FORUM

Evaluating Schools
School Self-improvement
Transfer to Secondary
Dearing's Missed Opportunity

TRIANGLE

Celebrating *10/65* Thirty Years On

The Comprehensive School, in principle and practice, is proving remarkably robust and resilient despite persistent attempts by the political right to smear, dismember, frustrate and destroy it. The ideal and the reality have survived and flourished because, contrary to all the hostile slander, its proponent practitioners have not been complacent but have steadfastly striven to achieve ever higher standards, to accept new challenges, to innovate and to serve the diverse educational needs of the whole range of children and young people for whom local comprehensive systems were created.

The LEAs, who set the comprehensive school system on the road, have tried to give their schools as much continued advice and support as they still can, despite paranoid legislative efforts from 1988 to emasculate their locally sensitive administration. Parents have increasingly shown that they value the role of their LEA and want to keep local comprehensive school systems intact as they vote not to opt out, despite all the propaganda and bribes designed to lure them away. The flagship GMS policy has run aground.

It is now thirty years since *Circular 10/65* was issued. Imperfect though it was, that *Circular* proved immensely popular. Nearly half the LEAs met the initial early deadline with plans for comprehensive reorganisation of their whole area and most others gradually developed a variety of schemes for local circumstances. 10/65 accelerated and smoothed the way in all LEAs for a process already under way in many to eliminate the hated eleven-plus selection in favour of planned comprehensive systems. That reorganisation was delayed, botched and never completed was due to Margaret Thatcher's malign interventions as Secretary of State in 1970/73, when she irresponsibly abused her position to thwart local democracy so as to satisfy her own prejudice for perpetuating selective grammar schools. This was her first bid to undermine both LEAs and comprehensive education. She caused chaos and confusion, but could not stem the tide.

Support for comprehensives derived from hatred of the flawed and discredited eleven-plus selection. Released from that straitjacket, primary schools could abandon streaming and forge ahead educating all their pupils. Comprehensive secondary schools had to develop curriculum, teaching methods and internal organisation for a new educational context. Circumstances were so diverse that dull uniformity was always a myth.

Comprehensive education has been locally popular, enjoying parental and professional support. LEAs put in much effort to enable teachers and schools to respond to new challenges and to develop interrelated families of schools within the variety of comprehensive systems that evolved.

Populist moves to disrupt established comprehensive systems appeal to narrow, selfish interest by presenting a mirage of parental choice as the supreme criterion. Open enrolment and opt out ballots divide parents, undermine LEA planning for local provision and, in practice, enable some schools to discriminate between applicants, thereby effectively introducing selection. Combined with the funding formula and league tables, these policies subject educational opportunity to market forces.

Because of the support that most parents continue to give to their local comprehensive systems within their LEA, comprehensive structures are not in the tatters that the Tory right hoped to bring about. Instead, comprehensive education retains its popularity because teachers and schools remain true to their principles and strive hard at self-improvement for the benefit of the communities they serve.

The traditional and institutional divide between academic and vocational education prevented extension of fully comprehensive education beyond sixteen, except where LEAs set up tertiary colleges. A patchwork pattern persisted, including local consortia arrangements to ease the problem, while separate qualification routes reinforced the division. Removing Further Education, Sixth Form and Tertiary Colleges from LEA provision has created a chaotic, market oriented, competitive, unplanned dispersal of 16-19 courses that is inefficient and wastefully expensive. The National Audit Office and the Audit Commission have recently expressed concern.

In the three 1995 numbers of *Forum* we celebrate *Circular 10/65* after thirty years with articles from primary and secondary comprehensive schools committed to continuing to serve their communities, and we pursue discussion on making sense of post-16 education for all students.

It is cause for concern that David Blunkett is straying from his original commitment to revitalise comprehensive schooling serving local communities. Policies are needed to end the long planning blight, creeping selection and the chaos of a false market; to open up opportunities for all from nursery into adult education. Making articulated sense of qualifications, routes and institutions post-16 is urgent. 'Fresh Start' hit squad gimmickry is a diversion.

Parents and local communities have for years demonstrated support for their schools by ever greater fundraising. Many schools already depend on this for essentials such as books and computers. Now Professor Alan Smithers and Dr Pamela Robinson, surveying 2% of primary and 10% of secondary schools, report in *Affording Teachers* that most schools are increasing class size alongside cutting spending on books, equipment and building repairs, encouraging early retirement and employing cheaper teachers. For many children the quality of their education will be at risk.

Underfunded schooling has caused growing anxiety as the cumulative effects become ever more apparent. This year fears of increased class size is bringing a fragile 'rainbow alliance' of governors, parents and teachers to focus widespread concern at a funding crisis attributed to the government.

The same goal of highlighting that larger classes will result has led the three main teachers' unions to decide on action, though by different tactics. The potential for governors, parents and teachers to unite in a common cause must not be put at risk. A concerted campaign for greater and more equitable funding is essential.

NANETTE WHITBREAD

School Effectiveness and 'Value-added' Analysis

Harvey Goldstein & Sally Thomas
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In November 1992 schools' 'raw' examination results were published for the first time by the Government and reproduced in most national newspapers, fulfilling a pledge made in the Parents' Charter to provide more information about schools. At the same time, these league tables were widely criticised as unfair and misleading due to the differing intake of many schools. There has for some time been a considerable weight of research evidence which shows that by far the best predictor of student GCSE and A-level exam achievement is the achievement of the student on entry to their secondary school. Schools which have high average exam results tend to be those whose students have high achievement when they start. Ranking schools on the basis of their exam results then, in large measure, merely reflects attainment at entry. This did not prevent the Government, when it introduced the Parent's Charter, from claiming that the exam result league tables would result in fair comparisons of the effectiveness of school and the quality of their education.

Several years on, the idea of 'value-added' in educational terms has been accepted by a large section of society: parents, teachers, researchers, LEA officers, journalists, employers, and even government policy makers. In comparison to 'raw' examination results, 'value-added' indicators – quantitative measures of the educational progress pupils make while at school – can in theory provide accurate information for making choices about individual schools for individual pupils or, more importantly, when we wish to evaluate schools for the purpose of improving educational standards.

What is value-added analysis? We shall illustrate our discussion using results from an analysis of information collected about A-level results in Summer 1993. This was obtained as a result of a collaboration between the Institute of Education, University of London, and *The Guardian* newspaper and published by the latter on November 30, 1993, to provide a rational alternative to the Government's crude league tables of examination results. A full discussion is given by Goldstein & Thomas (1995).

Figure 1 shows hypothetical relationships between student GCSE examination scores and A-level scores for two schools. The vertical axis represents the predicted A-level score in each school for students with different GCSE scores. With increasing GCSE score so the predicted A-level score increases, but note that whereas for low GCSE scores we have one school with a lower predicted A-level score at each GCSE score, this school obtains higher predicted A-level scores for those students who obtain high GCSE scores. This 'differential effectiveness' for students with differing levels of prior achievement is commonly found in school effectiveness studies. It may also extend

to other student characteristics. For example, some institutions may be relatively more effective for girls than boys, some for particular ethnic minority groups, etc. Furthermore, individual departments within schools appear to be differentially effective: Goldstein et al (1993) found in an analysis of the GCSE exam results for Inner London schools, that there was very little relationship between the effectiveness, or value-added, scores for Mathematics and English. Similar results were found in a more recent study across six different subject outcomes (Thomas et al, 1995). Likewise, during the course of schooling students will encounter different teachers who will vary in their 'effectiveness', and differentially so for different kinds of students. Research has also indicated that, for some schools, results can vary substantially over as short a period as 3 years (Thomas et al, 1995).

We see, therefore, that the reality in schools is complex and cannot be summarised by a single measure, whether value-added or not, without distorting what a school is achieving. It is, of course, better to present a value-added estimate for an institution rather than a 'raw' average; but in addition to the limitations we have already mentioned,
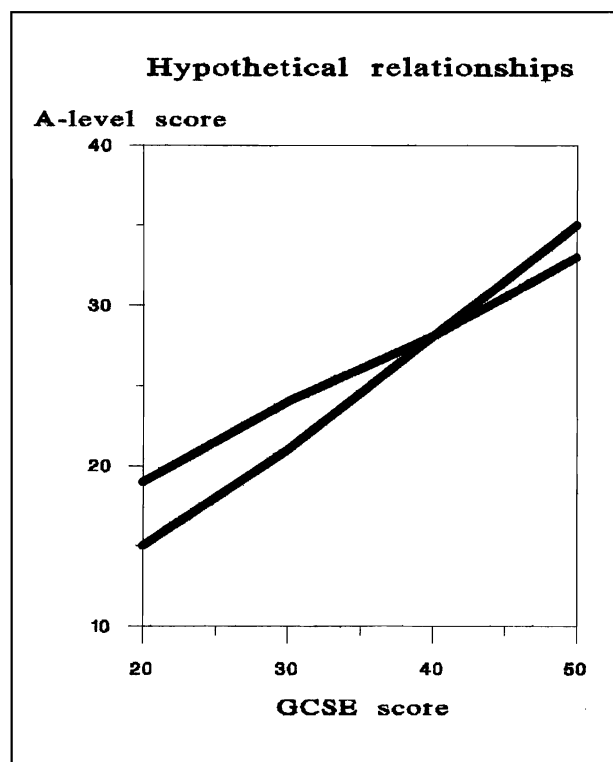

Figure 1

there are two further ones which severely limit the use of value-added (and of course raw) estimates for purposes of accountability. By this we mean essentially placing institutions in some kind of rank order so that judgements between any pair of them can be made.

First of all, in the case of A-level results, suppose we have available, in late 1994, value-added estimates for Summer 1994 examinations. These results refer to a cohort of students who began their A-level courses in Autumn 1992. If we wish to base decisions on a choice of institution for students starting in 1995 then the results are essentially three years out of date. In the meantime those institutions and departments within them may have changed, become more or less effective and so the historical information will be limited by this inevitable time delay. This problem is more severe if we wish to judge secondary schools using value-added measures calculated between intake and outcome (GCSE) five years later since results will then be six years out of date!

The second problem is this. While we can study the factors associated with student performance and come to conclusions about which of them appear to be associated with 'success', yet it seems to be very difficult to identify precisely *which* schools are doing well or badly. We can sometimes identify a few 'outlying' or 'extreme' schools. There are limited numbers of students in any one school year, or even over, say, a three year period and using factors such as intake achievement and social background we can only explain a proportion (typically about a half) of the variation in outcome scores. Where we are able to obtain value-added estimates for each school they are mostly too imprecise to provide a fine separation of institutions. Research on GCSE results (Goldstein et al, 1993, Goldstein & Healy, 1995) suggests that about two thirds of all the value-added comparisons between pairs of schools are of this kind; the institutions cannot be ranked. Figure 2 illustrates this point. Schools are to be judged as statistically significantly different (at the 5% level) only when the 'bars' for a pair of schools do not overlap. It is clear that we can only sensibly make use of the information for the schools at the extremes; even then our inferences must remain tentative.
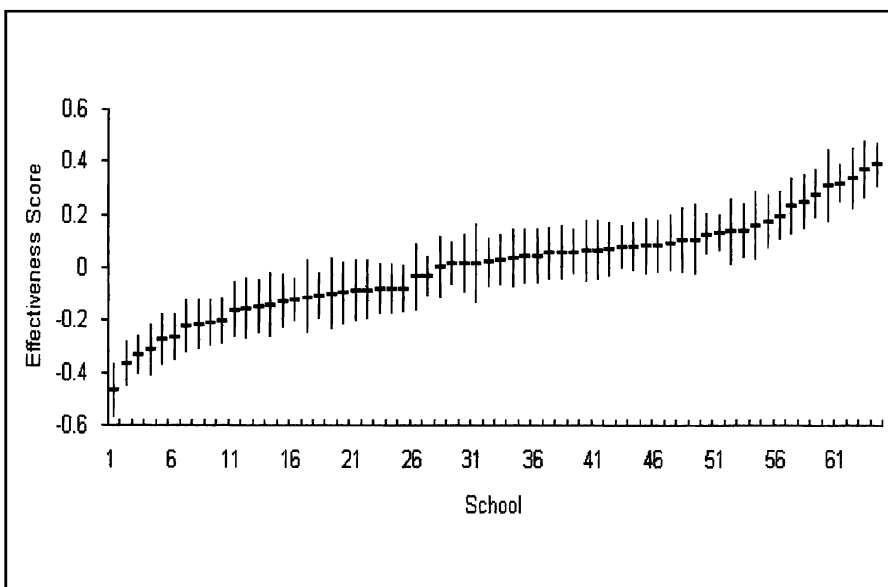
A kind of 'uncertainty principle' operates in which we can make useful statements about why schools differ, without necessarily being able to pinpoint precisely which schools are different. In other words, research into school effectiveness is a useful activity in our attempts to obtain knowledge about the process of education, but a very poor tool for holding schools to account.

The implications of all this for current debates is fairly clear. The use of test or exam scores to judge schools publicly is insupportable. Information provided by 'raw' exam or test score league tables is misleading and potentially educationally damaging. Value-added league tables eliminate one source of error but retain others that also make them insupportable. Used appropriately, however, by LEAs or other responsible agencies as a confidential screening instrument, a value-added analysis can provide a source of relevant information that can be used along with other evidence to evaluate the relative performances of schools for different groups of pupils (Thomas & Mortimore, 1994). Like all screening instruments, it can only provide a first indication of which schools may be the very high or low performing ones and should not be used to provide definitive judgements or firm 'labels'. In addition, the evidence points strongly to an approach where value-added information should be accumulated over several years, using a wide range of outcomes to reflect the complexity of schooling.

In our view, the use of value-added or raw results as a major component in identifying schools for 'improvement' interventions is problematic since it is predicated upon the assumption that they can identify 'failing' schools with some precision. Even where value-added results are used privately by individual schools, care is needed to avoid assuming an accuracy which the data do not support. This is especially true where estimates are obtained for individual departments where there may be very few students taking a subject exam, with a consequent large measure of uncertainty attached to any rank ordering. If a school is fully aware of this uncertainty however, a value-added estimate may be useful as one piece of information among others about its performance.

The purpose of this article has been to point out the limitations of current attempts to provide public accountability measures using examination and test score results. There remains the question of what to substitute in their place; while any answer to that question requires intensive study and debate it appears to us that a fruitful direction is one which looks for measures of process related to teaching and learning. To some extent this is what is done during OFSTED inspections, but much more is required by way of a thorough study and evaluation of alternative approaches to measuring process in a standardised way. Of course, there is no guarantee that even if it becomes possible reliably to determine where poor teaching occurs, that this will also tell us where poor outcomes are to be found. We

Figure 2

understand little about the subtle interaction between student progress and the process of schooling. This is an important area for further research.

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Towards a Learning Community

Pat Collarbone & Maggie Farrar
The Headteacher, Pat Collarbone, and her Deputy, Maggie Farrar, have collaborated in writing about significant developments within Haggerston School, an inner city 11-16 comprehensive school committed to raising the achievement of staff and students together.

A recent job specification for a post in Haggerston school included as part of the selection criteria "Must truly wish to take part in and belong to a community of learners". What does this mean and why was it important enough to be included as part of the selection process for a deputy head?

We were first introduced to the idea of a school as a community of learners through the ideas of Professor Roland Barth:

> The school as a community of learners is a place where all participants – teachers, principals, parents and students – engage in learning and teaching. School is not a place for important people who do not need to learn and unimportant people who do. Instead school is a place where students discover, and adults rediscover, the joys, the difficulties, and the satisfactions of learning.[1]

These ideas came to the school at a time of rapid and turbulent change two years ago. As a school in inner London the years following the Education Reform Act in 1988 had brought us a diet of growing autonomy, LMS and school development planning. This was accompanied by a new vocabulary of action planning, aims, objectives and success criteria but without the sustenance of the ILEA. We were aware that in order for a school to cope with this amount of change and autonomy we needed to work with teachers to ensure that they:

> engage in frequent, continuous and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice. By such talk, teachers build up a shared language adequate to the complexity of teaching, capable of distinguishing one practice and its virtue from another.[2]

In the words of Caldwell & Spinks we were a self managing school:

> one that for which there has been significant and consistent decentralisation to the school level of authority to make decisions related to the allocation of resources.[3]

Drawn by their lists of 'characteristics of effective schools', and also the 'collaborative school management cycle' we sought to make sense of the post ERA world. We were also concerned not to be drawn by the list logic and recipe book approach to school improvement much in vogue at the time. Most importantly, we were concerned that the staff in the school, whilst buffeted by change, were still striving to teach in a creative and accessible way while being hampered by a content laden curriculum. We wanted to enable them to feel energised, rather than overwhelmed by, the scale and speed of the changes they were faced with. We wanted to find a way of reaching the position described by Hargreaves & Hopkins when they say:

> A school should reach a point where change is not something extra or unusual but a task with which it can cope comfortably because innovation and change have become part of management.[4]

Our reading of Hargreaves & Fullan's *What's Worth Fighting for in Your Schools* led us to the notion of 'stuck' and 'improving' schools. The description of the 'moving school' seemed to have direct parallels with the notion of a learning community:

> Teachers work together more. Most teachers, even the most experienced, believed that teaching was inherently difficult. They believed teachers never stopped learning to teach. Since most teachers acknowledged that teaching was difficult, almost everyone recognised that they needed help. Giving and receiving help was part of the common quest for continuous improvement.[5]

This struck a chord with us. We wanted to be moving. As our discussions on a learning community progressed we began to look at the seeds that had already been sown. Did we have instances in the school where the dual culture of the learned and the learners had already begun to be broken down?

For some time we had been engaged with our local higher education institutions in partnership work in the training of initial teachers. It was clear to us that if young teachers were going to become reflective and critical practitioners then they had to be trained in an environment

that modelled this. As well as encouraging staff to take part in student seminars and reflect and question alongside them, we also involved pupils in the training process. We asked the pupils what they thought made a good teacher. Their thought provoking and very honest responses were used with the student teachers as part of their school based seminar programme. The pupils also formed a panel of 'experts' that the student teachers could question to gain a greater understanding of what made a good lesson, what was good homework, what did a teacher who was ' fair' do etc.

> I think a good teacher is someone who makes you believe you can do something. I was not so confident in one of my subjects last year and that teacher said to me, 'go on Natalie, you can do it', that for me will always be the best teacher.[6]

We were also involved over three years ago in the planning for the first Haggerston Conference. The idea of this grew out of a desire to meet the needs of teachers who were feeling isolated through the loss of the ILEA and old established and trusted networks and who were also feeling devalued in their search for school improvement within a national debate on raising (and declining) standards. The Conference has now grown into an annual event and has become a powerful learning tool for Haggerston school.

It was the second Conference which brought us to the ideas of Professor Roland Barth when he engaged the conference in a debate on 'Improving From Within' It was at this Conference that the notion of a school as a community of learners was first debated. It was also here that the pupils' voice was heard publicly for the first time.. They planned and delivered a seminar on what makes an effective school and delivered a paper responding to Barth's paper of the same title.

> Our vision may be utopian, or idealistic but it is not impossible. We would like to go to a school that students look forward to attending, and return home feeling that they are learning and working towards achieving their goals. A school that teachers want to teach in and which makes them feel that what they are doing is worthwhile. A pleasant and friendly place, where both staff and pupils work together and cooperate with each other to ensure that everyone gets the best education possible.[7]

They spent a day with Roland Barth planning their seminar and challenging and being challenged by him. This led to them engaging in a high quality debate on the day and increased their self esteem regarding their voice in the educational debate. This was carried from themselves to the rest of the school through a display in the school and in assembly.

These pupils have since become instrumental in developing the pupil voice through the rebirth of the pupil council and the development of the school antiracist pupil committee. Activities included designing an antiracist mural, designing and producing antiracist posters, and consulting on and piloting a pupil incident referral form. A major focus of the work done by the pupils was a rewrite of the school antiracist statement for display in classrooms and on the corridors. As one pupil at the time articulated:

> The school's antiracist policy and statement was written by teachers for teachers – the pupils didn't understand it. Especially the younger ones, they didn't understand the words in it.[8]

How did teachers hear and perceive the pupil voice at the second Haggerston Conference? Perhaps the following

quote from one of the delegates gives some insight into how thought provoking this voice actually was:

> One thing I was reminded of was that 'institutions are about the quality of relationships in them'. We need to build good relationships in schools because good relationships help us to learn. It was the Haggerston students who conveyed this message most emphatically to me. They also modelled 'collegiality' by helping us struggle with difficult questions such as: ' how can we as teachers learn to take more risks?' and 'how can we involve students in the reforming of our schools?'[9]

It was after this Conference that the Senior Management Team questioned the design of the school development plan. Why was staff development seen as separate from pupil achievement? In a true community of learners shouldn't all this come under one target of raising achievement? Once again Roland Barth brought this home to us when he said:

> We constantly talk about the importance of student achievement, of teachers' staff development and of the professional growth of principals as if they occur on different planets during different epochs. In a community of learners, adults and children learn simultaneously and in the same place to think critically and analytically and to solve problems that are important to them. In a community of learners, learning is endemic and mutually visible.[1]

"Learning is endemic and mutually visible" – this is an obvious notion in theory but radical in practice. When the headteacher takes on the public role of lead learner and opens out to the pupils as someone who struggles to listen and to learn, at times this can seem vulnerable. Pupils when given 'permission' to express their voice can sometimes misuse it. Recently pupils dissatisfied with school meals took direct action by planning a boycott of school lunches. Since 800 pupils take lunch daily and 75% of these are entitled to a free lunch, the effect may well have been dramatic. In the end, negotiation took place and pupils learnt something about the use and misuse of power and the place of negotiation in a hierarchical institution. The role of the headteacher is to strike that fine balance and tension between allowing pupils to use their voice and protecting them from inappropriate action. We have learned, sometimes with difficulty, that there is no short cut to the end aim – to ensure a holistic sense of learning throughout the entire community.

At the second Conference we were reintroduced to the ideas of Socrates who held the first symposia in Ancient Greece. At that time a symposia was a gathering of a true community of learners with no notion of 'expert'. The questions at these gatherings were more important that the answers. The Ancient Greeks recognised the power of conversation as a tool for clarifying and gaining a greater understanding of issues.

The third Haggerston conference saw us experimenting with the notion of the conversation as a means to school self improvement.

> Most of us listen with the intent to reply, not to understand. We listen from a paradigm limited by habit, tradition, personal experience and knowledge. Seeking to understand goes beyond this narrow form of conversation.[10]

The writer of this is Joanne Macmanus who is currently Principal of the Hartwell Elementary School in Lincoln, Massachusetts, and perhaps she speaks for us all when she says:

With regard to school leadership, what does this mean? For me it has meant that my role as principal has changed dramatically. I find that I am now more a seeker of information than a giver. I make time for personal and small-group conversations. I try really hard to be an empathetic listener. But it is not an easy task. I must first relearn how to listen. I have also discovered that empathetic listening is risky, for you open yourself up to being influenced.[10]

A culture change in a school also leads to a change in vocabulary. This can be powerful. Inviting a dialogue with pupils and staff using the words "let's have a conversation about ... tell me about ..." leads to a more open dialogue than a request for a discussion or a direct (and often challenging) question from the head. It has certainly led to some thought provoking exchanges with parents and pupils all of which formed the basis of the third conference. At this, the latest conference, the central activity was a conversation between Professors Michael Barber and Peter Mortimore on school improvement. Input from parents and pupils came from the floor but also in the form of video input: some of these insights are powerful and challenging.

> I wanted a school where my daughter could enjoy herself and be allowed to grow up to develop into a self confident young woman. I looked at the older children when I was looking at schools – what were the role models for my child ? I looked at the results the school achieved – not league tables. Were the results those that the teacher expected of their children? It was important to me that the immediate environment was welcoming. Schools can be scary places for adults and children.
>
> I think an effective school is one where children, parents and pupils feel at ease with one another. Everyone needs to feel that their culture and personality is affirmed. The curriculum needs to be exciting. You could have the curriculum wonderfully organised but there needs to be some excitement there to help learning.
>
> Parents should trust their children to be able to cope. The child should feel that the school and the home can talk to each other. It is vital that the school is a listening school. It should be open minded to the views of the parents and the views of the child. The child wants to be heard.

The school middle management team in conversation on school improvement also observed:

> Teaching is still a profession where you don't talk about your failures. It's so important to find time for reflection – to sit down with the team and talk about deeper issues. A priority for the school must be to find time where opportunities to talk about teaching and learning become more numerous. Not formal meetings, they tend to be business – teachers feel more secure in informal settings.[11]

So what has been the impact on this school as it strives to become a learning community? The message that learning is important has been consistent, clear and communicated often and in many different ways. Perhaps the simplest message has been through the word ACHIEVE which has been developed into an acronym displayed in school and used in assembly.

This has become so much a part of 'school think' that a recent skit was done on it at the end of term staff panto for the pupils who responded with great enthusiasm.

As the inner city has been 'talked up' through the conferences, so the borough, the school and the staff have been part of this talking up. When the pupils met Roland Barth the American confidence of 'we are the best' translated itself to them and they found it exciting. Brent Davies and Linda Ellison have commented on this when they say:

> One of the characteristics of the British personality is self deprecation and modesty; this is not always an advantage in marketing terms. More of the American viewpoint exemplified by ' We are at the best school ' is necessary if attitude and message are to be conveyed. A central task for school management is to decide how to encourage this type of attitude and pride in the school.[12]

A Faculty handbook in the school now contains the words:

> We seek at all times to raise pupil self esteem through the way in which we encourage and reward achievement and through our daily interactions as pupils and teachers. We believe that as teachers, we must model for our pupils a pride in teaching in the inner city and in Haggerston School. As teachers our own self esteem is vital if we are to develop it in our pupils.[13]

As we begin to plan the fourth Conference, taking as our theme – 'Learning for Life' we are put in mind of a poem that resonated in our minds when we began to believe, over three years ago, that a school could become a focus for national educational debate and that the voice of all involved in educating, could take part in that debate. The last verse had particular resonance for us:

> I shall be telling this with a sigh
> Somewhere ages and ages hence:
> Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
> – I took the one less travelled by,
> And that has made all the difference

As we continue our journey, questions spring to mind. Does one make more mistakes on this road? Without mistakes would one be able to still create a sense of excitement and innovation in an institution? Perhaps more thought provoking – is the road less travelled only a learning experience if one ' goes it alone'? It cannot escape attention that the impetus for the Conferences and from that, the sense of excitement in growing as a learning community,

A	C	H	I	E	V	E
t	o	o	m	f	a	v
t	m	m	p	f	l	e
e	m	e	r	o	u	r
n	i	w	o	r	e	y
d	t	o	v	t		o
a	m	r	e			n
n	e	k				e
c	n					
e	t					

came out of a sense of isolation as a school and a weakened relationship with the LEA.

We still travel the road and we still learn from our partners on it.

If we are all learners then we should improve the relationship between teachers and pupils. There should be open mindedness so fixed views can be changed – both teachers' and pupils'. Fixed views clash and collide, they don't work together, they don't help anyone.

Miss, you say it should be OK to make mistakes in a learning community. But some teachers still make you feel stupid if you don't know something. Teachers should try lots of methods so we can learn. Sometimes, I don't say I'm scared, but I'm apprehensive about asking a question. At the back of your mind is the thought that every teacher still has the power to humiliate you. It's not really a learning community at the moment – when push comes to shove, it's still not equal in all ways.[15]

Would-be learning communities still have many reasons to listen and lots to learn.

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The 'Feel Good Factor'

Lyndon Godsall & Liz Rose
Lyndon Godsall, a lecturer at Westhill College, and Liz Rose, the headteacher, describe how St George's Primary School in Newtown, Birmingham, used a range of 'School Improvement Initiatives' to turn itself around, thereby winning national and local awards.

St George's is an inner city primary school surrounded by high rise flats and small industrial businesses and is within five minutes walk of Birmingham City Centre. There are 276 children on roll, the largest ethnic group being Afro-Caribbean. In 1994 the school received the National Primary Centre Award, two awards at the Birmingham Education Business Partnership Awards for their outstanding links with local industrial partners and an Investors In People award. 1994 was a very successful year and in 1995 the school will appear on Channel 4 TV.

Liz Rose the head teacher of St George's commented:
It came as a real surprise to discover that St George's had not invented School Improvement. In fact it is only recently that I have come to realise that School Improvement is more than something that happened over a number of years at our school.

The school has been developing planning strategies, setting positive climates, and introducing effective communication networks. It was later that Liz discovered that what they thought was a unique experience, involving some individual strategies and solutions, were some of the commonalities that are now being highlighted by many exciting school improvement projects. Many of the school improvement projects have demonstrated the importance of the attitude of the head teacher.

The attitude of the head is one critical factor in the development process... It is therefore important that the

head is from the outset positively inclined, and wishes to support the effort. (Dalin & Gunter Rolff, 1993 p. 41)

When children are dissatisfied with their school they often protest through the only means open to them – unacceptable behaviour. The first step at St George's was to introduce a 'Whole School Positive Behaviour Management Policy'. The policy was developed aiming to guarantee consistency throughout the school. Through a clear induction process and a complex but clear communication system the school rules of St George's are given a high profile. Children at the school receive positive reinforcement for keeping those rules and for contributing towards the positive ethos within the school. There are a series of sanctions for those children who break the rules or who make a negative contribution towards the school ethos.

The policy has been embedded into the school culture. It slowly transformed the attitudes of children and staff and behaviour gradually began to change. The policy like all policies at the school is regularly reviewed.

Making fundamental changes to people's behaviour and attitudes is a very slow process. It has taken years to establish a positive supportive atmosphere at St George's where everyone is allowed to make mistakes and get things wrong without anyone feeling alienated by the experience. It was through a process of 'Action Research' that many of the initiatives at the school came about.

The teaching and learning process is complex. Research on teaching is a relatively new science. ... The tendency

for most teachers, therefore is to rely on traditional, secure and 'standard' instructional practices. (Dalin & Gunter Rolff, 1993, p. 101)

Everything that happens in a school, however small, contributes either negatively or positively to the education of the children. In order for all those processes to be under scrutiny St George's had to have a very thorough and effective planning and evaluation process. The vehicle they used to move the school forward with prioritising and achieving the goals they set for themselves was 'Quality Development'.

Quality Development is essentially a process. It is a strategy, a 'way of working' that facilitates change and supports development. Quality Development makes a difference to learning and teaching by providing the stimulus and practical support for colleagues to build monitoring and evaluation into their work (QD Development Plan, Birmingham LEA, 1994, p. 3).

The Local Education Authority provided a course on implementing QD and following this St George's introduced Quality Development into the school. Liz said,

They began with awareness raising sessions for the whole staff and the Governors. Then staff were invited to join a Quality Development Working Party to take on an initiative and use the process of Quality Development. We were impressed with the results and with the straight forwardness of the process.

The process of Quality Development is a cycle. It starts with the question 'Where do we want to get to?' which establishes the Vision. Then follows the audit that identifies the strengths and weaknesses and answers the question 'Where are we now?'. The gap between where you are and where you want to get to is the Quality Gap. The action plan ('How do we get there?') which works on the weaknesses should eliminate the quality gap. The progress being made is monitored 'How are we doing?' Checks are made to ensure that the success criteria are being met and that decisions on changes to the plan are made. Finally, what has been achieved is evaluated 'How have we done?' and on the basis of the answer decisions are made as to where we need to go next.

Once the Working Party felt competent in using the Quality Development Processes they introduced this way of working into all the meetings that took place in school. A booklet was produced with the whole process laid out and at least one member of the Working Party attended each meeting to provide support and advice on the mechanics of using the process. Meetings became more efficient, more productive and shorter. Staff morale improved when they saw that what they achieved themselves in meetings caused real, noticeable and positive improvements in the classroom. Anthony Jay in the *Harvard Business Review* points to critical outcomes for effective meetings. He demonstrates the effectiveness of a corporate approach:

However, when the combined experience, knowledge, judgment, authority and imagination of a half dozen people are brought to bear on issues, a great many plans and decisions are improved and sometimes transformed...(Jay, 1994, p. 59)

The QD process was used to produce usable and effective policies. A Quality Charter was produced which gave the school its uniqueness and which united the stakeholders in ensuring that standards were kept up. Proformas developed using the QD process were modified for use in targeting goals for children with special needs. Similar strategies

were also used for the major exercise of producing the School Development Plan. Quality Development permeated all the school's planning and was an effective tool in moving the organisation forward.

St George's created a Behaviour Management Policy that worked and that helped to promote a positive atmosphere throughout the school. The school was using Quality Development to achieve goals and targets set. As the school developed they heard about Investors In People.

Before the Investors In People award widened its brief to include schools and other sectors, it was seen by many as something exclusively to do with businesses. St George's at first was wary and saw little connection with Investors. It was difficult at first for the school to see the links between companies that had achieved this award such as Rover, Bass Tavern and IMI and themselves.

Investors In People has been developed from an analysis of the commonalities of the best management practice. The award recognises organisations both in the public and private sectors whose polices and practices include training and development. These organisations should motivate and manage all their staff to achieve their business aims and objectives. St George's saw the award as a reward for the good quality training and development that is identified with the aims and objectives of the school. For them Investors In People provided a recognition for the training and development that they thought was important to a successful school.

Liz Rose saw the Investors In People standard as something that confirmed everyone working together to achieve a shared vision of an organisation. It acknowledged that people are good at their jobs and valued their achievements. The standard also saw everyone striving for continuous improvement in terms of developing the skills they posses. It also ensured that staff who were learning new skills brought about agreed and negotiated changes to teaching and learning.

Almost over night the staff had increased from 15 to 45 which included all associate staff. The whole community of employees at St George's included lunch time supervisors, cleaners, secretary, building services supervisor, classroom assistants, and kitchen staff. Forty-five people working together to achieve the school's targets definitely had more potential than just fifteen on their own, and for St George's it was.

Investors In People had a major impact on three main developmental areas for the school. Firstly, it empowered everyone to take part in the creation of the School Development Plan. Everyone in the school had a part to play through processes and procedures that involved questionnaires, meetings and interviews. This empowerment meant that the whole community of employees knew what St George's was trying to achieve and what their roles were within the school. A Working Document of the School Development Plan contains all the Quality Development planning and evaluation sheets for each target. This Working document is kept up to date by actions being noted and is referred to on a day to day basis. This allows for everyone concerned to see what stage the school is at in its planning and development. Subsequently, this places the SDP as a major document for day to day planning.

Hargreaves & Hopkins (1991) have highlighted the importance of involving everyone in the process of development planning:

The successful implementation of strategies depends on the quality of relationships among those involved with the plan. Effective planning requires collaboration and coordination between the school and its partners.

The second area in which Investors In People has been important for St George's is in valuing people's skills and expertise. A reflection of their commitment can be seen in the section of the SDP that identifies training and development needs of all those working at the school. Using the framework of Investors In People all staff training and development needs are sighted so that the outcomes of training can be clearly shown against identified targets.

At St George's, people are very enthusiastic to play a full part in the life of the school once they have been empowered to do so. There are regular meetings and individual interviews with every member of the workforce so they can discuss their jobs, identify areas of their work where they want further training. Staff are also given the opportunity to identify skills that had been used which they wish to develop to meet the school's agreed targets and to identify new ones.

The official definition of the Investors In People Standard is defined in the terms of twenty-four indicators that are classified under four main principles:

- An Investor In People makes a public commitment from the top to develop all employees to achieve its business objectives.
- An Investor In People regularly reviews the training and development needs of all employees.
- An Investor In People takes action to train and develop individuals on recruitment and throughout their employment.
- An Investor In People evaluates the investment in training and development to assess achievement and improve future effectiveness.

The framework translates into the four major principles: commit, plan, take action, evaluate.

Through expansion of training and development at St George's, training has not necessarily meant going out of school on a course that has been financed by the Training and Development Budget. By using training and development budgets appropriately they have provided more training for everyone by developing good practice in-house using the expertise of the staff. Therefore, the skills, interests and expertise of all are encouraged to improve the curriculum in the widest sense. The rewards have been immense. Liz Rose said that:

If a child has a stimulating lunch time because the supervisor has organised a games club, that child will be in a good frame of mind for working in the afternoon. If kitchen staff are also keen to support the Behaviour Management Policy by creating a warm and positive environment in the dinning room, it will also have a beneficial impact on the children.

The third area where Investors In People has made a difference is in the area of teaching itself. There is no simple, single answer to the question of the way we should effectively deliver the curriculum. It becomes a matter of testing new methods, trying out new ideas, developing initiatives, learning from our own and other's practices and consolidating successful learning and teaching. Teaching is, or should be, a creative process. By being involved with Investors In People an ethos has been created in the school where teachers feel encouraged and safe in trying out new

ideas in developing the curriculum. By providing good quality training and support for people, confidence has increased and staff are motivated to try new ideas.

St George's started to improve when the structures through which it was organised became more efficient. They used good planning procedures and employed a good communication system. Charles Handy and Robert Aitken forecast the changes that the world of education will have to take into account when they said;

No longer will the headteacher be able to look out of the window and see what is going on in the school, because the networks will reach beyond the school. New methods of communication will have to be found, new ways of sharing visions and plans, new ways of checking the performance of staff (by results rather than by a feel for the method). (Handy & Aitken, 1986, pp. 123-124)

It is with these thoughts and ideas that St George's ensured that their people received training on a regular basis. They made their meetings more efficient and kept a very close check on whether they were meeting the goals and targets set. However, with many fundamental structures and procedures in place, Liz and her team were well aware that they still could have been in a position of only improving the management structures and not focusing also on the curriculum. It was not until staff began to think creatively about the curriculum and to come up with ideas and innovative suggestions for improving teaching in the classroom that they really began to make significant changes.

In order for the school to reach a level where they felt effective, they had to develop partnerships with the whole community together with a positive school climate and strong leadership. It was the framework that Investors In People provided that finally placed all the pieces of the jigsaw together. Therefore for St George's to improve they believe that fundamental management structures had to be in place to channel ideas and pieces of creative thinking. To also harness, nurture, and develop successful pedagogy the teaching and learning community needed a route to voice their ideas.

That route was supplied through the combination of Quality Development and Investors In People. This made it possible for everyone's ideas to be valued and responded to. It then became possible to incorporate those ideas into the School Development Plan. Training and Development are then provided at St George's and any ideas that are incorporated in the plan are effectively monitored and tracked in each classroom. Evaluation methods are used to monitor how useful ideas have improved the teaching and learning for the child. Supporting all stakeholders to be effective and see the clear pathway from ideas to successful teaching is what St George's is all about.

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Continuity in the Curriculum

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Lesley Jones works at Goldsmiths College, University of London, mainly in the field of mathematics education.
She taught in Birmingham primary and secondary schools between 1968 and 1985 and became interested in
the difference in children's attainment and attitude as they moved from primary to secondary schooling.

Prior to the comprehensive system, assumptions were made about children's attainment at the age of transfer. Children who went to grammar schools had all passed the 11+ and so were considered suited to an 'academic' curriculum. Those who had failed the examination went to secondary modern schools, where a lower "base line" was assumed. Pedley (1963) claims that,

> Public confidence in the fairness and accuracy of the (11+) examination rested on the belief that intelligence tests could detect and measure inborn ability.

With such confidence in the testing system and the fixed nature of ability it perhaps seemed reasonable to teach children as if they formed two distinct, but homogeneous groups. With the advent of comprehensive schools came an awareness of greater diversity and individuality in the pupil population. There was a perceived need to smooth the transition from one school to the next and to attempt to ensure some continuity of experience for the pupil.

Anne Lance (*Forum*, Vol. 36, No. 1) emphasises the importance of continuity for pupils and their educational needs, but seems to assume a shared understanding of what is meant by continuity. I consider that there is a number of different ways in which the curriculum can be continuous or discontinuous across the primary secondary interface. In *Forum*, Vol. 36, No. 3, I suggested that some changes in style of teaching and approach can be quite beneficial for children. Part of the excitement in moving schools is related to the aspects which will be new and different. Our interviews with children revealed that subjects such as science and drama are eagerly anticipated and seen as part of the rites of passage of moving from the 'childish' curriculum of primary school into the 'grown up' sector of the secondary school. Lee, Harris & Dickson (1994) found that this phenomenon was particularly the case with subjects which had, "not been prominent or explicitly taught in the primary curriculum."

Continuity in curriculum content sounds like a good idea, but may be impossible to manage across a large number of feeder schools and into a number of receiver secondary schools. It also assumes a more linear progression through subject topics than is actually the case. Denvir & Brown's work on teaching and learning sequences within mathematics topics shows progression is anything but linear, and that children construct their own knowledge in a variety of cognitive pathways (Denvir & Brown, 1986). What we teach is not necessarily what the children learn. In other subjects the choice of content is not necessarily seen as hierarchical. Studying the Romans does not make you a better historian than studying the Egyptians.

One of the areas in which there is clear discontinuity is organisational. From the primary classroom where one teacher has taught the child for a year and has got to know his/ her strengths and weaknesses, the pupil moves into a

situation where the teacher's concern is more with their subject and what they will teach, than with the child and what s/he will learn. Lance (op. cit.) puts the difference down to different styles of training, but I suggest that the difference is much deeper. It is a philosophical, pedagogical and epistemological difference. The emphasis moves from learning to teaching and from child to knowledge base. The secondary school teacher is less likely to consider that s/he needs to know a great deal about the pupil. Secondary school teachers see themselves as subject specialists and there is a great deal of pressure from all directions to 'cover the syllabus.' This pressure is increasingly present in primary schools since the implementation of the National Curriculum.

Lance refers to local initiatives in continuity as long ago as 1975. There is a feeling of *déja vu* when you look at the literature. I recently gave a talk about the CICLE (Continuity in Curriculum Learning Experience) [1] project to a group of mathematics educators and was aware as I spoke of the feeling voiced by one participant that, "We have seen it all before. Nothing has changed." I am aware that educators have been saying very much the same thing over a long period of years. 1 first started researching in this area in 1982 and many of the same issues arise now that were identified then. A local working group report (City of Birmingham Education Department, 1975) provides a list of twenty recommendations, many of which would apply equally today. Progress is made in small pockets for relatively small bursts of time. Clusters of schools are inspired by involvement in research projects, but the improvements do not seem to leave a lasting effect.

Records

One central reason for this is that there has been little progress made on the issue which I consider crucial for success, the transfer of records. This issue has been highlighted many times (Weston, 1992; Galton & Wilcocks, 1983; Lee, Harris & Dickson, 1994). It is always a bone of contention between teachers in the two phases, as described by Lance. However, I would argue that the difficulty is more than the issue of trust which she identifies. More crucial than that is the question of how teachers use the information transferred and what is the most useful information. There seems to be an assumption that teachers automatically know how to use the information they receive. Here we have a problem that applies equally within the primary school, but is less significant because of the class based organisation in primary schools. Each September teachers meet a new class of children about whose academic progress they know very little. Before meeting the children it is very difficult to make effective use of a set of records. However, the nature of primary schools means that it does not take too long before teachers gain a good idea of the attainment of the

children in their care. By the middle of the first term they are in a position to meet parents and discuss the progress of the children. Working with students in school I am impressed at the speed this can come about. By the end of a four week teaching practice students have a good idea of children's levels of attainment. The secondary situation is different. Teachers may have more than one group of Y7 pupils to teach and may only see them twice or three times a week. In this situation it is much more difficult to gain a view of the children's attainment, even though the judgements will be limited to one area of the curriculum. In both sectors it is equally difficult to use the records before meeting the children. Without knowing the children there is no context for learning details about them. It would seem, then, that the best arrangement would be to access the records soon after meeting the children and to build up a picture of the children, using the transferred information, as soon as possible. Again the question arises of how teachers should use this information and what kind of information is most useful.

What is the Purpose of Transferring Information?

There can be no point in using any transfer information unless it leads to a differentiated curriculum. Cockcroft (1982) referred to the seven-year gap in children's conceptual development at the age of 11. We know that children progress at different rates and we would probably all agree that we want each child to be working to his/her potential and given a challenging curriculum. Differentiation can take a variety of forms and is perhaps more easily achieved in some subjects than others. Open ended assignments provide an opportunity for children to perform at their own level, (differentiation by outcome), though it might equally be said that they allow the possibility for the child to under perform, achieving only the minimum expectation set by the teacher. This kind of assignment may be used in creative subjects like English, design technology and art, but is perhaps less likely to occur in mathematics or science.

A second way of differentiating within the curriculum is to tackle the same content base, but setting the challenge at different levels. Some mathematics text books attempt to do this, providing different exercises within the same chapter of the book, or providing parallel books with different levels of challenge (e.g. SMP 11–16, Cambridge Primary Mathematics). Children can work individually or in groups at similar, but differentiated tasks. Some schemes go a stage further and provide individualised learning systems (e.g. SMILE [2]). The difficulty which teachers perceive with providing a differentiated curriculum relates to their perception of the need to 'get through the syllabus'. The emphasis of the National Curriculum is so heavily content based that teachers feel guilty if they allow children time to work at their own pace.

Which Information is Most Useful to Transfer?

Clearly it can be useful to some extent for teachers to know what content has been covered, so that the children do not receive a repeated diet of 'dinosaurs'. However, this is far from being the crucial information for the receiving teacher. It is perhaps more important to know whether the child has a particular learning style which works well for him/her, or a particular aptitude or interest. Research has shown that the least able children are those for whom transfer systems are most effective. (HMI, 1989) Here the quality

of information is good and there are systems in place to use it for future planning. The level descriptors set out in the post-Dearing National Curriculum (DFE, 1995) should provide a good indication of children's attainment in each subject, but it is surely essential that teachers use them to make provision for the different levels of ability of the children transferring.

How, then, should we move forward and attempt to work towards a smooth transition? Styles of teaching and learning have to be the central changes. Teachers need support in professional development designed to enable them to provide a more differentiated curriculum. They also need support to learn how best to use the information on the transfer records. Level descriptions should provide some useful information, but there is a need for additional information about children and their learning styles. This assumes that teachers know how to provide for a range of different learning styles. Schools have experimented with a curriculum which gives more power to the learner (Collins & Lee, 1994). It is noticeable that children in year 6 seem to operate with more autonomy than pupils in Y7. Yet empowering children by allowing them to direct their own learning can make for a more meaningful and successful curriculum and an easier task for the teacher. Built into this system would be arrangements for pupils' self assessment. If this is initiated prior to the transfer stage pupils themselves might identify instances where the curriculum is inappropriate and make their own needs plain. Local initiatives in which children have compiled a coursework file have been seen as a successful way forward (Lee, Harris & Dickson, 1994).

Unfortunately we seem to be moving away from seeing children as independent learners. If schools feel the pressure of the vociferous calls for more subject teaching and more whole class teaching in the primary schools (Alexander, Rose & Woodhead, 1992; *The Times Educational Supplement*, 1995) they will move away from consideration of the individual child and put subjects before children. The National Curriculum has put teachers on the defensive. Content is all important, children cannot be allowed time to explore or investigate. "We have to get on. We're doing the Vikings next week."

One final point: I would agree with Ann Lance that the ERA (1988) has had a deleterious effect on primary/secondary liaison. The pressure of the National Curriculum, the constant fear of the OFSTED team around the corner and the deluge of paperwork which makes it hard to look over the parapet mean that teachers have little time to 'stand and stare', little time to reflect and precious little time for curriculum development of any sort.

Notes
[1] CICLE (Continuity in Curriculum Learning Experiences) is a research group based at Goldsmiths College, supported by the University of London Central Research Fund.
[2] SMILE (Secondary Mathematics Individual Learning Experience) is a project initiated by the Inner London Education Authority, which produces teacher-designed learning activities.
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Transferring to Secondary School: whose choice?

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Since I wrote my last article for *Forum* concerning transfer between primary and secondary schools (Lance, 1994), there have been further grounds for concern about this issue. The concern relates to allocation of places, and how this may be influencing the experience of a child moving from primary to secondary school. This article looks at the experience of parents and children when considering the transfer to secondary school. It then moves on to discuss the reality of 'choice', and consider how parents may be ignoring vital issues in their anxiety to gain a place at a 'good' school.

If you enter into a conversation with parents who are considering where they might send their children to secondary school, several issues emerge. Firstly they begin to think about this at an increasingly early stage, very often at the end of their offspring's Year 4 in primary school. It is also apparent that the early perceptions which they have of the local secondary schools from which they are likely to be able to choose are based on very unreliable sources. They are sometimes based on their own experience of what the particular institution was like when they were of school age. They may be related to the reputation which the school enjoys in the locality. They may reflect the views and values which parents have of the society in which we live. For example, there is evidence that the multiracial makeup of school populations sends racist parents scuttling for a place for their child in the local 'white highlands'.

From these initial perceptions, parents then begin to investigate further and look to league tables, school prospectuses, and local authority information. They also consider the travel factor, and how they will manage either to transport their child, whether s/he will walk to school or if they will be able to manage the journey by public transport.

The next stage in all this is for parent(s) and child to visit a range of schools at a series of open evenings which are organised by the schools themselves. On these occasions the secondary schools normally include a meeting which is led by the headteacher in the school hall, followed by an opportunity to trail around the school and see its different departments.

In the middle of all this deliberation is the child, who has very often made her /his own mind up about exactly where s/he wants to go. S/he will use the experience which s/he has gained from visits to local secondary schools or information gathered 'on the grapevine' when it comes to making the choice. It is inevitable s/he will also be influenced by peer notions about what happens in the school.

And yet all the time which is spent, all the emotional turmoil which all parties undergo in their quest to 'make the right choice' may well be in vain. For in spite of the government's pretence that parents and their children have a choice under their admissions policies, this is not always the case. For some parents and children the choice is restricted to a single secondary school which is part of the local community and which is served by three or four local primary schools. In a large city such as Birmingham the position is different in that there is apparently a greater variety of choice. It is quite possible for a class of Year 6 children to disperse to a dozen or more secondary schools, and secondary schools may receive children from a host of different primary schools. The truth of the matter is, however, that it is not always parents and their children who choose the school, but rather that there is "a pecking order of schools who choose parents" (Brighouse, 1994). There is an enormous gulf between a minority of schools which are perceived to be 'good schools' and which will have an opportunity to select their intake, and have a waiting list, and those schools at the other end of the spectrum which, for a variety of reasons, may not be at the top of the examination league tables, may have poorer resources

and which will eventually close because they will not be financially viable.

While one would support strategies to improve pupil and teacher performance, the government has approached this critical issue in an entirely inappropriate manner. It has waged a campaign to 'outlaw' schools with high truancy rates, and poor examination results rather than offer the support which such schools often desperately need. The effect has been to further demoralise the staff and pupils in such schools, to sully their reputation, and to create a gulf between 'good' and 'bad' schools. Thus the demand for some schools has considerably increased, while others struggle to fill their places.

What, then are the hallmarks of 'good' schools? They are likely to enjoy a good reputation in terms of discipline, which may relate to their careful avoidance of admitting potentially disruptive pupils. They will inevitably appear near the top of the league in relation to examination results. They will undoubtedly boast excellent resources, both material and human. Some of these schools are 'selective', some are grant maintained, others are situated in middle class areas or were former grammar schools. They lure the high achieving pupils from primary schools, ensuring their continued success in league tables, and thus compounding the cycle of selectivity, whether by examination, class membership or geographical location of a child's home.

In a society which has a built-in unemployment rate, where the rights of the individual are seen as paramount, where there has been an ongoing campaign against 'liberal' views, many parents seek places in secondary schools which produce the future adult élite. After all, everyone wants the best for their child. Some parents abandon their previously cherished beliefs in the interest of their child's future, when it comes to this decision time. One of the United Kingdom's most prominent parents recently demonstrated this point. "I am not going to make a choice for my child on the basis of what is the politically correct thing to do." (*The Times Educational Supplement*, December 1994). Like Labour Party leader, Tony Blair, many teachers who have formerly argued vociferously against the selective system, have a change of heart when it comes to the point when their own child is due to transfer to secondary school, and enter them for the examination circus which exists in Birmingham. Children can spend three consecutive weekends sitting 'eleven plus' type exams in their quest for places at local selective schools operating under different foundations.

In their anxiety to gain a place at a prestigious school, do parents still remember to look for vital evidence about the secondary school which goes beyond league table results and a super new sports hall? It is my belief that in this scramble to see their child successfully over the divide, parents become less discerning and less demanding about what actually happens to their child when they have crossed into secondary school. In their rush to gain a place at a 'desirable' school, do they consider some of the issues which are vital to a smooth transition?

Will the staff in the secondary school which they so desire make good use of the documentation which their primary colleagues have collated on the child over the past years? Will the talents, weaknesses, foibles, minor health problems which their son/daughter arrives with, be recognised because such paperwork has been consulted?

Will the secondary school accept the levels which their child has been assessed at, or will s/he be subjected to a series of similar if not identical tests, just to make sure that their primary colleagues are not being over optimistic about their ability?

Will the curriculum which they receive recognise what has gone before, and build on the child's previous achievement, or will they cover old ground 'just to make sure'.

Will the curriculum areas taught cater for a differentiated approach, or will a whole class didactic approach be used? Will differentiation only be achieved through banding?

Will their child be gradually eased into the new system with a build up towards a full homework timetable, or will they be immediately over burdened with a two or three hour a night schedule which weighs them down?

Will the pastoral system reflect the child's experience in the primary school: Who will take up on the role of the primary class teacher, dinner lady, crossing warden, caretaker?

Will the management of the school respond positively to the enquiry/complaints which a parent may have?

In a sense parents who gain access to the place of their choice have no inclination to ask such questions because, if they do not like what they find, their only option will be to select a less prestigious school without the features of success which they desire.

It is a source of great concern that recent legislation (*Choice and Diversity*, 1992) has accelerated the trend for children in large cities to move away from attending their local secondary schools. Open enrolment has encouraged parents to seek places in schools beyond their immediate catchment area, places which are too few in number to be able to satisfy the demand. Through legislation such as the *Parents' Charter* (1994), the government is dangling a golden carrot in front of the noses of all parents, safe in the knowledge that only a limited number of children will be able to find places in these 'high ranking' institutions. Parents are wooed into seeking places in these schools to support their own children, and to avoid the less desirable alternatives which are the result of such a system of 'creaming off'.

If a school has a waiting list, is oversubscribed with children who seek a place in order to avoid being allocated to their own poorly resourced, poorly regarded local school, will it be really necessary to consider easing transition? This may in the future become an issue only considered by schools who need to 'sell themselves' in order to survive. The price of choice may be that parents have to take what the secondary school has to offer, and be grateful for it. After all, why should a highly sought after school challenge its own practice?

The educated middle classes were the prime beneficiaries of an earlier system of selection. This new form of selection seems likely to encourage a return to this.

Unless someone tackles the issue of admission by legislation – the outcome ten years from now will be ever widening gaps between the educationally rich and the educationally poor." (Brighouse, 1994)

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Plus SÇAA Change?

Some reflections on the revised National Curriculum

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The changes to the National Curriculum, and in some instances the lack of any changes, are worth further examination and only by looking for meaning beyond the self-evident can we see what the changes really signify. That is why this article will not be looking at the minutiae of the actual changes, interesting though it would be to do so. There is a general awareness that many of the changes have to do with reduction and simplification and most are content to leave it at that especially since most teachers are virtually punch-drunk anyway following eight changes in seven years to the science curriculum and twelve in as many years to technology. Ostensibly it has been to give the teachers what they had been asking for, i.e. more time to manage the national curriculum. Closer examination reveals the selectivity of the exercise however as, for example, although there may have been re-arrangement there is no real reduction in the core subjects and indeed as far as English for KS1 is concerned it now demands more time rather than less. Have the changes been to restructure the status of the fundamental subjects into those that might now be more accurately termed the peripheral?

Winning Whims

Examining the changes in the light of their possible meaning brings a number of questions into focus. For example, what has been the place of individual whim? Where have the opportunities for change been ignored, or even avoided – and why? What of the effects of cosmetic change and the influence of time-management on the 'slimming' exercise? There also seems to have been an assumption that the changes, for instance from the tick list to the level descriptors, will be both welcomed and absorbed by schools without causing any problems. Can we be sure that this is the case without first considering what may have been the damage over the last five years?

To take individual whim: why, for instance, has the recommended example of the story of Guy Fawkes been allowed to remain at KS1 (History)? It is a complex tale and not a particularly edifying one at that, entailing as it does defending the finer points of Catholic/Protestant animosity and the practice of torture and decapitation. To children of six? Many of whose preferred reading is still *Spot the Dog Goes to the Seaside?*

It can also only be individual whim that has allowed the introduction of even more phonics at KS1 English. There is absolutely no convincing research evidence of note that indicates children become better readers or writers if they are raised on an over-rich diet of phonics at 5 or 6 years old. Common sense and experience alone would suggest that it would be profitable to leave it to the early

years of KS2, but these were not the voices that were heeded. Unfortunately the travelling merchants peddling the snake-oil of phonics had an audience already looking for the quick fix.

Small instances apart, and they are not that infrequent, the bold change that could have been made and would have brought Britain into the world of 21st century education instead of fine-tuning the 19th, would have been adopting the HMI vision of a curriculum based on 'areas of experience'. Unsurprisingly, it was a vision that the civil servants, inheritors of a complex system based on tight categorisation, could not, rather than would not, share, and education has now been handed the burden of ten subjects from the age of five onwards.

'Subjects' are a fairly recent cultural invention and are hard to justify on pedagogical grounds where young children are concerned. Interestingly, the call to 'cross-curricular' work has never ceased and is often quoted as a means of delivering the National Curriculum although it has been carefully deleted from the revised version as implying a certain methodology – and methodology is still the teachers' prerogative (Education Reform Act, 1988). For the time being. When examined more closely it is nothing more or less than the acknowledgement, conscious or otherwise, that the defence of strict subject areas breaks down in the light of classroom practice and knowledge of how young children learn and think about a world some of them have only inhabited for sixty months and in which they have only been talking fluently for about 20. By the time two-thirds of them have been 80 months on the planet they are expected to perform a really quite astonishing range of mental gymnastics. Reading the National Curriculum, in this light puts much of it in proportion and begs the question as to whether we have yet got it right for the children of KS1 who have much social and emotional learning to undertake, an aspect society may well come to regret having given less attention to than it undoubtedly needs.

The Price of Haste

To return to the document itself, it has to be said that from the production point of view the revised curriculum is a real tribute to the positive aspects of the civil service, whether manifest in the DFE or SCAA. To have organised the meetings and the paperwork, kept to agendas and delivered the brief of a shorter, neater and more accessible curriculum in the extraordinarily short time allowed for the exercise was a real achievement. If educationists recognised that there were certain subjects or subjects-within-subjects, e.g. the above mentioned phonics, that were somehow mysteriously 'off limits' as far as change was concerned,

it must have been a relief to those with the deadline uppermost in mind as they simply worked against the clock. This begs one of the other important questions – should the exercise have been given such a short deadline and was it merely a politically manufactured one? 'Time management' can be and is, used unscrupulously by both business and government on occasion – would we have seen more considered change if there had been time for greater debate and reflection? In welcoming the new revision we may have been rather too readily grateful for the speed of its production and overlooked what we might have had, given more time. The new presentation is an undeniable and obvious improvement but it shouldn't blind us to missed opportunities.

For example, the paring back of the Geography and History curriculum, welcome thought it is, still goes for the dilution model as far as the younger children at KS1 are concerned. That is to say that instead of recognising that these young children learn in a qualitatively different manner to those at KS2 they are given a watered down version of what the older children are expected to cover. It looks neat and turned on its head it's called progression but it still deals with the imposition of the constructs of adult thinking upon certain subject matter. It not only fails to raise the fundamental question as to how 5 and 6 year olds learn, it consequently misses many opportunities to build effectively on the way in which young children *do* learn to think and structure their learning.

The result is going to be (an avoidable) confusion worse confounded. For example a child of six in my class could 'name the country in which he lived' and even find it on a map or a globe – for which I thought I deserved a tick as well as he! His true understanding was revealed to me when he said he'd *seen* the whole of England the previous Saturday; they were getting off an aeroplane at Luton after a football match! Amusing at one level maybe, but such comments should be taken far more seriously than they usually are and should inform our planning and assessment. This is where the children are at and where we should begin to think out an appropriate curriculum for this age group.[1]

Dissonant Outcomes

Finally, how are we to look at the effect these new changes might have on schools, particularly with regard to the desire to get away from the ubiquitous tick-list and its inexorable demands? Is it a picture of unalloyed bliss or if not, why not?

As a KS1 teacher, living through the last five years of educational change has been the equivalent of taking, or rather being told to take, a ride on a switchback made out of untested material over uncertain track and knowing that the chap in charge not only kept handing over to other chaps but even when they were in charge, none of them knew what or where the control buttons were.

As a psychologist, it's been easier to take the standpoint of a spectator albeit one who sometimes feared for the well being of those jolted about by machinery that clearly wasn't going to last the pace. In some respects, as I hope to show, the new changes are, rather unexpectedly, no exception to one's disquiet about teachers' ability to handle change.

Wearing both hats, it's been a particularly sobering experience over recent years to have met teachers at various compulsory LEA training sessions, on assessment for example, and to realise how little it took and takes, to alter otherwise sensible teachers into those who appear to suspend professional judgement in order to be seen as uncritically law abiding, putting 'mechanical obedience' [2] above all else. Not that the courses have stressed this aspect but somehow the view from the top of the Whiteknuckle Ride did something for those teachers' sense of proportion and there was a pervasive whiff of fear.

As Sir Ron Dearing and his advisors recognised, this fear manifested itself in the now immortal tick list. Interestingly, in another context, it is said that "the bite of some ticks may produce a peculiar tick paralysis which disappears with the removal of the tick".[3] To my own cost I know that this annual exercise involved at a conservative estimate somewhere near 587 ticks or their equivalent per child at the end of KS1.

It is these equivalents that received very little publicity at the time but which spoke a great deal about what can happen to tired professionals under too much and/or unrealistic pressure and which could also happen again if the circumstances were to be repeated.

If one could maintain a certain objectivity there was considerable interest to be found in the ingenuity of these tick-list equivalents. Each one represented a system to which a teacher, or more generally an entire school, was completely wedded. Now they may be considered as ephemera of their times but they were the ephemera of control systems that were themselves going out of control.

For example, in some schools children's achievements or lack of, were represented variously as petals on a daisy, traffic lights or bricks on a house each numbered according to AT. There seemed little awareness that, for children transferring from one school to another, it was hard to tell whether someone stuck at amber was the equivalent to five or ten petals, or a home only completed up to the first front windowsill. Oddly, it didn't seem to be the concern of such schools; ostensibly such systems were justified on grounds of their greater accessibility to a knowledge of children's achievements but it didn't do to query whether such systems represented real learning or were perhaps even effective diagnostic tools. The perceived task was to deliver the ATs, no questions asked.

It is in this context that it has been significant to read that teachers are, surprisingly, finding it harder to come to terms with the 'level descriptors' than was expected. These level descriptors have been expressly designed to give an overall impression of a child's level rather than provide a meaningless bank of ticks.[4] However, it seems that teachers can become only too easily conditioned and end up as victims of their own systems.

There is also the factor of cognitive dissonance. KS1 teachers have been told by those they considered to be in authority that assessment by ATs and ticklist was crucially important. Now those years of toil are suddenly to be put aside. Is the message that all this hard work was for nothing after all? The pain hasn't been worth it? In looking at managing change within schools the new change-over from tick lists to level descriptors is going to be an important if not vital one because the way in which children's learning is assessed is going to be essential for the way in which such learning is going to be put in the way of children. Contradicting this though, and it is something of which teachers became quickly aware in recent months, teacher assessment seems to be increasingly less important though as far as arriving at a child's *public* level of attainment is concerned, i.e. SATs result. It also raises a considerable

question over this particular aspect of change with the arrangement for the delivery of the National Curriculum.

For teachers, still in roller coaster mode, it isn't so much a matter of a revised curriculum as the question of wanting to know who is really in charge of the Big Dipper. As it so happens, amongst the children's culture of today, it is no longer rides called 'Thunderlooper', 'Black Hole' or 'Corkscrew' which are reckoned to be the scariest of experiences; it is one called 'Nemesis'.

References
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[2] E.G.A. Holmes, quoted by A. Hargreaves, 'Let us Take the Lead', *The Times Educational Supplement,* 24 February 1995.
[3] Ticks, *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Vol. 22, 1955.
[4] G. Haigh (1995) Back to basics instinct, *The Times Educational Supplement,* 10 February 1995.

14–19 Education: a coherent approach

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The Dearing Review did not embrace 16–19 issues and, during the consultation, the messages which it received concerning Key Stage 4 were very mixed. There was, therefore, no consensus for Dearing to reflect at Key Stage 4 and so his proposals, which have now been accepted by the Secretary of State, have not been greeted with enthusiasm. Not only has Dearing failed to find a consensus at Key Stage 4, but there has been little attempt to link Key Stage 4 with the 16–19 curriculum structure. An opportunity has been lost to look simultaneously at these two age groups and to produce a coherent 14–19 curriculum, which will serve the needs of all young people. It is the purpose of this article to outline such a curriculum and to show how it would be possible to move towards it.

Principles for a 14-19 Education System

In its publication *14–19: Pathways to Achievement* (SHA, 1993), the Secondary Heads Association put forward a number of principles on which a coherent 14–19 system should be based. A 14–19 education system should:
1. Provide the foundation for a system of lifelong learning;
2. Build on success, not failure;
3. Be a single unified system with elements of choice to suit individual need;
4. Guarantee breadth, balance and depth in the curriculum of each learner; and
5. Give a high priority to personal development, guidance and careers advice.

Lifelong Learning

The GCSE examination, taken by most people at the age of 16, represents a major obstacle to a system of lifelong learning. Because it coincides with the end of statutory full-time education, it is seen by too many young people as the final hurdle in a race which they have already lost. If we are to use the analogy with athletics, education should be a marathon, not a race in which hurdles are set at a height which will cause a large proportion of the population

to fall. A system of lifelong learning requires accreditation which is not age-related and which encourages people – young and old – to build on their qualifications towards the next stage. This concept of credit accumulation is now widely accepted and is already becoming fully established in higher education. Indeed, there is little reason why a 14–19 system using the concept of credit accumulation, should not be linked to the increasingly modular higher education curriculum, so that the brightest students can take advanced placement courses while still at school or college.

Flexibility is an important component in lifelong learning, because the needs of all people change over time. This can best be guaranteed through shorter units of study. At no stage is this more essential than between the ages of 14 and 19, when the two-year GCSE and A-level courses present formidable barriers to many young people. Those who make a two-year commitment to A-level, and do not succeed, have nothing to show for their efforts, because there is no half-way house to success or failure. The welcome growth in modular A-levels since 1992 represents an important trend. If this also occurred at GCSE, it would be of particular benefit to those with special educational needs and those who achieve little at present, since the shorter units of study are seen as more realistic goals.

A modular-based 14–19 system will enable students to study – and achieve accreditation in – units which are suited to their needs and their aptitudes. This flexibility has similar benefits for the adult education market, as people build up their portfolio of qualifications throughout their lives. We should then see more adults studying in schools and a greater focus by the schools themselves on their responsibilities towards the wider community.

Success, Not Failure

Although the present system has grown haphazardly, there is an underlying assumption, for both historical and economic reasons, that a proportion of people will fall at each stage The Government's performance tables, based

on the age cohorts at 16 and 18, confirm this. The National Targets for Education and Training (NTETs) have inched away from this millstone of age-relatedness, highlighting achievements at Level 2 (Intermediate GNVQ and GCSE) by the age of 19, rather than 16 years. This is welcome, but insufficient.

What is required is a whole system which is built on success, not failure, and where accreditation is given for all positive achievement. A modular structure is well suited to this, provided that it gives parity of esteem to achievement in all areas a highly successful module of work experience, linked to part of a student's study programme, is just as creditworthy as a distinction in a module of physics. The proposed system for Scotland represents a good model, demonstrating that it is possible to build a system on credit accumulation and successful achievement, without accusations of a dilution in standards which tend to be levelled at similar proposals in England and Wales.

A Single, Unified System

Professor Howie's committee had accurately diagnosed the problems of 14–19 education in Scotland, but failed to produce an acceptable solution. After widespread consultation, the final Scottish proposals came from the Government itself. It is therefore a matter of considerable mystery why the Government is able to propose a single, unified system for Scotland, while stating that it is not possible to have such a system in England and Wales, where GCSE and GNVQ pre-16 are being developed by different bodies – SCAA and NCVQ – on entirely different sets of assumptions. Post-16 the dual carriageway has become a three-lane highway, we are told by Government Ministers with A-level, GNVQ and NVQ in parallel. This analogy misrepresents the present situation, since there is no opportunity for students, unlike motorists, to change from one lane to another, except by returning to the start. Until we have opportunities for credit transfer and, where appropriate, common modules we have all the disadvantages of three separate systems. The problems are compounded by the pre-eminent position of A-level, with the consequential lower status of GNVQ. If we cannot use the terms academic and vocational without introducing notions of hierarchy – and the history of English education indicates that we cannot – then we should not use this terminology at all.

In a unified system, all courses have both theoretical and practical components. The balance between these varies according to the subject matter – more theoretical for classics, more practical in science, for example. Assessment is a combination of coursework and terminal examination. As with the curriculum, the balance varies from subject to subject, with appropriate proportions of each type of assessment.

The modular structure is well suited to the wide variety of courses which is required to cover all aptitudes, but each module must have a clear place in the structure readily identifiable as part of a study pathway and categorised according to level of difficulty. Modules in, say, history or manufacturing are unique to a single pathway, whereas modules in languages or social sciences contribute to several study pathways and open up opportunities of genuine credit transfer.

It is not sufficient to have only two levels of difficulty, General (equivalent to GCSE and Intermediate GNVQ) and Advanced (equivalent to A-level and Advanced GNVQ).

Students who need to work at a slower pace will specially benefit from levels which represent staging posts to General and Advanced. Thus, all modules can be identified as Foundation, General, Intermediate or Advanced and a portfolio of qualifications can be built from accreditation gained at any of theses levels.

Breadth, Balance and Depth

The main reason why the Dearing Review failed to find a consensus at Key Stage 4 was the sharp division of opinion which exists between those who favour a broad and balanced curriculum up to the age of 16 and those who believe that, in years 10 and 11, students are better motivated by a study programme in which they have had a large element of choice. The 14–19 modular curriculum described in this article makes it possible to have breadth, depth, balance and flexibility through the concept of breadth over time. In this way, the study programmes of all students contain guaranteed breadth, but there remains a considerable choice of modules and pathways through the system.

During the first two years of the (normally) four-year programme, all students study English, mathematics and science. They also study compulsory modules in religious education, careers education and work experience, information technology and personal, social and health education. The four available levels of accreditation and the modular structure enable students to vary the amount of time which they spend on arts technology, humanities, physical education and modern foreign languages, but they will have breadth and balance by studying them all at some time during the two-year time period.

There is a danger that the GNVQ Part 1 at Key Stage 4 will produce undesirable divisions between the so-called academic and vocational lines of study. A more coherently planned curriculum would find a less exclusive place for vocational studies. Better still, the vocational approach underpins the whole curriculum, with theoretical and practical elements in all areas of study, as described above.

In the shorter term, study programmes could be constructed which guarantee the full range of core skills to all young people. This is also a sensible approach to breadth at the Intermediate and Advanced levels, where study programmes will have become more specialised for most people (though not as damagingly specialised as in the existing structure).

Personal Development

High quality guidance and careers advice are crucial to students as they find their way through a modular-based unified curriculum. Its diversity guarantees that there is an appropriate study programme for everyone, yet its unified structure brings parity of esteem to all types of study. The opportunities for personal development are built into the system, so that progression does not cease at 16 or 18, but continues throughout life. Only with the introduction of such a system will we make the most of the talents of all our people.

Although there is little agreement about how the National Curriculum Key Stage 4 should be organised, there is a broad consensus in favour of most of the principles outlined above. The Labour and Liberal Democrat parties have adopted 14–19 policies along these lines. The Confederation of British Industry, the Royal Society and many other bodies hold similar views. The Government itself has adopted such a system in Scotland. Perhaps, therefore, a coherent approach

to the 14–19 curriculum is not so far away as it sometimes seems.

Moving Towards the New System

In the present climate, it is difficult for schools and colleges to develop a Curriculum on the pattern described in this article. The proposals for Key Stage 4 do not provide an answer to the problem of creating a broad, balanced curriculum up to the age of 16 years. Particular areas of concern for schools are the proposals for short courses and the way in which GNVQ Part 1 courses may appear to form a separate, lower status, part of the curriculum.

For the 16–19 age group, it is possible for institutions to move some way towards the desired goal. In spite of the narrowness of A-level courses, breadth can be incorporated into the curriculum through an entitlement in areas such as information technology, modern foreign languages, work experience and community service. Interim accreditation can be developed by offering modular A-level courses, as an increasing number of institutions are already doing. In some cases, modules can be co-taught with GNVQ modules at the start of the course and, in areas such as business studies, students' decisions concerning their terminal qualification can be delayed until part of the course is completed. But these are small steps and it will take a major Government initiative before a coherent system is in place.

A Comprehensive Community College

Freda Hussain & Tony Hughes
The Principal, Freda Hussain, and the Vice Principal, Tony Hughes, together contribute this account of the ethos and achievement of a combined 11-16 years comprehensive school and community college in Leicester.

Moat Community College opened in 1980. It was formed by the amalgamation of two single-sex schools, Moat Boys' School and Moat Girls' School. Both were 'secondary modern' but redesignated 'comprehensive' in 1975 after the Leicestershire reorganisation. The college operated as an eight form entry, 11-16 community college on a split site until 1983, when all year groups were accommodated in new buildings on the present site. Central to this development was the provision of a community programme based on the needs of the local community. In 1982 Leicestershire Education Authority designated Moat as a 'Phase III Community College'. This new initiative meant that each member of the teaching staff had an option to take up an annually renewable community contract to work on some area of the community education programme.

The College is located in Highfields, a largely residential area lying immediately to the east of Leicester city centre. It is a densely populated and a very mixed area, both socially and ethnically. Average incomes are low in comparison to Leicester as a whole and unemployment rates are high. The balance of ethnic and religious groups is constantly changing: demographic data, therefore, has short term validity.

This Comprehensive Community College is open seven days a week from 7 am to 10 pm. It provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for 11-16 year old students as well as an effective class programme for post-16 students and adults. Two Youth Tutors provide an issue based programme of activities that address the needs of the young people in the catchment area. A crèche facilitates learning opportunities, particularly ESOL courses, for mothers in the neighbourhood.

Moat Community College is an institution whose role in the community is the provision of an educational resource. Moat is a place where education for people of all ages takes place alongside, and often overlapping, the statutory education of 11 to 16 year old students. The intention is that Moat provides the focus of educational opportunity for all community users, not just those who must attend. Obviously this grand ideal has its problems, not least of which is the question of funding. We believe that any given community surrounding an educational institution should be encouraged to view the College as more than a building where the education of young people takes place. Moat, like any educational institution, is a resource that is available to any individual or group in the community it serves. It has both human and material resources that are available to young people of statutory age, young people that live in the community the college serves. However, these resources should be made available to all members of the community, not least because the institution's resources, and in particular the material ones, lay unused for a great deal of the time. This means that if a school/college is available only to those it must serve for a part of the day or week it is then redundant for the rest of the time. Should not such a valuable resource for a community be put to more effective use at other times also? This is a strong argument for the provision of an integrated community education programme. The resources brought together in any one institution are enormous and it would be almost criminal to allow the investment in such a large resource to be made available to so small a group of people in a community; a more effective and efficient use of the resource would be to make it available to a much wider and more diverse audience. Education does not stop at 16 or 19 or whenever the educational institution's legal requirement ceases; education is for life and with so massive an investment in people and materials it only makes sense to make the use of the resources wider. A natural benefit of this integration is that the institution is not an empty 'people

factory' for a great deal of the time and so will not be seen as a target for vandalism. If the whole community 'owns' the use of the resource it is not viewed as a threat but more as a focus for community activity.

Moat Community College is a place that does not view itself as merely having the role of educating a distinct student body that must be educated with National Curriculum content. Moat has, and we would hope will continue, worked to overcome recognised cultural gaps between the college staff employed to work in an educational institution and local community groups with distinct ethnic, religious and political affiliations. Moat has worked hard to develop a common bond of community between those who are distinctly employed to be at the college and the community the College serves. The College has a fully integrated community education programme that considers both statutory and community education merging into an integrated structure, one that sees education as a lifelong process and not just that which takes place at particular times and places in someone's lifetime.

Moat Community College has, up to now, been able to effect this 'common bond' through the deployment of special community contracts with teachers; contracts known as Phase 3 Contracts by the use of community Teacher Contracts. Many of the teaching staff at Moat have been able to take on a wider commitment to community education and so support the needs of the community the college serves. "I have held a Phase 3 contract as Theatre Manager for the past four years and have found this a valuable contribution to my own understanding and awareness of the community I serve as a teacher. I hope that my work within the community in providing a resource for community use has also been viewed by the community as valuable. I truly believe that my wider commitment to the education of the community as a whole has enriched both myself and the community I serve in the form of a partnership".

Teaching staff with community contracts (10–5%) had 'time off in lieu' and an additional payment of £500 per annum for each 10% contract. The College staffing was enhanced by ten percent to compensate for the time lost to the statutory school element within the College's provision.

This community education ethos involves a radical shift in thinking with respect to the education of students/pupils. The relationship between the teacher and the student/pupil changes, it is no longer a dominant/submissive relationship where the teacher has the knowledge and the student/pupil accepts what is taught. The relationship between the educator and the member of the community becomes one of a partnership where the community becomes the teacher and the teacher becomes the learner. For any educational institution to become effective it must take an integrated community education ethos seriously. If an institution does not serve the community it is in, but merely indoctrinates an educational curriculum that may not be valuable to any given community, then the institution will be seen as a threat to the stability of the community. Moat Community College is a community college that takes the community seriously and listens to the concerns and needs of the community.

At the time of Frieda Hussain's appointment as Principal, the College began to change over from LEA management to the LMS scheme of delegation. This over-staffed Phase 3 Community College with a falling roll was in serious financial trouble. It had absorbed staffing from the two single-sex schools; it had enhanced its staffing by 5 ftes

(full-time-equivalents) to compensate for Phase 3 contracts; it had 4 ftes under a 'social deprivation' heading and 7 ftes for Section 11 funded Language Support work. In addition, the College had a Training Officer (for training Phase 3 staff); a Home School Liaison Tutor (originally funded by Inner Area funding); a Social Worker (funded by Social Services); two caretakers on each shift (in case one felt unsafe in this inner-city establishment); a Project Teacher (to work with a few disaffected pupils); a Vice Principal (community); an adult course tutor, two youth tutors and a crèche worker. There was also an endless list of part-time workers who all had access to community funding. It did not take us long to realise that LMS funding would not meet the cost of running this 'thriving' comprehensive community college! The ideal and the contextual realities did not match.

There was a need to respond to the local community, to maintain staff morale, to liaise effectively with feeder primary schools, to increase the falling roll and improve examination results, agreeing a clear and comprehensive College Aim, setting the scene for changes that required team work, trust and high expectations of all staff and students.

Indexed increase in schools' GCSE results 1990-92 to 1992-94

Moat

LEA improvement

90 100 110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180 190 200 210 220 230 240
GCSE performance 1992-94 relative to 1990-92 base
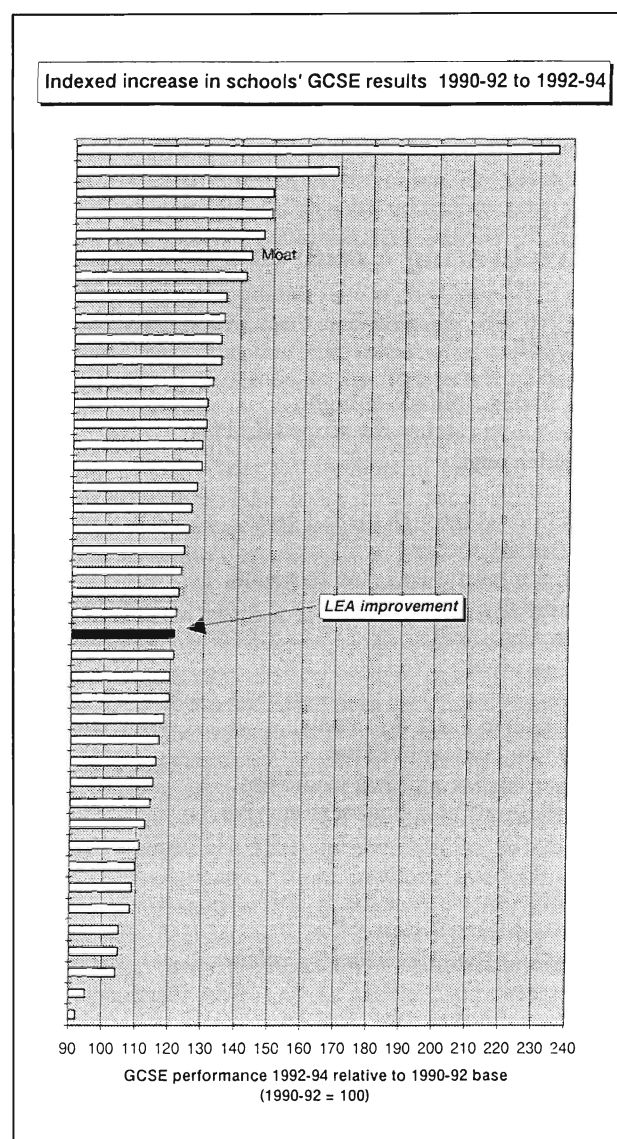(1990-92 = 100)

Figure 1

However, Moat is moving into a new chapter in its development as an integrated community college. The Phase 3 Teacher Contracts will cease at the end of the academic year 94/95 when the funding for such a development comes to an end. We believe that any educational institution must work to be a fully integrated community institution if it is to be both effective and efficient in its aims. The College Aim states that "within the context of a secure and challenging learning environment, it is our intention to empower all students through good academic and vocational qualifications to gain high level access to further education and employment. Equally, it is our intention to promote active citizenship through social skills, pride in culture and a commitment to continued learning".

The College also aims to raise expectations and show through the success of students that aspirations can be realised. The College's Anti-Racist Policy values all languages and neighbourhood cultures, challenges racist behaviour and condemns racist graffiti, jokes and remarks. The College Development Plan seeks to optimise student learning, facilitate professional development and provide a framework for moral, spiritual, social and cultural development of students.

A recent OFSTED inspection report stated that "the College adds value to pupils' achievement"; "the College captures the aspirations and hopes of the community it serves"; "the College ensures an effective match between its aim and its practice"; and finally "Moat is a college with a commitment to learning and a passion for raising achievement". The LEA analysis of examinations results for the last three years places Moat in an aspiring position (see Figure 1).

Leicestershire's experiment with comprehensive community education – Phase 3 – could not be funded under LMS. It has been phased out over the last four years. Adult classes (Schedule 2) are funded by the Further Education Funding Council. There is a much reduced delegated community budget to support the community programme. Despite cuts and changes, we are committed to continue to function as a college that serves the whole community. It makes what we do more relevant and therefore more effective. The school roll is rising and this provides some stability in a culture of annual budget cuts.

To end, here's another quote from the OFSTED report:

Moat is a successful inner city community college with a deservedly rising reputation amongst parents in the locality.

We welcome our cultural diversity and celebrate it.

Celebrating Children's Creativity

Tiger

As I walk, solitary, at night,
The moon catches my striped Reddish
Golden coat.

As I prowl through the tall grass,
I hunt my victim.
Slowly but surely I start to pound,
gracefully, powerfully,
Leaping to kill,
To survive.

I fear man, he is my enemy,
He will hunt and kill me,
Just to make mythical medicines.
I am beautiful and want to survive.

Faye Ackerley, Year 8
Welland Park Community College

Belly-dancer

Roxanne Skorchod, Age 5

Our Mutual Friends: partnership and primary schools

Richard Eke & John Lee
Richard Eke and John Lee are Principal Lecturers in Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of the West of England. Here they consider primary schools' views of Circular 14/93 on the proposed new and largely school-based primary initial teacher training.

The thrust of the Conservative Party's 'reform' of initial teacher training (ITE) has been to increase the role of schools in the education and training of teachers. The most recent *Circular 14/93* has enshrined this vision in policy directives. Here we seek to examine what primary schools actually feel about this radical change in professional training and offer a critique of the government's position by reflecting on data collected from a representative sample of primary schools in a large shire county. It is significant that neither John Patten, the previous Secretary of State, nor any of his conservative predecessors actually consulted any member of the teaching force. They relied instead on the ideological arguments of a cabal of new right 'thinkers'. The most extreme of these sees no need for any training for teachers, particularly for those destined to teach the youngest children.

The only substantial data gathered from schools has been that collected by SCOP and UCET. This survey addressed the question of whether primary schools were prepared to take on the responsibilities embedded in the circular. It gives a number of very clear messages about primary schools' feeling of competence in the field of training, the desirability of the proposed change, and where they saw responsibility lying. In brief the schools gave a resounding 'no' to the Secretary of State who, in the manner to which we are so accustomed, carried on regardless.

Godsall (*Forum*, 36, p. 73) noted that "For many years institutions of higher education together with schools have been partners providing initial training for teachers." 14/93's references to partnership are then really a reiteration of the good practice that already exists rather than, as the Secretary of State seems to believe, a new concept to teacher educators. As part of our desire to create and sustain 'genuine partnership' as stressed in the second paragraph of the letter accompanying the circular we sought the views of schools with whom we have worked closely over many years. We did not focus on the 'greater responsibility for planning of courses and the selection, training and assessment of students' as the SCOP survey did. Like other HEIs we have had procedures for these issues in place for many years. Rather we focused on the support that schools offer in 'developing the practical skills necessary for effective teaching'. What we were interested in was the practical implications of implementing the circular.

We had responses from 149 primary schools, nearly half of the schools who regularly work with our undergraduate and PGCE students. We were fortunate in being able to get responses from a diverse group of schools which may be deemed to be nationally representative, as shown below.

JM & I	60%
Junior	12%
Infant/Nursery	28%
Rural	23%
Urban	37%
Suburban	39%

There was clear division in the responses. The key question put to them was 'Would you be willing to take greater responsibility for the education and training of primary school teachers?'

40% said they would not take such responsibility, 54% were prepared to take extra responsibility, 6% offered no comment. These divisions must be borne in mind when we consider the rest of the responses. Not to labour the point 40% are simply not prepared to play the Secretary of States' games, this in itself will have profound consequences in planning school places for students in training. Even the schools willing to take some extra responsibility limit severely what they can and/or are prepared to do. For instance only 2% of schools are willing to take a leading role in giving students knowledge of educational legislation since 1945. In areas in which it might be thought schools would automatically see themselves as knowledgeable and able to take a leading role, such as knowledge of parents' rights and responsibilities and individual differences only 6% of them are willing to do so. Perhaps this is not surprising in view of the opportunities that colleagues in schools have had to develop expertise in theses areas. In fact if we take the total of all respondents 78% are unwilling to deal with legislative issues and 58% are unwilling to do more with regard to parents and 53% are unwilling to do more about individual differences. Since 1988 this government has created more legislation with respect to education than all previous governments. Legislation compelling schools to act in particular ways and to enable parents to exercise choice has been its proud boast. Yet schools who are the bastions to protect students in training from HE ideologues declare themselves unable or unwilling to offer additional help to students developing this knowledge.

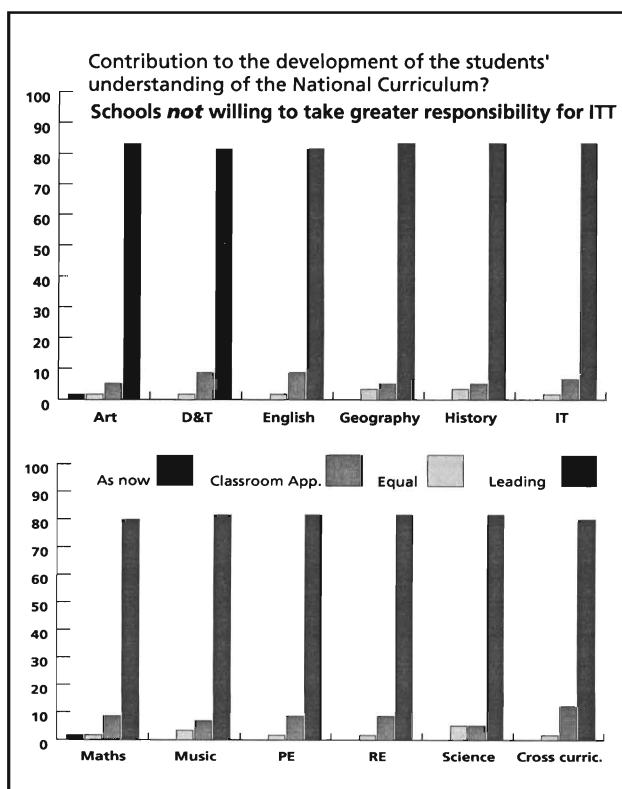All the above pales into insignificance when we look at the contribution schools would be willing to make to

Figure 1

Figure 2

students' understanding of the National Curriculum. Arguably the imposition of the National Curriculum on all schools has been a key feature of Conservative policy. Moreover the content of ITE training courses has been further prescribed by the introduction of the National Curriculum and increasing emphasis has been placed on time in school. However it is schools that have the expertise to plan and implement the National Curriculum in contrast to HE which is simply concerned to peddle theory and fill students' heads with, in Pauline Perry's words, 'clutter'. According to our respondents schools do not feel well equipped to make significant contributions to HE students' understanding of the National Curriculum.

Figure 1 shows clearly that of the 53% of schools prepared to take increased responsibility for training teachers they see themselves offering classroom applications. In effect they are saying this is something they already do and feel comfortable with. We know from our close collaboration with schools that these are the schools in which the relationships between students and staff are most intense.

Figure 2 shows that of the 40% that were unwilling to take further responsibility for training, they are unwilling to make any further contribution to the students understanding of the National Curriculum even at the level of classroom applications.

Conservative education policy has been successful not because it has received general support either among the lay public or the education community but because legislation has been used as a crude stick to impose change. Schools have clearly felt impotent in the face of the power of 'over mighty' Secretaries of State. The only successful
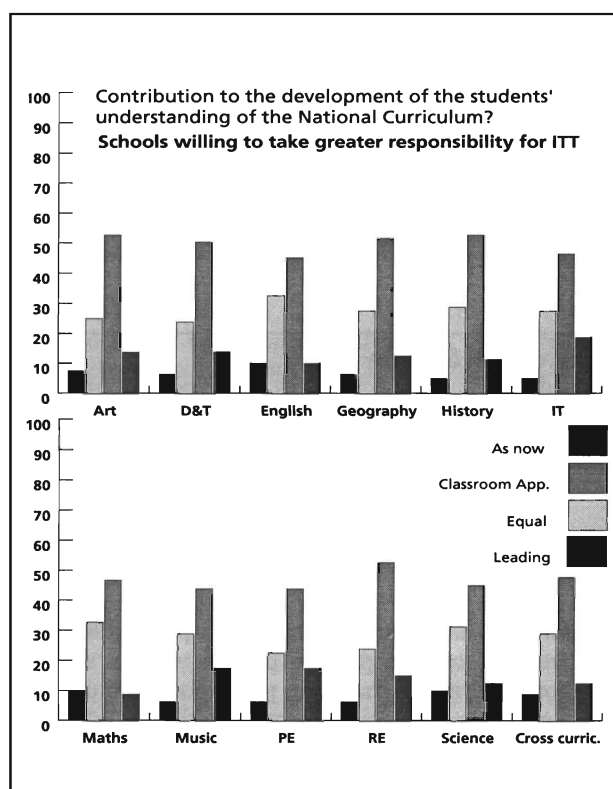
opposition to education policy has been the revolt over testing at KS3, although this is now unlikely to be continued. Through the narrative responses to our survey schools have told us that they prioritise their pupils, are braced for the impact of changes in the National Curriculum and are unwilling to take on additional demands at this time. More significantly for the enterprise of teacher training all of these schools are resistant to the shortening of training courses and the consequent deprofessionalising and deskilling of teachers. 40% of our sample state unequivocally that they will not take on the role of teacher training. The 53% who respond that they are willing to take extra responsibility make it clear that they will still only take a minor role. In short support for the present arrangements is overwhelming. Genuine partnership requires HEIs and schools to recognise and develop the unique contributions that each can make. One contribution that HEIs can make is to employ their research capability to articulate concerns of the whole partnership. Partnership is not simply about the sharing of responsibility for students; genuine partnership is about developing and enhancing the profession. Now is the time to mobilise the whole profession against this policy. Our survey shows opposition is already there, albeit presented in a quiet primary voice. Let us hope that the Teacher Training Agency will be able to hear such quiet voices: for a government is potentially impotent when faced with a refusal by the profession to engage in its own deprofessionalisation.

The views expressed are those of the authors.

In the Light of Experience: teacher appraisal six years on

Barry Wratten
In this carefully-researched article, Barry Wratten looks at changing attitudes towards appraisal over the past five years. The author is a deputy headteacher at John Masefield High School in Ledbury, Hertfordshire.

It was in the Autumn 1989 edition of *Forum* that Rob McBride mounted a strong attack on teacher appraisal:

> The original intention of teacher appraisal was in my opinion quite clear. John Elliott [1989] captured my feelings when he wrote that the White Paper Teaching Quality 'quite unambiguously proposed appraisal as a strategy of hierarchical surveillance and control over the work of teachers..'.

In that article McBride described how centrally imposed innovations – including teacher appraisal – would alienate teachers and that experience of such changes, where ends are identified by central authority but where the policy is carried out by others, had not been successful:

> Teachers tend to subvert or marginalise impositions depending on whether the imposition helps their practice (ibid.).

Essentially, McBride argued, the idea of appraisal undermines the autonomy of teachers to act, professionally, as they judge fit. He goes on to champion a 'two-tier' approach to appraisal that accommodates both accountability and professional development:

> The two-tier model enables self-development to be fostered and management to exercise its legitimate functions on training and selection ... peer-group observation is more appropriate than a line management form of observation. Mutual respect between hierarchy and worker is encouraged... (ibid.).

As if to throw down the gauntlet to those who may have supported the introduction of teacher appraisal – or even to those with an open mind on the subject – McBride goes on:

> I foresee another swaithe of careerist bright sparks, pandering to their masters, producing evidence that appraisal is working well in their schools and LEAs. They let us all down. Teaching is not a rule-following workbench activity. We need to help build a responsible professional practice. There is fortunately evidence of some LEAs gently building two-tier models but these are a minority. (ibid.)

Six years on from McBride's article we may begin to reflect on his ideas. In secondary schools most teachers, including myself, have undergone their first two-year cycle of teacher appraisal and research into the effectiveness of appraisal is beginning to produce results. In September of 1994 *The Times Educational Supplement* published a summary of the findings of a research project carried out by Exeter University under the direction of Professor Ted Wragg for the Leverhulme Trust. The general findings reveal a picture that is quite optimistic about the impact of appraisal on a personal level:

- Ninety-nine per cent were happy with the choice of appraiser.
- Sixty-nine per cent felt appraisal had been of benefit to them, mainly boosting confidence and self-awareness... (*The Times Educational Supplement*, 9 September 1994).

There were important findings about classroom observation, interviews and targets but undoubtedly the other most significant finding was one that reflects less well on the effectiveness of appraisal:

> ...but only 49 per cent felt it had affected their classroom practice (ibid.).

How could it be that Elliott's and McBride's '...strategy of hierarchical surveillance...' had produced greater teacher esteem but had not changed actual practice despite the assumption that teachers would be required to change to fit the pattern set by the central administration? Was it that the teaching profession had, as McBride claimed they might, somehow subverted teacher appraisal into something useful to themselves?

When McBride wrote his article the idea of a centrally imposed downward pressure on schools and teachers – a pressure to be accountable – was very strong. Ten years of Thatcher governments had accentuated a growing determination at the DES to make the teaching profession account for their performance and their efficiency in using the public resources dedicated to education. This was not new – nor was it uniquely a Conservative policy as it had been the Callaghan Government, responding to manifold promptings (by industrialists such as Sir Arnold Weinstock, by the DES itself through the 'Yellow Book', by the Labour party's own policy advisers) who had launched the 'Great Debate' in 1976 (for a detailed background see Chitty, 1989). The 1980s witnessed a clear enunciation of the principle of accountability from the Conservative Government – especially value for money and the overriding imperative of choice. The implications of these policies for local democracy and government spending on such as Health and Education have been profound. One aspect of this drive for accountability in education was to be appraisal.

The teaching profession's response to the imposition of appraisal was always, in a general sense, predictable. All professions have reacted adversely to attempts at external regulation. Eric Hoyle (1983) and David Hartley (1992) have argued that attempts by the Government and the DES/DfE to impose regulation on the teaching profession, and attempts by the profession itself to improve and make more effective what it does, have produced a dichotomy as such efforts create forces that, simultaneously, professionalise and de-professionalise teachers. Demands

for accountability fulfil two vital elements of what constitutes a profession – an insistence on conforming to behaviour characteristic of that profession, and an insistence on the highest quality of service for clients. But it also undermines another – the principle of practitioner autonomy. Hoyle identifies two different types of appraisal:

(i) managerial – control oriented, individually focused, being both judgemental and hierarchic;

(ii) participative – collectively focused, developmental and cooperative.

Broadly speaking the former is de-professionalising (and in line with the Elliott/McBride description of appraisal) and the latter professionalising, although the individual focus on effectiveness in the classroom is applauded by Hoyle. The teaching force wish to be seen as a profession but manifestations of accountability in education – stronger management, appraisal of performance – appear to diminish any sense of professionalism based on practitioner autonomy.

The inception of teacher appraisal raised concerns and apprehensions amongst the teaching force but also raised an expectation in some that appraisal might be one way of sorting the educational wheat from the chaff. Peter Wilby, writing in the *Journal of Educational Politics* in 1986, summarised opinions:

...No matter how much Joseph [then Secretary of State] attempted to allay the teachers' fears, even the 'heavy' press could not be shaken in its view (perhaps because of its own enthusiasm for the notion) that Sir Keith was intent on 'sacking' or 'weeding out' large numbers of teachers.

Sir Keith Joseph, however, was quite clear that he did not intend appraisal to be used aggressively:

I am frequently misquoted in terms that suggest that I am only concerned with the need to dismiss the very small number of incompetent teachers who cannot be restored to adequate effectiveness ... I am concerned with the whole range of positive advantages that would flow from applying to the teacher force standards of management which have become common elsewhere (from Joseph's address to the North of England Education Conference, Chester, January 1985).

Whatever Joseph believed to be the aims of the appraisal initiative, its implementation has been greatly affected by the fact that the development of its structure was carried out largely by teachers or educationalists working in conjunction with LEAs. Also, the fact that the age profile of the teaching profession is generally ageing has significance for the introduction of appraisal, a fact highlighted in 1987 by Professor Wragg:

...[by] the early 1990s two thirds of all teachers will be over the age of forty. Thus teacher appraisal is being introduced to a mature rather than a novice profession (Wragg, 1987).

Wragg goes on to emphasise that a mature teaching force has affected the style of management adopted in schools – more collegiate than pyramidic – and that some older teachers will resent being judged. Many headteachers have sought to nurture an open, collective approach to school management and are therefore reluctant to introduce anything that might damage or hinder the spirit of collaboration. Also, during the time of the development of an appraisal structure the School Effectiveness and School Improvement movements were beginning to identify factors that are present in successful schools – these include

collective review and an emphasis on professional staff development (see Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Reynolds & Cuttance, 1992; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). It is not surprising, then, that the key studies and pilots prior to introduction were sympathetic to the notions of supportive, developmental appraisal (see *Those Having Torches*, 1985, and *In the Light of Torches*, 1987, and the evaluation report on the main pilot study carried out by the Cambridge Institute of Education, led by Howard Bradley, 1987-89). Bradley stated quite clearly the philosophy underpinning appraisal in the Evaluation Report of the DES funded *School Teacher Appraisal Pilot Study*:

In industry, any expensive piece of plant which had to perform a delicate task for forty years and which had the capacity to make or mar the product would be the subject of constant care and attention. We have been very slow to realise in education circles that teachers need and deserve support, reassurance and encouragement to go on extending their skills...

Appraisal, then, has taken its place alongside other strategies employed in schools to improve their effectiveness. Some of these strategies, based on ideas from business and industry, force many teachers to recoil in horror – especially at the jargon of quality development, matrix-management, internal and external 'stakeholders', servicing customer–supplier relationships and so on . But in business, appraisal has been an important element in the way restructuring has occurred during recession. Equally it has been employed to raise standards of performance amongst employees. Appraisal has been used to bring about changes in practice and attitude as well as the identification of specific training needs. Motivation is central to both business and education. Education improvers echo post-Deming views:

Management is about people [and] management arrangements are what empower people. Empowerment, in short, is the purpose of management (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991).

What, then, can education learn from business appraisal? I had the privilege of an industrial placement for a week with Marks & Spencer plc and I gained an interesting insight into a big company. The M&S appraisal scheme is given a high profile and its purpose is very clear:

The purpose of the Appraisal system is to improve your performance as a member of staff, within the Company... It is also used in the comparative assessment of staff for the payment of performance awards. Salaries will be performance related ... (from the M&S Appraisal Scheme literature).

The scheme is comprehensive and gives staff the opportunity of an interview with their line manager and it attempts to identify immediate training needs and individual potential. The store manager with whom I worked stressed that no scheme would ever – should ever – replace those management skills of direct and personal intervention which motivate and at times admonish, but he felt that appraisal lent a greater structure to relationships within the store. He also said, although he could not quantify it, that he was convinced beyond doubt that appraisal had added to the profitability of his store. The M&S scheme is much more rigorous than anything either envisaged or actually introduced into schools. It has summative elements – and this may reflect the fact that it is used to inform PRP arrangements.

My own research, carried out amongst a cross-section of teachers – mainscale to heads in both urban and rural

schools – supports the idea that appraisal has, generally, been received well in the light of experience:

● when asked whether they were looking forward to their appraisal teachers responded with mixed feelings:

Yes	40%
No	42%
Yes . . . but	5%
Unsure	13%

● when asked whether they welcomed their role as appraisers, teachers were a little clearer:

Yes	53%
No	24%

Not sure 22% [The 'not sure' responses here are a good indicator of some of the key concerns which have arisen – suspicion of a line management model, time, danger of cosy and anodyne appraisals; against these was a reasonably common assertion that the appraisal process had helped the appraiser].

● when asked whether they were happy with their appraiser teachers that knew who would appraise them responded very clearly:

Yes	82%
No	4%
Unclear	13%

● when asked how they would describe the appraisal process in their schools, teachers responded clearly:

Helpful	21%
Positive	29%
Reassuring	21%
Enjoyable	8%
Novel	3%
Purposeless	2%
Stressful	8%
A chore	3%
Annoying	1%
Wasteful	2%

● when asked whether they thought appraisal would improve what goes on in their schools teachers responded positively:

Yes	62%
No	13%
Unsure	25%

[Amongst the 'Yes' phalanx there was consistent reference to the opportunity appraisal gave to 'reflect' or 'take stock'. Amongst the 'unsure', teachers were concerned whether resources would be made available to meet training needs,

time (again) came up as did the possible linking of appraisal with PRP – which was strenuously criticised].

● when asked whether they thought appraisal would be linked with PRP in the future, and whether this would be a good or bad thing, teachers were very clear:

Yes	72%
No	14%
Unsure	14%
Good	6%
Bad	88%
Undecided	6%

["PRP will destroy what we have achieved" sums up the sentiments about PRP. Some teachers referred to research which suggests that PRP demotivates workers and that quality gurus like Deming thought PRP to be counterproductive in the building of quality teams].

However we may judge the introduction of teacher appraisal over the recent past we can say that it has not been a disaster for morale – if anything, quite the reverse. Certainly, PRP haunts appraisal at present, and teachers are quite clear that they would not welcome the use of appraisal to make judgements about PRP. What teachers *have* achieved is to create an appraisal system from which they feel they can gain some professional benefit different in emphasis although not wholly different in philosophy from appraisal in industry. Perhaps the development of other means to promote accountability in education (Ofsted, open enrolment and league tables, changes in the constitution and function of Governing bodies, local management and delegated budgets etc.) has led in any case to more proactive management in schools and has robbed appraisal of the need to be 'a strategy of hierarchical surveillance and control'.

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Reviews

Look Ahead
Educational Reform and its Consequences
SALLY TOMLINSON (Ed.), 1994
London: IPPR/Rivers Oram Press.
180 pp, £9.95 paperback, ISBN 1
85489 065 4

This collection of papers is a thoughtful and challenging contribution to the increasingly urgent debate about what will have to be done to repair the damage incurred since 1988 and to facilitate evolution of practice and systems that can offer everyone opportunity for developing their talents and learning new skills throughout life. The short and longer term effects of legislation 1988-93 are analysed to clarify the nature and extent of the problems that will have to be tackled at government and institutional levels. No blueprint is drawn up but alternative agendas are considered.

Sally Tomlinson sets the scene for a new alternative vision for education in the twenty-first century. She argues need for research to inform future policy. The market oriented reforms were not so informed and clearly are not delivering what was promised as they were based on a backward-looking ideology quite inappropriate to the present and future economy.

Three papers in Part 1 examine key features of current policy that rely on competition as the driving force. Each shows how the government's chosen policy has failed to deliver its promised aim. ESRC-funded research at King's College, London, on how parental choice operates concludes that it reinforces middle class advantage and so is likely to result in "a more socially differentiated and divisive system of education" and to diminish rather than extend choice.

David Halpin, John Fitz and Sally Power draw on research into the impact of opting out to Grant Maintained status and find that this policy "tends to preserve existing options rather than provide new alternatives" or greater diversity as promised. Having failed to take account of local contexts or actual parents' attitudes, this flagship policy has fossilised existing school hierarchies and failed to promote real diversity.

Analysis of the effects of LMS in thirteen LEAs by Hywel Thomas and Alison Bullock at Birmingham University reveals how LEAs have limited scope to direct resources towards specifics and thereby influence schools' provision. They go on to invite more informed debate about what range of decision-making might be appropriate at LEA or school level following a change of government.

The three papers in Part 2 focus on the curriculum and teachers. Philip O'Hear outlines principles that he and John White postulated in 1991 for a coherent curriculum framework and its assessment for effective schools serving a liberal democracy. This is followed by a paper from a team at the Post-16 Education Centre at the Institute of Education who argue the need for a more unified post-16 curriculum and how this might be brought about. This draws on developments in progress through the Hamlyn Post-16 Curriculum Project.

Pat Mahony and Geoff Whitty confront the likelihood that teacher education and training "will be transformed out of all recognition in the next few years." Analysing how the New Right's paranoia and prejudice have exerted contradictory influences, they show that the government has so far been ineffective at securing radical change but has brought considerable confusion. This is predicated as an opportunity to build new partnerships, formulate new criteria and develop new structures for an alternative framework. A disturbing flirtation with competency assessment criteria is tempered with insistence that observed behaviour must be justified to be valid and higher education is granted a vital function. This is a call for new thinking.

Important issues concerning central control of inspection and assessment are raised by Eric Bolton's and Paul Black's papers. Bolton accepts the case for more regular school inspections than HMI could manage, but warns that the present absence of informed feedback to policy makers on the overall state of the education service is potentially dangerous. Black's analysis of the problems of reconciling formative and summative functions of assessment concludes that the key lies with extensive research and professional development to establish, in the long term, that moderated teacher assessment is the most reliable.

In the final paper Stewart Ranson presents a vision of a new, moral, participative democracy consonant with a learning society. His theoretical analysis is followed by suggested outlines for policies, powers and structures for education in the new polity.

These analyses of how legislated policies have operated, and the nature and extent of the consequential damage, prepare the ground for making a start on alternative planning. That task is indeed daunting but must be tackled urgently at every level. The debate has barely begun; the direction is not as straightforward as rhetoric suggests.

NANETTE WHITBREAD

From Confusion to Chaos
The Tory Mind on Education, 1979-94
DENIS LAWTON, 1994
London: Falmer Press. pp. viii + 159, £ 11.95 paperback, £35.00 hardback, ISBN 0 7507 0351 2

Denis Lawton tells us in the Preface to this new book that part of his professional responsibility "is to keep educational policies under review and try to explain them". Two earlier books, published in 1989 and 1992, explored Conservative ideologies in the context of the Education Reform Act (1988). These he now finds "insufficiently analytical" in terms of a diagnosis of "what is wrong more generally with education in the 1990s". Hence this book, which aims to make sense of Conservative policies since 1979 by penetrating into the "beliefs, values and attitudes" that lie behind policies. It is an ambitious effort.

In his search for "the Tory Mind", Lawton outlines first traditional Conservative views of society, social structure and government as adumbrated by Burke, Disraeli, Stanley Baldwin and others, and as explicated by Tory intellectuals such as Roger Scruton whose *The Meaning of Conservatism* (1980) is a basic text. A chapter, 'From Consensus to Conflict 1944-79), then whirls us through R.A. Butler (1944 Act) and the 'consensus' years to the thirteen ('wasted'?) years of Tory rule, 1951-64. Horsburgh, Eccles, Hogg and succeeding Tory Ministers and others are all examined – many found wanting. But within this period and especially through the late 1960s Lawton identifies the beginnings of a more or less powerful 'swing to the right' which finds overt expression from 1979. This takes us to the start of the book's main focus: 'The Ideological Years, 1979-94' which forms Part II and contains the core of the argument.

This consists of four chapters. Their headings give a fair taste of their contents: 'The Attack on Education, 1979-86', 'The Baker Years, 1986-89', 'From Confusion to Chaos, 1989-94', concluding with a more general discussion of the whole period in 'Ideology and Policies, 1979-94' in which Lawton discusses the main 'Problems and Contradictions', by now blindingly apparent. During this period no less than thirteen Acts of Parliament were passed in an attempt to transform the system to one primarily determined by market forces whose ideological basis was to be found particularly in the work and thinking of Hayek and others of like mind. John Patten was still Secretary of State when this book was written (early 1994) and the outlook bleak in the extreme. Neo-liberal thinking had 'captured' the Tory Mind, leading not only to inextricable theoretical confusion but,

worse, to a genuinely 'chaotic' situation on the ground. What could be the outcome?

In the hope that readers will feel impelled to buy this book I now deliberately withhold the author's conclusion, set out in Part III. Reviewers of cliff-hangers should not reveal the denouement. Perhaps I have said enough to indicate that this book is a good read (to use a popular term, however ungrammatical). On the way through entertainment is provided, for instance, by a series of almost unbelievably stunning quotations – Baker on the DES as a left-wing consortium or conspiracy, Thatcher's educational views, Nigel Lawson on Cabinet procedure, Thatcher again on the original TGAT report, and yet again telling us 'What History is'. There is also an ingenious content analysis of Baker's literary effusions listing his 'Likes and Dislikes'.

More seriously Lawton does identify the leading characteristics of the contemporary Tory Mind in education, defining a set of six key words which encapsulate the central features of Conservative thinking. What has most struck Lawton's own mind on dissecting the Tory one is the "almost paranoid belief in conspiracies among the 'educational establishment'" which appears time and again in speeches and autobiographies. This, he believes, has distorted the Tory perception of education in such a way as to have serious consequences for the future.

This is an important contribution to analysis of our current discontents. It deserves a wide readership and will surely help to increase awareness of the need for a radical change in the educational leadership in Britain.

BRIAN SIMON

Exciting Optimism
Towards the Learning Society
STEWART RANSOM, 1994
London: Cassell. £12.99
paperback, 146 pp.,
ISBN 0 304 32769 7

There are not many books on education that could be said to have major significance for the future of society: this is one of the few. It combines careful analysis of the present system with a vision of a realistic set of alternatives. I hope it is brought to the attention of those in a position to make important decisions about education in the next few years – we cannot afford to wait long.

But what is meant by 'the Learning Society'? Ranson provides us with a definition in his preface:

In periods of social transition, education becomes central to our future well-being. Only if learning is placed at the

centre of our experience can individuals continue to develop their capacities, institutions be enabled to respond openly and imaginatively to periods of change, and the difference between communities become a source of reflective understanding. The challenge for policy-makers is to promote the conditions for such a 'learning society': this should enable parents to become as committed to their own continuing development as they are to that of their children; men and women should be able to assert their right to learn as well as to support the family; learning cooperatives should be formed at work and in community centres; and preoccupation with the issues of purpose and organisation should then result in extensive public dialogue about reform.

The rest of the book is concerned with detail – of analysis and prescription for reform. Lest anyone thinks they are in for a utopian recipe, Ranson assures us that his work has been most influenced by practitioners in some of the most disadvantaged areas. Their practical experience has stimulated "a revised vision of comprehensive education, of equality of opportunity..." The author modestly claims only that this book is the first part of a theorising project. It takes us a long way in the direction of a better future.

The first chapter, 'Understanding the Crisis in Education', critically examines recent changes in the system. 'Reforms' which were claimed as means of improving standards and giving parents greater choice have contained so much confusion and contradiction that the result is crisis. In the course of his description of the crisis, Ranson examines the word 'education' and the variety of purposes that have been attached to it. He sees the purpose of education as complex and 'multi-layered': each layer should be seen as complementing the others, not in opposition to them. Four purposes are briefly but sensitively examined: meeting the needs of individuals; the transmission of knowledge, culture and morality; investment in human capital and vocational preparation; education for the polity. Although the purposes or functions of education should be complementary, they may not always sit easily together, and at different times one function may be emphasised at the expense of others. This principle is illustrated by dividing the history of education since World War II into three periods which serve as the titles of Chapters 2, 3 and 4: the age of professionalism 1945-75, corporatism 1970-81, and consumerism since 1979.

Chapter 2, 'The Age of Professionalism'. is not an exercise in nostalgia. It begins with the 1944 Education Act, the post-war settlement, the radical swing in public opinion, weakening the hold of class and seeking a fairer, more open society. There was an all-party, consensus

approach to the settlement. But this Welfare State was incomplete – and reversible. The implementation of the 1944 Act was a splendid step forward, but it was by no means unflawed: it survived the 1960s, but during the 1970s it was increasingly clear that something else was needed.

The next chapter includes a perceptive discussion of some of the social and economic changes influencing education, before we move on, in Chapter 4, to 'The Period of Corporatism' (1970-81) when the British state moved from supporting to directing economy and society. Production and efficiency became the new keywords (more important than equality and social justice). In education the economic purpose is emphasised, and vocationalism begins to emerge as a serious alternative to academic education, with an integrated code rather than the traditional collection code. The Department of Education and Science was confused and lacked real policies, but they nevertheless tried to exert more central control: accountability and rationalisation became the order of the day.

Chapter 5 analyses the third period: 'Education in the Market Place' which has been increasingly dominant since 1979 (we all know what happened then!). A Tory vision of consumerism replaced the egalitarian social engineering of comprehensive schools. 'There is no such thing as society' was the individualist slogan: self-interest was legitimised. Ranson then embarks upon a detailed critique of the market as an alternative to educational planning. It is, in my view, the most devastating demolition of the neo-liberal position on education yet written. I will not try to summarise the argument here: it needs to be savoured in full, paragraph by paragraph.

Ranson also points out that an important result of Tory policies has been "marginalising the LEA" and the chaos of privatised school inspections. He points out how far we have moved from the 1988 Act to 1993 (the 'choice and diversity Act'). Ranson aptly blames "an atrophied psychology of possessive individualism" a degraded and distorted view of human nature – for this commodification of education.

So, what are we offered as an alternative? Chapter 6 sets out a programme for 'Towards Education for Democracy: The Learning Society'. For many this will be the most important part of the book. A return to the pre-1979 system would be neither feasible nor desirable. A New Order will not be easy to achieve, but Ranson is more optimistic than, for example, Alistair MacIntyre whose analysis he refers to. Ranson suggests that the challenge for the time is 'to create a new moral and political order' which has the capacity to enable an educated public to participate actively as citizens. Agreeing with Nagel,

Ranson believes that there can be "no just democracy without a deeply ingrained moral culture". Freedom depends upon justice. The theory of the learning society builds upon three axes: of presupposition, principles and purposes. The presupposition is the need for the creation of a learning society as the constitutive condition of a new moral and political order. Two organising principles are specified: *citizenship* developed through the processes of *practical reason*. (There is a detailed discussion of the concept 'citizenship'). Finally, 'purposes' are discussed at three levels: the self, society and the polity.

A fundamental aspect of the plan is a new kind of partnership, a new central authority covering education and training, LEAs with a full list of responsibilities and services, and schools in their communities. Education for Ranson is essentially a local system, but some policy must be national. Parents play a vital role, and not just as choosers between schools (if they are lucky). Schools themselves will reflect and exemplify the new moral, political and social order. Active learning for active citizenship. It is an exciting prospect.

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Good at English?
English and Ability
ANDREW GOODWYN (Ed.),
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London: David Fulton. £12.99
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English in the National Curriculum has provoked more controversy than any other subject: there were more replies than for any other subject to the consultation on the 1994 SCAA proposals for the revised curriculum, and English teachers have been the most persistent and united in their opposition to Key Stage Three testing in 1993 and 1994. Debates about 'correctness', 'standard English', and the literary canon draw in princes and politicians who would hesitate to comment on the detail of the science curriculum.

With the revised orders for English now published, this volume attempts to focus some of the debates that the National Curriculum has heightened (but not caused), and which are of continuing relevance in schools. Its central quest is for explanations of what it means to be 'good at English'. This, in a context of national testing, is a particularly relevant question. Andrew Goodwyn provides an overview of the different models by which being 'good at English' might be judged: is Eng-

lish about personal growth, or inculcation of the cultural heritage, or the needs of the adult world, particularly the world of work? These very different models presuppose very different definitions of what the subject 'English' is, and what ability in the subject means.

Surprisingly, the introduction gives little direct attention to interactive theories of cognitive development, which underpin an integrated view of language and literature study, writing, reading and oracy. A social-interactionist model provides a theory for relating intellectual and social development. It provides a key rationale for enabling learners to engage with the widest possible spectrum of literature that will enlarge their experience of other people's feelings and viewpoints. At the same time it provides the rationale for learners to share their views and experiences. A social-interactionist perspective sees the development of language as inseparable from the development of social awareness – and hence within the subject English, the study of language and literature are similarly inseparable. GCSE English (of 1986-1993) had as one of its subject specific aims that candidates should "understand themselves and others".

The chapter on mixed ability by Judith Baxter belongs within a current context in which schools, under pressure of league table comparisons, are increasingly conscious of the need to justify their arrangements for groupings of pupils. Judith Baxter provides a brief history and a very interesting overview of the reasoning behind mixed ability teaching in English. She introduces findings from her own research, including a developing awareness among English teachers of the diversity of 'ability' in English across aspects of the subject: "Personal qualities of engagement, flexibility, imagination, social skills, open-mindedness, motivation, conviction are just as important as intellectual qualities...".

Robert Protherough's chapter on writing is a wonderfully clear account of complexity. He identifies a number of reasons why there can be no single account of what constitutes 'good' writing. He also provides a very helpful summary of the most significant attempts to refine the assessment of writing, and of studies of *development* in writing ability. These studies illustrate the range of considerations that underlie assessment in English, and – most challengingly of all – the lack of regular development with age, experience and instruction. Robert Protherough cites the revision of the National Curriculum in English within four years as an example of such uncertainty: "Disputes over the form of the National Curriculum demonstrate that if we wait for accurate and agreed official definitions of writing ability or for reliable tests of quality, then

we will wait for ever." Such uncertainty is a problem in a context of top-down, governmentally-led, 'unproblematic' views of what constitutes English. By contrast "effective English teachers ... have learned over the years what it means to 'read' students' work, how to construct meaning which takes into account a relationship with the person who wrote it, the situation of the writing and what preceded it, and the need to respond in a way that develops that relationship."

Colin Harrison's chapter on reading considers response to reading, and comprehension. Since response cannot be assessed directly, he outlines and illustrates the value of the *reading interview*, and cites a system of categorisation of response as a framework for analysing what learners say about books and reading. In the second half of the chapter he offers an outline and rationale for looking at comprehension in terms of reading *strategies* – a term which, like Dole, he distinguishes from the idea of low-level sub-skills: " 'strategy' implies an active, deliberate and cognitively sophisticated approach to reading...". The overall position of the Chapter is that teachers of English have become increasingly confident in judging writing, and now need to develop judgements about reading "not on the results of comprehension tests, but through observing reading processes and strategies in action." ... "If what we are seeking to capture is evidence about the generalisable strategies a reader uses, rather than their response to single texts ...".

Alan Howe's chapter 'Speaking and Listening' traces the variegated history of oracy as an educational concern, from the 1921 Newbolt Report's conception of 'speech training' to the somewhat mixed blessing of official sanction given to speaking and listening by the National Curriculum. Despite some problems in the Cox version of National Curriculum it had at least given a recognised place to oracy: but the revised version's emphasis on standard English, may "have little or no positive effect on language use". The heart of the chapter is then devoted to drawing together the best wisdom that exists about what constitutes achievement and development in oracy, much of this based upon the National Oracy Project which ran from 1987 1993. In this area of the curriculum there is still much scope for development work in curriculum and in suitable assessment. This chapter offers valuable guidance for teachers to enlarge their conception of oracy around and beyond the requirements of the revised curriculum.

The final chapter, by Sallyanne Greenwood & Becky Green, looks at those pupils classified as low achievers in English. The chapter presents findings from a small-scale research conducted by the

authors, in which responses of low achievers (as identified by teachers and accounting for 26% of the survey) were compared with responses of other pupils in their year groups. Enjoyment of many aspects of English was found to fall off more sharply for the low achievers, between Years 8,9,10, as against the rest of the year group, and year 9 was felt by the authors to be critical to the shaping of attitudes and perceptions. They also found that some aspects of English were more influential than others in forming ideas about low ability. When asked what advice they would give to a pupil new to the school about how to do well in English, those who held a low self-estimate of their ability in English tended to give advice related to not getting into trouble in school, rather than advice about English – and some pupils said they did not know how to do well. The authors associate these responses with some pupils' being outside Bruner's 'culture-creating community', rather than to anything that is usefully described as low ability in English. They cite the development work of the National Writing Project, The National Oracy Project, and the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative in *recasting the contexts* of learning, for example, by providing a diversity of communities for communication and contexts for collaborative work. Such recasting of the contexts enables learners to re-interpret past experiences and perceptions, and can break the self-fulfilling pattern of low expectation and achievement.

This book gathers together a background of many years of research and reflection by those engaged with English as a central school subject, together with interesting new research by some of the contributors. Its publication coincides with the arrival of the new National Curriculum Orders in schools, and therefore with a time when teachers and departments will be reviewing their curriculum plans. There is much in this book that should help to inform that planning. While it remains faithful to its theme that ability in English is a very complex matter, it also provides some well-considered and well-supported frameworks for making professional judgements about development in English, and for curriculum planning which will support such development for all pupils.

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Is your school or college striving to adhere to its progressive principles and resist reactionary pressures so that all students may expect an equal entitlement to as good an education as possible?

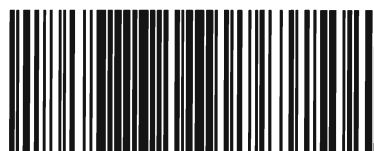*If so the Editors of Forum would like to hear from you (see inside front cover for address)*

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