

FORUM

for the discussion of new trends in education

Spring 1991

Volume 33 Number 2

£2.00

This issue

**Into the 1990s:
the State System Under Attack**

Editorial Board

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Spring 1991

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ISSN 0046-4708

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Forum is published three times a year in September, January and May. £6 a year or £2 an issue.

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The Next FORUM

The May **Forum** will continue our on-going critique of the National Curriculum with an article on its neglect of the need to develop children's finer motor skills and another on the imminent Key Stage 1 SATs. An article based on classroom research will take our examination of the development of young children's writing further.

Two articles will discuss how secondary comprehensive schools contend with the various pressures from 14 while remaining true to their principles; Terry Hyland exposes the enterprise culture penetration of schooling and Pat Tunstall will review the situation regarding Records of Achievement.

Michael Eraut writes on teachers' reflective practice and Liz Thomson on teacher development in times of change.

We hope to carry an article on the French *lycee* reforms and upheavals in this or a later number.

Editorial

It is surely no exaggeration to say that November 1990 will rank as one of the truly momentous crisis months in British political history. For readers of this journal, it is not without significance that in the course of that month, the country lost both its Education Secretary (after a remarkably short reign of only 16 months) and its Prime Minister (after an interminably long one of 11½ years).

Of John MacGregor, there is really very little left to say, except that he proved totally incapable of implementing the massive piece of destructive legislation bequeathed to him by his lethal predecessor. It is sometimes said on MacGregor's behalf that he showed a willingness to listen to the views of others, and he was certainly made aware — by teachers and by opposition critics — that there was nothing in the 1988 Act which would raise standards or improve the performance of our schools. Yet his speech to the 1990 Conservative Party Conference in Bournemouth was one of extraordinary banality, lacking any coherence or vision and promising even more disruption to the state education system with the announcement that all primary schools would now be allowed to apply for grant maintained status. His successor, Kenneth Clarke, is a more combative performer, with few of MacGregor's listening skills, so that over the next few months, we will probably all suffer as he dreams up controversial issues where he can engage in fruitless and time-consuming struggles with the teaching unions.

The impact of the former Prime Minister on the education service cannot be so lightly dismissed in a single paragraph. It was Jean Monnet, the so-called 'father of European federalism', who liked to divide up politicians and officials into those who want to **be someone** and those who want to **do something**. Unfortunately for the rest of us, our Mrs Thatcher fitted firmly into the **second** category.

Her well-known contempt for the 'educational establishment' can be traced to her experience as Education Secretary in the Heath Government (1970-4), when she felt obliged to implement policies with which she profoundly disagreed. In an interview with the editor of **The Daily Mail**, in May 1987, she described the movement to establish comprehensive schools as 'a great rollercoaster of an idea' which she had found it 'difficult, if not impossible, to stop'. She never forgave her DES officials along with members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for advising her that secondary reorganization was almost inevitable.

As Prime Minister, she was keen to interfere in the detailed formulation of education policy; and in the closing months of Sir Keith Joseph's unhappy reign at the DES she held regular meetings in Downing Street to plan the contents of that major new piece of legislation to be introduced into Parliament after a third electoral victory. In the run-up to the 1987 election, she used her daily press briefings to emphasize that the

forthcoming Bill would mark a clean break with the past, suggesting, for example, that **most** secondary schools would choose to opt out of local authority control and that the 'best' of these would be free to establish their own admissions policies — and perhaps even charge fees. A greater variety of schools would lead to enhanced parental choice and this, in turn, would ensure an all-round improvement in standards.

Of course, nothing has worked out quite as the Far Right intended. Writing in **The Guardian** at the beginning of November — at the time of Thatcher's last Cabinet re-shuffle — education editor Stephen Bates listed the various problems facing Kenneth Clarke at the DES:

The Government's reforms are in place, but are either bogged down or unworkable. The National Curriculum is still being launched but has already been cut back; testing of seven year olds has had to be reduced by 75 per cent; relatively few schools have shown much interest in opting out; the City Technology Colleges programme is stagnating; and the local management of schools has produced uncertainty and concern. The fundamental problems of the service: a demoralized staff weighed down by administrative duties, its professional competence under question, under-funded and under pressure with just more of the same in prospect and no relief in sight — these have not been adequately tackled.

Yet opposition to Thatcherism in all its manifestations, allied to a feeling of relief when its practical policies fail, does not amount to an alternative agenda for the future — as the Labour Party is now discovering to its cost. As far as education is concerned, it is surely not enough to argue for the abolition of City Technology Colleges and Grant-Maintained Schools in their present form. The formulation of an alternative policy has to be something more than a damage limitation exercise fought on the New Right's terms. Sadly, the recently-published Labour Party document **Aiming High: Raising Standards in Britain's Schools** is woefully inadequate as a blueprint (redprint?) for future progress.

All this leaves an important vacuum for others to fill; and there are welcome signs that bodies such as the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) and the newly-formed Hillcole Group are willing and anxious to undertake this urgent task. In this number of **Forum** Dave Hill outlines the origins and objectives of the Hillcole Collective; and Andy Green reviews the exciting and innovative IPPR document **A British Baccalaureat**, described by Stewart Ranson in **The Times** (8 August) as 'an excellent analysis of, and stimulus to debate upon, one of the most complex, contentious areas of our education system: provision for 16 to 19-year-olds'. **Forum's** own contribution to the search for a 'progressive' definition of standards, quality and achievement will be an important one-day workshop conference, to be held at the Crowndale Centre in London on 18 May. We look forward to engaging in debate with our readers and supporters.

Grant-Maintained Schools: A Third Force in Education?

John Fitz, David Halpin and Sally Power

The authors are conducting a three-year research project, supported by the Economic and Social Research Council, into the origins, implementation and effects of the grant-maintained schools policy.¹ John Fitz lectures in the Faculty of Education, Bristol Polytechnic, David Halpin in the Department of Education, University of Warwick, and Sally Power is the Project Research Associate, also at Bristol Polytechnic.

In February 1989, the Secretary of State approved the proposals of the first schools which had sought grant-maintained (GM) status. In September of that year, 18 schools left the control of their Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to become 'grant maintained', that is, funded directly by central government. A year after the first Grant-Maintained School opened, it is appropriate to review the implementation of GM schools policy and to make some interim assessment of its early impact both nationally and locally. To this end, this paper is chiefly concerned with the magnitude of the policy's effects, local support for it, and the characteristics of the schools which moved towards GM status.

Scope of GM Policy

Over 50 of the 108 LEA's in England have one or more schools which have commenced the process of seeking GM status. Although not typical, 11 schools have moved for GM status in Kent, while in Lincolnshire 8 schools have sought to leave LEA control.² Gloucestershire and Hertfordshire are also well-represented, each with 6 schools seeking GM status. By early September of last year (1990), a total of 114 schools had embarked on the GM process. While the number of schools involved (Table 1) represents a very small proportion of all maintained schools, the impact of the policy is best judged in the light of the share of LEA's, about 50 per cent, where schools have initiated the opting-out process.

Table 1 Progress of Grant-Maintained Schools policy
(September 1990)

Approved as GM schools	45
Minded to approve	3
Proposals published	13
Yes vote-proposals awaited	2
Rejected by Secretary of State	12
No vote	28
Ballot pending	10
Application lapsed	1
Total	114

Although grant-maintained schools in the first round of approvals are geographically dispersed, there have

been particular concentrations in the Midlands, East Anglia, the North West and in the Home Counties. Only two metropolitan areas, South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear, have thus far not been directly affected by the policy. No schools in the LEAs in those areas have been approved for GM status.

Another way of assessing the impact of the policy is to reflect on the observation made in February 1990 by Angela Rumbold, then Minister of State for Education, that 'less than half of English LEAs have more secondary schools than the number approved for grant-maintained status'.³ Moreover, as one of our DES interviewees noted, '30 -odd grant-maintained schools . . . represents about an average local authority's worth of secondary schools'.⁴ While these comments overlook the large number of primary schools for which LEAs have responsibility, and thus over-emphasize the proportion of schools which have opted out, the policy is clearly gaining momentum, although not at the pace anticipated by some. At the time of writing, 45 schools have been approved for grant-maintained status, of which 44 are now operating.⁵ Three more schools are 'minded to approve', that is approval is conditional upon some variations to the initial proposal.

About a third of all LEAs in England will have GM schools operating in their administrative boundaries by the beginning of the next school year. As Table 2 further indicates, the majority will be affected by the presence of 1 or 2 such schools. Lincolnshire and Gloucestershire, exceptionally, each have 4.

Table 2 LEAs with Grant-Maintained Schools
(approved and minded to approve)

LEAs with 1 GM school	21
LEAs with 2 GM schools	8
LEAs with 3 GM schools	1
LEAs with 4 GM schools	2
LEAs with GM schools	32

Although early claims were made by the policy's advocates that GM schools would afford parents an opportunity to take schools out of the control of left-wing and overtly political local authorities,⁶ Table 3 shows that schools are more likely to leave Conservative-controlled LEAs.

Table 3 Grant-Maintained schools
(approved and minded to approve) and political
affiliation of their former LEAs

Labour controlled	18 GM schools
Conservative controlled	22 GM schools
Democrat controlled	5 GM schools
No overall control	3 GM schools
Total	48

Party political control of LEAs, contrary to some predictions, has not been the determining factor causing schools to seek GM status, although it may be one of a number of factors which governors and parents have taken into consideration.

Support for the policy

One innovative feature of the GM policy is the formal right of parents to participate in deciding the future status of schools. In the 105 school ballots conducted, the average turnout of those eligible to vote has been 68 per cent. In 28 cases (25 per cent), parents have voted against proceeding with an application for GM status. In all ballots where the votes were in favour of opting out, the **average** 'YES' vote of those who participated was 66 per cent. Looked at in another way, however, by calculating the proportion of those eligible to vote who voted in favour of opting out, support for the policy is rather more variable than the average figure above indicates. If we look at those schools which have achieved GM status, in 3, over 80 per cent of those eligible voted in favour of opting out. However, 16 GM schools (33 per cent) left the control of the LEA after a 'YES' vote by less than 50 per cent of parents eligible for the ballot, and in 3 instances on a 'YES' vote of 35 per cent or less of eligible voters.

Characteristics of GM schools

Of the first 10 schools which applied, and were approved, for GM status between November 1988 and early January 1989, 5 were grammar schools and at least 2 others were former grammar schools. The most recent figures (see Table 4 below) suggest that this trend has continued to the extent that nearly 40 per cent of grant-maintained schools have academically selective admissions policies. Inasmuch as only 4 per cent of all LEA secondary schools have similar policies, academically selective schools are disproportionately represented in the grant-maintained sector.⁷

Table 4 Admissions policy of GM schools
(approved and minded to approve)

Comprehensive	29
Selective	19
Total	48

Table 5 Former status of GM schools
(approved and minded to approve)

LEA	32
Voluntary aided	7
Voluntary controlled	8
Special agreement	1
Total	48

The selective admissions policy of some opted out schools, coupled with the former voluntary status of others (see Table 5), may lead to a well-defined corporate image for the GM sector, possible in a niche between the independent and the maintained sectors. In this latter respect, the independent sector has led the way by carefully fostering the view that it represents academic excellence and freedom of choice. As recent research on the Assisted Places Scheme suggests, however, its elite academic schools can provide a halo for weaker, less fashionable ones.⁸ Applied to GM schools, the non-selective, socially-mixed schools within the grant-maintained sector could obtain benefit from an association with schools which have been traditionally selective.

There is also a disproportionate representation of schools which offer boarding places in the grant-maintained sector. Although the numbers are small, 2 approved GM schools, with a possible further 4 in the pipeline, all offer boarding accommodation. On a national basis, only 55 LEA maintained schools offer such facilities.

Also noteworthy is the pupil composition of GM schools. The data in Table 6 indicates a strong presence of single-sex schools, which further contributes to the difference between LEA maintained and grant-maintained schools. The proportion of single sex secondary schools in the LEA maintained sector is 12.7 per cent compared with 48 per cent of all grant-maintained schools.

Table 6 Pupil composition of GM schools
(approved and minded to approve)

Mixed	25
Single sex — girls	6
Single sex — boys	17
Total	48

While the policy was not intended to be applied exclusively to secondary schools, Table 7 indicates that all but one of the GM schools, a middle school, falls into this category. The opportunity for schools to become grant-maintained has so far been available only to those schools with 300 or more students on roll. This alone is sufficient to exclude many primary schools. Again, it is too early for us to advance a reasoned account of the secondary bias within GM schools, but the first wave of schools to opt out has fostered a perception that the policy is primarily focussed on the secondary sector.⁹

It is also interesting to note (see Table 7) the considerable proportion of GM schools, (88 per cent), with post-compulsory age students educated in a sixth form.

Table 7 Age range of pupils in GM schools
(approved and minded to approve)

9-13	1
11-14	1
11-16	4
10-18	1
11-18	35
11-19	2
12-18	3
13-18	1
Total	48

As only 44 per cent of all LEA secondary schools educate students across that age range, GM schools may well further advance their image of offering something different, perhaps more 'traditional', than is available in adjacent LEA maintained schools.

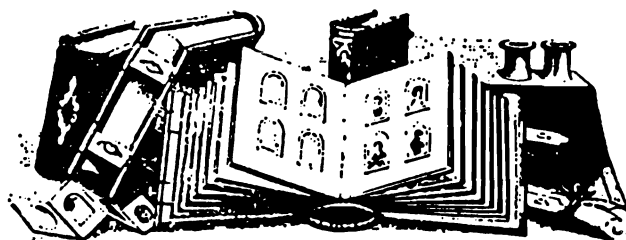
Conclusion

The previous discussion raises a question about the extent to which GM schools can now be thought of as composing a coherent 'sector'. Clearly, grant-maintained schools include a variety of school types. In terms of admissions policies and originating status, however, the first wave of opted out schools are beginning to form a 'sector', somewhat different in character from the LEA-maintained one. We have suggested that the presence of a considerable number of eleven to eighteen, selective, voluntary and single-sex schools in the group may provide it with an opportunity to create a sharply defined image and one which may appeal to parents seeking a 'traditional' secondary schooling for their children.

Notes

1. The authors wish to acknowledge the support of the ESRC for the research reported in this paper (Award no. R000231899). Other papers arising out of this research include: D. Halpin and J. Fitz (1990) 'Researching grant-maintained schools', *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 5, No. 2; D. Halpin, J. Fitz and S. Power (1990) 'Local Education Authorities and the grant-maintained schools policy', Paper presented to the 16th Annual British Educational Research Association, 30th August — 2nd September 1990, Roehampton Institute, London.

2. The statistical data presented in the paper draw on material provided by the DES and by Local Schools Information (LSI). The authors are grateful to both agencies for their help.
3. DES Press Release, 53/90, 19th February 1990.
4. Research project interview, 19th January 1990.
5. By the time of the 1990 Conservative Party Conference, the number of secondary schools given grant-maintained status had risen to 50.
6. The Centre for Policy Studies, for example, welcomed the grant maintained schools proposals because they offered a way out for parents who 'feel their children are trapped in schools whose values they deplore — manifested in peace studies used as propaganda for defencelessness, gay and lesbian lessons and hostility to Britain and its culture'. They also noted that some action was needed 'to allow parents to escape the stranglehold on education imposed by some left-wing London boroughs'. Quoted in Haviland J. (1988) *Take Care Mr Baker!* Fourth Estate, London, pp. 105, 107.
7. Rogers R., (1989) *Considering the Options: A Guide to Opting out.* ACE, London, p.8.
8. Edwards T., Fitz J., and Whitty G., (1989) *The State and Private Education: an Evaluation of the Assisted Places Scheme.* Falmer Press, London, pp. 43-46.
9. Since this paper was written, the right to opt out of Local Authority control has been extended to all primary schools regardless of size.



Magnet Schools: Not So Attractive After All?

Anthony Green

Anthony Green is a Lecturer in the Sociology of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London. He is the co-author of *Education and Social Control: A Study in Progressive Primary Education*, published in 1975, and has recently co-edited (with Stephen Ball) *Progress and Inequality in Comprehensive Education*. In this article he looks at the origins and progress of the 'magnet school' idea in the United States.

Things seem to have gone quiet on 'magnet schools' for a while, but are they about to make a comeback? A couple of years ago the term, and a range of ideas associated with it, were frequent points of reference. Now the term seems to have lost much of its original pull, though the ideas and related institutions continue to develop. What has happened?

By way of a brief reminder, 'magnet schools' was an idea Kenneth Baker 'discovered' and brought home with him from his visit to the United States in the autumn of 1987. They were supposed to be successful inner-city schools, either solely in the public funding sector or receiving private-sector support. They were assumed to provide education at the secondary level,

have powerful technical and vocational specialist interests, and, importantly, recruit their students by parental choice. A happy combination, then, of City Technology College and open enrolment. As such, the term 'magnet school' was a mechanism through which the philosophy of the market in education could be articulated along with decomprehensivization. It had the endorsement of Caroline Cox and of the Institute of Economic Affairs, caused a flurry in the Labour Party, got plenty of publicity in the press and on television and was eventually picked up by Bradford and Wandsworth. The omens were favourable; but was it something of a five-minute wonder? What went wrong, if anything?

It's probably a combination of three things: firstly so far as Government policy is concerned, the term has probably done its essential (though necessarily ephemeral) political work, in combination with other initiatives, of building a climate for the open reintroduction of selection; secondly, its United States origins and the ambivalences invoked have prompted a further and more realistic consideration of education across the Atlantic, which, in turn, has produced ammunition for the opposition, and, despite a little comfort for supporters, food for thought at least, as the US scene is not quite as straightforward, or by any means as attractive, as it might have seemed; thirdly, the high profile and confrontational approach of the education authorities which appear to have taken the idea most seriously, notably Bradford and Wandsworth, has given 'magnets' a bad name, partly by contagion, not least with other clearly less compelling ideas like the poll tax.

To elaborate briefly:-

Political work

Returning across an ocean from a round trip into the future, carrying home the message 'I've seen it and it works' can prove to be a valuable political manoeuvre. It galvanizes supporters and can wrongfoot opponents, particularly when the vision is so rhetorically evocative, attractive even! Such was true of the term 'magnet school', seemingly a gift for any politician. Few people had any idea what it meant but it sounded good and was associated with positive activities in an apparently successful country. By hooking onto it many of the then dominant points of Tory education policies, it helped to articulate what was supposedly modern, dynamic and productive for inner-city educational renewal. The solution lay with 'choice'. It seemed to suggest that diversity of educational provision, plenty of private sector financial involvement, and the benign effects of the 'hidden hand' in educational markets was an American reality, and that, 'over there', it was achieving a general improvement in the quality of education. The initial rhetorical work was very successful and eventually displaced by other priorities and devices, most recently perhaps, by a more robust attitude to selection.

Reality of American Education

Meanwhile, many senior educational administrators, researchers and people active in the 'policy community' in the United States continue to be bemused by the

idea of British Cabinet ministers looking over there for inspiration in public education. The inner cities are a disaster and the suburbs, while providing quite high satisfaction for their clientele, are nevertheless part of a great problem of underachievement by international standards. Magnet schools are symptomatic of certain aspects of these problems and by no means widely accepted as demonstrably central to the solutions, though they do have some 'heavy hitting' support. They have always been highly controversial and, in their most recent novel educational policy incarnation, yet to prove their worth. Importantly, there is not one, but several notions of 'magnetism', in American education and a more realistic sense of this range and some appreciation of its history has emerged in Britain since 1987.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given its enthusiastic reception by some Tory 'modernizers', the core idea of magnet schooling in the United States is anti-comprehensive. Magnet schools are designed to undermine the tradition of 'the one best school'. It used to be believed that democracy and equity were served alike in school systems where uniformity of provision ensured that children experienced much the same education whichever school they attended. Thus assignment to the 'neighbourhood' school was administratively convenient and suited most parents' needs. However the challenge to that arrangement, which specifically brought the term 'magnet' onto the agenda of American education, was partly a widespread recognition that the 'one best school' was patently little more than a myth. It could hardly be otherwise given the inevitable inequalities *between* school districts (typically smaller than in Britain) funded by local taxation which reflected property values. Traditionally, no systematic alternative has been developed in the public sector to serve equity (equal opportunities) purposes. Instead, the more successful parents, exercising their right to choose, move up and out, to 'better' housing and education, or over to the private sector.

In the 60's this social process, combined with economic decline in the inner cities, sharpened economic and associated racial segregation. It occurred at just the time when black political pressures were beginning to show success in the struggle for desegregated schooling, following key constitutional decisions in support of civil rights. 'Magnet' was the term applied to the idea devised as an alternative to compulsory 'bussing' for desegregated education.

The initial strategy was to take an inner-city, predominantly black, school which, almost inevitably, was in deep trouble; refurbish the buildings; install a new head; generate a new educational identity and in so doing turn it into a school so good that it would be attractive to whites. *Voila*: desegregation, and education as the vehicle for social engineering!

This early model of magnet schooling, involving decomprehensivization of the curriculum to create a more comprehensive social intake was widely adopted during the '70's and is still alive and well in parts of America today, along with its many contradictions. It is essentially an administrative 'numbers game' in which open enrolment is rarely practised for it is usually

modified by 'quota' arrangements intended to realise equity in a semblance of racial balance.

During the '70's this type of 'magnetic decomprehensivization' of the curriculum was significantly diversified and amplified. Many types of magnetic programme emerged in the elementary as well as the secondary sector including whole-school programmes in which a particular ethos and philosophy, such as Montessori, 'gifted and talented', 'city as school' predominated or embracing special vocational courses such as aviation, military or medical courses; or including specially-designed 'opportunity' programmes to combat school drop-outs; or specific curriculum specializations, such as music and mathematics, languages and communications. The school location may be unusual and attractive, such as the zoo. Thus 'magnets' have no particular form, except that they are 'different' from the neighbourhood school because they are **chosen** rather than **assigned**. They may be selective, overtly or covertly, or open.

The connection between magnets and desegregation was put increasingly under pressure in the Reagan and — even more so — Bush administrations. The balance between equity and choice shifted significantly; choice taking prominence as these Presidents showed increasing unwillingness to endorse magnet schools for desegregation, while at the same time supporting them for diversification. All this assumed distinct benefits to be derived from market mechanisms in education, and involved coupling these policies to economic rather than social ends, though the assumed 'social control' effects were not far below the surface. In the process, this reactivated the myth of the dynamic of 'Americanism' as lying in individuality and choice-making. Clearly, **social** democratic practices have been losing ground to more **liberal** democratic practices, with, in apparent contradiction to this, as in Britain, various moves to centralize control (though at state rather than Federal level), especially over curriculum provision and teacher quality. What has emerged are rather tense combinations of 'flexible specialization', and 'Fordist' curriculum organization; 'back-to-basics' plus diversification. Here, of course, is where Baker came in. The 'magnet' schools he saw (indeed was probably looking for) appeared to be outstanding examples of what could be achieved with extra resources, plus covert (or even overt) selection, in a society where there was little confidence in the public education system. Their popularity has been unmistakable and understandable, given the demoralization inherent in the inner-city public sector alternatives. What tended to be overlooked in Baker's enthusiasm for American magnets was the deep misgivings of the 'professionals', particularly the principals, in neighbourhood schools, unable to operate selection (or rejection of 'difficult' students) and so generally finding their schools low on the publicly-available merit tables of school achievement rankings. The whole set-up amounts to an educational system which includes favourably endowed CTC's and grant maintained schools, but with a more accessible private sector.

Much of this has become evident in the intervening period, as several groups (teachers, LEA administrators, HMI's, etc) have made study visits to

America. Some recognize that 1980's/'90's style magnets could well reinvigorate the very conditions they were originally designed to combat (race/class segregation, for example) and also clearly see in America a sense of desperation about inner-city education. The magnet idea is not attractive once these things are recognised, despite (or even because of) the Government's efforts and highly selective financial blandishments. Similarly, CTC's and opting-out schools policies, the English version of magnet schools, have not so far been conspicuously successful, except in demonstrating how 'magnetic' these schools can be to parents and their youngsters if they receive disproportionately extra funding.

Wandsworth and Bradford Effect

Thirdly, Bradford and especially Wandsworth have probably given magnets a bad name, partly because these LEA's have failed to generate popular support for them and partly because Wandsworth in particular has developed a reputation for being heavy-handed in its whole approach to education policy, fuelling the image that it really is 'Thatcherite' in the most unattractive and aggressive connotations of the term and appearing to show contempt for parental and professional opinion alike. Most recently this has been amplified by its poll tax leadership role. Thus 'magnet school' is no longer a widely popular term, or a major talking point, having been absorbed into CTC and grant maintained schools, and as such, symbolizing pockets of selectivity, 'excellence' and funding privileges (even more so than the former grammar schools). There is precious little systematic evidence in America that 'free' choice and open enrolment improve educational performance in general. It is just as likely that the effects are more efficiently (because more covert, more subtle and politically less conspicuous in the short run) to 'sort' youngsters and their families into 'freely chosen' hierarchies of educational institutions. In this regard, it is interesting that Wandsworth placed very prominently the following quotation from Stuart Maclure (*Sunday Times*, 18 June 1989) in their magnets schools publicity brochure:

'Schools . . . could eventually fall into three groups. First the elite high-performing schools City Technology Colleges, opted-out schools and local authority Magnet Schools such as those planned by Wandsworth; then a larger group of 'run-of-the-mill' institutions delivering the standard national curriculum; and finally the deprived 'sink' schools, mostly in the inner cities, with larger numbers of people who speak English as a second language.'

While Maclure clearly meant this as a warning, it is difficult to decide whether, in the context issued by Wandsworth, it was best interpreted as a promise or as a threat.

Some lessons

It is interesting that in America, much of the problem of public education, as identified by the most recent wave of the Neo-Conservative choice movement, is currently being attributed to the stultifying effects of local educational bureaucracies, seen as concerned more with administrative rationality than with educational considerations. To many American minds

intent on reinvigorating 'education', the British tradition of headteachers (rather than administrative principals) and educationists, often 'progressive' CEO's and their staff, in partnership with the professionals in the schools, offers a positive model. Ironically again, this model is currently being undermined in Britain in an administrative convergence towards American managerial approaches. At the same time, there are plenty of misgivings from Tory local educational interests over the implications of their own redundancy, once that tier of educational government is removed by opting out. Associated with this is the issue of the appropriate relationship between teachers and administrators. In America, there are moves and experiments to strengthen professionalization for teachers, to 'empower' them in recognition that educational achievement (with or without parental choice and wider diversity of provision) is unlikely to be realised by yet more 'teacher proofing' of the curriculum and heavy-handed administration of educational practices; that teachers' own range of choices, and self-confidence as relatively esteemed workers must be enhanced if any educational reforms are to have a chance of working. It has often looked rather different over here.

We would do well to bear in mind that it may be possible to see our educational future in the contemporary American scene. In so many of the urban

areas there it very definitely does not work, as countless educationalists, parents and professionals alike will confirm. Magnets here will prove not to have been a five-minute wonder, however, if children really do become 'walking vouchers', symbolic of 'choice' irrespective of the patterning of the opportunities to exercise such 'choices', as right-wing Tory pressures demand. 'Magnet' could then receive a new lease of life, particularly if there is to be a continuing coyness about the reintroduction of selection and an unwillingness to remobilize 'grammar schools'. 'Magnets' could then hold their pull for a very long time, as the appearance of diversity and choice spreads, its patterns and structures disguised until the realities of stark inequalities between the school systems can no longer be rationalized, and they have to be redesigned with administrative controls to desegregate them socially or operative them with significantly more effective means of surveillance and social control developed alongside and within them. The 'market' in education is neither likely to achieve solutions without assistance, nor to dissolve successive waves of demands for non-selective high-quality education, irrespective of residential location. Ironically, this is exactly what the magnet idea provoked amongst many poor residents of the inner cities in the '60's and '70's in America; they have yet to be taken really seriously let alone satisfied.

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Initial Teacher Education and the New Right

Geoff Troman

Having been a science leader in both secondary modern and comprehensive schools, Geoff Troman is now a lecturer in education policy studies at Bristol Polytechnic. Here he subjects a recent CPS pamphlet on Initial Teacher Education to critical scrutiny.

A recent contribution to the debate concerning the nature and purpose of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is the pamphlet **Teachers Mistaught: Training in theories or education in subjects?**, written by Dr Sheila Lawlor and published by the Centre for Policy Studies in June 1990. This publication adds to the plethora of polemical writing which is presently pouring from the 'think tanks' of the New Right. Ten years ago such writing would not have received much serious attention from teachers or teacher educators. In today's changed ideological climate, this writing should be taken very seriously indeed, for the experience of the past decade has taught us that today's contentious pamphlet can quickly become tomorrow's official government policy. Dr Lawlor's policy initiatives demand sober consideration coming as they do from the policy unit closest to Mrs Thatcher's heart (the Centre for Policy Studies was set up by Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph in 1974). I would like here to examine some of Dr Lawlor's assumptions about evidence, the curriculum and teaching with the seriousness they deserve.

Dr Lawlor's Case Against ITE

Firstly, it is necessary to locate Dr Lawlor's position within the New Right. It is a mistake to think of the New Right as a homogeneous group. Two factions, at least, are discernable: an ideological wing and an economic wing. The ideological faction argues that ITE should be abolished on the grounds that it is ideologically dangerous. It accuses teacher educators of preaching, at best, egalitarianism and, at worst, socialism to their undergraduates and graduates. On the other hand, the economic faction seeks to scrap ITE because it is simply too expensive. While Dr Lawlor clearly represents the ideological wing of the New Right, she presents us with a novel argument. Whilst acknowledging the doctrinaire nature of teacher education (although she omits to mention which doctrine) and recognizing that scrapping ITE would bring savings, Dr Lawlor's main thrust is that reforms introduced by the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) have been subverted by the teacher educators. The result of this subversion is that courses of ITE still retain substantial elements of study that rely on perspectives drawn from educational theory and that this detracts from aspects of the courses which develop the subject specialism of the intending teacher. The structure and philosophy of these courses, Dr Lawlor argues, have twin effects. In the case of the

Bachelor of Education (BEd), graduates enter the teaching profession with inadequate 'grounding' in their subject specialism. In the case of the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), the presence of theory of education elements in the one year course dilutes the subject excellence and standards of the graduates. Indeed, the very thought of being exposed to educational theory is seen to deter highly qualified new entrants to PGCE courses. This she asserts (for no evidence is provided) is the sole cause of poor quality teaching in schools and the crisis in teacher supply. The solution to this problem, Dr Lawlor suggests, is to abolish both the BEd and the PGCE in favour of on-the-job training in which graduates with a 'deep knowledge and mastery of the subject' are inducted into the teaching profession without danger of their subject specialism being 'polluted' by contact with educational theories.

In her analysis other factors which could conceivably affect teacher recruitment and quality, such as salary scales, promotion prospects, the intensification of work and perceived or experienced job satisfaction or lack of it, are not considered.

The single solution identified by Dr Lawlor to solve the recruitment and retention riddle is the abolition of institutions providing ITE. This would then remove educational theory as an aspect of the education and training of intending teachers. For Dr Lawlor, teaching quality can be assured by the recruitment of graduates who have both studied their subjects at a high academic level and have a deep knowledge and love of their subject. As Dr Lawlor puts it:

The good teacher has about him (sic)¹ an aura of mystery remembered with respect, admiration and, at a distance, affection; linked forever with his subject and his singular way of imparting it (page 7).

Now Dr Lawlor, as a 'distinguished' historian, who presumably has a 'deep knowledge and mastery of her subject', must know what it is which makes history a unique discipline and form of knowledge. It is of course that history is an evidence-based discipline. It contains within it its own truth criteria and these criteria are utilized to judge the truth or falsity of historical propositions. The historical process involves collecting and evaluating primary and secondary sources, weighing evidence. Knowledge is always provisional. Yet the pamphlet betrays very little of these theoretical or methodological insights gained from Dr Lawlor's historical studies. This is evident in her selection and

analysis of evidence gained from seven course handbooks obtained from institutions engaged in ITE (five university departments to illustrate the PGCE, one university department and one College of Higher Education for the BEd). Her analysis relies heavily upon the evidence gleaned from the course outlines. Indeed the section on the PGCE and BEd consists almost entirely of lengthy quotations from the course books and these are interspersed with her brief assertions which have a heavy ...‘there I told you so’... ring about them. Throughout these critical sections it is implicit in her writing that the reader somehow agrees with everything she is saying and all that is really required to convince totally is another lengthy quotation from a course handbook. The intention of the quotations is to sustain the argument that courses of ITE contain too much educational theory. In fact, they say remarkably little about theory at all. We might have expected, perhaps, on attack to be launched on Piaget’s theory of cognitive development or Kohlberg on moral development or Hirst on epistemology or even Marx on a theory of society and the State. Instead Dr Lawlor doesn’t identify theories at all; rather she discovers and arranges lists of issues. The following issues are adumbrated; special needs (I think she means special educational needs), cross curricular issues, multicultural education, gender, race, class, pastoral care, health education, pupil behaviour and classroom management. Dr Lawlor claims that this ‘theory’ is intended to inform practice when students gain school experience. The result is to produce teachers who teach in a uniform way (since they are informed by only one ‘theory’) and are unable to choose between competing theories and select one which would develop their individual classroom practice.

Dr Lawlor’s Evidence

Two points should be made here about Dr Lawlor’s evidence. The first point concerns the generalizability of her findings. If she is correct about the seven institutions she considers, is it then academically respectable, or even fair, to then assume that institutions nationally are the same? Dr Lawlor’s sample does not include a Polytechnic Department of Education. These institutions have been much admired (even by government) for their flexibility and innovativeness in generating courses which conflate theory and practice. In my personal experience of several institutions involved with ITE courses the philosophy and structure of the courses are the reverse of those described by Dr Lawlor. In these institutions classroom practice and its problematical nature lead to students generating personal theories which are located in a wider context of understanding provided by the theoretical perspectives of educational studies. In my experience many courses promote this practical and enquiry focused bottom-up-approach.

The second point concerns the alleged uniformity of ‘theory’ which produces teachers who are ‘all the same’. I know of no single educational theory. All I do know is that in education there are several competing theories, as there are in other disciplines. It is difficult to imagine how such a uniformity of theory would look,

given the range of competing perspectives which characterize all disciplines, even history.

Dr Lawlor in her critique of the content of ITE courses also seems to misunderstand the stringent requirements of CATE and the National Curriculum. For both require that courses of ITE prepare teachers to address the very issues Dr Lawlor condemns. The National Curriculum Council circular number 6 for instance instructs teachers to implement cross-curricular themes, dimensions and skills which will involve such areas as health education, personal and social education, multicultural education, literacy, oracy and numeracy. If the history of curriculum development has taught us one thing it is that just about the worst preparation there is for encouraging integrated cross-curricular work is to strengthen the subject specialism of the teacher. The subject specialist, if trapped into the subject culture, is ill-equipped to promote cross-curricular initiatives which involve crossing subject boundaries.

Dr Lawlor’s ideal subject specialist teacher (though she is not explicit on this) would seem to have an aura, enthusiasm, knowledge and commitment to the subject and would somehow intuitively know how to best teach it. Her ideal (but again she does not spell this out) seems to assume a didactic subject-centred, transmission model of teaching. This very model has been found by HMI’s in their school inspections to be widespread in the primary and secondary schools of this country. They have repeatedly criticized it and have supported curriculum development initiatives aimed at removing it. It does, they say, lead to mechanistic and shallow learning.

In my personal experience of Grammar Schooling and the University Department I have encountered many knowledgeable, enthusiastic and committed academics who were totally incapable of communicating their subjects to their pupils/students. They were also unable to structure imaginative activities and experiences capable of promoting meaningful learning. In short, they were apparently unaware of person-centred models of teaching and learning. This type of teacher is ill-fitted to any phase of schooling. Teaching is best carried out by those who understand not only subjects but also about the context of learning. They need to comprehend the possible effects of structural and institutional constraints on teaching and learning. This of course involves recognition of the likely impact of such variables as gender, race, social class, disability, motivation and self esteem on educational achievement. Manifestations of this kind of approach are to be found in the innovative and alternative pedagogic models fostered for many years by educational institutions in this country. Such models have been both admired and envied by visitors from overseas.

Dr Lawlor’s policy implications which occupy only four pages of her forty- nine page pamphlet look exceedingly flimsy compared with the course handbooks so heavily criticized in the previous sections. However, she does not need to expand at length on innovative course structures, for in the new programme, courses will be replaced with on-the-job ‘training’. The PGCE will be scrapped and replaced with school-based training provided by ‘mentors’.

Theoretical input, in her vision of a new programme, will be restricted to one evening per week in which trainees would be offered a range of theories in a 'dispassionate' way and from which they could choose an appropriate theory. Dr Lawlor is unclear about who will provide these courses as, in an earlier paragraph, she advocates disbanding educational departments and distributing lecturers either to schools or to other colleges or university departments where they can teach, English, maths, physics etc. if 'they are distinguished academically'.

Dr Lawlor suggests the abolition of the BEd and its replacement by a Certificate of Advanced Studies. This would be a generalist course of slightly higher standard than 'A' level, last two years and would qualify students to teach in primary schools (but not secondary) or for other vocations.

Perhaps ironically Dr Lawlor's proposed pattern for future teacher 'training' is derived from comparative education, a view of training patterns in France, West Germany and New Jersey, USA. These systems are held up to be exemplars of good practice largely because the theoretical components of the courses are small.

In promoting the international models, Dr Lawlor seems quite unaware of other evidence which is available in educational theory and research. Educational research, for example, recently found most teaching in the French primary school to be mechanical, repetitive and unimaginative. HMI discovered that while the West German system was 'efficient', the German teachers and pupils alike lacked the creativity and imagination which characterizes the best of primary practice in this country. Dr Lawlor also ignores the evidence that when New Jersey teachers were confronted with mandatory minimal competency testing of their pupils (in order to provide teacher accountability through pupil testing) the teachers subverted educational aims and resorted instead to cheating. Pupils likely to fare badly on the tests were not entered, answers were issued before the tests were taken, and teaching to the test led to a narrowing of the curriculum in order to prepare pupils only for the test items. These are hardly striking examples of international 'good' practice and certainly not sound reasons for implementing 'on-the-job training' here.

In addition to these omissions in evidence, Dr Lawlor does not seem to grasp the contradictions in what she suggests. If in the future all teachers are to be trained on the job, logically the examples of 'good' practice that will inspire the trainee teachers will be found in the existing stock of qualified practising teachers (the mentors). These of course are the very teachers who have been consistently rubbished by the 'think tanks' of the New Right as being either socialist agitators, too expensive or incompetent, and recently by Dr Lawlor as being tainted by educational theory. Will not the trainee teachers then be surrounded by examples of 'bad' practice? Even if they manage to locate practitioners of excellence whom they can emulate, the system can only maintain existing levels of quality and there is no provision in Dr Lawlor's recommendations for raising teacher quality to new levels.

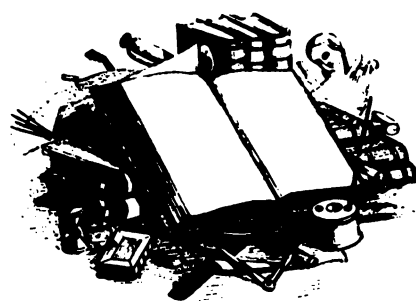
In writing her pamphlet, Dr Lawlor has missed a prime opportunity of presenting a more cogent

argument. Instead of attacking the nature and purpose of existing ITE provision, she could have provided a much stronger case about the role of theories. She could, for instance have argued that the National Curriculum lacks a theoretical basis, since its architects have yet to justify its form on philosophical, sociological or psychological grounds. She could have reasoned that, since the ends of the National Curriculum are disarticulated from its means and in turn both ends and means are not underpinned by any theory of teaching and learning. Then the induction of intending teachers into educational theory would be a pointless activity. From this base Dr Lawlor could then have proceeded to outline her school based plans for producing the next generation of de-skilled classroom operatives, who although incapable of entering into means-ends debates concerning the curriculum, would be technically efficient 'deliverers' of a curriculum designed by others. This curriculum would have been designed, of course, in the absence of theory or research. Such a generation of teachers would be concerned only with what central government had decided education is *for* (to produce a further work force with the 'right' skills and attitudes) rather than with alternatives such as what education is (a process of personal development).

However, in order for Dr Lawlor to structure such arguments it would paradoxically require that she had some knowledge and understanding of educational theory and research. It would also require from her a degree of openness in order for her to locate her policy intentions in the wider policy context of current curriculum and assessment reform which is designed to disempower and deprofessionalize teachers.

Reference

1. Teachers are referred to throughout the pamphlet as male with the exception of a brief suggestion on page 39 that '... many married women graduates who had first-hand experience of raising young children would wish to train at primary school!'



Prospecting Fools' Gold: 'Auditing' the Curriculum

Don Salter

Don Salter has taught in America and spent time in Moscow looking at the teaching of English in schools on behalf of the British Council. He has previously written on the GCSE, gender issues and teacher training. He is now a lecturer in Education at the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne. In this article he challenges the idea that uniformity between subjects and levels of attainment is worth pursuing.

In spite of Mrs Thatcher's apparently emollient remark to the *Sunday Telegraph* (April 15th 1990) ('I do not think I ever thought they would do the syllabus in such detail'), schools continue to reel from the demands of implementing the curriculum provisions of the 1988 Education Reform Act. New curriculum initiatives arrive in a blizzard, daily. And perhaps it is because of the scramble to work out the details of time-tabling, faculty re-organization and so on, that many commentators have missed some of the most fatuous — and most dangerous — aspects of the Government's plans for the school curriculum.

The National Curriculum Council (NCC) published its Consultation Report on the attainment targets and programmes of study in English at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 in November 1989. The analysis of responses and the summary of views expressed during the statutory consultation are practical and well-judged, as are most of the recommendations and examples of teaching activities. There is little doubt that these recommendations will inspire consensus.

Yet at the beginning of the Report there is an assumption of the most breathtaking arrogance. It is this: that the National Curriculum may be envisioned as a collection of skills and performances. Furthermore, that the job of the 'Curriculum Auditor' will be to make sure that there is comparability or uniformity between the levels of performance and attainment in various subjects across the curriculum.

The Report says that work has been undertaken to ensure greater consistency between attainment targets in English and design and technology, science and maths. 'The orders for mathematics and science have been scrutinized for inconsistencies with English', says the Report. Who are the personages or bodies that have advised the NCC to scrutinize so earnestly? Who believes in — or is willing to justify, as no argument is given — such a vast undertaking? What likelihood is there, except at the most superficial or mechanistic level of description, that performances in design and technology may be 'equated' with performances in English.

The examples offered confuse rather than clarify. A level 7 performance in Design and Technology (attainment target 2) requires students to 'systematically appraise . . . from appropriate historical and cultural sources', and to achieve level 10 in English students must 'make an independent and discriminatory selection . . . evaluate and synthesize information' (page 18). To draw the conclusion that

one of these descriptions must be reworded so that there is some kind of uniformity between them is entirely crass. It assumes that the overall framework of testing is the ultimate goal to be achieved, not the needs of the child, or of the subject in making a series of connections or programmes of study that are educationally worthwhile.

Consider the illogic of the position a moment further. Suppose that I, as a teacher of English, do not wish to thank the NCC for pointing out the anomaly between evaluation and synthesis in English and attainment target 2 in design and technology. Suppose instead that with obstinate perversity I choose to hang on to my belief that 'evaluation and synthesis' make real sense in English at level 10 and not at level 7. Am I to be *ordered* to change my teaching? Who will 'audit' that I have done so?

In spite of Mr Bernard Ingham's warnings against a John Le Carré view of the world, where conspiracy theories endlessly multiply, one may persist in seeing a danger in the role of the NCC as an agent of its political master. After all, the autonomy and professionalism of teachers have constantly been denied in fact as well as in the tabloid press. Angela Rumbold has announced that in cases of dispute between the teacher's judgment and the child's score on the Standardized Assessment Task, then it is the score which takes precedence. And it was a previous Junior Minister, Mr Bob Dunn, who was recorded in **Hansard** during the deliberations of Standing Committee J on the Education Reform Bill as saying that reform was needed because of schools which teach 'peace studies, gay rights, lesbian activities, anti-police activities and a whole range of things'. (**Hansard**, 15 December 1987, p. 86).

In this matter of deciding what should be taught where, and at what level, there is a direct incentive for government intervention. A government which needs to get the quart of the National Curriculum somehow into the pint pot of limited teaching periods has a wonderful opportunity to go a stage further in its 'Curriculum Audit' and impose a frightening uniformity.

Through the NCC or through the kind of cross-curricular rhetoric favoured by Mr Baker and his successors, a cynical exercise would be to review the whole curriculum and ruthlessly cut all skills in, say, English which have already been 'demonstrated' elsewhere. So if they've already 'done' systematic appraisal in design and technology, there's an argument

for removing it from English or **vice-versa**. Such an exercise would be pure expediency without any educational basis whatsoever. But it could save money and keep teachers on a short rein.

The whole idea that uniformity between subjects and levels of attainment is worth pursuing is a fallacious and trivializing one. It has been foisted upon teachers and schools in the name of observable, quantifiable

outcomes, or 'performance indicators'. It is a popular heresy which at once 'deskills' teachers; ignores the unique nature of differing subjects; and has nothing at all to do with helping children learn. Perhaps soon Drama teachers will be told that as the children have already shown in PE that they can successfully jump up and down, then from now on in Drama they must remain seated.

The Characteristics of a Good Learning Environment in Schools

Mick Norton

Having taught in England and Wales in both rural and urban areas for fourteen years, Mick Norton is now Deputy Head of Gwernyfed High School in Powys with responsibility for staff development.

This article argues that to engender an environment that enables pupils to obtain maximum benefit from schools requires close attention to three areas that are often seen as being separate, yet are, in fact, inter-related: teaching and learning; the whole curriculum; and school management.

Improving schools starts with improving the quality of teaching and learning within the classroom. The factors associated with effective learning are planning, clarity of purpose and the nature of the pupils' experiences. Associated with these are other common factors: high, though unspoken expectations; encouraging hard work; providing opportunities for investigational work; ensuring that all pupils achieve some success at school; setting and monitoring homework; varying teaching approaches within lessons; an active role taken and positive role model provided by the teacher; and warmth in relationships. These play a crucial part in the motivation of pupils and in the raising of their standards of achievement.

The generation by schools of motivation and commitment is crucial since, without it, all other aspects of achievement are likely to be limited (see ILEA, 1984, p.2). Furthermore, the teaching of effective learning or study skills is essential. Many pupils underachieve due to insufficient explicit help with learning skills.

Progression implies pupils moving to higher levels and is hence closely related to the notion of learning. However progression in knowledge, for example, should not be treated separately from that in skills. Pupils should also acquire the ability to inter-relate them, and to apply them in contexts which themselves increase in variety, complexity, degree of abstraction and removal from the pupil's immediate experiences and environment.

The tasks must be real and challenging, yet achievable. There must be a blend of theoretical analysis, practical application and subsequent conscious reflection to ensure that the learning is thorough and secure. Learning is particularly effective where pupils appreciate what they are doing and why.

All pupils benefit from a variety of teaching methods; these must be considered in relation to their effectiveness in helping the pupil to receive, process and understand the experiences encountered. An information-based curriculum conceived in terms of content can be taught economically and efficiently using chalk and talk, followed by copied or dictated notes. If, additionally, skills, concepts, attitudes and values are being developed alongside the quest for knowledge, then the teacher's role must be extended. Good classroom practitioners will, where necessary, be both guide and critic, a provider of resources and encouragement, persuader and judge, and occasionally have the good sense to keep quiet and let things happen.

Isolation in the classroom can be stressful particularly for teachers experiencing classroom problems, preventing them from seeking the necessary guidance and support. They have no yardstick for measuring the quality of their work, the standards achieved and their expectations of pupil performance. Co-teaching and team teaching could help teachers to evaluate and improve classroom performance and also broaden teachers' approaches to learning, spread ideas and enliven classroom practice.

Intellectual activity needs to be based on actual experience rather than on symbolic abstractions. Throughout, children need a wide variety of interesting things to use — texts, apparatus, different materials, maps, artifacts, pictures, machines and objects — so

motivation comes, not only from the learner's involvement, but from the assignments themselves. Bluntly, this means that verbal abstractions and formulae should follow, not precede, experiences of the kind described.

Learning has to be an active process because knowledge and understanding are constructions which are built up from within. Good teaching should afford pupils situations where experiments — in the broadest sense — are possible; where the child can try things out, manipulate materials or symbols, pose questions and seek answers; where he or she can reconcile what is found out at one time with results on other occasions and can compare ideas and findings with other pupils.

Social interactions in school are important to develop the obvious inter- personal skills which children need and to help extend their intellectual capabilities. Encouraging corporate learning allows children to inspect their ideas publicly, to offer tentative solutions for consideration, to juxtapose different points of view: working together enables the children to challenge other opinions, to make re-adjustments to their own, to re-frame knowledge in order to make it personal and meaningful.

This requires the right balance between the pupil as 'receiver' and as an active 'processor' of curriculum experiences, together with opportunities for pupils to work together and a recognition that genuine learning can occur in such circumstances.

The problem is moving from very general aims to specific decisions about what is taught, how that content will be taught, and how, because of these preferences, the school is to be organized. But schools are not entirely free to derive a curriculum, pedagogy and organization suited to their aims because of constraining factors over which they have little control, such as the inherited curriculum, and resources.

There are inevitably different perceptions of the needs of pupils and teachers and of the resources required and these views must be articulated if methods of meeting them are to be improved. Analysis of pupil needs not only identifies aims and goals but also raises questions about tasks or work that teachers and pupils must undertake in pursuit of these needs.

A viable curriculum philosophy must be widely accepted by staff, parents, pupils and governors requiring continuing discussion about the principles on which the curriculum is based. Changing subject matter and process to provide a more relevant diet requires a clear curriculum philosophy, because schools require reasons and criteria for such decisions (Dean, 1985, p.40).

For many pupils, the curriculum is fragmentary because subjects are conceived and taught in isolation resulting in the different elements being unco-ordinated. Coherence requires consideration of the curriculum as a whole rather than the amalgamation of different subjects, but this is notoriously difficult to achieve as HMI have observed (DES, 1979, p. 209 -10).

The administrative style, another aspect of the institutional curriculum, is more than merely the form of management or leadership of the head and senior staff. Administrative styles are not an end in themselves; they are an enabling social structure that

should reflect institutional values and effectively sustain the chosen curriculum.

Heads and teachers working together can improve the discipline and efficiency of schools by establishing clear and agreed structures, consistently and humanely enforced, which are understood by parents, pupils, teaching and non- teaching staff.

A school can easily lose its sense of direction if it does not take stock periodically. 'Confidence in an organization such as a school depends on knowing what it is to supposed to be achieving Effectiveness is judged by the degree to which objectives have been attained... An objective is a specific, verifiable result which can provide the basis for planning'. (Shipman, 1979, p.3). The means of translating objectives into individual staff responsibilities are job descriptions, and the techniques for obtaining and developing staff to fulfil these effectively are those of selection and appraisal, followed up by development actions including training.

Self-evaluation also requires a recognition of strengths and achievements, a ruthless honesty about weaknesses and shortcomings in oneself as well as in relationships with colleagues. The test of effective self-evaluation lies in the extent of improvements after such an exercise.

Probably what is common to schools actively engaged in curriculum planning and self evaluation is 'effective leadership and a "climate" that is conducive to growth' (DES, 1977, 36).

Ten Good Schools suggests that 'success' is not only dependent upon organizational structures, teaching patterns and curriculum planning, but also upon 'creating a well-ordered environment in which learning of all kinds can flourish ... and where functions and responsibilities are clearly defined and accepted' (p.7). In 'good' schools emphasis is laid on consultation, team-work and participation, but without exception, 'the most important single factor in the success of these schools is the quality of leadership of the head' (p. 35).

Good learning is much influenced by the attitudes and value system prevalent in the school, which are evidenced in many ways, for example, the regard people have for each other and the quality of the general environment. A positive and caring attitude to the school is more likely where there is a concerted attempt to enhance the appearance of classrooms and corridors with varied displays which give prominence to children's work.

* * * * *

Similarly, a pastoral care system which is seen, and felt, to be separate from other organizational structures is unlikely to channel its major energies into helping pupils to become successful learners. Classroom relationships, communication systems, extra curricular activities, and the many forms of discussion between teacher and teacher and between teacher and pupil are as much a part of the guidance system as are the formal tutorial sessions.

There must be consonance between the way pupils are treated in the classroom and the way they are treated generally within school. Far from objecting to

rules and regulation, pupils generally accept those which they perceive as reasonable. They respect and accept those teachers who combine warmth and approachability with the determination to make pupils work.

High levels of pupil involvement in running the school, the right balance of control and freedom, firm leadership and a reinforcement system which emphasizes good behaviour are clearly associated with an effective school.

Successful headteachers set high standards for pupils in work, behaviour and attendance and lead teams of teachers who have equal commitment to such standards. Effective schools involve pupils fully in an institution which is warm, friendly and caring. Headteachers must also have high expectations of staff and be willing to take action when members of staff seem to be grossly inefficient, in the interests of both pupils and staff.

'Nias' study (1980, p.261) found that teachers valued positive leadership more highly than autonomy or fully decentralized decision-making. The characteristics of positive leadership are seen to be: explicit aims for the school as a whole which are subject, within limits, to negotiation; high standards of personal 'commitment' and professional competence, support and encouragement for individuals; the capacity to create a sense of cohesion within the whole school.

As Everard and Morris note (1985, p. 25), 'people are best motivated to work towards goals that they have been involved in setting and to which they therefore feel committed'. By involving teachers at all levels and in all areas of the school in consultation before decision-making, the senior staff demonstrate the value they place upon teachers' views, ideas and judgment. Teachers who are encouraged and assisted to develop their professional skills are more likely to experience job satisfaction, which in turn will enhance

their commitment to providing the best possible education. This positive and dynamic approach may be in conflict with strong concepts of accountability.

In many schools tensions arise between professional autonomy and managerial control, individuality and hierarchy, structural authority and participative decision-making, the head's dual roles of 'leading professional' and 'chief executive', the educational good of the many and the self-interest of the few, high principle and pragmatic expediency — and many other dilemmas requiring a decision as to the lesser of the two 'evils'. Perhaps the essence of the head's role is the resolution of these conflicts to the satisfaction of the majority of the 'stakeholders'.

In the last analysis, effectiveness in education must be measured in terms of what happens to the pupils in a school. So effectiveness is also concerned with ability to manage and motivate people and to organize the work of the school. The head also interacts with those outside school and must be able to manage this boundary as well as drawing together the parts of the organization so that they all contribute to the shared aims.

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Religious Education and Social Policy: An Alternative Vision

David Tombs

Having argued in a previous article that Christianity is being used by this Government as an instrument of 'social control', David Tombs here puts forward a framework for an alternative vision of Religious Education in schools. The author is a teacher at Lampton School in Hounslow in Middlesex.

Introduction

It has been suggested that behind the provisions on religious education in the 1988 Education Reform Act lies a conception of religious education as a tool for promoting a reactionary social policy. The apparent political agenda behind the Act has not, however, been fully enshrined in the wording of the legislation. In fact the Act itself leaves enough flexibility for religious education to respond to the new form of political pressure.¹

A response to the Act must recognize the inevitable political dimension in all education. Religious education cannot choose to be non-political, but it must choose whether or not it will accept the vision of religious education and society implied in recent legislation. This article will suggest a framework for an alternative vision of religious education as part of a wider response to reclaiming the new National Curriculum for progressive education. It will be suggested that religious education has much to learn from Christian liberation theologies and other religious

movements for social justice.

Religious visions of society

Religion is capable of either supporting or challenging the **status quo** in society. Religious traditions can rationalize the social situation or challenge the dominant social groups and demand an alternative vision based on peace and social justice. To all those who are poor, oppressed or marginalized, religions can promote fatalism, passivity and subjugation; or encourage self-determination, activism and social liberation.

The fact that religion can play a part in either justifying or challenging the social situation raises the question of who should judge the social implications involved in learning about it. On educational grounds there is good reason for making these judgments part of, or even central to, the student's learning process.² The implications of religion for politics and social issues should be recognized as an essential area in learning about religion.

The crucial difference between the new vision for religious education advocated here and the approach envisaged in the Act centres on their attitude to student autonomy. They both share an interest in social agendas but in the former this is open-ended, made apparent and is itself a matter of discussion for those involved, whilst in the latter it is pre-determined, hidden and would be imposed from above. In developing this new vision, there is much to be gained from a consideration of Christian liberation theology and especially from recent reflection on its suitability for Britain.

Liberation theology and an alternative view of society

Christian liberation theologies are being developed in a wide variety of social contexts throughout the Third World and amongst marginalized communities in developed countries. Whilst there is considerable variation in their message, there is unanimity that Christianity should be responsive to concrete social contexts and not to abstract philosophical ideals. They share a critique of 'establishment religion' as serving conservative social interests and refute any of its claims to be politically neutral.

In Latin America there is an emphasis on responding to economic injustice and class oppression. Feminist Theology investigates the role of Christianity in sustaining sexism, whilst Black theology in South Africa and the United States takes racism as a crucial concern for Christian liberation. Other theologies in Africa unmask the cultural imperialism concealed in much European theology. For each and every situation of social injustice, there is a liberating method and potential theology that explores an alternative vision of religion and society.

Liberation theology and education for liberation

Latin American liberation theology has developed a liberative teaching method related to the work of Paulo Freire on developing critical consciousness.³ In Freire's method a facilitator is usually responsible for

stimulating discussion and reflection by a consideration of appropriate 'generative themes'.

Each generative theme is an issue that the group knows well and is concerned about. It is used to illuminate other themes and encourage the group to make connections between the themes and the group's social involvement with them. A systemic analysis is promoted through shared reflection and it is expected that this new consciousness will lead to new forms of social action by the group. Thus themes are 'generative', not only in the sense of generating further issues for reflection but also in stimulating new social stances.

For liberation theology in Latin America the group discussion is set in small Base Church Communities. The experiences of the group and their reading of the Bible is used to suggest and illuminate 'generative' themes and provoke discussion. The traditional teaching method denied people a right to judge for themselves and allowed 'establishment' views to go unchallenged. The intention of the open educational method used in liberation theology is to reverse the group's traditional role as 'passive' receivers of the establishment view of the text. Group members are encouraged to interpret it in their own way and draw their own conclusions about its social message. Liberated from the social message imposed by the establishment powers, groups become free to work for their liberation from the social injustices they suffer.

Liberation Theology for Britain

Poverty in an industrialized capitalist country such as Britain may be different from the acute poverty suffered in Third World countries but it certainly cannot be dismissed as non-existent or irrelevant. In fact, the promotion of market forces ahead of collective welfare by the political Right has caused a considerable increase in the poverty of a substantial minority.⁴ Since some of the most acute deprivation caused by this is concentrated in inner-city areas, this has been a particularly challenging context for developing approaches to liberation theology.⁵ Thus in common with other liberation theology one essential objective of British liberation theology will be an analysis of the inequality between rich and poor.

Liberation theology in Britain will, however, need to develop more than a simple definition of what it is to be rich or poor. Georges Casalis draws attention to communities within developed countries that are not just economically disadvantaged but also marginalized for a variety of other reasons and which collectively constitute a 'Fourth World' within developed countries.⁶ In response to this, a wider analysis of social poverty and economic oppression is required to encompass the complexity of the issues. This analysis also needs to be linked to other forms of structural oppression that have increased due to New Right policies including sexism, racism and homophobia.

Furthermore, in all situations of oppression, it is both the oppressed and the oppressor who need delivery from the oppression. In the context of suffering, liberation theologies have tended to speak more to the oppressed than to the oppressor; in the context of privilege, liberation theology in developed countries

must also address the self-deprivation that oppressors create for themselves when they participate in the exploitation of others. Participating in the exploitation of others is a failure of human relationships and moral values which deprives the exploiters of their own true freedom and personal integrity. Oppressors need to be freed from the ideological captivity that determines their actions so they can realise their own human potential by working for the full humanity of all.⁷

One of the most important dimensions of this might be regarding Britain's privileged role within the international trade context. Concern with liberation from the global exploitation that rich countries are benefitting from could be one of British liberation theology's most important contributions.⁸

In conclusion, an authentic theology of liberation for Britain is likely to include concern for poverty within British society but will also involve a wide interpretation of social poverty and include all forms of structural oppression. Furthermore, it will be concerned with liberation for both the oppressed and the oppressor and will focus attention on both the national and international social context.

Religious Education and Liberating Religions in Britain

Religious education, in its encounter with Christian liberation theology, may have a unique role to play in developing reflection on Britain's national and international social context. As outlined above, Latin American liberation theology involves a particular model of education. If British liberation theology develops a similar method for using religion in liberating education, then religious education in school is one obvious place where it might be used.

It has been suggested that religious education may benefit from liberation theology's contribution of a liberating educational method and its central concern with social justice in its two objectives.⁹ In turn, religious education may have two important contributions to make to British liberation theology due to its multi-faith approach and social context in schools.

The 1988 Act may intend to promote a reactionary social policy by giving Christianity a privileged position but it does not legally enforce it and any attempts to promote it should be strongly resisted. It would be quite wrong, even contradictory, to reclaim the Act for progressive education with regard to its social agenda and yet ignore Britain's multi-cultural context and promote a religious education based only on Christianity.

In schools at least, liberating approaches to religion should be multi-faith and each individual religious tradition should recognize and value its shared role in this. Religious education cannot just look to Christian liberation theology but must engage liberative approaches within other faiths. The opportunity for this to happen in some schools with the active involvement of students from a variety of religious backgrounds is a fascinating opportunity for teachers of religious education.

Furthermore, the development in Britain of this multi-faith approach to liberating religious traditions may be one of the contributions that religious education

could make to Christian liberation theology's own self-understanding. If Christian liberation theology is to really serve Britain, it cannot assume universal Christian allegiance. The presence of other religions and widespread secularism are challenges that Christian liberation theology in Britain must face. The principle of being truly appropriate to the social context enables Christian liberation theology to embrace religious and non-religious traditions beyond a narrowly Christian setting.¹⁰

A second major contribution may stem from the social contexts of schools. These contexts may themselves be appropriate starting-points for considering social injustice. Developing liberating approaches to religion with students will involve the active personal involvement of those who are marginalized through being young, and perhaps by gender, race or class. Drawing on a variety of religious traditions, religious education might stimulate students' awareness of social injustice and their own participation in its structures. This could be the starting-point for developing a systemic critique of British society and the global economy — before elaborating an alternative social vision for both oppressor and oppressed.

Religion and Generative themes in Britain

The generative themes best suited to the above tasks would be drawn from various religious traditions and students' experience of their local context. For some, themes relating to deprivation within Britain might have highest priority; whilst for others, it could be themes relating to global exploitation.

Just one brief example of a generative theme that could be used in a number of ways in Britain is homelessness. The problems faced by the homeless in society could be developed both literally and figuratively in a number of ways. There are those who are poor in this country and the third world who are without any roof over their head. In addition ethnic minorities face racism, cultural alienation and a feeling of homelessness in contrast to the dominant society. Students suffering from broken homes or domestic conflict may feel that they no longer have a real home. On a global level, the widespread alienation and moral failure due to the free-market capitalist system could be interpreted as part of peoples' spiritual 'homelessness'.

Religious faiths have perspectives on all these issues and could be used to stimulate further discussion and reflection. New generative themes such as tax and debt might be developed from the discussion on the homeless and those in turn could focus attention on further social issues.

Reclaiming Religious Education

In conclusion, a new way forward is offered to religious education in its encounter with liberation theology. Regardless of the Act, there is still scope for an open-ended, educationally sound and socially progressive vision of multi-faith religious education as a basic subject within the National Curriculum.

The Notes to this article are on Page 51.

Primary Geography: A Pink Curriculum?

Annabelle Dixon

A long-standing member of the Forum Editorial Board, Annabelle Dixon here discusses the National Curriculum Geography proposals and particularly as they affect the primary schools.

'Indiana pink? Why what a lie!' 'It ain't no lie; I've seen it on the map and it's pink'. (**Tom Sawyer Abroad**, Mark Twain, 1896).

An American acquaintance once told me that he'd dared himself to attend a meeting of a Primal Scream Therapy Group; he confessed himself a failure because his enormous embarrassment at the proceedings paralyzed him to such an extent that he could manage only a rather low hum.

This came to mind when I came across 'Describe a slope in your area' (AT5 Level 2c in the Geography curriculum proposals). Is this where a subject has come to ally itself with John Ruskin's 'Mountains are the beginning and end of all natural scenery?' It isn't the only instance in the proposed attainment targets that seems to suggest that some things are so dear to the hearts of geographers that they would rather see them diluted to the point of absurdity rather than face the challenge of re-ordering their thinking in relation to young children's **real** intellectual development. Every now and again for example, there is a requirement that young children should be able to describe and know random, specific facts. Such items of factual knowledge dart in and out of what the Working Group have, in other places, attempted to make slightly more open-ended since their first suggestions were published in the interim report. To an adult, such basic facts might appear simple and non-controversial. We may not have

been aware of lithospheres, biospheres and hydrospheres when we were at school, but by golly we knew our continents, our capital cities and our hot dry areas from our cold, wet ones. Surely, then, there can be nothing too demanding in asking children to 'name the country in which they live' (AT Level 1)? Many children will be able to respond to it at a superficial level without too much difficulty either: but stop and ask them deeper questions, as I did recently with some 5/6 year olds, such as what 'England/Wales' or 'country' means and a different picture emerges: concepts such as these have only an apparent simplicity and few young children have any real idea of what is meant by them. Considering that an adequate notion of 'England' or 'Country' encompasses no little understanding of History and Politics, it is hardly surprising.

Another example is the requirement AT4, Level 3A in which younger juniors are required to 'identify and name on a suitable (**sic**) globe or map of the world the seven continents and five oceans, the North Pole, South Pole, Equator, Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn'. It might be fair to assume that such a requirement followed on a study of what was meant by continents, oceans, Poles and the problems of mapping a spherical surface (leaving to one side for a moment the appropriateness of the age group for so doing). That there are no such requirements adds to the disquiet raised by the first example, and together with other such instances are particularly telling in that they demonstrate a basic flaw in many of the Groups proposals for young children — an inability or unwillingness to accept that the thinking of young children is qualitatively different from that of adults.

It is interesting to notice that the notion that young children learn through active involvement has been given more support than appeared in the interim proposals but the support is inconsistent and teachers are still told that children should be 'taught' a considerable number of disparate facts. Some they could find out for themselves anyway — eg programme of study for Key stage 1(a) 'Pupils should be taught how most homes are clustered into settlements such as villages, towns and cities.' Even so, in the face of sustained criticisms of the interim proposals the Working Party has lessened the number of things to be learned, dropped the word 'know' in favour of 'describe' (in itself a questionable change) and simplified much of the matter in the earlier key stages. Perhaps primary teachers should just be grateful for the increased emphasis on activity and the new simplifications.

Does this represent a submission to external pressures or a change of insight? To what degree is the

NOTES to article by David Tombs

1. See David Tombs 'Religious Education and Social Policy in the Education Reform Act', **Forum** Vol 32, No 3, May 1990.
2. See Brian Wren, **Education for Justice**, (London: SCM Press, 1977), Chs. 1-2.
3. See Paulo Freire, **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**, (New York: Continuum, 1970).
4. See John Battle, "Pitching the Song in the Crack: the option for the poor and the current political realities", **New Blackfriars**, Vol. 69, No. 813, February 1988.
5. See Mark Corner, "Liberation Theology for Britain", **New Blackfriars**, op. cit.
6. George Casalis, "Methodology for a West European Theology of Liberation" in Fabella, V. and Torres, S. **Doing Theology in a Divided World**, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1985), p. 114.
7. See Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans, and William Bean Kennedy, **Pedagogies for the Non-Poor**, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1987).
8. See especially Christopher Rowland and Mark Corner, **Liberating Exegesis: The Challenge of Liberation Theology to Biblical Studies**, (London, SCM Press, 1990), pp. 156 ff.
9. See further Daniel Schipani, **Religious Education Encounters Liberation Theology**, (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1988).
10. See for example Ignatius Jesudasan, **A Gandhian Theology of Liberation**, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1984).

change fundamental? Activity and simplicity appear to characterize the learning of young children but to accept that as all there is and go no further is to base any proposed and suitable curriculum on superficial grounds indeed. The simplifications are adult simplifications: simplify a mountain and you end up with the aforementioned 'slope', but ask young children to describe a slope and they will probably still tell you it's what you push your friend down and roll a snowball up. If adults train you as a child to describe a slope 'properly' (for reasons best known to themselves), you'll probably manage it, in the same way as you'll manage to remember the words of 'Once in Royal David's City'. Ask what the words **mean** and the replies will be as diverse as the children themselves. Young children's thinking isn't simple; it's complex, fascinating and, to adults, confusing. No amount of simplified curriculum structure is going to make it less so; young children are just not in the business of dividing their world of experience into subject areas. It may sound paradoxical to subject specialists, but a really effective curriculum for this age group will always recognize this contradiction.

Part of this failure to understand the intellectual development and needs of young children would appear to lie in the educational experience of the working group members. The interim proposals showed only too clearly that those voices in the group that might have spoken out for a realistic approach to Geography for younger children had been over-ridden. The large majority of the members represent secondary Geography interests and 'recent and relevant experience' in the classroom of junior, let alone infant age children, did not appear to be a requirement of membership, as it seems to be in other areas of the educational establishment. What experience the group have of younger children would appear to be that of bright articulate middle-class children to whom maps, books and atlases have always been familiar. The statistics speak for themselves; **one** member out of twelve represented the interests of the primary school (if other members did so, it wasn't rated sufficiently important to detail in the notes on individual members). Consider the following — the more able top junior children are expected to be able to tackle at least some of the work in Level 5, the majority, Level 4. There are only ten Levels. Thus **one** representative group member for nearly 50 per cent of all the proposed programmes of study and levels of attainment? Four women to eight men is a statistic that speaks for itself. If chaps seem more interested in maps, then this seems an ideal way of perpetuating the imbalance. These figures are damaging because in all ways they seriously and unnecessarily lower the Working Group's credibility. The tone of the proposals for young children is, however, undeniably buoyant and confident despite the barrage of criticism. Experts in the field of Geography they may be, but with regard to this stage of education, is it the confidence only ignorance can bring?

'Geography is a big subject' (p45 Programmes of Study 6.3). It's a deathless phrase. It also helps to explain another part of the failure to come to terms with the intellectual needs of young children. Geography is only a big subject if you happen to be a

geographer. Historians, environmental educationalists, sociologists and geologists can all lay claim to significant parts of the 'subject'. A subject that, as the proposals acknowledge came into existence in British schools only after 1870. In a sense, it's a subject that's pulled itself up by its own bootstraps and now offers a far more wide-reaching and undeniably fascinating field of study than existed twenty five years ago. Will part of that fascination pall for children of all ages as they have to cover too great an area in too short a time and in too prescriptive a manner and for the younger ones, have to tackle concepts they're not ready to understand? Geographers, as David Hall pointed out in 'A Great Leap Forward' (**The Times Educational Supplement** December 1987) have had to fight their corner with considerable political acumen in order not to be marginalized into becoming a 'cross-curricular' subject like personal and social education. Nonetheless it has many elements, as the proposals have to acknowledge, that are strongly cross-curricular.

It is an awkwardness that geographers are aware of and the report of their visit to France reflects one of their fundamental concerns. The French are considering a curriculum split between Physical and Human Geography, a move which draws the comment that 'in some respects the integrity of the subject may be threatened'. That it might be also intellectually challenged to defend such 'integrity' is left unsaid. It seems that the consequent anxiety not to compromise the status of the subject has led to an over-riding concern to pack in as much matter as geographers think should be covered. Not, it seems, what is practical for primary teachers to cover or a realistic programme for children to undertake. The needs of the 'subject' have been put first and it's what will prove its undoing with regard to primary schools.

One of the most serious charges against the proposed curriculum as it applies to younger children is that it's in such a hurry to put things 'geographical' in front of children that it wants to give answers before children have had time or experience to even begin to ask the questions. A more effective curriculum could be based on giving children considerably more of both and appreciating that all children have to construct and make sense of their own world in their own way before being offered the constructions of others; children are rightly as blithely unaware of cross-curricular links as they are of subjects; such divisions may well be useful to teachers and older pupils but that is where they belong. Not only is it inappropriate for younger children but intellectually unhelpful and narrowing.

A small but perhaps not insignificant pleasure in reading the Geography proposals, has been the inclusion of some rather good quotations. It lightens the text and provides evidence of the group's erudition if not of their awareness of the cross-curricular links. It's also pleasant to think that a quote from Mrs Thatcher can apparently be given the same weight as one from an imaginary bear wearing wellington boots and a sou'wester. It's a pity, though, but maybe unsurprising, that one of the more familiar but telling quotations about Geography has not been included:

'Map me no maps, sir, my head is a map, a map of the whole world' (Henry Fielding 1745)

Geography at the Secondary Level

John Hopkin

John Hopkin is Head of Geography in a Midlands comprehensive school. In this article he looks at the NCC Geography prospects from a secondary point of view.

‘Geography is about maps; History is about chaps’.

Of all the National Curriculum subjects, the proposals for Geography have perhaps been the least publicly controversial to date. Yet the Final Report of the NCC Working Party is a very political document, in both context and content, and it has been the subject of intense debate within the Geography ‘profession’. At the heart of the debate seems to be the sort of Geography young people should be taught in schools, and particularly, as with History, the place of factual knowledge in a geographical education.

In many ways the Geography Working Group were asked to do an impossible task. The demands of the 1988 Educational ‘Reform’ Act meant that in their spare time, in the space of a few months, they were asked to produce a document which was designed to be the blueprint for all school Geography well into the next century. On the one hand, Group members were no doubt anxious to enshrine the good practice in Geographical education which has developed in schools throughout the country; on the other, it is clear that they were working within a framework of strong external constraints. Small wonder that their Interim Report, published in November 1989, reflecting these difficulties and contradictions, betrayed a defensive tone and was heavily criticized by Geography teachers.

Consider the Group’s view of the aims of a Geographical education, which should: a) stimulate pupils’ interest in their surroundings and in the variety of physical and human conditions on the earth’s surface; b) foster their sense of wonder at the beauty of the world around them ...

Compare these forward-thinking and constructive sentiments with the Group’s view of geography as currently practised in schools in England and Wales. The Group visited five primary and three secondary schools but, rather than seeking evidence of effective practice in classroom management and curriculum development, focused their comments on the limitations of school Geography, for example the ‘unsatisfactory state of Geography in most primary schools’. There is no sense in this document of the excitement of enquiry, of the dynamism of good Geography classrooms.

Having started with a vision of what Geography might be, and of the deficiencies of Geography as they saw it, the Group chose to emphasize the latter, rather than develop the former. In doing so, they were partly reacting to an outside agenda. Firstly, a series of surveys and media reports suggested a lamentable level of locational knowledge amongst young people, and a

public perception that this should be a major component of Geography courses. The debate amongst Geographers had been simmering for some time; the Group obviously decided they had to make this an important element of their proposals.

Secondly, the National Curriculum provisions within the 1988 Act were clearly designed to establish control over what schools should teach; the Group clearly felt constrained to produce a report reflecting a conservative view of Geographical education, fearing, perhaps, that anything more ‘radical’ would be rejected by the Government. The Working Group Chairperson, Sir Leslie Fielding was considered to be a safe pair of hands who, over a glass or two of port, would ensure that there were no hitches; rumours or schisms within the Group come to nothing, and the Interim and Final Reports presented a united front.

Finally, the Group’s terms of reference ensured that they should work within the constraints imposed by the assessment requirements of the Act. This has resulted in curriculum development led by assessment; as one Group member made clear during the consultation period, everything must be testable and, if the Group didn’t specify what was to be tested, the testers would.

These constraints and the limitations they impose on the Group’s work, were neatly summarized by Sir Leslie Fielding himself, quoted in **The Times Educational Supplement** (8 June 1990): ‘There are always difficulties about progression in a content-rich subject like Geography; it is more difficult than in a reasoning subject like Mathematics’. What we have are a number of forces conspiring to produce a view of Geography which sees the subject as a vehicle for the accumulation of knowledge about the world, rather than thinking about it. This has a number of unfortunate consequences.

Perhaps the major problems, as Sir Leslie intimated, lies with assessment. Nobody had invented a National Curriculum before and the Geography Group, casting around for models to base their work on, hit upon the Science Report. The Science Report contains seventeen Attainment Targets in ten levels, many of which contain several statements of attainment. The Final Report of the Geography Group contains seven Attainment Targets and 269 Statements of Attainment which, as with the Science Report, largely describe curriculum content. At the time of writing, press reports indicate that the NCC has reduced the number of Attainment Targets to five, and the Statements of Attainment to 211, but the fundamental problem remains.

The difficulty in this approach is two-fold. Firstly, the large number of Statements of Attainment will cause overload, especially at Key Stage 3. Secondly, it is difficult to show progression where the basis is the accumulation of content, unless you can discover which facts are intrinsically more difficult than others. This is a particular problem with locational knowledge, where progression seems to be defined in terms of more 'distant' places. Interestingly the History Group, faced with a similar — and more politically charged — problem, eschewed setting historical facts against levels of attainment favouring instead the assessment of historical understanding. The Geographical model is not based on any development theory of learning; the concern is that assessment will focus on memory, rather than understanding, thus limiting its formative and diagnostic aspects and its potential for raising standards.

A further problem lies in the Group's selection of places to study. The proposals in the Interim Report reflect a Eurocentric view in which the rest of the world was divided into a first and second division (prosperous countries and white Commonwealth versus the rest). Although to some extent these worries have been addressed by the Final Reports — the artificial division has gone — the Anglocentric bias and prescribed places remain. How much better to have outlined criteria for the selection of places as contexts for learning, at local, regional and global levels, and trusted teachers to choose appropriate case-studies based on their own and their pupils' experience, enthusiasms and resources. In many schools Geography is at the forefront of educating young people to take their places in a plural society and interdependent world; the Report acknowledges this, but seems to equate 'cultural diversity' with learning about the countries of origin of minority groups, inner-city issues and global poverty. How much more helpful to have made Geography's contribution to multicultural and anti racist education explicit in the programmes of study, and to have based it on good practice for the 1990s, rather than the discredited approaches of the early 1970s.

Geography teachers are fully aware of the need to found their teaching on a sound factual basis; most accept the need for a more rigorous approach to locational knowledge. How much more positive we could be about this aspect of the Report if the factual content had been moved to the Programmes of Study, restructured — as in the History Report — to support teachers in planning the curriculum, leaving the attainment targets to be based on the progressive development of geographical skills, concepts and ideas. This would solve a further structural problem of the current arrangements. The Final Report presents a model of the Geography curriculum based on systematic topics or themes lifted straight out of the technocratic 1970s, with area studies, environmental education and geographical enquiry added on. The tendency of five Attainment Targets and numerous Statements of Attainment, without strong Programmes of Study, is to lose the sense of interrelationships between people, places and natural phenomena and to produce a view of the world which is fragmentary, functional and uncritical, rather than interdependent, relevant and challenging.

What are the implications for Geography in the classroom? Although the Working Group and the NCC claim to have reduced content overload, teachers, particularly at Key Stage 3, will be sceptical. The Group's assumption of three to four lessons a week to teach this curriculum to this age group is surely unrealistic in many schools, given conflicting and valid demands on the timetable by other areas of the curriculum.

At Key Stage 4, Mr Baker's 'back-of-the-envelope chickens' are coming home to roost. Mr MacGregor's more pragmatic approach could be applauded, but the possibility of early high achievers opting out of Geography, or of slimmed-down non-GCSE courses, risk trivializing the subject. It is unfortunate that the Geography Group went out of their way to cut links with History, and that modular courses have been discredited with such zeal; Mr Clarke may well find the only solutions to the mess in just this sort of arrangement, thrown up by grassroots curriculum development.

It is easy to be critical, less easy to be constructive. There are good things about the Final Report which Geography teachers have welcomed: the emphasis given to the enquiry process, the support given to active learning, the acknowledgement of Geographers' important contribution towards understanding of the natural environment. But where does this document stand in relation to curriculum development? How will Geographers view it in fifteen or fifty years' time?

What is missing, as Annabelle Dixon points out in her article, is a sense of understanding about how young people learn and what motivates them and meets their needs. What we have instead is a document produced by a committee of geography enthusiasts, set in a particular political and ideological period of which the Group are as much a victim as the teachers who will implement it. For many, an exciting opportunity to establish forward-thinking, good practice in Geography as an entitlement within a broader vision of the whole curriculum has been lost. We have a document which enshrines the Geography of past, rather than future decades, set in the empirical-positive tradition of factual knowledge, rather than recognizing the radical prospects offered by critical thinking about our world.

But will it be a baseline of entitlement and development for young people, or a curriculum cast in tablets of stone? The same teachers who have made Geography work in the past are even now, in schools and colleges around the country, discussing how they will make this curriculum work in future; developing schemes of work which will replace what has been lost to Geography, rebuild the links and work the unworkable.

Poverty and Education

Cecilio Mar Molinero

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Schools, in particular primary schools, are the focus of the local community. Local authorities aim at providing equal opportunity in education, but not all local communities are equal: in urban areas there is a great deal of social segregation. People with different socio-economic backgrounds tend to live apart. The poor are not equally spread around a city; they tend to concentrate in certain areas. This has been long known by local and national administrations. The existence of Social Priority Areas, Section 11 funding, and special policies for schools in disadvantaged areas are examples of the concern shown by administrators to alleviate the problems of poverty.

Local Authorities (LEAs) have, therefore, taken an interest in identifying poor areas. This is normally done by looking at the areas in which the groups most at risk of being in poverty concentrate. According to the Child Poverty Action Group (1987), groups that are particularly at risk of poverty are the unemployed, large families, one-parent families, the sick and disabled, and pensioners.

Poverty is often found in association with housing tenure. A study of different areas of Southampton which used the 1981 Population Census (Mar Molinero and Mao Qing, 1988) found that lone parents, the permanently sick, unemployed married people, and larger groups of individuals living under one roof are more common in council housing than in owner-occupied households. It was also found that groups at risk of poverty can be found in council housing and privately rented accommodation, but there are qualitative differences between them. Privately rented housing is used by those who have not had the opportunity to qualify for a council house or to acquire a place of their own: the young, students, and the single unemployed. As far as school education is concerned, the most important problems will appear in the large council estates.

Poverty and academic results

The Rate Support Grant (RSG) has allocated extra funding to Local Authorities with high proportions of children born outside Britain or belonging to non-white ethnic groups, because they may have language difficulties. Extra funding is also allowed to account for the acute educational problems that deprived areas have, deprivation being measured by means of indicators. This is given in acceptance of the fact that children from disadvantaged backgrounds often require special or remedial teaching provision (see, for example, DES Statistical Bulletin 16/83, 1983). LEAs also take deprivation into account when allocating funds to schools. For example, the Inner London Education Authority developed an Educational

Priority Index 'in order to assess educational disadvantage among pupils at primary and secondary schools' (LEA, 1985).

Confirmation for the hypothesis that schools in poor areas have more educational problems has been provided by statistical studies. Using a sample of some 3000 Glasgow school leavers, Garner (1988) found large differences in social characteristics over relatively short geographical distances, which were associated with large differences in educational attainment. Mar Molinero and Gard (1987) found that the incidence of special education need is, indeed, higher in poor areas.

This link between deprivation and academic results was accepted in a recent report on local management of schools, which suggested that the resources allocated to a school should depend on the socio-economic characteristics of the pupil intake. Given the low degree of geographical integration in large urban centres, this means that the socio-economic structure of the catchment area should influence the funding that a school receives (Coopers and Lybrand, 1988).

The 1981 Education Act required LEAs to make provision to meet special needs, as identified in individual cases. However, it should also be accepted that the child who requires special or remedial help does not appear in isolation, but is often to a large extent the product of his/her environment, and that extra provision should be made even when there is no specific individual who requires it. Schools in poor areas need a member of staff with specialist knowledge of children with learning difficulties to make it possible to detect problems at an early stage, so that necessary steps can be taken quickly. Ideally, problems should be identified at the pre-school stage, and this should require pre-school provision with diagnostic facilities. Staffing in such schools should be generous, and not totally based on pupil/teacher ratio considerations.

Parental support and its consequences

When, in 1986, there were consultations on the future of a primary school in Winchester, the chairperson of the school association, run by parents, wrote to the local authority indicating that the association had raised a great deal of money for school improvements, including the fitting of a library, the carpeting of classrooms, and a swimming pool. This highlights the support that parents can give their local school. Parents can become involved in the day-to-day running of the school; they can organize after-school activities; and they can contribute with teachers to the success of an academic initiative, such as a reading scheme. The level of support will, in general, depend on the wealth of the area. The wide differences that appear between schools that are supported by parents and those schools that

have to rely only on LEA support have been observed by Her Majesty's Inspectors (see, for example, HMI, 1985).

The 1988 Education 'Reform' Act has enhanced the right of parents to send their children to the school of their choice. If one compares the number of children in the local school with the number of children in its catchment, as done by Mar Molinero (1988), it is found that schools in poor areas attract a small portion of the children who would qualify to go to them. The schools that have wealthy catchments attract many children from other schools and may have to reject some of them. It is not possible to find out whether the children who choose not to go to their local school are also the most able, although there is a strong suspicion that this is the case.

The net result of the exercise of parental choice for schools with poor catchments may or may not be negative selection by ability but, since staffing depends on pupil numbers, the loss of local children results in staff losses. With them goes specialized expertise that they may have. This in turn, makes the school less attractive. This is a negative spiral of declining rolls, declining resources, and declining quality of education. When, by virtue of this process, numbers on roll fall below a minimum number, the school becomes a candidate for closure or amalgamation, and a deprived community loses an important social asset. Concentration of school closures in poor areas was observed in the case of Southampton (Mar Molinero, 1988).

A school which is threatened with closure because of falling rolls will sometimes consider applying for Grant Maintained status as a means of survival. This is unlikely to be granted. In general, LEAs will be careful not to propose the closure of a school until it has reached, or is likely to reach, a minimum size. Under this circumstance, the Secretary of State for Education may argue that the school would not be large enough to be viable under the new system.

Schools situated in wealthy areas provide the other side of the coin. The problem they face is one of rationing entry since demand will, in general, be greater than supply. It may be possible to expand such schools to accommodate more children, but LEAs may be reluctant to do so. The 1988 Education Reform Act envisages the introduction of tests at several stages of a child's development, and the publication of the results of such tests. A school which has excess demand may find it difficult to resist the temptation to use academic results as a selection tool. Such a policy would result in a selective system within the public sector. If LEAs were to attempt to interfere with this process, by reorganizing schools or other means, the 'magnet' schools would be tempted to apply for Grant Maintained status. The Secretary of State may grant this in order to 'retain what is best and has proven its worth within the existing system' (DES, 1982).

The school as a social asset

A school has to be seen in the context of the local community. Social problems are often accentuated in poor areas. A family without a car will find it difficult to take children to a distant school; the problem will

be exacerbated when there are two children, one of first school age and another one of middle school age, and they both have to be taken to different schools that may not be near each other. Highly mobile families, like the ones often housed in bed and breakfast accommodation will bring with them extra problems: with little income and little room to move there will be stresses that will often affect the behaviour of the child, whose education may have been disrupted several times, and this, in turn, will create problems in the local school.

One of the consequences of poverty is isolation, having nowhere to go to or not daring to go anywhere in order not to spend money. Another, well-documented consequence, is ill health (Child Poverty Action Group, 1987). An enlightened policy that integrates the school, the social services, housing, and health could go a long way towards alleviating the worst problems of poverty in the family with small children.

Provision for pre-school children should be available in primary schools situated in 'poor' areas in order to free families from having to look after the very young. Parents could then make better use of other community resources such as adult education, part-time work, or even engage in leisure activities. As far as the small child is concerned, pre-school would give him/her the opportunity to develop his/her creativity, and his/her ability and health could be monitored. It would, therefore, be desirable that such pre-school units be visited by health officials and that provision is made to identify children who may require special education provision before they reach school age.

Schools situated in poor areas should be staffed according to the needs of the curriculum, and not on the basis of pupil numbers. A low number of children on the school roll should not be seen as an educational disadvantage but as an opportunity to give intense support to the children who most need it. Capital resources made available to the school should not be based on pupil numbers, and should take into account the fact that financial parental support can be very low.

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Discussion:

The Public Price of Private Education and Privatization

Hywel Thomas

In this short article, Hywel Thomas, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Birmingham, takes up some of the issues raised by Caroline Benn in the summer 1990 issue of *Forum*.

Caroline Benn has provided a valuable service in unearthing new data on education spending and seeking to relate them to the key questions in her article: 'why are so many advantaged educational institutions and parents getting such vast amounts of money from the public purse and why is so much of this expenditure not directly accountable to democratically-elected authorities?' That so much of the data is the product of Parliamentary Questions is itself a commentary on the quality of regularly-published education statistics. As an activity which shapes the distribution of life-chances in our society, data on who gets what with respect to spending on education services should be available on a more systematic basis.

In answering these questions, however, the article does seem to get enmeshed in a discussion of privatization which is not clear and, simultaneously, obscures the fundamental questions of distribution and accountability. In commenting briefly on the article, I will refer to the privatization issue before turning to the larger questions.

In what sense can Grant Maintained Schools be deemed private? Certainly they leave the LEA (which retains a claim on the property in the event of the school closing or moving to a new site), but only to be maintained by Central Government. If these schools are deemed 'private', then so also must be those polytechnics and colleges funded by the PCFC. In a continuum of private/public institutions both are less private than Universities which, unlike GM schools, can set their own admissions criteria; and, unlike GM and PCFC institutions, universities are largely free from scrutiny by HMI. This is not to say that it is not worthwhile developing a coherent set of rules for classifying the nature of institutions in receipt of public spending on education. Such coherence can lead us to thinking through the necessary system for monitoring the use of public money in those areas. It may cause us to ask why, for example, most spending of public money by Universities is not subject to scrutiny by HMI but the same does not apply to PCFC institutions? It may cause us to monitor the differences not only in capital spending between GM and non-GM schools but between county and voluntary schools. Such a classification system may be a necessary pre-requisite for devising means for effective monitoring of the use of public money by public, public/private and private institutions. By focussing on new forms of organization however, the article ignores existing institutions which

should be subject to as much accountability as other recipients of public money.

Such accountability also needs a wider focus than spending on 'elites'. This distributional question: who gets what needs to be answered with respect to all social groups and in a form which also answers the question: what do they get? Concern about education spending should take as much account of the benefits for those upon whom it is spent as in its original distribution. Even if the intended beneficiary of some specific spending is deemed socially desirable, there is little purpose in that spending if no benefits are received. With respect to these two questions — which are no more than a generalized form of Caroline Benn's opening questions — her article leads to proposals which recognise that a mixed economy of education provision has some commendable virtues. She poses the question: are we so sure that what the private sector has to offer isn't needed? and goes on to set out circumstances where the public education service might buy in provision from the private sector. Like most markets, regulations govern behaviour and, here, three main rules are defined. The first requires that private sector entrants into the public education market must work in accord with the general principle of comprehensive education from five to sixteen and beyond. The second rule is that it is the schools in the public education service which decide upon the use made of private facilities: 'An important principle would be that pupils taking part at any one time would be chosen by their own schools' (p.93). The third principle is that any scheme of private/public partnership would have to have the agreement of all local comprehensive schools.

These three principles appear to enshrine the public providers as the dominant group in the management of education, who are given the discretionary power to allow or prevent diversity and the development of a 'mixed economy' of local schools. The proposals would, therefore, not only consolidate comprehensive education but would do so in a way which gave monopoly power to the LEA system. The article's earlier recognition that there are some virtues in a mixed economy of provision is translated into practice by giving one of the providers in that economy control over the entry of others. While the proposal will have the virtue of ending the subsidies of elites from the public purse it creates (or re-creates) a public monopoly of schooling which takes no advantage of the potential

of regulated markets and, at the same time, appears to find no place for the exercise of choice by parents and pupils; indeed they are notable by their absence from the discussion. By way of illustrating an alternative, let me return to the case of GM schools and develop an argument for more use of target funding.

There is no reason why GM schools cannot be consistent with comprehensive patterns of provision. Rules of access to GM schools are subject to the approval of the Secretary of State and using these powers, GM schools which are currently comprehensive can be required to remain comprehensive. However, as GM schools their choice and use of services which would otherwise be centrally controlled by the LEA provides a market test for services which would otherwise be provided by a monopoly provider. Their independence of the LEA also gives parents a choice of schools which, by virtue of being outside the LEA and drawing external support from elsewhere, may have a distinctive ethos. Much the same may be argued for City Technology Colleges whose recruitment policies are set by the Secretary of State and can be required to reflect the nature of the local community.

Retaining GM schools and CTCs does not mean a commitment to their different level of funding. They should be funded on the same basis as schools in the local area and should not expect to be favoured in the distribution of capital grants. What should be addressed more vigorously, however, are the funding arrangements embodied in the pupil-driven formulae which funds the revenue expenditure of LEA and GM schools. If we are seriously interested in the distributional question, the weighting for social disadvantage in formulae should be increased and, as a consequence, the market power of children from relatively disadvantaged groups.

Caroline Benn is right to draw attention to evidence of increasing support for elites and of deterioration in the mechanisms of accountability. Yet, her proposals would in practice seem to be against the grain of growing demands for stronger participation in education and more diversity. What is needed are policies which provide an overall framework — which could be the consolidation of comprehensive reform — within which the power of the ‘citizen-client’ is enhanced and, through differential funding, that of disadvantaged minorities more than others.

The Hillcole Group

Dave Hill

In this article, one of the founders of the new left-wing Hillcole Group outlines its origins and chief objectives. The author is a lecturer in education at the West Sussex Institute of Higher Education.

What is the Hillcole Group of Radical Left Educators? Who are we? What do we do? How? And Why? What do we hope to achieve?

Our Aims

The Hillcole Group was founded in early 1989. We are a group of Socialist practitioners and academics in education from all sectors of education — school, adult education, further education, and, in the higher education sector, from Colleges, Polytechnics and Universities.

Our aims are: to improve the quality of schooling and teacher education; to confront the assaults by the Radical Right on the quality of education; and to influence policy and decision-making on a wide variety of educational matters. We also try to act as a rapid response group, responding to assaults from the Radical Right. As such we put out press releases, some of which are published.

We don't think we'll have much influence on the Radical Right, other than causing them annoyance and, hopefully, discomforting them through our attack on their attempts to hegemonize their market-authoritarian ideology.

Who Are We?

The group was co-founded by Dave Hill and Mike Cole. We invited a number of socialist educationalists we knew, or knew of, to join/set up together a working group of writer/thinkers. The networks we initially worked through were activist groups in the NUT, NATFHE, ARTEN (The Anti-Racist Teacher Education Network). A number of us are and have been activists at various levels (Branch, Region, National) in teacher unions and in the Labour Party.

We don't want to form a fan club, a sect, or to contemplate our navels. Up out of our armchairs, into print and into politico-educational consciousness!

At various stages during or between the fifteen full-group meetings we have held so far, members would suggest other potential members, or we would invite one or two people who had written in wishing to join us.

So we are a group combining Labour Union, Labour Party, Radical Pressure Group, and Academic Activism. Various of us take part in advisory/committee work at national level advising the NUT, NATFHE and the Labour Party. So, I suppose we are one embodiment of the synthesis between academic analysis and development on the one hand with political

activism on the other, attempting to make the pedagogical political, and the political pedagogical. But it's a politics and pedagogy deriving from the application of non-sectarian democratic socialist and Marxist analysis and experience confronting and exposing both social- democratic/liberalist rhetoric and policy and that of the Radical Right.

At present members of the group include: Pat Ainley (City University); Stephen Ball (Kings College); Dipak Basu (Tower Hamlets' Teacher Centre); Caroline Benn (Adult Education); Clyde Chitty (University of Birmingham); Mike Cole (Brighton Polytechnic); Ann Marie Davies (Kensington and Chelsea LEA); Debbie Epstein (University of Birmingham); Andy Green (Institute of Education, London); Dave Hill (West Sussex Institute of Higher Education); Janet Holland (Institute of Education, London); Tamara Jakubowska (Middlesex Polytechnic); Ken Jones (Institute of Education, London); Rehana Minhas (Haringey LEA, London); Chris Shilling (University of Southampton); Gaby Weiner (South Bank Polytechnic London); and others join the group or subgroups for specific writing/discussion tasks. We meet in groups or subgroups at various campus sites in London or at the Institute of Education Policy Studies, 1 Cumberland Road, Brighton (which is our contact address).

What have we written?

In addition to a number of short Press items and short articles (in, for example, NUT publications), we have published five booklets.

In Charge of the Right Brigade: the Radical Right's Attack on Teacher Education (Hillcole Paper Number One) — Dave Hill examines and criticizes the way that the Conservative Government is seeking to 'conform' teacher education to its own ideology, having already substantially 'conformed' schooling and proletarianized teachers. The argument that teacher educators must persist in developing reflective teachers as 'transformative intellectuals' is developed. And a call is made for the adaptation of new initiatives in teacher training for this purpose, within the context of broadening access to training and the better preparation of teacher trainees for classroom life.

Appendices give examples of teacher education courses from Brighton Polytechnic and West Sussex Institute of Higher Education, dealing with issues of social class, 'race' and gender in schooling and society, and with ideological analyses of their interrelationship. Radical Right ideology and its impact on teacher education are analysed and critiqued.

In Equal Opportunities in the New ERA, (Hillcole Paper Number Two), Ann- Marie Davies, Janet Holland and Rehana Minhas examine the implications of the Education Reform Act and the National Curriculum for equal opportunities in relation to gender, race and class. They set out the major influence the New Right have had on the development of this policy. The rhetoric of choice and parental power is compared with the actual process of consultation undertaken before the legislation was introduced and during its progress into law. The booklet explores the likely effect of the legislation of equal opportunities with its creation of local management of schools, open

enrolment, testing and assessment and changes in methods and content of the curriculum. The authors describe the negative impact of the new legislation as it affects teachers, pupils, heads, governing bodies, parents, communities and LEA's. They conclude with proposals for a charter of demands which would seek to ensure equality and democracy in education.

In Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue: Schooling, Teacher Education and the Radical Right in Britain and the USA (Hillcole Paper Number Three), Dave Hill examines Radical Right attacks on liberal-democratic and social-egalitarian models of schooling and teacher education in Britain and the USA. He analyses the extent to which the Radical Right ideas have permeated current policy in both polities but argues that there is relatively greater political and professional resistance in Britain than there has been in the USA. He compares the Thatcherite Right's policies in England and Wales with the domination by testing and textbook in the USA. Deskillling of teachers in both countries is analysed. He then criticizes the shortcomings of the Licensed and Articled Teacher Schemes and the Thatcher Government's attack on teacher education curriculum, seeing these developments as a tripartite attack on teacher education. A call is made for 'resistance', for alliance building in active opposition to the Thatcherite Project for Education, and for the development of critically reflective teachers exhibiting civic courage.

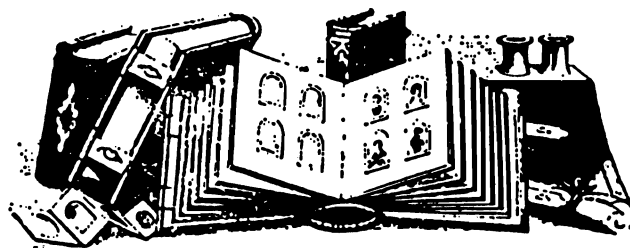
In Training Turns to Enterprise: Vocational Education in the Market Place, Pat Ainley reviews the phases of education policy since the war to ask what has become of the penultimate 'vocational' phase from 1976 to 1987. He looks briefly at what is left of the Youth Training Scheme before concentrating on the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative and the City Technology Colleges.

In Markets, Morality and Equality in Education (Hillcole Paper Number Five), Stephen Ball explores the political and ideological antecedents of the education market established by the Education Reform Act. The operation and implications of the market for school organizations, the curriculum, teachers' work and conditions and social equality and justice are considered. The booklet argues that the education market fulfils the requirements of market forces outlined by neo-liberal economist Friedrich Hayek and sponsored by the New Right Think Tanks (Institute of Economic Affairs, Centre for Policy Studies).

Redprint for Education, due to be published in early 1991, seeks to set out socialist and popular proposals for a socially just and high quality schooling, training, and educational system that can help guide and become incorporated into Labour's education legislation and policy in the 1990's.

The Hillcole Papers are £3.95 and can be brought from the Tufnell Press, 47 Dalmeny Road, London, NE7 0DY, or from the Hillcole Group, The Institute for Educational Policy Studies, 1 Cumberland Road, Brighton, which is the address for any enquiries or correspondence.

REVIEWS



Education and Training: A Way Forward

A British Baccalaureat: Ending the Division Between Education and Training, Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) Education and Training Paper No 1 (July 1990). Reviewed by Andy Green, Post-Sixteen Education Centre, Institute of Education, University of London.

With the approach of 1992, and the rising stakes of economic competition within Europe, concern mounts daily about the state of the UK training system. Low post-16 participation rates, early specialization and poor quality training schemes all contribute to the growing skills gap between the UK and its European 'partners'. The dire economic consequences of this are at last beginning to dawn on politicians and industrial leaders, as the recent spate of the reports from BP, CBI and others bear welcome witness. However, many of their proposals are little more than cosmetic, showing scant understanding of the depth and longevity of the problem or of the necessary scope of reforms needed to deal with it. Their faith in market solutions is, in fact, part of the historical pathology. The new report from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) therefore comes as a great relief. It is one of the first such documents to take the full measure of the problem and to acknowledge honestly the full scope of government intervention which will be needed to tackle it. The proposals offered are radical and wide-ranging. If ever put into effect, they would comprehensively restructure post-16 provision and nothing short of this will do.

A British 'Baccalaureat' is subtitled 'Ending the Division Between Education and Training', a rubric which concisely defines the IPPR's distinctive approach. Following the Higginson and BP Reports, the IPPR criticize current 'A' levels as over-specialized, elitist and lacking in the breadth of knowledge and skills appropriate for our future economy and society. Like the National Institute for Economic and Social Research, they criticize vocational training for being too narrow and job-specific and for not aiming high enough. The labour market is also accused of encouraging early entry to work through inflated youth wages, age limits on entry into training schemes and poor recompense for those with qualifications.

The pertinence of this analysis has been acknowledged by many parties now, from various political persuasions. However, what is less often said, and what is demonstrated so well in this Report, is that it is precisely

the fracture between education and training, embedded in curricula, assessment and institutional divisions, which lies at the heart of these other problems. 'There are divisions between academic and vocational studies in all societies,' says the Report, 'but they are particularly deep and complex in England and Wales.' The split has manifold consequences, not least in underpinning the limitations of an elitist, often anti-utilitarian, academic route, and a low-status, overly pragmatic, vocational route. It also reduces choice, inhibits progression routes and discourages the necessary interlacing of theoretical and applied study. It is one of the main problems which underline our 'early-specialization, low-participation' system of post-compulsory education and training.

A critique of current reform strategies follows logically from this analysis. Higginson-style reform of the 'A' level system would be a move in the right direction, but it does not go far enough. Broadening the 'A' level curriculum in isolation from vocational qualifications leaves intact the disabling division between academic and vocational study. Likewise, the NCVQ's attempts to rationalize vocational qualifications. Their brief not only excludes an integrated approach to examination reform but their insistence on employer-led competency assessment is reinforcing the very narrowness and job-specificity of vocational training which is so inappropriate as a preparation for work roles in modern enterprises based on flexible specialization and autonomous work practices. The current fashion for aping the West German 'Dual system' of training is seen as equally unpropitious in the UK context because it reinforces the divisions between academic and vocational routes and for a host of other reasons which I mentioned in an article in a previous issue of this journal (*Education and Training: A Study in Neglect* Forum, Volume 33, Number 3). Mr Macgregor's proposals for 'core skills' for 16-19 year olds is seen as a welcome recognition of the problem but no solution. It would still leave 'A' levels and NVQs separated by a vast chasm; and no spider's web of bridges across the two sides can be an adequate substitute for full-scale integration.

The IPPR's solution to the problem is to integrate academic and vocational provision within a unitary, education-led post-16 system. Such a system, they say, would increase choice, flexibility and breadth post-16, and would, coupled with other measures to limit the adverse effects of the labour market, increase participation rates and so

the levels and appropriateness of qualifications amongst young people. These ambitious proposals would involve substantial reforms both at the level of institutional structure and central government administration, but the changes would be driven by reforms in qualifications and curricula, hence the stress of the title — 'A British Baccalaureat'.

The new curriculum, combining academic and vocational areas, would be modular and assessed on the now familiar US/Swedish accumulating credit model. There would be three levels: the Foundation stage (encompassing the current GCSE, BTEC First, CPVE and various CGLI and RSA awards at what are now NVQ levels 1 and 2); the Advanced stage leading to an Advanced Diploma — the British Bac of the title (encompassing 'A' level and BTEC national and other qualifications at NVQ level 3); and the Higher stage (degree level). There would be explicit overlap between the stages, with extensive opportunities for credit accumulation between them. Students would not be locked into any one stage at one time so that those who progress more quickly in one particular area could advance in that area to the advanced level whilst continuing at foundation levels in other areas.

At the Advanced level there would be three 'domains' of study: Social and Human Sciences; Natural Sciences and Technology; and Languages and Literature. In each domain there would be three types of module designated Core, Specialist and Work/Community-based respectively. Core and Specialist modules would include some with a more theoretical focus and some with a more applied or practical focus and Work/Community modules would involve structured work experience. To encourage breadth and a mix of the academic and vocational, all students would have to complete core modules of both theoretical and applied focus in each domain and all students would have to complete at least one work/community-based module. The assumption is that the majority of students would attend on a full-time basis but part-time study would be possible and student's employment experience could be assessed as part of the diploma. Assessment would be conducted internally according to clear criterion of achievement, with graded levels for each module, but there would need to be a much strengthened system of external moderation to ensure objectivity and consistency of standards.

Delivering a coherent and integrated post-16 provision would clearly require more than just changes in curriculum assessment: there would have to be concomitant reforms to the system of delivery and administration. This is one of the toughest areas where potential obstructions and sectional interests loom largest and the IPPR do not duck the problem. First of all, central government administration would have to be restructured to reflect the new merger of education and training, breaking with a tradition of divided responsibility that goes back to the mid-19th century split between the Education Committee and the Department of Science and Art. The authors thus suggest a new combined Department of Education and Training. Within this there would be a National Training Authority responsible for work-based learning, adult training and labour market intelligence; a National Education Authority responsible for all provision to the Advanced diploma level; and a Higher Continuing Education Authority responsible for higher levels. A new Joint Qualifications Board would bring together representatives from education, the community and industry to set standards, qualifications and curricula for all elements of the education and training network. The latter would have the statutory powers now lacking in the NCVQ to effect a full rationalization of the currently chaotic assessment system.

As the institutional level, the Report recommends a system of tertiary colleges as the most effective and efficient way of delivering an integrated education and training provision. Since immediate legislation to this effect would be fraught with difficulties, they propose a transitional phase where the existing mixed-economy of institutions would persist but where these would develop into 'tertiary systems' through increasing collaboration, the sharing of a common curricula and qualifications and deliberate LEA planning for a long term tertiary college solution.

Further recommendations relate to the labour market and employment-based training. Employers should be required by law to provide for day release for full-time employees under 18 to allow them to attend college or approved courses. This would discourage employers from recruiting 16 and 17 year olds but would allow those who do still opt for jobs at 16 to continue their education. Maximum age limits on entry into jobs or training schemes should be discouraged and made illegal below the age of 21. Employers should be encouraged not to offer apprenticeships for those beyond who would already have received a foundation training through their advanced diploma studies. The intention is clearly to encourage all young people to stay in education up to 18, but for those who reject this option and who cannot find a job there would still have to be some reduced version of work-based youth training but this would be clearly education-led. It is not entirely clear from the Report who would administer this although it seems that the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) might still have a role.

The implications of these proposals are wide-ranging. They would be expensive and would no doubt encounter the concerted opposition of various private and sectional

interest groups, just as all previous educational reforms in this country have done. The training lobby would resent its reduced role and would no doubt seek to rubbish the idea of a system led from the education sector. Employers, many of whom have done little for training in the past, would oppose restriction on their hiring policies, object to the cost of compulsory day release and complain of a return to government meddling and corporatism. Private examining bodies would shout about nationalization and warn that no government could afford to forfeit their vital experience, despite the hash of things they have made so far. Some school teachers would complain about the loss of their sixth forms, despite the fact that demographic change signed their death warrant anyway. Bulldog libertarians on the Right would denounce the whole idea as 'tyrannical' and against freedom of individuals to do what the hell they want at 16 including consigning themselves to no-hope futures in dead-end jobs.

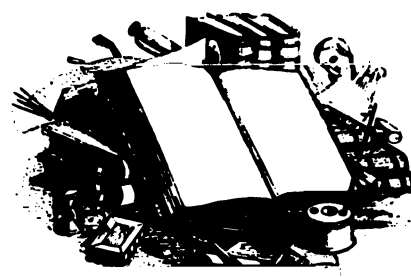
Most of these objections are effectively pre-empted by the Report. Alternative employer-led systems seem unlikely to work and there is no alternative (to coin a phrase) to the wholesale reform of the examination system. The cost of doubling the numbers in post-16 education would be considerable, but this would be phased in over eight years and anyway the cost of not doing anything would be incalculable. Institutional reform would develop gradually and organically, so that the particular character of different regions would be respected and so that teachers and administrators already suffering from near-terminal reform-fatigue could survive the process. The plan certainly seeks to encourage continued education up to 18 but for those who really could not stomach the prospect, there would be other alternatives.

There is just one area where the Report lapses from its usual political realism and that concerns the management of the institutional transition to a tertiary college system. The reason for rejecting immediate legislation are clear but equally one must remain a little sceptical about a gradualist organic approach. The adoption nationally of a unitary curriculum and assessment system would not in itself be enough to ensure that LEAs so move towards creating a 'tertiary system'. The new curriculum would certainly imply co-operation between schools, further education and sixth-form colleges, but this will not necessarily be forthcoming, especially in the current climate where institutions compete with each other for students. Under the local management provisions of the 1988 Act, LEAs have limited powers to plan across institutional boundaries, and these can be easily subverted by opting out and the refusal of governing bodies to co-operate with staff redeployment plans. Even were a new government to amend part of this legislation, LEAs might well stall on introducing tertiary colleges simply because they were opposed to the idea. Furthermore, if LEAs were to stall on this, the new curriculum could not be effectively delivered in sixth forms and sixth form colleges since they do not have the resources and equipment to deliver the technological components. Those attending

these institutions would then still be locked into the old divisions.

If a tertiary college system is deemed to be the best national framework for 16-19 provision, there would have to be legislation specifying the basic design of that system. Previous permissive legislation (over comprehensivization for instance) has created enormous problems with unevenness and inconsistency and if the IPPR's objective is to replace the current muddle with a national and unitary system, the logic of this must be carried through. LEAs have a vital role to play in the delivery of education and must retain a degree of autonomy in certain areas, but the institutional design of the system is not necessarily one of them. Any legislation would, of course, have to be preceded by extensive consultation, and would have to involve a lengthy schedule of transition, but final goals should be clear. With sufficient political will, a new (presumably Labour) government could transform our post-16 system and the IPPR's proposals represents the best model yet produced for achieving this.

Andy Green



A Horror Story?

The Making of Tory Education Policy in Post-War Britain 1950-1986, By Christopher Knight, Falmer Press (1990), pp. 206, pb: £9.95, ISBN 1-85000-677-6.

This is a book that every **Forum** subscriber should read. I do not guarantee that you will like what you find, but on the principle 'know the enemy', it is indispensable. The author sets himself a difficult but interesting task to interpret: 'the making of Tory education policy'. The results of his efforts are extremely revealing; and I would be surprised if anyone finishing the book were to claim that it contained nothing new.

The main thesis is stated baldly at the beginning of chapter 1: from 1954-1974 the Conservative Party failed to fashion an educational policy in line with Conservative philosophy, but then succeeded between 1975 and 1983. The rest of the book is intended to explain why. Christopher Knight has been industrious and resourceful: he is not one to be satisfied with what is already available in secondary sources. He sought and was given access to the official Conservative Party papers (1960-74); he consulted the private papers of the late Edward Boyle, the Conservative Central Office and the Conservative Political Centre. Perceiving that there were many other gaps in the evidence, Knight wrote to a number of key individuals and nearly always received a helpful reply or an interview. The result is a fascinating collection of raw data.

Knight is critical of those who have already written about the development of Thatcherite education on the grounds that they concentrated on outcomes rather than roots. Very nearly the opposite is true of Knight: he amasses a mountain of information about the roots but does little with it except to put together the narrative. This is interesting enough as a story (a horror story?) but the data cries out for deeper analysis. It is always unfair to tell an author that he should have written a different kind of book, and I do not wish to be unfair, but it really is a pity that so little attempt was made to theorize or to develop some kind of conceptual framework to explain the changes after 1975. Where theoretical analysis is attempted, it is unsatisfactory or is not sustained: for example, Knight makes considerable use of the category (invented by Angus Maude) of 'Conservative Educationist' (CE), which is too broad and all-embracing to be useful for Knight's task. On the other hand, Knight does not manage to find any satisfactory way of categorizing and explaining the differences between the various groups of Conservatives with views on education. He refers, for example, to 'Right-centralizers' and 'Right-decentralizers' without analysing the ideological reasons for such a significant dispute: similarly the term 'preservationist' is used from time to time without analysis.

This failure inevitably makes it difficult for Knight to succeed in **explaining** how ideas are translated into policy. This is disappointing. On the other hand, there are successes or partial successes — there is a detailed account, for example of the successful absorption of the various factions by the Party organization. However, Knight's major contribution — and it is major — is to succeed in making available hitherto unexplored material, and thereby throwing new light on familiar stories. For example, several writers have analysed the influence of the Black Papers. Knight does much more: he carefully traces the origins of the Black Papers in the operations of Cox and Dyson in the 1960s, describes in detail the network of political supporters that grew up, finally fills in the gaps in the story with his own correspondence and interviews. It is true that this gives us more data than coherent analysis — but we should still be grateful for the data. Similarly, Knight describes the complex picture of ring-wing pressure groups without giving sufficient attention to ideology — but what a picture!

The book contains excellent footnotes and a useful bibliography. But the index is unsatisfactory: individuals who feature in the narrative are **not** included, so you can search in vain for Butler or Boyle! Perhaps this will be put right in a revised edition. It deserves to be re-printed — perhaps in an updated version to include the Education Reform Act of 1988?

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Assisting a Minority

The State and Private Education: An Evaluation of the Assisted Places Scheme, by Tony Edwards, John Fitz and Geoff Whitty, Falmer Press (1989) pp. 262, hb: £26.00 ISBN 1-85000-5672, pb: £11.95 ISBN 1-85000-568 0.

In 1976 the minority Labour Government, with Liberal support, ended the direct grant grammar-school system, offering these schools the opportunity either to go comprehensive or become fully private; 48 chose the former course, 119 the latter. The Conservative Party promised to restore them when returned to power. Instead, as a result of negotiations between Stuart Sexton (political adviser to Tory education ministers from 1979 until Baker) and the Direct Grant Joint Committee, the Assisted Places Scheme (APS) was formulated. It was introduced by the first Thatcher Administration.

Edwards, Fitz and Whitty have been studying the evolution of the APS, its implementation and how it has been successful in terms of the claims made for it by early supporters such as Carlisle who stated in 1980 '... it was the underprivileged children who would gain most from the Scheme'. The APS arranges for the Government to pay all or part of the fees of some pupils selected by private schools in relation to the declared income of the parents. Those earning £4767 or less in 1981-82 paid nothing, whilst above that rate, contributions increased until those on £11000 paid £1500. These scales were increased in line with inflation: £6973 to £16000 in 1986-87. The authors found that over a six-year period 40 per cent of beneficiaries held free places. At the same time, one third of parents gaining help received above-average incomes.

One question posed was whether those parents on low income were 'underprivileged' in the usual understanding of the term: living in inner-city areas, both parents unemployed, or unemployed manual workers in unskilled jobs. Although a few such examples could be found, the majority of parents were from middle-class backgrounds, usually possessing cultural and educational capital. There were teachers and clergymen on low incomes but also prosperous parents, often self-employed whose declared incomes did not seem to match their work or lifestyle.

As the study progresses so the authors let the facts speak for themselves and numerous assumptions are challenged. The idea that fee-paying schools are all academically sound is exposed: 'Of the 470 schools whose provisional offers of 13,000 were considered in the initial sifting process, over 200 were discarded as being unsuitable for the Scheme's explicitly academic purposes.'

As to the scholars chosen, 28 per cent had attended the prep department of the school they entered, whilst two-thirds of the 16 year olds were already studying at a private school. Heads within the APS admitted that parents of 30 per cent to 40 per cent of the pupils intended to send them to private schools anyway.

With regard to the schools involved, the more prestigious did not need the Scheme as they could easily fill their places but those poorly regarded in the market place and threatened by falling rolls 'had been in danger of losing the very pupils who gave (them) an academic reputation in direct-grant days'. Far from the pupils coming from inner-city schools, most would have attended suburban comprehensives with good academic reputations now under threat by the loss of some of their highest achievers. This was bound to affect the morale of the teachers and the standing of the school in the community.

It is not easy to justify spending millions of pounds on the schooling of 1 per cent of the nation's pupils in the very decade that real expenditure on LEA schooling was cut. As to the familiar cry of extending parental choice, as one parent pointed out: 'Their freedom of choice diminishes my children's opportunities'. From the wealth of evidence provided it is difficult to sustain the view that the APS has helped many children we would classify as truly underprivileged. This interesting book refreshingly free from jargon deserves a wide audience.

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The 1988 Act Re-visited

The Education Reform Act. Its Origins and Implications, edited by Michael Flude and Merrill Hammer, Falmer Press (1990), pp. xvii + 291, pb £10.95 ISBN 1-85000 554 0, hb £28.00 ISBN 1-85000 553 2.

The 1988 Education Reform Act has been on the statute book now for over two years. It was the first important legislative measure carried through by the present Government following its victory in the last (1987) election. It set out, in Kenneth Baker's words, 'to create a new framework' for education, and that it has certainly done. It is clearly important that its implementation should be very closely monitored, and in an independent and critical manner. This is what this timely book sets out to do.

Indeed to publish so authoritative and all-embracing an assessment (if by various hands) so soon is no small achievement. The various chapters were written in the year following the passage of the Act — that is, before any serious assessment of its actual impact could be made. Several of the chapters, therefore, necessarily take the form of serious, critical and informed discussions of the issues raised and **likely** outcomes.

This is the case, for instance, with Geoff Whitty's critique entitled 'The New Right and the National Curriculum', in which he points to the contradiction between a state-imposed curriculum and the market forces ideology which dictates most of the other measures embodied in this legislation. Whitty sees the National Curriculum as 'the one remaining symbol of a common educational system'. This is certainly an area where teachers and others are now engaged in a struggle for hegemony. In a lengthy and well-argued chapter, Kevin Brchony focuses on the implications of this measure for primary schools. While accepting shortcomings in primary practice in the past, he concludes that the National Curriculum (with related measures) 'cannot even begin to address those things that are wrong, let alone raise standards of attainment' (p. 126); the curriculum 'lacks rationality'; its most likely outcome 'is that primary schools will lose much of their distinctive character for which they were once internationally renowned' (p. 128). For Plowden's child at the heart of the educational process, 'there should now be substituted the Standard Attainment Test'.

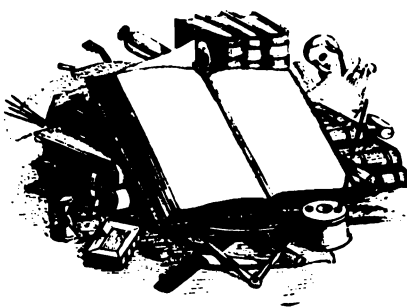
On assessment generally, Roger Murphy contributes a characteristically well-informed and penetrating chapter. Current plans outstrip any attempts toward national assessment ever attempted 'anywhere else in the world'. That's saying something; but we must recognise that it is absolutely true. No other country, not Germany, France, the Soviet Union, nor Japan has ever attempted 'such an ambitious and comprehensive system... covering such a wide range of ages and curriculum areas.' Murphy is highly critical of the procedures proposed, and usefully sets out an alternative six-point programme based on educational principles. His own prognosis of the future, however, is hardly encouraging.

There is space only to draw attention to some of the other contributions. Jan Hardy and Chris Vieler-Parker write on the Act's implications for race and schooling, whilst

Sheila Miles and Chris Middleton discuss its likely outcomes in relation to gender. Both chapters warn against the probable negative effects of current developments, as does Phillippa Russell in the case of children having special educational needs. These are all highly important areas, and these chapters should alert us to pay special attention to monitoring developments in these areas over the coming year.

Other chapters cover opting out (Flude and Hammer), parental choice (Andrew Stillman), TVEI (Mike Hickox and Rob Moore — a very useful and thoughtful contribution), governing bodies (Rosemary Deem), as well as further and higher education. The most controversial chapter, to my mind, is Ron Wallace's on 'The Act and Local Authorities'. Wallace appears to argue that the Act strengthens local authorities' powers ('The DES and local authorities occupy the high ground'). Most people have seen the Act as fundamentally on attack on local control of education, as on local government generally — and a fairly effective one at that. The real issue here now is surely the **defence** of local authorities and their responsibilities in the field of education; but this standpoint (surprisingly) is not presented in this chapter.

Brian Simon



Communication Skills

Primary Schools and Parents (Rights, Responsibilities and Relationships), by Jim Docking, Hodder and Stoughton (1990), 204 pp, pb: £7.95.

Over the last thirty years, there has been an enormous change in the attitude which schools have adopted in their relations with parents. Few schools now present a 'fortress-like' image with parents kept strictly 'in their place'. But the implementation of legislation during the eighties has given a fresh impetus to the way in which parents can bring power and influence to bear on the running of schools.

Jim Docking, starting from this position, has given a useful overview of the rights, responsibilities and relationships which engage the attention of parents and schools today. His book gives three perspectives. Part 1 looks at the perceptions which parents, teachers and politicians hold of one another and of primary schools; Part 2 focuses on the duties, rights, influence and power of these groups; and Part 3 examines ways in which the groups communicate and relate.

The book, as a whole, should have appeal to both parents and teachers and could form the basis for a useful dialogue between the two. Parents, I'm sure, would be surprised at the wide range of ways in which schools have initiated inter-action between themselves and their 'customers'. What they should take particular note of is that, until recently, there was no action by government agencies to support or stimulate dialogue. The implementation of various pieces of legislation aimed to 'galvanize parental involvement in schools' (Kenneth Baker) comes on top of so much that is already in place.

Schools have had an enormous extra workload placed on them by the need to implement the National Curriculum, and parents in general are unaware of this imposition. Dialogue is necessary to establish the relationship between what this book shows is theoretically possible and what, under the new conditions, teachers may find practically possible. It would be a pity if the relationship which has developed between schools and parents was in fact impaired rather than enhanced by the onset of the National Curriculum. But in considering all the possibilities which Jim Docking reveals, teachers today must be very aware of the element of stress inherent in trying to do too much.

If the central theme of the book is borne in mind, then practical ways to implement dialogue can be found which do no overload teachers. This theme is that all parties need to listen to each other; to consider needs thus revealed sympathetically and to be willing to demonstrate that sympathy with action. Many agencies feel that a prerequisite for this is a formal P.T.A. or similar organization. It is interesting to learn that from his reading of the Junior School Project (Mortimore et al, 1988) the author concludes: 'Somewhat surprisingly, no relation was found between effective schooling and the existence of a parent-teacher association'.

In an interesting chapter entitled 'Perspectives on parental participation in schooling' the author outlines 'contrasting perceptions of parents and their role in schooling — as problems, as customers and as partners'. Here we are reminded of the dangers inherent in treating 'parents' as a unified, homogeneous group and being influenced by statistically-based viewpoints. Parents differ as much as children and should be treated according to their individual views and behaviour. Another danger lies in being taken in by the present political call to subject every aspect of life to market forces. It has been observed that 'Consumerism isolates people and importantly eschews the practice of reason between groups; the market does not conceive of accountable discourse'.

I believe that this book will prove to be a useful reminder of the arguments and practices which relate to primary school/parent discourse and co-operation. In the present climate of increased parent power and increased teacher workload, it should help schools to achieve a balanced rational relationship with their customers.

Michael Clarke
Forum Editorial Board

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