

FORUM

for the discussion of new trends in education

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Reflective Teaching

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100th FORUM

The next **Forum** will be the hundredth number. This and the achievements of the comprehensive education movement will be celebrated in articles by the original editor, Brian Simon, and two pioneers, Pat Daunt and Dame Margaret Miles. A series of expert articles will examine key aspects of comprehensive education and what must be common entitlement at each phase from nursery to tertiary as **Forum** affirms its commitment to promoting 3-19 comprehensive education in the 1990s and beyond. Contributors will include David Armstrong on secondary curriculum, Mary Jane Drummond on 3-5, Josie Farrington on LEAs, Andy Green on 16-19, Harvey Goldstein and Richard Noss on assessment, Adam Newman-Turner on equal opportunities.

Election stakes

Both main political parties expect and want education to be among the key issues in the forthcoming General Election, perhaps in June or October. As Kenneth Clarke is pressing for massive opting-out to be central to that part of the Conservative manifesto and Jack Straw seems to have committed Labour to returning Grant-Maintained Schools (plus CTCs) to LEAs, the politicians look set to direct attention to this aspect of educational politics. The wider issue of funding education has become entangled with controversies over local government structure and finance in the wake of the poll tax fiasco.

As an independent journal **Forum** is unconnected with any political party. As an educational journal we have an obligation to scrutinise the educational policies of those who seek to govern. We have always argued for a comprehensive system of primary and secondary schools serving the whole community and consequently for non-divisive curricular arrangements to facilitate the development of everyone's best potential.

Opting-out and the poll tax epitomise the ideologically inspired conviction politics of Thatcherism. Combined with the absurdly irrational formula based on average salaries built into LMS, these irrelevances have frustrated evolution of a more sensitive, responsible partnership for the local management of schools, such as was envisaged by the Taylor Report and for which the scene was set just as Baker's Education Reform Act was enacted.

Misjudgements, faults and absurdities inherent in that Act became so quickly evident that the architect/salesman had to be moved out a year later. MacGregor's sixteen months of quietly tentative tinkering ended abruptly when he was replaced by the proven abrasive, Kenneth Clarke. Noisily blustering and blundering around, he has perfunctorily knocked out key blocks from the National Curriculum structure while eagerly propping up those parts of the ERA fabric most damaging to the coherence of the education system as a service for all. Bringing his own ignorance and personal prejudice to bear, he is wrecking the positive and enhancing the negative features of the ERA.

Despite faults of over-prescription and, particularly, flawed testing, the National Curriculum had some potential for ensuring a 'balanced and broadly based curriculum' as a common entitlement from five to sixteen. In this respect Labour policy was similar. But Clarke has abandoned that entitlement beyond 14 and instead resurrected the previously much criticised chaotic options just when comprehensive schools were busy devising new patterns, often modular, for more common and balanced learning experiences at 14-16. In arrogant contempt for professional advice, he tampers with content in the arts and humanities, then instructs SEAC to devise 'predominantly written' tests at 11 and 14, specifying 'terminal written examinations' for science and mathematics at 14. This term many Infants will be minded not taught for several weeks while their teachers test seven year olds.

Disregard for complex and sensitive matters such as individual learning experiences, developing enquiry

and self-awareness must be expected from one who admits he sees Records of Achievement as the means for 'fitting many more round pegs into the correct round holes'. Clarke views schools as factories supplying products for the labour market.

Extending eligibility and proposing increased financial incentives for opting-out can only exacerbate the planning blight that prevents LEAs from providing articulated and coherent local school and FE services; absurdly, it also prevents them from closing schools to eliminate surplus places as half the schools which have opted out have done so to escape closure. In the name of choice and power for some parents with only a transitory interest vested in a particular school, the future rights of most neighbouring parents and their children are to be denied on an increased scale — if Clarke has his way. Tory rhetoric of 'parental choice' and their criteria of 'market forces' contrasts with Labour's focus on improving inadequate schools' performance through a proposed Education Standards Council and target setting.

By proposing amended Regulations to allow opted-out schools to change their admission procedures, age range, numbers and other characteristics, Clarke abrogates the pledge given to Parliament when the Bill was debated. His plan to remove FE and Sixth Form Colleges from LEAs further threatens link courses and development of comprehensive tertiary arrangements. The **White Paper** portends continued planning blight for 16-19. The devious aim is to eliminate comprehensive sixths and secure bipartite structures from 16, when flexibility and open access are the strategies needed.

Forum always suspected that Open Enrolment, Opting-out and City Technology Colleges were intended to revive selection and sabotage comprehensive education as well as to destroy LEAs.

The ERA bestowed such power on the Secretary of State that significant transformation can be achieved by Orders and Regulations without much further legislation. Despite LMS, there is potential for great central control. The underlying thrust of Manifesto rhetoric must be judged in this context. To what end and in whose interest would that power be exercised?

Forum believes that the principle of comprehensive education with a valid curriculum entitlement for all is at stake.

This number shows how reflective teachers can still save education from destructive pressures.

* * *

Forum has contained inflation for two years, despite increased costs of paper, printing and postage. Regrettably, we must raise the journal's price to £2.50 in September when we celebrate the publication of our hundredth number since we began in 1958. We hope readers will continue their support by re-subscribing as we intend our contribution to education to be as important as ever.

Quality and Achievement

Peter Mitchell

A member of **Forum's** Editorial Board and Director of Education for the London Borough of Camden, Peter Mitchell sets the scene for **Forum's** Conference and Workshop on 'Defining Quality — Recognising Achievement' to be held on May 18 at the Crowndale Centre, where he and Peter Mortimore will be speakers.

The **Forum** Conference on 18 May will provide an opportunity to share in a debate on defining quality and recording achievement in education. **Forum** magazine has presented, in recent editions, a series of articles by, for example, Michael Armstrong, Harvey Goldstein and Caroline Gipps, which have expressed serious reservations about the approach to improvements in quality embodied in the National Curriculum.

There is concern that the strong emphasis on testing will seriously inhibit the range of learning opportunities available to students. The most important learning which embraces how students create their own meanings, and deepen their own understanding of subjects, cannot be assessed exclusively through the medium of tests. We, therefore, face the prospect of teachers being expected to focus only on those aspects of learning which are most readily tested.

We have been here before; for attainment targets read behavioral objectives. Stenhouse writing in 1972, produced a critique of the objectives model. He argued that the precise definition of student behaviour, prior to the lesson, would inhibit teachers from taking advantage of opportunities for learning presented in the lesson. In essence this is a recognition of the complex nature of classrooms.

The conference/workshop will provide an opportunity to see how we should define quality and record achievement if classrooms are to be places that liberate rather than inhibit children's learning. The influence of teachers will draw us back to individual children. HMI's work on entitlement in the 80s; on definitions of learning outcomes; on differentiation and on the importance of dialogue between professionals has grown out of their work observing comprehensive school (primary and secondary) teachers in classrooms. In a similar manner teachers have been influential in bringing about the recognition of course work in GCSE and in transforming TVEI to become whole curriculum planning for all students.

Organising children's learning is complex. Past attempts to influence classroom learning from the centre have led to over simplification of the issues as curriculum developers have searched for certainty where none exists. We have no tradition of pedagogical studies with the consequence that debates on the subject of children's learning swing between extremes. The current debate on reading is a case in point. Eric Bolton's recent report on Standards in Education (HMI 1991) points to the fact that teachers rarely work exclusively using one reading method. Teachers concerned with quality seek to build on what children bring to the classroom in terms of knowledge and experience. Mixed ability teaching reinforces the emphasis on children's individual needs while at the same time expanding the demands on the teacher's ability to respond to those needs.

The debate about quality must address the issue of how a centrally organised curriculum can be made accessible to individual children. It must also evaluate children's achievements so that teachers are able to make judgements about the appropriateness, or otherwise, of attainment targets.

It is self evident that the National Curriculum is dependent upon the professional management of learning by teachers. What is not so clear is how the debate about quality informs the wider public which is in danger of being misinformed about the efficacy of test results.

Records of Achievement have, at their most successful, demonstrated how the motivation of children, and their desire to manage their own learning, can be enhanced. Valuing the whole range of a child's achievements is formalising what good teachers have always done. The search for improvements in the quality of learning, in the basic curriculum, cannot be separated from the quality of classroom relationships. Schools today are caring communities; care is not, however, an end in itself; it builds the confidence which enables children to develop autonomy and high standards for themselves and others.

The question we must ask, therefore, is how should teachers respond to the National Curriculum and Assessment? The part teachers' assessments play in reporting at key stages must keep open the debate on quality and the range of students' learning. Records of achievement will open the way to negotiation with students and lead to their greater involvement in the management of their own learning. Management of education must be much more explicitly concerned with student learning rather than, as is so often the case, control and administration. At every level of an education service there should be a focus on learning if the quality of students' experiences and their achievements are to be priorities for improvement.

One of the key purposes of the conference/workshop on 18 May will be to make the debate on quality more public. Progressive ideas on student learning have too often remained the exclusive preserve of the professional. We must value parents being more involved in their child's education. We must expect to justify why we believe students can go beyond the limitations set by tests.

FORUM Workshop Conference Defining Quality — Recognising Achievement

10.00-4.30 Saturday 18 May 1991

Crowndale Centre, 218/220 Eversholt Street,
London NW1 1BD

Tickets £12 from Jill Hoffbrand at Crowndale Centre

Teacher Quality

Michael Eraut

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Not only does the quality of our education system depend on the quality of our teachers, but it depends on the quality of those who are currently teaching in schools; for they will remain the majority for at least twenty more years. Moreover, they will establish the culture into which new young teachers, and to an increasing extent new older teachers, are socialised. They will set the standards and affect their attitudes and expectations. The recent scapegoating of teacher education has been a diversionary tactic to deflect our attention away from what is happening to working teachers, whose influence has always been greater than that of teacher educators.

Although attention is repeatedly drawn to standards of grammar, spelling and numeracy as powerful symbols of the disciplining of the younger generation, the expectations for the achievement of 18 year olds are increasing all the time. Not only do increasing numbers of pupils gain qualifications at 16+, but they have to demonstrate a wider range of qualities. TVEI has also promoted a broader curriculum and learning across a wider range of contexts. Disappointing comparisons with our economic competitors draw attention to the need for learning oriented towards appropriate qualifications to become part of the life of every young person aged between 16 and 19. Several groups representing educators and employers have agreed on the importance of Common Learning Outcomes for this age group which include communication skills, personal skills, problem-solving skills, the application of number, information technology and a foreign language. While many, including myself, argue that changes in schools should be more realistically paced, all credible analyses of the future suggest that curriculum change will continue to be a permanent feature of our education system. Moreover, the successful implementation of ongoing change will require teacher development programmes of the highest quality.

Another feature of the last decade has been the gradual, some would say belated, recognition that students should be encouraged and helped to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Readers of **Forum** will have noted exhortations to this effect for 25 years, especially from the primary sector; yet only now is it becoming generally accepted as an important indicator of educational quality rather than the preferred approach of a few enlightened teachers. The introduction of profiling and records of achievement has drawn attention to the importance of feedback that goes beyond the marking of pieces of work and emphasises positive achievement rather than failure. The range of approaches now being grouped together under the portfolio title of Flexible Learning are being welcomed not only for their approach to learning traditional goals but also for their continuing

stress of students' responsibility for their own learning and the development of the appropriate skills, attitudes and habits. For it is these that will take the school leaver forward into an adult life in which continuing learning should be expected to play an increasingly important part. The implications for our central theme are twofold. First, the development of students as flexible learners requires flexible teachers who continue to learn themselves. Second, discussions of progress with students give feedback to teachers as well as to students; and feedback of this kind is central to teachers' continuing development as managers and supporters of learning.

All the major professions now have policies for continuing professional development (CPD) and for some engaging in CPD has become mandatory: one has to engage in a specified minimum each year in order to stay on the register. Why are they doing it? To sustain and enhance quality and to reassure the public that they can still be trusted to give a proper professional service. There is much to be learned about how best to identify needs and plan CPD opportunities to match; but, the intention is clear. Some professional organisations are even contemplating leaving initial qualifications to the higher education system and focusing entirely on CPD. This would not be appropriate for teaching, where the interpretation of theory and practice is so crucial, but it does at least indicate a modern perspective.

This wider acknowledgement of the role of CPD should eventually erase the naive assumption that pre-service training can make a good teacher. It takes most teachers 3 to 5 years to reach proficiency, yet that process is rarely monitored or supported after the probationary year and even then support is by no means guaranteed. After that initial plateau there is still scope for broadening the repertoire, and curriculum change will contrive to make demands that can only be met by further professional development. Yet the challenge of making professional learning part of one's life is not taken up by all teachers. Indeed one finds many departments, even whole schools, where the prevalent culture is sceptical at almost any attempt to change.

So wherein lies the problem? Most current (and past) approaches to teacher development still fail to address the central core of the teachers' role: the daily attempt to manage and support the learning of individual pupils in a crowded environment. Many teachers feel that teacher development is simply a new term for INSET, associated either with other people's views of their needs or with innovations which they have played little part in shaping. Alternatively, it is a route to promotion and/or higher qualifications which involves preparing for responsibilities outside the classroom rather than enhancing work within it. When it is classroom based, teacher development may be seen as a threat to a

tolerable status quo; or, conversely, as yet another pressure on a job whose demands are already too great. Few advocates of teacher development have been able to characterise and justify in a way which both resonates with their more sceptical colleagues and convinces politicians that it offers value for money.

Alongside this concern about teacher development, we need to consider the issue of teacher professionalism. Three salient characteristics of a profession are (1) control of its own membership and qualifications, (2) a client-centred code of ethics and (3) a recognised knowledge base. The first relates to a deteriorating situation: over the last five years government control over teacher education and, indeed, all aspects of teachers' lives has increased. This will not change until progress is made on the other two fronts. The second is confused by the very individualistic way in which concepts of professionalism have traditionally been formulated. Since teachers work in schools, and pupils learn and live in schools, we need a concept of a professional institution in tandem with that of a professional person. We need a much clearer view of what it means to be a professional institution and what it means to be a professional person if teachers are to gain in status. These views need to be consistent with each other, and this interrelationship will be particularly important in the context of teacher appraisal. This leads us to the third characteristic of a profession, its distinctive knowledge base. Here teaching has suffered from the traditional view that its knowledge base is the content of what is taught. While necessary, subject knowledge is neither distinctive (many other members of society share it) nor sufficient. The foundation of a teaching profession is (a) knowledge about the management and support of learning (class teaching is still an important component of this); and (b) knowledge necessary for running a professional institution. Currently we expect all teachers to be proficient in (a) and all institutions to have a team of teachers who are collectively proficient in (b). Both teacher development and institutional development are concerned with the continuing updating and enhancement of this knowledge base.

One of the most exciting developments of the 1980s has been the progress made in articulating the knowledge base. At classroom level, there has been research into teacher thinking and decision-making, classroom action research and research into pupil learning and the social settings of classrooms. At school level, there has been some attention to school improvement, school self-review and management development. Much of this research has been undertaken by teachers themselves, almost all of it with their active participation. It is also increasingly recognised that important areas of practical knowledge defy codification and cannot be summarised in books; although they can be shared by observation and discussed in ways that enhance understanding.

The overwhelming conclusion of this research is that the prime source of a teacher's practical knowledge is their own classroom experience. At worst, they learn a set of almost unthinking routines that become progressively dis-functional over time. At best, they continue to learn and adapt by continually reflecting

on their experience. This reflective process is now increasingly recognised as the cornerstone of teacher professionalism. While classroom conditions do not allow for deeply considered responses to immediate events or for the amount of individual attention to pupils that teachers want to give, it is always possible to learn from experience and modify one's plans or one's practice accordingly. Thus at the very least, teacher professionalism would seem to imply:

- 1 a moral commitment to serve the interests of the pupils by reflecting on their individual well-being and their individual progress and deciding how best it can be fostered or promoted
- 2 an obligation to review periodically the nature and effectiveness of one's practice in order to improve the quality of one's management, pedagogy and decision-making
- 3 an obligation to collaborate in reviews of policy and practice at departmental or institutional level
- 4 an obligation to continue to develop one's practical knowledge both by personal reflection and through interaction with others.

Thus professional accountability necessarily involves the ongoing review of what one is doing for individual pupils, personal and collaborative self-evaluation and continuing self-development.

What is gratifying about this analysis is that it reveals strong linkage and overlap between being pupil-centred, being accountable, being professional and developing one's knowledge base. It is through reflecting upon and learning from reviews of pupil progress and ongoing classroom experience that most teacher development occurs. The role of research and theory is to aid that reflective process not to replace it. Indeed self-review is in itself a form of research, and reflection can result in the creation of personal theories.

Four types of process can be discerned in the management and support of pupils' learning, each underpinned by both practice and theoretical knowledge yet using it in a different kind of way.

- 1 *Process for acquiring information* about pupils and situations: these range from deliberate inquiry to noticing interactions, activities and events, and the almost intuitive reading of an emergent situation.
- 2 *Deliberate process* such as planning, decision-making and problem-solving.
- 3 *Routinised action and skilled behaviour*. Much classroom teaching falls into this category, intuitive yet following discernible patterns and still under some overall cognitive control. One critical issue is the range of a teacher's repertoire. Another is the ability to adapt routines to changing pupils, conditions and circumstances.
- 4 *Assessing, evaluating and controlling*. These processes concern first how professionals assess the impact of their actions and evaluate their personal practice and that of their organisation; then second how they make use of this information to modify or rethink their decisions, work-patterns and policies. Thus the term 'controlling' is used mainly in the cybernetic sense of obtaining and responding to feedback. At a more informal level it involves daily decisions about what to do, noting and reflecting on what has happened and learning from experience.

Others might present a different analysis. My purpose

Teachers closely observed

Helen Campbell

This article arises from research undertaken when Helen Campbell was on a term's secondment to the National Primary Centre. She has taught in Buckinghamshire for ten years and has been Deputy Head at Wellsmead First School since 1987.

During 1990 I was seconded as a teacher researcher to the National Primary Centre. Our Research project was entitled 'The Assessment of English in the National Curriculum and its implications for Classroom Practice'.

As a reception teacher I had become fascinated by the range of knowledge children have acquired before coming to school. I knew that I had worked closely with parents and children to ensure that I could build upon these experiences. I was convinced that I had made hundreds of 'assessments' about individual children's needs. I did not see assessment as a slave of the National Curriculum but something teachers were already doing. I decided to focus my research upon the teacher as an assessor in the classroom. I had a number of questions in mind:

- what kind of assessments were being made by teachers?
- how did teachers communicate with children when they received children's work?
- what form did the interaction between teacher and pupil take?
- what reference was made to the child's work?
- how were teachers' 'impressions' about the work communicated?
- did the teachers reflect upon the work constructively?
- were the assessments recorded/reflected upon?
- what effect did these assessments have on future planning?

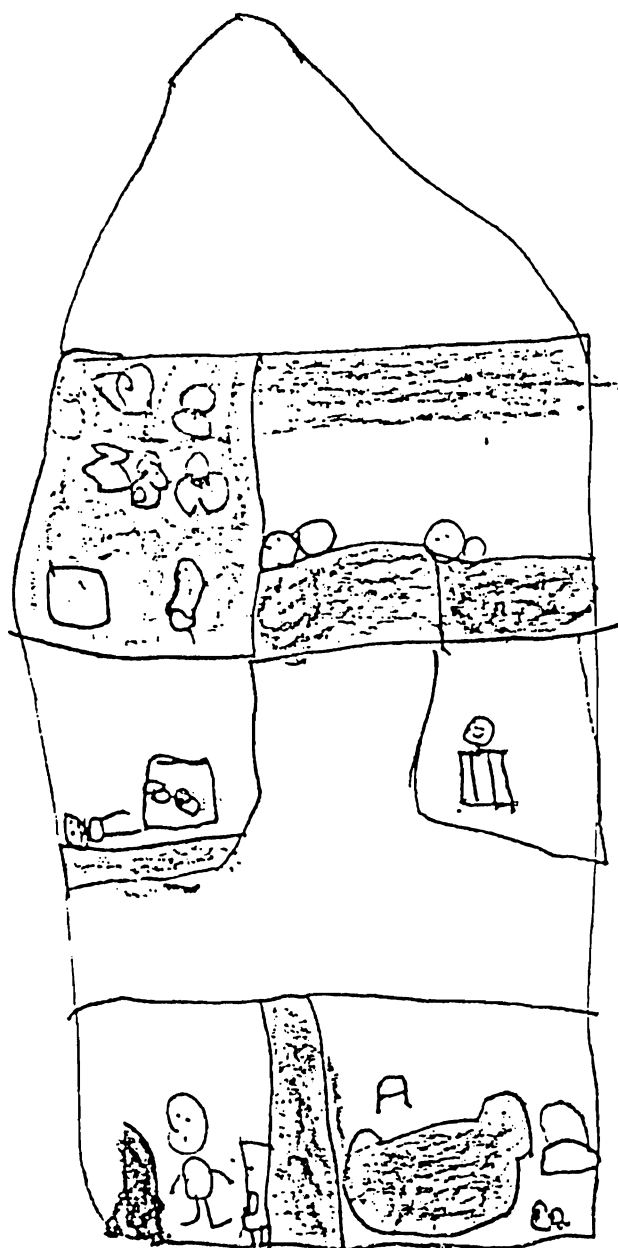
I suspended all my personal beliefs about teachers as assessors and adopted the motto 'I do not understand' as I ventured into reception classes with

my notebook. I worked in my own school which has three reception classes and in a nearby first school with a nursery, for one term.

I observed teachers as they received new entrants at the start of the spring term.

- How would the teachers assess what children already knew about written language?
- What opportunities would they offer?
- What information was available to the teachers about these children?

I used my notebook to describe the work I saw being



here is to suggest the kind of categories one would need to use in developing a knowledge base for the profession which was distinctive, enabling for classroom teachers and credible to external people.

There is no room to develop further the concept of the school as a professional institution and the knowledge base needed to put it into practice, except to point out that it must both parallel and facilitate the forms of teacher professionalism outlined above. What I do wish to stress, however, is that professionalism implies accountability: not accountability for following detailed instructions, but accountability for the use of authority delegated because clients are trusting and recognise the distinctive knowledge base. This in turn requires good communication with all clients and continuing development of the knowledge base both in response to social change and to enhance quality. It is becoming increasingly urgent for teachers to agree on a positive, publicly credible form of professionalism if education is to flourish in the future.

done in the classroom. I always spent time talking through my observations with teachers, asking questions and trying to find out more about their thinking. At a time when the National Curriculum was weighing heavily upon the minds of teachers I was heartened by the great sensitivity they exhibited towards young children. This is an extract from one of my diaries.

First School Week of January 1990

The teacher began by talking to all the children in the class about their homes. Afterwards a group of new entrants were invited to record 'something' about their home. The teacher did not specify drawing or writing but made it clear that either would be a good way to start. The children chose from a variety of mark-making implements, felt tip pens, HB pencils, thick and thin wax crayons and were provided with good quality unlined paper to use.

After checking the children had found a place to work and the necessary equipment, the teacher left the group and began work elsewhere in the classroom. Five of the six children started by drawing. Only one child was reluctant to begin. The teacher noticed this and returned to have a quiet word with him and lightly touching him on the shoulder encouraged him to make a start.

I noticed one child muttering loudly as she drew . . .

'This is a picture of my house. Katie's in her cot, Tom and me are in bed. Mum's going to the cupboard — she's getting some bowls. That's Dad on the sofa bed — it's green. That's another baby. They've taken the other sofa upstairs — yes upstairs! That's the toilet and the bath: I need blue . . . the toilet's blue, now I'm doing the ceiling, I'm doing my blue ceiling. What colour's Katie's? Katie's got yellow.' (See page 71.)

The child was not talking to me (indeed she appeared oblivious to my presence). She was talking about her drawing, thinking aloud as she drew her home. The

outline of the house appeared first, followed by the detailed interior.

Later in the week the teacher sat with this group and asked: 'Is there something you could write about your home to go with your picture?' The child who had talked to herself did not ask for the teacher to be her scribe, but her behaviour was most interesting . . . She changed chairs choosing to sit very near the teacher. She paid particular attention when another child came and asked for help or when the teacher was scribing for another child. She watched the teacher's lips and hands. She listened as the teacher repeated words aloud and pointed to the marks on the page.

As before the child began talking to herself. As she began to write she repeated some words over and over again. Sometimes letters were traced in the air, sometimes ideas spoken aloud 'now is this a "p" or a "q"?' Again the child was expressing her ideas aloud, clarifying her thoughts before committing herself to paper.

At one point the teacher intervened to prevent her from shading in letters. The teacher asked 'Is there anything else you want to write?' The child replied 'I haven't finished "cupboard" yet, I've only put "c-b".' She added another letter, "c-b-d" — cupboard — that's better!' (See below.)

The teacher received the work warmly, her facial expression indicating her delight in this 'first draft' of written work. The child also looked flushed with success, aware of the teacher's praise and the recognition of her achievement. The teacher did not put a mark on the child's work.

At playtime I shared my observations with the teacher and asked:

- how was it that she had been able to leave this group of children to work alone on their drawings?
- what had alerted her to the fact that one child had not started work?
- how was it that one child was able to write alone with such confidence?

The drawing is a simple line sketch of a house interior. It shows a room with a bed, a sofa, a toilet, and a bath. The labels are written in a child's handwriting, with some words repeated or corrected. The labels are: Ellie, Tom, Mum, Dad, Katie, and a small circle with a dot inside. The text is written in a way that suggests a list of family members and their locations: Ellie, Tom, Mum, Dad, Katie, and a small circle with a dot inside. The text is written in a way that suggests a list of family members and their locations: Ellie, Tom, Mum, Dad, Katie, and a small circle with a dot inside.

The teacher recalled her careful planning, what she had noted from the records she had received about the children and recalled her observations of the children interacting as a group. The teacher explained that initially her assessments focused upon how well each child settles into the classroom, the friendships they make, their ability to attempt suggested tasks and share resources. I found that all the reception teachers I worked with shared this view of the purpose of 'classroom assessment' in the early weeks of term. 'Had there been anything else that the teacher had managed to assess about the child's approach to writing?' I asked. The teacher went on to describe in detail what she had noticed while the child worked. She noticed that the child knew:

- what she wanted to write
- where to start
- the direction she would go
- how to spell names of people in her family
- how to write 'and', 'the', 'bed', correctly
- that some letters looked similar but were not the same
- that she could work out what words looked like
- that talking aloud and tracing in the air helped
- that it helped to re-read her writing
- that what she wrote remained the same.

The teacher looked positively upon what the child had done. When asked what she might plan for the child next the teacher thought she would like to correct the spelling of 'is' before it 'became a habit'. She felt this could be done at a future time with the child — perhaps when she was writing in front of the child or after they had shared a book together.

The teacher expressed doubts about the values of her observations. She felt unsure about the suggestions she was making. Her observations were not recorded except in her head.

I listened as all the teachers I worked alongside expressed anxieties about their assessments. I found teachers excellent at describing children's behaviour but lacking in confidence when asked to analyse or interpret their thoughts and judgments.

I worked until half term collecting evidence of teachers making assessments in their classrooms. Through my observations and discussions with teachers several important issues emerged:

- the importance of creating the right learning environment
- the attitude of the teacher towards young writers
- the way children's work is received
- the need to reflect away from the classroom on children's achievements and share information with colleagues.

During the second half of the term I became actively involved with the teachers, sharing my observations. I wanted to help the teachers build upon the 'assessments' they were making but felt unsure about. For one teacher this meant considering her classroom environment, thinking through planning and opportunities she created for children to become writers. With another teacher it involved examining the

expectations she had of young writers and how work was received and discussed with children.

I wanted the teachers I worked with to be able to step back and reflect upon what children were doing in their classrooms. We worked together and took one step at a time. I share with you my notes from a conversation with three teachers as we planned some classroom observations.

"One step at a time" . . .

- In your classroom plan a range of activities so that you can spend time with one group of children observing them closely
- Try and note down (quickly in your own shorthand) exactly what the children are doing
- You do not need to spend a long time (you may not be able to either!)
- Share your thoughts and observations with a colleague

All the teachers were delighted that they could manage this! They were surprised at the range of strategies children were using to write. All teachers discussed their observations with me and each gave me copies of significant points they had found. What emerged was a common vocabulary. Every teacher noted the behaviour and approach of the children towards writing tasks. We then discussed meaningful ways of recording this. We made a list but rejected the idea of a 'tick sheet'. We developed a wheel which we liked but which became crowded and hard to interpret. We agreed upon a semi-circle which incorporated a wide range of behaviour we had noted. The chart can be shaded and interpreted quickly. It clearly indicates some of the strategies children may use as they become writers. The teachers involved with this chart felt a strong sense of ownership. They felt this would help as they looked closely at children as writers.

All the teachers said they felt more confident about their observations because of the common vocabulary we had found. Sharing ideas together enabled them to appreciate what they could plan next for each child. Our dialogue developed from a nervous concern about 'making assessments' to the more fundamental questions of finding 'appropriate activities'.

Working closely with another trusted and sympathetic colleague, listening to and sharing concerns using a shared vocabulary will enable teachers to develop confidence in themselves. I believe teachers are making assessments in their classrooms but that they need practical support when collecting information, time to reflect upon their observations away from the classroom and opportunities to share thoughts together.

If learning to make assessments means finding out more about how children learn, it can sit comfortably alongside the teacher in the classroom.

It is vital that we build up confidence in teachers to see themselves as assessors, and encourage them to act upon what they have observed not because the National Curriculum requires it, but because it is the entitlement of every child in their care to receive it.

Maintaining a comprehensive philosophy

Owen Shelton

Commitment to comprehensive education took Owen Shelton to Leicestershire in 1959 and to Coventry in 1970 where he held senior posts at two comprehensives before becoming Head of Whitley Abbey Comprehensive School in 1981. He is a member of the OCEA Accreditation Team and has piloted Records of Achievement.

Our school is a co-educational comprehensive of some 850 pupils (80 in the Sixth Form) situated on a pleasant site on the southern outskirts of Coventry. For the past ten years we have been trying to fulfil policy/philosophy of equal opportunity, celebrating attainment and achievement in many fields, acknowledging the worth of all pupils and involving them in their own learning.

Some examples of the above in practice are:

- our Personal Development programme established since 1983 which incorporates our own Record of Achievement processes and has always addressed the cross-curricular themes of Health Education, Careers, Citizenship, and Environmental Education, and other issues;
- the use of mixed ability learning situations for most curriculum areas in Lower School (Years 7, 8 and 9) and many in Upper School (Years 10, 11);
- access for all pupils to the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities and experiences offered;
- the provision of as many such opportunities as possible giving the school a good reputation for links with industry, residential education, outdoor pursuits and a unique 'Pre-driver training course' in conjunction with West Midlands Police, in addition to our classroom work;
- the work done as part of the OCEA Records of Achievement scheme, encouraging reviewing, reflecting, recording, on the part of pupils, staff and as a whole school;
- the adoption with full commitment, of Coventry's TVE model of modular courses as a means of
 - changing styles of learning to more student centred approaches
 - offering the opportunity of a broad technological education
 - allowing students choice when there is generally less time for options
 - encouraging staff to develop skills in more curriculum areas
 - providing more balance in an individual's curriculum programme

The TVE work is giving a considerable boost to the development of more active styles of learnings, leading to greater student participation in the learning process. The time given to supported self-study aids the whole process;

- the integration of thirteen profoundly deaf youngsters into the life and work of the Schools alongside their peers with access to the curriculum

through the support of well qualified staff and willing pupils;

- the philosophy and practice of having both Special Needs teachers and subject teachers working in the classroom together to provide for the support of those with learning difficulties, not creating discrete groups;
- a well known, well organised pastoral structure for supporting students and staff to try to ensure the pupils are not left to fail but can achieve success in a variety of situations;
- a system of staff attachment to work in contributory primary schools to enhance curricular links and share the work we are doing, thereby providing ease of continuity in pupils' educational experiences as they transfer. This involves Year 6 primary pupils visiting the school to experience work in Science, Environmental Education and the use of information technology. It has also involved our staff releasing primary teachers to do whatever work they wished as well as the two teaching alongside each other;

We have also held joint meetings cross-phase to discuss National Curriculum issues in English, Maths, Science.

Why talk of maintaining a philosophy? What effect might recent developments have?

Recent developments may lead to emphasis on competition rather than co-operation and a more selfish approach to resourcing through marketing. The National Curriculum and LMS are not child-centred. The former seems rather 'archaic' when matched to our (and others') present curriculum. It may prove to be very valuable and worthy but lack of time and resources and the regular changes and 'back-tracking' make planning difficult. In the classroom there would be a danger if constant emphasis on levels were to reinforce the failure of some pupils to attain them. We shall keep our celebration of positive achievement well to the fore and resist any temptation to group pupils according to level. However, maintaining this mixed ability learning environment will make (even more) enormous demands on teachers unless resourcing and staffing levels are at least maintained, or preferably enhanced.

LMS will itself, unless counteracted, force rethinking of such a philosophy as ours. Our school is not 'full' and our staff are very experienced; we do not therefore gain maximum benefit from the formula. Funding based on average salaries makes us 'losers'. A temptation might be to increase the size of groups,

organise them according to ability (?) and to abandon the philosophy of the support of pupils and the subject teacher by Special Needs teachers. Undoubtedly money could be saved here, but at what cost and to whom? Since the staffing of a school forms the greatest part of the budget share (in our case £1¼ million out of £1½ million) there is not a great share of the remainder for the provision of up-to-date, good quality resources to support teachers and classroom activities.

The most recent developments in the form of a draft National Record of Achievement and draft Annual Report to parents are to some extent out of step with much of what we have been successfully involved in for some years. The four LEAs comprising the OCEA consortium (Oxfordshire, Leicestershire, Somerset and Coventry) have made a response to the draft NRA which reflects our own thinking. Namely, that there is a confusion over whether the NRA is a report, a reference or a Record of Achievement — it contains elements of all three! — and there is a lack of emphasis on the process/processes which must be in place for pupils/schools to produce a worthwhile record. We have also spent much time in trying to develop reports and reporting procedures which will both inform parents of fact and potentiality, and will do it in user-friendly language, with the presentation of

essential information, explaining and celebrating achievement.

What has been done since the Summer of 1988 to try to meet the requirements of Government, LEA and Governors and at the same time to maintain the philosophy of keeping the young person at the centre?

In-Service training in a variety of ways has been undertaken and organised by senior staff and teachers to re-emphasise and re-inform our beliefs.

In particular one teacher day was spent in clarifying thoughts and reviewing where we thought we were.

An OHP was used to restate a commitment to reviewing, reflecting, recording and celebrating other successes for a student's personal record. This also was intended to clarify for us all what is meant by the student's own Record of Achievement. For us this is a portfolio, added to continually, of certificates of achievement, reviews of experiences, praise for success, records of attainment of all kinds, which belongs to the student. Part of this is also a summary of the achievement which in our school has contained a curriculum vitae, a statement of curricular achievement across the subjects, and a personal summary statement by the student. The process and product is accredited through the LEA in partnership with the OCEA consortium.

RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT
(capital R of A!)

The **PRODUCT**, be it OCEA, MRA or any other, of a **PROCESS**
which involves youngsters in their own learning by

- recognising all their achievements
- discussing their progress-target setting
- encouraging them to reflect, review, record
- asking for self-assessment
- providing opportunities for all this to happen

<p>A record of attainment (small r of a!)</p> <p>A system of recording what the pupils have attained within curricular experiences and opportunities which have been assessed by teachers and discussed with pupils.</p>	<p>A certificate of achievement document</p> <p>This may be a certificate or A5/A4 sheet which acknowledges an extra- curricular achievement of some kind eg, participation in 'Aerolink'. We are trying to find new, different ways to 'praise' pupils' successes.</p>
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The introduction was followed by groups of tutors (all groups were representative of every year group in school) sharing with each other what opportunities there are for tutors to 'review, reflect and record' with pupils. This involved staff sharing successful

experiences and looking for gaps. It was intended to give staff an insight into the continuity of process for pupils and tutors through the school.

Later in the day three further sessions were to:

Re-inforce commitment to
subject based reviewing,
reflecting and recording

In same groups — what
processes are still in
place for reflecting in
the curriculum? (Give
examples on 'post it' pages
headed with subject and
stuck on the proforma

Establish and confirm links between the National Curriculum requirements for assessment for recording, reporting and the Record of Achievement

Reconcile classroom practice and organisation with National Curriculum requirements for assessment, recording and reporting for Year 7

Whole staff information session with input from Head and software writer, Mick Ellis

Working in departmental groups with a specific brief drawn up by the Head

Two previous teacher days had been spent with staff preparing their programmes of study, schemes of work and assessment, reviewing, recording, reporting processes. Once again this was tackled against a specific brief provided to underpin our philosophy with essential elements of practice. For the second session staff were asked to review their first eight weeks work with Year 7 pupils and to continue to plan the next stages. This was done against a background of the advice from NCC on catering for children with special needs.

Another vital part of our drive to maintain philosophy and ethos has been in the use of computer software and technology. We want to ensure that staff do what they do best, namely work with pupils in the classroom, presenting the best experiences in a vital and stimulating way. We do not want them 'number-crunching' and filling in forms to the detriment of classroom activity. With the tremendous help of Cogent software we have helped develop a system of storing information about pupils' achievements. This data can be retrieved for a report to parents, as part of a curricular statement for a Record of Achievement, or any other appropriate form.

All our National curriculum records are held in the package and the information can be updated simply and quickly using an optical mark reader. The data can be used in a variety of ways and can provide staff with an overview of the curriculum. Teachers are able to monitor pupil/class progress and plan a programme of study suitable to the pupils' needs.

This whole package also has a facility for auditing the curriculum and it is possible to see exactly where content is covered and where skills are introduced or reinforced. It would take far too long to describe in full the breadth of information at our finger tips.

Staff in the school within their departmental teams have discussed and created the words, the text files, which match the pupils' achievements in their subjects. These contain comments on cross-curricular skills, eg ability to handle data, confidence in working in groups and independently. This work has brought staff together and has allowed them to gain enhanced insight into the skills and processes within their subject.

All the above in-service training sessions and whole school developments are intended to (and it is hoped will) maintain our commitment to doing our best to provide valid, valuable, worthwhile experiences for our youngsters. It is deliberate policy that our profoundly deaf pupils are not disappplied from the National Curriculum — they are given access to the curriculum

experiences of all pupils. Our youngsters with learning difficulties are supported in having access to the full entitlement. We are a fully comprehensive school and aim too to meet the demands of those youngsters who need 'stretching'.

For this academic year I asked the Governors for more staffing for the school. Our suggested total for the year through the formula was 57.8 fte. This would not have allowed us to maintain the philosophy and practice we have always had nor would it have allowed any development. We have this year therefore committed money to bring the equivalent of 59 full time staff; my Deputies both teach 50% timetables and I also have a classroom commitment, albeit small. We have of course been trying (quite successfully) to save money in other areas to pay for this staffing!

The whole staff investment in classroom works has, I am aware, placed strains on all of us to give our best for the pupils, to prepare, organise, read and take in all the initiatives flung at us. It is thanks to the total dedication of the staff that I believe we are holding our philosophy and continuing to develop as a school — we are this year also broadening our 16-19 programme to encompass an entitlement curriculum for all.

I believe that the Record of Achievement (product and process) as developed through the various pilot schemes is the vehicle by which we can find a way to link the best of our own work with the new developments. I share the view of Ruth Sutton that the way forward is

- to share the targets with learners, to involve them in their learning
- to encourage self assessment
- to use the evidence of the pupils' work to review and illuminate the NC targets
- to recognise personal achievement in a wide variety of contexts as well as attainment to sustain the pupils' self esteem and motivation
- to use a student's personal Record of Achievement (portfolio) to 'house' all successes of the youngster including National Curriculum attainment
- to find a clear, concise but informative way to report achievement to parents.

The process of such an approach gives the student confidence in facing the world outside school, and keeps the youngster at the centre. Without this process National Curriculum implementation and assessment could over emphasise subjects, summative assessments, and the information needs of parents, employers and others.

Teacher Development in times of change

Liz Thomson

A member of **Forum's** Editorial Board since 1984, Liz Thomson has worked as a Teacher's Centre warden and for the Kent Inspectorate and is now a Senior Advisor for Buckinghamshire.

I sometimes think that the state of support for individual teachers at the present time is somewhat like the rabbit in Alan Brownjohn's poem¹:

We are going to see the rabbit
We are going to see the rabbit
Which rabbit, people say?
Which rabbit?
The only rabbit in England
Sitting behind a barbed-wire fence
Under the floodlights, neon lights,
Sodium lights,
Nibbling grass
On the only patch of grass
In England, in England.

Only, that has now become transposed to:

We are going to see the teacher
We are going to see the teacher
Which teacher, people say?
Which teacher, ask the children?
Which teacher?
The only seconded teacher
Sitting inside a book-lined room
Studying, thinking, reflecting . . .
On the only one year secondment
In the only School of Education
In the only University
In England, in England . . .

My point is that teachers really have become an endangered, if not extinct, species. The developments which have occurred since the teacher training pool was abolished in 1987 opened up INSET opportunities to far more teachers, but with no more resources. Some would say that pre-1987 the opportunity to take up one year secondments was not made available to many — certainly not in the spirit of the James Report² notion of sabbatical entitlement for all teachers. The reality was that a small number of LEAs were able to exploit the resources available through the pool and second, in some instances, up to 200 teachers; whereas others, because of budget decisions which set INSET as a low priority, could make the choice not to second any.

When the LEA Training Grants Scheme (more commonly known as GRIST) was set up, many of us believed that the long-awaited action on the 1984 ACSET Report³ would result in a greater range of learning opportunities for teachers through INSET. Four years on, when the training grants scheme is incorporated into a unified(?) approach through Grants for Education Support and Training, otherwise known

as GEST (I note with some wry amusement that DES officials insist on using the hard 'g' whereas the rest of us persist in pronouncing the acronym with a soft 'g'), it is perhaps necessary and salutary to consider the kinds of support available now for teacher development at all levels.

This seems particularly critical at a time when the blame for low standards and performance, poor teacher morale and low self-esteem is ascribed by John Major⁴ to 20 or 30 years of experimentation in education. He infers that, during the 1960s, teachers were led into dangerous practices by trendy academics and loose theoreticians. The Great Education Debate⁵, launched in 1976 by James Callaghan, was developed and, according to John Major, extended over the ensuing years with practical action for change coming in the guise of Government direction and reform. Whilst listening to John Major's speech, I was reminded that the Great Education Debate was launched nearly fifteen years ago! Surely, I ask myself, a government which has been in office for over 12 of those 15 years bears some measure of responsibility for the low morale of the country's teachers? Instead of which, all I seem to have heard during that period, is a continuous castigation of the standards and performance of those of us involved with teaching and learning in schools.

As far as teacher development is concerned, I believe that the above contextual factors illustrate clearly powerful reasons for resisting change. The notion of being a scapegoat is not far removed from considering oneself to be a victim of other people's actions: sic. trendy academics, loose theoreticians, biased politicians. As victims we are able to lay blame at the door of others, abnegate responsibility and disassociate ourselves from changes which threaten and violate our core beliefs and principles.

Some time ago, I asked a group of teachers to list words which described how they felt about the changes they were experiencing. We then sorted the words into what we perceived as positive and negative categories. (See Table 1 on page 78.)

We also looked at each word on the negative list and produced an alternative, so that if the words were set out alongside each other they could be seen as different aspects of the same construction. Some examples of these are set out in Table 2.

The picture emerging from the right hand columns in both tables is positive, constructive and optimistic. It leads me to ask:

— How can we incorporate these qualities into the professional development of teachers? One way is to

Negatives	Positives	
confusion	partnership	governors
anger		parents
impotence	debate and dialogue about the curriculum	community
alienation	getting learning on the agenda	
imposition	autonomy	
arid	accountability	
mechanistic	communication	
bureaucratic	commitment	
incoherent	motivation	
contradictory	teamwork	

Table 1

look more closely at some of the features listed in the positive category in Table 1.

Table 2		
confusion	< >	clarity
anger	< >	calm
impotence	< >	power
alienation	< >	involvement
imposition	< >	ownership
arid	< >	fertile
mechanistic	< >	organic
incoherent	< >	coherent
contradictory	< >	agreement

Partnership and Communication — Teachers have, for many years, worked hard at developing positive partnerships with pupils, parents, governors and the community. The enhanced powers of governing bodies adds bite to that partnership; insofar as governors are, since the 1988 act, directly responsible for the management of schools. A major challenge for us all is how to move from the rhetoric of partnership to the reality. Most of us would agree that trust and mutual respect form the best foundation for partnership at all levels. This foundation is not an entitlement but, like all forms of credibility, has to be earned and demonstrated through conduct and practice. A critical factor in successful partnerships is the ability to communicate clearly to all involved.

Debate and dialogue about the curriculum — In many schools the National Curriculum has provided a powerful stimulus for debate and discussion about the nature of the curriculum. The requirement to consider how the statutory orders in English, mathematics, science and technology will fit into an established curriculum has caused teachers to re-examine assumptions about practice. An important feature of such debates, whether they occur between teachers or with parents and governors, is the need to be realistic about the range of learning opportunities offered to children and to set these within the context of each school's needs and priorities.

Getting Learning on the Agenda — This links directly to the above features in that, if any scrutiny of practice focuses on the learning of pupils and teachers, it can provide powerful evidence to support future developments. It raises questions about models of teaching and learning and can provide opportunities

and validation for teachers to develop as reflective practitioners.

Autonomy — The concept of autonomy implies the freedom and the capacity to make individual choices. On one level this is certainly true of Local Management of Schools (LMS), but may well be questioned in relation to individual teacher development; particularly as many teachers now see *what* is to be taught as clearly prescribed and the only choice left is to determine *how* teaching and learning occurs. However, if LMS is used to support teachers — say through clearly articulated and resourced policies and programmes for staff development — then it could be extremely effective.

Accountability — Accountability is seen by many as a double edged sword. It can be extremely effective when linked to action research based teacher self-evaluation and school review. Such an approach is based on a cycle of observation, analysis and action.

Motivation and Commitment — There is no doubt that, if teachers have opportunities to 'own' what they learn and know, their motivation and commitment increases. This seems to occur most effectively when teachers become actively involved in the development of their own learning. A critical question, for those of us concerned with support and development within LEAs, is how to offer frameworks which will enable this to occur.

Team-work — In many primary schools the National curriculum has provided a catalyst for teachers learning together. Primary teachers, by virtue of their generalist approach to the curriculum, have always been prepared to admit what they do not know. This is particularly true in science and technology where many teachers have successfully demonstrated their capacity to learn new content, methods and strategies. Despite misgivings about bureaucratic interference in what is taught in schools, the introduction of the National Curriculum has provided a unity of purpose and support through teamwork and development.

Implicit in many of the above features is a recognition of the need for planned approaches to staff and school development. Staff development is concerned with the development of staff singular and plural. That is, it should offer support to:-

- i) individuals through a programme to support their professional development;
- ii) the whole staff through the priorities established as part of a school's development plan.

Staff development is not synonymous with INSET, but provides the context within which INSET can occur. Thus INSET is seen as a process to support staff development, not as an end in itself.

Many argue that an appraisal system should be at the centre of any programme for the professional development of teachers. There is no doubt that approaches which involve teachers in the articulation of their needs, as part of a process of establishing agreed priorities, are critical to successful staff and school development. However, the introduction of compulsory appraisal for all teachers may well cause difficulties in matching the resources to support identified needs.

Recent moves in many LEAs to cut back on central costs and devolve more INSET funds to schools mean that there will be further changes in the kinds of support

Dilemmas in Supervision

Peter Lucas and Chris True

Formerly teachers in comprehensive schools, Peter Lucas and Chris True are tutors for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education at Sheffield University. This article arose from their work on a three-year TVEI/PGCE project funded by the Training Agency.

Responsibility for the management of one's own learning has in recent years been promoted in initial teacher training under the banner of 'reflective practice'. Student teachers are urged to enquire systematically into their own classroom performance in order to improve it, but the intricate and demanding skills and behaviours required of tutors to encourage reflective teaching have been insufficiently recognised and understood. This is one reason why 'reflective practice' has too often remained a catchword and why much more needs to be done to explore its implications.

We identify and examine several dilemmas associated with the supervision of practical teaching because it is at the heart of good practice in initial teacher training. Supervision is, itself, a form of teaching and part of what student teachers see as the most valuable element of their training: block practice. It is also an element of initial teacher training that is receiving increased attention.

Our students follow a secondary PGCE training course with two supervised teaching practices, the first in the autumn term and the second in the spring term. During 1988/89 and 1989/90 we had 15 and 16 Maths students and 10 and 14 History students respectively.

We tried to ensure, on as many occasions as possible, that our supervisory styles had certain features that differentiated them from traditional methods. (The latter are principally characterised by the making of judgments, often more negative than positive, delivered with varying degrees of sensitivity.) The features we attempted were: a student-set agenda for observation and post-lesson discussion, the use of a non-judgmental record of the lesson written by the supervisor, an awareness of the dangers of tutor power and a genuine effort to minimise its negative impact on students' responsibility for managing their own

learning. In essence, the styles followed 'partnership supervision', developed by Jean Rudduck and Alan Sigsworth. Generally, the styles of teachers in the placement schools were more traditional.

A 'partnership' mode of supervision seems to be suitable for a PGCE programme such as ours which endeavours to promote reflective practice and, by extension, what Barnes and his colleagues have called the 'negotiated' style can be seen as a way of placing high priority upon personal and social goals, since the negotiation if successful is likely to strengthen students' sense of responsibility for their work, and develop their ability to reflect, predict and plan.

We interviewed each other's students, the first cohort in the summer term, the second in the autumn and summer terms. Our students were asked about the extent to which during their subject programmes and teaching practices they were able to take responsibility for their own learning. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcripts made. During post-lesson discussions with students we faced a number of dilemmas, and we deal with three here: whether or not to withhold judgments; how to present evidence about classroom behaviour and its consequences without distorting the student's pre-specified agenda by doing so; and how to receive and respond to 'explanations' about their performance given by students.

Dilemma 1: giving or with-holding judgments

Learners naturally want to know how well they are perceived as doing by those they regard as experts. They see themselves as having lots to learn; they are in a situation where they feel they must learn particularly quickly; and they have an 'expert' on tap in the supervisory context. They want 'constructive'

available to teachers and schools. There is no doubt that with devolution there is an increased responsibility for schools and teachers to negotiate programmes to match their specific needs. I believe that there are opportunities here to develop access to networks which will foster teacher development through action research.

When I look at the right hand column of table 2 and read words like clarity, coherence, involvement, ownership and power and then link these to metaphors of growth like organic and fertile, I am certain that the instrumental measures we have tended to adopt are no longer adequate. My experience of working with teachers as learners leads me to suggest that through accepting responsibility we are able to create constructive alternatives which mean that we do not have to be the victims of our own biographies.⁶

Through giving ourselves permission to adopt a professional stance and response to the times of change we are now experiencing, we are able to review current developments and articulate our concerns in a way that does not compromise our core principles and beliefs.

References

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2. Department of Education and Science **Teacher Education and Training** (James Report) HMSO, 1972.
3. Report of the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers (ASET) on the In-service Education, Training and Professional Development of School Teachers — August 1984.
4. Reference to John Major's speech to the Young Conservatives Conference — Scarborough, 9 February 1991.
5. James Callaghan's speech at Ruskin College, October 1976 'Education — the Great Debate'.
6. George A Kelly, *The Psychology of Personal Constructs*, Norton 1955.

advice (ie to be told how to improve): ‘. . . you did not want to be sort of told, “Oh, you’re wonderful”, but you definitely wanted sort of like to be told constructively how to improve . . .’

These perceived needs, however, clash with the fundamental idea of their being responsible for the management of their own learning. If responsibility is theirs, it is essentially *their* task to work out, with the support of the supervisor, what it is they are doing effectively, or not (and praising themselves where appropriate). If the supervisor is too ready to make a judgment, or is ‘trapped’ by the students into doing so, the latter’s autonomy and executive decision taking is inevitably undermined. And yet if the supervisor remains impartial the weaker student may feel too insecure: ‘. . . he never knocks (a student’s confidence) but I found it quite hard to pick items when he was complimenting you . . . saying that was good.’

For the supervisor to stay neutral (ie offering neither criticism nor praise) can in any case be self-defeating because the student may interpret the absence of praise as being negatively judgmental. The first student quoted was reflecting on the first teaching practice and it seems that there is a developmental issue to consider. The situation on second teaching practice (prior to which the History students but not the Maths ones had completed a practice-based assignment evaluating their teaching) was seen as definitely different. Students, it was claimed, had ‘internalised’ the idea of reflecting on performance ‘and then it was sort of second nature by the time we did it.’ There is an inference here that in the early stages of practical teaching, supervisors ought initially to be prepared to be willing to abandon, albeit temporarily, certain features of supervision designed to promote responsibility for students’ own learning in order to accommodate the more immediate needs perceived by students. Although the student as ‘partner’ ought to regard the supervisor primarily as a ‘consultant’ and not as a ‘judge’, this can be rejected by some students. They may do so not simply because they feel they need more direct support, but because it seems to mean accepting what is perceived as a ‘cold professional’ approach on the part of the supervisor, an approach in which the latter is emphasising the intellectual, the academic. Such perceptions contrast with a common desire amongst student teachers to emphasise quality of relationships between teacher and taught. The irony is that for a supervisor to display caring in their terms may affirm and confirm their dependency.

Dilemma 2: Who or what sets the agenda?

In a partnership approach to supervision, the burden is on the supervisee to determine the issues to be observed and discussed. The nature of the evidence used (a chronological and descriptive account) when it is immediately perused by a student teacher may actually preclude him/her from taking and maintaining the initiative in post-lesson discussion. It is natural to read such notes in the order in which they are written, but doing so can remove the focus from the key issues the student had previously identified. In one sense, therefore, the notes become the agenda rather than the student’s previously expressed concerns. In this way,

too, we may be undermining our attempts to make students responsible for the management of their own learning.

‘. . . We spent so long going through the minor aspects that we had little time going through the aspects I felt were important and should be talked about in more depth.’ As well as identifying the dilemma posed by the chronological nature of the record, this student comment poses further problems for the supervisor in considering the status of the evidence which is presented. In this instance, the field-notes of the tutor identified a pupil as not having done any work for a substantial period of time. The student identified this as not being a major concern because he had other issues which he wished to discuss. He believed he had ‘taken on board’ the fact that the pupil had done little work and no longer felt that it was worth considering further. The dilemma for the supervisor in such a case is whether or not simple recognition by the student of the fact that the pupil was not working is sufficient. Should we encourage students to stay with such issues and consider them more deeply or allow them to move on?

According to the supervisory model adopted, issues need to be identified by the supervisee prior to the lesson as an integral part of the student’s management of his or her own learning. One student said he ‘had given so many areas (to consider) before the lesson that (the supervisor) had more than enough’ foci to consider when making notes. Two possible interpretations of this reveal further dilemmas.

First, it may look as though the student is managing his own learning and setting an agenda for the observation and possibly the evaluation of the lesson. However, there seemed to be a confusion between putting a lesson in context for the supervisor’s benefit (eg the school being perceived by the student as dictating what was to be taught) and posing questions not only about the rationale for the lesson, but also about how this may affect the subsequent behaviour of the pupils in the classroom. For this student, the agenda was not just ‘lesson’ issues, but the wider context of the institution in which he was working. Such a broadly reflective stance is to be welcomed. But the clarification of the context was seen by this student as a justificatory ‘end’ and not as a springboard for raising issues to be returned to in order to achieve greater understanding — and possibly greater and more imaginative flexibility of response in his teaching.

Second, we might infer that the student was trying to manipulate the situation rather than genuinely thinking of how he could manage his own learning. There was some evidence in the interviews with students that they said things during post-lesson discussions to keep the tutor happy, and this indicates their not being prepared to engage in serious critique.

Dilemma 3: interpreting students’ explanations

A not uncommon response amongst student teachers during post-lesson discussion with supervisors is to attribute the blame for any failings to other people (the pupils for being unmanageable even by experienced teachers, the class teachers for demanding teaching strategies that students find personally unacceptable,

the tutors for not having previously explained how to handle a particular problem) or external agencies (the time of the week, the excitement associated with the end of term, the state of the weather).

To the supervisor it can appear that the student is 'defensive', unwilling to examine his or her own weakness as a source of any difficulties. Yet there may be times when students may, in identifying causes beyond themselves, be doing so because they really do feel they are offering legitimate explanations. It is (they feel) supervisors' ignorance not their own that is exposed, and they feel aggrieved: '... you try and explain why something was happening in such a way and he thinks ... you are trying to defend yourself which implies you have done wrong ...'

To focus apparently exclusively (or even primarily) on their own personal performance can seem to the student teacher like ignoring the individual responsibilities of the other actors in the situation, and also to be ignoring the felt institutional and inter-personal pressures affecting the setting in which any lesson takes place. A student teacher KNOWS that those four girls in 3X are 'scallies' and have been so before he or she arrived on the scene; he or she KNOWS that the class teacher does not like active learning strategies such as simulation which might increase pupils' motivation to learn; he or she KNOWS that colleague Z's treatment of the pupils in the previous lesson makes them less amenable to any authority.

When the student is offering 'alternative' explanations the sub-text goes something like this: 'Look, there are problems here I can do nothing about — and neither can you. You have no influence over the set-up here. You don't know what it's like working with colleagues like Z. And you can escape after the supervisory visit.'

Conclusion

The intricate and demanding skills and behaviours needed by tutors to encourage student teachers to take responsibility for the management of their own learning (ie reflective practice as systematic enquiry into their own performance in order to better understand and improve it) has been, and is, inadequately understood. Within the context of attempts to adopt supervisory features deemed appropriate to encourage such student teacher responsibility, we have identified three dilemmas. It is a not unreasonable speculation that student teachers' experiences of how they are encouraged to be responsible for their own learning influence how they themselves tackle this issue with regard to one-to-one situations with their pupils in school (for example, in dealing with records of achievement and profiling). If this is so, it is important for these experiences to be reviewed thoroughly, *particularly* in the area of supervision.

Further, if, as seems likely, serving teachers are to take more responsibility for the supervision of beginners (and if they take seriously the principle of 'active' learning), they themselves cannot ignore the dilemmas we have identified.

A Tangled Web

Annabelle Dixon

A longstanding member of **Forum's** Editorial Board and an experienced infant teacher, Annabelle Dixon assesses the Key Stage 1 SATs now facing seven year olds and their teachers.

As with apple pie and motherhood, there can be no argument against the assessment of children's learning. There is a tacit agreement that we all accept why; there has been a fair amount of useful discussion about the how, the what, in terms of the content of the national curriculum and the test materials are a difficult matter. Not only now largely closed to professional and useful discussion, they are a virtual 'fait accompli'.

The claim particularly for the earlier key stages, is that the content is based on 'good primary practice'. It is an honourable intention and one can indeed recognise significant elements. That these are also idiosyncratic, not to say plain dotty aspects is also clear to see. The reasons behind the inclusion of both elements are worth separate consideration. This article however, concerns itself with the relevance, to say nothing of wisdom, of adopting, for younger children at least, a seemingly very widely accepted method of coping not only with the content of the national curriculum, but, most importantly, with the subsequent testing and assessment: the Topic.

It is so widely acceptable as a suitable way of pulling together the disparate strands of core and foundation subjects, such a neat way of apparently wearing everything together to create some kind of coherence, *that it is surprising there has been so little criticism of it*. Nothing could be that neat; there surely has to be a snag somewhere. Nothing can and there is.

Yet much thought and many hours are often devoted to the construction of the most detailed topics imaginable. Many will be laid out in a graphic form that is instantly recognizable as the project or topic 'web'. The strategic theme word, eg 'Transport', is most often in a central balloon and spokes radiate to subsidiary balloons each containing the word of some element that has a greater or lesser degree of relationship to the main theme. These are normally so arranged that it can be seen at a glance that all obligatory subjects of the national curriculum and as many attainment targets as possible are conveniently covered by the Topic. Sometimes the subsidiary themes inter-relate with an intricacy that is rarely seen outside anthropological models of kinship patterns. These are indeed the tangled webs, and unintentional although the practice may be, deception is frequently the outcome.

But who is deceiving whom? Surely topics are an unambiguous way of avoiding 'subject' lessons, with infants in particular, and reflect successful primary practice which has tried to move away from such rigidity? In a sense, the claim is justified; enter a class that is engaged on topic work and instead of them all colouring in the same picture of a daffodil as might have been the case when that allotted time was 'Nature

Study', some will be painting, some measuring, some writing etc. etc. The Topic may be much wider than daffodils, too, for example 'Water'. In this instance some might be trying out water proof materials, others making a water clock, another group reading about boats.

The intellectual integration claimed for this diversity of activity will be that in a variety of ways, children will be studying water. But will they? The children reading about boats are reading about boats: they could be floating on treacle as far as most infants would see the relevance of the connection to the main topic. Children making water clocks could be as deeply into the fun of getting wet as they would be into the relevance of design and technology [water]. That is not to say they shouldn't be engaged on such a variety of activities but it is pertinent to ask whose mind the topic web belongs to? Who creates the lines, perceives the coherence? And if the coherence belongs to the maker of the topic web, how, if it is considered important, is that to be conveyed to the participants? Are six year old children going to have the experience and the intellectual sophistication to appreciate the subtlety of the links between the various sub-themes? Links, it should be added, that were not created by them in the first place. It could be argued that it doesn't matter — in which case throwing doubt upon the rationale behind the adoption of the topic based approach.

Much of value has been written about the match and mis-match of that which is being offered young children and asked of them in schools. It goes beyond a common sense approach to the heart of learning itself. Can claims be substantiated that a teacher's choice of theme and its elaborate planning, match how a child of six or seven could understand the underlying concepts and the often tenuous links between the sub-themes? Defenders of the large scale, or mega-topic approach may say that in their planning there's enough variety of activity and experiences for the children to be able to claim that there would be sufficient and appropriate 'matching'.

In practice though, do all the carefully planned activities really seem to match the right stage in the children's cognitive development and their motivational needs? What could be the underlying reasons if they don't, especially if they have been planned in advance to do so? The topic approach itself rarely appears to be questioned; the next step is only too easy to take; the fault must lie with recalcitrant children. For any system to work intelligently though, there has to be feedback; feedback that gives information about the system's effectiveness and how it might be altered to become even more effective. Such feedback can be planned for in as much detail as the original mega-topic web but it is uncommon to find it. Indeed, can those who organise such webs *afford* to contemplate what feedback might be telling them?

A colleague recently had an enlightening experience with her infant class. A group of children asked if they could organise a doll's birthday party, other children became interested and before long, nearly all of them were involved in writing invitations, painting and drawing cards, making cakes and presents etc. etc. It took nearly the whole week and abandoning the input she was going to have made, the teacher worked

alongside the children. Both she and they recognized and were impressed by the high quality of maths, art and written work that had emerged. A fortnight later she introduced what had been one of the original SAT activities, designing a jumble sale poster. An appropriate project, since the school was about to hold a jumble sale. She introduced it with enthusiasm and had plenty of attractive materials for the task. The results though were nowhere near the standard of their previous work on the dolls' birthday party. She is now not only assessing the children's achievements at the different activities but also asking herself, faced with this kind of feedback, some fairly trenchant questions about the place of a totally teacher topic based approach for infants, and what this means for assessment.

The prevalence of the mega-topic approach though, ie one in which the majority of activities within the classroom are related to such a topic, reflects at least two aspects of infant practice about which educationalists should probably have cause for concern. Firstly it could be becoming as much of a straightjacket as the former subject approach and secondly, by focussing attention on trying to provide a catch-all system to cope with the excessive demands of the national curriculum for young children, it appears to muffle what should be genuine grounds for criticism and discussion about such a curriculum.

Looked at in further detail, how could such a topic based approach for younger children be perceived as a straight-jacket? Especially as it appears to offer such a range of activities within each topic. There's probably a choice of two designs as far as these straightjackets go. One is when the Topic Takes Over. Doing 'Transport'? Then the big brick area becomes a bus, the children paint pictures of trains and aeroplanes and block graphs are constructed to show how everyone gets to school etc. etc. Acceptable for a short time, many topics nowadays take the form of a half-term block, or mega-topic, in which every activity is geared towards the main theme. Indeed there are many infant schools that can tell you exactly what is going to be the topic for a particular class or even the whole school two years from now, be it 'Electricity', 'Wheels' or 'Rubbish'. Such play as the children are allowed is highly structured by the teacher around the main theme and nothing is left to chance or, more importantly, choice.

The child who went to the zoo the day before, the one whose cat has died and wants to paint a picture of it, the one who wants to write a song about the school tree being felled, is not just refused access to time and resources to carry out these activities; the chances are that in such a highly structured system no-one knows they even want or need to. The only legitimate activities, their end products already defined, are those chosen by the teacher.

On paper and even in the classroom itself, the apparent degree of organisation is probably impressive but its true effectiveness is likely to be less so. To be effective is to maximise the individual child's potential. How do we or they know their potential unless they are put into situations where they challenge themselves, where they can learn how to go about investigative learning by following up some of their own interests?

Records of Achievement into Act 3

Pat Tunstall

The Director of the London Record of Achievement, based at the University of London Institute of Education and involving 11 London boroughs, up-dates the Records of Achievement story in a sequel to the article by Mary James and Barry Stierer in **Forum** Vol 30 No 2.

Reviewing the changing role of assessment in education in the 1980s, Patricia Broadfoot used the fairy story Cinderella and the ugly sisters to describe developments. In this portrayal, assessment (Cinderella) emerges from its low status (the kitchen) within education policy into a role of central importance (a Princess). As all fairy story goodies are those with whom we are meant to identify, Cinderella is no exception. Once transformed by the fairy godmother — we are never quite sure who she is in the assessment policy pantomime — Cinderella comes to represent the benevolent aspect of assessment, that of the formative, diagnostic type which supports learning and is articulated by Records of Achievement. In this pantomime story, the ‘pumpkin of narrow, norm-referenced and negative assessment’ is turned into a ‘glass coach’ of a ‘new assessment paradigm in which the emphasis is on procedures that are individualized and constructive, comprehensive and relevant’. The article goes on to discuss why assessment is centre stage at present: the reasons do not reflect the conversion of those in power to an appreciation of the benefits of formative assessment; they are more to do with the activities of the ugly sisters which represent alternative forces in assessment: ‘the one convinced that standards can be raised by the pervasive influence of comparison and competition; the other championing the cause of appraisal and accountability’.

This way, when they are older and in a junior class they will then understand the scope and demands of project or topic work because, on an appropriate scale and in their own way as individuals, they have had the opportunities to do so in the infant school.

This is not to say that there should not be class mini-topics, projects or centres of interest which have been thought out beforehand by the teacher, but these will not be overwhelming and will not attempt to do the impossible by trying to square the circle of meeting all the demands of the national curriculum and its attainment targets. There will be a balance between those centres of interest that are chosen by the teacher and those which children will initiate through their own response to life. Importantly, the children’s choices and interests are valued for their own sake which has significant consequences for their growing confidence in themselves as learners and for the subsequent growth of their self-esteem. The teacher also has a much deeper knowledge of the children which can only lead to more effective assessments.

Allegories are useful devices for illustrating roles and characters and showing moral dilemmas. The story of Cinderella works well for Records of Achievement in this respect. This present article continues the assessment story, finds Cinderella’s stepmother, points out the fairy godmother and looks at the extent to which the glass coach of Records of Achievement has been able to proceed without being overturned by all kinds of obstacles set in its path by those ugly sisters. The whole of Patricia Broadfoot’s argument is in fact concerned with the increasing use of assessment as part of the politics of educational control. An issue raised in this article is the extent to which the forces which keep the glass coach on course are doing so on their terms.

Writing in mid-February, I am conscious that we are at the opening of the Third Act in the assessment policy story relating to Records of Achievement: by the time **Forum** is published, we shall be through the overture and into developments.

Let me sketch the story so far. Act One takes place largely between 1984 and 1989. It shows the philosophy of Records of Achievement developing into widespread educational practice. That principles and processes of formative assessment moved from rhetoric to, at the very least, a patchy reality across the country as a whole, was in large part due to the recognition accorded to this development by the Department of Education and Science, backed up by the Technical and

In relation to the mega-topic approach though, perhaps it should be asked whether it is in their anxiety to meet all the requirements of the national curriculum that this system of classroom management has been so widely embraced. It appears to do more to alleviate this anxiety than it does to meet the all round needs of young children. The alternative of stoutly challenging some of the sillier attainment targets as being unrealistic and ill-informed has met with less enthusiasm than devising an elaborate and largely uncritical system of delivering what is required. The mega-topic approach would appear to encompass some of those aspects of ‘good primary practice’ that are rightly recommended as being the appropriate stuff of infant education, but it is a kind of simplistic borrowing without its own sound theoretical rationale. The tangles in the web are there because it’s a spider that doesn’t know how flies operate. The pity of it is that when the large scale topic approach proves ineffective, it will be ‘good primary practice’ that will get the blame, not the way in which it has been misappropriated.

Vocational Education Initiatives. Some of the vision of recording achievement, which came to be called a movement, was caught within that first DES policy document published in 1984 which co-incided with the launch of the nine pilot schemes in England and Wales. The articulation of that vision and its implications for practice was further elaborated through national reports from the Pilot Records of Achievement In Schools Evaluation (PRAISE) team and from HMI. The Report of the Records of Achievement National Steering Committee (RANSC) in January 1989 brought together authoritatively the principles and practice of recording achievement in a way which provided national definitions of meaning. After the consultation on that Report, it was expected that Regulations would be introduced requiring schools to introduce Records of Achievement along the broad lines sketched by RANSC. Here the contrary forces intervened. The Fairy Godmother's influence in the DES had waned. The DES made no acknowledgement that SEAC had even conducted a consultation on Records of Achievement; in August 1989, the letter of reply to Philip Halsey indicated only the government's intentions to introduce Regulations on reporting National Curriculum assessments. Cinderella had been to the ball in high hopes that she might stay there in her new clothes all night; the clock struck twelve and she learnt the reality of her situation.

August 1989 thus saw the opening of Act Two which lasts from the Summer of 1989 until late February 1991. It is a period when Records of Achievement appeared initially to be struggling for existence. The framework for National Curriculum assessment was being created. As anticipated, the Regulations only cover reporting to parents; they do not include Records of Achievement within their scope. They set a 'common minimum foundation' for reporting to parents on pupils' performance both in the National Curriculum and also other subjects and activities. The widespread outrage that the government had rejected Records of Achievement in the Summer of 1989 may have led to the Circular 8/90 in support of the Regulations being more overtly encouraging of Records of Achievement than originally intended.

It is, however, questionable that the DES even in stating its support for Records of Achievement is still using the same language as that used in the RANSC report. We need to recognise that there are shifts in meaning: instead of achievement across and beyond the curriculum, assessment policy now talks about pre-specified attainment in levels; instead of encouragement to collect samples of work as recognition of students' achievement, the focus now is the requirement of samples of work as evidence for statutory assessment; instead of student ownership of a Record of Achievement at 16 years, there is only the need to provide information to parents. Records of Achievement are being made the vehicle for National Curriculum assessments by the DES; there are differences in emphasis and meaning.

The endorsement by the DES of Records of Achievement in Circular 8/90 included its approval of the guidance booklet published by TVEI at the same time. **Recording Achievement and planning Individual Development** contains a chapter on formative

processes as well as advice on the summative document. This increasing interest in Records of Achievement by TVEI was indicative of the new policy decisions for the next phase of Records of Achievement. Although schools producing Records of Achievement knew nothing of what was intended, in December 1990 a prototype National Record of Achievement was launched for limited consultation as a collaborative exercise between the Departments of Education and Science and the Department of Employment.

Thus by the end of Act Two, it can be seen to be TVEI which provides the most emphatic support for retaining the principles and processes of Records of Achievement in national assessment policy. The next Act sees the new change of Record of Achievement fortunes with ministers from both government departments sponsoring the initiative, public funding and a publicity campaign. Within this collaborative effort between the DES and the DE, there seems to be little doubt that it is the Department of Employment which is providing most of the impetus. The DES moves into the position of Cinderella's stepmother, not exactly wicked but not particularly supportive either. The fairy godmother turns out to be the baron who had played a more secondary role until now; he is showing himself to be impatient; he has some cash; he has trade connections.

Into Act Three. At the time of writing, the public consultation on the National Record of Achievement is over. In the course of that consultation, the DES and DE showed themselves more willing to receive responses than they had at first indicated. By all accounts, the document which is to be launched at the end of February will be much more recognisable as a Record of Achievement than the prototype model first put out for consultation. At this stage, we are informed that schools will receive a copy of the National Record of Achievement in March and will be able to trial the summative document. A national evaluation of the trialling will be undertaken during the summer months; the National Record of Achievement will then be in place.

There are a number of key issues which we need to bear in mind in considering the National Record of Achievement. If implemented as planned, the local Record of Achievement summative documents up and down the country, such as that of the London Record of Achievement, will disappear from 1992. Part of the rationale for the National Record of Achievement has been that there is a need for coherence; it is argued that the provision of a single summative document will ensure greater recognition and understanding of what is involved amongst users. In designing a model, therefore, the Departments of Education and Science and of Employment are undertaking much greater prescription in terms of content than was contemplated after the consultation on the RANSC Report. Could we have gained the required greater coherence and recognition but less prescription through introducing Regulations enshrining principles and broad areas of content? In doing so, might we have retained aspects of local and individual ownership which have been so important in the success of Records of Achievement in the past? I tend to think so. We need to be aware

of the extent to which users' needs are controlling the development.

At the beginning of Act Three, the audience has no idea of the measures that have been planned for quality assurance. The prototype model that formed the basis of the consultation was widely criticised for being purely a summative document with no part of its guidance notes relating to the supporting formative processes that involve students or trainees in reviewing, target setting and recording. Without these processes, secured by accreditation and validation processes, there is no hope that the National Record of Achievement will be able to bring about changes in the assessment paradigm. A summative National Record, devoid of process, could entrench the use of assessment purely for the purposes of comparison and competition. The leer on the faces of the ugly sisters would be very visible.

There seems to be a good chance that the lobby for formative processes being incorporated within the guidance for the National Record of Achievement will be heeded. To my knowledge, local and national employer groups have been united in their criticism of the National Record's emphasis on the summative document. Employers have strongly indicated their support for formative processes. It will undoubtedly come down to a question of resources, however. Although we are promised that the folder for the National Record of Achievement will be free in 1991 and 1992, there are no suggestions that schools or colleges will be given increased resourcing to provide more time for review sessions with students. To have expected that would have demonstrated that we were indeed talking about a fairy tale world.

Possibly the most interesting aspects of the National Record of Achievement relate to its potential for post-16. There is a very real need to create coherence in the post-16 phase. The National Record's aims to create a bridge between the academic and vocational, incorporate National Vocational Qualifications within its framework and accredit prior learning are ambitious but command support. Consultation with the interest groups for post-16, particularly the National Council for Vocational Qualifications, is being undertaken in order to clarify issues in implementation. There is no doubt that the support for the National Record of Achievement from employers comes from the need to facilitate progression and continuity. The CBI sees a National Record of Achievement, linked with Individual Action Plans, as an important aspect of its concept of careership and life-long education and training. In this respect, if a National Record can increase access and contribute towards greater flexibility of provision in training and education, it will go some way to increasing equality of opportunity for the individuals concerned. The National Record will be no magic wand in this respect, however.

The National Record of Achievement will require careful evaluation in terms of its effect on individual ownership. The draft prototype model that we saw in December did not require student signatures in any part of the document. Both the ordering and design of the contents conveyed a greater sense of forms that were meant to be filled in about a person rather than a Record of Achievement that was actively owned by

an individual. The sense of a national requirement to supply details about personal interests, activities and experience is also conveyed, which we need to recognise and debate; this is the kind of area concerning control that Patricia Broadfoot was raising in her article.

Responses on the way the Record is suitable for students with Special Educational Needs are also essential. A feature of the London Record of Achievement's summative document has been the way Special Schools have been able to adapt its format for their own students and make it their own.

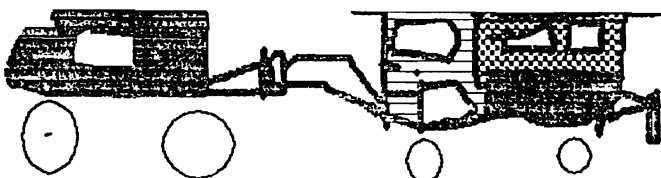
These issues have bearing on the whole concept of what we mean by a Record of Achievement and the kind of safeguards that are essential. Neither the employer fairy godmother nor, of course, the stepmother in her present mood can be relied upon for their sensitivity. It was very significant that the draft model available for consultation contained within it a format for reporting National Curriculum results with supporting guidance notes specifying that completers should comment on the individual student's strengths and 'weaknesses'. Such an inclusion in a Record of Achievement was an illustration that the Department of Education and Science was no longer speaking the same language that was so clearly used in the RANSC Report. We wait to see what amendments have been made in the new version.

In conclusion, what can we realistically hope for from the National Record of Achievement? Much depends on the piloting in 1991 and the nature of the evaluation. There has been anxiety that the schools which will be involved in piloting this year will be those which have more limited experience of Records of Achievement. As in other Record of Achievement schemes, the majority of students in Local Education Authorities subscribing to the London Record of Achievement will have completed their summative document by the time the National Record is on offer and will be unlikely to be involved in the national pilot. We need to be sure that comments from schools with considerable insight and experience in Records of Achievement are incorporated in the evaluation.

The National Record's potential for changing the model of assessment is great; its perils are very considerable. We all need to subject Act Three of this assessment policy's script to a searching analysis. I have spotlighted above just a few of the issues requiring examination. I hope the critics will be there to undertake serious review of the performance throughout the summer. Where Records of Achievement are concerned, the last thing we want is a pantomime.

Reference

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Citizenship education and the Enterprise Culture

Terry Hyland

After teaching in schools and university, Dr Hyland worked in teacher education at Mid-Kent College for five years and has recently been appointed to the University of Warwick.

The impact of the enterprise culture on education over the last decade or so has resulted in a vocationalising of the curriculum, an emphasis on input/output efficiency in the management of schools and colleges, and the promotion of a value in the service of all this which gives pride of place to the pursuit of economic goals and material wealth. On top of all this, there are now proposals to introduce programmes of 'citizenship education' into schools, and I would suggest that this can be seen as part of a strategy to provide social and moral legitimisation for the enterprise ethos.

Vocationalising the Curriculum

The end of the liberal consensus and the re-assertion of the economic and vocational function of education in recent times is typically dated from the time of the Great Debate following Callaghan's Ruskin College speech in 1976. Throughout the years that followed, the role of schools in helping to improve industrial performance was taken up by public figures and politicians such as Arnold Weinstock and Sir Keith Joseph, and was subsequently reflected in various DES publications.

The Green Paper **Education in Schools: A Consultative Document** (DES, 1977) had emphasised the vital role of education in aiding Britain's economic recovery through the improvement of manufacturing industry, and the change of ethos is clearly reflected in **Better Schools** which recommended a 5-16 curriculum which would foster the 'qualities, attitudes, knowledge, understanding and competences which are necessary to equip pupils for working life', and praised the recently introduced Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) for its attempts 'to fit work-related skills within initial full-time education' (DES, 1985, p6).

The influence of this new vocationalism has been widespread and pervasive, perhaps most noticeably in the post-compulsory sector in which the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), at a stroke, took control of 25% of work-related non-advanced further education in 1985/86. In subsequent years the MSC's successor, the (now defunct) Training Agency, through its one hundred regional Training and Enterprise Councils, effectively took charge of most of the TVEI, youth training and enterprise schemes around the country (Jackson, 1988). Competence-based learning, popularised through National Vocational Qualifications, has brought about a revolution in vocational education and training by linking assessment and outcomes to the requirements of employers. The influence of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) now shows signs of spreading to the school sector, and it looks likely that this

powerful body will take over many of the functions now held in abeyance since the recent demise of the Training Agency (Jackson, 1990).

The Schooling Business

The National Curriculum, especially the seemingly HMI inspired language of the early sections of the Education Reform Act (ERA) which refer to a 'balanced and broadly based curriculum' (ERA, Ch 1 Sec 1 (2)), is not straight forwardly in line with the trend towards vocationalism. Indeed, the incoherent and backward-looking nature of the final National Curriculum provisions, as Lawton (1989, pp 48-52) argues, simply defy interpretation except in terms of a confused and desperate attempt by Mr Baker to satisfy a number of contending ideologies each making rival demands on the system. What is certain, however, is that the sections of ERA concerned with the local management of schools (LMS) and with assessment serve to support a perspective which views schooling as a business and education for the majority of pupils as a training programme designed to meet the needs of employers.

The National Curriculum assessment package fully satisfies the bureaucratic demand for a system of national tests which can deliver the required data to compare results for individuals, classes, schools and whole LEAs. Important questions of implementation have still to be settled but even at this stage it appears that the proposals will miss opportunities to reform an examination structure which for years has tended to 'exaggerate the vocational function of secondary schooling' (Lawton, *ibid* p81). Goldstein and Noss have pointed out the dangers of a return to streaming inherent in the TGAT notion of 'levels' and 'stages' of learning, and argue forcefully that the national curriculum assessment system is 'primarily concerned with providing a common currency of test results with which to introduce the ethics and economics of the market place into the education system' (1990, p6).

Such market place ethics are on open display in the LMS proposals of ERA which have accelerated the tendency to view schools as businesses and education as a form of commercial activity. In certain educational circles the new enterprise ethos has been embraced in a naive and crudely uncritical manner. Max Morris, incensed by the report that a Welsh school had established itself as a trading company, has recently taken teachers to task for their collusion in the process of subverting education in this respect. The head teacher of the school in question declared, apparently in all seriousness, that 'turning schools into income-generating businesses is the way ahead for education

in the 1990s' (Smith, 1990, p6). In a similar critical vein, the new president of the NAS/UWT, Mike Carney, has condemned the use of 'marketspeak' in education and lamented the fact that teachers now talk glibly about 'inputs and outputs, of clients, of units and modules, skills, strategies, delivery, consumer choice' (Ward, 1990, p2).

Citizenship and Enterprise

Against such a background it is, perhaps, a surprise to the profession to hear that the idea of education in citizenship is being recommended by people in influential circles. Although there is nothing new in the proposals — the NUT was recommending citizenship education as long ago as 1938 (AEC/NUT) — the timing of their resurrection certainly provides ample scope for speculation. A city technology college committed to the study of citizenship is to be opened in Docklands in September 1991 (Dean, 1990a), and a Speaker's Commission on Citizenship recently reported after a two-year investigation into how best to promote active citizenship in schools, among employers, public authorities and during retirement. A scheme for developing and monitoring citizenship across the curriculum was one of the key recommendations (Dean, 1990b).

These proposals can be regarded as concrete manifestations of a public relations exercise designed to take the edge off the more undesirable products of the enterprise culture. The political origins of this process of moral re-alignment and rearmament can be discerned in Douglas Hurd's *New Statesman* article (27/4/88) in which, after citing Edmund Burke's proposition that 'no cold relation is a zealous citizen', he attempted to argue that the qualities of enterprise and initiative which are essential for the generation of material wealth are also needed to build a family, a neighbourhood and a nation. Mrs Thatcher's disbelief in 'society' only permitted her to offer a rather more oblique message when, addressing the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May 1988, she suggested that there was a spiritual dimension to social and economic arrangements founded on the acceptance of individual responsibility. More recently, Mr MacGregor, through the National Curriculum Council (NCC, 1990), has sought to emphasise the importance he attaches to promoting entrepreneurs with social and moral consciences.

These political messages can be interpreted as a response to warning signs of a social malaise, but none mentions the possibility that the sickness may actually have been caused by the very culture they are seeking to legitimate. Social harmony and a caring society are, no doubt, partly dependent upon a certain level of material wealth but the motive for acquiring wealth is normally economic not altruistic. Moreover, the enterprise ethos implies that seeking wealth is good in itself whereas common sense and experience tell us that this self-interested disposition is parasitic and could not exist without a society in which the moral values of honesty, promise-keeping and respect for others still have some currency.

The value foundation of the enterprise culture celebrates self-interested individualism and materialistic achievement, and it is not surprising that this has produced a state of affairs in which schools

are, as ever, called upon to salvage the moral health of society by promoting the virtues of active citizenship. A schooling system which is itself founded on the individualistic ethics of the market place, however, will not produce the goods in this respect. It needs to be stressed (as I have tried to explain elsewhere, Hyland, 1990) that schools and colleges — and, for that matter, hospitals and prisons — were not established to make profits or generate income. Faced with financial constraints resulting from local management anomalies, committed professionals will obviously give due attention to economic matters, but the crucial distinction between business activity and educational activity needs to be maintained at all times.

The aim of industry and commerce is to make profits by selling goods and services; it needs to be emphasised that there is *no other aim*. Educational establishments, on the other hand, must perform a wide range of complex functions including the provision of appropriate tuition for pupils in a growing number of curriculum areas. Education is a service not a business, and the making of profits is no more the concern of teachers than it is of nurses or prison officers.

Making gadgets for disabled people and campaigning for the re-siting of pelican crossings — two of the acts of good citizenship praised by the Speakers' Commission — are commendable projects but they must be located within an educational and value framework which gives meaning to such socially aware and caring sentiments. Such a framework might even (if the 1986 Education Act will permit this) result in some young people developing questioning and critical attitudes towards a society which has witnessed an increase in homelessness, relative poverty, drug addiction and youth suicide over the last decade or so, in addition to the biggest rise in reported crime since records began in 1857 (*Education Guardian*, 16/10/90).

Citizenship programmes, no matter how well intentioned, will not make much headway without challenging the moral bankruptcy of a system in which the accumulation of personal wealth and the stockpiling of material possessions have such pride of place. Citizenship is concerned with rights, duties and respect for persons, and needs to be supported by a morality in which communal trust and benevolence are regarded as the only proper ways of behaving towards fellow citizens who are ends in themselves not merely means to individual gain. The competitive individualism of the present schooling system needs to be replaced by schools with genuinely caring pastoral policies based on the commitment to co-operation between teachers, pupils and parents.

A programme of citizenship education which stresses such values has some chance of success and, if this forms part of a system of educational reform aimed at fostering the full, all-round development of all pupils, then so much the better. In *The Challenge for the Comprehensive School* Hargreaves (1982) accused secondary schools of being 'deeply imbued with a culture of individualism' (p87) and recommended a solution in the form of the comprehensive ideal which seeks to encourage the fullest active participation from all members of the community. It is this comprehensive ideal that we need to look to at the present time not the divisive policy of establishing CTCs, opting-out and

Facts, Morals and Schools

J. Don Bloom

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The government stresses that with some subjects teaching should be 'factual' while with others there should be a, possibly strong, emphasis on moral teaching. What I am questioning in this article is the validity of that dichotomy. The facts we present in a given lesson are selected from our own paradigm of the subject we are teaching. This selection of facts can become biased and educationally dangerous when presented in schools. Biased because the way we select the 'facts' we present to our students can present a one sided view which can be tantamount to brain washing or political indoctrination; and educationally dangerous because we may be putting blinkers on our students instead of encouraging them to think for themselves and preventing them from making the informed choices which will govern their lives. For example, a firm with strong religious connections recently published a wallchart which is an excellent example of subtle bias through a careful selection of the facts presented. The chart itself was well prepared showing the development of the human embryo and foetus. However it included the words 'After seven weeks this tiny person has a brain, a skeleton and a heart.' Apart from the highly questionable assertion that a seven week old embryo is a person, this statement is only a half truth for all three (brain, skeleton, and heart) are in a very rudimentary condition; but the purpose of that statement is made clear where the teachers' notes state pointedly that the 1967 abortion act allows abortions up to the sixth month. This is immediately followed by a statement: 'If the foetus was born at this time it might live'. True, but only with enormous help from the doctors and nurses. If the notes are going to raise the subject of abortions they should provide a much wider presentation of facts reflecting both sides of the argument. What the notes do not say, for example, is that if abortions are carried out late, ie at six months, there are very serious medical conditions necessitating such an operation; or that 83% of abortions are carried out by the 12th week and 94% by the 16th week; or

that before the 1967 act there was (illegal) abortion on demand for those who could afford it and knew where to go; or that these back street abortionists often killed or caused prolonged ill-health for the poor women who went to them. This was through the lack of skill, knowledge and hygiene by the abortionists who were rarely trained doctors. The 1967 act was introduced to reduce these miserable sequels to the operation, and it has done so. The chart notes state nothing about either the misery caused by unwanted or malformed children; the greatly increased possibility of children born to very young mothers being malformed and unwanted; or the availability and techniques of contraceptive methods. Nor do the notes or the statements on the chart give any hope to a desperate pregnant 14 year-old girl, irrespective of whether she was impregnated by her father, another abusing adult, or her 14 year-old boyfriend.

Sex education should, the government says, include moral teaching. This sounds fine until one tries to define what exactly is meant by moral teaching. While I do not fully accept the definition that 'Morals are the way I think others should behave', I do see that sexual morality has different connotations for different people. Some are concerned to keep sexual morality as a stud farm morality. Copulation should be reserved for breeding purposes only; and it is wicked to try to gain any pleasure from it. On the other hand there is the hedonistic outlook which says that as long as there are no ill effects, such as unwanted pregnancy or the passing on of sexually transmitted diseases, sex is there to be enjoyed. It is a pleasurable activity. Some people find it quite moral to lie around sunbathing in the nude; while moslem women will show only their eyes, and some even keep *them* hidden. So where on this continuum of morality should we draw the line? How are we to decide what is and what is not moral?

Sex is a delicate and emotional subject, or so we are told. My own experience in many years of being involved in sex education is that the parents who are

competitive selection. If citizenship education is to succeed the re-assertion of this ideal must be placed at the centre of a radical value shift which replaces the rampant individualism of the enterprise culture with an other-regarding morality based on community values and interests.

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most 'sensitive' about it are the very ones who are themselves most inhibited. This is not altogether surprising since inhibited parents socialise their children into further inhibitions. The myth is that the children would 'lose their innocence'. Why 'innocence'? To be innocent is to be not guilty of a crime. If that is the case about 90% of the adult population is guilty to a greater or lesser extent of that same crime. The reality is the fear that if the children know about sex then they will immediately put that knowledge into practice. This is rubbish. How many ways do you know of killing a person? I can think of at least half a dozen; but neither you nor I go around killing people. Knowledge does NOT always lead to action. Ignorance is far more dangerous; and a combination of ignorance and inhibition is more dangerous still. I do not need to stress the obvious points that the facts about sex and reproduction should be geared to the age of the pupils, or that if students do not find a course relevant or interesting they will let it drift by them, or that the facts about sex should be set in a suitable context.

Again my own experience has been that parents are very willing for the school to have sex education, particularly if they know what the course is going to comprise. It is a false assumption that all parents have the required theoretical knowledge to teach their children adequately.

But all of this begs the real issue. Why should 'moral' teaching be so important for sex education and not for other subjects? In talking about the battle of Trafalgar why do we not teach about the conditions in the navy at the time; the frequency of the floggings, the sexual abuse of the cabin boys by their captains, the total autocratic authority of the captain over his crew? These raise considerable moral issues which are not normally discussed with the classes. The Spithead and Nore mutineers are often shown as villains, but wasn't theirs a more moral attitude than that of their officers? Admiral Byng shot on his own quarterdeck 'Pour encourager les autres' raises great moral questions; the sort of questions Southey raises in his poem 'After Blenheim' which ends

'And what good came of it at last?'
asked little Peterkin.
'Why that I cannot tell' said he
'save twas a famous victory.'

War itself is a great moral issue, but there are others. The creation of concentration camps and the treatment of women and children by the English troops in the Boer war, the treatment of the indigenous populations of the Empire all raise serious moral questions. The South Sea Bubble and the whole question of financial manipulation for the sake of making a fast buck for the financiers, leaving others in ruin, are moral questions. The action of multinationals, exemplified by Nestles who sell baby milk products by hard sell and unscrupulous advertising to the third world countries where, due to lack of clean water to make up the milk, many babies die from diarrhoea. If their mothers suckled them the babies would be much healthier and less likely to be infected with parasites. This surely is an important moral issue. This raises the whole question of when is a profit moral and when is it not? There is also the question of how a firm's profits should be distributed. Is it right for them to go entirely to the shareholders, or would it not be more moral for profits to be distributed among both shareholders and workforce?

Honesty and integrity are generally considered to be moral virtues (except perhaps by some politicians and senior civil servants who deliberately wish to misinform us), but most advertisements deliberately misinform us. In teaching current affairs should we not talk about the morality of advertising, and by that I do not only mean the content of the advertisement but also of the morality of persuading people to buy things they do not need (and often can't afford) or even to get themselves into debt?

What I am arguing is that morality is not confined to sexual behaviour; that the selection of 'facts' is itself a moral choice and those we present to our students may be adversarial advocacy when, for good pedagogy, we should be presenting both sides of the case so that each individual student may make their own moral decisions.

Reviews

European paradigms

The Education Reform Act: Competition and Control, by Leslie Bash and David Coulby, Cassell Education Limited (1989), pp. 140, pb: £6.95. ISBN 0-304-31768-3.

Despite its ambitious scope and bold intentions, this is a comparatively short book, and its brevity is arguably its one major defect. Many of the crucial topics covered in its 140 pages deserve a fuller discussion and a more penetrating analysis.

The first two chapters outline the political and philosophical context within which the 1988 Education Act was conceived, and the authors themselves admit in the Preface that

'the chapters are in no sense a history of education in the period which preceded the Act but rather a selection of events and ideas that informed the political process' (page 1).

The chapter entitled 'Education Goes to Market' is excellent as an introduction to the type of free-market philosophy associated with Friedrich Hayek; but the other, on Central Control, suffers from the attempt to summarize really complex issues in a few succinct paragraphs — which can all too easily lead to misrepresentation and distortion.

The claim that the voice of the early Black Papers re-emerged as the dominant educational philosophy of the 1980s fails to notice that the New Right agenda which inspired the 1988 Act is far removed from the concerns of 1969; it is important to emphasize that the 'crisis' of the state education system in the mid-1970s was more *synthetic* than *real*; and it is simply wrong to claim that the formation of the Manpower

Services Commission (MSC) was one of the outcomes of the 1976-1977 Great Debate (page 8) — the MSC was, in fact, set up in 1974 under the terms of the Employment Training Act of 1973.

Having said all that, it is important to commend this book for its many positive features. There are very useful and informative sections on the break-up of the Inner London Education Authority, further education and higher education; and the last three chapters examine some of the revealing contradictions both *within* the 1988 Act itself and *between* the Act and wider areas of government policy. The new Agenda outlined in the Postscript is predicated upon 'the slaughter of some sacred cows' while 'reasserting fundamental tenets of educational progress and democracy'.

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Reviews

1988 v. 1981

Special Educational Needs and The National Curriculum: The Impact of The Education Reform Act, edited by Harry Daniels and Jean Ware, Kogan Page in association with the Institute of Education, University of London (1990), pp.68, pb: £8.99. ISBN 0-7494-0179-6.

The Government has repeatedly claimed that the 1988 Education Act will raise the standard of education received by all children. However, a close examination of the likely effects on pupils with special education needs leads towards a very different conclusion. This book, one of the latest in the Institute of Education Bedford Way Series, addresses this issue directly. What becomes clear is that very little coherent thought was given to this group of pupils by those responsible for drafting the 1988 Act, and that the problems which have already begun to develop threaten, in time, to expose the sufficiency of the Government's thinking.

The ramifications of the 1988 Act have led to three major areas of concern for those involved with pupils with special needs. The first issue is the extent to which the rigidity of the National Curriculum is suited to meet the needs of individual pupils. The second is the question of the vulnerability of pupils with non-stated special needs under the new pressures created by Local Management of Schools. The third is the likely fate of services previously provided centrally by Local Education Authorities as funds are increasingly devolved to schools. The six papers in this collection approach these concerns from a number of different viewpoints.

Issues relating to the National Curriculum are tackled in the chapters by Brahm Norwich and Jean Ware. While they both welcome the explicit recognition in the Act of entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum, they are concerned that too great an emphasis on access to the National Curriculum could be a disservice to many pupils. Norwich argues that 'entitlement can become a restraint' if time devoted to the National Curriculum is at the expense of other areas of the curriculum which may have more validity for pupils with special needs. Ware challenges the thinking behind the current trend in schools in relation to pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties towards providing as much access as possible to the National Curriculum. Both argue from the point of view that a pupil's special needs can be met only by an individual curriculum.

Barry Daniels examines the possible effects of Local Management of Schools on pupils with non-stated special needs. Central to his argument is the danger that Section 19 of the Act, which can be used by Headteachers to disapply the National Curriculum on a temporary basis for individual pupils, might be misused. Pupils subject to these measures are to be excluded from assessment arrangements. Pupils with

special needs might thus find themselves exempted from the National Curriculum so that the school can put a gloss on its published results. Daniels argues that the result could be the development of 'an educational underclass' in a system which values competition and casts aside 'casualties who are damaging to the public image'.

Ingrid Lunt addresses the problems which are likely to arise as LEAs come under pressure to reduce their Discretionary Expenditure from 10 per cent to 7 per cent of the General Schools Budget. Services directed towards special educational needs will inevitably come under threat. Assessment arrangements are again the key. 'The problem is that children with special needs do not "yield the best return" and therefore the protection of services to support them will not necessarily be seen as a high priority.' Janet Wright looks at these issues in terms of provision for children with language and communication difficulties. She argues that successful collaboration between teachers and speech therapists will inevitably be under threat if schools have to buy in speech therapy time under LMS.

The conclusion one is left with at the end of this volume is that there is a lot more work to be done. The authors expressly set out to alert both parents and professionals to the dangers resulting from the 1988 Act, and it is clear that unless provision for children with special needs is closely monitored there is likely to be a deterioration in the standard of education many of them receive. As Klaus Wedell points out in his introduction, the 1988 Act shows practically no regard for the development of good practice which followed the Warnock Report and the 1981 Education Act. Nevertheless, the true measure of a school's worth will remain its ability to demonstrate that all its pupils are valued equally.

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Grasp the nettle

Assessment: A Teachers' Guide to the Issues, by Caroline Gipps, Hodder and Stoughton (1990), pp.117, pb: £5.95. ISBN 0-340-51849-9.

A student teacher recently stated that there was too much jargon in my attempted introduction to the assessment issues with which schools are grappling. Perhaps the next generation of teachers will have transformed the language of 'criterion referencing', 'summative' and 'formative assessment' into such everyday good practice that the terms will be consigned to a museum of past educational obsessions. I felt, however, that my mission to prepare students to be articulate participants in the current debate about assessment had been

somewhat snubbed.

Caroline Gipps' book does not, and properly does not, avoid the jargon. She does, however, show that much of it is more rhetoric than real, since there really is no precedent or expertise to support a criterion referenced system of assessment on a national scale. She points out that writing the national curriculum statements of attainment may have been relatively simple, but 'we do not yet know whether they are in the right order'. The question of 'standards' is opened early in the book, with some suggested definitions to unpack the confused sets of notions with which the term is loaded, and it is to the theme of whether testing can actually raise standards that she returns with limited optimism and many notes of caution at the end.

The book is wide-ranging over graded assessments, the work of the Assessment of Performance Unit, GCSE, the national curriculum, and across issues such as bias in assessment which may prevent students from showing what they have truly achieved. It is much more than an overview: it brings together much pertinent research, such as studies by Patricia Murphy and by Roger Murphy on the relationship of multiple choice and closed questions to the performance of boys and girls, and reports of the harmful effects of 'high stakes' assessment by Corbett and Wilson from experience of United States minimum-competency testing. There are glimpses of the classroom, too, as in the reminder that primary pupils are not uncompetitive, nor unaware of who is doing best at maths or reading.

I think teachers will find much that is consonant with their own experience, and much that places their current anxieties in context. I hope also that they can draw from the book some of the strength to be active participants in the future development of curriculum and assessment. I do not wholly go along with Caroline Gipps' statement that 'teachers have little real power to control or influence the path of current educational developments'. It is teachers who can determine whether the national curriculum statements of attainment are in the right order, and indeed if they are the right statements. In one sense of the term 'standards', it does seem possible to say they are rising — in teachers' growing awareness of their own practice, of curriculum issues, of the need to ensure that there is progression and continuity across classroom and age sectors, and in their close scrutiny of past and developing assessment practices. Caroline Gipps' book should make a useful contribution to that growing awareness though I may still have a long way to go in convincing at least one student teacher of that.

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Curate's egg

Britain and a Single Market Europe: Prospects for a Common School Curriculum
by Martin McLean, The Bedford Way Series, Kogan Page, 1998, £8.99, 148 pages.

This is a timely and compact little book. Not quite timely enough, as the author concedes, to take on board the recent momentous changes in Eastern Europe, but well-judged to fill a conspicuous gap in the literature as we contemplate the educational challenges of the Single European Market. In a short space McLean offers a trove of information about the education systems of the European Community's twelve members states and raises crucial questions about their adaptability to the demands of the new economic and social order in Europe. Ostensibly prompted by the (rather unlikely, it seems to me) possibility of the emergence of a pan-European common school curriculum, the study is more provocative and stimulating when it comes to analyzing the rival claims of *universalism* versus *particularism* in school knowledge traditions and what each imply for both nations and their indigenous minorities.

McLean posits three main school knowledge paradigms in Europe — encyclopaedism, naturalism and humanism. Each implies a different set of curriculum priorities and the book is organized around an analysis of each tradition in terms of its different national variants. Encyclopaedism (most prevalent in France, but also in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium and Luxembourg) is characterized by its stress on universalism, rationalism and utility. Humanism (predominantly England and Wales, but also to be found in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Greece) presents a sharp contrast to encyclopaedism, traditionally abandoning the universal, rational and vocational in favour of an emphasis on morality/character, individualism and specialization. Naturalism (in Germany, Holland and Denmark) is a more eclectic tradition falling somewhere between the other two and combining a diluted form of rationalism with various forms of child-, community- and work-centredness.

Whatever one may think of these conceptual categories, they provide a convenient way of grouping the different national school systems and a framework for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of education in each country. The main focus is on England, Germany and France, although there are illuminating vignettes on other countries, not least on Scotland whose educational distinctiveness and historical affinity with mainland Europe makes welcome its separate treatment here.

France is rightly treated as the heartland of educational encyclopaedism, and McLean's analysis adroitly focusses on those aspects of its school tradition which make it in some ways a positive model for a single market curriculum. The encyclopaedic approach to knowledge (illustrated in the typical breadth of the compulsory school curriculum and the avoidance of early specialization) well fits modern economies with their demand for employees with high levels of broad general and vocational education. The universalist ethos, dating back to the Jacobins and the Philosophes

before them, has long been seen in France as an essential prerequisite for equality in education, justifying a degree of centralized uniformity in institutions, curricula, and assessment procedures, which would be deemed intolerable in Britain. Universalism means establishing national norms and standards in a range of subjects as a minimum for *all* children and provides an ostensibly egalitarian rationale for regular testing and even for the practice of *redoublement*, whereby children who do not make the grade have to repeat a year. Rationalism and vocationalism in French education have an equally long historical pedigree and are now manifest in the emphasis placed on maths, philosophy and systematic thought in general education and in the incorporation of technical education within the modern lycee and its baccalaureat programmes. The emphasis on a minimum standard of common achievement in a broad range of subjects has ensured that the majority of pupils in France leave with a reasonable facility in languages, science and maths and their applications, and some grounding in systematic conceptual thought, thus meeting the more obvious pupil requirements of modern European technocracy. The main weakness, as McLean sees it, is that rationalism can easily degenerate into intellectual party games, all *form* without *substance*, whilst rigid universalism can be unyielding to the demands for diversity of 'private' knowledges inherent in multi-faith and multi-cultural societies. What is more, the minority of low achievers who fail to meet the minimum standards are all the more vulnerable in such a climate.

The naturalist traditions of the northern continental states are said to combine the French emphasis on encyclopaedic knowledge with other traditions which put more stress on the individual child (Pestalozzi) or on links with the community (Grundtvig and Danish folksskole) and the work place (German Arbeitslehre vocational programme). The result is an adherence to the principle of national core curricula, combined with a much greater institutional pluralism. Holland, for instance, has a multitude of state-funded denominational and community schools and five different forms of secondary school, whilst Germany retains its tripartite secondary system of Gymnasien, Realschulen and Hauptschulen. Such pluralism allows the Dutch system to reflect community and religious aspirations and the German system to develop effective vocational education in some types of schools, but it also means sacrificing the relative egalitarianism of the French system.

In England and Wales, the humanist emphasis on the individual and moral derives from a pre-democratic view of high culture, and comes at a high price in the modern world. Applied science and vocational education traditionally have been downgraded and, in an elitist system, the expectations for the majority have been low, particularly as regards the methodical acquisition of rational and systematic knowledge. Sensitivity to the individual needs of children has not been matched by responsiveness to the wishes of parents, communities or work places; in fact, the ideal of community has been limited to the enclosed institutional community of the

school, first elaborated in the public school tradition. The humanist curriculum never embodied an encyclopaedic view of necessary rational knowledge, and the long absence of a national curriculum, together with the adoption of the GCE in 1951, with its elective single subject exams, has exacerbated the trend toward early specialization, not unconnected with the school's role in reproducing class divisions. The low standards amongst many students in science, maths and languages could have serious consequences when school leavers begin to compete in a European labour market, and the 1988 Education Act will do little to rectify this. The 'failure to join the mainstream of European educational rationalism', writes McLean, 'threatens to make [England and Wales] economically and socially marginal in a Single Market Europe.'

McLean's comparative approach draws welcome attention to the crucial curriculum questions posed by burgeoning European integration and the unresolved educational problems in all countries, but particularly in the UK. He also effectively highlights many of the differences between the national traditions and their respective strengths and weaknesses. However, his characterizations of national types may seem to some unduly neat and formulaic. The category of naturalism is rather too eclectic to be helpful and Germany, with its peculiar intellectual mix of scientism and metaphysics, does not really fit (as he concedes). It might be objected that the whole project of trying to define national knowledge traditions is somewhat idealist and pays too scant attention to the complex social and economic factors which do as much to determine a country's educational structures as any trans-historical Weltanschauung. Whatever one's views on this, it is certainly a pity that McLean does not illuminate his different school knowledge traditions with more concrete reference to the different national curricula in practice — in the classroom, rather than relying on the generalized rubrics of national policy statements.

Nevertheless, McLean's book lucidly poses a central dilemma for modern education. If the needs of society and the ideals of egalitarianism both demand a certain universalism and uniformity in school curricula, how is this to be achieved without neglecting the more particularistic concerns of families, communities, and minorities? There are no easy answers to this and McLean does not seek to provide them, although Gramsci's notion of developing a hegemonic culture through building on the 'practical' common sense of communities might have been worth further investigation. As it is, the book ends rather abruptly. Having demonstrated rather effectively the uniquely widespread problems faced by English education at the present time, McLean concludes with the traditionally cautious and comparativist injunction against making any judgments about the relative effectiveness of different education systems. The book prompts us to think *otherwise*.

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