquiry, particularly fruitful at the present time, where matters of attitude, values and principle are increasingly under scrutiny.

I can only outline here the stages by which a definition of WSP might be arrived at. First, many (though not all) school policies are whole school (e.g. uniform, discipline) but some have been particularly emphasised

in this way: second, schools are governed by a large number of different policies, many of which have become so much a part of what schools in the popular imagination are, that they are no longer perceived as policies and are easily ossified and overlain by tradition, convention and habit. We have also to distinguish between policies that tend towards a 'good' and are tied to an acceptable principle and those which are merely advantageous or expedient. This relationship between policy and principle is an intricate one particularly relevant in any discussion on WSP in the comprehensive school. All schools, whatever their ethos or tradition, have policies which determine or are determined by that ethos. However the comprehensive school has to face the particular challenge of being required to relate an educational philosophy to a social philosophy: possibly it is to meet this demand that the notion of WSP has arisen.

Perhaps any 'whole school' policy should be seen as a staging post for a new, usually current, educational concept or perspective on its journey towards this end in ethos and tradition. A working definition might, then, read as follows — 'a policy understood by the whole school community, whose purpose is to guide and determine the ethos of the school and to support attitudes and practices consistent with that ethos'. Thus a WSP provides a platform from which to reiterate principle.

An examination of the inter-relationships between two topics commonly introduced as WSPs helps to shed further light on the matter, from a different angle. For this purpose an analysis of what is currently understood by Multi-cultural Education and Special Educational Needs is particularly illuminating. It shows both topics as being composed essentially of two elements. The first involves an examination of society's attitude and behaviour towards identifiable groups, raising in particular the issue of prejudice and discrimination; the second examines the needs of children, both as individuals and as members of recognisable groups. By making the connection between society's attitudes and behaviour and children's needs, or, put another way, between violations of human rights and the action required to remedy them, we introduce the idea that there may be a particular group of WSPs which should more properly be called human rights policies. We could, further, begin to select certain aspects of school management, such as pupil groupings, the methods by which needs are met, the rewards system in a school and certain aspects of the curriculum as examples of matters which would be primarily the concern of these policies.

If this is the case, we have little difficulty in picking out other human rights issues which are also, it is no surprise to find, frequently introduced as WSPs. If it does nothing else, this way of looking at such policies (e.g. Race, Gender, Handicap, with at least one authority also considering Localism and Ageism and others considering Class) induces one not only to consider formulating a typology of WSP, but to re-examine the place in that typology of one of the front runners among WSPs, Special Educational Needs.

If all human rights policies can be analysed as having a dual concern with a) society's attitudes and behaviour and b) children's educational needs, then it becomes apparent that teachers, and special needs teachers in

particular, need to have a very much more sophisticated idea of their brief than they commonly do. *Whose* special needs? And why? Are we talking about learning difficulty or about needs (as in the case of second language learners or girls) which do not arise because of learning difficulty but nonetheless require special provision?

A rather confused section of the 1981 Act attempts to make this point about children whose 'language (or form of language) in which he is, or will be, taught is different from a language (or form of language) which has at any time been spoken in his home.' It is time we reviewed this section and included in it all the other children, who require 'special provision' but do not have 'learning difficulties', among whom many have needs which arise from a combination of sources, with Class knocking around among all of them like a rogue elephant.

Furthermore the analysis of human rights policies into two parts shows that this provision requires two kinds of closely related response. First, schools must do what they can to meet the immediate needs of the groups concerned in a way which recognises that different kinds of special provision are likely to be required because a particular individual's needs may arise from more than one source. This needs careful analysis to ensure that the appropriate provision is provided. We are accustomed, for example, to some kinds of special provision for girls (toilets, uniform, P.E.) but what about other needs which may arise — for the inclusion of national dress in uniform, for separate classes for Maths or Science or Health Education. But a girl recently arrived in this country with a limited command of English will need special ESL provision, and, if the same girl is from socio-economic class 5 or 6 she will also need special provision in the shape of a richly resourced school, excellent teaching and a strong emphasis on equal opportunity. This brings us to the second point, that schools must create a climate in which there is a minimal need for special provision in the first place. WSPs have merged out of this dual concern, as a way of balancing attitudinal with pedagogical approaches, and of linking principle with practice.

How then, do we make WSP effective? What are the management implications so rightly stressed by Boyd? Handy³ points out that schools tend to confuse policy making with administrative and executive functions — a condition many teachers will associate with 'crisis management'. In perhaps the majority of schools, since this is the tendency, policy making, being the more intellectually and emotionally demanding task, is neglected. Further, although there are structures (Tutor/Year/House groups) in operation for policies which might be primarily considered the concern of pastoral care groups or curriculum groups (Department/Faculty meetings), it is rare for a school to develop a structure specifically concerned with the formulation, planning and co-ordination of WSP. Since it is these, and the kind of change generated by them, which most closely guide and determine school ethos and give expression to the comprehensive school principle, this is a serious omission. Structures, however, are not in themselves enough. Schools have to pay attention, as Richardson⁴ outlines in a recent article, to the factors affecting the success or failure of a policy and to the planning of WSP (stressed in the Hargreaves Report)⁵.

Curriculum Change in a County

Sylvia Richardson

All local authorities were required, by Circular 6/81, to formulate and publish a policy for the curriculum. As a result a great deal of discussion and activity took place in the area of every authority in the country, resulting finally in the production of policy documents. Authorities varied greatly in their approach to this request. Here, Sylvia Richardson, now Senior Assistant Education Officer for Suffolk County Council and previously head of a London comprehensive, writes on the approach utilised in her authority.

When Circular 6/81 was issued in Suffolk we decided upon a plan of campaign which, with the benefit of a subsequent period of healing, seems fairly straightforward but at the time represented a major departure from practice.

In outline, the response to the Circular looked like this:

1. The Authority took soundings upon the areas of experience approach to curriculum planning and agreed that this was a useful cross-phase tool.
2. Members of the Advisory Team prepared draft curricular statements for each of the areas of experience taking account of good practice in schools, new approaches and attitudes which were being adopted more broadly and nationally perceived needs for pupils of statutory school age.
3. These draft curricular papers were then submitted to combined groups of advisers and teachers and the emphasis, priorities, attitudes and practicalities of the proposals were fully discussed. More than fifty teachers were engaged in this work with their advisory colleagues. Those teachers had been nominated by the representative teacher associations.
4. Resultant papers emerging from these working parties are now referred to as the "Professional Papers" and on their completion a separate draft

summary was prepared — "The Suffolk Curriculum, a Consultative Paper", May 1983.

5. The Professional Papers and the Consultative Paper were then issued to all Heads and they were invited to area conferences at which the issues were debated and observations sought. Heads were also asked to ensure that members of staff were given the opportunity of seeing the Professional Papers in draft, in order to keep them informed of the Authority's initiative and allow individual schools to make fuller responses.
6. A copy of the Consultative Paper was then sent to all Governors of the Authority's schools, including teacher and parent governors, and they were invited to local seminars with Heads, Officers and members of the Advisory Team, at which the approach adopted by the Local Authority to the Secretary of State's circular was outlined and observations sought. Notes of the various meetings were kept and, in any event, governors were invited to make any further comments either in writing or by debating more fully at their next governors' meeting.
7. The Consultative paper was also submitted to meetings of the Authority's three Business Education Liaison Groups and, again, comments were invited either at the meeting or separately by letter.
8. The Consultative Paper and the Professional Papers were then submitted for observation to a meeting with the Curriculum Steering Group of the Suffolk Teachers' Committee which is the body that undertakes normal consultative procedures with officers of the Authority.

The above paragraphs outline the formal consultative procedures that have taken place, but in addition there have been numerous opportunities when advisers, as part of their in-service programme of work with teachers, raised and discussed related issues.

9. Final drafts were then prepared in the light of the comments made and were submitted to the Education Committee of March 1984.
10. The papers remain entitled "Consultative". Set out like that the initiative seems logical and relatively

Whole School Policy (continued from page 21)

both short and long term. First, however, we have to be prepared to overcome our reluctance to talk principle: that is what WSP is about and why it needs to be taken seriously as a concept in its own right.

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3. **Take for Granted? Understanding schools as organisations**, Charles Handy, 1984
4. Each and every school: responding, reviewing, planning and doing, Robin Richardson, **Multicultural Teaching** Vol. 3 No. 2
5. **Improving Secondary Schools**, The Hargreaves Report, ILEA 1984.

uncluttered. Reality, however, was that it represented for this Authority a determination on the part of those most closely involved to ensure that curriculum thinking throughout the county was moved on.

The process of drawing up those documents and seeking advice and comments upon them was, of itself, developing for all who participated but it was not a process which was seen in isolation from other trends within the Authority. School self-appraisal, moves to improve liaison between phases, and intention to put staff development at the centre of the stage, all went hand in hand with the writing of these curriculum documents.

So Circular 6/81 set up what was effectively not just a process to respond to the Secretary of State but one which set the agenda for change within the Authority. Perhaps if I synthesise the work into its key elements it will become clearer how the Authority saw that process in relation to change within its institutions. The Professional Papers had a number of key themes running through all of them:

- i. Methodological change from the didactic towards the participative;
- ii. A view of education 5-16 as a continuum;
- iii. A view of curriculum as an entitlement;
- iv. A changed role for classroom teachers, school senior managers, parents and local community in their relationship with that continuum and that curriculum development.

I suppose the main question which will be in people's minds is whether or not this sort of approach to providing a curriculum framework, directional rather than directive, then produces the sorts of changes which were sought. I can only say that it was our intention to endeavour to support schools in this process of change in a very much more co-ordinated way than in the past. The requirement for the Authority to look at its in-service education programme, its policies for group size, and to change emphasis in its support system, wherever necessary, was critical.

The other key question is whether such a curriculum framework is more than just rhetoric. We certainly took the view that we were not afraid of being accused of being centralist since we felt we could justify the Authority's decision to take responsibility in a directional way for curriculum, especially at a time in which moves towards school self-appraisal required individual teachers and groups of teachers to assess their objectives and set themselves targets. The difficulties teachers face without some clear statement of aims and objectives from the Authority seemed to us to be likely to isolate individual teachers in their schools from the Authority if no guidance were available. How can you ask people to set themselves targets against which they will assuredly be assessed if only informally, if you have not stated categorically and clearly what are the parameters of the exercise? Similarly, how can you make statements like the one which follows — taken from the 'Professional Papers' — where as an LEA we set out our stall?

"All teachers need to participate in the following:

Identifying and developing cross-curricular links;

Establishing school policy on the curriculum and reviewing it regularly;

Liaison with parents, community and employers;

Developing the necessary school statements and practice in the light of County guidelines;

Ensuring consistent co-ordination and monitoring of the curriculum for each pupil;

Avoiding early over-specialisation or excessive concentration on the requirements of external examinations;

Ensuring the appropriateness of work to age and ability;

Positively encouraging equal opportunities for boys and girls;

Ensuring that the needs of different ethnic groups are met.

These will have unavoidable consequences for the teacher.

New methods already emphasise the changing role of the teacher. The papers which follow require that:

A teacher relinquishes the role of sole "pace-maker" of pupils' learning;

The teacher works in partnership with pupils;

The teacher, in all phases of compulsory education, no longer is the main human resource and increasingly acts as the manager of learning;

The teacher encourages pupils to learn from and with each other."

Teachers themselves drew up this statement as their view of the ways in which education in the county desirably should move. Their participation and subsequent consultation with a wide range of teachers, the fact that the professional papers were published as a consultative document and that review and further consultation will start again this Autumn, all go towards ensuring that such statements have credibility.

Yes, there is a central role for the Authority — the central role of supporting and assisting in the management of change. Yes, there is a strong element of centralism — agreed policies in the process of implementation will always look centralist to some and, therefore, beyond the pale. To the majority, I believe they are seen as positive assistance.

Please do not feel after reading this outline that I felt obliged to defend my Authority's position. I do willingly and with confidence coming from hindsight. It is now two years since the curriculum Professional Papers were published. In that time practice in schools in all phases has already changed. Schools are better able to prepare their own needs analysis, to undertake preparation of staff development proposals, to liaise more confidently within their sector. We have passed the stage of rhetoric.

FORUM and Primary Education

FORUM was founded a very long time ago now — in the Autumn of 1958, to be exact (we will soon celebrate our thirtieth anniversary). The journal was brought into being by a triumvirate consisting of Robin Pedley, Jack Walton and Brian Simon (hence 'PSW Educational Publications') for two main purposes, both closely related to each other. The first was to encourage the movement towards comprehensive secondary education which, at that time, was in its infancy. The second, seen as equally important, was to press for more flexible structures within primary schools, and in particular to support the movement towards non-streaming. At that time the vast majority of primary schools large enough to stream certainly did so, usually with extreme rigidity.

The 'PSW' partnership saw the movement towards more flexible forms of grouping within primary schools, and that towards comprehensive secondary education as complementary, as indeed they proved to be. Hence our first number carried articles on both issues, including articles on the new 'experimental' Leicestershire Plan for secondary education and on unstreaming in primary schools. Today, thirty years later, the bulk of the maintained schools in England and Wales (and of course Scotland) are in fact comprehensive schools, while the classic system of streaming is no longer to be found within the primary field. In these senses, then, **FORUM's** initial objectives can be said to have been achieved.

However, as is increasingly clear, the system of comprehensive secondary education remains under consistent attack (see our leader in this issue) — and from currently powerful sources. At the same time there is much discussion about the nature of the curriculum and teaching within primary schools. **FORUM** has a contribution to make to both these fields. In planning for the future, the Editorial Board has decided to give a higher degree of priority to primary education, while, of course, continuing our struggle for a genuinely comprehensive system of secondary education, and devoting attention in particular to problems of gender and race. During this current academic year we are planning two Special Numbers on primary education, the first being our next (January 1987) number, and the second our September (1987) number. We intend to focus particularly on problems of the curriculum and teaching within these schools (for the contents of the first number, see 'The Next Forum' on the inside front cover).

At the same time we propose to launch a publicity campaign for the journal within primary schools, with the aim of largely increasing our subscribers in this area. This will be an expensive undertaking (for a self-financing independent journal), and any help our readers can give us in increasing our subscribers will be

very gratefully received. Our view is that the problems of primary and secondary education should be seen as a unity, and it is in this sense that we will be dealing with them. As mentioned earlier we will certainly continue to give full attention to problems of secondary (and to some extent tertiary) education, but attempt also to ensure a proper and full coverage of issues within primary education as well.

Excluding the two editors, both of whom have some knowledge and experience of primary education, our Editorial Board is in fact evenly split between those with largely primary experience and those with secondary — in fact the former are in a (slight) majority. We feel well placed, therefore, to embark on this new initiative. If we are successful in substantially increasing the number of our subscribers (now at its maximum throughout our history) we should be able to enlarge the size of the journal and so ensure effective coverage of the whole field.

We would like to ask our subscribers to support this new initiative. Comments, suggestions or offers of help (and of articles) will all be gladly received.

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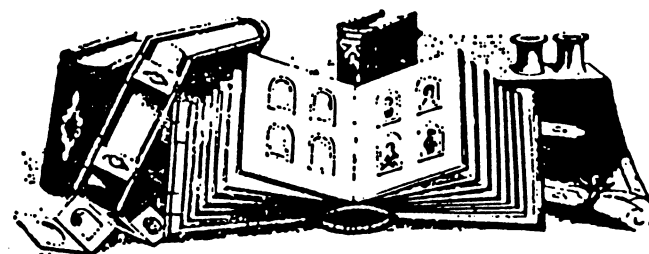
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REVIEWS



Quantum Leaps

Rescuing the Comprehensive Experience by Bernard Barker. Open University Press (1986) pp 160, £6.95.

When I purchased my copy of **Rescuing the Comprehensive Experience**, the dispute between teachers and their employers was already twelve months old. Like many of my colleagues at that time I feared for the future of secondary — and therefore largely comprehensive — schooling. However justified, the immediate impact of this long-running dispute was undoubtedly very damaging. From the gloom of those days it was difficult to see or even imagine what was over-the-hill. Also we dramatically lost the machinery for discussion and debate about possible developments so internally institutions were standing still or, worse, slowly slipping backwards.

Even before the dramatic events of the teachers' action there were serious concerns about the future of the comprehensive movement and many considered that a more campaigning style should be brought back. Therefore Bernard Barker's title 'Rescuing the Comprehensive Experience' seems entirely appropriate. If not 'rescuing', then certainly the process needs a shot of adrenaline. And who better to undertake a vigorous critique than the country's first head of a comprehensive school who was himself educated entirely within the system?

It seems all authors feel it necessary to put the movement into its historical context. Once again we are reminded that many of the early comprehensives worked hard to out-do the grammar schools. Their curriculum — both content and process — being severely constrained by the early patterns adopted. Whilst I do accept the broad thrust of this issue it is the only point in the book where I am uneasy. In my view there were some very exciting early pioneers (at all levels) in the comprehensive movement who made quantum leaps in those earlier days. The integration of children coming from schools in the highly divisive bi-lateral tradition was quite remarkable. Having worked through two major re-organisations myself, I still stand in awe of the dynamic people who led

and inspired us at that time. Indeed, currently I am privileged to work in an imaginative and innovative comprehensive that stands as a remarkable achievement for my distinguished predecessor and his colleagues who developed their school from Leicestershire's last and oldest grammar school. Even here, however, we need to maintain the momentum, understand the process of organic development, and avoid the danger of inertia. And that is Bernard Barker's general thrust when he says 'The comprehensive experience has to be rescued from its own meritocratic assumptions about children and teaching before it can be saved from politicians, falling rolls and shrinking finances.'

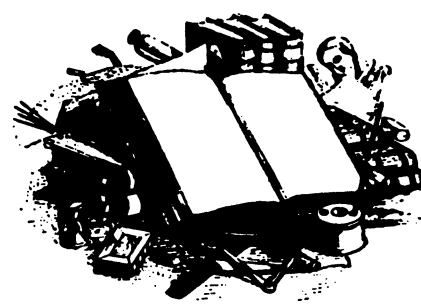
'The inescapable claim of the comprehensive is that all children; of whatever ability or background, should be educated together and will benefit profoundly from the shared experience.' That children learn best when they work together and that their similarities as citizens of a democratic society are of much greater importance than the differences as individuals, is a major theme of the book. The author uses Peter Dawson's phrase that it is children who are 'making comprehensives work.' I enjoyed the punchy comments on the classroom experience. 'Lessons are the least enjoyable and most quickly forgotten element of school life'... 'from the beginning of a lesson a teacher is struggling against a natural indifference that can be overcome only by exceptional efforts'... yet despite this, 'children work conscientiously and with determination'... 'Lessons are, for average children, often difficult and boring. And yet the children like their teachers and remember them with affection for ever'... 'Children hate disorder and indiscipline even more than their teachers do.' His conclusion is that 'A rescue is not feasible until a more comprehensive view of talent and learning is widely accepted as a basis for new methods of learning.'

Having focussed on a task ('An alternative view of learning is needed to provide the rationale for a new curriculum and new methods of teaching'), the remaining chapters suggest a 'strategy for "second generation" comprehensive schools.' We are taken in some detail through elements like a

sharing, task-based approach to decision making, a curriculum provision that starts with the needs of pupils, group approaches to learning, assessment strategies that encourage self-confidence and reinforce group learning and the idea that schools can become the focus for their neighbourhoods. The concluding sentence, rightly in my view, focusses sharply back on the role of the teacher. 'Everyone can achieve maturity and judgement through education but only if teachers remain sufficiently determined and inventive.'

An interesting and timely book that will surely achieve its aims if it serves as a starting-point for debate and development within comprehensive schools and also amongst those who are the providers. Encouraging because it is both a re-affirmation and a challenge to move ahead.

ROGER SECKINGTON
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Media Education

Teaching The Media, by Len Masterman. Commedia (1985), pp 341, £6.95 paperback.

In his book **Teaching Television** (1980) Masterman promoted the role of media education in 'demystifying' television images while exposing the values, ideas and practices that were at work on audiences. Supplying a range of activities, games, exercises and simulations, Masterman's book proved popular and influential among teachers.

The intention of **Teaching The Media** is to provide 'general principles' and 'critical approaches' which students (including school-students) can apply to 'any media text'. It is also intended to 'convey an understanding of the processes and principles of media education which will free teachers of dependency upon this or that piece of material or series of exercises and enable them to work independently and confidently in setting up their own media education programmes'.

Masterman proposes the teaching of 'core concepts' (e.g. ideology, genre, discourse, anchorage) that will be deepened year by year in a 'spiral curriculum'. These conceptual tools will aid the study of four 'general areas'. These four 'areas' (which Masterman argues 'suggest themselves with some degree of logic') form the substance of the media education model.

The first 'area' is that of 'determinants': how do institutions, professional practices, business interests etc. operate within or influence a media text? The second 'area' is that of 'rhetoric': what are the dominant techniques and codings employed by the media to 'convince us of the truth of their representations'? (These include image selection, narrative, anchorage etc.). The third 'area' is 'ideology': what are the 'values implicit in' media representations? The fourth 'area' is 'audience': how are media constructs 'read or received' by their audiences?

A thorough education programme would certainly address most of the issues proposed in **Teaching The Media**. For this reason alone the book is likely to prove useful. However I think that some of the problems of its theoretical framework would require careful consideration by teachers setting up their own programmes.

Teaching The Media seems to subscribe to one popular left account of the relationship between the mass media and children. The Right tends to see in this relationship a cause for moral alarm: watching TV and reading trash leads to obscenity, sexual deviation, mimetic violence and race-rioting — undermines Law, Order and Family. The Centre tends to read into the relationship a story of brain retardation, deprivation of childhood, stunted family life, withdrawal from literature and entry into an addicted state of opiate consumption. The Left tends to read a story of 'consciousness industries' feeding false consciousness to an unsuspecting and inert audience of working-class children.

What these accounts share is a view of children (and the working class) as somehow naturally innocent, vulnerable, easily duped and manipulated and in need of moral or political guidance. They imply the need for an education that will compensate for evident

deficiencies and remove false consciousness engendered by (according to political preference) anarchism, consumerism or capitalism.

It is possible to read a narrative at work in the educational model proposed in **Teaching The Media**: ruling interests inscribe their ideologies in media texts which children *passively* consume; having been 'positioned' by the texts, readers reproduce the dominant ideologies and sustain them; the role of media education is to warn against these false ideologies by exposing them at work in media texts and the institutions that make them; students will then be able to reject false 'ideological work' wherever they find it.

An overly deterministic view of the relationship between media texts and their readers leads to an overwhelming emphasis by Masterman on text and institutions and a limited (and limiting) view of literacy ('the basic media literacy technique of relating media messages to the political, social and economic interests of those who are producing them...'). This is 'cultural criticism' at a price. What is missing is a space and method by which to explore the process (and its implications) by which readers of media texts negotiate meanings to different purposes rather than consume them ready made and whole. The absence of a materialist account of reading parallels the absence of any account of the process of learning in the classroom.

By default, the reading and learning subject is notionally taken out of socio-historic context and de-politicised: students and teachers sharing a common 'cultural criticism' can console themselves with that Leavisian closure — 'It is so, is it not?'; politics is displaced to the text and its determinants. But is it enough for students to be able to identify, for example, racist images and values within media texts (perhaps the relevant determinants and be able to expose the techniques by which racism is naturalised) without ever confronting their own politics of racism and without being encouraged to interrogate the socio-historic conditions (race, age, sex, class, situation in institutions) which inform that politics?

Teaching The Media, perhaps unsurprisingly given its limited view of literacy and its marginalisation of the student learner, is suspicious of practical work and favours 'cultural criticism over cultural reproduction'. Practical work may be 'woven into' media studies, but only in a thin thread. I would argue that practical work need never be simply 'reproduction' and ought to provide a substantial part of a media education programme.

Even modest student production of media texts (e.g. comics, photo-love stories, biography, fragments of sitcom or soap, photo-projects, news, magazines, interviews, documentary) involving imitation, parody, role-reversal, montage, alternative images and narratives offers an entry by which production and reading processes can be questioned. Not only can codes and practices of production be deconstructed in a practical way but students are firmly *implicated* in the process of making meaning, negotiating decisions and choices. Analysing each others work, students can open up inconsistencies *within* and *between* texts and offer differences of reading. The problems and pleasure (or lack of it) in, say, an alternative narrative can

raise issues of ideology at a personal level and the socio-historic conditions of the reading and writing subject. This is not to see practical work as 'busy work' for the less able or as validation of working-class values in the mode of some '60's progressivism.

It is a diminished service in the cause of 'cultural criticism' to present students with a media programme which does not in theory or practice acknowledge their full political significance as readers *and* writers with power and responsibility.

ANTHONY S D WRIGHT
ILEA teacher of English and Media Studies



Computer Optimism

The Three Cs: Children Computers and Communication, by Tom Stonier and Cathy Conlin. John Wiley (1985), pp 218, £7.50.

This book is a wide ranging account of the role, and, more importantly, of the potential role of micro-computers as educational tools. The authors are experienced teachers and themselves authors of high quality educational computer software. They view the increasing role of computers in education with great optimism. The importance of computers as educational tools is attributed to three factors.

Firstly, computers used as a teaching aid are not, as many of their critics would argue, simply another fad. The difference is in their interactive nature—the response from the computer depends on, and can vary according to, the response of the children involved. Much early software was trivial and involved little other than drill and practice. It did little to enhance a reputation tarnished in many teachers' eyes by arcade games. More recently software in use in primary schools involves creative story writing, graphic communication and a wide variety of intellectual skills. The best new software, used well, has been shown to increase communication amongst the children using it. The extension of such teaching programs using interactive video is described. The use of concept keyboards to by-pass the effects of physical disability on intellectual development are used as pointers to future possibilities.

Second, the computer when linked to nationwide and eventually worldwide information systems (of which we are only now seeing the first steps such as The Times Network, Prestel) will allow students to access information and expert systems for immediate use in project and research work. The computer itself will become a powerful learning and research tool.

Third, the use of the computer as a word processor can increase the confidence of children in producing work in which their imagination is not limited by handwriting, spelling and syntax errors which need not appear in the final version.

The book divides into four sections.

In section one the authors describe the changes in education that have already come about, and look towards massive changes that can be brought about both in the level of educational achievement of children, and in the nature of education-learning becoming home and family based.

"... By the end of the decade, young children working with computers will learn to read and write about as fast as they learn to talk. With further advances in hardware, ... it becomes likely that early in the next century almost all twelve year olds will understand calculus and will have achieved comparable levels of understanding in science, engineering, geography. ... Children will go to school because they need to play with other children, to acquire social skills, ... perform experiments, put on plays. ... In short, home will become the place to learn, school where you go to play."

Sections two and three come down to earth and are well worth reading by the sceptic and the suspicious. Section two is an account of good practice in the use of computers and of forthcoming developments in teaching creative communication and lifeskills. In addition the use of simulations and interactive questionnaires might be used to give careers advice, and to improve self perception.

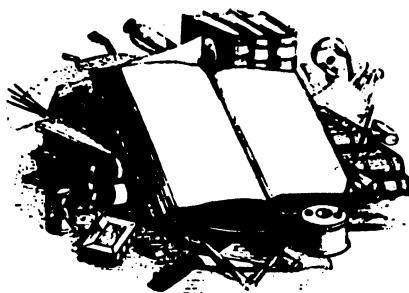
Section three contains practical advice for the teacher, the parent, and for the academic on how to exploit the computer as an educational tool; coupled with the authors' mind-stretching vision of what is already possible with existing technology.

Section four looks towards the opportunities and dangers associated with the development of the information technology society; and suggests strategies that an enlightened government might take.

The message is clear-these changes in the way young people gain knowledge and learn to use information are changing beyond recognition. ... "Schools as we know them today will have no place in the future. It is an open question whether they will adapt by transforming themselves into something new, or wither away and be replaced." There are implications now for the training of teachers, the resourcing of schools, and the imagination of educational administrators in Britain. The point at which I part company with the authors is that the tone of their book is wholly one of optimism. I hope that they are right.

GERRY SPALTON

Earl Shilton Community College
Leicestershire



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It's the first time I have ever felt **compelled** to write a review, so that as many people as possible can share this enlightening experience. I felt I was very privileged when I met one of the authors recently, the Jamaican writer, Judy Craven.

I hope that readers of 'Forum' will buy this pack and use it.

Available from:-

The Central Manchester Caribbean English Project,
Moss Side Community Education Centre,
40, Embden Walk,
Moss Side Precinct,
MANCHESTER M15 5NW

Michaela Oddy,
Chairperson of the N.W. District and
Manchester Branch of the W.E.A.

Also Received:

Talking To Some Purpose (December 1985), edited by Barrie Wade, with contributions by Maggie Moore, John Bakewell, Viv Jackson, Valerie Cherrington and Sylvia Winchester.

Educational Review Occasional Publications No. 12.

This attractive and well-produced book of some eighty pages has its origins in two courses which were mounted by the Birmingham branch of the National Association for the Teaching of English, in conjunction with Birmingham Local Education Authority. It explores the role of talk in pupils' learning, together with strategies for encouraging effective talk in the classroom.

The three sections (**Learning through Talk, Purpose and Diversity** and **Strategies**) focus upon 'good practice' with the intention of stimulating further discussion amongst teachers who are presently uncertain about the precise aims of talk in class, how to conduct it, or how to assess its effectiveness.

The book deals with a variety of school subjects at both the primary and secondary level, and explores the role of talk in various contexts such as whole class discussion, one-to-one talk and small group work. The emphasis throughout is upon the benefits of oral work and, in the words of Barrie Wade's short Introduction: 'frequent illustrations will be found of pupils' strengthened grasp of concepts, greater willingness to write and greater effectiveness when they do, as well as examples of their increase in both social and academic confidence'.

The book is available from:

Secretary to the Editors,
Educational Review,
Faculty of Education,
University of Birmingham,
P.O. Box 363,
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