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Special Number

The Primary School

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Ian Menter, Gaby Weiner, and
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Editorial Board

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The Next FORUM

Our May number returns largely to secondary education. A main feature will be a symposium focussing on G.C.S.E. This includes articles by Caroline Gipps, Harry Torrance, Alex Begbie (Head of Foxford School, Coventry) and others and will tend, on the whole, to be a critical appraisal. In addition, John Hull, head of Waltheof School, Sheffield, writes on 'A Comprehensive View of a Full School Day', while Ian Menter and others, in 'Bussing to Birmingham', raise some important issues relating to race. Clyde Chitty will critique Kenneth Baker's plan for so-called 'City Technical Colleges', while Roy Hayward writes on LAPP at Gateshead. In the primary field, Peter Mortimore and colleagues contribute a second article on the ILEA research study, while Geoffrey Southworth evaluates the recent report by the Parliamentary Select Committee on Primary education.

Editorial Announcement

In view of a surplus of material for this Special Number, the articles previously announced, by Nanette Whitbread and Brian Simon, have been held over for later publication.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

'If it be so, as it is, that selection between schools is largely out, then I emphasise that **there must be differentiation within schools**'. With these words, in a TV programme in February 1984, the late, unlamented Secretary of State for Education and Science, Sir Keith Joseph, announced his determination to impose new divisive procedures within comprehensive secondary schools.

As all can see, this policy is being ruthlessly pursued by the present government. The power and apparently bottomless resources of the Manpower Services Commission was unleashed on the schools and used, through the Technical and Vocational Initiative, to develop a specific vocational 'track' within comprehensive schools for named students within the single school. This initiative, Kenneth Baker has announced, is now to be generalised, again with MSC money and under MSC control. The Lower Achieving Pupil Project, for Joseph's so-called 'bottom 40 per cent', this time financed by the DES, has the purpose of developing special curricula for this specific (but very large) group of students. This is also now to be generalised throughout all schools in the country. This provides the second 'track' (of a 'secondary modern' variety). Finally the G.C.S.E. provides the academic 'track' for the highfliers, leading through 'A' level GCE to higher education. But this is where the differentiation process will be crystallised. G.C.S.E. is to be differentiated into seven grades, thus forcing teachers to take crucial decisions as to the level of teaching to be directed at each individual child. For the first time historically differentiation is to be built into the actual examination itself.

What this amounts to is clear. By these means an attempt is being made, from on top, to impose a threefold or tripartite division within comprehensive secondary schools. It is the old tripartitism, rejected by the country, in a new, more covert form. And it has the same objectives — to channel different groups of children in different directions, and so to destroy the primary objective of comprehensive education, which is to provide for **all** children, between the ages of 11 and 16, a full, all-round, general education which can provide the basis for effective citizenship in the late 20th century, as also the means to profit from further, higher, and indeed lifelong education.

But now a new tactic has emerged, presented under the slogan 'freedom of choice'. This is Baker's proposal to establish twenty or more so-called City Technological Colleges in inner-city urban areas up and down the country. This tactic is clearly aimed at further disrupting, or destabilising, locally controlled systems of comprehensive schools. With enhanced funding from industry, under no form of local or democratic control, offering teachers higher pay, and supported directly by the Government, it is hoped that these schools will attract parents away from the locally provided system, will reduce their student rolls, and cause them yet further problems in a period of social crisis.

This is an irresponsible use of government power and money, having no precedent whatsoever in the historical record. No previous government has ever attempted so directly to disrupt the system of schooling for the health and effectiveness of which **they** are directly responsible. If this initiative actually gets off the ground, its effects will be felt over the educational system as a whole. And not least in the primary schools in the cities where CTC's are established.

Because it will mean a return to the 11 plus, if in a new form. So far, only vague statements have been made as to how the students for the 'Colleges' will be selected. But if there is parental pressure, then systems will have to be established which can stand up to public scrutiny. There are no such systems, as we know from our own experience extending over a long period. That was why comprehensive education was originally established.

But whatever system is enforced, this is bound to have a direct, and deleterious effect on primary schools in the chosen cities. Whatever tests or other forms of selection are used will inevitably be replicated in the primary schools, just as in the past. It is generally accepted that comprehensive education, by liberating the primary schools from the demands of the 11 plus, opened a new and positive era in primary education.

With this issue of **FORUM**, we launch our first Special Number on Primary Education. Primary schools are now specifically under heavy pressure, again from above, to move from the class teaching approach to subject based teaching. The establishment of City Technological Colleges is certain to increase this pressure, just as it is designed to impose new forms of differentiation at the secondary stage.

Our conclusion is that this initiative must not be permitted to get off the ground, under any circumstances. Teachers in particular can play their part in this by ensuring that Kenneth Baker, or whoever may succeed him, are not in positions of authority after the next election. They have shown very clearly that they do not have the true interests of the public system of education at heart.

Subject to Subjects

Joy Richardson
Formerly a primary teacher in Buckinghamshire and Oxdfordshire, Joy Richardson has been at Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln, as a tutor for the last ten years, working very directly to local schools. In this article she examines critically the pressures for specialist teaching in primary schools.

As curriculum publications rain down on staffroom tables, questioning voices are beginning to be raised. What about primary class teachers attempting over the next few years to assimilate all twenty-plus Curriculum Matters publications, while secondary colleagues get to grips with one or two? Is this trial by paper deliberately calculated to demonstrate the untenability of the class teacher's position, thus contributing to the inexorable logic of a trend towards greater subject specialisation? In any case, is this really how change is affected on the ground? Does the 'stand and deliver' approach allow time for healthy organic growth? Can curriculum really be considered in isolation from organisation?

Curriculum is a greedy word. Over-indulged for a decade it is growing steadily fatter in the process of swallowing education whole. In the 1950s Christian Schiller described the word curriculum as 'sharp and harsh . . . a Roman word, unaltered and unassimilated by our native tongue,' and advocated a descriptive language more properly rooted in the nature of children's learning: 'Curriculum has for long been conventionally used as a collective noun to denote a collection of subjects. But in the field of primary education we are becoming increasingly doubtful whether "What we do in school" can be conveniently described in terms of subjects'.

Thirty years later, the units of measurement have changed a little to include 'curricular elements' and 'areas of learning and experience' alongside subjects, as metric/imperial equivalents within the recipe, but it has become an article of faith that the right ingredients in the right proportions will make the perfect educational cake.

The 1978 Primary Survey used the subject categories for purposes of clarity in describing primary practice, circumventing the in-house shorthand of topics and projects by separating out the subject matter from its organisation. The survey also attempted to identify the broad areas of learning and experience which make up the curriculum, and these have developed into the nine areas presented in '*The Curriculum from 5-16*' (1985) as 'a planning and analytical tool' rather than as discrete elements to be taught.

It is both the strength and the weakness of the 'areas of learning and experience' classification that it carries no implied mode of implementation, whereas subject titles are generally associated in common parlance with a particular pattern of organisation. Analysis of the curriculum can only be separated out from discussion of organisation if neither threatens to impose impossible constraints on the other. At the present time organisational implications are stacking up behind curricular statements and are crying out for attention.

The DES publication '*Better Schools*' (1985) spells out the knock-on effect at primary level:

> 'Plainly the content of the curriculum cannot be divorced from the teaching approaches employed . . . Teaching the broad curriculum . . . with the necessary differentiation . . . places formidable demands on the class teacher. Older primary pupils need to benefit from more expertise than a single teacher can reasonably be expected to possess; this has consequences for staffing and the deployment of staff within a school, including the use of teachers as consultants.'

When, as the new Senior Chief Inspector, Eric Bolton set the cat among the pigeons at a NAPE meeting in 1984, he elaborated the Primary Survey's findings concerning the need for a greater use of teachers' specialist strengths, and pressed the logic further with respect to the teaching of older juniors.

> 'It is time we looked hard at the whole question of when and how the change from general class-based to specialist-based teaching should take place'.

The Primary Survey while advocating specialist influence as a means of achieving better 'match' of work to ability, particularly for more able children, also rehearsed the disadvantages to be guarded against: the danger of fragmentation; loss of timetable flexibility; lack of co-ordination across the curriculum.

> 'A danger of specialist teaching is that work done by a specialist may be too isolated from the rest of the children's programme . . . The teacher responsible for the class may be best placed to co-ordinate the whole programme of the class. Care needs to be taken that the programme of the specialist's own class is not too fragmented . . . If specialist teaching is taken too far, the timetable becomes over-complex.'

It is important to weigh up possible gains against what stands to be lost in the process of strengthening specialist teaching in primary schools. There is a seductive logic which suggests coping with the add-on curriculum (add on science, add on health education, add on technology, add on computers) by dividing the time available into a greater number of parts and bringing a greater concentration of expertise to bear on each of the parts. When description seeks embodiment in action there is always a tendency to divide up the action according to

the descriptive terms, taking the shortest route to the desired end. (Thus prediction in reading becomes cloze-procedure, problem-solving becomes Problem-Solving, and consultant influence becomes swap you half-an-hour's music for half-an-hour's maths.)

Through an over-extension of the logic, the CATE criteria for teacher training courses elevate subject specialism, sanitised from excessive school-relatedness, as the main agent for improvement in the quality of primary teaching. The same simple but invasive logic leads rapidly to the discovery of the ideal minimum size for a primary school: one teacher for each subject or one for each of the nine golden areas of learning and experience. (Sounds familiar? It's called a secondary school.)

The use of specialist strength for the purpose of whole staff development has been an exciting development over the past decade, but this needs to be sharply distinguished from subject teaching by specialists, which has altogether different implications for the pattern of teaching and learning in primary schools. Specialist teaching (as opposed to consultancy) has the negative side effects of under-valuing and under-using the teacher's all-round understanding of children's development, cutting away at the development of children's capacity for sustained work over a long period by breaking up the timetable, and minimising opportunities for the reinforcement and application of knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

Why is aspiration to the secondary model so highly to be desired? Ironically, as subject-based pressures build up on primary schools, secondary schools, recognising the finite nature of the time available, are seeking to resolve the problem of extending the curriculum while reinforcing the common core through the linking of subjects, whether in the form of integrated Humanities or Science courses, or in hybrid creations such as Life Skills designed to tie up loose ends from Religious and Moral Education to Health Studies.

Primary thinking has in fact suffered from the traditional secondary view of integration: the grouping of subjects in search of a common theme; the coming together of teachers, teaching spaces and timetable slots in an enterprise which adds up to the sum of its parts, and is justified by divisibility into and derivation from its component elements. Primary schools are concerned not with sticking the fragments back together again, but with recognising the wholeness of children's learning and experience, and the seamlessness of knowledge.

The CATE criteria allow a 'wide area of the curriculum' to constitute the student's subject specialism, recognising that history and geography, or the creative arts might form natural groupings, but this still reflects a secondary view of integration. The challenge for the primary teacher is not the linking of science and maths or art and music, but the achievement of curriculum overlay: multiplication of learning through the application of knowledge and skills across all areas.

The primary teacher does not start from a recognition of History as an element within Humanities or Social Studies, but from the recognition that historical content knowledge, however important in its own right, is also a vehicle for the exercise of skills. This may involve appropriate application of mathematical skills in the handling of statistical evidence, the development of a range of reading and writing skills, the use of dramatic role play in the development of empathy and moral awareness, the application of art skills in the recording of observations, or of technological skills in the construction of models. It is not that primary teachers hold knowledge in low esteem, but that the balance of the relationship between content knowledge and the exercise of skills changes over the years from 5-16, and rightly so. Whatever the content knowledge to be learned, the primary teacher has always to be concerned with what the children are actually going to *do*, and this involves understanding of the skills involved in doing.

If this is ignored, repetition, time wastage and boredom can result. As one nine-year-old put it: 'We did history this morning and we copied out of a book. Then we did geography and we copied off the board. Then we did English and we read a passage and wrote answers to questions.They're all the same really aren't they?'

The diet of copied notes uncovered by the HMI survey '*Aspects of Secondary Education*' similarly demonstrates the dangers of the content-dominated curriculum. The failure of the Bullock Report to take root in consideration of language across the curriculum within secondary practice must be attributed to the lack of opportunity for the individual teacher to gain an overview of children's learning across the curriculum. '*English from 5-16*' makes only passing reference to the teaching of English as part of other areas of work in the primary school, and retreats from the multiplication of language competence across the curriculum to the safety net of simple addition of competence within English lessons.

Mathematical weakness, traced by the Cockcroft Report to lack of confidence in the application of mathematical skills, is unlikely to be overcome by the further boxing off of mathematics from other areas of work. The influence of the subject specialist on the school as a whole promotes thinking about cross-curricular application. Specialist teaching can simply remove from other teachers the burden of thinking about it at all. In this way the good becomes the enemy of the best.

The suggestion that the expanding curriculum creates a burden too heavy for any mortal to bear indicates a welcome sympathy for the lot of the primary class teacher. But removal of part of the task can undermine the teacher's ability to do the rest of the task really well. Primary teachers need to share specialist strengths and to be given time and opportunity to do so. They must also be allowed to deal with the arithmetic of the add-on curriculum not by division or subtraction, but by the recognition of curriculum overlay and of a wholeness in children's learning which can be greater than the sum of its parts.

More attention needs to be given to the means by which students and teachers become confident in the handling of inter-related skills within children's learning. Too often, initial training, and even in-service training is defined in terms of curriculum strands, whereas quality of practice on the ground depends on ability to weave the strands together. This ability is not born of subject study. It is an essential characteristic of good primary teaching, and Without it the broad and balanced curriculum cannot be achieved.

The Primary Curriculum

Jenny Senior
Now head of St Meryl JMI school in Hertfordshire, Jenny Senior spent four years as a Field Officer for the Schools Council after teaching in a series of comprehensive secondary schools. Her special interest in language development led to Junior school posts. Here she focusses on current pressures towards a subject based curriculum, and presents her own (critical) view of this development.

The Context

A college student on teaching experience joined a class of 3rd year juniors on a five mile walk, and commented afterwards on the number of subject areas which had been touched on during the afternoon; she wondered how children would explain the activity to an outsider who expected school learning to be neatly parcelled under subject headings. In fact, the walk signalled the beginning of weeks of exploration and discovery on the theme of 'routes', and involved knowledge, skills and concepts traditionally associated with Geography, History, Science (Natural and Physical), PE, Language, Literature and Maths.

The teacher, however, made no attempt to inform the children which activities might go under which subject heading, because it was of no importance to their learning. It was irrelevant.

The same would be true of most good Primary Schools where the learning stems from the interests and experiences of the child, and the teacher is more interested in the child as learner than in a body of knowledge to be passed on to the child.

Pressure for subject-based curriculum

Recently, however, there has been increasing pressure towards a more subject-based curriculum in Primary Schools and once again primary teachers will have to re-examine their practice in order to justify it to themselves and to others. It seems to have been triggered off as far back as James Callaghan's speech at Ruskin College in 1976, which started the Great Debate about standards in schools and about what schools should be teaching. The 'Yellow Book' had alerted government to the fact that all might not be well in the schools.

Fears about declining standards and poor discipline had already been expressed in the Black Papers, which warned that 'At Primary School, some teachers are taking to extremes the belief that children must not be told anything, but must find out for themselves'.[1] Industrialists such as Sir Arnold Weinstock were blaming the teachers for inefficiency and failure to produce a literate work-force. Many parents believed that standards of performance were declining.

Some of the teaching profession joined in the criticism. All these anxieties were brought to a head by the events at William Tyndale Junior School, Islington in 1975.

The response of LEAs to DES circular 14/77 suggested that neither schools nor teachers were being asked to account for what they did. In 1978 the HMI Primary Survey pointed to serious deficiencies in some curricular areas, e.g. Science, Geography, History, Craft and suggested that teachers were not all capable of coping with the whole range of the curriculum. At the same time the move towards a consensus or common curriculum was gathering pace with the publication of the 'Framework for the Curriculum' and 'A View of the Curriculum' in 1980, followed closely by 'The School Curriculum' in 1981. In this last document it was made quite clear that 'each authority should have a clear policy for the curriculum in its schools and make it known to all concerned; be aware of the extent to which its schools are able within the resources available to them to make curricular provision which is consistent with that policy; and plan future developments accordingly, in consultation with the teachers and others concerned in their areas'. Furthermore, it proposed that 'schools should analyse and set out their aims in writing, and make it part of their work regularly to assess how far the education they provide matches those aims. Such assessments should apply not only to the school as a whole, but also to each individual pupil, and need to be supported by the keeping of adequate records for each pupil's progress'.

In 1985 the Government White Paper 'Better Schools' firmly set out the Government's intention to take the lead in promoting national agreement about the purposes and content of the curriculum and to complete the reform of the examination system in the interest of curriculum and standards. Since then there has been a series of discussion documents (Curriculum Matters) to guide schools in drawing up their curriculum policies. In Curriculum Matters No.2 'The Curriculum 5-16', the overall framework is viewed from two complementary perspectives: the first being areas of learning and experience, e.g. aesthetic, recreative, scientific etc. (para 32), and the second elements of learning, that is, the knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes to be developed (para 90). However, other Curriculum Matters devoted to English, Maths, Music and Home Economics are firmly subject based.

The pressure for a firmer subject base for the curriculum has been brought to bear on teacher training. The Government White Paper, 'Teaching Quality' (March 1983) drew attention to 'teachers' need for subject expertise' if they are to have the confidence and ability to enthuse pupils and respond to their curiousity.

Circular 3/84 in setting out the criteria for approval of initial training courses, demands at least a two full years' course devoted to subject study at the expense of professional study, referring for support to the statement in the White Paper 'Better Schools' that 'teachers need solid expertise in one or more curriculum areas'.

Of course, teachers must be well educated and should have regard for their own learning, but the priority for the training of most primary teachers needs to be a study of the curriculum both as a whole and in all its parts and the study of how children learn. Unfortunately, professional and curriculum studies are not always regarded as having the status of more traditional academic subjects, and it is often difficult to persuade college staff and students otherwise.

Three main strands run through all these documents; accountability, assessment and curricular consistency. Schools must be accountable for what they do, they must be able to show how successful they are and children throughout the country should have access to a common curriculum. No teacher would disagree with these aims, but it is the way in which they are to be achieved which disturbs primary teachers in particular. It seems to run contrary to the nature of primary education as we know it, and threatens to reverse the way primary education has developed over the last two or three decades.

It is quite obvious that these aims are very much easier to achieve if the curriculum is subject based. The curriculum is easier to describe to the layman in subject terms, it is easier to assess if subject boundaries are retained and a common curriculum is more readily achieved if clear objectives are set for subjects to be taught.

Primary teachers have spent decades trying to break free from subject constraints in order to match the learning needs of the child. There is no doubt that this has made their job very much more difficult, and has called for a high degree of professional skill, but it has made the job very much more satisfying when learning can be observed, not merely tested. To know what learning looks like is a far cry from testing a child's regurgitated knowledge.

For the primary teacher, the subject based curriculum means a fragmentation of the child's experience. Children do not see the world in subject areas; they view things in an integrated way. Society's division of subjects is fairly arbitrary and the basis of the division is obscure. It is part of the academic tradition which primary schools have attempted to revise and restructure in order to match the child's spread of interests more closely, e.g. History, Geography, and Social Science are unnatural divisions for a child studying his local environment. A child's way of explaining his world may begin with Science, but spills over into many other subject areas (e.g. an exploration of colour leads to work in Art, Craft, Music, Language, etc.). Teaching subjects as subjects militates against the unified curriculum.

There have been many attempts over the last decade to match education to the social and economic needs of society — to make the curriculum a preparation for life, for work or for leisure. The secondary stages of education are full of vocational initiatives and life skill programmes. The Primary School, however, can best help to prepare the child for life by recognising the importance of childhood as a separate stage with its non-unique needs. The young child is not a miniature adult.

Even if primary teachers were convinced that they should equip children with knowledge and skills for later life, it is not at all clear which items of knowledge or which subjects will be useful for our children in their adult working life or leisure. Society is changing so rapidly that a large proportion of all subject based learning will be obsolete or irrelevant by the time our children reach adulthood.

We need to explain to parents that there is no way we can teach children all the knowledge they will need for life, but we can, by allowing them to become agents of their own learning, develop the skills which will enable them to succeed in whatever tasks they encounter. Primary schools give priority to communication skills and to problem solving skills which are valuable at all stages of development, and for which the subject medium is comparatively unimportant.

The emphasis which the primary teachers places on the process of learning need not, however, entail a rejection of content. It simply means that content is a secondary consideration, and is more likely to be selected for its relevance to the child's experience and stage of development than for any external reason.

Although the primary teacher might reject the idea of delivering a subject based curriculum to the child, she may find subject areas a useful tool for planning the curriculum. For many schools, the demands for a curriculum policy were beneficial in that they brought teachers together to discuss the whole school curriculum, and to examine it for breadth, balance and relevance. Schools need to evaluate their curriculum in a variety of ways; not only in terms of areas of experience, but also of concepts and skills, and of attitudes and values, and not least in terms of subject areas.

Primary teachers need to know the content, skills and attitudes peculiar to a subject area so that they can judge its relevance and justify its place in curriculum planning.

The planning and teaching of the primary curriculum makes ever increasing demands on the class teacher's knowledge and skills as the curriculum widens. The class teacher may well seek guidance and advice from a specialist, probably another member of staff, as recommended in the Primary Report. However, the suggestion that the subject specialist should take over the teaching of that subject in the class, or even in the school as a whole is an entirely different matter, and will be resisted by primary teachers who value the advantages of one teacher to one class. In fact, Her Majesty's Inspectors warn of the dangers that the work done by a specialist teacher might be too isolated from the rest of the children's programme, and that the programme of the specialist's own class might became too fragmented. They also point out that if specialist teaching is taken to extremes, it creates an over-complicated, inflexible timetable. It also creates difficulties for the permeation of the curriculum by multicultural education, and other cross curricular issues.

The subject specialist would be of more use to the other teachers as a co-odinator/adviser, a role which requires more than expertise in the subject. The co-ordinators described in the Primary Survey were disappointly ineffective, probably because they were

What CATE is doing to Schools

John Hallett
Chairman of the Undergraduate Primary Teacher Education Conference (UPTEC) since its formation in 1984, John Hallett is Principal Lecturer in Education at Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham, where he coordinates the large Initial Teacher Education programmes. In this important article, he elaborates widely held criticisms of the outlook, procedures and activities of CATE (Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education), which, he argues, will have a very adverse effect on Primary teacher education. It is encouraging to note that, since this article was written, the House of Commons Select Committee which reported in early Autumn on primary education, strongly endorsed the view presented in this article.

Over the last hundred years of primary education in Britain, there have been many striking changes. In almost every case these changes have grown out of the pioneering work of practitioners; innovation and development, built on the evidence of good and successful practice, have spread through schools and training institutions to become widely accepted.

In the last two years a change has been initiated through a quite different process, but neither the change nor the process seems to have caught the attention of the majority of staff engaged in primary teaching. The change involves a new basis for staffing primary schools, using a model in which a team of subject specialists cover the major elements of the curriculum, and staff are recruited to build or maintain this subject specialist pattern.

The process by which this change is being made is of direct central government intervention in teacher training, by dictating the balance of attention to be given to different elements of B.Ed degree courses.

Although this process was begun in the Autumn of 1984 with the establishment of the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) it is evident that a majority of teachers working in primary schools are quite unaware of what is happening. Within teacher training we are very aware, painfully so, because we are being required to redesign our degree programmes to fit a pattern we do not like, or have confidence in, in order to be accredited.

In this article I intend to discuss both the intervention and the resulting changes in sufficient detail to show why, in my view, and that of many of my colleagues, strong opposition is vital, in the interests of quality in primary education. What is at stake is not just the dilution of the role of the primary class-teacher, but also **the destruction of any semblance of partnership between the DES and the profession**. The views I express in this paper are my own but they have emerged from extensive discussion with colleagues in the Undergraduate Primary Teacher Education Conference (UPTEC) and have widespread support.

The history of these developments has shown them to be but part of governmental attitude to education which favours strong central direction, especially where changes are perceived as necessary to establish an ideologically favoured model of good practice. In the case under consideration the evidence of HMI reports on primary education was seen to point to weaknesses in the subject knowledge of primary teachers who had followed the certificate or BEd route. Evidence from HMI reports on training institutions showed that examples could be found where 'main subject studies were being taught in a manner so applied to the classroom that they seldom rose above the level of children's learning'. On the basis of this picture the Government White Paper (Cmnd 8836) *Teacher Quality*, March, 1983) specified the remedy that the initial training of all teachers should include the equivalent of at least two years of subject studies at a level appropriate to higher education.

At that time the trend in B.Ed degrees was away from a separate, main subject model, and towards a more coherent 'generalist' programme with a very strong professional bias (though by 1982 very few teachers trained by following this kind of programme had joined the profession and so their performance in the class was unlikely to have supplied any significant evidence to HMI). Partly because strong government intervention was not part of our experience and partly because many

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insufficiently prepared for their role. Co-ordinators need in - service training - and time in order to do the job well. Training in the role would be of more use than high academic qualifications.

A subject-based curriculum does not fit into the environment of the primary school where the child is at the centre of the educational process. Subject areas are useful as tools for curriculum planning, but they do not match the child's view of the world, and only seem to fragment the child's experience and learning.

Reference

1. Cox, C.B and Dyson, A.E, Ed. **Black Paper No 1** (1969)

of us in education are politically unaware, the significance of the March, 1983 paper was largely missed and it was not until the arrival of Circular 3/84 setting up CATE (and the Annex to that paper, giving the criteria for accreditation) that teacher training, generally, awoke to the seriousness of the issue.

The Council was established to consider all courses of teacher training in the light of the criteria and to recommend to the Secretary of State where accreditation should be given. Membership of the Council was by invitation, and when the names were published it was clear that members with recent first-hand experience of primary teaching or teacher training formed a very small minority.

CATE began meeting in Autumn, 1984 and had to spend some time informing its members of the complexities of teacher education and establishing its working procedures, before it could begin its real task. In May, 1985, the outcome of consideration of the courses at the first nine institutions was published; one primary B.Ed was accredited. In August 1986, the second round of accreditation added one more primary B.Ed. So two years work has resulted in two of the 54 primary B.Ed. courses in the country receiving accreditation, the remainder being either rejected (with the possibility of reconsideration after considerable revision a year later) or subject to modification or even closure in anticipation of CATE consideration. The Chairman of CATE, Professor William Taylor, made it clear that the Council was not formed to debate issues but to implement the wishes of the Secretary of State; the experience of these who have been CATE'd has shown that this is being done in a mechanistic way.

If the intention of the intervention was to improve the quality of teaching in schools why has it aroused such strong opposition in those professional groups who are aware of its significance for teacher education and primary teaching? There are three reasons evident to me. One is that it shifts the balance of attention for B.Ed students from children and their learning to 'subject study', to a degree which can only do harm to their role as class teachers. The second is that it is based upon a model of primary staffing that postulates interdisciplinary teams of specialists based upon degree specialism, difficult to visualise in the case of 'small' schools (about a quarter of all primary phase schools have less than five teaching staff). The third has become more important as the accreditation process has rolled on; the intervention has damaged the relationship between teacher trainers on the one hand and HMI and DES on the other.

Even if the HMI diagnosis was correct, intervention by forcing a particular treatment upon professionals (who see the treatment as moving in the wrong direction) is destructive of partnership and unlikely to succeed. Teacher trainers have had a long period of 'run down'; initial training was severely cut, over the 1973-1983 period, with the closing of colleges, mergers and redundancies but, despite these disheartening experiences, all over the country responsible planning of the new generation of B.Ed degrees was taking place. B.Ed degrees are currently validated by the CNAA or the appropriate university body; validation looks at all aspects, academic, professional and logistic and involves visits to institutions by teams of validators with experience and knowledge, who, in conversation with staff, rightly look for depth of understanding of and enthusiasm for the degree they have submitted for approval. Accreditation through CATE adds a further time-consuming stage of approval involving the submission of considerable documentation to a body, much less well informed, who scrutinize these papers to examine only those aspects which they wish to compare with the template of the criteria.

Every institution offering a B.Ed degree has a Local (Professional) Committee (whose membership includes practising teachers and LEA officers) charged with monitoring the design and conduct of the course. the Local Committee is seen by DES as an agent in the accreditation process, no degree is likely to be accredited by CATE if it does not have its support. Significantly more and more Local Committees are expressing their disagreement with the criteria and their lack of confidence in CATE style primary B.Eds.

I believe that the design of B.Ed course for primary teachers must start from a realistic understanding of what the teachers actually do, and I see three dominant characteristics of the job.

(a) They are responsible for laying the foundations of children's personal and social development through their teaching.

(b) They normally work with one class of children for at least one school year.

(c) They are responsible for teaching the full range of the curriculum.

B.Ed degrees should therefore develop the understandings and the skills related to teaching, to children, and to the whole curriculum, and should do so in a way students will find intellectually and personally rewarding and challenging. The first two aspects (teaching and children) are certainly demanding and challenging, especially where theory is closely related to practice, and where experience in schools is well-planned and timed in order to develop skill, understanding and confidence. When we come to the third aspect, the curriculum, different decisions need to be made in getting the best balance between establishing a wide base of sound subject knowledge and building strength in a particular area. A different balance point is needed for the intending nursery teacher, from that for the intending junior teacher. The really important aspect is that much more than subject knowledge is involved here; we are concerned with grasping the essence of the particular discipline and the capacity to interpret this in working with young children. By increasing the specialist preparation in one subject area we are necessarily diminishing the attention to other curriculum areas. The criteria demand that 'the equivalent of at least two years full course time is devoted to subject studies at a level appropriate to higher education'. Of this time 25% may be given to 'the application of the subjects concerned to the learning and developmental needs of young children. For primary B.Eds a wide area of the curriculum might constitute the student's specialism'.

UPTEC members, drawn from a majority of the B.Ed

On reviving the Progressive Tradition, an essay in memory of Maggie Gracie*

Michael Armstrong
Head of Harwell County Primary school, and a long-standing member of the Editorial Board, Michael Armstrong is the author of the remarkable book, **Closely Observed Children** (1981) which pioneered a new approach to the study of children and of education. In this article he reinterprets 'The Progressive Tradition' in the light of his experience and thinking over the last five years.

'Unorganiz'd Innocence: An Impossibility. Innocence dwells with Wisdom, but never with Ignorance. William Blake
Note written on the Margin of **The Four Zoas.**

ONE

In 1973 David Hawkins, a distinguished American philosopher of science who had become deeply involved in the reform of American primary education, wrote an essay for **FORUM** in which he argued that the growth of a progressive tradition in a minority of British primary schools, however incomplete and inadequate, represented 'at least the beginning of a major practical and intellectual achievement.' We tend at first, according to Hawkins, to think of progressivism as a straightforward reaction against the overwhelming didacticism of conventional schooling. On the one hand learning is conceived 'as predominantly a reception of pre-codified knowledge, in which practice is so to say removed from field and shop and diminished to the level of the workbook.' Significant learning, on this account, is 'something which takes place only under the sway of a teacher's voice and presence.' On the other hand 'learning is seen as the process and precipitate of extending the learner's experience through his own active inquiry and synthesis, through his involvement in or with primary subject matter.' Significant learning is 'based upon resources which teachers can provide and is of course facilitated by their confidence and their administration', but the teacher's role is less obstrusive. Inasmuch as teachers direct the course of learning they 'direct by indirection.'

* This essay began as an address to the National Association for Primary Education at the Froebel Institute in March 1985. In its revised form it was presented to a Study Course on The Whole Curriculum at Beaumanor Hall, Leicestershire, on November 17th 1986.

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courses in the country, are convinced that this represents a wrong balance and have put their strongly held views to the Secretary of State, senior HMI, members of Parliament, select committees, CATE and to the teachers' organisation, but have not been able to secure the modification we believe is necessary.

Judgement about balance is rarely simple or clearcut, but the unanimity of professional opposition is the consequence of responsible consideration by people very concerned to see teacher quality improved. We have spent a lot of time working out designs for a CATE, B.Ed; we do see the desirability of meeting the other criteria of Circular 3/84 and we do want to improve the real subject strength which our students bring to their teaching. We do not want to dilute the class teacher's role, we do not want to weaken the central concern for children by being over-occupied with subject students, and we do not see that these priorities can be met on the CATE model. Studies which have strong relevance to primary teaching have the strongest call for inclusion in the B.Ed programme. Much of what is rightly included in subject studies in a BA or B.Sc programme is, on this criterion, inappropriate to a B.Ed and a costly diversion from the real task. The time that is left after subject studies have been given their allocation is insufficient to establish a sound base in the remaining curriculum areas and to examine issues which are not subject specific but relate to children's learning, development, and social background, to special needs, industrial and economic awareness, to multi-racial issues, microcomputers, and relationships with parents (to name but a few), and, of course to give the students adequate time in school with children at appropriate times during the year.

Because we see that the effects of CATE's activities will be to damage primary education we continue to use every opportunity to work for review and modification of the critera. We look for others who can lend weight to our case, not only because we want to achieve this change but because we are seriously concerned at the increasing measure of central control of education of which this is an example. The strength and the quality of our primary education derives, at least in part, from the autonomy and creative freedom which teachers (and teacher trainers) have for so long enjoyed; partnership and collaboration offer much more hope for the future than directives.

But to polarise the argument in this way is misleading. It is no part of the purpose of the progressive tradition, according to Hawkins, to belittle ordered knowledge, as expressed in its traditional forms — mathematics, literature, history, science and the like. Its aim is, rather, to reconstruct the relationship between the organised knowledge of the expert and the naive understanding of the novice. As Dewey put it in **The Child and the Curriculum**, a text to which Hawkins returns repeatedly in his essay, 'The facts and truths that enter into the child's present experience, and those contained in the subject-matter of studies, are the initial and final terms of one reality.' Or so they should be. But the way in which knowledge is organized within our society forces these terms apart. 'The psychological order of experience,' as Hawkins called it, is set against 'the customary logical order of codified subject-matter' with results that are disastrous, both for education and for knowledge. To repair the broken unity nothing less is required than a reconstruction of knowledge itself, 'a radical expansion and reorganization of academic subject matter according to a principle which is unprecedented in the annals of knowledge and education.' Organized knowledge, as Dewey wrote, 'must be restored to the experience from which it has been abstracted. It needs to be **psychologised**; turned over, translated into the immediate and individual experiencing within which it had its origin and significance.'

It is at this point that the achievement of the progressive British primary school enters the argument. for 'what the best traditions of early education have done . . . in this regard amounts to a major reorganisation of subject matter into a common and coherent framework. The sand and water and clay, the painting and writing and reading, the cooking and building and calculation, the observing and nurture of plants and animals are woven together into a complex social pattern which sustains romance as it extends a concern for detail and for generalisation . . . The organized discourse and the text do not disappear but they do not dominate . . . Teachers of the young . . . the skilful among them . . . are able to see order and number, geography and history, moral testing grounds and aesthetic qualities in all the encounters of young children with the furniture of a rich environment.' Hawkins' essay is a plea for the consolidation of this achievement and its extension beyond the world of the primary school into the worlds of secondary school and university. He recognises the daunting quality of the task, which requires for its success the collaboration of university and kindergarten, 'of persons deeply versed in subject matter and those deeply versed in the teaching arts.' 'To understand mathematics,' he concludes, 'or physics, or geography, well enough to know ways of reconstructing them, of rooting them so to speak in the child's garden, is a major intellectual undertaking for the best minds we have. Only a good and reflective physicist can see the beginnings of his own basic schemes and abstractions nascent in the experience of childhood, and only an inventive teacher, supported by such knowledge and insight, can undertake the reconstructive process which analysis reveals as necessary.'

How remote this celebration of the primary school seems now. Even at the time that he wrote, Hawkins' argument would probably have appeared extravagent to most people with an interest in education. Today even fewer would be prepared to take it seriously. The thirteen lean years since 1973 have done little to advance the cause of reconstruction. For the most part they have served only to reinforce the traditional dichotomy between 'organised knowledge' and 'fresh inquiry'. Even among radicals, as Colin McCabe showed so disconcertingly on Channel Four in 1983, the distinction between what McCabe called 'theoretical work' and other forms of intellectual practice can seem so insistent and irreproachable that it entices them into desperate new forms of intellectual segregation between the academic few and the non-academic majority. So it comes about that McCabe can advocate as part of what he calls an 'educational blueprint . . . radical in its scope' the transformation of the public schools into super-selective grammar schools, 'academic centres of excellence which would recruit their non-fee paying pupils at 14 by competition from common schools.' (One hears already the faint pre-echo of a right wing initiative still to appear when the left wing McCabe spoke — the Crown Schools project.)

Traces of the philosophy of reconstruction can still be found, it is true, within the theory and practice of comprehensive education, in the work of a few dissident schools or in studies such as David Hargreaves' book **The Challenge for the Comprehensive School** or the ILEA report **Improving Secondary Schools** which Hargreaves helped to compile. But even here there is a tendency to evade a confrontation with academic thought, 'the scholastic tradition' in Hawkins' terminology, by abandoning it to the world of post-compulsory education — the A level class, the pre-university course — where the interests of the majority need not disturb its orderly exclusiveness. Meanwhile within the primary school, for all the hopeful exceptions, the drift has been towards a new conventionalism — towards the return of streaming, subject specialization, the routine exercise of rudimentary skills, a predetermined curriculum, obstinately linear and sequential. Part of the reason for this regression has to do with the weakness of the progressive tradition itself even at the moment at which Hawkins was celebrating it. What has been particularly damaging is the way in which a progressive ideology can slide unobtrusively into a kind of pedagogic quietism, until the principle of direction by indirection signifies no more than a refusal to enter into any meaningful conversation with children learning. A much larger part of the reason, of course, lies in changing economic, social and political circumstances and in the cultural shift which has accompanied those changes — especially in the narrowmindedness, the absence of generosity, which has been so characteristic a feature of intellectual life in this period.

Is it possible, against the current of the age, to recover the confidence of David Hawkins' declaration that the progressive tradition in our primary schools represents the beginning of a major achievement? I think it is. Popular education depends more than ever for its eventual success upon fulfilling the promise of that beginning. After one and a half decades of educational reaction the time has come to redescribe the progressive

tradition and to outline a programme for educational reconstruction — a revival of learning. What follows is a first sketch of the task.

TWO

I want to begin with a child's naive understanding, that is to say with the 'initial term' of Dewey's 'one reality': 'the facts and truths which enter into the child's present experience.' I want to pick out two elements in children's understanding which I take to be decisive for intellectual growth. (I apologise to readers of **FORUM** for repeating here remarks already made, in part, in a note written for Volume 29, Number 1, August 1986. However my argument would be incomplete without them.)

The first element concerns the young child's judgement. As I see it, the exercise of judgement — artistic, scientific, literary, mathematical, whatever it may be — is embedded within the experience, and in particular within the **practice**, of art of science, literature or mathematics, from children's earliest engagements with these pursuits. As soon as children begin to write stories, poems and diaries; to draw and to paint; to speculate about time and space or about identity and meaning; to experiement with sand, water and clay, or with number, quantity and shape; they do so in ways which are already more than naive, which are indeed in an important sense as characteristic of the expert as of the novice.

Firstly, their engagement is for real, it is not a pretence. In one of his early essays on art, John Berger remarks that young children's paintings lack any 'sense of outward intention and striving' and for this reason,while 'invariably pleasing' are 'never works of art'. According to Berger 'a child paints simply in order to grow up; and his pictures are therefore almost **natural** objects . . . The adult artist paints in order to create something outside himself, in order to add to — and to that extent alter — life.' (For drawing my attention to this comment I am indebted to Carolyn Steedman's fascinating study **The Tidy House**, Virago, 1982, page 3). The contrast which Berger draws here is profoundly mistaken. 'conscious intention and deliberate striving' are at the heart of children's intellectual enterprises and it is precisely in the attempt to create something outside themselves that children grow.

Secondly, children show a deep concern for the constraints implicit within the various forms of thought — for their grammar and syntax as it were. When they begin to write they become aware at once of the requirements of written form, of the essential difference between written and spoken word, of the need to restructure experience in ways that are appropriate to written expression. When they experiment with material objects they share at once the scientist's concern for constructing hypotheses and submitting them to tests, for speculating on results and returning to fresh observation and experiment.

And thirdly, the very restricted repertoire of skill and experience which children possess, while it sets all too obvious limits to their intellectual performance, has also a more positive aspect. It provides children with opportunities, as well as imposing limits, opportunities which they are often able to exploit to creative intellectual effect. Hence, as I have tried to show in **Closely Observed Children** (Writers & Readers, 1980) and elsewhere, the limited vocabulary and syntax of young writers encourages them to invest each simple word and brief sentence with a wealth of meaning — to make a few words go a long way.

This, then, is the first element in children's understanding which I regard as decisive for intellectual growth: the seriousness of purpose which characterizes their earliest intellectual enterprises. The second element follows from it. Intellectual growth — effective growth — is the outcome, or as Hawkins calls it the precipitate, of successive enterprises of the kind which I have just described, in which the exercise of skill, judgement and imagination is embedded as a condition of performance. Growth comes through practice. The kind of practice I have in mind is not practice in the sense of drill or of exercise in technique, the kind of practice we tend to think of when we talk about practising the piano or practising sums. By practice I mean the sustained effort to write, to paint, to investigate phenomena mathematically, scientifically, historically and so on, over the course of weeks, months, years. It would be possible, I think, to see the conflict between traditional and progressive education in just this way, as a conflict between two kinds or practice: practice as drill and practice as sustained composition or performance Intellectual growth is secure, in my view, only when it is founded on practice of the second kind.

We do not know nearly enough about the way in which practice nurtures the intellect, and in particular about the ways in which children's successive enterprises lead them on to new levels of mastery. One common effect of the kind of practice I am commending is to make children dissatisfied with their present intellectual performance. They sense that they have gone as far as they can within the limits of their existing skill and they grow anxious to incorporate new experience and more advanced techniques within their various enterprises. Sometimes their first attempts to move beyond the given are much less successful than earlier achievements and there may seem to be a falling off of skill and interest. Children have to struggle hard to reconstruct their achievement in the face of new demands. This is often the most critical moment in the course of intellectual development. For the converse of the view which I am proposing, that intellectual growth is the outcome of practice, is that intellectual failure is a consequence of ceasing to practice. Practice comes to an end usually because of a failure in the social context of education. Sometimes this is because a child has come up against a blockage in the pursuit of some enterprise and no teacher or supportive adult or child has been around to help. Sometimes it is because there have been too few material resources to stimulate or enhance a child's enterprises. Sometimes teachers fail to recognise what it is that a child is attempting and sometimes children fail to recognise this themselves. Sometimes the problem is that we lack what Tolstoy called the 'transitional literature' which could help a child to move forward to a new level of enterprise, the literature which could mediate between naive understanding and organised knowledge. If such breakdowns occur too frequently, or at particularly critical stages in a child's development, then a child may simply give up practising, in my second

sense of practice, and so bring to an end a promising line of development. We may try to explain away intellectual failure on the grounds that it is in the nature of many children's imaginative expression that it should come to an end as they grow older. But in this we are deceiving ourselves.

THREE

Now I want to turn from the child to the curriculum, the final term in Dewey's 'one reality' which he calls 'the subject matter of studies'. How can we define the primary school curriculum in a way which suits the child's mind as I have sought to describe it? I think that we can define it best in three interdependent ways: in terms of cultural tradition, in terms of the classroom environment,and in terms of the variety of thinking which the classroom prompts. I will consider each of these definitions in turn.

First we may define a primary school curriculum in terms of the various forms of thought that activate our culture. I do not want to join issue with the many attempts that have lately been made to define these forms — by HMI, DES, Schools Council, curriculum theorists, philosophers of education. My own fairly traditional list would be made up like this:-

1. Mathematics, Science, Technology, Natural History;
2. Literature, Language, Art, Music, Craft, Drama, Dance, Physical Education;
3. History, Geography, Social and Environmental Studies;
4. Philosophy, Ethics, Religion.

Each of these forms of thought is appropriate to the life of a primary school and will find expression in one way or another within its daily cycle of activity, however that activity happens to be construed in individual schools. Indeed the experience of most children is already informed by each of these traditions before they enter school. The task of the school is to promote, and to help its pupils to sustain, an engagement with the forms of our culture which has already begun.

I do not have space to describe how a primary school might best give expression to its concern for the cultural tradition. But I want to say a little more about the way in which children, in confronting an intellectual tradition, appropriate it to their own purposes. I will take an example from the practice of literature. Here is a story written by an eleven year old girl, Joanne, who took as her model a story written by an adult for children (**The Shrinking of Treehorn**, Florence Parry Heide, Penguin 1975) but whose own story easily transcends its point of departure.

SIX INCHES HIGH

I was on my way out of Joris, I had bought a pair of earrings and a necklace to match. I was walking along the Cleave when I came across a cat.
"Hello," it said,
"Ah," I said, "you shouldn't be talking."
"You do" said the cat, "so why can't I?"
"Don't know," I said.
"Well then," said the cat, and he ran off.
I was half way up the hill which led to my house when I first noticed that I was shrinking. I was about 50 inches high. I had shrunk four inches.
"Hello'" said the lady who lived next door to me. "you ***are*** *getting a big girl aren't you?"*
"Least she hasn't noticed I am shrinking," I said to myself. My mum never noticed that I was shrinking. She just thought that Daniel was growing. Next morning I was 24 inches. I couldn't find any clothes that fitted me. I called my mum.
"What?" she said.
I tried to tell my mum that I was shrinking but she never believed me.
She said "No-one SHRINKS!"
"Don't they?" I said.
I got dressed with difficulty, then went to school. Still shrinking I was when I got to school. I was at most 9 inches. My clothes were getting bigger for me by the seconds. I sat down and waited for my name to be called out.
"Joanne," said Mr Armstrong.
"Here," I said.
"Where?" said Mr Armstrong.
I stood up.
"Your're small," he said.
"I know," I said.

At packed lunch I was eating my apple. When it was 12.05 I was 6 inches high. I climbed into my packed lunch box to put my apple away and SLAM someone had locked me in my box. I heard Clare say "I can't see Joanne about anywhere so I've closed her box up."
"Listen Clare," said William who was sitting near to Clare. "Can you hear someone saying help?"
William moved closer to Clare.
"Urr, get away, you smell terrible."
"Sorry," said William. "Open the box," said William.
"OK, OK," said Clare.
"Phewww," I said.

At 4.30 I was 9 inches high, I was starting to grow. I once again saw the cat and then I saw William with David G. having a fight. William won. David went home crying. The cat said "Hello" As soon as the cat said hello I became 24 inches high. I carried on walking. When I got to my house I was 50 inches. I went straight upstairs. I was 54 inches high.
"Hip, hip, hooray," I shouted.

THE END

Much might be written about the narrative skill displayed in this story. I will pick out just three traces of that skill. Consider first the strange beginning. How are we to explain the apparently inconsequential conversation with the cat? The incident is decidedly Joanne's own invention inasmuch as it finds no place in the adult story which served her as a model. The cat, it seems, is the agent of the story's magic, setting in motion the narrator's shrinking and later her growing. But its role here at the start is more significant than that. In talking, and in insisting, in its own matter of fact way, on the reasonableness of cats talking, the cat affirms the fictitiousness of fiction. This is a story in which the writer

can and will determine what can and will happen. If cats can talk then children can shrink. We are in a magic world controlled by nothing but the art of the storyteller and the tradition of storytelling on which she draws.

Consider next the writer's treatment of adults. None of the human characters in the story seem to recognise, or if they do recognise seem to acknowledge, what is happening to the narrator. In describing the variety of their reactions, and in particular the reactions of adults, Joanne uses the magic of her tale to express her own recognition of the waywardness of adult-child relationships. The lady next door is too patronising to see what is happening; the mother is too preoccupied with her daughter's younger brother, and refuses to believe in magic anyway; the teacher recognises the facts but attaches no significance to them among the distractions of his daily routine.

Lastly consider the economy with which the story makes visible the world which its actors inhabit: the village world, as perceived by a child, of shop, neighbours, home, classroom, rituals of register, packed lunch, childhood taunts and childhood fights. There is no overt description but a culture is brought vividly to life. Joanne's story represents as it were a single moment in the history of one particular child's narrative practice. I have cited it because it illustrates so clearly the way in which a young child uses her limited resources to creative and original effect within a particular tradition of thought. In so far as the primary school curriculum is construed in terms of the transmission of an intellectual culture it is with just such personal, idiosyncratic uses of culture that it is primarily concerned. That is the burden of progressivism.

A second way of defining the primary school curriculum is to think of it in terms of the material environment of the primary classroom and, in particular, the resources which that classroom offers children for learning. In an essay entitled 'The Laboratory of Archimedes' (**Outlook**, Number 44, Summer 1982), in which he returns to the theme of reconstruction, David Hawkins suggests that an appropriate image of the primary classroom might be the laboratory which he supposes Archimedes to have once inhabited: a large workroom equipped with simple machines like the screw, the wedge and inclined plane, the unequal arm balance and the level, the sand-table and water-table, mirrors, spheres and working models. 'The laboratory was', Hawkins surmises, 'a mirror of the practical Hellenistic life of trade and manufacture. But it was miniaturised, transformed to be the instrument of curiosity, no longer only of the common life.' In much the same way we might think of the primary classroom as also a studio, a library, a craft shop, a garden, a field centre. The focus of our attention is no longer the several forms of knowledge in themselves but the material objects and cultural artefacts which promote and sustain inquiry across many different forms, bringing diverse traditions together, cutting across separate disciplines, and weakening the uniformity of specialisms. When we look at the curriculum from this standpoint we tend to think first and above all of resources which teachers provide for children. But the most profitable resources are often those which children provide for themselves. For this reason I am glad that the best brief account I know of this aspect of curriculum concerns a teacher who helped a child to make effective use of a problematic if not dubious resource which he had himself brought into the classroom. The teacher was Maggie Gracie and her account (published in the memorial volume **Maggie Gracie: a Teacher for our Time**, ed. Brian Simon, 1983) traces the investigations of a twelve year old pupil, William, into the life of a frog which he had caught down by the local stream one Saturday in April and brought into school the following Monday 'in a large sweet jar with some grass'. This is how Maggie Gracie opens the story of William and his frog:-

> On Monday the frog arrived in school. It was still in the sweet jar and had nowhere to rest or breath and nothing to eat. How should a teacher react to such well intentioned cruelty? William was an excitable and sensitive twelve year old and would have been hurt and ashamed by a corrective explanation about the right way to house a frog. The way forward seemed to be to suggest that William spend some time designing a home for a frog, first finding out what a frog needed to survive. It was fortunate that William's class were choosing individual topic work to begin shortly, so William's frog, Kermit, became William's topic.

William promptly set to work rehousing his frog with room to swim and stones to lie on and finding it suitable food. For several weeks he studied the frog, recording his investigations in a 'field notebook' as suggested by his teacher. 'The notebook, which eventually occupied three school exercise books, contained diary items, pictures and diagrams, poems, stories, observations from life and numerous items of more general interest discovered in an encyclopaedia.'

William's study, as documented in Maggie Gracie's account as well as in William's notebook itself, embraces 'scientific exploration, philosophy and art.' The moral problem, for example, which had at first been appreciated only by his teacher, was eventually shared by William himself who made it the subject of a brief and poignant narrative. As Maggie Gracie observes 'the young naturalist is often a problem to his teacher. The child who is fantastically keen to explore and know about the natural world can, inadvertently, do much damage to it. The mature naturalist still has to face the same dilemma and must work out his own moral standpoint. William is already aware of this problem and explores it in a story.'

The notebook abounds with scientific investigation and speculation. William carefully observes and notes what a frog will eat and how it eats. He doubts the evidence of the encyclopaedia inasmuch as it fails to correspond to his own observations. Observations lead on to theory, most notably when William wonders how the frog has managed to climb a waterfall in the stream. On Saturday April 26th he writes 'I am still puzzled of how he climbed the waterfall because it seems impossible for him to climb the bank.' Twenty pages later he produces 'My theory to how frogs overcome obstacles ie waterfalls.' This theory is, as Maggie Gracie says, 'one of the high spots of William's topic. Even though it may be based on a false premiss — was the frog really incapable of climbing up the bank? — It nevertheless has the mark of genuine scientific thought. William recognised a problem, mustered all the

evidence, mulled it over in his mind (while he wrote in his field notebook about hibernation, changes in skin colour and about an invented amphibian), and then returns to the problem with an hypothesis: that the frog is able to utilise the air pocket created behind the waterfall "if the water flow is fast enough, and the riverbank cut back enough".

The story of William and his frog is a beautifully apt example of how a reflective teacher is 'able to see order and number, geography and history, moral testing grounds and aesthetic qualities, in all the encounters of young children with the furniture of a rich environment,' and is able to help her pupils to share and extend her vision. Such insights come only to teachers who refuse to be imprisoned by 'subjects', who are prepared to move freely between one tradition and another, from science to philosophy to art, without embarrassment or anxiety. **This is why a curriculum defined exclusively by the forms of knowledge will not satisfy the requirements of children, any more than a curriculum defined exclusively in terms of resources. Each requires the other in order to complete itself**.

There is a third way of defining the primary curriculum and that is to think of it in terms of the varieties of intellectual activity which it serves. The life of a primary classroom at its best is rich in observation, experiment, speculation, invention, construction, narration, logic and fantasy. The way in which these and other kinds of thinking find expression in a story like Joanne's or a topic like William's is vital to a teacher's curricular aim. In the last few years a small but valuable literature has begun to appear which seeks to describe some of the varieties of classroom thinking, from the standpoint of a practising teacher. I have in mind studies such as Gareth Matthews' account of speculative thought in a class of Edinburgh juniors (**Dialogues with Children**, Gareth B Matthews, Harvard, 1984); Stephen Rowland's absorbing discussion of the 'abstract theorizing and hypothesizing' of a class of nine to eleven year olds in his book **The Enquiring Classroom** (Falmer Press, 1984); Vivian Paley's description of logic and fantasy in her kindergarten classroom in Chicago (**Wally's Stories**, Vivian Gussin Paley, Harvard, 1981). I do not propose to illustrate further this aspect of the primary curriculum. I went, rather, to touch briefly on a particular quality which underlies the variety and richness of children's thinking but which is almost entirely absent from contemporary discussion of the primary curriculum. That quality is playfulness.

One day Joanne, the author of **Six Inches High**, came to me in the classroom and said that she fancied designing a set of earrings. I had no idea how the idea had occurred to her and did not inquire. I simply expressed an interest in how the designs would turn out and told her that she could start straight away if she wished. Her first sketch was of two many-pointed stars, decorated with beads, the smaller star suspended from the larger by a chain, also of beads. She liked her design but not the drawing itself. The earring was greatly enlarged and in isolation on the sheet of paper it barely looked like an earring at all. After a brief conversation we decided it might be better to draw the set of earrings onto a set of faces. That way it would be easier to recognise them and to judge their effect. During the next few days Joanne drew six sets of earrings for six separate faces while her friend Clare, whom she had managed to interest in her idea, drew a further set of six. They mostly drew the faces first, if only in rough outline, and then carefully added the earrings. Finally they coloured their drawings in coloured pencil and felt tip, both the earrings and the faces.

The two sets of drawings are equally florid and expressive but strongly contrasted in mood. Apart from the earrings themselves, only hair, eyes and mouth are given detailed treatment, the rest of the face being outlined faintly in pencil. Joanne's faces are round and full. The hair is casual in a rather studied way and often multicoloured. All her faces have full red lips and red blue or mauve eyelids which seem half closed and in one case are closed entirely. The eyelashes are prominent as are the scribbled eyebrows. These faces are soft and glamourous. They might be construed as variations on a single face, though each drawing has a distinct and assertive character. Clare's faces are also variations on a single face but that face is startlingly different. The hair is severely cut and either brunette or blond. The eyes are only faintly made up, their lashes composed of short black vertical strokes drawn in felt tip, the eyebrows pencilled in thin brown lines. Unlike Joanne's eyes these stare out at the viewer from blue, brown or green irises. The lips again are red but thinner and sharper. A wholly different personality confronts us as we look.

The two sets of earrings are equally distinct. Joanne's earrings are large and flamboyant. They sprawl brightly at either side of the face: tassels, stars, catherine wheels, clusters of rings, the word September. By contrast one of a pair of Clare's earrings is often half concealed by hair and in one case has disappeared altogether. Moreover Clare often draws one earring from a front view and the other side on, taking immense pains to render the side-on view accurately. Her earrings are more exactly drawn than Joanne's and have an almost finicky delicacy. They are tiny linked chains with beads and hearts on the end, miniature bottles, geometrical cones and spheres, all of them precise, hard-edged miniatures.

In the weeks that followed several other children took up the interest in earrings. One or two drew earrings as Joanne and Clare had but more were interested in making earrings out of wire, beads and sequins. Joanne and Clare however never really wanted to make earrings. They realised that their own designs would require the skills of professionals to realise and they were quite content with the design stage in itself. Their drawings resembled more than anything else the theatrical designs of artist who rely on others to realise their fanciful creations in solid form.

For me these wonderful sketches are a powerful image of the fertility of children's playfulness. Like children's cartoons and comic strips, their drawings of monsters and machines, their plasticine models and junk sculptures, the two girls' designs began with a particular enchantment, which to the adult onlooker might easily seem derivative and banal. At first Jonanne and Clare's attention was focussed on the act of invention and inventiveness is a predominant feature of each pair of earrings. But other interests began to emerge almost at once. there was the fantasy of imagining the face you might wish to grow into. There was the narrative skill of constructing the person, as perceived in the face, whom the earrings would suit. There was the imaginative

Comprehensive Education: for a renewal of commitment

Roger Seckington

Comprehensive secondary education continues to be the focus of irresponsible attacks by those in high places in education and elsewhere. FORUM is concerned, as always, to defend the principles of comprehensive schooling; indeed it was to support and propagate these principles that the journal was founded nearly 30 years ago. Here Roger Seckington, Chairman of our Editorial Board, head of a large Leicestershire Upper School, and having long experience in a variety of comprehensive schools, calls for a new commitment to these important principles.

Recently a colleague commenting on a new educational book described it as not very scholarly. It lacked research and constant reference to other writers' viewpoints. My comments below may also fall into the same category for they are nothing more than a personal view of the experiences gained in secondary education since the late 1950s: mainly in comprehensive schools and for much of the time as a head. Certainly too unremarkable a record for the weighty task of a re-statement of comprehensive principles. But like very many ordinary workers in the comprehensive movement I passionately believe that common or comprehensive schools have been the great educational achievement of the post-war period and that the future lies in their continued development. Under threat both from within and from without there is a clear need to get back to fundamental principles, yet at the same time to push out the frontiers as we strive to develop schools ever better able to meet the needs of young people.

Almost every author writing about the pioneer comprehensive schools of the 1950s and early 1960s suggests that they were intent upon outdoing the grammar schools. I sometimes wonder whether some direct experience of teaching in the bi-lateral system could be seen as an essential requirement for working in a comprehensive school. Clearly this is an untenable long-term notion. Few of my present colleagues have had that experience. The future of the comprehensive movement lies with this and the coming generations of parents and teachers, most of whom will only have experienced common schools. They will need to apply the same vigour as the early pioneers to take comprehensive schools forward or as Bernard Barker puts it to 'rescue the comprehensive experience'.[1] But there can be no doubt that those earlier workers were convinced of the need to change a highly divisive and damaging system for one which was both fairer and better. The challenge from within the educational system was incisive. Selection — the eleven plus examination — was questioned on the grounds of its

Reviving the Progressive Tradition (continued from page 43)

transformation of previously observed and remembered drawings and photographs of model faces in magazines, newspapers and advertisements. And there was the quality of visual observation itself, apparent above all in the immaculate way in which Clare drew her earrings now from the front, now from the side, now hanging in full view from the lobe of the ear, now half hidden by a lock of hair.

So much of the thinking which primary schools exist to promote is found at its most advanced in the playful activity of their young pupils. And this is hardly surprising. For it is here above all, in the world of toys and comics, dressing up and make believe, making dens and building castles, flying kites and constructing go-carts, that children possess the expertise, enthusiasm and patience to translate their thought into action. The curriculum that turns its back on play, or pushes it into a corner of the classroom, impoverishes children's thinking in all its variety.

I have taken my sketch of progressivism as far as I can for the moment. The tradition which I have attempted to describe is in conflict with conventional wisdom. It is fashionable to talk about the assessment of performance; the progressive tradition is more concerned with the description of a practice. It is fashionable to emphasize the uniformity and standardization of the curriculum; the progressive tradition is more impressed by the inexhaustible variety of learning within a common framework. It is most of all fashionable, and fatal, to regard the curriculum as a commodity to be 'delivered' to children through the agency of schools. No language could be better devised to perpetuate the false dichotomy between organized knowledge and naive understanding. Knowledge is not independent of the means by which it is transmitted. Every significant educational moment is reconstructive to however small an extent, adding to and altering life in ways which no educator can foretell. This is why the very best teachers of the young have always been, often despite themselves, intellectuals of a kind. **I dare say it is only when primary school teachers are among the intellectual heroes of the age that we will know that the dream of popular education has at last been fulfilled.**

accuracy as a means of sorting children out into two radically different types of schooling. Despite many caring teachers trying to elevate the status of secondary modern schools I have never seen or heard a convincing defence of that system. Since more than seventy per cent of our children were consigned to a 'second class' system there was obvious cause for concern. Yet the waste of talent even amongst those selected for the grammar route was also quite appalling.

Parents and the wider community saw the whole process of introducing comprehensive schools as making grammar schools available to all. It was a process that coincided with a rapid growth of school population. The need to enlarge, improve or add to school buildings existed whatever the system. Some practical virtues of a comprehensive system could be seen across the political persuasions. In Leicestershire the two-tier plan made good use of existing 'grammar' (now Upper) schools and 'modern' (now High) schools' buildings. Rural Dorset considered a single building complex — albeit originally conceived as bi-lateral — as a quite pragmatic solution. Areas of particularly rapid growth saw large single or common schools as the right way forward to ensure an adequate range of curriculum provision and particularly to ensure a strong sixth form. No doubt those working in these newly formed common schools, however eager to establish a full development of comprehensive principles, saw an early need to establish their schools as credible and respectable places. Too much of the grammar school may have gone into those pioneer ventures. Not enough time was spent on developing a comprehensive curriculum. To start as you meant to go on involved some risk. A few high profile, radical, and innovative institutions met considerable difficulties.[2] Regardless which of the major parties were in power the basic national conservatism has been a powerful brake. Regrettably the left, particularly at a time of unparalleled opportunity — in the mid-1960s — has never given the total political support necessary.

My own experience convinces me that comprehensive schools have been a great success. I have taught in a grammar school, a secondary modern and five comprehensive schools. All were, or are, interesting schools with good teachers and good teaching. Yet the quality of experience in those schools that accepted all children through their doors from a given area is that much better. Such empirical statements do not satisfy many evaluators, who want well researched evidence. Even when clear facts, for example examination results, are laid out for consideration it will not necessarily be enough to convince.

I have so recently joined my present school that I feel able to act almost as an observer. Opened in 1969 by my distinguished predecessor, Tim Rogers, and a dedicated group of teachers, a forward-looking comprehensive school was created from Leicestershire's last grammar school. On just one criterion — getting students through exams — the 'new' school was able easily to demonstrate its success. Parents who bothered to understand the 'new' comprehensive could see the advantages of a broad curriculum, excellent facilities and a caring, dedicated staff. They, in fact, are quite fanatical in their support. Depressingly, some parents never seem to look properly and all the old familiar flak and uncertainties remain: uniform, discipline, standards and so on. The parental view is by no means as solid as, for example, it would be about the virtue of having full community use of school buildings. As I write, local journals carry news of the prospective opening of an independent grammar school in the very buildings vacated when my present school moved to its new site. It is argued that this is a necessary alternative to some schools in the area and one which many can easily afford. The old divisions are once again proposed for our area. Feelings of outrage are doubled when we notice that some of those involved also have a major responsibility as elected members for the maintained system. It is a lesson for all who have a concern for the provision of neighbourhood community schools fit for ALL children. In my more cynical moments I believe parents who seek such an alternative are less worried about the teachers, curriculum and organisation than about who their children will mix with.

Old problems remain and new ones are emerging. For me an increasing concern centres on the growing bureaucracy. Much of it well intentioned, there is an increasing amount of legislation related to health and safety, equal opportunities, multicultural concerns and much more. Indeed much of this is not just well-intentioned but vitally important. With it goes all the paraphernalia of training, analysis, form-filling, adoption of new procedures, evaluation and so on. Central, but rarely local, resource provision often goes with these initiatives. Less fortunately at some levels too much power is given to the little Hitlers — the traffic wardens of the educational system. At any level there is a substantial increase in the complexity of tasks and roles, and a feeling that too much is being shifted away from the learning experience of children. I do feel that the young teacher coming into the profession now has a much more complex and demanding role than was expected of me when I started in the late 1950s.

FORUM has on many occasions highlighted concern about growing centralism. LEA, Government and MSC are becoming more involved in various ways even in the detail of direction at local level. A strong sense of partnership with parents, governors and the local community is so important. Some of the external initiatives, however, are blatantly intrusive and ill-prepared. Stewart Mason was able to say to me in 1969 that I was captain of the ship and that I should get on with the job. Many would be rather unhappy with that analogy, even the suggested freedom of the Head, but most would welcome the implied trust and confidence that flowed between central government, LEA and school and vice versa.

During the present dispute the profession itself has challenged the system. However proper the concerns, indisputable the cause and just the outcomes, the system is being moved faster than it can adjust. We have a temporary inability to manage, even perhaps more so when the model is collective or corporate. Whatever the final settlement there will be fresh challenges to the ways in which schools are organised.

From the narrow parochial perspective of most teachers working in schools it may be difficult to sense national shifts. It is glaringly obvious that the present government does not have a commitment to the provision of the very best possible common schools in each area as fit and proper places for all children. On past record we could not be certain that a change of

government would produce the decisive response required though the more supportive and sympathetic attitude would be positive. A major political issue is the absolute incompatability of private and public systems. Within comprehensive schools there is the challenge of how to progress the system. There are times when the resistance to change seems almost as stubborn as the rearguard action of grammar school teachers faced with comprehensive re-organisation. Some uncomfortable parallels can be drawn between the 'established' comprehensives. A feeling of "we have got it right", and therefore do not need to review our provision more adequately to meet the needs of young people in our present and future society.

I believe the challenge to the comprehensive movement is greater now than ever before. Firstly we need to restate basic principles. Pat Daunt writes that the 'one predominant characteristic principle of comprehensive education is "THAT THE EDUCATION OF ALL CHILDREN IS HELD TO BE INTRINSICALLY OF EQUAL VALUE"[3] Only a comprehensive school can oversee the whole diversity of needs, strive to search for and understand the individual without losing him totally through prejudice, predetermined assessment and allocation to groups, learn to deploy the totality of resources available self-critically and flexibly in imitation of the familiar model which is the only exemplar by which the equal-value principle can be made to work."[3] That is as much the key now as when first written more than a decade ago.

One of my tasks towards the end of the school year is to sign a leaver's card for each student. Sadly it may be one of the very few times for a brief chat. Even more sadly, for I am absolutely confident that I work in a 'good' school, made so by a well-qualified, experienced and caring staff, some of the leavers express a gloomy view about the value of their schooling. James Hemmings wrote, 'At the heart of Britain's educational problems is a profound motivation crisis which especially affects the less able academically but also includes highly capable children who nevertheless are bored or feel that school has little to offer them.'[4]

Whilst significant progress has been made through curriculum initiatives, grouping of students, individualised learning, integrated courses, improved techniques of assessment, the fundamental problem remains for too many children. An essential requirement is to remove the absolute straitjacket by which the school day is organised. While we are still required to work for a certain length of day, in two sessions and almost entirely in one place for *all* young people regardless of their age and interests we will be constrained. Ideas about the flexible day too often founder because of bus schedules or school meal provision. In upper secondary at least students should be more involved in the negotiation, not just of work within subjects, but of the whole package. Units, as suggested in **Improving Secondary Schools**[5], and the use of modular structures will do much to provide variety, change of pace and intensity and a more flexible structure in which to work. A process of genuine negotiation would be greatly helped by establishing a minimum taught length for each day or working week. Students should be able to work within the 'institution' for varying lengths of time. More time should be spent within the community, in project centres, in residential experience, on enhancement or enrichment experiences either in industry and commerce or in FE. An imaginative change in legislation is required to give schools a genuinely freer and more flexible day.

Paulo Freire reminds us 'There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or becomes the "practice of freedom", the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.'[6] The comprehensive movement is not about conformity, it is about growth and the development of personal confidence. For teachers it is a radical and demanding process.

Fortunately the quality and commitment of teachers has never been higher. A long process of denigration of teachers has done little for morale. It remains quite clear, however, that given adequate rewards and resources the profession is eager to renew its work. A majority public view (despite a growth in interest in private schools and some applause for elements of the present government's extraordinary strategies) remains confident that comprehensives can do the job given adequate resources.

We need to
— reaffirm basic principles
— develop a comprehensive curriculum designed to meet the challenges of the future
— establish child-centred approaches in attractive environments
— learn to work closely and positively with parents and community members
— recognise that a good neighbourhood school will be a community school
— accept the education is a lifelong process encompassing a great range of needs, pace and styles
— press for less restrictive legislation which currently constrains our working programmes
— insist on radically improved levels of resourcing
— campaign for renewed and decisive political commitment to comprehensive policies.

Teachers have been the architects of good practice in comprehensive schools; their skill, energy and commitment has made this essentially a 'grass roots' movement. The future lies with this group. Government and LEA organisation must enable them to work effectively and creatively with people of all ages. Crucially, we cannot afford to take progression for granted. It is a time for renewal of commitment.

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The ILEA Junior School Project: A Study of School Effectiveness

Peter Mortimore, Pamela Sammons, Louise Stoll, David Lewis and Russell Ecob.

The Junior School Project, carried through by the Inner London Education Authority's Research and Statistics branch, is the most comprehensive research initiative into Junior school education ever undertaken in this country. It is basically concerned with discovering what factors render some schools more effective than others, and in the process obtained a mass of data on many important aspects of school life. In this article, Peter Mortimore and his colleagues provide a full introduction to their research. FORUM will carry further articles from the ILEA team, focussing on specific aspects of the research findings.

In the July 1986 issue of **Forum** Michael Clarke provided a thoughtful account of the ways in which the ILEA's Thomas Report **Improving Primary Schools** could be a recipe for positive action. Since publication of the Thomas Report, the ILEA has launched the results of a major research study — the Junior School Project — designed specifically to focus on the question of school effectiveness. The Authority has sent details of the findings of this four year study (one of the largest surveys of primary schools undertaken within the UK) to all its primary schools. Headteachers are being asked to take account of the Project's findings when devising the development plans recommended by **Improving Primary Schools**.

In this article we provide a brief account of the design of the Junior School Project and its aims. We also describe some of the differences in effectiveness which were identified between schools. In a later series of articles we will go on to describe the major factors found to be related to such differences which, in our view, help point the way towards more effective junior education.

Why have a study of junior schools?

Over the last decade or so, there has been a growing debate amongst teachers and researchers about the extent of differences between schools in their effectiveness in aiding the learning and development of pupils. The question of school effectiveness is of great relevance to heads, teachers and policy makers, as well as to parents and pupils. It is clearly of critical importance to a local education authority.

Case studies of individual schools and classes have provided useful insights into life in the relatively closed communities of school and classroom. Hargreaves' (1967) study of 4th year classes within a secondary school, and Lacey's (1970) study of a boys' grammar school, for instance, have shed light upon the basic social processes at work in such institutions. Similarly, Armstrong's (1981) detailed examination of the progress and development of one class of primary school children provided a detailed account of the learning experiences of individual pupils, and led to the development of hypotheses about the nature and impact of such experiences. However, valuable though they are, such studies can only be of limited help in evaluating the variety of practice found in such a large local education authority as the ILEA.

Work undertaken by Coleman *et al* (1972) in the United States has been used to argue that schools have very little impact upon pupils' educational attainments. These authors have claimed that other factors (related to aspects of children's backgrounds) exercised far more influence upon the academic careers of children than did the particular school attended. Such conclusions have often been challenged by classroom practitioners and later research carried out in the United States (Weber, 1971; Brookover *et al*, 1976; Edmonds *et al*, 1978) at the elementary level, and by Summers and Wolfe (1977) or Goodlad (1979) in high schools, has disputed the claim that schools have little influence, and in contrast suggest that some have very powerful effects upon their pupils.

In the United Kingdom most research into the question of school effects has been conducted in secondary schools (see Madaus *et al*, 1979; Rutter *et al*, 1979; Gray, 1981a; Reynolds, 1982). Results have pointed to the existence of substantial differences between schools in selected educational outcomes, although there has been considerable debate on the theoretical and methodological considerations of research into school differences (see, for example, Mortimore, 1979; Tizard *et al* 1980; Rutter *et al*, 1980; Gray, 1981b; Reynolds, 1985).

To date,however, none of the important studies of the education of primary pupils in the UK have specifically addressed the question of school effects. Thus, Galton and Simon (1980) focused on the classroom and related pupil progress in basic skills to teaching strategies, and Bennett's (1976) study also investigated the impact of teaching style. In addition, neither of these studies controlled fully for the different backgrounds of pupils entering the schools. The primary survey carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (1978) provided an excellent description of practice but, again, was limited by this lack of information.

Thus although school effectiveness in the secondary sector had been fairly thoroughly researched, not a great deal was known about the differences between junior schools and their effects upon the pupils who attend them. It was from this position that we designed the Junior School Project.

The Project began in September 1980 when an age cohort of nearly two thousand pupils entered their junior classes. They transferred to secondary schools in September 1984. These pupils had attended 50 primary schools in inner London, selected randomly from the 636 junior and infant, or junior-only schools existing within the ILEA. Our sample proved to be representative of both schools and of pupils in the Authority as a whole.

Aims

The Project was designed to produce a detailed description of the pupils, teachers and of the curriculum and organisation of schools in an inner city area, and to investigate the progress and development of an age group of pupils. We also intended to establish the extent of any differences between schools in such progress and development.

The Project has focused on three major questions.

1. Are some schools more effective than others in promoting pupils' learning and development, when account is taken of variations in the pupils' backgrounds?

2. Are some schools more effective than other for particular groups of children (for girls or boys, for those of different social class origins, or different ethnic backgrounds)?

3. If some schools are more effective than other, what factors contribute to such positive effects?

Following the ILEA'S Equal Opportunities initiative, special attention was paid to identifying the links between junior pupils' attainments, progress and development and their social class backgrounds, sex and race. We also examined the impact of differences of age within a year group, an area that has received relatively little attention from researchers in the past.

An inter-disciplinary team of researchers and experienced primary teachers worked as a team on the Project for four years. In our view it was crucial that teachers were involved both in the design of the study and some of the instruments, and in working directly with the sample schools as field officers.

Information about pupils, schools and teachers

In order to answer the questions we had set ourselves, three different kinds of information were collected.

The first measured the characteristics of the intakes to the 50 sample schools. Detailed information was obtained for each child about social, ethnic, language and family background; their nursery and infant school experiences; and their initial attainments at entry to junior school. These data were needed so that we could establish the impact of such background factors on pupils' attainments, progress and development, take into account difference between schools in their pupil intakes, quantify the relative importance of school compared with background as influences upon pupils, and explore the effectiveness of schooling for different groups of children.

The second set of information related to pupils' learning and development. To take account of the diversity of aims and curricula of primary education a wide range of outcomes was examined. The study did not focus solely on attainment in 'basic skill' areas. Such a narrow focus would be in danger of presenting a potentially misleading picture of school effectiveness. Thus, in addition reading and mathematics, we examined the children's practical mathematics attainment (using an assessment based on the ILEA's Checkpoints procedure). Pupils creative writing was assessed using measures which included the quality of language and ideas, as well as more technical aspects. To broaden our assessments of language, pupils' speaking skills were also studied. Oracy assessments devised by the APU's Language Survey team were adopted for this purpose. These focused on the ability to communicate effectively, and children were not penalised for using non-standard English.

We were equally interested in the 'non-cognitive', or social, outcomes of education. These have tended to be neglected in previous studies of school differences. Information was obtained about children's attendance, their behaviour in school, their attitude to school and to different types of school activities, and their self-concepts (including their perceptions of themselves as learners) in school.

The third set of information related to the characteristics of the schools, their organisation, and numerous aspects of the learning environment experienced by pupils. This information was gathered by a variety of methods including interviews and questionnares with headteachers, deputies and the class teachers of our pupil sample. Field officers also made detailed observations of teachers and pupils in the classroom setting, and kept extensive field notes.

By interviewing the parents of pupils in eight of the sample schools, it was also possible to investigate their views, and establish the extent of parental involvement with their child's education and the school.

Measuring School Effects

The analysis of all this data was very complex, and extensive use was made of statistical techniques in the investigation. In essence, however, the strategy we adopted was very simple. Our intention was to find out what impact schools had on pupils' progress and development, once account had been taken of the children's attainments at entry to junior school, and of the influences of age, sex and other background factors.

It was possible to analyse pupils' progress in several cognitive areas because the Project was longitudinal. By studying pupil progress we could take account of the very different levels of skills possessed by children at the start of junior schooling. For each pupil, therefore, her or his initial attainment at entry was the baseline against which progress during later years was measured.

Thus, the Junior School Project studied schools' effects on their pupils' progress and development in terms of a wide variety of educational outcomes. The

impact upon pupils was the criterion we used for evaluating effectiveness. It is our view that this is the most valid way of comparing schools. We sought, therefore, to establish their influences — whether positive or negative — upon the pupils who attend them.

We found strong relationships between background factors (especially age, social class, sex and race) and pupils' attainment and development and, to a lesser extent, upon their progress during the junior years (see Mortimore *et al*, 1986a, 1986b). Marked differences were also found between the pupil intakes to the sample schools. Full account, therefore, had to be taken of these relationships before schools' effects on their pupils could be examined.

Even after controlling for the characteristics of pupil intakes, however, our data show that the school made a very important contribution to pupils' progress and development. In terms of the first question asked by the Project, we found that schools *did* make a substantial difference to their pupils' progress and development. In fact for many of the educational outcomes — especially progress in cognitive areas — the school was more important than background factors in accounting for variations between individual children.

In the measurement of reading progress the school was found to be about six times more important than background. For mathematics and writing, the difference was ten fold. The analyses of oracy and of the non-cognitive (social) outcomes also confirmed the overriding importance of school.

We calculated the size of the effects of each of the schools on our measures of educational outcomes. The differences between the least and the most effective schools were striking. Taking reading as one example, the most effective school improved a pupil's attainment by an average of 15 raw points above that predicted by that child's attainment at entry to junior school, taking into account her or his background. But in the least effective school, each child's attainment was on average, 10 points lower than predicted. This compares with an overall average reading score for all pupils of 54 points, and a maximum possible of 100.

A number of schools (14 in all) were found to have had positive effects on pupils' progress and development in most of the cognitive and most of the non-cognitive outcomes. These can be seen as the generally effective schools. In contrast, five schools were rather ineffective in most areas.

It was also possible to compare the effects of schools on the progress of different groups of pupils. This comparison was made in order to answer the second question. Generally, however, we found that schools which were effective in promoting the progress of one group were also effective for other groups, and those which were less effective for one group were also less effective for others. It appears that an effective school tends to 'jack' up the performance of all its pupils irrespective of their sex, social class origins or race. Moreover, the evidence indicates, that although overall differences in attainment were not removed, on average a child from a working class family attending one of the more effective schools, ended up attaining more highly than a child from a non-manual background attending one of the least effective schools.

The results of the Junior School Project indicate clearly that the particular school attended can make a substantial difference to the future prospects of individual children. Given this, the third question addressed by the Project is crucially important. What makes some schools more effective than others? In a future issue of **Forum** we will discuss those factors which accounted for differences between schools in the pupils' progress and development and which helped to promote effectiveness.

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(Continued on Page 50)

The Primary Purpose of Swann

Ian Menter
Lecturer in Primary Education at the College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham, and a member of the Avon CARE (Campaign Against Racism in Education), Ian Menter subjects the Swann Committee's report (**Education for All**) to a critical analysis. He asks specifically what assistance the primary school teacher can find in the report, coming up with a dusty answer. He concludes, however, with some positive advice concerning the literature of anti-racism in the primary school.

First Story: Through my letterbox this evening comes a leaflet: 'Stop the Deportation of Sulakhan Singh'. Some details of the case are given:

> Mr Sulakhan Singh, aged 26 years, has lived in Bristol for 5½ years. He came to this country to marry a British born woman. The couple have a four year old son, Avjeevan, who is attending school in Bristol . . .

Since 1980 Mr Singh has been applying for leave to remain in the United Kingdom. He has now been told by the Home Office to leave the country as soon as possible on the grounds that the marriage had broken down and that his application was late.

Second Story: November 1985 in a local infants' school. It's lunchtime and seven four year old children, four black and three white, are being served by the (white) student teacher who is sharing their table with them. 'Could you serve out the potatoes, Amy, while I serve the meat, please?' Amy is white. Stephanie, the black girl who is sitting next to Amy, says 'Miss can I serve out the peas?' Before 'Miss' can answer, Robert, the black boy on her other side, calls 'No. Stephanie can't be the teacher. She's a little black girl.'

While the first story shows how the so-called 'primary purpose rule', part of the battery of racist immigration legislation, may be about to shatter the life of one four year old boy, the second story shows how the primary education system can unwittingly convey racist messages — 'black people are not teachers'. Different aspects of racism — one the vicious and 'legal' racism of the state, the other the more subtle and sometimes 'invisible' racism of one of the most egalitarian institutions in 'our' society — the infants' school.,

But what of the implications of these stories for the teachers of the children concerned? What will Avjeevan's teacher do when she hears about this threat to his future? Will she join the campaign to prevent his father's deportation? What will she say to Avjeevan or his classmates when the subject is raised in school? Will she in fact raise it herself?

How can the student teacher respond to Robert? 'Don't be silly Robert,of course Stephanie can be a teacher. Lots of black people are teachers, it just so happens that there aren't any black teachers in this school'? We may well know that there aren't any black teachers in the school down the road either, but she doesn't have to tell Robert that, does she? Does she?

Perhaps somewhere within the 800 papers of the Swann Report I may be able to find some clues towards advising the teachers involved in these cases. It is, after all, written by the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups, even if it is contradictorily entitled 'Education for All'. Regrettably, given my brief — 'give an account of what's in Swann for primary teachers' — I have to say that I find very little that will help in either of these cases. In fact, given my brief, this could be a very short article!

Looking through the sixteen contents pages (there is no index) two references to primary schools can be located as sub-sub-headings, one in the chapter on languages, the other in the chapter on religious education. There are a few other mentions of primary education in the main body of the report (which I will look at presently) but it has to be said at the outset that an awful lot of what is said about schools seems to be

The ILEA Junior School Project (continued from page 49)

Madaus, G F et al (1979) The Sensitivity of Measures of School Effectiveness *Harvard Educational Review* Vol. 49, pp 207-230

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referring to secondary schools.This can most frequently be deduced by the way the organisation of the curriculum is referred to. Although it could also more radically be suggested that the Report doesn't have much to say about any schools! Certainly in no way can it be seen as a handbook for teachers. It might rather be described as a painful and lengthy construction of an educational ideology suitable for discussion at conferences and for supporting important points at important meetings.

How can this be? Six years of discussions, albeit peppered with significant sackings and principled resignations, surely should lead to some conclusions of immediate use to primary teachers. Looking with care at the front and back of the Report reveals some interesting points. On pages iii and iv the members (and ex-members) of the Committee are listed. Out of 31 people listed (38 including HMIs and officials) only one has their post at the time of completion of the Report listed as 'teacher' and one as 'head'. The only person listed whose work is clearly related to the primary age range (although probably only part of it) is Bradford's Adviser for the Education of Children in the Early Years. Thus not only is there an absence of primary teachers, there is an absence of teachers altogether. It is of course possible that a number of members (Trevor Carter is one) were promoted from teaching posts during the course of the Inquiry.

If we turn now to the back pages we find on page 778 a list of co-opted members to sub-committees of both Rampton and Swann. Here we do find several more teachers but only three from primary education and two of these are heads. Appendix C follows; this is a list of LEAs and organisations which have submitted evidence to the Committee. One surprising omission here is NAPE, the National Association for Primary Education. In fairness it should be said that the other two appendices, lists of schools visited and of individuals who submitted evidence, both include strong primary school representation.

Perhaps this superficial survey of the Report might be misleading. Let us look now at some of the substantive content to ascertain whether there may be some clear indication of implications for the primary teacher. I will look at Swann's delineation of two matters of central concern to us: 'racism and the young child' and 'the primary school'.

The Report's treatment of 'racism' has already come under considerable attack, particularly for its strong emphasis on one particular aspect of racism, namely prejudice. It is apparent from a careful reading of the Report that the Committee is well aware of other forms, structural, institutional, political, governmental even, but when it comes to educational responses the only significant form seems to be prejudice. this view is clearly articulated in Chapter 2:

> We could all be said to have 'prejudices' in the sense of likes and dislikes and these are inevitably determined to a greater or lesser extent by our own upbringing and experiences, by the climate of opinion at the time, and by the facts or at least the version of them, however tenuous, that we receive from 'influential others', be they family, friend, teacher, church-leader or the media. (Para 2.1)

At the end of this paragraph the following conclusions are drawn:

> There seem thus to be two factors which are essential for prejudices initially to be formed and subsequently maintained and even reinforced — firstly, ignorance, in the literal sense of lack of knowledge on which to base informed opinions and judgements, and, secondly, the existence and promulgation of sterotypes of particular groups of people as conveyed by the major informers of public opinion most notably the media and the education process.

The next paragraph is headed 'The Task for Education:'

> The role of education in relation to prejudice is surely therefore clear — to equip a pupil with knowledge and understanding in place of ignorance and to develop his or her ability to formulate views and attitudes and to assess and judge situations on the basis of this knowledge. (Para 2.2)

While few primary teachers would strongly disagree with these sentiments we do nevertheless have a problem, two problems in fact., Firstly, there is no evidence to support the view that children's racial prejudices are reduced, let alone dispelled, by learning about cultural diversity, or pluralism to use Swann's preferred term. Secondly, even if multicultural education were effective in this respect, all the other forms and perpetrations of racism in education would remain.

Careful readers of the Report might argue that Chapter 3, on 'Achievement and Underachievement', recognises this fact. This part of the Report builds largely on the ideas put forward in the Rampton Committee's interim report, especially the notion of 'unintentional racism'.Again however we see the problems created by an overemphasis on a particular form of racism. In focusing so centrally on the 'difficult' and 'contentious' issue of teacher racism and the effects of teacher's expectations (and I am not denying the importance of saying this sort of thing), by the same token those same teachers are offered no further guidance. That is, it is implied, if they expunge (exorcise?) their own racism then the problem will disappear.

So it is, I would suggest, that the notion of 'Education for All', as expounded in chapter 6, is constructed with the dual purpose of removing pupil prejudice through multicultural approaches and raising the 'achievement' of black children through cleansing teacher's attitudes. While the former, as I have already said, has not been found particularly effective, the latter gives teachers little guidance on what to do once they have been on their 'racism awareness course' or whatever.

Let us turn now to Swann's conception of the primary school. Indeed there is remarkably little explicit reference to it but by looking at two particular brief extracts I think we can get a feel of their understanding of what a primary school is. Firstly then, in a discussion of the need for curriculum review, the development of policy and monitoring in schools, it is suggested:

> In primary schools such an exercise can usually be undertaken by staff as a whole, but in secondary schools, with their complex tiers of responsibility and

subject divisions . . . (page 352)

This idea of 'easy innovation', is in my experience, somewhat naive, even though it has become part of the educationists' mythology of the primary school. Just because an institution is relatively small it does not mean that communitcation is good, let alone that relationships are good. Indeed it could well be argued that because of the formality of channels of communication in larger institutions (including more democratic consultative procedures for example) major innovations are more likely to be successful and lasting than in small institutions.

For an insight into the Committee's view of primary school children we can look at a discussion of political education, in Chapter 6.

> . . . we believe that a start can be made to political education at the primary level in developing the basic 'political' skills needed to benefit from more specific provision at secondary level. (page 340)

The implication here is that young children are in some way unpolitical. The Committee seem to feel that they are making a radical proposal to start political education in the primary school. I would suggest on the other that in fact primary teachers have no choice. Children arrive at school with 'political' skills, with ideas about fairness and responsibility, indeed with ideas about power. Avjeevan is in the process, at the age of four, of learning about the power of the state. The quotation above suggests to me that the Swann Committee in fact has a confused notion of the interplay between 'the child', 'racism' and 'the role of the school'. Earlier we saw their recognition that racial prejudice starts at an early age. But because they also see the school's role as dispelling ignorance through learning about 'our plural society' they apparently do not think racial prejudice starts at an early age. But because they also see the school's role as dispelling ignorance through learning about 'our plural society' they apparently do not think racial prejudice at this age is in any way a political matter.

Having thus far been somewhat critical of Swann's approach it is only reasonable that I should offer some indication of what I would expect to find on the subject of primary education. I can best do this by isolating four particular characteristics of the primary school.

1. Primary schools are populated by young children (and adults). Young children, whether white or black, are less powerful within society than older people and hence are particularly vulnerable to the effects of racism.Thus education against racism is particularly important with younger children.

2. Primary school teachers spend most of their time working with one particular class of children, usually for a least a year. This should mean that they are able to establish much closer relationships with the children, relationships which should make it possible to discuss difficult issues in an honest and open way.

3. It is usual for teachers in the primary school to teach right across the curriculum. this should provide ideal opportunities for developing an integrated approach to education against racism. (This same feature of course also gave rise to the growth of those notorious 'multicultural projects' of the late 70s and early 80s on 'India' or 'The West Indies'.)

4. Primary schools are generally smaller than secondaries and notwithstanding my earlier remarks it might be hoped that some benefits would derive from this fact. One field of potential benefit for example would be the generally much closer home-school relations which exist (this is also due to the age factor). These should enable a school to move forward with the local community rather than in spite of or because of it.

These four brief statements serve only to indicate some starting points for developing an anti-racist approach appropriate to the primary school.Before concluding by indicating some sources which would aid the development of such an approach it would be worth looking at to the writings on primary education to see what they have to say about these matters.

If we look first at other government-backed reports the obvious starting point is the Plowden Report. Now nearly twenty years old, **Children and their Primary Schools** has been an influential document in the professional development of most primary teachers at work today. It is extremely salutary to return to Plowden and find a whole chapter devoted to 'Children of Immigrants'. The language may have changed but it is clear that 'the issue' is not a new one. The Committee's views make fascinating reading.

> Most experienced primary school teachers do not think that colour prejudice causes much difficulty. Children readily accept each other and set store by other qualities in their classmates than the colour of their skin. Some echoes of adult values and prejudices inevitably invade the classroom but they seldom survive for long among children. It is among the neighbours at home and when he (sic) begins to enquire about jobs that the coloured child (sic) faces the realities of the society into which his parents have brought him. (Para 179)

Those were the days! When children were children and childhood was innocent . . . This reveals both how great and how small have been subsequent developments. With Rampton and Swann we are at least able to discuss the racism of teachers but the identification of prejudice as the major problem remains unchanged. (This extract from Plowden also indicates why David Milner's work in the early 70's was so important notwithstanding Maureen Stone's subsequent powerful critique. Swann refers to the latter but not the former.)

If Plowden did take these matters seriously it is very apparent that subsequent Government documents generally attach steadily decreasing importance to them. The HMI Primary Survey published in 1978, for example, does refer to children learning English as a second language, but its reference to wider aspects is confined to one sentence about religious education under the heading 'Other aspects of the curriculum':

> More might be done to make all children aware of other beliefs and to extend their understanding of the multi-cultural nature of contemporary society.

Since 1978 the volume of material emanating from

HMI and the DES has steadily increased of course but it has to be said that the sentence above is typical of the treatment given to the issue (however it is defined). It would be reassuring to be able to refer readers to the major report on primary schools recently published by the Inner London Education Authority, that model of anti-racist progressivism. Regrettably the Report of the the committee chaired by Norman Thomas (ex-HMI), with the promising title of **Improving Primary Schools**, takes only one page to deal with racism and sexism.

If one looks at text books about primary education do we find that the issues have made any greater impact? As recently as ten years ago it was possible for at least one leading progressive primary educationist to set down the most appalling stereotypes of 'immigrants', as shown by the accompanying passage (Fig 1). How many Teacher Training Institutions still have such texts on their shelves? But it seems that rather than addressing the questions head on (which is clearly what Alice Yardley was at least aiming to do) most writers would rather ignore them. Recent books by Blenkin and Kelly, Joan Dean, W A L Blyth and Robin Alexander are all interesting reading for primary educationists but not one of them makes more than token reference to the issue of racism or multiculturalism. And while all of these books were published before the Swann Report, and so could be forgiven for ignoring the questions raised therein, most of them succeeded the Rampton Report.

What then is it that is missing from all of this literature? What is it that primary teachers might want to know about racism? What does Avjeevan's teacher or the teacher of Amy, Stephanie and Robert want to know? Well, I suggest that she would like answers to questions such as these:

— How can I support the child whose father may be deported as a result of racist immigration laws? Can I do anything to prevent his deportation?

— How can I constructively raise the issue of racism in my (all-white?) staffroom?

— How can I tackle racial abuse in the classroom, staffroom and playground?

— How do I teach against racism?

My overall conclusion has to be that she will not find answers to these questions in the Swann Report, in other reports on primary education or in the general literature of primary education. There is however an emerging literature of anti-racism in the primary school and I will conclude by offering a brief bibliography which is aimed to help newcomers to the field make a start in developing an anti-racist approach to their work.

ALTARF — All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism — produced a booklet in 1981 called **Race in the Classroom — teaching against racism in the classroom**'. In 1984 ALTARF's book **Challenging Racism** was published and this includes several articles that have particular relevance to the primary school. ALTARF's address is Room 216, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X OAP.

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Fig 1

An extract from Alice Yardley's 1976 book, — 'The Organisation of the Infant School'

Immigrant children

Immigrant children are often found in some of our poorest neighbourhoods where they crowd into substandard property, and in some multiracial schools more than eighty per cent of the children have parents of Asian, West Indian, African, Indian and Pakistani, or Cypriot origin. Many of these are now second-generation children. Whereas language was formerly thought to be their worst handicap, many teachers find that cultural differences make for even greater problems. In some schools the children have a good command of English and are not at all self-conscious about the colour of their skin, but still find great difficulty in fitting into an English way of life and our school system. Factors which give rise to cultural problems are:

1. Indefinite discipline in the home. In Indian families, for example, women have few rights and children have little regard for them. Mother is lenient, particularly with the boys, while father is authoritarian. These children resist female discipline, yet need the love of a stable mother figure.
2. Social customs. For example, in some homes children do not sit down for a meal with adults particularly when visitors are present.
3. Envy of Western culture. Some African women want straight hair and white skins. Some Chinese girls want round eyes and fair hair. Sometimes white children likewise envy the immigrant children their cultural background; eg. The white child wishes he had black curly hair and bananas growing at the bottom of his garden.
4. Immigrant children see education as a key to establishing a toehold in the Western world and they become over-anxious for their children 'to get clever and pass exams' from the moment they enter school.
5. Many immigrant children are temperamentally more exuberant and variable than English children.They tend to dominate the white child in play. Girls are as forceful as boys and go out for what they want with amazing drive and tenacity. The inferior status of girls in the home creates a deep-seated need to be noticed in school.
6. Many immigrant children are highly intelligent and often devise cunning ways of getting their own way in a society where they feel different and up against the odds.

In order to teach these children successfully the teacher needs not only training in teaching English to immigrants, but also sound knowledge of their ways of life and background culture.

Martin Francis is a member of ALTARF and has written a very useful article called 'We decided to lie about our ages — anti-racism in the primary school'. This is published in issue 21 of **Teaching London Kids**, available from TLK, 20 Durham Road, London SW20.

CARE — The Campaign Against Racism in Education — is based in the County of Avon and has published three pamphlets **Racial Abuse in the Staffroom, Racism in the Classroom** and **The Other Side of Me**. These are available from CARE, c/o Bristol Resource Centre, 62 Bedminster Parade, Bristol.

The ILEA has produced an attractive and very readable handbook called **Education in a multiethnic society: The primary school**. This was published in 1984.

Issues in Race and Education is a termly journal produced by a group of teachers in London. Each issue takes a theme of current importance and explores the implications for teachers (recent topics include deportations, police in schools and assessment). It is available on subscription from **Issues**, 11 Carleton Gardens, Brecknock Road, London N19 5AQ.

Alison Sealey is a teacher in Birmingham and has written two articles of interest here. "Primary school projects" is in 'Issues and Resources' (1983), published by AFFOR, 173 Lozells Road, Birmingham B19 1RN; 'It doesn't happen here!' is a very short piece in **Starting Together**, published by The Development Education Centre, Selly Oak Colleges, Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LE.

Finally, Chapter 3, 4 and 23 of **Education for a Multicultural Society** edited by Martin Straker-Welds are relevant to the primary school. This book was published in 1984 by Bell & Hyman.

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The Schools Council Sex Differentiation Project

Gaby Weiner

Well known for her work on issues relating to gender in education, Gaby Weiner, of the Open University, took part in one of the first national studies on this topic, which she reports on in this article. In spite of minimal funding, the project was successful though, looking back, the author identifies some points of criticism.

The Schools Council Sex Differentiation Project (1981-3) was one of the first national studies focusing on gender and education. Established at a time when gender was still a sensitive and contentious issue; as it still is in some schools and local authorities today, the project sought to establish the eradication of sexual inequality as a mainstream educational priority, and to achieve recognition of gender as an important educational issue by classroom teachers.

The project was divided into three main areas of work. The most important was that of initiating, supporting and developing teacher group work in a number of LEAs. The second was the accumulation of examples of current practice aimed at reducing sex differentiation in education, both to inform project teachers and others who might wish to undertake similar work in the future.

Finally a newsletter series of four issues provided information about the work of the project throughout its duration (dissemination was a key feature of all Schools Council projects of this time) in order to encourage wider discussion of gender issues and to establish a network of people interested in the project's (or similar) work. The newsletter series proved popular, especially when the national newsletters were supplemented by two focusing on the wide range of ILEA initiatives, and the project mailing list became one of the largest at the Schools Council.

Initial funding for the project was minimal (£15,000 over two years), so financial help was sought from the Equal Opportunities Commission for the establishment of a resource centre at the Schools Council and secondments were requested from LEAs wishing to develop their own equal opportunities policies. As a result Val Millman from Coventry and Kate Myers from ILEA joined the project team and considerably increased the scope of the work.

Not surprisingly, the project attracted teachers and

LEAs who where already convinced of the need for new developments to challenge current sexual inequalities in schooling. For them, the main priority for the project was that of raising awareness amongst colleagues. Whilst many teachers appeared to have a professional commitment to equality of opportunity, discussion of gender tended to be dismissed either by denial of the existence of sex-differentiation, or where this was clearly impossible, by acknowledgement of gender differences as welcome, 'natural' and inevitable — 'Vive la difference!' was oft quoted comment.

The counter these views, it was agreed that the principal aim of the teacher group work should be that of persuading teachers that *sexism in schools is an educational problem*, and that the project teachers, either individually or in school groups, would carry out small scale studies on the extent of sex-differentiation in their own schools. These studies were then to be written up and presented at staff meetings and to local authority personnel as a basis for general discussion. It was thought that *local* evidence of sex-differentiation was likely to provide incentive for change where information on national patterns might be either ignored altogether or dismissed on the grounds that 'no matter what, we treat everybody the same in this school' or 'it isn't a problem here'.

The following topics were chosen as suitable for closer study, covering areas of the formal and hidden curriculum:

a) *Sex differentiation in whole school areas* — gathering information on option choice, examination entry and results as a preliminary to more focused work.

b) *Sex bias in reading schemes, textbooks and teaching resources* — analysing curricular material for stereotyping and irrelevance to pupils' lives.

c) *Sex bias in specific subject or departmental areas* — examining the 'milieu' of a subject or a department, for instance, by analysing staffing patterns, examination entry and results, pupil attitudes, option choice, to gain a clear overview of the working of a department.

d) *The 'hidden curriculum'* — looking at implicit as well as informal aspects of the curriculum, eg assemblies, uniform, out-of-school activities, teacher and pupil attitude and expectation.

e) *Classroom relationships* — considering, by monitoring and observation, the relationship between pupils and between pupils and teachers.

f) *Careers education* — examining the effects of the content and timing of careers advice.

g) Language use in school — undertaking studies of language use in all areas of school life, eg within the classroom, in the playground, in school booklets and parent publications.

h) The changing curriculum — looking at changes in the school curriculum brought about by the collapse of traditional forms of employment and the growth of computer technology.

A wide range of methods of investigation were used in the studies including checklists for evaluating texts, questionnaires and interviews for exploring the views of pupils and teachers, and schedules for observing classroom interaction. The studies took from six months to a year to complete and were then written up and presented to colleagues either verbally at staff meetings or in the form of printed booklets, distributed within the school and/or LEA. Both the Enfield and Leicester groups disseminated their findings in printed form, each providing descriptions of the range of studies undertaken by project teachers and some candid reflections on the research process.[1]

In summarising the work of of the project and particularly in seeking an explanation for why changes in practice seemed more successful in some cases than in others, two important criteria for educational innovation on gender were identical:

Awareness raising. This is the means by which the issues of sex-differentiation and stereotyping are raised; for instance, in informal staff discussion, at staff conferences and parents' evenings. The aims are to persuade teachers and parents of the importance of change and to promote awareness and information about the issues.

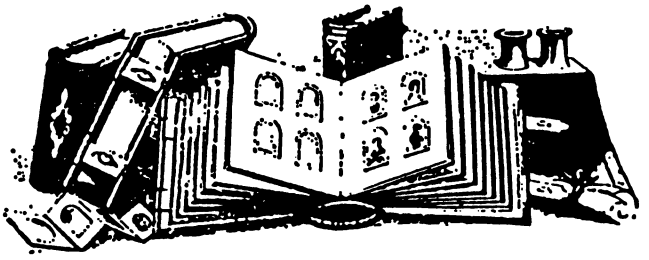
Institutional support. This is the method by which official sanctions are given to encourage teachers to change their practice in a particular way. Approval may be given, say, through promotion or allocation of resources. (Millman and Weiner, 1985)[2]

In an earlier review of the project[3], I argued that it was successful in that it raised general awareness of gender inequality, produced examples of anti-sexist practice, created a network of people interested in gender and education and disseminated findings on gender through a widely-read newsletter series.

I am rather more critical of the project now, five years on. In my view, we failed to consider gender as but one form of educational inequality, alongside race, class and disability, or to explore theoretical and pedagogic possibilities by drawing on other challenges to inequality. Further, though we argued in the project report for structural and institutional change as well as awareness-raising and shifts in attitude, we insufficiently emphasised the need for teachers to consider the variety of explanations and theories about the *origins* and *continued existence* of sexual inequality. For instance, some understanding of the role of education in the creation and maintenance of gender difference might have provided reasons why the pace of change was rather slower than anticipated.

Finally we were rather naive in our understanding of the consensual view of equality of opportunity. We expected that sexual inequality could be reduced merely by increasing awareness of issues and by improvements in professionalism and pedagogy, without recognising, however important these improvements might be, the acutely *political* nature of all work on gender — in questioning prevalent patriarchal and conservative ideologies and in challenging established educational practice.

REVIEWS



HONEST AND PROVOCATIVE

Growing Up at the Margins: Young Adults in the North East, by Frank Coffield, Carol Borrill and Sarah Marshall. Open University Press (1986), pp. 248. Paperback, £6.95; Hardback, £20.00.

This is the most challenging and important book about young people that I have read since Paul Willis's **Learning to Labour**. It is a carefully researched study which gives the reader a vivid sense of the lives of young working class women and men in the North East. Unlike Willis, who combined vivid description with a highly sophisticated critique of 'reproduction' theories in the sociology of education, Coffield and his co-authors are at least overtly atheoretical. This arises from two of the book's aims: to authenticate the experiences of the young people they meet; and to ensure that the book speaks to practitioners and policy makers, as well as academic researchers and lecturers. However they quite explicitly accept responsibility for **explaining** the actions and beliefs of the young people in the study. The simplicity and directness of their style are deceptive. In their emphasis on the complex interplay between biography and social structure, in the importance they give to the historical traditions and economic circumstances through which people make sense of such experiences as unemloyment or training schemes, and in their constant stressing of the interdependence of social class and gender divisions in young people's lives, the researchers have taken on most of the recent theoretical issues in the sociology of education. Their distinctive and important contribution is that instead of sustaining a theoretical debate, they have attempted to express these theoretical issues in their research and writing.

The research is based on regular meetings with about fifty young people of both sexes over a period of two and a half years. The great advantage for the research of the length of time of their fieldwork, was that most of the young people in their sample changed several times from being unemployed, to being on some government scheme, to various forms of temporary low-paid employment. They were able to bring out the transitory, and, for the young people themselves, insignificant nature of the differences between these experiences. After describing the characteristic features of the three communities from which they drew their sample, the main body of the book begins with a description of a number of individual young people. This is done through carefully reconstructed portraits to preserve their respondents' anonymity. They go on to describe in painfully acute detail the endless struggle of the young people to find real employment. They bring out the hypocrisy of government policy which lays great stress on young people improving their employability through training schemes. What the young people find in practice is that there are virtually no employment opportunities, and the few that do arise do not require any skills that the training schemes have offered. A powerful theme running through the book is the very real *economic* poverty that young people find themselves in, and the difficulty they have in saving any money for clothes, holidays and entertainment.

Section III on 'Relationships' brings out more clearly the importance of local traditions on how the young people make sense of their lives, as well as the *very different* experiences of the young women and men. The last section extends the theme of localism, and the limited vision of the world of the young people, most of whom had not travelled beyond Newcastle. On political and moral issues, the picture emerges of a combination of apathy and gut right-wing reactions on such questions as racism, homosexuality and capital punishment.

The authors conclude with a highly ambitious programme for a new social contract for youth. This includes the explicit linking of training to job creation, rather than, as in YTS, assuming that training is some kind of end in itself. More provocatively, they stress the need for young people themselves to be involved in the construction of policies which affect their lives. The book ends with a warning to those who the Bishop of Liverpool described as 'the comfortable middle class'. Unless they take the predicament of young working class people seriously, they will be creating an increasingly apathetic 'under-class' with less and less stake in society, and more and more reason to turn to anarchistic forms of violence (the reports of the scenes of destruction on the Harwich ferry are before me as I write).

Sex Differentiation Project (Continued from page 55)

Notes

1) Enfield LEA (1983), **Changing Attitudes; achieving equality of opportunity for girls and boys in schools**, Enfield.
Beauchamp College (1983), **Equal Opportunities; the first year**, Oadby, Leicester.
2) Millman V and Weiner G (1985), **Sex Differentiation in Schooling; is there really a problem?**, York, Longman.
3) Weiner G (1985); 'The Schools Council and Gender; a case study in the legitimation of curriculum policy', in Arnot M (ed), **Race and Gender; Equal Opportunities Policies in Education**, Oxford, Pergamon, pp 113-121.

Growing Up at the Margins has an honest and provocative message, and the authors are right that members of the comfortable middle class do need to read it and ponder its implications. Two themes stand out most clearly again and again. The first is the 'normality' and reasonableness of the young people. Despite the despair of poverty and minimal employment prospects, by and large they accept their lot and conform — drugs, violence and criminality are rare. The other side of this comformity is the total lack of faith they show in any possibilities of political change. Linked to this conformity, the authors are impressed by the courage and cultural strengths that enable the young people they studied to make something meaningful out of their lives, in a society which has systematically excluded them from the majority of its benefits. They may be disenchanted with public politics but the portrait of the North East that Frank Coffield and his colleagues give us is that its young people are lively, capable and intelligent in the way they cope with their adversities.

For school-teachers and the rest of us in education, the book is a serious indictment. This does not mean that it blames teachers and schools in the way that has recently become so popular. Rather, the book highlights how as a society we have allowed *education* in its potentially emancipating and liberating sense to have so little impact on a vast section of young people who pass through our schools. What is so tragic is that the young people reported in this book have no sense that returning to formal education could offer them anything. For anyone involve in schemes for alternative access, the task is almost too vast to imagine, even if the resources were available. To teachers I would say, please read this book, and let us really debate how we have allowed it all to happen. For all of us in education, the book's strength is that it is not about classrooms, TVEI, CPVE etc, but is about the much deeper historical questions concerning the dynamics of a deeply divided society.

I would like to end this review with a brief contribution to the debate I hope this book will facilitate. The book is a study of the experience of working class young people as victims of economic circumstances and government policies whose primary aims have been social control and the enhancement of private profitability. There is much that I agree with in this analysis; however, the only strategy for change with which it leaves the authors is one of moral persuasion. Their scenario is of a comfortable middle class who will probably go for more repressive measures to control young people, but might be persuaded to take up some of the themes of their new social contract in the interests of their own survival. Their basic proposals are welcome, but there is nothing in their analysis which suggests why they should be adopted. The book offers even less support to the possibility that resistances that might be expected from an increasingly disenfranchised working class could become a source of radical social change. By focussing on the 'culture of survival' of the young people in their study, the authors treat the institutions of the state as external and monolithic, with cracks which the young people occassionally manage to exploit. The alternative is to start by recognising that teachers, YTS managers, DHSS officials and MSC personnel themselves have complex biographies which cross cut divisions of class and gender. They are not just the 'dirty workers' whose only sense of identity is asserting the rules over claimants and trainees. Sources of change will be found not just among young adults themselves, but in the contradictory circumstances that officals of the state and private business together with TU officials, youth workers and others involved with young people face. The best compliment to a book as good as this and to the cause it espouses, is to go beyond its framework. We need to look at how the contradictions between the rhetoric and outcomes of government policy can be used to enable young people to increase their opportunities and to redirect public priorities in ways which involve their strengths not just for survival but for transformation.

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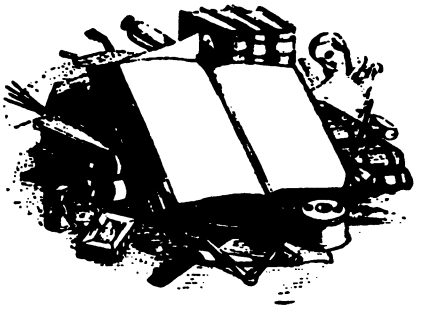

GENDER AND EDUCATION

Untying the Apron Strings: Anti-Sexist Provision for the Under Fives, edited by Naima Browne and Pauline France. Open University Press (1986), pp.175, £6.95 paperback.

As an infant teacher who is concerned by the extent of sex-stereotyped behaviour in children by the age of five, I welcome this addition to the Gender and Education series. This book contains a series of nine essays by different writers covering a range of gender-related issues in pre-school provision.The main point of the book as a whole is to emphasise that, from a very early age, children are constantly bombarded with stereotyped images of male/female roles, and that these images have a profound influence on the way in which children pattern their behaviour.

Pauline France takes a look at 'The beginnings of sex-stereotyping', pointing out that even as babies, boys and girls are treated very differently. Boys are permitted to be more active and demanding, whilst girls are already beginning to be trained for a passive, caring role. The immediate family is obviously a powerful influence on the young child, but even young children are influenced by the world around them, particularly by the media, and by the toys and books which are presented to them. Thus, by the time children reach the nursery, they already have well-formed ideas of the different roles they will be expected to play in the future.

Glen Thomas reports on a study which she carried out in two nursery classes in an inner-city primary school where she looked at the attitudes of nursery workers towards Anti-Sexist Education. As is often the case, the workers initially thought that by providing equal access to activities within the nursery, they would ensure that the girls and boys would participate equally — and in a non-sexist manner. This led to some interesting observation work, which showed that children already have ideas about what constitutes 'suitable behaviour', and that their choice of activities is largely controlled by this.

In my own work, I have been concerned about this for some time,and was interested to read Anita Preston's essay 'Propaganda in the Nursery', suggesting strategies for challenging the images presented to children. She suggests that one approach is:

> 'to raise the status of the so-called feminine traits of caring, sharing, being sensitive and generous, and give them a new heading: "problem-solving".'

This leads to a consideration of 'home-corners', and she suggests that children should be able to face and discuss the realities of home-life, including the 'taboo' areas of unemployment, violence and death. My main worry in my own teaching is that when presented with 'home situations', most children tend to act out stereotyped roles without challenge — thus simply reinforcing those roles. This subject, I feel, could easily extend to a book on its own.

The essay by Naima Browne sets the historical perspective, and shows how provision for young children has been used as a tool to control women, by providing or withdrawing facilities according to the needs of the labour market. I would recommend this chapter and its useful bibliography to all students and teachers looking at this issue, as I would Sue Duxbury's essay which compares contemporary provision for the Under-Fives in Britain with that of other countries. These and other chapters make this book both a useful reference for workers in the field and, hopefully, an 'eye-opener' to those who claim that serious sex-stereotyping begins in the secondary school.

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RIGHTS FOR THE ELDERLY

University of the Third Age, Mutual Aid Universities, edited by Eric Midwinter. Croom Helm (1985) pp.159, £14.95.

How does the adult education worker react to community demands for participation? What happens when adults start to exercise total control over their own learning? What happens when a voluntary group starts giving away for free a service that the LEA should be paying the part-time adult education tutor £9 per hour to provide?

The University fo the Third Age (U3A) provides educational, creative and leisure activities for anyone no longer in paid work. Members organise their own activities, offering their own skills and experience to fellow members.

After the first age (of dependent childhood) and the second age (of, for most, economic, family and social involvement) comes the third age when major commitments are complete. For many, this stage may last for thirty years, and can be the most stable phase of life. This third age is the target for the 'mutual aid university'. It can postpone the fourth age (of dependence and death).

For many local U3A groups, the word 'university' seems to be a problem. Surely universities prepare young people for professional roles, and isn't university the *culmination* of educational experience? For Midwinter, U3A 'returns to the older connotation of the early medieval university, with, in its ideal form, the concept of fellow-students joined together in the selfless pursuit of knowledge and truth for its own sake.'

'Université du Troisiéme Age' was launched by Pierre Vellas with a programme of lectures, concerts and tours in 1972 as a summer school for retired people at Toulouse University. By 1975, there were the beginnings of U3A programmes in Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, Italy, Spain, the USA and Quebec. In the chapter on international U3As, David Radcliffe concludes that Vellas did not invent a new model, but gave 'a name to an idea whose time had come'.

In the chapter on major influences on U3A, John Rennie relates the development to startling demographic changes in this country. In 1971 there were twice as many youngsters in school than there were retired people; in 1981 the numbers equalled out; and by the year 2000, there will be twice as many people in retirement as there will be pupils in schools. However U3A development is still slight. In 1981 only 2-3% of LEA adult education enrolments were pensioners. Even in Denmark, which has the most active adult education movement and devotes most attention to the problems of the elderly, less than 10% have been touched by education programmes.

Dianne Norton's overview suggests five development stages for local U3A groups — spontaneous initiative, public gathering, working party, mainstream programme, diversification. In Britain in 1984 there were over 50 U3A groups in one or other of these stages involving over 4000 people.

U3A groups themselves identify the need for paraprofessionals, and, as Rennie affirms, 'the more successful of the volunteers . . . will be the most assiduous trainers, the best empathisers, the most effective communicators'. But Rennie is the only contributor to spell out the need for 'professionals who will be required to exchange their former roles for the new ones of trainer of the trainees, network organiser, innovator motivator and inter-professional link man'.

My own view is that it is only this kind of professional input that can stabilise the fluctuations in fortune of some of the local U3A groups and, even more important, begin to reach out to black and working-class groups that are so obviously missing at present from U3A. Michael Young spells out quite clearly that self-help provides not an alternative but a supplementary service: 'the promise will be blighted unless the main structure in education, health, social services and the rest is kept in being and, more than that, nourished.'

This is an important book with contributions from key people in the U3A movement. Peter Laslett's wide-ranging chapter is a splendid definition of, and demand for, educational rights for the elderly. But the book is expensive, the quality of the poor, and the second half of the book (concerned with case studies of British U3As) is fast getting out of date.

Those who want to know more might start off by sending for 'U3A DIY' — a guide for groups wishing to start a self-help education project from U3A, 6 Parkside Gardens, London SW19 5EY: £5.00 including postage.

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YOUTH AND GENDER

A Question of Youth? Gender and Generation, edited by Angela McRobbie and Mica Nava. Macmillan (1985), pp.228.

Gender and Generation is aimed primarily at 'those who deal professionally with young people' but also at 'students and general readers who want a lively and accessible introducution to some of the most awkward but important issues of our time.' The fundamental impulse for this book, according to the editors, 'was the desire to expose the way in which commonplace relations, experience and representations of youth are quite crucially related to questions of the masculine and feminine.' Consequently, the contributors cover youth service provision, dance, sex-talk, shopping, girls' comics, the family and inter-generational sexual relations. The main thread throughout is that in the past youth has often been defined in masculine terms which has left girls in a confusing position.

In her chapter 'Femininity and Adolescence' Barbara Hudson tackles this key question head on. She puts forward the theory that adolescence, though clearly applied to both boys and girls, has always been *defined* in masculine terms: hence, adolescents can be scruffy, aggressive and lazy. The traditional concept of femininity has both physical and emotional connotations: for example, girls are supposed to be neat and tidy, pretty, sensitive, emotional, giggly; but these are not the same criteria as those applied to being adolescent. No wonder, then, we often hear the claim from adolescent females that 'whatever we do, it's always wrong' because if a girl is too feminine, then she is trying to grow up too quickly and should try to enjoy herself; but if she is adolescent, then she is aggressive and unfeminine. In other words, she can't win.

Barbara Hudson argues that the problem with these concepts is that they are defined and used by teachers and other adults as a set of expectations of young people. The girls in question, though, never really know which standard, adolescence or femininity, is being used and by whom.

The case is argued very clearly and sets the tone for the whole book. It is a stimulating and relevant thesis for anyone who comes into regular contact with young people. The one omission is a suggestion for handling, or rather helping girls handle, this dilemma while we await the coming of the anti-sexist/equal opportunity nirvana.

The other contributions look at manifestations of this issue at various levels. In 'Youth Service Provision, Social Order and the Question of Girls', Mica Nava shows that if 'youth' has been seen as essentially 'masculine', then consequently so, too, has youth service provision — in this case as a tool of social control. Because girls have not, by and large, presented the same problems as boys, they have not warranted the same provision. This is not to say girls were not regulated, but that came generally from the home. In her concluding section, Mica Nava examines different feminist approaches to youth service provision for girls, and leaves us with concrete points of departure for further study and action.

Julian Wood and Mica Nava in two interesting and unusual contributions examine the power relations within the category of youth and the power relations of inter-generational sexual relations respectively. These both explore how those in positions of power, either boy vs girl, or adult vs child, often abuse such power. Mica Nava, in particular, draws our attention to the practical issue that institutional procedures are sadly lacking when it comes to dealing with such abuses of power.

In a very practical piece, Adrian Chappell describes his work with Tina, an eighteen-year-old working-class girl. Through photography, Tina provided not only a record of family life but a critique of masculine/feminine power relations within the family. This article provides not only an insight into the process of discovery for Tina but also a stimulus for other projects with girls. And the final three chapters present us with a critique of public representations of femininity in terms of dance, girls' comics and shopping.

Gender and Generation, one of the new Youth Questions series, is at times lively, accessible and intellectually and practically stimulating. At other times, however, the academic style serves to undermine the attempt to communicate what to many readers are important and largely neglected issues. Taken as a whole, this book is an important catalyst for action and further research for all those interested in youth and gender issues.

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RECORDING ACHIEVEMENT

Records of Achievement at 16, by Burgess T and Adams E, NFER/Nelson, 1985.

This is not a book simply about Records of Achievement. It suggests new forms of organisation in schools, 'to enhance the responsible learning of young people . . . it proposes that every student should have a personal tutor, responsible for his (sic) educational progress through the school. The tutor's responsibility is educational not simply "pastoral".' It also proposes that specialist subjects be organised and presented in ways that make them more accessible to students as part of their own programme of work (though the detail on this is thin).

There are four stages proposed in the process of drawing up records of achievement: the first, of negotiation, takes place during the year the student is 14; a commitment is made at the beginning of the next year; review takes place at the end of that year; the final stage is the completion of the Record in the Spring of the year in which the student is 16.

The authors describe how the records of achievement can be validated and accredited, thus giving them the same external authority as public exams. Validation, to ensure that the scheme is worthwhile, would be the responsibility of the school's governing body while accreditation, to ensure that the records of achievement are honest and reliable, would be controlled by the LEA. Clearly Burgess and Adams see these processes as vital to employers' and parents' acceptance and approval of records of achievement. To achieve this at national level they recommend an Accrediting Council for Education.

I fear they are right: that even a practical scheme such as records of achievement will sink unless employers think it is in some way externally validated. The key to the success of such schemes within schools will however lie with the ability of personal tutors to harness the motivation fo the students and for the records themselves to be intrinsically worthwhile.

Reading the book through from cover to cover it seems repetitious but this is because it describes in some considerable detail what students and parents, personal tutors and heads, validating, accrediting and local education authorities have to do during each of the four stages, while the Appendices contain examples of notes and record sheets.

This is basically a 'how to' book, and, as such, has much to recommend it to practitioners. The authors' clear commitment to records of achievement and the accompanying system of tutoring does come through in occasional bursts of zeal, for example, the assertion that improving the relationship between students and tutors will ensure that the records are intrinsically worthwhile (p 52) and, 'example can be a morale booster. A tutor who is ordered, competent and rigorous will tend to have students who value these qualities' (p 62). If only it were that simple!

In concert with other moves at secondary level, records of achievement aim to help students to judge their success and failure in a wider range of tasks than purely academic ones and to see exams as helping them to judge their performance, rather than as a goal which determines everything they do. But as the authors point out, history shows that the prospects for any curriculum initiative relate less to its intrinsic quality than to its status in the examination stakes.

Given this one might be forgiven for seeing the future and eventual status of records of achievement as hazy rather than rosy. But this book, and the suggestions in it, could well be a factor in breaking that history.

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YET MORE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Anatomy of Intelligence: by Patricia Preston Brooks. Today's World Publications (1984; Supplement, 1986) pp 252, £7.95.

In a recent supplement to her book Patricia Brooks accuses intelligence researchers of looking at the wrong things, and contends that the methodology of mathematical logic is inappropriate to the task of gaining insight into this complex question. **The Anatomy of Intelligence** challenges the view that heredity is a dicisive factor in the development of intelligence. She argues that each infant inherits the same set of inborn intellectual capacities, . . . 'ie all infants are equipped to utilise, and combine in due course, powers of observation, reasoning, imagination, logic, judgement, inventiveness, creativeness, orginality,' How these capacities develop, will depend upon the environmental factors present, especially in the first four years of life. Abilities, on the other hand, are acquired through learning and practice. She points out how frequently the terms 'intelligence' and 'IQ' are used as if they meant the same thing and how this lack of clarity has led intelligence researchers into the blind alley of quantitative scores which tell us nothing whatever about our mental make-up.

Ms Brooks investigates a range of factors which may affect intelligence, including birth order, family position and lonerism. She examines the circumstances which encourage the development of high intelligence and genius. Descriptions of the childhoods of outstanding men and women, from Karl Marx to Erin Pizzey are used to substantiate her theory that some element of 'differentness' distinguished them from their fellows, when they were children.

The Anatomy of Intelligence presents a critical survey of previous research in this field, rejecting all ideas of white superiority, and drawing on information from both the United States and Britain. It is well written and clearly argued, and would be of interest to teachers and others interested in advancing education, especially as some of the material it contains suggests that children suffering deprivation would gain more from intervention before the age of four, whereas most children entering nursery education do so at about four years old. Perhaps this is a question which should be looked at again in the light of Ms Brook's work.

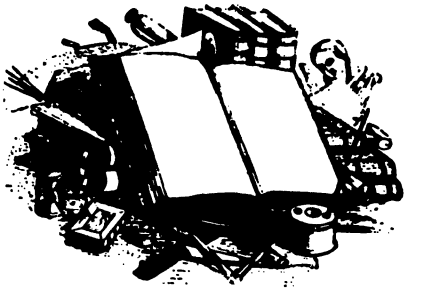
RAY PINDER

SHORT REVIEW (1):

Forum readers concerned about the recent introduction of new examinations and qualifications at the secondary and tertiary levels will be interested in two new books in the Bedford Way Series published by the University of London Institute of Education. Clyde Chitty is responsible for the new edition of **Secondary School Examinations: the helpful servants, not the dominating master**, which is a revised and updated version of a book by Jo and Peter Mortimore originally published in 1984. The six chapters deal with: the development of the examination system; the strengths and weaknesses of public examinations; assessment procedures in Sweden, France and the USA; the arguments for and against profiling and graded assessments; recent initiatives such as GCSE, CPVE and the NCVQ; and suggestions for the way forward. The second book, by Caroline Gipps — **The GCSE: An Uncommon Exam** — is a critical study of the new examination which will replace O-level and CSE in 1988.

The two books are available at £3.50 each (plus 50p postage and packing) from:

Turnaround Distribution,
27 Horsell Road,
London N5 1XL.



SHORT REVIEW (2):

There was a time when the initials 'MSC' stood for a particular type of higher degree. Now they carry far more sinister overtones. The Manpower Services Commission was set up by a Conservative Government on 1 January 1974 under the terms of the 1973 Employment and Training Act and taking over the functions of the earlier Central Training Council. Its power and influence have grown enormously over the years and particularly since the election of the first Thatcher Government in 1979. Although separate from government, it is responsible for running the public employment and training services and is directly accountable to the Secretary of State for Employment. Anyone concerned to find out more about the internal workings of Britain's most influential 'quango' will find the task made much easier by the publication of a new book — **A User's Guide to the Manpower Services Commission** by Alastair Thomson and Hilary Rosenberg (Kogan Page, £9.95). An indispensable reference book for all **Forum** readers.

C.C.

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