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This issue

The School Curriculum: need for a vision

Editorial Board

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The next FORUM

The January 1993 **Forum** aims to analyse how key educational principles and practices are threatened by government policies. Annabelle Dixon and Harvey Wyatt argue why streaming and selection must not be revived and Lee Enright explains why premature subject specialist teaching must be avoided; Roger Seckington writes on KS4, Andy Green on post-16 and Jill Hoffbrand on the training scenario. Liz Thomson explores the plight of teacher education. The implications of Patten's White Paper are exposed and Aileen Fisher reviews the Scottish scene. John Howson examines the crucial role of environmental education.

The White Paper

With all its imperfections, the 1944 Education Act lasted for over 40 years, and its foundations and underlying principles were not seriously questioned until the 1980s. What a contrast with the 1988 Education Act which has been subject to numerous revisions and amendments over the past four years largely because the Government refused to listen to any criticism or advice as the legislation was rushed through Parliament at breakneck speed with the result that many of its key provisions have proved to be either unworkable or inadequate. We have now arrived at a situation where Key Stage Four of the National Curriculum has been virtually abandoned, assessment policy seems to change every month, the powers of headteachers and governors are so ill-defined that no one is sure what to do when the relationship between them breaks down, as has happened recently at Stratford GM School in Newham, East London, and the co-existence in some areas of local authority secondary schools, grant-maintained schools and City Technology Colleges has meant total chaos in the operation of the local authority's admissions procedures.

So in a vain attempt to clear up some of the mess, we now have a new White Paper, **Choice and Diversity: A New Framework for Schools**, to form the basis of new legislation this Autumn. Launching the 64-page document on 28 July, Education Secretary John Patten described it as 'a blueprint for the state system for the next 25 years'. He went on to argue:

> Our proposals are radical, sensible and in line with what parents want . . . This is above all a commonsense White Paper. Its central focus is on choice and diversity.

The White Paper itself argues that FIVE great themes have run through the story of educational change in England and Wales since 1979: quality, diversity, increasing parental choice, greater autonomy for schools and greater accountability. The proposals put forward are intended to complete the process begun by the former Prime Minister in 1979:

> The five themes have provided the framework for the Government's aims, and together define our goal for Britain's education system. The measures necessary to achieve that goal are now largely in place. This White Paper and the proposed legislation that flows from it will complete the process.

Among its many proposals, the White Paper announces that the opting-out process will be 'streamlined' and speeded up, with responsibility for channelling funds to grant-maintained schools handed over to a new statutory body, the Funding Agency for Schools. Local education authorities will eventually have a much diminished role, with limited responsibilities in such areas as special needs, transport and the monitoring of attendance together with permission to **compete** with other bodies to provide services to grant-maintained schools. New 'Education Associations' (or 'hit-squad' management teams), comprising five or six members and including retired heads, will have powers to take over the running of any schools deemed to be 'at risk'. Firm action will be taken to get rid of 1.5 million surplus school places and the Secretary of State will have new powers to close schools, against the wishes of governors and parents, if he deems it 'necessary'. The National Curriculum Council (NCC) and the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC) will be merged and replaced by a new powerful single body: the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA).

It seems that in order for market forces to operate effectively, the Government has to tighten its grip on the education service. As Barry Hugill has pointed out in **The Observer** (2 August), recent education secretaries have instituted 'one of the most centralized, undemocratic and bureaucratic education systems in the Western world'. In future, all schools will be controlled by civil servants in Whitehall with their curriculum and assessment policies determined by a new unaccountable quango staffed by men and women hand-picked by the Secretary of State on the basis of their ideological credentials. Local education authorities will be destroyed because they are hated by the Far Right and they frustrate the workings of the market. The Secretary of State will have the power to remove governors of schools that run into difficulties; to demand the closure of schools with falling rolls while insisting that others increase in size; and to decide whether or not a grant-maintained comprehensive school can 'change its character' and introduce its own selection procedures.

John Patten has, in fact, had very little to say about selection, but here the Conservatives have been very clever. The failure to reintroduce grammar schools in Solihull and elsewhere has convinced them that many middle-class parents are against the whole idea of an eleven-plus selection examination, fearing as they do that able working-class children might secure a grammar-school place, while their own children do badly and find themselves consigned to the local secondary modern. So the obvious answer is **selection by specialization**. Writing in the **New Statesman and Society** in July, shortly before the appearance of the White Paper, John Patten argued that 'specialization' was 'the new S-word that Socialists must come to terms with'. And the White Paper itself announces that, in future, secondary schools will be encouraged to specialize in one or more subjects, in addition to teaching all the subjects of the National Curriculum. This seemingly innocent proposal represents an enormous threat to the comprehensive principle. For in an area like Wandsworth in south London, which is already experimenting with the idea of its secondary schools being able to sell themselves by having expertise in a particular curriculum area, it is obvious that two or three of the schools will be able to win the support of the 'right sort of parents' simply because their specialist strength gives them the status of revamped grammar schools. And the corollary of this is a growing number of disadvantaged schools, half-full of pupils who have no wish to be there. In other words, what we face is a return to the divided system of the 1950s. If we let it happen.

Educational Philosophy: Does it Exist in the 1990s?

Derek Gillard

In her article in the Summer 1992 issue of **Forum**, Liz Thomson pleaded for an informed debate among professionals about the issues raised by the report of the so-called 'Three Wise Men' on primary education. Here, Derek Gillard, Head Teacher of Marston Middle School in Oxford, offers some thoughts in an attempt to contribute to that debate.

Does this Government have a policy for education? Does it have a philosophy of education? Many would argue that it has neither. The fragmentation of educational provision — opting out, City Technology Colleges, selective schools etc — is taken as evidence of a lack of policy or direction. I would argue the reverse — that there is a clear policy here based firmly in elitism. It is never (or at least rarely) stated as a policy, presumably because even this Government recognizes that such a statement would meet with a high level of disapproval.

In my view, the same argument applies to philosophy. The apparent vacuum in this area also disguises a view of education which many (and all **Forum** readers?) would regard as unacceptable. It is a philosophy closely linked to the policy of elitism. It is utilitarian, seeing education as a means of providing the elite with the means for success and an outlook on life which will ensure the maintenance of Tory values, while providing the rest with an education which fosters the skills and attitudes of a compliant workforce and an obedient citizenry. (Witness John Patten's remarks about teaching children about hell).

The promotion of this policy and philosophy has been going on since the late seventies largely by stealth, but it has gained momentum with the implementation of the 1988 Education Act. The policy can be seen in its provisions for open enrolment and publication of 'league tables' (setting school against school); and its philosophy in the establishment of the National Curriculum, a reincarnation of the 1904 Secondary Regulations.

The latest weapon in this war for the minds of teachers is the paper 'Curriculum Organization and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools' by Robin Alexander, Jim Rose and Chris Woodhead.

Despite the fact that this paper contains much that is good common sense, its thrust is undoubtedly to promote a return to streaming and setting on the one hand and to more specialist teaching on the other. The policy of elitism can clearly be seen in the desire for streaming and setting of pupils by ability, and the Government's philosophy of education is evident in its concern for more specialist subject teaching. There is little discussion of the appropriateness of these approaches, little acknowledgement of the vast amount of literature of the last thirty years which demonstrates a developing understanding of the way children learn. Indeed, the conclusions of each section of the paper appear to have been written first, with 'evidence' added as an afterthought to convince readers of the justification for the conclusions. Unfortunately, the evidence often does not support the conclusions. (This is particularly true of section 3, 'Standards of achievement in primary schools').

There is no doubt that the introduction of the National Curriculum itself has pushed teachers in both primary and middle schools towards a more subject-orientated curriculum. The absurd and bizarre edifice of attainment targets and statements at ten levels — constantly changing — has presented teachers with an enormous task in terms of curriculum mapping and planning. Little wonder, then, that many have decided it is easier to cope with if kept in discrete subject areas. Many schools are still attempting to devise appropriate learning experiences for children but the burden of constantly demonstrating which attainment targets are being fulfilled in which subjects is heavy — and, I would argue, totally pointless.

Teachers are now internalizing this oppression, worrying more about meeting legal requirements than about providing an appropriate style of education for their pupils, even where the requirements are more perceived than real.

How do we challenge this situation? I think it is important for teachers to have the opportunity to get off the merry-go-round of government initiatives occasionally to take stock and to think — for themselves — about what education is and what it is for.

I make no apology for believing that most of what Plowden had to say about children and their primary schools was — and still is — absolutely right. I go along with Margaret Donaldson that what we should be doing is extending good primary practice into the lower secondary years, rather than extending dubious secondary practice into the primary years. As Margaret Donaldson wrote in 1978: 'There is pressure now for change at the lower end of the system. And there is a real danger that this pressure might lead to change that would be gravely retrogressive' (Donaldson, 1978). If those words were true in 1978, how much truer they are today!

For me, then, education must be, first and foremost, child-centred. This means starting from where the child is, acknowledging the child's integrity and regarding his/her needs and interests as paramount. 'Don't forget that the child is a living thing, with thoughts and beliefs, hopes and choices, feelings and wishes; helping the child with these must be what education is about, for there is nothing else to educate' (Pring 1976). The

philosophy of this Government (if 'philosophy' is a word which can be used to describe its rag-bag jumble of on-the-hoof decisions) seems to me to be based on the utilitarian view that the child is a unit to be prepared for a life of work, that the child has no individuality of his/her own. In the view of Far Right philosopher Roger Scruton, children enter primary school with no integrity and very few rights as individuals. They are then trained in school to become good citizens. 'They come to the teacher unformed, ignorant and distracted; their important existence as citizens . . . will lie at the end of the educational process and not at the beginning' (Scruton 1987). Compare this with Plowden's view that 'A school . . . is a community in which children learn to live first and foremost as children and not as future adults' (Plowden 1967).

I am committed to the **process** model of the curriculum, even though I acknowledge that content, aims and objectives **do** have a place. How appalling it is now to hear from children that, whichever school they attend, they are all studying the Vikings or the Egyptians or the Tudors and Stuarts: whatever happened to the spontaneous, the unexpected, the creative? Education has become boringly predictable.

I want to allow — indeed, encourage — the child to take a large measure of responsibility for his/her own learning. This means much less teacher direction (though, as Plowden pointed out, there must be advice and support from the teacher) and much more choice for pupils. I despair of education perceived as a series of teacher-prepared worksheets (usually photo-copied from textbooks) through which pupils must work as though they were filling in income-tax forms. This isn't education; it's time filling. Worse, it's time wasting. It is also de-skilling, since it prevents pupils from using their own initiative and a wide range of valuable skills.

I want to see guided discovery reinstated as the only ultimately valid way of learning: I want to see less of the teacher standing in front of the class lecturing (although there is a place for this occasionally). I want to enter a classroom and, after searching, find the teacher engaging with a small group or individual child.

I want to see far more resource-based learning, where pupils choose their areas of study and then have to find the information they need. It is in the finding, collation and use of information, and in sharing and discussing it with others, that much of the educational process lies.

I am not suggesting that traditional subjects don't matter: we do our children no service at all if we don't teach them to read, write and add up. But, ultimately, this is not what education is about. Subjects are a means to an end, not an end in themselves.

I want teachers to have control of the curriculum so that they can implement the above. I have no time for the concept of curriculum as being something **imposed from outside**. 'A curriculum consists of experiences **developed from learners' needs and characteristics** (as opposed to the needs of society), and a large measure of freedom for both teacher and learner is a necessary condition for education of this kind' (Skilbeck quoted in Kelly, 1982). 'The curriculum . . . is internal and organic to the institution, not an extrinsic imposition' (Skilbeck, 1984).

I want no competition between pupils: I don't like house points, gold stars or merits and I certainly don't want to see pupils' progress compared with one another and — heaven forbid — displayed for all to see. If the work has integrity and validity and relevance, no external motivation should be necessary, though the appreciation and praise of teacher and peers are, of course, vital. I have no time for elitism: every member of the school has something to offer which should be valued by all. I don't like tests and I certainly don't want results published to anyone but the pupil him/herself and, where appropriate, to his/her parents or the school to which s/he is transferring. Assessment should be part of the dialogue between teacher and pupil as **equal partners** in the learning process. Education is much more than me telling you something and then testing you to see if you've remembered it: it's about learning and developing together. A good school is 'a community of young and old learning together' (Hadow, 1931). How much longer is it going to take us to learn this lesson?

We already have a National Curriculum which is distorting what education is about. With the re-election of the Tories for a fourth term I am desperately anxious that all we have worked for in the past twenty-five years will be destroyed. A whole generation of teachers will emerge from the colleges with no philosophical understanding of what it means to be educated. Does anyone read Dewey anymore?

With a Secretary of State for Education who believes that to create obedient children all you have to do is teach them about hell, a government that spends huge sums of taxpayers' money on a tiny number of pupils in City Technology Colleges, that divides the schools with opting out, open enrolment and formula funding, that shows little or no interest in pupils with special needs, what are we to make of its philosophy of education? What a mess!

In his book **Personal and Social Education in the Curriculum**, Richard Pring quotes the Principal of an American high school who sends this letter to his teachers on the first day of school:

> 'Dear Teacher
>
> I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:
>
> — Gas chambers built by learned engineers
> — Children poisoned by educated physicians
> — Infants killed by trained nurses
> — Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates.
>
> So I am suspicious of education.
>
> My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmans.
>
> **Reading, writing and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human.**'

In her article in **Forum** (Summer 1992), Liz Thomson suggested that 'the best teachers are those who can be described as thinking, researching and innovative practitioners' and asked (of the report of the Three Wise Men) 'where's the vision?'. It is difficult to have a vision when confronted with a government which is setting such an all-encompasing agenda that is at best irrelevant and at worst destructive. That 'vision' has never been more vital than it is now.

(References on next page)

Beyond the Secret Garden: Observations on Myth and Metaphor in Education

John Lane
John Lane is a Senior Lecturer in the Mathematics Department at Newman College in Birmingham. In this article, he provides a critique of some aspects of the progressive tradition, and argues that the future lies in teachers being empowered to constitute a self-confident profession interacting with the wider community.

Schools cannot overcome the structural inequalities of society: but, in the period of progressive consensus, their ethos was to try. This is no longer tolerable to a political dynasty dedicated to the increase and exploitation of inequality.

Critically, in my view, schools know already how to raise the aspirations of most pupils above the levels at which society can meet them. If schools cannot change society, but can change pupils, there is a crisis. One resolution is for society to change schools, by controlling them. Schools are achieving the wrong kind of success: which is presented as just the right kind of failure to legitimize political intervention.

In this article, I hope to explore some of the 'myths' and 'metaphors' which channel or subvert the discourses of intervention.

The Myth of the Secret Garden

> It was at this time [1960] that the Minister, David Eccles, used the phrase secret garden of the curriculum as an indication of his dislike of an important area closed to public scrutiny and discussion. (Lawton, 1979, p. 13).

Denis Lawton sees this as a watershed, and contrasts it with the robust disclaimer of Education Minister George Tomlinson a decade or so earlier: 'Minister knows nowt about curriculum'.

Eccles' phrase has wider resonance. It picks up neatly two dimensions of analysis and controversy. One, that of secrecy and openness, runs also through such issues as accountability, privacy and surveillance. The other evokes the seminal metaphor, within the 'progressive consensus' of education as horticulture, supported by an account of developmental psychology based on the nurturing of natural growth.

The professional consensus within education was made possible by a wider political and social consensus, in which teachers were generally trusted and respected. Also, most teachers within the tradition were deeply conservative and pragmatic: they invariably adopted a 'progressive' pedagogy out of a sense of fair play rather than as a radical commitment to change society.

I believe that the time has come for us to abandon the secret garden. Its myth will not save us. Although powerful, it was precisely the transformed image of another, reactionary myth of a Golden Age. We just replaced the teacher, at the centre of the classroom, by 'the child'; Authority by Creativity; products by processes; multiplication tables by tables for groups to work at.

This 'progressive' tradition has dominated the literature for three decades. As a paid-up member, I offer a few notes towards a critique of the tradition.

Judging the pace to set for learning remains one of the biggest challenges for teaching. Within the 'progressive' consensus, a kind of soft pseudo-Piagetian account of stages of development was often invoked.

Post-Plowden euphoria provided a legitimizing cloud over some practices which actually called for sharper analysis. Thus, children were said to be **working in groups** (highly approved) when really they were **sitting in groups** but working on individualized textbooks schemes.

Projects were widely held to make sense of 'the seamless robe of learning', but too often were shapeless and loosely-knit, leading instead to fragmentation.

In similar vein, we were often very relaxed about teachers' special interests and phobias. True, 3X wouldn't get much science with Mr. X, but they could catch up later, and meanwhile he was very good at creative writing. Mrs. Y might skip playground games from October to May, but next year they would be skipping through a blizzard with Miss Z.

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Staff development was curiously amateurish and opportunistic. A 'cafeteria style' of offering courses was combined with a career structure which promoted enthusiasts out of the classroom. Cuts in in-service training have compounded the problems.

A commitment to parents and the local community figures strongly in the tradition. Once more, the myth glosses the reality. A patronizing relationship was often on offer, not a partnership. It was **responsive to needs**, as interpreted by teachers, and not **engaged with rights**.

My point here is not to castigate individual teachers or schools. Most teachers experience their work as coping with overload. **It is rather that the profession, seen as a system, has not been geared to developing and consolidating *quality*.** The virtues of patience, tolerance and respect are central to our philosophy of education: but they weaken, when turned back on ourselves, into complacency and orthodoxy. The 'secret' within the secret garden is a safe hothouse where anything goes and anything grows.

The challenges for education are urgent. They cannot be met by teachers alone. Education is underfunded and undervalued. And children live also outside the secret garden, and come to see the world through the alternative prisms of the media, of commercial youth cultures and fantastic role models: the jungle outside is not safe, but it is their future. They outgrow fairy stories:

> We are suggesting that modern child-centred education is an aspect of romantic radical conservatism which involves an emotional turning away from society and an attempt within the confines of education to bring about that transformation of individual consciousness which is seen to be the key to social regeneration. (Sharp and Green, 1975, p.227).

The principles of progressive education are too vital to be blurred by a nostalgic myth. We have to clarify our professional task if we are to deserve the wider support we need.

> We need to open up the secret garden but we must also be sure to plan very carefully where the paths lie. We also need to make sure that we can keep out the elephants. (Lawton, 1979, p. 24).

On Trumpeting and Trampling

Any simplistic demonology for the destruction of the garden would be an extension of the myth. There are many forces outside education imposing changes on it. They include parents and others with legitimate concerns, as well as ignorant career politicians and sinister newspaper tycoons. They are not unified. If they include conspirators, there is no single conspiracy. Indeed, any coherent account must be structured on their inconsistencies. Yet they are powerful and effective.

The rhetoric of consumer choice is fraught with contradictions. **The Parent's Charter** (1991) carries the ambiguous legend 'Raising the Standard'. (I note in passing that, when a Roman army invaded, the standard bearer was sent in first to provoke the enemy and rally the following troops!) Of 19 pages of text, only 2 deal with the theme of partnership. The rest focus on rights to be required from schools and advice on adversarial procedures. Partnership based on mutual trust and respect is hardly perceived as a choice. And the curriculum is out of bounds for parents as for teachers in this curious form of empowerment.

It would be mistaken, though, to regard central control and consumer choice as if they were simply opposite tendencies, in some kind of tension or balance. They co-operate to form a 'pincer movement' to reduce the power of 'the educational establishment'.

Here, increasing central control is a **structural** reality, with individual choice as its inverted **image**. In just the same way, other countervailing forces to central government have been undermined, as the people were 'liberated' from the unions, from local authorities and from the medical establishment. Propaganda has declared such institutions to be insufficiently accountable. **Between the Lone Citizen and the President, in this new polity, there is little room for mediating institutions**. The space they have vacated is of course occupied: but by propaganda and the media, which are not accountable at all.

In this campaign, quality has been redefined in terms of reductionist or contentious indicators. **The Cockcroft Report** (1981) cited the famous 'seven year gap' in achievement to show that mathematics is a difficult subject to learn and to teach. Now the same evidence is held to reveal an unacceptable gap in standards.

Just as the unemployed are blamed for their unemployment, so teachers are blamed for making them unemployable. The 'educational establishment' is cast as a scapegoat, a clever, cohesive and self-regarding 'enemy within'.

A dangerous enemy must be watched.

From Secrecy to Surveillance

Formerly, even the most powerful emperor slept uneasily: for who shall guard the guardians themselves? The modern totalitarian nightmare snaps shut here. Orwell's Winston Smith comes to love Big Brother. In the last and worst case, the guardians internalize the necessity of guarding themselves also.

One direction out of the secret garden leads towards a very different mythical world, the **panopticon** as analysed by Foucault:

> It must be possible to hold the prisoner under permanent observation; every report that can be made about him must be recorded and computed. The theme of the panopticon — at once surveillance and observation, security and knowledge, individualization and totalization, isolation and transparency — found in the prison its privileged locus of realization . . .
>
> . . . the system of moral accounting was made compulsory: an individual report of a uniform kind in every prison, on which the governor or head-warder, the chaplain and the instructor had to fill in their observations on each inmate . . . The prison . . . has to extract unceasingly from the inmate a body of knowledge that will make it possible to transform the penal measure into a penitentiary operation . . . a modification of the inmate that will be of use to society. The governor . . . is a veritable accountant. Each inmate is for him, in the sphere of individual education, a capital invested with penitentiary interest. (Foucault, 1986, pp. 216-219).

This story has uncomfortable resonances within the current debate on education. At issue here is not the **relevance** of assessment, appraisal and accountability: it is their power, within the rhetoric, to subvert the processes of education into 'a modification of the inmate that will be of use to society'. And beyond that

is the question of **who** defines what is of use to society, and with what accountability.

Metaphors and Masters

It is the underlying **intention** in a discourse that gives it its distinctive quality. A poet's metaphor sets us free by illuminating a connection. A propagandist proposes an iron matrix for controlling our thought. The ways in which we are manipulated could in turn subvert our pedagogy:

> Is the Zone of Proximal Development always a blessing? May it not be the source of human vulnerability to persuasion? . . . Is higher ground better ground? **Whose** higher ground? And are those sociohistorical forces that shape the language that then shapes the minds of those who use it, are those forces always benign? The language, after all, is being shaped by massive corporations, by police states, by those who would create an efficient European market or an invincible America living under a shield of lasers. (Bruner, 1986, p. 148).

The dangers are even greater in the moral domain than in the cognitive:

> Middle management in our time tries to hold together the exercise of power in the name of productivity and cost-effectiveness, while still claiming to act on behalf of the personal realm and the cherished values of human concern, sympathy and attention. Hypocrisy is the only way... Lying as routine is next... to maintain credibility the manager must lie about the success of his policies. The momentous energy required by power to hold this contradiction together has created the image-building and public relations industry, so much more pervasive and terrible than mere advertising. The language of image-building deeply penetrates the idiom, the categorical frameworks, the explicanda and systems of explanation, and the common sense of managerialism... (Inglis, 1989, pp.48-49).

Such lies carry the terrible truth of inevitability:

> 'No', said the priest, 'it is not necessary to accept everything as true; one must only accept it as necessary'. 'A melancholy conclusion', said K. 'It turns lying into a universal principle'. (Kafka, 1953, p. 243).

Similarly, the ideology of markets and managerialism colonises educational discourse directly. Schools are defined as **producers** whose survival depends on measurable efficiency in a competitive framework. This posits a fraught corporate unity driven by image construction and the presentation of spurious indicators of performance. Differences are quantified and encoded, to re-emerge as **deficits**. Pupils are products: perhaps, merely, by-products, as managerial targets themselves take centre-stage.

This takes place not just in a public arena but in an arena of publicity. Newspapers make news and construct discourses. They are neither neutral nor accountable:

> The Conservative Government of the time was concerned to contain and marginalize a range of 'groups' felt to be a threat to power: among them, civil servants, the medical profession, social workers, social scientists and all kinds of teachers. In some cases the alignment of the Press with this policy is blatant, as in the **Sun's** routine publication of stories likely to compromise or ridicule local government officers, social workers or teachers. (Fowler, 1991, p. 108).

Despite the powerful sway of propaganda, though, I do not intend to present a deterministic picture here. People are not yet automata, and language itself provides many opportunities for fighting back: in Caliban's words, 'You taught me language; and my profit on't is, I know how to curse'.

Education is itself a Phoenix-like metaphor for renewal and hope, and must always carry the noblest aspirations of equity and fulfilment:

> In this view, a culture is as much a **forum** for negotiating and re-negotiating meaning and for explicating action as it is a set of rules or specifications for action... ways of exploring possible words out of the context of immediate need. Education is (or should be) one of the principal forums for performing this function — though it is often timid in doing so. It is the forum aspect of a culture that gives its participants a role in constantly making and remaking the culture — an **active** role as participants rather than as performing spectators who play out their canonical roles according to rule when the appropriate cues occur. (Bruner, 1986, p.123).

This is the **authentic** voice of the progressive tradition, not its institutionalized and distorted echo. Hope lies in the shared task of making a new culture, not in revisiting a nostalgic myth and still less in fulfilling norms and quotas to satisfy an overseer.

The Sense of the Community

Children have the right to a good way of growing up, as well as to a future with genuine expectations. The lives of too many children at home are fragmented and pressurized. teachers often have to start farther back than with instruction in reading: they have to initiate children into talking with meanings, into stories and conjectures, and into play itself. Remarkable commercial toys and TV experiences encourage children to construct themselves as smaller consuming adults, who have already bypassed the need to learn as children. The first lesson consists of **coming into their own**.

Research and reflection have helped us to improve on the shallow and deterministic sub-Piagetian ideas of former days. The image of a river of time along which a child floats, passing by stage-markers on the bank, is too passive. Floors of a building under construction offer a more dynamic image, and make it easier to see the revisiting and restoring of earlier stages and the provision of scaffolding.

Similarly, the traditional Piagetian tests trained their light-meters on a child's mind searching for the measurable reflection of adult logic. Donaldson (1978) has taught us more respect. The rediscovery of Vygotsky, by Bruner and others, has led us away from the 'lone child coping with the environment' towards a model of social interaction:

> It is not simply that the individual learner works his solo way through the lesson, but that the lesson itself is an exercise in collectivity, one that depends on the attunement of the teacher to the expressions and intents of members of a class. (Bruner, 1986, p. 132).

It would seem a pity to discard this insight in a wider context, and settle for the impotence of a Lone Citizen coping with the State!

Professional self-regulation is another key to development. Responsibility is closely linked with initiative. Teachers need empowerment to create an optimistic, co-operative and critical profession interacting with the wider community. Equity and solidarity are the relevant principles. An urgent task is to move away from divisive career structures. Staff

development needs a higher profile, with opportunities for co-operation across many divides. Such developments could prepare a strong new consensus:

> Judgment is not so much a faculty as a demand that has to be made of all. Everyone has enough 'sense of the common' that he can be expected to show a 'sense of the community', genuine moral and civic solidarity, but that means judgment of right and wrong, and a concern for the 'common good'. (Gadamer, 1979, p. 31).

Such a concern would follow through on the needs of a community aiming for empowerment through education rather than over it. It would need to be honest about the limitations of education, though. A society with a policy of high unemployment is ill-placed to motivate a push for higher standards in schools. And a collection of individual needs is **not** a society:

> Competition is **always** divisive, always opposed to the sense of solidarity, of common fate, and the need for collective response, that is basic to the self-organization of oppressed or exploited groups. (Connell, 1982, p. 172).

Accountability, in this revised context, has several aspects: to the shared aspirations of a pluralistic community; to the network of fellow professionals; and above all to the students themselves

That would be a consensus that would not need a validating myth.

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Empowering The Community

Gilroy Brown and Lyndon Godsall

Gilroy Brown and Lyndon Godsall are Head and Deputy of Foundry School, an inner-city primary school in Birmingham which is rapidly fostering very close links with the community it serves.

'To ensure that all students achieve their full potential, the curriculum — both formal and hidden — should actively discourage inequalities of access **and** outcome on the basis of class, race, sex, sexuality and disability. The curriculum should be secular in its orientation, but should value and take account of the cultures, language, skills and experiences that students bring with them'.

This was the view put forward by Clyde Chitty, Tamara Jakubowska and Ken Jones in the 1991 Hillcole Group publication **Changing the Future.** But what is the present reality? Uniformity, clean lines, a manageable animal. Is this how we are beginning to see the National Curriculum? How often do we now look back with horror at the tragedy of those housing estates that were created from bulldozed land only to emerge as tall, lifeless streamlined buildings with no character, that everyone hates and no one in their right mind would like to live in. Of course the builders of today have learnt their lessons well and now design with the harmony of the land. They try to create character and a feeling of warmth. We wonder if the creators of the National Curriculum could pick up a few tips from such disasters?

The Government have been only too quick to point out that the people should be given the power to influence. Where in the creation of the National Curriculum is the input by the punters? Where in the curriculum is the sensitivity towards oppressed and minority groups? Arriving as we are at the completion of a highly specified national curriculum, it is clear that it neglects the very essence of the motivating factors that promote and encourage learning: the pupil's own cultures and experiences.

Throughout this argument we must not lose sight of the wider context of the National Curriculum as one part in the process of educational reform. That is to say that the curriculum forms just a part of the mechanism for providing information that can easily be summarized and publicized in the form of scores and league tables. Therefore if the curriculum, as we argue, should take account of the pupils' context, it could prove an obstacle for simplistic scoring of one school against another! This would, in turn, cause further problems for the doyens of 'market forces'.

Some would say that parents and the community have no way into participating in discussions that can help shape the curriculum policies of a school. Can they

make a positive contribution to school life and the climate of the school? It is this question that we endeavour to answer in an attempt to move forward positively in creating a curriculum that bears some resemblance to the pupils' needs.

Foundry School sees the parents as not only customers but also **partners,** a situation emphasizing a two-way relationship based on mutual trust and respect. The chances of 'success' are even greater when a school realises that its 'community' stretches beyond the immediate vicinity. The community of a school should include first and foremost the parents together with the variety of groups and bodies that exist within the world outside. Included in these groups are interest groups and pressure groups, each having something of great value to contribute towards a school and helping to create a broad and balanced curriculum.

How, then, can an Inner-City, Multifaith, Multicultural school make a contribution to the curriculum? Furthermore, how can its parents and community hope to have any impact? This requires a particular approach and an enormous challenge, and by some could be seen as revolutionary and even threatening.

At Foundry we needed to define what we meant by curriculum and community and to examine their structure; looking for a way in and a place from which the process for change could start. Throughout, we kept in mind the context in which we were working, not wanting to go against the legislative constraints but to build upon immovable forces to create a genuine inroad from the interested parties — parents and the community.

Educationalists who genuinely believe in the idea of a community school will know that true partnership with the community can be achieved only as a result of clearly thought out strategies and a lengthy process. At the initial stage any school has to have its own philosophy. At Foundry we see the school as part of the community and its function as serving all those who use its services.

We see cultural identity as one of the key factors in a child's experience at school. However, we do not see it to the exclusion of everything else. Many argue that schools are not equipped to support children in this way and a national curriculum can be just what is needed by some to **avoid** getting into this area. We disagree. Many parental groups have addressed these issues by supporting their own and others children at home with cultural studies. Others have found the route to Supplementary Schools. We recognise that there is a lot to be discussed in this area.

We saw the curriculum as every experience the pupils had within the school (both in and out of the classroom) that directly or indirectly affected their sense of worth and well being. We came up with the model of the curriculum being divided into three areas. At the core was the 'Formal Curriculum', the content of learning proposed by the Government. Surrounding this were the 'Extra Curricular Activities' that supported the children's interests. Finally, the 'Hidden Curriculum', the area that is influenced by the **quality** of the relationship between the pupils, their teachers and the parents.

It was important for us to realise that each of these was of equal significance, even though the formal curriculum, which appears to be the most tangible part, seems to be treated as the 'jewel' in the crown. Temptation to pry it loose was to be avoided. In order to ensure that influence in the formal curriculum would be meaningful and longterm, it was important to devise strategies that would identify the best possible route to the core from the outside. At the same time we needed to prepare the teachers and the parents for the process of change that was to follow.

Our strategies had two aims. The first was to get the parents involved in the school working on a partnership basis with us, in and outside of the classroom. The second was to reach a stage where the parents and the wider community influenced the aims and curriculum of the school. It was this partnership that held the key. The goal was already in sight: that of getting the parents involved with the formal curriculum and its planning.

It was here that we felt that parents would define what content within the boundaries of the National Curriculum they would like to see reflected. Links were already there; the school viewed itself as 'open' where everyone had equal access. Parents were also involved in the extra curricular and hidden curriculum. Curriculum evenings had outlined the National Curriculum carefully to parents, allowing them to understand what was going on.

In terms of our first aim, we felt we had already gained the parents' trust and established links. This had been achieved in the following ways:-

Hidden Curriculum

The school made sure that it enabled the parents to have access to the school based on mutually agreed terms. We removed the obstacle of parents always having to make an appointment to see the Head Teacher or other members of staff. This gave the school a kind of openness that was greatly appreciated by the parents. It is also important to add that this system was never abused by the parents either. We made sure that we were always responsive as well as receptive when liaising with the parents.

Extra Curricular

Parents were involved in our extra-curricular clubs in which they shared their wealth of skills. They even played a greater part in the planning and organizing of our many social events. Such events were an ideal opportunity for the school to utilize the vast cultural wealth of our multi-ethnic community. As a result of the access gained through the hidden curriculum, the parents felt confident and competent enough to share certain tasks with the staff and begin to feel as partners in the process.

Formal Curriculum

As a result of the positive interaction between home and school, parents felt confident enough to join members of staff in their classrooms. This means that the parents for the first time were getting involved in the learning process.

Privatization in Education

Geoffrey Walford
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The battle is on over the concept of privatization. In the early months of the year, we saw Labour and Conservative politicians fiercely arguing about whether or not what was happening to the National Health Service could legitimately be called privatization. A fearful Conservative government, running short of time before the April General Election, was attempting to overthrow the ideology that had driven the Thatcher Government for more than a decade. Instead of welcoming the broad conception of privatization which had been widely trumpeted just a few years before, the Major Government was now retreating to a more limited definition restricted to the sale of public assets.

Definitions and ideologies

In contrast to more recent pronouncements, just a few years ago it was widely accepted by both the political Left and the Right that the sale of government-owned monopolies and trading companies to shareholders was merely the most obvious example of what was meant by privatization. Papadakis and Taylor-Gooby,[1] for example, argue that privatization has occurred in areas as diverse as bus deregulation, pensions, residential homes for the elderly, social services and, in particular, health and education. In all cases, there has been a reduction in the level of state provision (although not necessarily state subsidy), and a corresponding encouragement of private services. Madsen Pirie agreed with this broad view of privatization, and writing in a booklet published by the right-wing Adam Smith Institute in 1985,[2] suggested that privatization was a complex and subtle process which takes very different forms in each case. He saw it not as a fixed formula but as a general approach which could generate and focus policy ideas. This diversity was illustrated through a list of about twenty different methods by which privatization had been achieved. The range included the obvious selling of public assets, charging for services, contracting out and repealing of monopolies, but also the broader processes of diluting the public sector, supporting alternative institutions, encouraging 'exit' from state institutions, and divestment.

During the Thatcher years it was this broad view of privatization that provided the ideological justification for a whole range of government policy changes. It centred on a blurring of the boundaries between the state and private provision and an overall shift from the state to the private sector. Moreover, it was recognised that the imposition of the rules of market competition would necessitate an acceptance of the inequalities that might come with it. The recent political debate on privatization has largely focussed on health, but nowhere can the process of privatization be seen more clearly than in what has occurred within education since 1980.

Privatization in education

Since the election of Margaret Thatcher's first government in 1979 a series of separate, yet interlinked, policies have been introduced to support

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In order to ensure that involvement in the learning process was extended to all parents, the school introduced a homework policy. This meant that the parents would be able to see their children's work each week and play a major role in the reinforcement of important skills. They were also asked to make comments as to whether they felt the work was appropriate.

When a school creates channels through which parents can make comments about the work the children are required to do, the process by which the community influences the content of the curriculum can begin.

The whole process takes time but with the help of a governing body that shares the same philosophy, together with the trust of the parents, a lot can be achieved.

It is important that the parents and the wider community feel able to articulate their views in a confident and constructive manner. Schools will need to consider ways in which they can become facilitators for this purpose. By the same token, all members of staff will need to feel able to relate to the community as equals without feeling threatened.

This will be one of the major challenges facing schools in the 90's. With the Education Act requiring schools to be more accountable to the public and parents becoming increasingly aware of how the system works, the community is no longer bewildered by the 'mystique' of the professional teacher.

Schools can no longer assume the position of a castle surrounded by a moat with its drawbridge permanently up. It is time to lower the drawbridge and let the community in, thus encouraging equality of access for all. Schools can only benefit from such a move.

and encourage the private sector of education while gradually decreasing the support given to the state maintained sector. There has been a gradual blurring of the boundaries between the two forms of education provision and a growth in market competition between schools.[3]

The process started with the introduction of the Assisted Places Scheme in 1980 which transferred high ability children from the maintained sector to selected private schools. The parents of some 33,000 pupils currently receive assistance with private schools fees on a scale linked to their incomes. The Scheme acts as a direct financial support for selected high status private schools at a time when funding for state education is under heavy pressure. But, perhaps more important, it also gives ideological support to the whole private sector. For the clear implication of the Scheme is that private schools are 'better' than those in the state sector and that the Government has little faith that its own schools are the right place for aspiring middle-class parents to send their children.

Stuart Sexton, one of the main architects of the Assisted Places Scheme, and educational advisor to two Secretaries of State for Education, has since made it clear that a fully 'privatized' education service was his long-term aim. The Assisted Places Scheme can be seen as the first step in a gradual plan towards the 'eventual introduction of a "market system" truly based upon the supremacy of parental choice, the supremacy of purchasing power'.[4]

While the Government has given strong financial and ideological support to the private schools, the maintained sector has been at the receiving end of various negative elements of the privatization process. For example, school cleaning and school meals have been subject to competitive tendering. The quality of service has played second fiddle to cost.

Within the maintained sector, spending on education overall has not kept up with the necessary demands made on it. A succession of HMI reports throughout the 1980s catalogued the neglect of physical bricks and mortar; and it has become commonplace for parents to paint and decorate classrooms in order to ensure an appropriate environment for their children. Many parents now pay for what were once regarded as the **essentials** of education,[5] and their donations have become increasingly important in maintaining the quality of service and facilities. In addition to providing funds for school trips, new computers, decoration of premises and new equipment, many schools now rely on parents to fund actual staff. It is now common for some teachers and additional auxiliary staff to be dependent on voluntary donations for their salaries. Payment has become a ubiquitous necessity for those parents who demand high standards — thus blurring the line between fee-paying and non-fee-paying schools. The problem is of course, that some parents are more able or willing to donate than are others, and, consequently, the inequalities between schools gradually increase.

Much of the 1988 Education Reform Act must also be seen as part of a rapidly increasing process of privatization of education. The City Technology Colleges were designed to be the flagship of this process.[6] Here, private industry and commerce help finance inner-city technological education alongside government. The Colleges are independent private schools, owned by trusts. They have their own conditions of service and salary scales for teachers, and overall control is vested in governing bodies dominated by industry. They select well-motivated children and give them a standard of education denied to children from less educationally aware backgrounds. As is now well known, the scheme as a whole has met with severe problems and only a few CTCs are in operation, but the increased competition and privatization inherent in the idea was exploited in several more of the 1988 Act's changes.

The Grant Maintained Schools introduced in the 1988 Act are in many ways similar to the National Health Trust hospitals. They were formerly local education authority or voluntary aided schools, but they have opted out of the local democratically-controlled system and now receive all of their funding from central government instead. The governing body now acts as a private trust and controls the budget and policy of the school.

Privatization is also strongly evident in changes to further and higher education. Universities and colleges have been encouraged to become 'less dependent' on money given by government and to sell their knowledge and skills to the highest bidder. Youth training has been overrun by private training colleges, profit-making courses and highly paid consultants. Local training is now dominated by the private industry and commerce dominated Training and Enterprise Councils. New schemes where training vouchers can be spent at private training centres are at the pilot stage.

Recent Privatization in education

The Major Government has denied that it is seeking to privatize either the National Health Service or the education service, yet it has continued to make clear privatizing changes within education. Although former Education Secretary Kenneth Clarke tried to deny it,[7] the most startling example of privatization can be seen to be his proposed changes to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools. In future, individual schools will be able to choose their own team of independent paid consultants to report on the quality of education they provide. How this is expected to ensure that high standards are maintained is difficult to discern; but what it will certainly do is to establish a whole new breed of well-paid private consultants and inspectors.

Further privatization can be seen in Kenneth Clarke's September 1991 announcement that teachers will no longer have to complete a probationary year before being given full qualified teacher status. The change affects those teachers who move directly into the private sector following a year's postgraduate course. It encourages freedom of movement of staff between sectors, and acts to further reduce the reluctance that some teachers have to enter the private sector.

Teacher training was further privatized through the announcement in January 1992 that postgraduate teacher training was to become more school-based. The original intention was that selected schools, from within both the state and the private sector, were to provide

80 per cent of the training for new secondary teachers. This has since been amended by Kenneth Clarke's successor to 66 per cent. Much of the funding for postgraduate secondary training is to be transferred to the schools including selected private schools. As a result, teachers will be able to achieve full qualified teacher status without having set foot in a state school, and the private schools themselves will be able to offer permanent appointments to the most successful students after a 'year-long interview' at the taxpayer's expense.

This blurring of the boundary between the two systems can be seen in several small ways as well. April 1991 saw the first publication of a DES **Statistical Bulletin** devoted to independent schools in England. These data have never been published in this series before, and now take their place in a similar format to Bulletins about the state maintained sector. In the same way, the recently published **Parent's Charter** contains information about the independent sector within it. Parents are given addresses to write to for more information on grant-maintained schools, City Technology Colleges, independent schools and the Assisted Places Scheme. This is probably the first time that the Independent Schools Information Service has received such free publicity in an official DES document. However, in January 1992, Local Authorities were also instructed to act as advertising agents for the private sector. The information they publish for parents must now include full details of the Assisted Places Scheme and of any private schools in their area. All of these moves encourage concerned parents to think of using the private sector as simply **another** individual choice. Rather than fight for high standards for all whilst remaining in the state sector, parents are encouraged to leave the system if they are dissatisfied with what is on offer.

If it becomes law, current legislation contained within the Further and Higher Education Bill will remove all further and sixth form colleges and much adult education from the control of local education authorities. Within this new post-16 sector, the rules of the competitive privatized market will reign, with potentially disastrous effects on provision for the poor, for women and for ethnic minorities.

These recent changes, proposed changes, and the continuance of previous policies show that privatization in education is clearly still part of the new Major Government's strategy. There is still strong financial and ideological support for the private sector and a desire to blur the boundaries between the two sectors. This continuing ideological support can be illustrated by the recent words of Kenneth Clarke about his then role as Education Secretary: 'What we are seeking to do is to persuade parents that state schools **can** have standards which make them a serious option for any parent when deciding whether to exercise their undoubted right to go to independent schools. I am sure that the independent schools will respond by seeking to continue to demonstrate that at independent schools you can get a better education than in the state sector.'[8] Kenneth Clarke's aims were modest: to make state maintained schools a 'serious option' while acknowledging, even championing, the fact that 'a better education' would still be available in the private sector for those with sufficient money to pay.

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Bilingualism and religious education

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The R.E.A.L. Learning Project is a co-operative innovation between the Religious Education Department and Parminder Jasser of the Community Language Department at Lampton. The initial stage of the project received advice and monitoring from Amy Thompson who at the time was co-ordinator of Hounslow's Bilingual Support Project. Further assistance was given by Sham Naib who was then Hounslow's Inspector for Multi-Culturalism.

The Religious Education and Language (R.E.A.L.) Learning Project at Lampton Comprehensive is a school based contribution to the research and development of bilingual education. It draws on previous work done in the LEA as well as the linguistic resources of students and staff at the school in developing a bilingual approach to teaching Sikhism. This article summarises some of the issues that have emerged from the project so far.

Underlying the project is the belief that bilingual education in England is too often restricted to English as Second Language Provision and/or teaching *about* the mother tongue as a Community Language forming a separate part of the curriculum. A fuller concept of bilingual education involves teaching *through* the mother tongue in the mainstream curriculum.[1] To date, however, the fuller understanding of bilingual education has had negligible impact on classroom practice in schools. Even the distinctive example of bilingual education in Wales seems to have done little to prompt classroom research and development in England.

Background to the R.E.A.L. learning project

During 1990-91 Hounslow was the base for a D.E.S. funded initative on bilingual support: The Hounslow Bilingual Support Project.[2] This included Maths being taught in a mainstream classroom through the dual media of English and Panjabi.

The 1975 Bullock Report stressed that:

> No child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold [and] . . . the school should adopt positive attitudes to its pupils' bilingualism and wherever possible should help maintain and deepen their knowledge of their mother tongues.[3]

Other subsequent official statements affirm the value of bilingualism and the importance of the mother tongue. However, there has been a clear reluctance to endorse the use of the mother tongue as a mainstream teaching medium. The Swann Report typifies this ambivalence. First, it affirms that:

> In order to lay the foundations for a genuinely pluralist society the education system must we believe both cater for the linguistic needs of ethnic minority pupils and also take full advantage of the opportunities offered for the education of all pupils by the linguistic diversity of our society today.

It then immediately reveals the limitations of this commitment in practice:

> To avoid misunderstandings, it should be said straightaway that this does not, as will become apparent, mean that teaching of school subjects in languages other than English, save for one area, the modern languagers curriculum . . . [emphasis original][4]

Whilst teaching about the mother tongue through community languages in the modern language curriculum is certainly important there is a danger of tokenism in Swann's approach. Elsewhere in the mainstream curriculum teaching through the mother tongue is seen as appropriate only as support during a transitional stage to functioning solely in English. Thus Swann, Cox, and Section 11 Guidelines see the need for English Language support, but not for Bilingual Support, to continue beyond Stage 1 of English language acquisition. Thompson identifies this as a 'deficit view of bilingualism' because it restricts bilingual education to a form of compensatory provision.[5] It treats bilingualism as a crutch to be discarded as soon as competence in English is reached.[6]

In contrast to this the Bilingual Support Project included an investigation of teaching through the mother tongue in a mainstream subject. This went beyond provision for first stage learners of English who are dependent on support to operate in English at any classroom level. It examined bilingual support for second and third stage bilingual learners. That is to say bilingual students who can engage in all learning activities but require variable degrees of support for more complex language excercises and developing their written work.[7]

The apparent success of this pilot project implied that official guidance imposes unnecessary restrictions on bilingual support by preventing its extension beyond stage 1 learners. Why should bilingual students at stages 2 and 3, and even those at stage 4 that are considered fully functional in English, not benefit from the opportunity to use Panjabi in mainstream classes? Following this lead the R.E.A.L. Learning Project is a contribution towards a more unified and comprehensive approach to bilingual education.

Attitudes to language

Depending on the political context and other factors an emphasis on mother tongues in education can be the basis of exclusion or pacification rather than empowerment.[8] It cannot be overemphasised that all students are entitled to education that supports their full ability in English. However, present policies mean that competence in English is at the expense of minority mother tongues. Despite the rhetoric of equal opportunities and multi-culturalism the education system suffers from a deep rooted linguicism that is shared with many other countries.[9] The predominant tendency is for schools to impose, intentionally or otherwise, a single official language. At the very least this is a waste of language which could be a valuable educational resource for students. In practice it is also likely to have very damaging social consequences for the student, the family and the community.

First, for the student, if a low esteem is given to the mother tongue it can be internalised by students as low esteem for themselves and their cultural background. This often leads to a rejection of the mother tongue in an attempt to assimilate. Given the importance of students having a positive self-image this denigration of such an important part of their identity is extremely serious at a personal level.[10]

Second, for the family, there is the additional concern that generational divides are unnecessarily exaggerated by a language gap. Finally for diaspora Sikh communities language is a bond of social identity. There is widespread concern that this linguistic bond is being weakened and that communities will be increasingly divided by language barriers. On the one hand, non-Panjabi speakers will find it increasingly difficult to paticipate in the worship and cultural heritage of the community. On the other hand, the Sikh community will find it increasingly difficult to retain the loyalty of young Sikhs.

At a theoretical level it might be illuminating to consider this within the framework of symbolic violence and cultural reproduction.[11] In these terms the suppression of Panjabi in the classroom reflects and reinforces real power relationships between language users as social groups. Making connections between what happens in the classroom and the balance of power in society gives an important political context for continuing the development of bilingualism. There is far more at stake than a purely educational innovation and some of the students were quick to make this link. When asked what difference using Panjabi made one student answered "I feel honoured, proud". Others raised questions about why Panjabi wasn't used more in the school.

A whole class approach to bilingual education

The Bilingual Support Project raised the importance of seeing mother tongue use as important for a much wider group than just first stage learners. R.E.A.L. Learning pressed the next question. Can *all* students *including monolingual English students* be enriched through bilingual teaching and resorces in some mainstream lessons?

Religious education offered an obvious area where this might be tried. Lampton has a rich variety of home languages (thirty-eight were identifed in a 1991 survey) the most widespread of which is Panjabi. This fitted in with the summer topic for Year 8 which focussed on the religous life of Sikh families in Britain. The initial stage of the project involved four Year 8 mixed ability forms at the school during the summer term of 1991. All classes were ethnically mixed and about one third of students in each class of about 30 were Panjabi speaking.

Bilingual resourcing and bilingual teaching

Two different aspects of a whole class bilingual approach may be distinguished. First, a more restricted version that involves bilingual resources and the general encouragement of Panjabi in student discussion. This can be termed 'bilingual resourcing'. Second, a fuller version that involves a bilingual teacher being present in the class to optimise the materials and facilitate discussion. This is 'bilingual teaching' in its more complete sense. For reasons that will become clear later R.E.A.L. wished to investigate both forms of bilingual education.

All four classes had a double lesson (70 minutes) per week and were taught with bilingual materials that had been specially developed within the school. Two classes worked with the bilingual materials and were encouraged to use Panjabi in their discussions but only had a monolingual English speaking teacher (i.e. bilingual resourcing). The other two of the classes had both a monolingual English speaking teacher and a bilingual Panjabi speaking teacher (i.e. bilingual teaching in the fuller sense).

Promoting language awareness

In terms of promoting language as an important and enjoyable educational resource R.E.A.L. Learning Project was a great success. Given the heterogenous language backgrounds of the class it was not assumed that all students would gain from the project in the same way. Different benefits were seen as appropriate to different students grouped in four broad categories: Panjabi speaking first stage learners of English; Panjabi speaking bilingual students; Non-Panjabi bilingual students; and monolingual English students.

For Panjabi speaking first stage learners the benefits were obvious in promoting their particiaption in the lesson. Indeed it is only the benefits for first stage learners that seem to recognised by official statements on bilingual education. However, contrary to the effects of approaches based on official guidance the difference made by R.E.A.L.'s whole class approach is that the link between the use of mother-tongue and being deficient in English was broken. This is vitally important for the self-esteem of students and the esteem in which they hold their home language. In view of the evidence that low esteem given to the mother tongue can lead to its rejection by bilingual students the significance of this must not be underestimated.[12]

For Panjabi speaking bilingual students at Stage 2 and above there was the possibility of choice in language medium. At first careful work was needed to generate the right atmosphere and provide security and status within the classroom for the use of the mother tongue. Steps were taken to encourage students to see

that both language mediums were of equal significance. The lead role in whole class activities was increasingly shared and gradually this led up to times when the whole class might be adressed in Panjabi. In this environment even Stage 4 bilingual students fully functional in English needed little encouragement to frequently opt for Panjabi. Given what has already been said the value of being able to make this choice should be seen as crucially important. For bilingual speakers of other languages there were readily recognised implications about the new classroom status and value of their own mother tongues.

For monolingual students there was the value of exposure to and participation in another language. At first there was a concern that the project might be criticised by monolingual parents or students unconvinced by its educational value for monolingual speakers. Fortunately this was not the case. There wasn't a single complaint and the vast majority of monolingual students took to the project with great enthusiasm. In this it doubtless helped that students from all language groups could see the clear links between the language and the insights it gave into the subject material. Monolingual students were easily convinced that bilingual education not only enriched their understanding of language but helped in their religious understanding of Sikhism and Sikh family life.

Implications for bilingual education

Classroom observation, video-recordings and follow-up interviews were used to assess the effectiveness of the different approaches. It seemed that bilingual resources, even when used on their own, made a significant difference to the class if they were introduced in an appropriate way by a monolingual teacher. Not surprisingly, however, the classes which had the bilingual teacher made far more of the bilingual materials. The opportunity for bilingual teachers to deepen understanding of the resources through oral work offers far more flexible opportunities for learning. Judged by educational criteria bilingual teaching rather than bilingual resources is clearly the better course to follow.

In practice the choice between bilingual teaching and bilingual resourcing is not as straightforward. Bilingual teaching has major staffing implications since bilingual religious education specialists are regrettably rare. For bilingual teaching monolingual religous education teachers would have to work in partnership with bilingual support teachers. We strongly believe that such team-teaching support should be staffed at a level so that it is available wherever students might benefit from it. However, given the current level of education underfunding this seems highly unlikely. In our own case team-teaching was only possible because of the dedication of the Community Language teacher who volunteered her free periods to the project. Given the return of the Conservative Government in April 1992 it is extremely unlikely that this problem of resourcing will improve. Therefore, although bilingual teaching is clearly preferable wherever possible, until educational priorities change the development of bilingual materials may have to be the main priority for classroom teachers. At Lampton the next stage of the project has become developing bilingual resources.

Conclusion

The need for more cohesive policy and practice for bilingual education is clear. In developing this further the desirability of mainstream teachers working with Language Support teachers at a school based level is obvious.

In our own case perhaps the most important outcome of the project was what it revealed about the overall atmosphere in a mainstream classroom of a multi-cultural school. A language that before had been virtually silent in the class suddenly had a high and open presence. After finishing the first stage of the project and reverting to more traditional classroom methods the old silence has largely returned. However, unlike before it is impossible not to question this or take it as a natural or normal educational state. A valuable educational resource and an important part of the social identity of many students is being forced to the margins of student life, excluded by the monolingual expectations that are dominant in school and society. One lasting outcome of R.E.A.L. is that most who have been involved with it, students and teachers, will in future be much more aware of, and disturbed by, the sound of false silence.

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Key Stage Four: An Opportunity

Ian Campbell
Ian Campbell is the Deputy Headteacher of East Birmingham Hospital School. He has taught in comprehensive schools in London and Birmingham, working with older pupils with special educational needs.

In the Spring 1992 issue of **Forum**, Clyde Chitty catalogues with great clarity the considerable shifts in government policy since 1988 with regard to the implementation of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 4. He shows how the Government abandoned the position of expecting that all ten National Curriculum subjects should remain compulsory until the end of Year 11, finally announcing in January 1991, that only five subjects had to be studied to the end of Key Stage 4. He traces the re-emergence of support for vocational alternatives to the academic curriculum, and links this both to factional struggles within the Conservative Party and to changing economic circumstances.

The purpose of this article is not to defend the Government's decision-making, which seems to have been a retreat under pressure from the hastily conceived framework of the 1988 Act, but to examine Clyde Chitty's conclusion that these measures are "disastrous". It is my belief that a differentiated curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is not only in the best interest of the pupils themselves, but also a prerequisite if comprehensive schools are to meet many of the problems they face today.

Most teachers involved in secondary education are all too familiar with the process by which large numbers of eager and expectant 11 year olds slowly change during the next five years into young people whose attitudes are very different. If we are fortunate, these pupils may continue to tolerate their education, although with little enthusiasm, but in many schools, they are just as likely to express their disapproval through misbehaviour, or simply by voting with their feet. The causes of this phenomenon are doubtless complex, and the responsibility does not lie with schools alone. However, we cannot pretend that the reasons are not in some way related to the failure of the curriculum to meet young people's needs.

I will attempt to justify this view both by reference to the views put forward by HMI prior to the 1988 Education Act, and by considering the specific issue of motivation. I will then go on to suggest that approaches to the curriculum which have been developed in Europe indicate a way forward.

Broad and balanced or differentiated and relevant?

Many supporters of comprehensive education in the late 1970's and early 1980's were greatly encouraged by the views of HMI. In a series of reports, beginning with **Curriculum 11-16** (1977), and culminating in **The Curriculum from 5 to 16** (1985), HMI developed an approach to the curriculum which was both forward thinking and influential among educationalists. Key elements of their approach included a view of the curriculum involving various areas of learning and experience, and an emphasis on the need for the curriculum to have characteristics of breadth, balance, relevance, and differentiation. However, as Clyde Chitty points out, these views seemed to have little influence on the way the National Curriculum was actually drawn up. To widespread dismay, a narrow subject-based approach was adopted, with the ten core and foundation subjects conveniently divided into ten levels, each for the purposes of assessment and reporting.

As is well known, the Government's curricular reforms were widely attacked from the outset. However, the vast majority of the criticism seemed to focus on the issues of breadth and balance. What appeared to be at issue was not **whether** it was appropriate for pupils to have a common curriculum, but what **form** it should take. Considerable discussion took place regarding the content of the various programmes of study, the relative weight which should be given to each subject on the timetable, and whether these subjects could be delivered effectively through cross-curricular approaches. The underlying assumption seemed to be that the National Curriculum would occupy most of the timetable, even in the last years of secondary education, and that some pupils would simply not progress as far through it as others. In other words, apart from those cases where disapplication would be needed due to pupils' temporary or permanent special needs, the National Curriculum, if it could be got right, would be appropriate for all.

The need for the curriculum to be relevant and differentiated was not nearly so evident in this debate, despite the clear lead which had been given by HMI. in terms of relevance:

> The curriculum should be relevant in the sense that it is seen by pupils to meet their present and prospective needs. Overall, what is taught and learned should be worth learning in that it improves pupils' grasp of the subject matter and enhances their enjoyment of it and their mastery of the skills required; increases their understanding of themselves and the world in which they are growing up; raises their confidence and competence in controlling events and coping with widening expectations and demands; and progressively equips them with the knowledge and skills needed in adult working life. Such a curriculum will be practical in that

it serves useful purposes and is seen to do so by pupils, their parents and the wider society (DES 1985).

In criticizing the Government's retreat from the National Curriculum at Key Stage 4, could anyone seriously argue that the original curriculum proposals met these kind of criteria?

Similarly, in terms of differentiation:

> The curriculum has to satisfy two seemingly contradictory requirements. On the one hand it has to reflect the broad aims of education which hold good for all children, whatever their capabilities, and whatever the schools they attend. On the other hand it has to allow for differences in the abilities and other characteristics of children, even of the same age . . . If it is to be effective, the school curriculum must allow for differences (DES, 1980).

This is particularly so for pupils in secondary schools:

> As pupils grow older, their interests and aptitudes become more sharply focused and developed. A greater differentiation of treatment is called for . . . (DES, 1985).

Under the original proposals for Key Stage 4, with the National Curriculum occupying the vast bulk of the timetable, this kind of differentiation was simply not possible. Not only would many pupils be forced to do subjects in which they had little interest or aptitude, but other areas of the curriculum would be marginalized through not being part of the National Curriculum, with serious implications for their resourcing. The consequences of these two trends would surely have created a crisis in many schools. The Government's change of policy may have come just in time.

Motivation

The recent BBC2 investigation "Learning to Fail" (broadcast on 14th January 1992), quoted the following revealing statistics with regard to the proportion of 16 — 18 year olds in full time education and training. In West Germany the figure was 83%*, in France 69% and in the United Kingdom 36%. Similarly, with regard to the proportion of the population achieving an educational standard of two A-Levels or the equivalent (in academic or practical subjects), the figures were: France 37%, West Germany 30% and the UK 17%. The programmes concerned argued convincingly that these differences illustrated a considerable failure within education in Britain.

Even more revealing were the reasons given by a sample of young people in the UK for not continuing their education **beyond** the age of 16. While 60% of the sample interviewed gave as a reason "I want to earn money", the next three most popular explanations have a direct bearing on this discussion. These were "I didn't like school" (39%), "I didn't want to study any more" (36%), and "I didn't do well enough at school" (23%).

These responses surely indicate a widespread failure of the curriculum to meet the needs of older secondary pupils. The sample of young people were also asked what would have made them stay on in education. The two most popular responses were "A better experience of school" (46%) and "Relating school to work" (38%). The implications are clear: the combination of frequent experience of failure and a common perception that the curriculum is not relevant to adult needs is having an enormous effect on the attitudes of many young people at a crucial stage of their lives.

My own research into the attitudes of a group of teenagers who have rejected comprehensive education supports these findings. While the curriculum is certainly not the only issue (class size, teaching styles, and the failure of pastoral care structures are also very important), it certainly has a crucial bearing. The following extract from a group interview illustrates the point quite bluntly.

— What did you think about the subjects you had to do?
— They gave you subjects that they **knew** you didn't like.

What kind of response should be made to findings such as these? Clyde Chitty quotes the former Education Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, speaking in January 1991:

> I believe we should not impose on young people a rigid curriculum that leaves little scope for choice. By the age of 14, young people are beginning to look at what lies beyond compulsory schooling, whether in work or further study. We must harness that sense of anticipation if every pupil is to have the chance of developing to the full.

Clarke went on to say:

> It is simply not possible to have both the 10-course set menu and . . . provision for RE . . . plus the **a la carte** selections for some. A decision has to be made that leans one way or the other. I have decided, and I have inclined towards more flexibility and choice for these older pupils, their parents and teachers (quoted in Maclure, 1992).

It is revealing to compare these remarks, with the argument for a differentiated curriculum for older pupils put forward by Professor A.H. Halsey on the Channel 4 programme "Dispatches" (23 October 1991):

> Children are motivated by many things. We can't afford to throw away any of those roots of motivation. Even now we are still biasing our attitudes and our resources in favour of the minority and ignoring what in the end must be satisfied — the rightful demands of the majority.

There is the opportunity here for agreement across a broad range of opinion. We should not waste it by arguing for the retention of a curriculum in which all but the most academically are likely to fail. We should attempt instead to participate in establishing a range of curricular alternatives which would enable far more pupils to succeed.

A Way Forward?

The episode of "Dispatches" referred to above showed the work of the "Channel 4 Commission on Education". It featured a detailed investigation of the curricular alternatives offered to young people in Germany and the Netherlands, and posed the question of why do 'less academic' young people elsewhere in Europe do so much better than in Britain. The programme argued that elsewhere in Europe, in contrast to the general practice in Britain:

— They provide high quality practical education.
— They use practical studies to teach academic subjects.
— They insist on high standards.
— There is no stigma regarding the path chosen.

The Commission therefore recommended that at the age of 14, pupils should choose an academic, technical

or vocational path. Pupils opting for technical or vocational education would have to continue with academic studies, but, it was argued, the chance to learn adult skills would motivate pupils to 'master' vital academic skills that might have been neglected otherwise.

It would be easy to claim that this is not a way forward at all but merely a path back to the system that preceded comprehensive education and so patently failed many young people. There are two key issues here. The first is that of stigma: it is certainly necessary to rid ourselves once and for all of the values and structures that recognize academic achievement as 'superior' to all other forms of achievement. The second is that of the quality of the technical and vocational alternatives: "Dispatches" showed clearly that current arrangements in the field of Design and Technology in Britain do not measure up to the Government's own objectives let alone the standard in Germany. For instance, a group of teachers in Germany were shown discussing GCSE papers in Design Technology and found them 'suitable for 11 or 12 year old pupils'. This was followed by the revealing spectacle of a group of 'lower ability' German school students discussing in English why the **question** on a GCSE paper was actually wrong. There is a great deal to be done if we are to reach European standards in this respect, and there are enormous implications for the resourcing of schools and the training of teachers, but there is a clear alternative if the Government is serious about choice for older secondary pupils.

Conclusion

For many years education in this country has been far too heavily focused on the needs of the most academically able pupils. The fundamental aim of comprehensive education was to reverse this tendency by providing equality of opportunity for all children. The original National Curriculum proposals for Key Stage 4 did very little to further this aim, and we should not be sorry to see them withdrawn. Many statements made by Ministers recently seem entirely sensible, and while the Government is in retreat, it should be the responsibility of progressive educationalists to sieze the opportunity to establish a series of curriculum alternatives at Key Stage 4. These should enable all children to follow their interests, experience success and prepare for adult life. In this way, it would be possible to raise the 'standards' which apparently cause the Government so much concern.

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*This figure for West Germany actually includes **part-time** as well as full-time students. The BBC2 programme failed to make this clear (Editor).

Action Research in Schools — Getting the most out of INSET funds

Frank Carruthers
Frank Carruthers is headteacher at Whiston Willis Primary School in Knowsley on Merseyside. Here he describes the success of action research projects which have formed the core of a management course for teachers he and five Knowsley colleagues run: Dave Newton, Ruth Owens, Colin Oxley, Norman Sandford and Brian Sumner.

Over the past few years, funding for In-Service Teacher Training has changed dramatically. Money for long courses has diminished sharply and instead, schools receive funds through the GEST system of funding and are expected to make it available to staff, following nationally determined guidelines while at the same time balancing school needs with teachers' own professional needs.

The Department for Education acknowledges the importance of management training by giving it its our budget heading in the new system. Schools today, with delegated powers of finance, personnel and planning, will be better equipped to face a future in which competition among schools (however much we may dislike it) features strongly, if their staffs are able to contribute effectively to whole school management policies that make the most efficient use of available resources, human and material.

But with schools receiving only a finite sum within the management budget (in the case of the school where I am head, a large suburban primary school, we received £362 during the last financial year for this purpose), how can that be stretched to give enough value so that the whole school can benefit?

The approach we have taken is to design a course which not only trains individuals in the theory and practice of management but which stresses school-based action research in issues relevant to the particular institution the teacher comes from.

The course ran for the first time in the year 1991-2 over three terms and attracted 19 teachers currently working in three sectors of Knowsley schools — Primary, Special and Secondary. It has been driven by four assignments undertaken by the teachers in their own schools, each one arising from a taught module. Completion of the four assignments entitles the teacher to a Certificate in the Advanced Studies of Education (C.A.S.E.) from Liverpool University.

The benefits of running a course that is certificated have been very evident in the high standard of assignments produced; and it has unquestionably helped to motivate the participants in the action-research projects, at a time when they are already heavily committed with their own job descriptions. 17 course members have been awarded Certificates, many indeed with High Passes which they are able to take forward to modular Advanced Diplomas and Higher Degrees.

I want to spend the bulk of this article detailing some of the research and its impact on schools, and then to finish with a few points we have gathered from feedback from participants — points that may well assist others planning courses similar to ours.

At one large Comprehensive School in the Borough, one teacher (Derek), a Head of Year with a number of years behind him as a Department Head, chose to look at the line management evident in his school for his first assignment (which followed the module on Leadership and Organisation). Having first interviewed senior managers in school and put together their views on the overt structure of the school, he then interviewed a sample of staff to find out their perceptions. What he found was a significant discrepancy between the formal structure and the "hidden organisation". He was able to report to a meeting of the senior management team not only his findings but a number of useful suggestions to help bridge the gap.

For example, line management for the technical assistants who work with teachers in Science, Technology, Computers, etc., was unclear and needed to be more specific in order to maximise their effectiveness. Proper communication channels between teaching staff and non-teaching/clerical/caretaking staff needed improving if they were to feel part of the whole school community. As a result, new job descriptions have been written and communication systems developed.

As the school's Staff Development Officer enthused to me: the exercise has been very similar to that which an outside consultant might charge £600 for. And it has been the more effective because the author has "chalkface" credibility.

His second assignment — which followed the module on Planning and Delegation — began as a plan to include a small number of departments in a cross-curricular topic, but generated considerable support from all staff. The plan became a full-blown school project, lasting a fortnight, with the title "Prescot Looks Back to the Future", encompassing environmental issues, economic awareness and citizenship. Prior to the event taking place in the

Summer Term, the plan attracted much outside interest and has been given an Education, Industry Partnership Award (E.I.P.A.).

A third assignment — following the module on Team Building and Time Management — surveyed time available to the teaching staff, whose job descriptions carried some managerial roles. For this, he drew upon a model of staff development used in the retail industry in which there is a target of providing 20% of the employee's time for management purposes (for appropriate personnel). He produced time logs for 35 members of staff which they were asked to complete over one week, and the results (in the form of charts of four categories of staff: main grade, Subject Co-ordinators, Faculty and Year Heads, Senior Management) showed that only three staff had the ideal 20% allotted to them.

The senior management team have to wrestle with the consequences of the report: Should more staff be employed? Should there be a longer school day? Should job descriptions be re-examined? How many 'lower level' clerical tasks can be delegated to non-teaching staff? Should more non-teaching assistants be employed?

These three assignments have provided the school with an excellent return, like the examples from the next school, a large Primary School surviving on a tight INSET budget.

This class teacher (Jane), a main grade teacher with responsibilities in Technology but no allowance available to go with them, has made a major impact on staff thinking by the way she has fully involved them in each of her assignments. One looked at the changing role of head and deputy in the light of the 1986 and 1988 legislation; in a second assignment, she looked at her own use of time, and, though she didn't involve staff in the time log, took the opportunity to involve them in the results.

For her final assignment, the teacher set about measuring the stress levels in the staff at school and included in her questionnaire non-teaching as well as teaching staff. She wrote up her findings, referring at length to her background reading, and in addition produced a user-friendly staff handbook on coping with stress, which all staff have received.

The headteacher at this school has been surprised at the level of interest these assignments have generated and the way they have contributed to team building among the staff. Not only providing the teacher with a focus of attention on school, they have attracted the interest of the whole staff.

At a school for children with multiple handicaps aged 2 to 18 years, one course member (Sue), a teacher with special responsibilities for pupils aged 11-18 years, took as an assignment topic the communication systems within and outside the school. This school involves professionals from a number of disciplines and interests — teaching and its ancillary help, medical, social service and parental. Communication links in this school of 87 pupils are complex. The teacher took a cross section of staff and parents' views and has highlighted the issue of how information is passed between the various contributors to the management structure. Further, correspondence with parents is now under review.

A timely piece of research on Appraisal schemes has recently been completed by one teacher (Alistair) at an 11-16 Comprehensive School in the Borough with 780 on a rising roll and 49 staff. The school is becoming involved in the first phase of Knowsley's scheme in September 1992 and the study focussed on the problems the school is likely to face given an hierarchical model and a senior management team already stretched by National Curriculum and external examination requirements. Proposals from the report have been taken on by the school's Appraisal Committee, who have welcomed the opportunity for an in-depth study this assignment has offered. It has helped to point the way to whole school INSET on Appraisal in the coming months.

A whole-school Technology development plan was the subject of a further assignment by a teacher (Steve) at a newly amalgamated junior and infants school. The teacher is an allowance holding co-ordinator and used the well known Coverdale approach to assist him. The significance here is not the Technology plan itself but the fact that the teacher has subsequently introduced the technique to all staff, who have begun to compile three-year development plans for each curriculum area in the new school. The headteacher is well pleased with the results!

Finally, a few words on organising what has been a course successful beyond the planners' expectations. The course being led by a team of practising teachers has given us the opportunity to act as tutors to the participants — each of us has responsibility for three or four. The course members report this has been very significant in helping them achieve their personal goals within the course. There is no doubt that had we not shared the task of designing and delivering the course and had there been fewer of us to act as tutors, then the course would have struggled to achieve the same success.

In order to assist schools in the commitment they have to make when sending an individual on a course spanning 3 terms, we have tried to strike a balance between demands on school time and twilight/weekend time. As a result, schools need to provide expensive teacher cover for only four afternoons in the whole year. In addition, all tutoring sessions have been outside classroom hours. All this has obviously increased the pressure on course members to commit maximum time and effort to the course. Quite obviously, their commitment was sustained because they valued the course content and the action research.

A final point to emphasise is the cross-phase nature of the course. Participants have benefited from working with colleagues from three educational settings, and not just their own.

Our target has been to reach as many classroom teachers as possible, provide them with background in management theory and with skills they will find useful in their professional development, while at the same time to offer schools the opportunity for in-depth study of their current structures. Perhaps the most pleasing feedback has been to hear classroom teachers speak of the fillip to their kudos they have earned from school colleagues by the impact of their action research projects.

Sex Education in Schools

Gavin Burrows
This is a revised version of an assignment originally written for one of Clyde Chitty's PGCE courses at the University of Birmingham. Having just completed his PGCE year, the author now teaches Science at Little Heath School in Reading.

The pastoral curriculum of Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme of a school should be one of its primary concerns, operating in a complementary partnership with the academic concerns of the (now National) curriculum.

In this article, I shall focus my attention on a single facet of the P.S.E. curriculum, that of sex education — an area about which controversy continues to rage freely. It remains an important, if particularly contentious, issue at present. My interest in this area stems partly from my Teaching Practice experiences at a large grant-maintained school in Birmingham, where I taught aspects of sex education as a science teacher and as a part of a science course. Although I obviously scratched only the surface of the subject in the teaching I did, it was enough to arouse my interest and give me a limited insight into what seems to be an almost endlessly complex issue.

In this article, I shall confine my attention to a handful of areas. I will first consider how the aims of a programme of effective sex education might be defined and what, broadly speaking, should be contained within such a programme. From this I shall move on to a detailed consideration of two issues in sex education which seem of particular concern at the time of writing: HIV/AIDS education and education in dealing with homosexuality (in the wake of recent government legislation). I will conclude with a look at the effectiveness or otherwise of our current sex education courses and by offering some personal reflections on the sex education classes that I have conducted and the responses of the pupils to them.

An Effective Programme of Sex Education: What Should Be Our Aims?

Sex education is controversial by its very nature. The terms has different implications and meanings to different people. Traditionally, the term might have been used to describe the teaching of bald explanations of anatomy and physical processes given from within the framework of a scientific discipline.

At the other end of the continuum, consideration might be given to the possibilities inherent in personal relationships, and the examination at some depth of a variety of themes seen as controversial in our society and the implications for individuals that these carry. Such topics might include: masturbation, homosexuality, abortion, contraception, pre-marital sex, amongst others and each school has to make the decision as to which of these to include (or even all, or none) in its P.S.E. curriculum. The responsibility of school governing bodies for determining what sex education, if any, should be taught in schools was clearly laid down in the 1986 (No 2) Education Act.

This is obviously an unenviably difficult decision, cutting, as it does across religious, moral and philosophical boundaries. As with all elements of teaching, however, teaching must be directed by the objectives that the education has. Variation in these aims is inevitably shown by writers on the subject, but it seems sound sense to me for objectives to be defined in **people-terms** rather than **academic terms** within the area of sex education; it is, after all, entirely for the benefit of young people that such courses should operate and such a rationale carries with it the implicit flexibility that should be a feature of all good P.S.E. courses.

In his contribution to **Sex Education: Rationale and Reaction,** Alan Harris picks up the theme to discuss from an even wider perspective the importance of aims which are broadly similar to those outlined above:

> The ultimate aim of all education, I would argue, is the promotion of personal autonomy. The more educated a person is, the more able they are to make a reasonable and informed choice between possible courses of behaviour. The more aware they are of these possibilities, the more freedom they have in the way they conduct their life . . . any sort of moral behaviour involves the making of choices which are conscious, rational and free.

Before going on to discuss some of the primary issues which a modern sex education programme would need to include, it is worthwhile answering here a common myth about sex education, namely that talking about sex and hence 'telling them how to do it' will increase promiscuity or sexual experimentation. As Went reports in her book **Sex Education: Some Guidelines for Teachers**, there is simply no evidence to support this:

> The conclusions reached by a number of reviewers in this area are remarkably similar, which is that they [programmes of sex education] had no discernible effect on the sexual activity of the recipients . . . the age at which sexual instruction was given did not affect the age at which sex was first experienced.

Reasuringly, young people seem to display an admirable tendency to make up their own minds about the 'right' time for them to participate in sexual activity, although this does not prevent the understandable concern on the part of parents about the possible consequences of their children's school sex education.

In contrast, there is, however, no shortage of evidence that the effects of **withholding** information about sexual matters can be damaging to those very people whom the intention is to try to protect. Without sex education, irresponsible sexual behaviour often takes place and ignorance can often prove humiliating, harmful, and (to refer back to our initial aim), can have as its consequence young people who are literally full of dread.

We must give young people all the information that they require in as balanced and sensible fashion as possible. This will obviously include all the biological facts, taught to an appropriate level, but it will also need to address communication skills and insights into the sexual feelings and needs of themselves and other people and a recognition that these are of equal importance. We should seek to foster people's ability to be alert and sensitive to situations where they ought to stop and think, teach them how to get to the stage of forming their own moral principles based on both facts and experience and finally seek to enable people to have confidence in their own autonomous moral judgments.

This requires a positive approach and sensitivity to the whole issue. It should not be treated as merely an important **extension** of health education, as I hope to show shortly. I shall address in detail AIDS/HIV education and homosexuality education in the next parts of my article. These are obviously only two of the themes of relevance (a detailed study being impossible in an article of this length), but serve to illustrate ideas which have application to the aims of all subject matter in the area of sex education, and the objectives which we must try to embody throughout.

Towards an Effective Programme of HIV/AIDS Education

This is a topic high on the lists of many young people's concerns and features prominently in Taylor and Brierley's study (1991) as 'one of the most useful things learnt' in a Leicestershire sex education course. AIDS is, of course, given a very high media profile, although the image projected is not always a balanced one. Although reference to the 'Gay Plague' may be consigned to history, it can remain an image entrenched in people's mind. The perception that 'normal' people are not at risk is a common one.

Excellent teaching packs detailing the medical aspects of HIV are now widely available (from the Family Planning Association in London, amongst others). Aggleton and Warwick (1989) report that this science is now generally well known by most of the school population, although certain misconceptions do still exist, particularly about the differences between being 'HIV positive' and 'having AIDS'. The research shows that the vast majority of the young people consulted know about the HIV virus, its modes of transmission and the steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of infection.

It is the setting of the science of HIV/AIDS within the social context of modern-day realities that has perhaps been lacking in our teaching of this subject in the past. Such social contexts are, of course, changing all the time as society struggles to come to terms with the problem and prevailing social attitudes change. Pupils need to be made aware that all 'sexuality active' people (not just homosexual people) are at risk.

Teachers will need to actively address such prejudices and popular misconceptions where they exist, and try to make AIDS issues less removed from reality by looking (by role-play, perhaps) at how people cope when they become HIV positive. How is it possible for people to retain control over their own lives under these conditions? HIV/AIDS is still stigmatized in society to such an extent that 16 per cent of young people surveyed by Aggleton and Warwick said that they would commit suicide if they were diagnosed HIV positive. How many young people know that there are now drugs to lessen the symptoms of AIDS and prolong life? People who have the HIV virus are often visualized and represented as dehumanized rather than normal people with the usual spectrum of emotions, needs and abilities and this can only work against the development of an attitude of caring.

We have to find ways to educate young people in a balanced manner to become tolerant, open-minded, sexual and autonomous members of our society. We must begin by accepting that **sexuality means different things to different people** and that it has many equally valid forms of expression. In this way, safe sex education might become a truly educational process of stimulating learning. A questioning, open-minded attitude, thorough organization and a good system of support, not least for teachers themselves, will be required, but the rewards and the implications for improvement in sex education programmes in schools and subsequently in society at large would be enormous.

Teaching about Homosexuality in a Programme of Sex Education in Schools

This area, more than most others, is heavily governed by recent Westminster legislation, which would appear to have caused much confusion in the ranks of the teaching profession and has led many schools to the abandoning of it as an issue at all. In the DES Circular No. 11/87 (1987), there are two Sections which appear to address sexual behaviour in a semi-contradictory manner.

> **Section 19:** 'The Secretary of State considers that the aims of a programme of sex education should be to present facts in an objective and balanced manner so as to enable pupils to comprehend **the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present-day society**.'

And this is followed by:

> **Section 22:** 'There is no place in any school in any circumstances for teaching which advocates homosexual behaviour, which encourages it as the "norm" or which encourages homosexual experimentation by pupils . . .
>
> . . . It must also be recognized that, for many people, including members of various religious faiths, homosexual practice is not morally acceptable, and deep offence may be caused to them if the subject is not handled with sensitivity if discussed in the classroom.'

A convincing series of arguments in favour of a comprehensive programme of education in this area is advanced by Jim Ferguson in his article 'Lesbian and Gay Issues in the Wake of HIV/AIDS' (1990), a brief resume of the main points of which is given below:

1. A deliberate omission of information relating to homosexuality would leave a vacuum in the sex education curriculum and in the learning of pupils. Information would be gleaned from inappropriate and unreliable sources, often leading to misunderstanding, prejudice, and perhaps even personal danger (if, for example, AIDS infection is seen as a concern of homosexuals alone).

2. An absence of officially-sanctioned information about homosexuality is certainly likely to decrease open-mindedness and tolerance ('if homosexuality was O.K., then it would have been mentioned in school'). This effectively reinforces the bigoted stereotypes that are, from time to time, bandied around in the popular press. It is an educational duty to give young people access to the facts and also the opportunities to discover and decide for themselves whether these images are accurate or fair.
3. To ignore study of homosexuality is tantamount to an unwarranted censoring of the learning of young people and is contrary to the principles of a free society and a democratic community. Being educated as future members of such a society should involve being fully informed about the wide range of ways of life through which people choose to live.

How Successful are our Current Sex Education Programmes?

At the time of writing this is a very topical theme. A very recent study conducted by the National Childrens Bureau in conjunction with 24 other organizations condemns the current state of sex education in Britain's schools and has been widely reported on television, radio and in the press. It reports the shocking figure that only 46 per cent of LEAs were able to give any information whatsoever about the sex education policies adopted by schools in their area. Even amongst these, only 70 per cent had developed a written statement of policy. The remaining LEAs were not only failing to make adequate provision for the education of their pupils in this area, but they were also breaking the law as set down in the 1986 sex education legislation.

The report concludes:

> The provision of sex education in schools is characterized by inconsistency, confusion and anxiety. There is widespread anxiety at all levels concerning the teaching of sex education.

In this, it reflects the findings of Neil Taylor and David Brierley, who surveyed the feelings of Year 9 pupils in regard to their sex education course at a Leicestershire boys' comprehensive school. They found that in their school not all the issues of concern to pupils were being covered by the course (some of these issues had, in fact, been removed from the course in response to the Government legislation of 1986.) The questionnaire given to pupils included the following two questions:

5. We did not mention a number of things during the course e.g. homosexuality and sex before marriage. Write down anything extra you think should have been included.
6. Is there anything about sex education which worries you or about which you are unsure?

A wide range of suggestions were made in response, suggesting that for many there were a wide range of issues that were not covered at all and needed to be, or were not covered to the **satisfaction** of the pupils. Top of the list of things which pupils felt should have been included on the course were: masturbation (39 out of 75 responses), homosexuality (25), sex before marriage (21) and abortion (16). Only 5 pupils who responded expressed satisfaction that the course had addressed in some fashion **all** the issues about which they wanted to be informed.

Some Reflections on my own Experience of Teaching Sex Education on my Teaching Practice

I taught a number of Sex Education lessons as part of the programme of my Teaching Practice as a teacher of science at a grant-maintained school in Birmingham. The classes were taken towards the end of my 12 weeks with a Year 7 class that I knew well (I was also their acting form tutor), and with whom I had built up a relationship. They formed part of an extended 'Reproduction' module in the Science course.

Discussion formed the cornerstone of around 50 per cent of the lessons, with the remainder being given over to more scientific descriptions of anatomy, intercourse and childbirth, etc. AIDS/HIV was mentioned, but only in a scientific/fact-giving way.

In the final lesson of the module (in fact the last one of my T.P.) I offered the class the opportunity of an 'anonymous questionnaire' whereby they could ask to be explained to the class (on an anonymously given piece of paper) anything about which they were curious or anxious. The offer was zealously taken up and the size of the response at the time surprised me.

Questions reigned freely across the whole area of human sexual concern:

— Top of the list in terms of volume of enquiries was contraception.
— There were also many queries relating to homosexuality (which had previously been given only a cursory mention — more damaging, perhaps, than none at all?)
— Detailed questions about S.T.D.s (prominently AIDS) also figured strongly.
— More miscellaneous questions supported the wide range of curiosity that Ferguson argues the existence of, and a need to meet, in his article.
— From the colloquial: 'What's a "blow-job"?' 'What's "backshafting"?' . . . to the endearingly basic: 'Is it nice?'

The first type of queries posed a problem from a **linguistic** point of view — I found myself straining for appropriate language to convey what I wanted to put across. But in my opinion, it is the latter comment which illustrates one of the biggest failings of our often reluctant attempts at sex education programmes. Ought we not to stress that sex SHOULD be 'nice', if entered into by two loving, intimate people who are ready to take this step?

It seems to me from these experiences that Taylor and Brierley's findings were widely reflected in the class I taught and that their conclusions are valid. There IS a wide disparity between what young people **want** to be told and what they **are** being taught. This often does not come to the surface due to embarrassment, unless the opportunity to comment anonymously is given. I was expressing my amazement at the response to my anonymous questionnaire to an experienced member of staff who commented that: 'it's nothing; I've run some that took 4 or 5 doubles to answer to my satisfaction'. This is surely an indication that our objectives are far from being met at present.

Sam Fisher
(14 April 1914 — 9 March 1992)

Sam Fisher was an outstanding teachers' leader, an educationalist who had thought very deeply about the nature of the child and of learning, a highly effective class teacher, head of department and head teacher, deeply committed and active throughout his entire adult life in promoting both educational and social change. Like many of his generation (students of the 1930s), he joined the Communist Party at the University (Cambridge) where he soon became a leading figure, greatly respected both for his activity and for his gift for the articulate and rational expression of his views.

All these qualities he brought to **FORUM** when the journal was launched in 1958. Indeed Sam was one of the original members of the Editorial Board, remaining with us for ten years. It was Sam who drafted the formula covering the editorial policy for the new journal, agreed by all with only minor amendment. He brought to the Board a wide knowledge and especially a deep understanding of the urgency of the need to transform the educational system from the streamed and selective structure inherited from the past to something a great deal more generous. For years Sam was a leading, and very persuasive protagonist of the comprehensive school — indeed in a sense he gave 40 years of his life to achieving this objective.

Sam always rejected fatalistic theories concerning the fixed and unchanging nature of human abilities — theories which underpinned the tripartite system. Only two of the 80 children from his (pre-war) elementary school passed the 11 plus (then known as the 'scholarship'). He already then felt that the system was wrong, together with theories legitimizing it. The other 78 children could not all be relegated as 'failures', lacking intellectual potential. Already in 1937, when training to teach at King's College, London, Sam wrote a 30,000 word dissertation critical of intelligence testing. This experience stood him in good stead when, in the early 1960s, the NUT began officially to examine the issue, concluding that the theory and practice of intelligence testing were unacceptable. Sam a;ways and consistently stressed the **educability** of the normal child. Here was the theoretical basis powering the movement to comprehensive education. It was this conviction that underlay his consistent espousal of policies of progressive, democratic change.

It was this conviction that Sam also brought to **FORUM** — to the lengthy and impassioned discussions on the Editorial Board, to the conferences we ran in the 60's on comprehensive education and non-streaming, and to the articles he wrote for the journal (especially one on 'The "Average" Child in the Comprehensive School' which was extraordinary far-sighted and still repays reading (Vol. 5, No. 2).

After service with the Eighth Army in Africa and Sicily during the War, and later service in Europe, Sam taught at Edmonton Latimer Grammar School, but joined a London Comprehensive, Woodberry Down, as soon as possible (1955). He was head of the history department for many years. A colleague, David Rubinstein, has written of him: 'He was an inspiring teacher and an even more inspiring colleague and leader . . . I never knew anyone remotely so deserving of total loyalty, indeed hero worship, as Sam Fisher' **The Guardian**, 1 April 1992). Finally, in 1972, he was appointed head of Acland Burghley school, a London comprehensive — political prejudice had prevented earlier appointment until the situation became ridiculous.

Sam was, of course, extremely well known to the London authorities as a teachers' leader having been President of the North London Association and then President of the Inner London Teachers' Association (NUT). He was elected to the NUT Executive in 1970 and to the Chair of its important Education Committee in 1972. All this gave wider scope to his many activities. In his posthumous article entitled 'A Life Time of Education Reform' (**Education Review**, Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring 1992), Sam recalls his forty years of struggle. He ends, as always, on a positive note.

That was always Sam's great strength. He would never admit, or accept defeat. His strength lay in a deep understanding of human potentialities. The great object was to give effect to these — to create the conditions where such development was able to flower.

Both he and June, his wife, recently President of the NUT, shared that objective. They derived strength from each other, however black the outlook. June also was an early **FORUM** supporter and contributor. Both came to our Centenary celebration last Autumn, though Sam was already struggling with the illness which finally overcame him. He took pride in **FORUM**'s record. It remains to ensure the final achievement of the aims and purposes Sam set out for us now over 30 years ago.

This may seem impossible to some, given the present circumstances. But Sam would never have been among those giving up the struggle. Far from admitting defeat, Sam would have seen recent setbacks as underlining the need further to step up the struggle — to ensure a final victory. There is, then, much to be done.

Brian Simon

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Reviews

Individual empowerment and economic survival

Education for Economic Survival. From Fordism to Post-Fordism?, edited by Phillip Brown and Hugh Lauder, Routledge 1992, HB £45, 279 pages.

Post-fordism has been a central theme in recent debates on education and training and a book such as this has been long overdue. Much recent policy literature, both here and abroad, has focused on how education and training should respond to changes in technology and work organization and to increasing economic competition from European integration and the globalization of production and exchange. 'Post-fordist' notions about 'flexible specialization', 'multi-skilling' and 'flattened organizational hierarchies' are now common currency in the skills debate and it is rare to find a policy document, from the left or the right, that does not invoke the importance of training for flexibility and change. The terms, however, are often very elusive, and it is useful to have a collection of essays critically exploring these themes from a definite political standpoint but without undue claims to theoretical closure. Post-fordist theory is by its nature provisional and speculative as the book's interrogative title aptly acknowledges.

The editors' introductory chapter lucidly expounds the compelling and now familiar 'post-fordist' case for education and training reform, combining this with their own explicit concerns for social justice, democratic citizenship and equality. The economic argument is that micro-technology, computerization, robotics and other aspects of the 'information revolution', combined with 'lifestyle' changes favouring more discriminating patterns of consumption, have created the possibility of radically new forms of economic production and consumption. Whereas fordism concentrated on the mass production of cheap, standardized products, the emphasis now is increasingly on the development of quality, specialised goods and services for highly differentiated markets. For advanced economies to compete successfully they must move into these high value-added areas which means adopting technologically-advanced, flexible production systems, utilizing highly-skilled labour. The problem in Britain is that we are locked into a 'low-skills equilibrium', using poorly trained labour to produce low quality goods and services.

Brown and Lauder argue that education and training must be reformed to generate high levels of knowledge and skill throughout the population. Elaborating their own attractive concept of 'collective intelligence', they maintain that whereas in earlier 'fordist' regimes hierarchical education systems sufficed economically if not socially, now there is an economic as well as a social imperative for flatter and more egalitarian forms which would end the haemorrhaging of talent that has characterized our traditionally elitist and selective system. The emphasis here on the mutuality of the economic and social goals, and on the essentially political nature of the process, is welcome and allows the authors, and indeed the volume as a whole, to avoid some of the traps which have ensnared previous writers in this tradition.

The problem with much 'post-fordist' writing hitherto is that it has veered towards utopianism, often justifying its vision of a new democracy on a sort of inevitable technical/economic logic which has yet to be proven. Certain of the changes described are clearly secular trends and are here to stay but others are much more mercurial and uncertain. Writers have often over-generalized from limited, localized examples of economic trends, mixing prescription with description, and painting highly optimistic scenarios about the enhanced work-place democracy and job enrichment which are likely to flow from the adoption of post-fordist patterns of organization. The difficulty is that, whilst there are some examples of these sorts of changes, they are nowhere very predominant and particularly not in the UK. How far they develop will depend on existing relations of power and on political processes and we can only speculate on the outcomes. This volume does well not to overstate the case and to emphasise the political contingency of it all. A number of contributors are healthily skeptical about some of the claims of the more utopian 'New Times' rhetoric. Krishan Kumar, an eloquent veteran of earlier debates about 'post-industrialism', points, for instance, to some of the historical continuities which underpin even the most radical societal shifts, noting the continuing centralization of economic power in capitalist systems and the tendency for new technology to create a new periphery of casualized, deskilled jobs at the same time as it consolidates a core of professionalised and multi-skilled employees. A more sustained look at the position of women and migrant workers in these areas would have strengthened this aspect of the book.

Another strength of the book is that it makes its political standpoint clear. Some 'post-fordist' writing, particularly from certain contributors in the 'New Times' debate in the erstwhile political journal, **Marxism Today**, has greatly overstressed the links between post-fordism and the neo-liberalism of the Thatcher/Reagan era. The language of choice, diversity, and cultural pluralism, all said to be features of post-modernity, came to be too easily associated with the individualism and commitment to privatization which was the hall-mark of neo-liberal politics. Such a connection is highly tendentious and suggests a very Anglo-American perspective on economic and social change. Far from neo-liberalism being a necessary political form appropriate to current socio-economic changes, it would seem that many of the trends associated with the transition to 'post-fordism' are most apparent in societies with strong interventionist and neo-corporatist political traditions, whether these be of the right or left of centre. Japan, Germany and Sweden have much more post-fordist economies than either Britain or the USA.

The contributors to **Education for Economic Survival** are consistent in rejecting the free-market in education and critical of any type of vocationalism which seeks to 'modernize' our system by organizing people into different tracks. Brown and Lauder criticize our traditional selective education system, which they characterize as bureaucratic and 'fordist', because it 'generates a large population of 'failures' who are profoundly wounded by the system'. Shane Blackman demonstrates how each historical initiative to develop mass post-elementary education has been accompanied by vigorous attempts to shore up the elite 'academic' route — a phenomenon witnessed again today as the development of GNVQs (General National Vocational Qualifications) as the primary vehicle for mass post-16 education is accompanied by the retrenchment of 'A' level via draconian limitations on coursework assessment. Most contributors here see the 'marketization' of education and training as a way of creating new educational hierarchies and thus impeding the development of the high quality education and training for all which they see as the economic and social imperative of a would be post-fordist society. Sarah Vickerstaff cogently outlines the limits of the 'voluntarist' or market-led approach to skills provision which has given us a century of under-development in training, now likely to be perpetuated through the TECs disaster. Clyde Chitty's trenchant analysis of the contradictions and elisions of the New Right privatization/voucher lobby is still timely as the government — and John Patten in particular — now stand at a cross-roads, poised between retreating from the imminent chaos of further free-market measures and pushing ahead regardless with the Thatcher agenda.

Like many collected volumes this book contains a fairly diverse array of contributions, broadly arranged around similar themes, but not always closely integrated one with another. One does not, except in a few cases, get a sense of a symposium of authors in close and sustained dialogue with each other's ideas such as to advance the theoretical debate, and few of the pieces contain sufficient new empirical work on the economy and labour market to put the hypotheses of the post-fordists to any very rigorous tests. However, this would be asking a lot from a book which is primarily about education and training policy. What it does offer is a series of very readable essays which openly and critically explore the analytical arguments underpinning an important area of current debate. It is particularly strong in its analysis of the different policy options for reforming education and training and here it has a consistency of voice which is most convincing, effectively consolidating the burgeoning sense of consensus which is detectable in the policy 'community' — outside, that is of the government itself.

Brown and Lauder set the agenda with their argument for an education for individual empowerment and economic survival in a high quality, aspiring, comprehensive secondary system based on late selection and a broad curriculum of academic, technical and practical study. Following a detailed analysis of changing labour market trends, David Ashton

provides a very clear review of the different options for post-16 education and training. Noting the seemingly endemic problems in this country with market-driven, employer-led training policies, he advocates moving towards a mass system of compulsory education and training until 18, where the majority would study a broad general and vocational curriculum in full-time institutions. However, he adds, I think rightly, that a college-based system would need to be supplemented by a vestigial work-based training system with compulsory day-release and that this should be organized by a national training board and financed through a new payroll training tax. 'A' levels would be replaced by a unified qualification at 18, á la British Bac, and, more controversially, GCSE would be abolished to encourage normative expectations of staying-on until 18. Like Clyde Chitty and Malcolm and Susan Maguire, he favours a system of community or tertiary colleges as the best way of delivering an integrated post-16 curriculum. Qualifications should be controlled by a single awarding authority — that'll be the day!

ANDY GREEN

A Socialist Redprint

Changing the Future: Redprint for Education, The Hillcole Group, edited by Clyde Chitty, The Tufnell Press (1991), pp. 139, pb: £8.95, ISBN: 1872767 25 7.

This book comes as a powerful challenge to the changes in education that have held sway over the last ten years. Written as a collaborative venture by the Hillcole Group, it represents a convincing Socialist 'redprint' for the transformation of the education system. As such, it is to be welcomed as a radical alternative to the New Right agenda that still currently dominates debate.

The first chapter reclaims Socialist principles of equality, democracy and social justice and their crucial importance for education. This provides the context for a devastating critique of New Right policies that include: the disastrous effects of new school funding, including LMS, GMS and CTCs; the educational strait-jacket of narrow vocationalism and an impoverished National Curriculum; the social implications of promoting an illusory choice whilst attacking **genuine** equal opportunity initiatives; and the political agenda behind the attack on critical thinking and theory in teacher education.

Extensive reviews of other alternatives to New Right policies are offered in Chapter Two. All the major political parties and interest groups are described, analysed and assessed. The Hillcole Group argue that, although much of the alternative policy would be welcome, it does little to produce any real new direction for the system. It is not based on radically new thinking about education and training, or the way in which society should be heading as we approach the year 2000. Developing a genuine alternative is the task the Hillcole Group therefore set themselves. They argue powerfully for the replacement of piecemeal or superficial reforms with a clear framework of basic and comprehensive change. Their analysis and conclusions are clearly set out in the subsequent chapters, and dealing with the structure of education, curriculum and assessment, education for work, and the provision of resources. The book concludes by setting out various proposals in the form of a new Act.

The Chapter on changing education structure shows the concern for a truly coherent and comprehensive state system. Proposals for action include: expansion and integration of pre-school provision; reducing the gulf between primary and secondary organization; the re-organization of tertiary and reform of higher education.

In examining the National Curriculum and Assessment, the book rejects any imposition of a **left-wing version** of the National Curriculum. It accepts the political necessity and educational usefulness of national, broadly-stated common core curriculum objectives that all students are entitled to (and that have been determined by national debate not political imposition) but argues that there should be a predominant place for local determination of the curriculum. This would include the development of a modularized curriculum and assessment system for 14-18. Public exams could then be replaced by Records of Achievement and in-school assessment of modules regulated by external moderation. SATs would be abolished in favour of school-based diagnostic testing.

There is a more holistic approach to education and work than has been present in the initiatives of the last few years. Going beyond narrow economic rationales, there is an appeal to a broader and more far-sighted outlook than just producing a more competitive national economy. Under present conditions, catching up with Germany or Japan would merely exacerbate ecological catastrophe and economic exploitation on a global scale. The book therefore argues that a new commitment to academic and vocational education up to 18 should be employment-related but **not** employment-led.

Particularly helpful in the Chapter on teacher education is the examination of what schools themselves say they want from it. This is placed alongside a consideration of the policy implication of different ideological perspectives. The Group conclude that the school-based element of current BEd and PGCE courses should be **increased**. However, this should, not involve moving teacher education wholesale outside of colleges. Furthermore, the crucial opportunity for critical thinking must not be lost in this process.

Inevitably, many of the policies proposed have implications for resourcing. These are considered in a separate chapter and although less radical than other chapters a number of important improvements are suggested. For example, as part of the clear need that the overall commitment to resourcing education should rise, it is recommended that Section 11 funds should be incorporated within wider support for equal opportunities.

The final Chapter brings together proposals from the rest of the book in a clear summary entitled 'A New Education Act'. Despite the title, it is quick to point out that many of the changes proposed could be realised without new legislation. The sweeping discretion for the Secretary of State granted in the 1988 Act means that the actual legislation that would be needed for its reorientation is not overwhelming. The Conservative victory embodied in the centralized powers of the Act might therefore become a two-edged sword.

Perhaps the most fundamental long-term contribution to change is the suggestion that a new language will be needed to reorientate debate. The New Right dominance of educational policy has established the jargon of the market in predetermining the agenda. If long-term and radical changes are to take place, a new consciousness and a new language forming part of a 'social audit', rather than an economic balance sheet, need to be developed.

It is a shame that only the chapter on the structure of education includes substantial attention to developments in other European countries. Such comparisons are infrequent elsewhere in the book, and this is a major disappointment in plans for the year 2000. Furthermore, it is slightly surprising to see that the emphasis on anti-racism and internationalism does not seem to recognize the true significance of religious pluralism in educational issues. There is mention of cultural values and a reference to world religions as part of Humanities, but it is not clear that the importance of religion for personal identity is really recognized. The implications of this for the informal curriculum as well as for all areas of the formal curriculum are therefore undeveloped, and the proposals on school worship oversimplify the current situation.

However, these criticisms should not be allowed to detract from the considerable value of the book. In filling the gap between abstract principles and classroom reality, it offers practical policies that are genuinely viable, attractive and moral. Although many of its individual points may not be completely new, the Hillcole Group have achieved a vital task in bringing them together in a single publications as a coherent Redprint for policy. The book balances polemical energy with academic weight and its demolition of New Right polices with a challenging vision for an alternative. It should be read by anyone concerned with progressive education and a fairer society.

As a classroom practitioner, I found the book both encouraging and sobering to read. Pressures in schools make it hard to reflect critically on educational principles and yet the undermining of so many principles by financially-induced compromises makes such reflection more important than ever. It is therefore heartening to see such a compelling case for a more just approach to education from people who have such genuine feeling for it. Yet this encouragement is matched by a concern that the current situation is serious and likely to get worse unless decisive changes are made.

It is difficult to read the book without feeling that a critical moment for state education has arrived. The importance of changing the future cannot be underestimated.

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