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TRIANGLE

Contents

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Persons, Performance, Privatisation ...

And there's plenty more where those words came from: prejudice, productivity and profitability being just three of them; but apart from their alphabetic cousinage, is there anything else that might relate them to each other? Unsurprisingly, a good deal and although this issue of *FORUM* mainly concerns itself with the three title words, the others are there as a persistent sub-chorus.

A mixture of theoretical and context-based articles illustrate these words and Michael Fielding's 'The Person-centred School' is a challenging example of the former. In it he takes issue with the way in which the 'effective school' movement has attempted to take or hijack, the notion of community to itself, not because it values it for the sake of those who make up that community but because it makes use of it for its own ends, these being the 'performance' of the school and its perceived 'effectiveness' by the outside world. The people for whom the school is presumably there in the first place, only mattering insofar as they contribute towards the school's productivity. Michael Fielding urges us to pull back from the seductive model of the 'effective and performing' school and think again about the basic principle of valuing those people within schools and putting them, not performance, first. To quote him, 'The imperative of performance is, despite good will, good intentions and much effort an inevitable if unwitting betrayal of education. It is intellectually shallow, spiritually destitute and corrosive of much that is central to human development'. His analysis of the present situation is perceptive and timely.

Other, context-based, articles demonstrate the positive changes that can be brought about by a genuine consideration for and of the person and the respect due to each person both individually and as part of a community. Gill North's article, for instance, on the work she and her colleagues are carrying out in the 'Learning Space' for disaffected secondary pupils, exemplifies the positive and successful effects of treating young people respectfully and as individuals. Brian Simon's account of the life and work of the pioneering headteacher, Tim McMullen, also illustrates the energising and constructive effects that can happen in a school when teachers are supported by someone whose life and principles are essentially 'person-centred'. The person at the heart of the school community is also developed by Jacqui Turnbull and Elizabeth Muir, who argue that for the benefit of this community as a 'learning organisation', citizenship should be mainstreamed and not sidelined as a separate subject.

Other contributors write about what can also happen when that respect towards the person becomes skewed by different priorities which place other values first and the effect that can have, for example on an individual when this occurs.

For instance, Elizabeth Burn's article 'Battling Through the System' is a telling account of an inner-city primary deputy head who is made to feel aware, on practically a daily basis, that she is quite distinctively a member of the working class. In this instance, the person's value is primarily estimated with regard to a factor that pre-judges people and consequently rejects them as individuals in their own right. Class is still one of the most significant and damaging factors acting as a powerful undercurrent to much of English education. Tony Brown, 'In the Direction of Children' also describes the destructive effects on an individual teacher of discrimination of another kind: that of bringing into question a person's core values when they don't tally with a certain ideology that in itself diminishes the importance of the person. His attempt to regain his sense of what is essential to education makes moving reading.

Patrick Yarker's articulate and thoughtful article on the way in which 'literacy' is insidiously taking priority over English, can also be read as pointing to the way in which the importance of a person's development through the subject of English is being increasingly diminished by the current stress on the acquisition of secretarial skills, that are coming to be seen as of prime importance in their own right rather than serving the ends of a more liberal and humane view of education.

The person-centred school is a place in which learning and the involvement in learning, is personal; indeed it acquires meaning through that very involvement. Elizabeth Jurd's article on her findings with Year 6 pupils and the recent changes in the teaching of primary science, underlines what damage can happen to children's real understanding when a mechanistic model of teaching replaces that of genuine pupil involvement. Dolores Loughrey has written an informative article about the changes to the early years curriculum through the new Early Learning Goals and if ever a stage of education demanded a person-centred school it must surely be the infant years.

The connection to the words 'pounds' and 'profitability' is not hard to make. The sense of justice that underpins an humanitarian view of education and its view that everyone should have an equal chance in the enterprise is given a considerable jolt by Chris Tipple's exposure of the basic unfairness at the heart of school funding ('The Funding Farce'). The pounds allocated to schools in one LEA can become virtually pence in another. Even the government has recently conceded that 'there are problems with the way that funding is distributed'. Perhaps this will change, albeit not necessarily for the better, if Dexter Whitfield's very sobering predictions on privatisation come about. Even some headteachers now see privatisation as a solution to the seemingly intractable problem posed by the apparent inability of some local authorities to establish a more equitable basis to school funding (*The Guardian*, 23 May). Quoting recent evidence though, Dexter Whitfield shows that even if we are now

familiar with British enterprise in terms of privatisation (*The Times Educational Supplement*, 15 May) it is nothing to the predatory ambitions of USA-based firms, not all of whom have creditable track records, and who are already sniffing round what they perceive as a very profitable market: nothing less than our education system. The privatisation of services is but the first step into (the suitably unpleasant-sounding term), 'commodification', of the whole of education. It is a word that has its only and proper place in the financial market; it has no value other than that of maximising its profits for its shareholders and doesn't even appear to possess the saving grace of enlightened self interest. While privatisation may solve problems in the short term, its lack of democratic accountability, especially if multinationals become involved, means the government, unions and LEAs should be very wary indeed. Those cheery souls apparently manning the welcome life raft may not have ultimately friendly designs on their would-be passengers.

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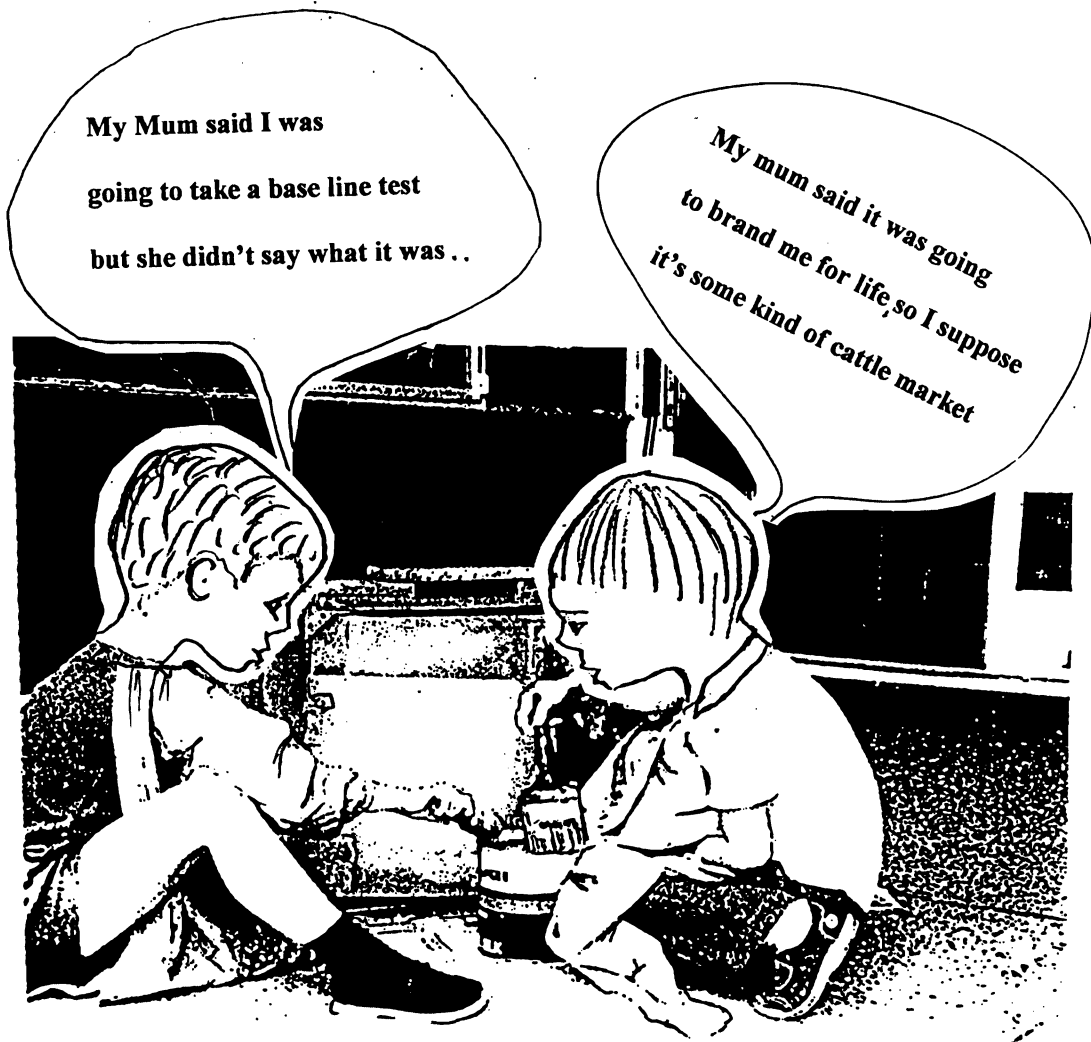
F.E.LINDRE

The Person-centred School

Michael Fielding
Michael Fielding, Reader in Education at the University of Sussex, who has recently joined the Editorial Board of *FORUM*, argues that school effectiveness will inevitably fail to meet our educational needs in the twenty-first century and suggests person-centred schools as a viable alternative.

Introduction

Why is there such disillusionment amongst so many involved in education at a time when a still hugely popular government has insistently and persistently proclaimed education as its main priority? Why have we ended up in a situation where, in the words of one commentator, 'we have ... six year olds being coached for SATs in the name of improvement, ... parents haranguing teachers for not giving their children enough homework, ... and teenagers who just stop going to school' (Moore, 2000, p. 17). Why, in the words of another writing some 70 years ago is it still the case that 'We have immense power, and immense resources; we worship efficiency and success; and *we do not know how to live finely*'? (Macmurray, 1935, p. 76) [my italics]. There are, of course, many answers to these questions, some of which have been explored in an engaging and properly demanding way in an ongoing *FORUM* debate (Halpin, 1999; Hill, 2000; Rikowski, 2000) about the usefulness and validity of the Third Way and its application to education.

This article suggests a slightly different way of coming at some of the issues central to our current dilemmas. It begins by raising fundamental questions that current preoccupations with school effectiveness and the raising of standards either marginalise or ignore altogether. It suggests that unless these bedrock questions are tackled more seriously and more intelligently, education policy and practice will remain a prisoner of a superficial set of understandings and aspirations. They will therefore fail profoundly in their attempt to meet our needs as human beings struggling into the twenty-first century. We need a more explicit, more adequate understanding of how we become persons: without it, no amount of commitment and goodwill will achieve an educational provision that inspires commitment and achieves what is intended. We also need a different intellectual framework that not only helps us to understand why current approaches are flawed, but also one that helps us to build better alternatives. We need to know both why school effectiveness is bound to fail and what other possibilities are more likely to succeed.

On the Necessity of Education having a View of How We Become Persons

My starting point, then, is the view that we develop as human beings in and through our relations with others. Primarily, we are neither individualistic nor social in our nature: rather, we are communal beings whose individuality and development as persons is realised in certain kinds of relations with others. Basically there are two kinds of relations through which we develop our humanity. They are *functional* or task-centred relations and

personal or person-centred relations. As we shall see, both are necessary and interdependent, but one is more important than the other.

In functional relations we relate to other people in terms of roles and specific purposes. Thus, for example, when I buy, say, a train ticket or various items from a shop, my relation with the person in the ticket office or the shop is defined by the purchase of the ticket or the items for sale. In such encounters we do not generally exchange profound thoughts about of our experience of the world or reveal ourselves in all our variety and complexity: when we have completed our purchase/sale the relationship ends. These kinds of relations and exchanges are characteristic of the day to day interactions; it is these functional relations that comprise society (as opposed to community) and make up the reality of economic, social and political life.

This aspectival or partial revelation of ourselves is not, however, true of personal relations. Personal relations, relations in which we can be and become persons are important basically because it is these kinds of relations that provide the conditions in which we feel safe enough and significant enough and valued enough to be challenged and stimulated to develop our emergent humanity. It is in personal relations, in relations of community (rather than society), characterised by the principles of freedom and equality within the context of care, that we can be and become most fully ourselves, most fully human. Here our relations with others are open and expansive as, for example, in friendship. Friendship is not task specific: we are not friends in order to get certain things done. Indeed, if we approach friendship in this way e.g. to gain access to certain things or positions we think are desirable, we are using the appearance of friendship for purposes that are corrosive of its development.

Understanding the Relationship between Society & Community

The interconnectedness of functional and personal relations is very important and it is here we find the centre of the problems we are currently facing, not just in education, but it many aspects of our lives. There are two main points to be made here. First, functional and personal relations are at once opposites, inseparable and essential to one another in human affairs. The second main point is that whilst the functional (social/economic/political) and the personal (the communal) are necessarily interconnected, they are not of equal importance. Understanding their essential relationship is essential if we are to work out why things are going so badly wrong at the

moment and develop a way forward that is likely to be both positive and creative.

What then can we say about which one has priority over the other, why this is the case, and in what circumstances can those priorities be realised? Answers to these difficult questions can most readily found in the writings of one of the most outstanding neglected British philosophers of the twentieth century, John Macmurray, from whose work this line of thinking is drawn. Macmurray argues unequivocally that 'The functional life is *for* the personal life ... the personal life is *through* the functional life' (Macmurray, 1941, p. 822). In other words, personal relations (i.e. relations like those of friendship, family and community where we relate to each other as persons rather than as role occupants or job holders) are fundamentally important in at least two ways. First, they precede in a temporal sense our emergence as social beings. Secondly, and more importantly, they provide the point and purpose of functional relations. Community is prior to social, economic and political life in the sense that their justification, their legitimacy and point are dependent upon whether or not they do in fact enable personal and communal relations to develop between us. It thus raises the most profound and subversive question of all; that is to say, 'What are our social, economic and political arrangements *for*?'

There is one further important point to consider before we come to examine Macmurray's wider significance for our current dilemmas. As we have seen in our earlier examination of the relationship between the functional and the personal, Macmurray argues that 'the personal life is *through* the functional life'. I would want to augment and extend this line of thinking and argue that not only is the functional for the sake of the personal, and the personal through the functional, but the influence of the personal on the functional is transformative of it; the functional should be *expressive of* the personal; the means should themselves be transformed by the ends by which they are inspired and towards which they are aiming. In other words, the functional ways in which we work together in schools to achieve personal, communal and educational ends should be transformed by the moral and interpersonal character and quality of what we are trying to do. For example, there are communication systems in schools which are largely mechanistic and impersonal, which provide no space for dialogue, which are primarily about a top-down imposition of authority, which are expressed in language that is metallic and monochrome, and which operate largely independently of the uniqueness and vibrancy of the human beings to whom they are directed. There are other communication systems that are person-centred, that encourage dialogue, that are about the development of shared responsibility, that are imaginative and richly textured in their discourse, and that are dependent on the mutual commitment of those who are parties to the mutuality of the educational process. In the first instance, the functional operates independently of the personal; indeed, it verges on being anti-personal: in the second, the functional is itself informed by the personal ends which animate and justify its existence.

On the Need for a New Intellectual Framework

The significance of Macmurray's work within our current context seems to me to have at least three dimensions to it.

First, he reminds us that since education is immediately and ultimately about becoming more fully human it must be linked to a view of human being and becoming; it must rest upon a view about how we become persons. Secondly, he reminds us that all the activity and busyness of our daily lives, all the arrangements, structures and practices we develop are only justifiable insofar as they do actually help us to become better persons: in other words he reminds us of the fundamental importance of purposes. Thirdly, he also reminds us that the success or otherwise of our efforts to achieve those human purposes are themselves dependent on the moral and existential quality of the means we adopt: that is to say, how we go about achieving our intentions matters a great deal.

I have indicated the kinds of answers Macmurray gives to these three fundamental questions. The point is not whether one is necessarily in agreement with him. What is crucial is that they are recognised as significant questions in the field of education and that our current policies and practices have some kind of answer to them. Only then can we move ahead in ways that are likely to be fruitful. In order to take the debate forward I set out below an intellectual typology that I hope will assist that process.

The typology itself is based upon the two fundamental forms of human association about which I have been arguing, the functional and the personal. What it then seeks to do is work through different orientations towards them and in so doing try to understand more clearly than we do at the moment how these four approaches to education and schooling differ and what some of the consequences of those differences are in approaches to teaching and learning. In particular, it tries to grasp more securely why the current vogue for school effectiveness is inappropriate. And, insofar as it is intended as an educational strategy, as opposed to a narrowly instrumental and strikingly dreary approach to schooling, is bound to fail. It also seeks to advocate a more compelling alternative, namely the person-centred school, which retains a commitment to achieving desirable results, but in ways which are rich in their humanity and wide-ranging and creative in their achievement.

Figure 1 below sets out the four basic orientations, (severally called 'impersonal', 'sentimental', 'person-centred', and 'high performance'), towards a number of different questions, the most fundamental of which concerns how the orientation sees the relationship between the functional and the personal.

Schools as Impersonal Organisations

The first two orientations, namely the impersonal and the sentimental, take diametrically opposed stances on the relation between the functional and the personal. The *impersonal* standpoint marginalises the personal. The impersonal school is a mechanistic organisation that is primarily concerned with efficiency. People's desire to relate to each other as persons or to work together as a community are seen as largely irrelevant and almost certainly either a waste of time or destructive of the drive to achieve outcomes. With regard to teaching and learning, teachers operating within the impersonal framework typically see themselves as teaching subjects not students; motivation is primarily through appeal to the importance of a particular subject and the standards internal to it; content is tightly controlled by the teacher, with

Schools as **Impersonal** Organisations	Schools as **Sentimental** Communities	Schools as **Person-Centred** Communities	Schools as **High Performance** Organisations
The Functional Marginalises the Personal	*The Personal Marginalises the Functional*	*The Functional is for the Sake of / Expressive of the Personal*	*The Personal is Used for the Sake of the Functional*
Mechanistic Organisation	Self-Indulgent Community	Learning Community	Learning Organisation
Community is Unimportant / Destructive of Organisational Purposes	Community has no Organisational Consequences or Requirements	Organisation Exists to Promote Community	Community is a Useful Tool to Achieve Organisational Purposes
Efficient	Complacent	Morally and Instrumentally Successful	Efficient

Figure 1. The organisational orientation of schools: understanding the relation between functions and persons.

insignificant room for negotiation: in sum, the teacher operates largely as a highly skilled pedagogic technician.

Schools as Sentimental Communities

In contrast, the *sentimental* standpoint valorises the personal at the expense of the functional. It has little time or patience for the functional or organisational arrangements needed to translate the warmth and deeply held emotional commitments into practical realities that help young people to learn in a variety of ways. Consequently it is ineffectual in what it tries to do. It is sentimental in the sense that whilst the value commitments that drive its daily work are concerned with emotional well-being they lack any tangible means of demonstrating the sincerity of those commitments through reciprocally demanding action and evaluation. It is a self-indulgent community in the sense that its concern for persons and for the wider dimensions of human achievement are overstated and under-realised, often leading to a complacency and self-regard that obstructs rather than enhances the learning of students, staff or the community it serves. With regard to teaching and learning, teachers operating within the sentimental framework typically see themselves as teaching students not subjects; motivation is primarily through appeal to the student's own best past performance, without any reference to the achievements of others, and there is often exhortation and encouragement which centres largely on the importance of not letting the teacher down; content is fluid and emergent, but interconnections and coherence remain largely elusive or circumstantial: in sum, the teacher operates in ways that are very close to certain kinds of therapy with a marked preference for concentrating on learning, sometimes to the virtual exclusion of teaching.

Schools as Performance Organisations

The third and fourth orientations, namely the person-centred school and the high performance school, share a commitment to young people's achievement, but take very different stances towards how that achievement is conceived and how it is best realised in the context of a school. The *high performance* school takes an opportunist approach to the emergence of the appallingly, if appropriately, named human resource management and the rise of emotional labour strategies (Smith, 1999). Here Macmurray's advocacy is turned on its head and instead of the functional being for the sake of the personal, the

personal is used for the sake of the functional. In many respects this orientation reflects the preoccupations and practices of the effective school and, within business and industry, the learning organisation. Here community is valued, but primarily for instrumental purposes within the context of the market-place: in the case of schools this means performance in local and/or national league tables which is not only 'good' but seen to be so. The significance of both students and teachers rests primarily in their contribution to the public performance of the organisation; hence its form of unity is collective, rather than personal and communal.

This last point about the incidental or derivative significance of the human beings who comprise the school as a learning organisation highlights one of the fundamental flaws of the school effectiveness model as it has developed in the national and international context of the education market-place. Basically, the collective model is totalitarian in its intellectual origins and, thus, unsurprisingly, in at least some of its consequences, whether intended or otherwise. For this reason, the realities that field data are beginning to reveal point to an emerging picture of human experience in which on the one hand students complain that their school only regards them as important insofar as they are bearers of A* grades (Fielding, 1999) or on the other that they are, in the frightening words of one primary school pupil, 'a nothing' (Reah & Wiliam, 1999). Teachers, too, are subject to exactly the same pressures and covert messages: their significance is now to be judged in terms of performance, more often than not related to practices that translate most readily into the public nexus of the market, and their professionalism subsumed into an increasingly ubiquitous list of generic competencies that marginalise judgement and prescribe a predictable practice, undeviating in its confidence and its collectivity.

With regard to teaching and learning, teachers operating within the high performance framework see their main task as getting results; motivation is primarily competitive, with an insistent reference to the importance (for the school as much as for the student) of measurable outcomes; and whilst content is tightly controlled by the teacher (or school/government policy), there is a substantial commitment to engendering 'ownership' in students: in sum, the teacher operates largely as a highly skilled persuader with an overriding emphasis on 'what works'.

The high performance model of school organisation which I am suggesting school effectiveness most readily exemplifies has another serious flaw which is, again, derived from its over-emphasis on measurable results. Here it is not just that the increasingly corporate orientation of schools inevitably reduces the significance of individual human beings to parasitic status, it is also that the collective pressure to achieve certain kinds of results and be seen to do so, marginalises concerns about the moral, aesthetic and interpersonal quality of the way the results are actually achieved.

Insofar as it exemplifies its ideological thrust and the dynamic of its wider political and economic contexts, school effectiveness must inevitably fail as an educational undertaking, as distinct from an economically driven model of schooling. It will fail precisely because the specifically educational character of its language and concerns are either eradicated altogether or transformed into a discourse which has no significant capacity to comprehend, let alone encourage, the richness, the unpredictability and the liveliness that give education its validity and value.

Schools as Person-centred Communities

In contrast to its high performance counterpart, the *person-centred* school sees the relationship between the functional and the personal in a Macmurrayesque way. For such a school the functional is both for the sake of and expressive of the personal. It goes beyond a learning organisation to become a learning community. Here organisation has an important part to play, but one in which the structures and procedures that support the daily realities of its work, promote community, rather than deny it or use it for purposes of corporate success. The person-centred school also goes beyond the effectiveness of the high performance model. Its outcomes are widely and imaginatively conceived and its success is as satisfying morally and interpersonally as it is instrumentally. Its form of unity is communal and person-centred, rather than collective and outcomes driven. Its language transcends the bullet point banalities of the effectiveness imperative, celebrating nuance as well as number, delight as well as definition.

With regard to teaching and learning, teachers operating within the person-centred framework typically take the view that teaching subjects or getting results is only justifiable if it does actually help students to become better persons; motivation is at once ipsative, emulative and rooted in negotiation; that is to say, it not only appeals to the student's own best past performance, but also to the delight in the creativity and excellence of others, and is given meaning through a reciprocal commitment to dialogue and mutual respect as the driving force of educative encounter. Content is thus discussed at appropriate points and joint decisions are made in the light of them; in sum, the teacher operates as an educator of persons. Such an approach rests on the assumption that real human achievement can only be attained, understood and demonstrated if means and ends are seen as mutually reinforcing and that for this to happen our modes of understanding, our systems that seek to make them a reality, and the language that shapes the form and quality of both, must develop in appropriately rich and dynamic ways.

Conclusion

Things cannot continue as they are. Despite its over-confident tone and the superficial plausibility of its hands-on advocacy, effectiveness ideology is as barren as it is belligerent. If the preoccupation with outcomes becomes increasingly myopic and insistent then teachers will become little more than cultural operatives and students mere units of economic production. The language of education will become even more dull and devoid of feeling: it will no longer sing to us and inspire us: it will reduce the poetry of human being and becoming to nothing more than a series of eminently clear but ultimately meaningless bullet points. The supreme irony in all this is that our proficiency and productivity will turn out to be either pointless or destructive or both: pointless because we will no longer have the language or the inclination to ask what productivity is for; destructive because in ceasing to ask these fundamental questions those with power and position will provide answers for us, answers which we are bound to accept since we might well have surrendered our capacity to think and act differently. The size of a nation's gross national product should not be bought at the price of boredom or servitude.

It is time we sought alternatives to the impoverishment and disillusionment of performativity. The typology I have explored here offers one way of understanding why the imperative of performance is, despite goodwill, good intentions and much effort, an inevitable if unwitting betrayal of education. It is intellectually shallow, spiritually destitute and corrosive of much that is central to human fulfilment. The person-centred school offers a viable alternative that many teachers, parents, students and others involved in education are beginning to explore with growing confidence and hope: why not join them?

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Tim McMullen: comprehensive pioneer

Brian Simon

By an unusual concatenation of circumstances, Tim McMullen, who died earlier this year aged 83, was propelled to the very forefront of the comprehensive revolution at the peak of that movement in the early 1970s. He was appointed head of the new Countesthorpe College in Leicestershire. The innovations there introduced aroused enormous interest not only in this country but across Europe as a whole. The contrast between current policies in school management and those introduced by Tim is so extreme as to make a look-back an enlightening project. This will be attempted here – Tim's legacy must not be forgotten.

From 1958 to 1965 Tim had been head of the pioneering Thomas Bennett at Crawley – a large new comprehensive created from the fusion of two secondary moderns and a grammar school. Here he implemented what came to be described as the 'meritocratic' (as opposed to the 'egalitarian') model. Streaming and setting were widely used and the school was one of the first 'genuinely' comprehensive schools (in its intake) to achieve almost unbelievable academic results. At the time, this was important for the comprehensive movement, countering, as it did most effectively, hostile propaganda that comprehensive education inevitably led to declining standards.

But in 1965 (year of the famous Circular), Tim was appointed director of the innovative Nuffield funded 'Resources for Learning' project with which he worked for the next five years. This focused on the use of the modern technological resources to allow individualisation of students' learning and activity generally, now seen as having a direct relevance to comprehensive education. As he explained in a *Forum* article in 1968 (Vol. 10, No. 2), Tim's ideas on school education (pedagogy) and management now underwent a sea-change. Meritocratic objectives were not enough. What was needed, to realise the full potential of comprehensive education, was an entirely new approach directed at motivating *all* students to become thoroughly involved in determining, and carrying through, their own projects, studies and activities. Responsibility must, then, be thrown on to the students and staff to facilitate the high degree of targeted involvement. For this he developed, in his own mind, a whole new set of what were, in fact, quite revolutionary procedures for implementation as opportunity arose.

And, of course, it did arise. The county of Leicestershire was just now completing its comprehensive transformation – this was the first English authority to actually abolish the 11+ successfully throughout its area, in 1969. New schools were being built, themselves architecturally innovative, allowing in particular, implementation of the new techniques of resource-based learning. Countesthorpe, based on a circular model, was one of these.

At this point, Tim steps into the picture. When planning this new school the authority approached the Resources for Learning team about plans for this new building – for students aged 14 to 18. Only minor modifications were made but the contact proved productive. Appointment as head of the new college was made two years before it was due to open, leaving the job to be taken up a full six months before that. And Tim was the appointee. The county authority, Tim says, 'believing as they did in the autonomy of the head and wanting someone to exploit the building', was looking for someone who was in sympathy with their own general aims 'and particularly interested in changing the learning situation'. Tim also writes that the authority were apparently not 'concerned with' his 'second set of aims' (i.e. his new thinking on inner school organisation), though these were 'clearly set out at interview and in documents submitted'. Many of the Resources for Learning team, he adds, had come round to these views (see *Forum*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Spring 1972).

Having been appointed head, Tim now recruited his staff – this function being left largely to him, as was normal practice in the county. When senior staff were appointed, they in turn played the major part in recruiting their own teams. Two leading members of the Resources for Learning project, who had worked closely with Tim for several years, now joined the staff in senior positions: John D'Arcy as Deputy and Michael Armstrong as Head of the Social Studies section (now Chair of *Forum*'s Editorial Board). Now, Tim writes, much of the basic thinking that had gone on in the Resources for Learning project 'became a major influence in the development of the school'.

A main principle of organisation and management was that the school should function as a 'wholly participatory democracy', decisions being taken 'by staff either as a whole or in sections', executive actions being left to individual members of the staff (according to their functions). Crucial to all this was a full four-day meeting of all staff already appointed in the Easter break before the opening of the school. In Tim's words, 'this meeting clarified aims and decided in general terms what these would mean in terms of curriculum'. In addition, the whole staff met for a week before the school opened 'and moved from the general to the particular'. This process was then carried on by weekly meetings of the 'Moot' (open to all staff) and a further full week without children in October.

So there was plenty of discussion about the new school – its principles and procedures. So far I have relied on Tim's own writings in this journal to set the scene. But I soon became peripherally involved myself. Tim had the

right, as head, to nominate two governors and asked me to take on one of these jobs. Being broadly in agreement with his ideas and anxious to give support I took this on although, as I was exceptionally busy at the time, I was not able to give much useful support. In addition, Tim agreed to my proposal that a joint appointment might be made in the field of social studies, a lecturer/teacher working half-time in both institutions, his students using the school for teaching practice. Finally, many of our students at the School of Education (University of Leicester) were excited by the school and others were also located there for teaching practice. In sharp contrast to the old grammar schools, which seldom allowed more than two students in their school at any one time, Tim enthusiastically welcomed our students and up to about 20 were located at the school during a year. So, in various ways, the university benefited greatly from the foundation of Countesthorpe. The sense of new things happening was itself a stimulus – Countesthorpe added to the general excitement of the time which, in retrospect, contrasts sharply from the present situation.

Tim, personally, was absolutely consistent in his approach and behaviour. Not a charismatic type, he sought a low profile – his objectives were enabling. This stance was unusual but very effective. For one thing he abolished the head's study – he was generally to be found around the school or in the staff room – available to all. This crucially symbolised his concept of a 'participatory democracy'. The school he created hummed with activity – discussion as to aims and procedures were unceasing, often intense, particularly among the staff. Someone said, perhaps correctly, that whatever the effect on the students, the staff certainly experienced an intensive education during their time at Countesthorpe. Several went on to senior positions and headships over the years, taking with them the Countesthorpe 'message'.

Tim retired unexpectedly towards the close of his second year as head. This was for reasons of health. How far it was due to the strains engendered through consistently implementing several innovations – some engendering local hostility – I do not know, but I do not believe this was a major factor. His place was taken by

John Watts who loyally continued to implement Tim's ideas and whose broad shoulders and sanguine temperament carried the school through some difficult years. Tim retired eventually to France where he worked for the OECD and later for the European Union. His home with his wife Marion, became 'the meeting place for scores of teachers, educationists, administrators, researchers, journalists, past and present teachers and colleagues from all over Europe' (Michael Armstrong, *The Times Educational Supplement*, 29 January 2000).

But Tim's niche in the history of education will relate undoubtedly to his establishment of Countesthorpe College in Leicestershire, celebrated and critically analysed in John Watt's fine book, *The Countesthorpe Experience* (Allen & Unwin, 1977), dedicated to Tim.

In the first chapter of this book I attempted to place Tim's Countesthorpe 'in the context of comprehensive developments', seeing it as the culmination of various trends which comprised that movement. Its foundation was, perhaps, the most significant 'moment' in that history. Had it flowered in a more generous age it might have determined the future. Heath's three day week, fiscal crises, the Black Papers and the vicious assaults against teachers and education generally which characterised the 1970s created an increasingly hostile environment for such humanist and deeply educative initiatives.

But the model created survived, documented and living in the memory of many. As the reaction against New Labour's 'modernisation' strategy mounts, Tim's ideas, perhaps in new forms, will certainly revive, as the humanist response to top-down bureaucratic and over-politicised 'management' gathers pace.

Tim's time at Countesthorpe was certainly not a failure, as Michael Armstrong reports Tim as concluding. After a difficult start 'the school began to flourish' and by the end of the 1970s 'the creativity and vitality of its curriculum' were 'an inspiration to students, parents and visitors alike' (*The Times Educational Supplement*, 28 January 2000). Tim will be remembered for his daring and passion as a comprehensive innovator – one who brought a new vision to a movement whose full potentialities remain to be realised.

'Learning Space': enhancing the educational care of children

Gill North

'Learning Space' is a multi-agency team which offers secondary schools with troubled pupils an original and responsive support service which bases its work on a solution-focused approach and a positive and constructive emphasis on the individual student. The team comprises Gill North, Jane Fincham and Gay Stracy, who previously worked in mainstream secondary schools, and an experienced social worker, Rosemary Revel, who has worked extensively with families and children using a solution-focused approach.

Background

'Learning Space' was established in Dorking, Surrey in April 1997. It evolved from multi-agency meetings held two years previously. These meetings were in response to concerns about the behaviour of a number of young people some of whom had been excluded from local secondary schools.

The schools expressed a concern that local education authority (LEA) support when faced with challenging behaviour was mostly too little and too late. Representatives of other agencies claimed that the needs of disaffected pupils often seemed to be given low priority in the overall agenda of schools. Statutory agencies did not have resources to provide preventative measures and costly crisis intervention became necessary. For example, for one excluded youngster Social Services incurred a total cost of £28 000 in addition to the costs of family visits and professional assessments. The cost of dealing with the social needs of other young people out of school was in the region of £10 000 and together they were responsible for over one hundred offences, mainly criminal damage, costing over £5 000.

As a result of these discussions a new community development organisation called the Surrey Youth Initiative (Dorking) was set up and charged with implementing projects to address the issues that had been raised. One of these projects, 'Learning Space', started to work with schools in building a supportive social inclusion framework.

Supported through joint finance provided by the Health Authority's Joint Finance Scheme, Social Services, Standards Fund from the DfEE and Surrey LEA, 'Learning Space' came into existence in April 1997 as a service that could move in quickly to the two local secondary schools, when requested to provide support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Two full-time teachers and a part-time social worker staff it.

During the past three years, the concept has evolved both in terms of the operational relationship between the schools and 'Learning Space' staff and in terms of the balance between emergency response activities and preventative work within the schools. It now provides a much more flexible support service for its schools.

Management Tensions

The 'Learning Space' management group brings together the referring schools, representatives from Health and Social Services and members of the local community. This group comprises local stakeholders in the success of 'Learning Space'. The teachers are line-managed by officers from one of the county's education support services and herein lies a tension that has yet to be resolved.

The practice and structure of 'Learning Space' is in direct contrast to operations in LEA services. 'Learning Space' has strong roots in the community it serves and partnership working is at the core of its philosophy. It is able to respond quickly and flexibly to local needs. It is a 'bottom-up' approach that keeps service provision to children and families firmly at the centre of its activity. It operates a flat management structure and discussions, planning and decision-making are open and transparent. Consequently the hierarchical 'top down' structure of the LEA with its emphasis on developing policy and procedure for centrally run services has resulted in an LEA response which has been fairly indifferent to 'Learning Space' service activity and development.

Providing Support for Vulnerable Pupils and Their Families

Working with individual pupils forms the main bulk of our work. The ecosystems model recognises that behaviour is about getting our needs met in the best way we know how and is the product of interactions. We therefore need to gain a total view of the pupil's situation and to work with all those involved. We believe that good communication is at the heart of effective working relationships and we work hard to put our clients at the centre.

A typical case study is 'Robert' (not his real name). He was referred to the team at the end of year 10 with a history of severely disruptive behaviour and it was felt that he would not survive Year 11. On referral from the school, he was allocated a key worker who began the holistic assessment, building up a full profile of Robert to enable the school and his family to support him successfully.

Robert and the key worker met on several occasions and Robert completed a simple pupil profile form to give more evidence of how he perceived his situation.

Robert was struggling in school with a learning difficulty and was finding the demands of a full curriculum to be too great. He also had had a great deal of intensive support from female staff and he was beginning to reject this. He resented being different from other pupils.

Since the key worker will always meet with the pupil's

family or carer, our initial referral form requires that schools gain the parents/carers' agreement and involvement is ensured from the beginning. Usually a meeting is arranged at our base or at the home.

The key worker met with Robert's mother. During these meetings we aim to actively listen, carefully and non-judgmentally, to the parent/carer acknowledging the feelings, and aiming to get a better understanding of the situation from his/her perspective. We try to keep our work 'solution focused' and we will be looking for what works and hoping to build on that. It is important for the parent/carer to feel heard and that they play an important part in finding solutions. There is some evidence to suggest that schools tend to think that problems are likely to be rooted in the home or in the individual [pupil] and not to fully examine/reflect on the school's role. It may be the case that both 'sides' are on the defensive and our role will be to try to facilitate a solution-focused approach.

Robert's mother expressed her dismay at his poor attitude to school and her lack of success in motivating him to do school work. She felt that Robert's learning needs had been well supported but that few staff appreciated the frustrations that he experienced. She was feeling that Robert was becoming increasingly out of her control.

The parents were asked to complete a scaling assessment profile form for us to build up a fuller picture and have a better understanding of the concerns.

The key worker then collected information from the school. A trawl through his file indicated that Robert had a long history of disruptive behaviour, going back to nursery temper tantrums. He had been identified as having a specific learning difficulty at age 10 and had received support for language difficulties since that date.

Robert's teachers were asked to complete a teacher profile – all the 'Learning Space' profiles (for pupils, parents/carers and teachers) are two-sided sheets with solution-focused questions relating to attendance, attitude, ability, attainment and behaviour. They are quick and easy to complete, using questions with scales of 1–5, seeking to identify positives about the pupil.

Having completed the assessment period and holding a sense of the big picture, the key worker completed an assessment report, which was presented to a meeting of the referring Head of Year, Robert's parents and Robert himself. An action plan in the form of an IEP [individual education plan] or PSP [Pastoral Support Plan] was drawn up ensuring that Robert's family was actively involved in the solutions as well as Robert himself, the school and 'Learning Space'.

It was agreed that Robert should be put on a reduced timetable and he should have a male member of staff to mentor him. Using the services of the Careers Officer, Robert embarked on one day per week work experience and indulged his highly developed entrepreneurial skills – bringing his sense of self-worth and success back into school in the rest of the week.

The key worker has continued to see Robert weekly, supporting him with work, anger management and any other issues that may arise. The parents also contact the key worker when things are difficult at home and the social worker has supported the parents to keep them in touch with their own strengths and resources so they feel better able to cope with the situation.

Half termly reviews are held to oversee the success of the support plan with the family, school, the pupil and 'Learning Space' in attendance.

○ 'Learning Space' also provides support to the schools in other ways:

○ Liasing with primary schools at the time of transfer to Year 7.

○ Supporting vulnerable pupils during the period of transfer including self-esteem screening, facilitating peer mentoring between Years 7 and 9 and running small groups to raise self-esteem.

○ Offering consultation and support for teaching and pastoral staff that may be concerned about the behaviour or the welfare of a pupil, liasing with the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service when necessary.

○ Providing staff INSET sessions on issues such as using the Code of Practice for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD), meeting the needs of pupils with differing learning styles in the classroom and understanding the implications for pupils with a Speech and Language difficulty.

○ Facilitating group work on a variety of issues such as anger management, No-Blame bullying, Circle of Friends, confidence building for non-attenders, motivation sessions for pupils in Year 11.

○ Providing off-site learning space for some pupils at the Centre.

○ Putting vulnerable youngsters in touch with the local Youth Service for support.

Findings from Our Work

As part of our work in the Dorking community, we conducted a survey of 35 EBD pupils and 20 non-school attenders from June 1997 to July 1999. We examined and compared these two groups in terms of the background factors and issues relating to the child. We also compared the outcomes of the interventions of the School and 'Learning Space', examining the involvement of other agencies and attempting to identify the elements of successful practice.

Of the pupils with EBD, 29 were acting-out and 6 were behaviourally and emotionally withdrawn; 26 out of the 29 acting-out pupils were boys.

Background factors included children in the Looked-After system and on the Child Protection Register; children who were the subject of other legal proceedings such as Residence orders; Police, Social Services involvement. Health factors covered mental health problems in the children, parents and siblings; physical illness (children, parents and siblings) and learning disability. Other factors included single parent families; parents with very long work hours; alcohol/domestic violence; serious poverty and racial/cultural issues. Of the EBD pupils, 25% were involved with the police (all boys). 37% came from single parent families and 22% had parents who worked very long hours.

Issues such as loss and bereavement, speech and language problems, prescription of Ritalin for attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) and bullying were a major feature; 49% of the group had speech and language difficulties and 29% had parents with language problems.

The offsite facility was a significant factor in the return of 76% of the non-attenders who returned to school after

an average of 2.5 terms out of school. Forty-five per cent of EBD pupils came offsite on a much shorter-term basis. The Centre offers a therapeutic environment allowing space for reflection. Pupils find using the computer calming.

It is noticeable that there is a stark contrast between the massive support that teachers give to non-attenders and their parents /carers and the sanctions response to the rude, defiant, disruptive and abusive behaviour of the EBD children. The exceptions to imposing increasingly severe sanctions occur when the school feels sorry for the child, for instance, when a parent has died or the home is particularly deprived i.e. when the reasons are wholly visible. In these situations, the schools are immensely supportive and manage to sustain this for a very long time.

However, our research shows that the EBD pupils have a similar range of problems in their background as the non-attenders. For example, alcohol/domestic violence was an issue amongst 26% of the non-attenders and 17% of EBD referrals. Severe mental/physical health problems in the child, parent or siblings occurred in 90% of the non-attenders and 14% of EBDs. Where the reasons for difficult behaviour are not immediately obvious, schools do not give the same tolerance and willingness to be flexible to the acting-out pupils as they do to the withdrawn/non-attending pupils.

Bullying was the most dominant single factor with 82% of the non-attenders and 86% of the EBD pupils experiencing it. This latter figure further divided into 36% being the perpetrator, 30% the victim and 33% taking both roles.

Anecdotal evidence is that schools are pro-active in dealing quickly with actual incidents but do not do enough about the long grind of continual name-calling and minor spiteful attacks that makes school 'a living hell' for many children. Some bullying dynamics are imported straight from primary school so that the victim does not get a fresh start, in fact quite the reverse as the old familiar safety strategies are gone.

Summary

The principles that guide our work with children, families and schools are:

Child focused. We support schools in listening to children and understanding the reasons behind behaviour.

Solution focused. We use people's existing skills and strengths as a starting point and aim to build on areas of success. We always look for 'what's going right' at school, at home, in friendships etc. We work towards solutions that are both realistic and workable.

Communication focused. We listen carefully to what others have to say and make sure any decisions are made jointly by all those involved. We work in partnership with families, schools and other agencies.

Multi agency. We encourage agencies to share information whenever this is appropriate and aim to overcome agency and professional boundaries.

Holistic assessment. We assess all the needs of young people including educational, social and emotional. We believe when schools know the whole picture then they are better equipped to meet the individual needs of children.

Inclusion Our work is most successful when we work alongside the school.

Evidence from referring schools suggests that our support has played a significant part in the following developments:
○ reductions in fixed term and permanent exclusions
○ reductions in truancy
○ improvements in school support structures for disaffected pupils and for teachers
○ improvements in school ethos and atmosphere.

Postscript

Robert has just completed Year 11 and will be returning to take his GCSEs in June. The school is now in the surprising but interesting position of giving careful consideration to his application to the Sixth Form. Some staff feel this may be one step too far!

If you require further information please contact the 'Learning Space' team on: Tel/fax +44 (0) 1306 889522 or learningspace@ukonline.co.uk (a website is currently being developed at www.learningspace.org.uk).

Embracing Diversity: learning and teaching for active citizenship

Jacqui Turnbull & Elizabeth Muir
The authors, both lecturers at the University of Glamorgan, argue that schools should now grasp the opportunity to become genuine and powerful 'learning organisations' by mainstreaming education for citizenship.

Schools have always accepted preparation for adult life as part of their agenda beyond the formal academic curriculum. This may have been implicit in the way schools were organised and relationships defined, or more explicitly demonstrated in active learning projects that encouraged pupils to develop competencies essential to future citizenship. The statutory order for citizenship education to become part of the formal curriculum in secondary schools in England from September 2002 means that schools will have to address the essential elements detailed under Key Concepts, Values and Dispositions, Skills and Aptitudes, Knowledge and Understanding (QCA, 1998), and plan for how these can be achieved by the end of compulsory schooling.

Catalyst for Change

Rather than viewing this as a further onerous chore, the suggestion is that this requirement contains the potential to stimulate reform within education that will benefit teachers as well as pupils. Promoting the acquisition of the essential elements of democracy can stimulate an approach that can sponsor greater diversity in teaching and learning to accommodate conditions of rapid and change and multiculturalism (Hargreaves & Evans, 1997). There are two concepts which, taken together in this instance, can explain how education can move to greater diversity, while at the same time generating more educational effectiveness.

The first is the concept of 'mainstreaming citizenship'. This, like the EU policies of 'mainstreaming equality' (Rees, 1998) is based on the notion of the politics of difference, where the aim is to overcome disadvantage without denying difference (Squires, 1994). The implications of such an integrated approach would be twofold. First, that 'teaching' citizenship would not be within the domain of one subject area, but may be 'mainstreamed' through a variety of subjects each with their own perspective. Secondly, it means learning that citizenship has been, and is accessed according to a set of social variables such as age, gender, cultural capital, ethnicity, nationality and a host of other socio-economic factors which create differences between people.

The second concept is that of the 'learning organisation' which has gained wide acceptance in public services organisation, particularly in the management of change (Owens et al, 1995). In relation to education, the

view has been expressed that schools are not now learning organisations either for pupils or teachers (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). Schools as 'learning organisations' would move away from traditional beliefs that can persist within school ethos and individual pedagogy – that knowledge is objective, that learners are essentially passive, and that the focus of interest is on the process of teaching – if that is right, learning will happen in a straightforward manner (Claxton, 1990). Rather it is the view that, while it is people who learn, their collective learning can be reflected in changes in the way their organisation functions (Owens et al, 1995). Yet of the four types of school cultures discussed by Hargreaves & Fullan (1998) – fragmented individualism, balkanisation, contrived collegiality and collaboration – only the latter has potential for continuous learning.

The essential elements of collaboration are consistent with the stated elements of citizenship education, which include awareness of Key Concepts such as 'democracy', 'equality and diversity', 'freedom and order' and Skills and Aptitudes such as 'ability to co-operate and work effectively with others' (QCA, 1998). It is not therefore too bold a claim to suggest that 'rooting' these principles within the whole school may have the potential to create the 'rich and purposeful relationships with parents, communities, corporations and others where learning runs in both directions' (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). It is when learning becomes a continuous process, that an organisation becomes a 'learning organisation' (Owens et al, 1995).

Within systems such as education where reforms have been imposed (on what has felt like a continuous basis), the idea of change can appear daunting and demoralising. The details of tasks can become so overwhelming that they cloud the overall purpose. Any organisation will be more effective if all parts co-operate and work towards the same goal, and this aligned state can only be achieved if change is dealt with at a number of levels (Knight, 1995). The American researcher and trainer Robert Dilts suggests a series of neurological levels for analysing personal and organisational change. This practical method draws on the insights and ideas of British anthropologist Gregory Bateson (O'Connor & McDermott, 1996), and allows us to take a step back to rediscover and reclaim values and beliefs about our identity and mission. To consider the transformative potential of citizenship education, we can

work through the levels to identify creative aspects of a 'learning organisation'.

Environment

This first level encourages thinking about the place and the people that make up our environment. Consider, for instance, the example of this particular Welsh secondary school. At this school 30 nationalities are represented, with over 20 languages spoken on site. Half the pupils do not have English as their first language; just over 60% of pupils entering Year 7 last year had reading ages two or more years below their chronological age. The 44% of pupils registered as being entitled to free school meals compares with the LEA average of almost 26% and gives an indication of a catchment area with a high level of unemployment and social deprivation. Propose citizenship 'lessons' in this environment without first defining basic democratic values and the likely result would be a spurious cosmetic exercise. At best pupils may gain a little knowledge, at worst there could be a situation comparable to having sex education 'lessons' within a national United Kingdom context of one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in the Western world.

So the environment for citizenship education is an important consideration, and two points can be made about this. First, the view that empowerment must begin in the classroom (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). Sarason (1990) suggests that most educational reforms fail because they simply do not address the existing power relationships of the classroom. Secondly, there is the recognition that in times of rapid social change, the environment where learning takes place also needs to reflect these changes. When the pace of change seems irksome rather than exhilarating, when cultures of compliance are demanded by inspectorates and governments, there can be a tendency to cling to the familiar, to focus inward, rather than broaden an approach to test and develop different conditions for learning. The very nature of education for citizenship requires learning partnerships with the world outside the school building. Not tentative agreements that look good on paper, but active relationships that allow students to examine how what they already know relates to the world around them. The 'learning organisation' is capable of redefining its relationship with the environment.

Behaviour

Change at the level of environment is only a start. At the next level of analysis behaviour – what we do – can be examined. An example from our own teaching experience can illustrate creative change at this level. F. was first encountered as a Year 12 GNVQ student, a tiny Muslim girl, swathed in black, doing her best not to be noticed amongst a group of otherwise lively teenagers. An attempt to include her in a group discussion prompted a quick response from the other students, 'Miss – F. doesn't speak'. And at that stage she didn't. Not without painfully slow stuttering, a reddened face, and seeming to shrink even further into her black coat and scarf. Three years later, local radio became interested in the pupil support group these pupils had set up to achieve the key skills required by their course. As a broadcaster called at school to interview them, not only was F. present at the interview, she insisted on taking her turn in speaking into the

microphone. Once F. had discovered that she could speak there had been no limit to her drive to achieve. She had completed Intermediate and Advanced level courses of GNVQ and she grasped every opportunity to test her newly-found confidence. The fact that F. had completed 11 years of schooling without speaking may well be illustrative of research evidence that teachers, like pupils, lack practice in the art of classroom discussion. But having encountered the GNVQ model, F. met the requirement to develop competencies in communication and working with others. This could only be achieved by generating a supportive, encouraging environment to empower F. to develop these behaviours. The whole group of students were involved in this, and F. provided them with a role model of how difficulties could be overcome. Behaviour in the learning organisation means that all members contribute and share the learning.

Capability

Above the level of behaviour, capability is more a resource in the form of a quality, and can also be illustrated with the example of another student. When T. was in primary school he was given a label – Stupid. It matters not what other explanation of T.'s experience was, his belief is that at that time he was so labelled, put to one side and ignored. Then there was a change of regime – a new Head – and T. received a new label – Dyslexic. But at least with this label he had some attention and some specialist help. When T. eventually left school he engaged himself in voluntary work at a unit for pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour, where he discovered an ability in interpersonal relationships. Very bravely, T. returned to school at 19 determined to obtain the qualification he needed to work in this field. The confidence gained from his voluntary work has enabled him to play a leading role in a student-run pupil advice service, and he continues to be determined and focused on achieving a GNVQ Advanced qualification. In this country there has been a neglect of 'risky' strategies such as co-operative learning and multiple intelligences which extensive research abroad has shown can significantly boost achievement and success of disadvantaged pupils in particular (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). The 'learning organisation' does not cling to narrow concepts of learning and intelligence.

Beliefs and Values

It is when real change occurs at this level that the effects are felt through all the lower levels. As with F. and T., changed beliefs about themselves changed their whole life experience. A more likely occurrence at this level has been described by Argyris & Schön (1978), who suggest there may be two sets of principles guiding individual action. The publicly stated 'espoused theory' is in line with official policies or widely shared cultural norms. But there will also be the private 'theory in use' which will be the real guiding principles behind behaviour. These may be identical, or they may be at odds with each other. Thus in a public setting a teacher might feel obliged to declare support for certain principles, but find it impossible to carry them out in the classroom (Bennett, 1997). When our meanings become habitual, they drop out of our conscious awareness, and operate at an unconscious level (Hall & Belnap, 1999). By 'rooting' citizenship education in democratic values we are forced to re-examine our

internalised values and beliefs. This, in turn exposes the whole operation of education to re-examination. Teaching practices, management structures, the nature of the curriculum, interpersonal relations, all warrant the test of whether we 'walk the talk'. In the 'learning organisation', values are made explicit.

Identity

Again, it is when changes are made at this higher level that the effects flow down to influence all the other levels. In being flexible enough to open ourselves to a diversity of teaching and learning we can justifiably identify ourselves as learners – we need to keep 'learning about learning' as second nature (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Transforming schools to 'learning organisations' means demolishing for ever well-used but outdated metaphorical images of schools as factories or prisons. Education for citizenship requires schools to be open systems, managing a dynamic between order and chaos, between internal order and the stimuli of the surrounding environment (Bentley, 1998). It creates an opportunity to meld the two traditional factions in British state education – one knowledge centred, the other child-centred (Griffith, 1998) and develop a transformed system that is driven by a vision of the future, not the past. Becoming a 'learning organisation' is a fundamental change, and must be managed as such.

The relationship between citizenship and identity raises issues of debate affecting nation states. Here consideration may be given to the rights and responsibilities of citizens when at local or national levels. How then do we reconcile this with increased pressures for integration within an expanding European Union, the formation of the Welsh Assembly or the Scottish Parliament? These then have an impact upon of individual and cultural identity – can one identify as Welsh, British or European or all three and how does a passport definition co-exist with personal expression through language, culture and a sense of belonging? 'Mainstreaming citizenship' means considering concerns for the rationale and processes involved in re-shaping of national boundaries and many school projects can be developed as a direct response to socio-economic and political change (Osler et al, 1995). The very concept of citizenship is diverse and embraces national geographical boundaries often identified by shorelines, rivers or mountain ranges; nomadic tribal territories identified by the fluidity of 'lines in the sand' (Wallach, 1996) and aspects of the diaspora raised through immigration, refugees and asylum seekers. Mainstreaming citizenship then means embracing diversity of thought and the conceptualisations of citizenship.

Spiritual Level

There is a further level that is higher than our own, or our institutions, identity. Referred to as the Spiritual level, it focuses on our connection with wider systems of which we are a part: political, social and economic. By developing an understanding of the prime right and responsibilities of citizens to contribute to a multi-cultural society in more ways than just voting, we can move to a knowledge base of different politics from a historical and conceptual basis. This then can lead to political literacy (Potter, 1999) through discussions and projects as to how politics works and how we are governed and a conversion of that knowledge into active citizenship (Annette, 1999). Here it

is important to note that this is not the same in every country and comparisons may be made within Europe and globally where democracy may be interpreted differently or not considered appropriate as a national structure.

'Citizenship represents the notion of participation in public life (which is broader than political life)' it ... 'implies greater emphasis on the relationship of the citizen with society as a whole' (Van Steenbergen, 1994). If we are to take our responsibility as citizens seriously then as educators we need to engage in developing the school as a learning organisation. School is intended in part to prepare pupils for their adult lives: this, in terms of mainstreaming citizenship, includes social citizenship aspects of community and economic citizenship aspects of the workplace. Not to be lost in debate are the challenges to the values of social citizenship embedded in welfare states and of the development of the 'social capital' of the community (Commission of Social Justice, 1994) in the face of economic crisis and political backlash. In the EU-European region, the promotion of citizenship and social rights has been identified as a priority ain applying the UN Guiding Principles (Lister, 1997). The focus of this being '... the enhancement of human well-being by raising the level of living, ensuring social justice and widening opportunities for people to develop their highest capacities as healthy, educated, participating and contributing citizens' (European Centre, 1993). Such opportunities then exist for discussion and consideration at local regional, national, European or global levels of welfare states, human rights, religious beliefs, health care policies, education systems, legislation, gendered differences in access to citizenship, disabilities, vandalism, ethnicity, anti-social behaviour, moral values and value systems, violence, drugs issues, and a diverse range of topics which impact upon people today. Mainstreaming citizenship provides a focal basis from which knowledge may be developed within a range of areas, not just political and economic, but also including social aspects of individuals and communities in terms of social capital rather than social exclusion.

Workplace

Within the broader socio-economic ways within which citizenship impacts, we must not forget the consideration of the workplace where many people will connect with citizenship. The impact of global capitalism organised through large corporations raises issues of the power of such corporations in relation to national governments and gives rise to concern of the relationship between human rights and citizenship rights (Turner, 1993). There is also a responsibility for those in power in such global corporations to enact a form of 'corporate citizenship'. This responsibility which varies from company to company, may be considered as a continuum with '... "minimal" citizenship at one extreme (consisting of compliance with the law governing the operation of the business, but nothing else), to a complex relationship of interlocking rights and responsibilities at the other (between a corporation and its communities, which has become an integral part of the functioning of the business)' (McIntosh et al, 1998). This then provides the opportunity to 'mainstream citizenship' through discussion upon employment practices, environmental protection, planning legislation, community sponsorship and

provision, and the general interaction between business and the wider community. It is also important to consider the 'internal' aspects of citizenship within a corporation for when a person joins a company through the employment contract they are agreeing to a legal and corporate set of terms and conditions which contain the working relationship (Brown, 1992). But they are also joining a 'corporate nation' which has its own organisation, structure and culture; which has it's own systems and processes, ways of accessing power and ways of making one's voice heard (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Understanding the ways in which the environment operates can make a world of difference to one's working life and a citizenship model is a useful aid to this understanding. Also, '[r]eflection, problem solving and creative thinking are essential to effective democracy as they are to successful business' (Potter, 1999). Thus mainstreaming citizenship can help prepare pupils for their working lives and in establishing their relationships within the community.

The pace of technological change in the second half of the twentieth century has generated equally rapid social changes. With the pace likely to be maintained – if not increased – as we move into the next millennium we can no longer rely on prescriptive pedagogy and autocratic structures to match the pace of change. They may have provided form and shape to education in the past, but they are no longer adequate to stimulate and release the creativity in teachers that will enable them to address the multiple educational needs of pupils of the twenty-first century. Such changes are having to be addressed by all public services – health service workers in particular have seen the closure of large mental health and learning disability institutions and community nursing services are now being clustered around primary care centres. Moving into the twenty-first century, there are predictions that the scientific and technological orientation of health and nursing care systems cannot be maintained into the twenty-first century, and that approaches are developing that integrate a philosophical examination of the nature of human relationships with the concrete world of practice (Watson, 1994). Education faces a similar challenge – if the transformative potential of citizenship education is welcomed as such, it can become the catalyst for change that can generate a new dynamism in both teaching and education, and drive the changes necessary to create a flexible and innovative service.

Acknowledgement

Notes

[1] Men and women access citizenship quite differently; men were citizens by right whereas women had to fight for it and were given that right only when their case was deemed justified by men (Pateman, 1988).

[2] Latest Update, 28 July 1999.

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Battling Through the System: a working-class teacher in an inner-city primary school

Elizabeth Burn

In undertaking research into the lack of primary school male teachers in inner-city areas, Elizabethe Burn, a lecturer in education at the University of Norh London, has found that the issue of class is still very strong. The following article is the moving account of one particular teacher's experiences as she describes how class discrimination has affected her professional and personal life.

Recent moves to support more working-class students entering higher education by considering postcodes (Sutcliffe, 1999), illustrate how our schooling system is still one that best serves the needs of the white middle-class (Elliot Major, 1999). Educational Action Zones and other new approaches aimed at addressing underachievement in our inner-city schools beg the question of how inner-city pupils are themselves defined. Note the views of the new headteacher of an Islington school: 'We can't carry on teaching children the way we did 50 years ago ... Inner-city kids are as bright as any-one else.'

I have been interviewing a range of inner-city primary school teachers for a couple of years, as part of my research into the lack of male teachers. I have found that the teachers' stories feature issues of 'class' as well as gender and race discrimination. These teachers often talk with anger about how they see inner-city children and their communities, 'named and shamed'. This short article is written with the intention of making public one particular voice: a white woman teacher who has now started to achieve promotion, but who still owns her class identity and pays the cost of working in the 'system' as she views it.

Her story is evidence of a political awareness and a wish to transform what she sees as an unfair system. It is a story marked by passion and periods of silence when Jenny cannot find the words to describe her own location. Jenny did not want to be taped, so I attempted to scribe as she spoke and this resulted in an interview where we did not 'dialogue' (hooks, 1994). Instead I often asked Jenny to repeat or clarify her statements. Jenny believes that class is a barrier to equal educational access. She links both her own educational journey and her teaching experience to the present debate concerning inner-city pupils and academic achievement. Jenny challenges the notion that inner-city pupils should be given a different educational curriculum. Her experiences raise clear questions regarding the way teachers themselves label certain children as not 'very academic' due to their background. It also makes problematic simplistic ideas of postcode target setting, which are aimed at challenging the very same educational inequalities that Jenny herself faced when gaining access to higher education.

I thank Jenny for her honesty and her proven commitment to offering all pupils in our inner-city classrooms access to quality education. I welcome feedback and further discussion concerning my particular interpretation of her story.

Jenny's Story

Jenny is an experienced white female deputy headteacher of an inner-city primary school in London. In her late thirties, she has two children and defines herself as a:

> ... white working-class woman who's battled
> through the system to become an educationalist.

Jenny has highly successful teaching experience (as defined by Ofsted) in three multilingual primary schools, teaching across the age range. Still she voices a sense of isolation and non-acceptance in the profession due to her class location:

> I'm always having to compete ... (SILENCE) ...
> other people's perception of me ... it's difficult to
> describe ... (SILENCE).

She continues to explain how her class is made visible by her accent. It is also deemed as inferior:

> My accent ... and the things that I say ... you know
> ... working class phrases ... "you know what I
> mean" ... makes me automatically feel inferior.

In common with Maguire's (1999) student teacher, Jenny is well aware of the power vested in standard English and her status as 'other' (Paechter, 1998) due to maintaining a working-class accent as part of her identity:

> ... those in authority have always been able to
> "speak well" ...

Implicit in this statement is the sense that her own language code and the culture it represents are not compatible with career success. I reflect on why Jenny refused to be taped, and why this normally so articulate teacher is stumbling for words and having such problems speaking her story. Does she believe in the continuing bias shown to her as she attempts to describe it? Certainly Jenny is demonstrating the lack of confidence that she later describes to me as part of her lived reality. Also present in her narrative is her continuing sense of being 'an exception' and as such both visible and vulnerable:

Working class people making it through the system are rare ... you're a ... (SILENCE) ... prototype-type of working-class success.

I recall a previous interview with a white male working-class teacher, that Jenny has not read:

"I don't know what it is ... you've not quite made it ... it's awful ... I'm not part of the club." Patrick. (Burn, 1999)

Here is the same sense of not fitting in, a dislocation that causes pain, resistance and anger at how one is placed. Jenny, as Patrick does, now openly links her present position with childhood tensions and struggle:

You battle (with) your own background ... (SILENCE) ... your parents' view: "what's the point of you furthering your education, when you'll end up married with kids?"

The same maternal discourse I have heard from Penny, another white female working-class primary teacher:

but my Nan ... she says "why bother ... you'll be getting married and having children." Penny. (Burn, 1999)

The way many women are defined by domestic ideology is a key feature of recent research into teaching (for example, Acker, 1994; Millar, 1996). However, despite family opposition, Jenny did complete her A levels and entered university. This further separated her from her own community:

I was seen as a traitor to my class, a bit like joining the police force.

Jenny suffered comments such as:

you'll become middle-class and won't want to know us.

This part of her story is similar to Skeggs's (1997) account of working-class women. It clearly demonstrates that the politics of class envy is not just one way. It is also evidence of the difficulty of leaving your class location due to academic study. I believe that in higher education we must address the very painful and deep seated fractures that crossing class borders may entail (Giroux, 1992). The language that Jenny employs to share her educational journey is emotive and framed by conflict. Words such as 'battle' and 'traitor' portray a crossing that is traumatic and not often discussed in the call to raise educational opportunities for working class children (Reay, 1998).

When Jenny entered university the taunts continued, but this time they were from middle-class students:

They basically took the piss ... because of your accent and when you were lining up for your full grant from the old ILEA ... there were only 3 of you ... and everyone knew ... they just ... looked at you!

In her study of black and white working-class women entering adult education, Luttrell (1997) also found this sense of discomfort. Some of their words in which they place themselves as inadequate and not belonging, are relevant to Jenny's story. The public 'shame' of receiving the full grant can only be experienced by those standing in the queue. I wonder how attending schools in the

Educational Action Zones will be viewed by both future employers and the pupils themselves?

I ask Jenny if she had friends whilst studying at university:

I had a good mate ... who understood how I felt about privilege and about education being a class issue.

I enquire whether her friend was from a similar background:

No (LAUGHS) ... because NOBODY was from a similar background to me ... Irish immigrant parents ... six children ... free dinners ... father a manual labourer ... mother a depressed housewife. Meat was a treat, especially at Christmas when there was no work for manual labourers.

Jenny feels this background is still part of her daily reality as an inner-city teacher who has recently joined the senior management team:

When I was promoted after nine years of teaching, I was seen as quite young to be in this position and also comments were made about the fact that I had young children

... it's how you are judged by outsiders ... I felt that ... the teachers accepted me, but I always had to prove myself to others ... it's probably to do with my working-class background ... it gives me ... a lack of confidence ... a lack of belief in myself.

This sense of not being 'good enough' results in Jenny, despite Ofsted praise and promotion, feeling constantly 'on guard'. She is well aware that she is not the 'norm' in primary teaching:

I have to always prove ... I'm one better than anyone else in the same position ... to justify why I'm in the position I am.

Here we see clearly how gender and class combine to place her as different. She has had 'off the record remarks' fed back to her from governors. There is some concern that she could be neglecting her young children for a career. The fact that her male partner is at home with them is also a break with traditional working-class ideas that still define women as primarily responsible for childcare. I sense that Jenny's disclosures are not just about the past but are on-going and a source of stress and hurt. Her next comment confirms this reality:

It becomes part of your character that you're always having to prove yourself ... otherwise nobody believes that I have a valid reason to be in the position I'm in.

This echoes a black working-class male infant teacher whom I have recently interviewed:

"... people are surprised I am the teacher ... they make judgments on what I look like ... I'm not very confident all the time ... and why ... when I think back to my experiences at school and university." Paul. (Burn, 1999)

Jenny does not face the racism with which Paul lives, but like him she is seen as challenging the norm. Again the institutional nature of class exclusion from education is

made visible in her story. If she still feels an outsider, how must pupils and their families feel who are constantly labelled by politicians and media coverage as 'under-achieving'?

Jenny now discusses the press article that so annoyed her that she decided to speak to me. She has taught in Islington and is thus implicated in this newly appointed headteacher's views concerning inner-city children:

> Have you seen the paper with the head talking about inner-city kids in Islington? (see Weale, 1999). I think class stratification is just as pronounced now as it ever was ... and in some ways worse. I went to a university on a full grant ... If I hadn't I'd never have gone.

Jenny returns to the economic issues that have marked her own educational journey. The sense that if you 'didn't pay the tally man' you would not have a roof over your head, continues to be the reality for so many inner-city families. I listen to the 'non-traditional' students that I now teach, trying to juggle studying to become a teacher, with part-time poorly paid jobs, childcare costs and increasing debt. I believe that Jenny has a valid point, one that further contributes to exclusion from equal access to education. I ask Jenny her views on inner-city pupils being offered a 'different' curriculum:

> I think you have to consider that with great caution. Shouldn't we be questioning why children are reaching secondary school in Islington unable to access the whole curriculum? We are in danger of reinforcing class divides. We should be looking at the under fives and primary provision to see why this disenfranchisement is happening. It's to do with lack of preventative strategies that are affected by economic factors ... the pressure on school budgets means that children living in poorer areas of the borough are NOT given the resources that are needed. The Special Needs Service is resource led rather than needs related.

Jenny has now become her articulate and educationally informed self, as she discusses schools and curriculum access. Listen to how she frames teacher expectations within the discourse of social class. Her words indicate that both during recruitment and initial teacher training we must address the deficit model of working class pupils as 'not very bright'. My own primary teaching experience in both the north and south of England has allowed me access to many staff room conversations that support Jenny's voice concerning low expectations of inner-city pupils:

> Some teachers still have a patronising and middle-class attitude towards both working-class and ethnic minority children ... if you've had to struggle through the system you realise the power of education and you really believe ... you have ... an impassioned commitment to all children

> succeeding. But some who've had an 'easy ride' through the system view the pupils as ...(SILENCE) ... they don't realise what effect educational failure has on a person's life ... they don't know anybody who has been an educational failure, because ... and I know I'm generalising but ... they came through a culture of educational success.'

Jenny clearly aligns herself and her class origins with the working-class pupils she teachers. As she says:

> These children desperately need to make it through ... providing a curriculum that is different is NOT good enough ... we might as well go back to the Victorian era and send them to be house servants, because they're not academic ... because they're the working-class ... the under-class.

Finally, Ouston's (1999) words concerning the way privatisation and the new Educational Action Zones may well be used to further stigmatise inner-city families, are very relevant to Jenny's telling account. Note how she reports:

> Negative judgments are made most frequently in schools serving disadvantaged families.

Jenny feels life has already delivered enough negative judgments on her and some of her pupils.

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In the Direction of Children

Tony Brown

Much publicity has recently been given to those teachers and headteachers who have suffered intolerable levels of stress due to a combination of moral disquiet and unrealistic demands. The following is an account by one of two headteachers who were pushed to such limits and their recent initiative to recapture a piece of the lost world that used to mean education to them personally.

We used to come to England to find out how to do things. What happened?

(German teacher, quoted in NAHT Review)

What Happened Indeed!

What happened drove us, two primary headteachers, through ill health to early retirement, and eventually to the edge of frightening despair. Later, a newly retired area education officer and ourselves came together for two days' voluntary work with a class of primary school children. Rooted in this and developing from it the book we are currently writing, *Dear Teacher – in the direction of children* has, for us, risen like a phoenix from the ashes of a debilitating and pernicious National Curriculum and our own sadness. What the book is trying to do is put the child right back at the centre of education and explore the implications of this within the framework of current educational legislation.

To start further back, I and Michael Foot, the other headteacher, were very closely linked, in practice and by local repute, in our attempts to create and sustain in each of our schools an ethos which put children first. We both sniffed with suspicion at such new ventures as Local Management of Schools (LMS) and other initiatives which, we sensed, were tending to distance us from the children. Being asked to take a 'daily curriculum reading audit' – management speak for listening to children enjoying their books – should have given us due warning as to what was to come. By the time that the testing regime was with us, riding on the back of the National Curriculum, we knew that things were sliding downhill: caring and effective schools were to be whipped and beaten on the backs of a few well-publicised (but often dubiously categorised) 'failing schools'.

When Keith Joseph left office the time was ripe for ill-informed and shallow-thinking Secretaries of State, driven by political expediencies, to seriously alter the nature of children's education. We foresaw much of what has since come to pass, for example, SATs, league tables, prescriptive homework, the marginalisation of the arts, etc. etc.

With the onset of an imposed, heavily content-laden national curriculum, we felt it right and proper that we should, together, respond as best we might to the plethora of orders, directives and guidance that the then DES. sent out. We always, to the best of our abilities and understandings, wrote measured, well-argued and perfectly reasonable replies to many of the documents which, like exhausted migrants on ships at sea, landed on our desks in ever increasing numbers. Just for the record

these included:
- ◯ DES publication for parents: *How is Your Child Doing At School?* (1991)
- ◯ DES publication for parents: *Your Child And the National Curriculum* (1992)
- ◯ DES publication: *Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools'* – aka The Three Wise Men's Report (1992)
- ◯ National Curriculum Council *Review of English in the National Curriculum* (1992/93)
- ◯ Government White Paper (1993)
- ◯ SCAA publication: *The National Curriculum and Its Assessment – Sir Ron Dearing, Interim Report* (1993)
- ◯ Performance/League tables for schools (1993)
- ◯ Ofsted publication: *Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools: a follow-up report* (1993)
- ◯ SCAA publication: *The National Curriculum and Its Assessment – Sir Ron Dearing, Final Report* (1993)
- ◯ Ofsted publication: *Primary Matters* (1994)
- ◯ Plus extensive correspondence and documentation from a wide variety of 'interested parties'.

We prefaced each response with our joint schools' statement of philosophy, part of which I reproduce here to give readers a clearer idea of where we were (and are) coming from.

(Our two schools) aim ... to create and sustain a happy, caring, attractive and stimulating environment in which each child grows in knowledge, understanding, tolerance, respect for others and self esteem.

It is an environment characterised by love, a love which insists that we trust one another, that we share together and work collaboratively and supportively, ;and one where each person and their contributions are valued highly.

At the heart of our school(s) is the child and all that she/he brings to the school with them. We accept and rejoice in the fact that each child is different. We strive to take each child from where she/he is (rather than from a fictional 'norm' based on markers such a chronological age) and treat them as they might become.

We subscribe to the concept of entitlement, but we see this as being deeper and more sustaining than the notion of a delivered, covered content. Our understandings are to do with quality. This quality exists in the sensitive, mutually respectful and enriching relationship between child and teacher. Our school(s) believe there is no substitute for this creative relationship. Streaming and specialist

subject teaching are incompatible with this approach.
We value processes in the relationship as highly as we value content. We encourage each child to be an active learner ... to take increasing responsibility for and ownership over what they do.
In a very real sense the child IS the curriculum. The emotional and intellectual engagement of both the child and the teacher in these experiences is indivisible: process and content are inseparable...

It can be seen, I hope, that our resistance to the multifarious impositions was based on a clearly held philosophy, which, when translated into practice, made our two schools good places for our children. There were minor successes. In part of a letter from Ashish Vadher, Schools Branch 3, DFE, dated 9 October 1992, an admission was forthcoming: '... I take your point ... in attempting to avoid monotonous repetition of particular phrases I am afraid we have not been completely precise ... I am grateful to you for pointing the matter out to us; we will bear it in mind in the event of any future reprint of the booklet.' This letter was part of our correspondence regarding the DES publication for parents, *Your Child and the National Curriculum* (1992). Most of our replies, however, were of the order, 'Thank you for your letter – your comments have been noted'.

And Things Deteriorated ...

SATS were, and still are, anathema to us. However assessment and accountability were perfectly acceptable. Not doing the SATs also meant asking well-intentioned governors to break the law and parents to accept the situation. One colleague recently had her school fined for not sending in her SATs results! And, we noticed, it wasn't long before 'tasks' became tests.

Kenneth Baker, Kenneth Clarke, and John Patten then formed part of a succession of unheeding and biased ministers taking powers and controls that might be said to be better suited to a one-party state than to a mature democracy.

Michael and I continued to respond, but with ever growing despondency. It seemed a lonely road we trod, despite the fact that we often sent copies of our correspondence to interested parties who gave us welcome support and encouragement. One such was Peter Holt, the Area Education officer for West Norfolk, who, after the three of us had retired, became the third member of our 'Last of the Summer Wine' trio.

But it all proved too much – running our schools, protecting the children, maintaining ethos and morale, sidestepping damaging legislation, responding to yet more directives. With extraordinary sadness, we each took the decision to leave.

Not long ago, however, we had the happy opportunity of giving a local and sympathetic school a two-day 'taste' of what life had been like, had indeed been possible. Poetry and bookmaking were on the agenda. During our two days with the children of Wimbotsham, the journey they made, and the manner in which they were allowed to

make it, gave every child a sense of achievement, and a pride in the results: but it gave much more of overriding importance; along with each child's fulfilment came a *commitment to the learning process itself* – and to the class, the teacher, and the schools. Bookmaking alone is indeed a rich and powerfully enabling process.

> '.. .*the total pattern of findings indicates the strong probability that the associations between school process and outcome reflect in part a causal process. In other words, to an appreciable extent, children's behaviour and attitudes are shaped and influenced by their experiences at school and, in particular, by the qualities of the school as a social institution. (Rutter, M. et al 1979, Fifteen Thousand Hours – Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children. Open Books*

This quotation, laid alongside the following, needs no further comment:

> *[Can we tolerate such teachers who] ... believe their job is more to help children become "independent learners" than to teach them the basic skills and subjects they need to know if they are to be educated people. The practical consequence of such beliefs is tedium and triviality. (Chris Woodhead, The Observer, 22 June 1997)*

The time for us was an absolute delight. Not only did it remind the three of us, from our different but complementary histories, of what we used to practise and 'to live': it provided positive reaffirmation of our fundamental beliefs. It also brought into sharp relief what we believe schools have had taken from them.

Although we went into the two days with absolutely no intention of writing a book about it, a chance remark by Michael later on was all that was needed to set us going.

The two days, in fact, provided a perfect vehicle for us to make explicit our thoughts and understandings about how children learn and how children should be treated. Our text is marbled throughout with the children's artwork and writings, and with the quotations we have collected over the years. Furthermore, we are delighted with the story it tells, especially as we believe our philosophy is uncompromisingly consistent throughout.

What does the future hold for us? Well, a day's poetry writing with a different (but equally 'sympathetic') class is leading us to a 'sequel' – *Greedy for the Sun*. Once more about children thinking, feeling and writing; their output is invariably poetic. What a pleasure. What a privilege. What an education!

Feathers

A feather as light as air
A feather as strong as metal
A feather as soft as wool
A feather as buoyant as cumulus in flight
A feather as wonderful as magic
Magical feather give me flight

> *(Edward, Wimbotsham School, November 1998)*

Dead or Alive – My Brazilian Stone

The book says inorganic,
that it isn't alive.
but it dazzles,
Sparkles, and best of all it
WINKS!
So is my
Brazilian beauty,
Dead.....or alive?

> *(Samantha, Wimbotsham School, November 1998)*

My Shell

My shell came from Devon. When I was on holiday I found
*   it in 1997 in the summer.*
It is special to me because I have had it for a very long
*   while and it used to have pretty colours on it but now it*
*   has got worn out.*
But you can still see some pretty colours.

The shell is very big and I also have a small shell just like
*   this shell but*
it has more colours on it.
My shell is a mussel shell.

The Old Lady Beach Shell

Inside my old lady beach shell
Are all pretty colours
It's like an old lady
She was pretty when she was young
But
When she gets old
She gets less pretty
But
Some of her pretty bits are left
And that is my old lady beach shell.

> *(Emily, Wimbotsham School, November 1998)*
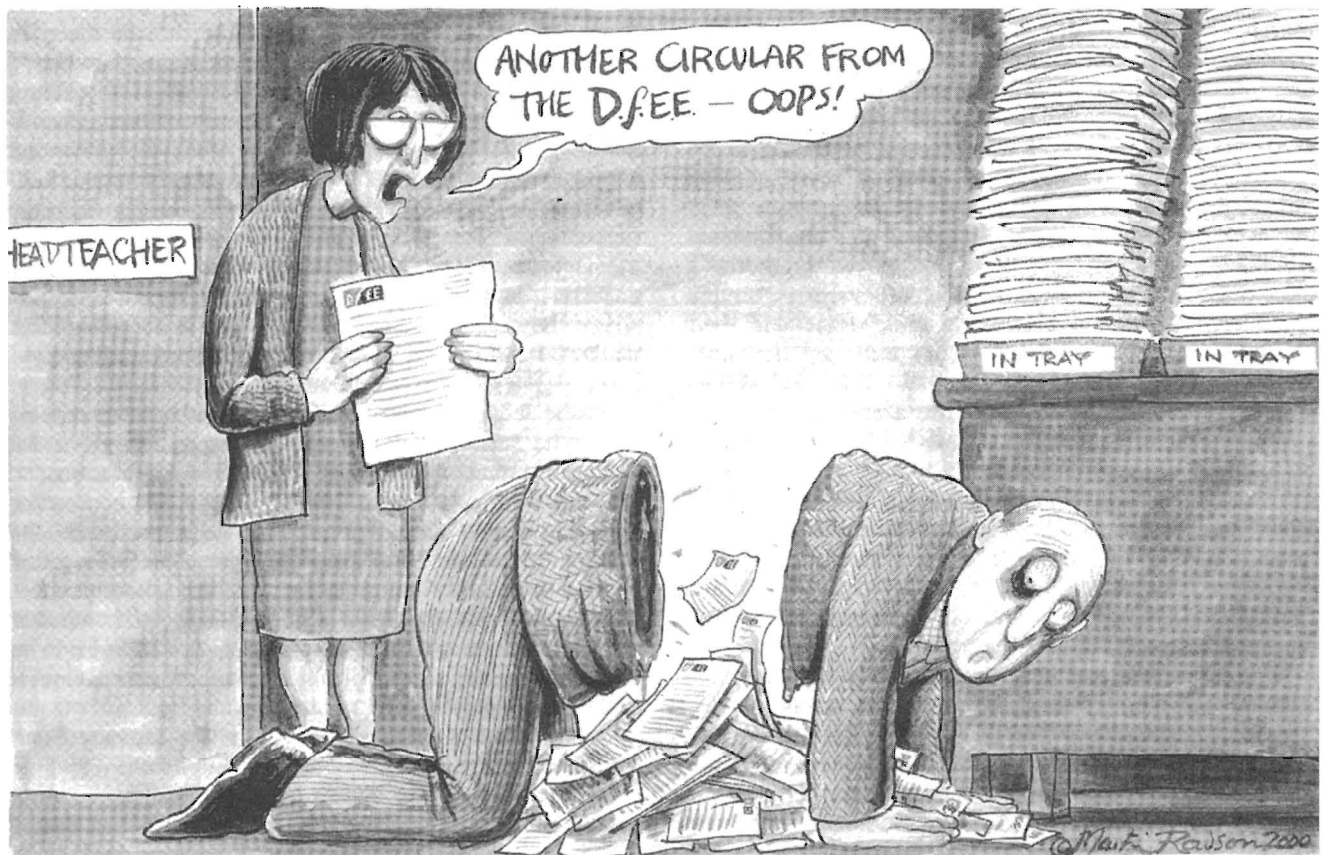
Martin Rowson, *The Times Educational Supplement*, April 7, 2000

In the Service of Politics: the elision of English

Patrick Yarker
Patrick Yarker has taught for 16 years at Crown Woods School, London's largest comprehensive and has become increasingly concerned at the way in which a narrow definition of literacy is edging out English, seemingly for entirely political ends.

On 7 July 1999, at about the time I was asking my Year 9 English class to think about someone they knew who was old ('Older than you, Sir?') and so begin to make or discover words, phrases and images that would, I hoped, go toward the writing of a poem, Education Minister Estelle Morris was being cross-questioned by the Select Committee on Education and Employment. In the course of an intensive session, the Minister, herself once a classroom teacher, revealed by her choice of vocabulary and image something of the philosophy of education she shares with those others empowered to shape and direct education policy. She was asked about several aspects of Government policy, including *Excellence in Cities* with its bountiful provisions for the 'Gifted and Talented', and about the effectiveness of the Literacy Hour in primary schools. She alleged that four out of 10 children had been failed by schools as far as literacy was concerned, a claim that went unchallenged. She suggested that the Literacy Hour starts 'at a very easy level and moves through to a more difficult level', revealing her acceptance of a simple and direct correlation between a child's age and their ability to handle 'difficulty', as well as her own uncomplicated notions of 'ease' and 'difficulty'. When asked what advice she could give to a nine-year-old who was bored by the Literacy Hour, Ms Morris suggested she do that hour with an older year-group, and be given 'more difficult' books and comprehension work. The Literacy Hour was a success, the Minister averred, because it 'pushes' a child 'to a higher level', and 'fast-tracking' was especially valuable because it enabled a child to move 'through a syllabus at a greater rate of knots than might be expected for a child of their age'.

Language. We hear less of it than we used to, in a manner of speaking; nowadays the buzz-word is literacy. Literacy Consultant/Advisor/Co-ordinator/Project/Strategy .... 'Literacy', claim New Labour in the latest edition of the Party magazine, 'is up five per cent ...'. Swop English for Literacy in that claim and expose something of the ideological use to which Literacy is currently being put. Literacy as conceived by this government is reified, measurable and trackable. It is spoken of as a thing with physical presence; an hour of it a day can impel a child 'to a higher level'. It has component skills to be honed, like a blade, or trained, like a pet. In some way it is prior to English yet detachable from it: an ignition key. Literacy hour, not English hour. A consequence is that English itself begins to be elided, partly I think because English is less susceptible to incorporation within the prevailing language used by Ministers and their minions when discussing education, a language at once reductive, instrumental and mechanistic.

The DFEE is about to launch the first ever centralised literacy pilot. The Literacy Hour will advance into KS3, with its content prescribed in a linear manner (for Year 2 Term 2 alliteration, read Year 7 term 1 villanelle) and its methodology increasingly circumscribed or imposed. Like pilot-fish around the shark, the scripted curriculum, increased use of setting and ready-made off-the-peg (or downloadable) lessons will tag along. An hour will be lost from English, and from all that English can mean in opposition to what the State has appropriated as Literacy.

The English hour. By now we have walked, my Year 9 class and I, into what Seamus Heaney calls the word-hoard. We have begun to gather and feel, weigh up and choose. We read a poem by R. S.Thomas. ('Is he old, Sir?' 'Even older than me, John.') I try to picture for them the fierce, hawk-like head of the poet as he walks in my memory out of the lecture-hall. We circle his words, or underline them. We read them again. We begin to follow where they lead, or they begin to take us to new places while the Minister is talking still, fielding the questions. Her replies extend over several pages of the record. At one point she acknowledges that she does not know an answer; at another she readily accepts a suggestion from the Committee, that children might have been taught to read at home as well as at school. Unsurprisingly, she contradicts herself: children should progress at their own pace, she says, and 'teachers should not feel forced to put a gifted and talented child through any part of the school day that is not appropriate for them'. She does not clarify whether children deemed ungifted and talentless are likewise to be allowed, or enabled, to opt out of inappropriate elements of the school day.

I have no first-hand experience of the Literacy Hour. My elder daughter, currently in Year 3, tells me very little about what it's like for her. At home she reads and enjoys it. Sometimes she writes stories. She arranges her Beanie Babies in front of her blackboard and proceeds with whole-class teaching and lots of praise. My qualification is as an English teacher. I admire those colleagues I have met who are specialists in the teaching of literacy, and who speak of literacy in a language very different from that of the DFEE. I am aware that those defined by the DFEE as having 'insecure literacy skills' are likely to have access only to unskilled jobs (declining in number), and to suffer low pay, lack of promotion, poor health, depression and (if they are male) a higher divorce-rate. In other words a layer of the working-class is particularly disadvantaged. This

knowledge concerns me the more because I know upward social mobility to be almost entirely a myth. I am also aware that the proportion of households receiving less than half the average income has risen from 10% in the 1980s to 25% now. Many of those households contain children. A recent article in *The Times Educational Supplement* pointed out that, on the government's own figures, projected spending on education as a percentage of GNP over the first five years of New Labour's administration will not be higher than that for the last five years of the previous Conservative administration. It will not even be a matching percentage. It will be lower. Poverty, education, class and opportunity mesh in ways whose complexity is mocked by Ministerial assertions of the efficacy of the Literacy Hour for improving the 'life-chances' of some of the most disadvantaged children in schools. And what impact will the Literacy Hour have as a pedagogical model on English practice in KS3? Already in my Department we are being encouraged to participate in Guided Reading, whereby students within a mixed-ability class are re-grouped 'by ability' and given a text to read which will match what they are deemed capable of. Such labelling and lidding is held up as good practice. I continue to be told by those who should know better, (Advisory Teachers, the Secretary of State for Education,) that my job is to deliver the curriculum, as if I worked for Parcel Force.

This language, this base DFEE-speak about education, presents itself as the lingua franca, and so seeks to render alternatives dumb, unsayable, beyond the pale of acceptable discourse, laughable, maverick. It legitimises the superstructure of testing, target-setting and measurement of every kind that has been built upon it, in William Blake's words *'Fixing their system permanent: by the mathematic power Giving a body to falsehood ...'* the falsehood in this case that learning proceeds in a linear fashion from the easy to the difficult, from lower level to higher, from poverty to wealth. This language equips its inspectorate with a phrase-book for what counts as good teaching, and a vocabulary for responding to teachers. It takes for its slogan the simplistic bluff no-nonsense pronouncement of the Chief Inspector that for children to learn it is sufficient that teachers teach. It justifies the vandalism meted out to the work done across years and sometimes decades by dedicated practitioners, as witness the outrageous decision to eradicate Open Book A Level literature options. It worships only what can be measured or tested, though not by teachers alone, for they are untrustworthy, and its aim is to legitimise the view that the priority for the State education system is to equip workers for their place in the prevailing mode of production. This language speaks of the revisions to the post-16 curriculum as designed 'to focus more sharply on the economy's need for skills ... those skills employers most value...' putting cart before horse, shareholder before car-worker.

In my classroom, under the displays and notices and posters and copies of *Poems on the Underground* my 30 or so Year 9 students are writing and re-writing. No more than seven words to a line, I say, imposing a form, and paying the penalty at once as I'm summoned from student to student to model what I mean, or discuss whether a line could have a single word on it, or help decide whether another line would be better with eight words .... In education's private sector, teachers enjoy a 1:10 teacher/pupil ratio, and are exempt from following the National Curriculum. They can teach as they like. How then, here in a London comprehensive, to bring the best of the private sector into the public service, to educate in ways that recognise the truth John Holt put into words over 30 years ago, that education is what students do for themselves, not what it done to them or for them?

In Committee Rooms of the House of Commons chairs seem to be arranged in an oval or circle around a table. From what I've glimpsed on television, the floors look carpeted.

Every so often I change the arrangement of desks and chairs in my uncarpeted classroom. Grouped tables, enabling four, six or eight students to sit together, is the norm, but for much of last term I surrounded the central island with a box made up of the rest of the desks. The hope was to accentuate a sense of the whole-group and so avoid the cliqueiness that was happening in certain classes in part because of the standard arrangement. The cleaners liked the new lay-out; the students's views were more mixed. For one lesson I instituted yet another floor-plan: two sets of rows facing the teacher's desk. Girls were directed to one set of rows, boys to the other, and the lesson began with a discussion of the room. One student called it 'a proper classroom', although she objected to the sexist division. She was even more unhappy when the two genders were further divided by my decisions about their 'ability' in English, and re-seated according to number, with number one, of course the most able boy or girl, at the front left of their set of rows. I was trying to re-create something of the 'plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom' described in the opening of *Hard Times*, a room organised according to Mr Gradgrind's system to make concrete the relationship between teacher and taught. There are three adults in the room: Gradgrind, the equally aptly-named M'Choakumchild who is about to teach his first lesson, and the un-named third gentleman about whom Dickens is merciless, and who is an inspector.

Dickens's polarities of Fact and Fancy, and his insight into how M'Choakumchild and the other adults regard the students ('... not unlike Morgiana in the Forty Thieves: looking into all the vessels ranged before him, one after another, to see what they contained ...') relate to the contemporarily-dominant educational ideology in telling ways.

That dominant view has been forced to move on from 'Now what I want is Facts ...' but remains immured within a utilitarian and mechanistic outlook of the kind symbolised later in the novel when Dickens describes another room. This is Mr Gradgrind's study, its walls surrounded by Parliamentary Blue Books or reports. Dickens compares it to an astronomical observatory without windows, 'a stern room with a deadly-statistical clock in it, which measured every second with a beat like a rap upon a coffin-lid ...'. Here Gradgrind will arrange the marriage of his favourite child Louisa to Coketown's fraudulent banker, and in the parallel scene towards the end of the novel it will be to this same room ('... with the deadly-statistical clock, proving something no doubt-probably, in the main, that the Good Samaritan was a Bad Economist ...') that Louisa returns, to bring home to her father by the ruin of her happiness and her own collapse the consequences of his system of education.

That system has eradicated from Louisa the capacity to love, imagine or empathise. It ignores how children learn,

to focus instead on how teachers teach: the anonymous inspector has come explicitly to 'observe' Mr M'Choakumchild's 'mode of procedure'. Dickens annihilates such a system and its proponents, but only in fiction. Too often in today's very different circumstances the government's narrow focus is still fixed on how teachers teach, and not on how children learn. Thirty years ago, in 'Talking to Learn', a contribution to *Language, the Learner and the School*, James Britton wrote:

> We teach and teach and they learn and learn: if they didn't, we wouldn't. But of course the relation between their learning and our teaching isn't by any means a constant one. From any given bit of teaching some learn more than others ... As the syllabus grows longer we teach more – but do they learn more? ... How do we judge how much is being learnt, in any case?
>
> It's easy enough to test simple rote-learning of course ... but this goes no way towards satisfying our idea of what learning and teaching are. We want children, as a result of our teaching, to understand; to be wise as well as well-informed, able to solve fresh problems rather than have learnt the answers to old ones; indeed, not only able to answer questions, but also able to ask them. Information as to how well they're getting on in this kind of learning – even if we could spend half our time devising and setting and marking tests – would be terribly hard to come by.
>
> With considerations of this sort in mind, it seems useful to take time off to think about learning, look for examples of it in progress, forgetting teaching altogether for the moment ...'.

'Forgetting teaching altogether for the moment'. Because there's no way round it: students not teachers are in the end in charge of their own learning, and this is where the challenge and the inspiration begin.

The poet Coleridge held controversial views on education. His lecture on the subject caused a scandal. He had 'three cardinal rules for early education', according to his biographer Richard Holmes:

These are 1. to work by love and so generate love; 2. to habituate the mind to intellectual accuracy or truth; 3. to excite power.

Not the power that attends Ministerial office and a say in the articulation of government policy; not the power of a magic word to prove that the Government keeps its promises; but the innate power a teacher may 'excite' or call to life to imagine, create, think, question and answer; to make sense of living, and to make history. 'Everything should be done to draw out each child, most especially those from poor and deprived backgrounds', Coleridge continued, choosing his words with the care of a poet. Like Estelle Morris before the Committee, Coleridge had no script. Unlike her, he spoke my language.

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Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard
    in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersèd vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,

Which image in their bulk both
    lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou
    see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

from 'Frost at Midnight'
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

An Unlooked-for Effect of KS2 SATS on the Teaching of Science in Year 6

Elizabeth Jurd
Elizabeth Jurd, an experienced primary teacher from Colchester, was recently awarded the Simms Schoolmistress Fellowship, at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge. In the following article she describes how, in her term's research into gender and science with Year 6 pupils, her findings revealed an unexpected change of emphasis in the teaching of primary science and one which could have serious implications for pupils' understanding of the subject.

The original subject of my research was the attitude of boys and girls to Science at the top of the primary school. I had observed girls performing well at science in the Primary school for many years and knew that their achievements in SATs at age 11 were only slightly below boys. However, by the age of 16 girls are reluctant to choose physical Science subjects. This study aimed to discover whether there was any difference in confidence and attitude between boys and girls. Very little research has been carried out on this area although it is accepted cross-culturally that boys mature earlier spatially and girls verbally. Brusselmans-Dehairs et al (1997) reported that 'at all ages, male students have more positive attitudes towards the study of science than do females'. This was a UNESCO Report and applied to findings throughout the world.

This study involved 535 children from Year 5 and 6 attending nine very different schools in Colchester. Each filled in a questionnaire which asked their opinion about a particular area of Science. These ranged from 'I like Science' to 'I can record my own results'. As predicted there was very little difference between the attitudes of boys and girls at this age, although the boys showed a marked antipathy to recording their work. The children surveyed showed a remarkable degree of confidence in all areas directly related to their school experience.

The boys and girls exhibited very similar responses to all types of question. These varied from 'I can make a prediction' to 'I have had a good Science report'.

In addition small groups of children were interviewed in each school. Teachers were asked to select three boys and three girls with closely matching general ability. A focused interview concentrated on attitudes to Science and confidence in planning an investigation. It is interesting that several groups of girls instantly deduced that direct comparisons were being made between boys and girls. They hung around at the end of the session asking; 'Did we beat them, Miss?' The boys on the other hand seemed oblivious to the possible comparisons.

It was explained to each group that this was a group interview session and that this meant they did not have to wait and put up their hand to answer. Questions were put to individual children but the others were free to add any comments. The girls readily adopted this collaborative approach, listening to each other and coming to a common agreement. This was not necessarily correct in every aspect but represented the joint opinion. For example most girls' groups thought that putting a coat on a snowman
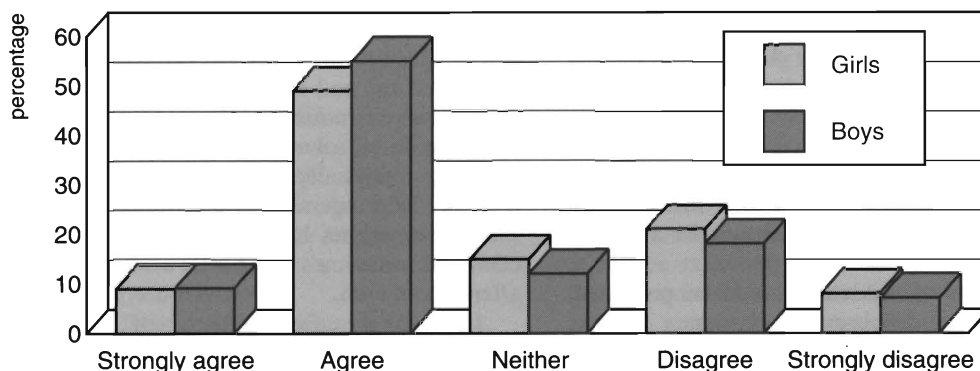
I am good at science (total sample 525)

would make it warmer and therefore result in quicker melting. Several boys insisted that the coat would insulate the snowman, keeping it cold, despite opposing views within the group.

The boys rarely listened to each other. They were full of adventurous and ambitious ideas: *'It would be difficult to measure the speed of a toy car running down a slope but we could find a man with a computer and a special ray gun who could do this for us'*.

There was one area where the majority of children lacked confidence and even interest. This was in the whole area of experience beyond the school. Very few boys and even fewer girls could imagine themselves using science in a job or even choosing to study science beyond the secondary school. Interestingly, they displayed very positive attitudes to science in the secondary school. Some children even disagreed with the statement 'I am good at science' while later agreeing 'I will be good at science at secondary school'. In conversation it became apparent that children had recently visited the science departments of their partner schools and that this had made positive impressions on them. This suggests that with suitable experience children could also overcome their negative views of scientists and jobs involving science.

Science in the world at large was seen as a remote and possibly threatening force. Some children seemed to be influenced by negative aspects of reporting in the media, for instance, concerning genetically modified crops. Very few children considered science as a subject that they would chose to study or that would be part of their experience of work. In fact most children had totally false views of the importance of science in the modern world. *Science wouldn't be useful to me. I don't want to do science; I want to be a vet* (comment of more than one child).

Children revealed very set attitudes to future careers, largely based on ignorance of the true facts. In this case the girls gave more negative replies than the boys but both sets of responses are worrying. Many of the children in the present study had apparently already rejected science as a possible career path. They could not imagine themselves as scientists or even as using science in a job. A recent study by Munro & Elsom (2000) has shown that this applies even more strongly in the secondary school. While some children chose science at 16 because of a clear career path such as medicine, others had rejected science well before they received formal advice in Year 10 or Year 11.

Readers are probably aware of the 'Draw a Scientist Test' and may even have tried this out with their own class. Newton & Douglas (1992) reported that young children drew very stereotyped pictures of male scientists with white coats. At the age of 11 over 80% of the drawings depicted men. Young children can have very rigid views of society and their future place within it. We need to address these issues from an early age in order to enable children to make full use of the opportunities that will be available to them later.

So far the findings of this study could be predicted. Teachers observe boys and girls enjoying primary science, especially practical work. They are also aware that boys and girls show equal confidence and perform well in the classroom. Children value the discussion, practical activities and the challenge to their thinking skills. However, as we have seen, they do not always see this as

relevant to their life in the future and they may be influenced by the negative reporting given to science in the media over environmental issues. It is essential that boys and girls realise from an early age that science is morally neutral. They need to recognise science as a tool that can be useful to them in their own life and which is available to answer challenges in the world. Girls respond particularly well to science when they recognise its usefulness in areas such as medicine. There is a need to promote science, including the physical sciences, so that from an early age children can recognise that this is a subject which is both interesting and which provides means of solving problems and developing benefits in individual lives and the whole world.

An unexpected outcome of this study was the fact that in some schools there has been a quite discernible change of emphasis in the primary science curriculum in Year 6. Some teachers were defensive when they realised that their class were being asked about planning and carrying out investigations. It turned out that in these schools there was little or no practical work taking place during Year 6. The teachers were clearly unhappy about this but were responding to pressure from head teachers, and ultimately from league tables, to improve SATs results. Schools are currently even being criticised by Ofsted when they are achieving over 80% at level 4 for science. When compared with similar schools this can result in a level of D or even E in an inspection report.

When interviewed, half the children (30 out of 60), said that they had not taken part in any practical activities yet this year. The children interviewed were in Year 6 but most were being taught in mixed Year 5/6 classes. (This was half way through the year, immediately before February half-term and with SATs in prospect in May.) They had been too busy with revision which included learning lists of definitions by rote. Teachers collaborated this and added that the problem with science is the large volume of work, covering four years in total which must be revised at Year 6 level. Their perception was that this is a different situation to maths and English were work is constantly being revisited and reinforced. In contrast there are many totally different concepts to be covered in science. Some schools had provided the children with glossaries which were being systematically learnt as home-work tasks. Other schools, in complete contrast, were attempting to continue with the full range of learning activities whilst revising vocabulary at odd moments. One school was even involved in a science competition which involved a group of children being taken to an outside venue. This type of activity is often the first event to suffer when teachers and schools are under pressure to perform in external examinations. There were 'booster groups' in operation in all schools which targeted children identified as being marginally below the level needed to achieve level 4. These operated in a different way from school to school, sometimes being organised as a group within the class and sometimes being after school on the pattern of an after-school club.

Interestingly, the children all referred back with enthusiasm to *practical* tasks they had carried out, regardless of how long ago that was. When asked to plan an investigation into floating and sinking all the children related this to earlier experiences. Some of them even discussed activities they had carried out in the Infants. It is
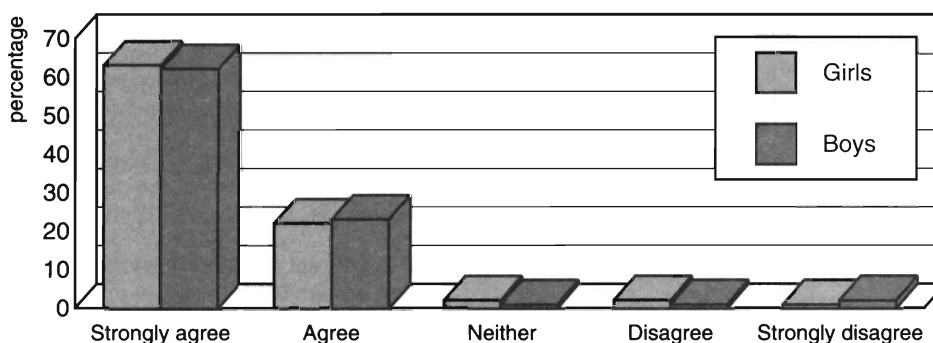
I like practical activities (total sample 521)

interesting to note that they were able to link these very early experiences with the task being asked of them at top Junior level. Several groups identified variables and discussed ways of keeping them constant while relating these concepts to much simpler activities carried out years earlier.

The groups also discussed ways of investigating a toy car running down a slope. All the children had learnt about gravity and friction but less than half had carried out a related activity. This greatly affected the way they approached the task. This was particularly apparent in their use of vocabulary. After discussion, each of the 60 children who took part in the group interviews made a quick sketch of a toy car running down a slope. They were then asked two questions: 'What would affect the car running down the slope?' and 'What could you measure?'

Boys and girls identified a wide range of variables and suggested numerous ways of measuring differences. These two examples have been chosen to illustrate widely different approaches to the problem.

Teacher: 'What would affect the toy car running down the slope?'
Boy aged 10, [who had not investigated this topic]:
    'Friction, Gravity, Speed'
Teacher: 'What could you measure?'
Boy: 'The speed of the car.'

Teacher: 'What would affect the toy car running down the slope?'
Girl aged 10, [Who had investigated this topic more than a year ago]: 'You could change the height, slope, wheels, shape of the car, angle of the slope, weight of the car, size of the car, change the height of the slope, the force by pushing the car, change the surface of the slope.'
Teacher: 'What could you measure?'
Girl: 'Time taken for the car to stop, distance travelled, weight of the car, size of the wheels, length of the slope, angle of the slope', and 'I would change the size of the wheels and measure the distance the car went. I would have to keep everything else the same.'

The first child added related words without direct reference to the practical situation. He has clearly been taught about forces but has not been able to use the correct vocabulary in a way that expressed his understanding of the related concepts. The second child, in contrast, had time to think about this situation or something closely related. She was immediately able to distinguish a list of possible variables, consider what might be measured and begin to plan a valid investigation. The first child would probably be able to score marks in a science test but reveals very much less understanding of the actual factors involved in the problem posed.

Howe et al (1992) took a closely related theme of motion down an incline. They found that discussion aided thinking on alternative concepts but that group interaction did not in itself resolve false understanding. It was being put in the situation of investigation which prompted consideration of different points of view. This was seen as an essential stage in restructuring erroneous ideas for individuals within that group. Many teachers will have observed children struggling to cope with new concepts. This is immediately obvious when they are involved in a practical activity. Conflicts arise within the group which must then be discussed and eventually resolved by the individuals. This does not always result in group agreement or even in the correct answer (as in the case of the snowman and the coat). However it does move individuals forward and force them to take an active role in their own learning.

Many teachers have seen this happening and have valued the challenge of encouraging children to think for themselves, yet in formal teaching there is very much less commitment to learning on the part of the child. Even in a test it is also unclear how much information has actually been absorbed and related to other areas of understanding. It will be extremely unfortunate for the individual and for science education in general if we are actually moving towards a more formal approach in the primary school. At the very least, a great deal of enthusiasm and commitment on the part of children will be lost. It is entirely understandable that if we are to give great importance to test results then schools will begin to teach to those tests.

In this study it does seem that some primary schools

are responding to the pressure of SATs by teaching in a more formal way. Teachers feel that there is so much work to be covered that practical activities must be sacrificed to more direct teaching. Further research is needed to discover the extent of such changes in the country as a whole. It would also be interesting to discover whether teaching which is directed at passing tests is having any direct affect on children's wider grasp of scientific ideas and method. Even more significant is the attitude and enthusiasm which children bring to science. This study has revealed very positive attitudes on the part of boys and girls. They are confident and enthusiastic as they look forward to starting secondary school. It would be very unfortunate if this enthusiasm was lost in the future by too great an emphasis on simply learning vocabulary and abstract definitions divorced from the genuine understanding and involvement that can come about through practical activities and experience.

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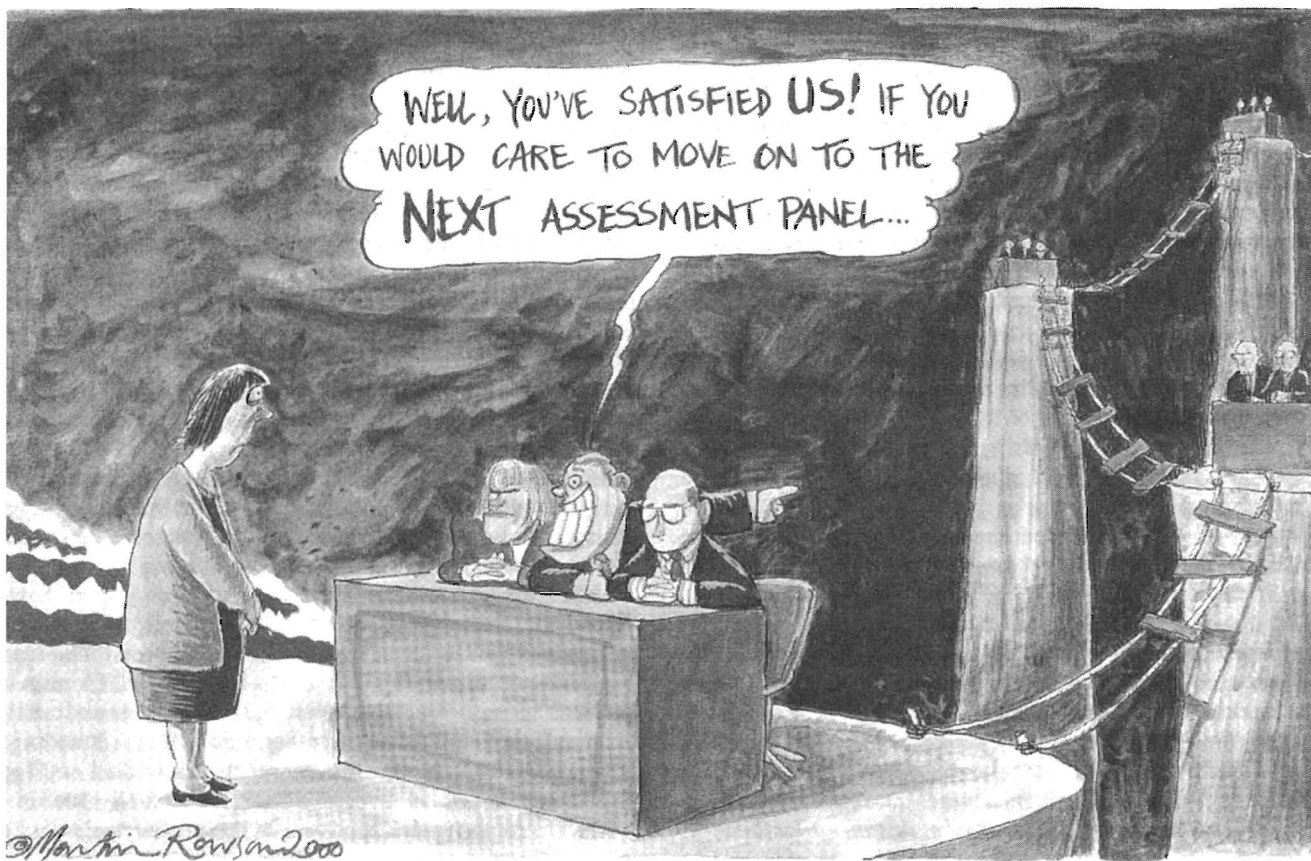
Martin Rowson, *The Times Educational Supplement*, February 4, 2000

Toying with Infancy

Dolores Loughrey
Dolores Loughrey is a Lecturer in Education at the School of Education, University of Ulster. In this article she suggests that the new 'Early Learning Goals' might go some way towards reclaiming the concept of infancy.

*Hold childhood in reverence, and do not be in any
hurry to judge it for good or ill ... Give nature time
to work before you take over her business, lest you
interfere with her dealings ... Childhood is the
sleep of reason. (Rousseau)*

Will Mr Blair's 'New Labour' take the age-old advice? The Government's revised guidelines for learning in the early years – in the form of 'The Early Learning Goals' – may not hold childhood in the romantic reverence advocated by Rousseau, but they do imply a certain sympathy for 'good' early years practice. Within the guidelines, there is a clear recognition that the educational requirements of early years children are somewhat different from those of children at later stages. The Early Learning Goals set out six areas of learning: personal, emotional and social development; language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. Even more significant, however, is the affirmation of 'structured play' as an appropriate context for learning. Nursery and play group workers have welcomed the emphasis on structured play as articulated by a spokesperson for the Pre-School Learning Alliance:

*it's heartening to see that the Government has
listened and reinstated the importance of play in
young children's learning. (The Times Educational
Supplement, 1 October, 1999)*

Changes in the Primary School Curriculum

The publication of the Goals has also clarified the nature of the educational curriculum of children in reception classes in primary schools. Instead of starting on the National Curriculum, reception classes will be part of the new 'Foundation Stage' covering children aged three to six years. However, teachers of reception classes will still be expected to take account of the relevant parts of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

Whilst moves to extend the Early Learning goals to children in reception classes in primary schools is indicative of the Government's commitment to an appropriate curriculum for this age group, such action has been demanded by educationalists for many years. In 1959 Her Majesty's Inspectors commented on: '... the unsatisfactory life and education of children under five in schools where no special provision is made for them'.

Four-year-olds in Primary Schools

There has been an increasing trend since the 1980s towards admission of four-year-olds to primary school. Atkin (*The Times Educational Supplement*, 4 March 1988) claimed that over 80% of four-year-olds were in primary classes and by her estimation, '... the vast majority of four-

year-olds do not get pre-school provision but are in school itself'. The admission of younger children to primary schools went largely unresourced with no additional appropriately-trained staff or funding to meet the needs of this age group. The outcome of this was that in many cases children of four-years-old were in classes of 30 or more children with one teacher who may, or may not, have had a professional qualification in early years practice. In a study in which she explored the 'learning environments of four-year-olds' Stevenson (1987) claimed:

*it is teachers in infant schools who are under the
greatest pressure when catering for the needs of
under-fives: the community wants them to maintain
a curriculum more suited to the needs of five to six
year olds; they are constrained by large classes
and school timetables; and they lack space,
resources and sometimes even expertise.
(Stevenson, 1987)*

She went on to assert that what is expected of the infant teacher in school, even with a class that is predominantly composed of four-to-five-year-olds, is that they teach reading, writing, and mathematical concepts.

Demands for a Change in Curriculum

The growing number of young children being admitted to primary school brought demands for a distinctive curriculum for the early years. In an article in *The Times Educational Supplement* (26 February 1988) an HMI, Mr Ron Weir, summed up the demands of the time when he addressed a conference of early years' experts organised by the National Foundation for Educational Research. He stated that it was, '... imperative for four year olds to have a relevant curriculum based on their essential need for structured play and practical activities' and that 'the needs of children of this age are distinctive and if the curriculum is to respond effectively, it also needs to change'. He also pulled no punches when he said that if teachers did not adapt to the increasing number of very young children being admitted to primary school then it was fair to ask whose needs were being met by the new admissions procedures: 'Is it the child's, the parent's or the school's need to fill empty places?'. Not much heed appears to have been taken of Mr Weir's sentiments as following the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1989 we had according to Blenkin & Kelly (1994) 'The death of infancy'. They argue that:

*the effect of the National Curriculum on infant
education has been, put simply, to destroy the
concept of infancy, to remove it from the
vocabulary and the discourse of the educational
debate. (Blenkin & Kelly, 1994)*

They made a plea for the instatement of high quality educational provision within a curriculum which is, '... conceived and planned as conceptually different from that subject-based form offered through the National Curriculum' and that it should apply '... not only to the education of under-fives but to that of infant children too'. They called for the concept of infancy to be 'resurrected before it is too late'.

An Appropriate Curriculum in an Appropriate Setting

It would appear that the growth rate in the admission of four-year-olds to primary school has continued to the present. In March 1999, Margaret Hodge, Minister in charge of early years education, announced an investigation by an independent panel into the question of why hundreds of playgroups faced closure at a time when early years education was in the throes of an expansion. The Report entitled *Tomorrow's Children – the review of pre-school and playgroups* found that the anomaly lay in the expansion of school reception classes. It would seem that government funding is making it financially viable for schools to recruit four-year-olds into reception classes. Giving cause for concern was their finding that parents reported feeling pressured by schools into seeking an early reception class place. Such warnings had already been sounded by Margaret Lochrie, President of the Pre-School Alliance in her address to members at their 1998 Annual Conference in Scarborough when she claimed 'already predatory schools are stripping three-year-old children from pre-schools with the promise of a place at five'.

The introduction of the Early Learning Goals and the recognition that four-year-olds in primary school should have a foundation year before following the National Curriculum may help to restore the concept of infancy but attention needs to be paid to the nature of 'Baseline Assessment' if the delivery of an appropriate curriculum for this age group is to be attained. A study by researchers from Durham University reported in an article, 'Under 5s prove to have the write stuff' (*The Times Educational Supplement*, 3 September, 1999), inferred that parents and nurseries were thought to be training the under 5s in the new compulsory baseline tests. Also quoted in the article and mentioned in relation to baseline assessment, was Wendy Scott, Chief Executive of The British Association for Early Years Education – 'it is unsurprising but regrettable that once more it seems as though the tests are influencing the curriculum rather than the otherway round'.

Lessons need to be learned from the recent past and misunderstandings that arose from the implementation of the 'Desirable Learning Outcomes' should not be repeated with the new Learning Goals. The 'Desirable Learning Outcomes' published in 1996 which were sets of expectations that all four-year-olds were expected to achieve by the time they entered compulsory schooling and which resulted in 'damaging consequences to children' according to Dowling (1999). She claims inspectors and providers misunderstood the aims of the Desirable Learning Outcomes and as a result some children were placed under pressure to achieve standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy, often before their physical and intellectual maturation enabled them to do so. She also points out that many of the providers did not have the professional knowledge or given the support to

develop the expertise to promote literacy and numeracy with young children:

> ... some settings resorted to inappropriate practices, particularly in using dull and repetitive pencil-and-paper exercises to promote these outcomes. Confidence in the power of play methods waned. By using a plethora of worksheets, providers felt reassured that children were producing tangible evidence of learning. (Dowling, 1999)

Advocates of good early years practice must all be appalled at this trickle-down effect of inappropriate curriculum content from primary school and at the adoption of developmentally inappropriate teaching methods as well.

Appropriate Education for Early Years Providers

Paramount to the success of the Learning Goals, must be the adequate education of all those professionals working with the three to six age group. Of prime importance must be a genuine education in appropriate teaching practices which allows practitioners to attend courses and get involved in exchanging ideas. Being issued with a glossy brochure to be browsed over which is then left to gather dust with the other collection of educational circulars is simply not good enough. There must also be a policy which allows parents and teachers to appreciate and acknowledge baseline assessment as a diagnostic teaching tool rather than as a test which puts labels on children.

Recent research findings referring to the centrality of high quality early years education as leading to 'lasting and better functioning in the domains of school, employment and community adjustment' (Sylva, 1992) may have helped influence government to invest in early years education, but it is up to educationalists as a community of professionals to grasp the opportunity to influence the form and implementation of early years provision. We cannot afford to let the latest attempt to formulate early years provision fall into the maw of history as yet another half-hearted, forgotten effort. In launching the revised guidelines for early years in the form of 'The Early Learning Goals' Margaret Hodge, Junior Education Minister is reported to have said 'The emphasis is on learning through play with imagination and structure so there is a purpose. They are goals they are not tests' (*The Times Educational Supplement*, 1 October 1999). What practitioners interpret 'learning through play with imagination and structure' to mean, and how this is disseminated to practitioners, will be the crux of whether or not early years education takes its place as a unique stage in human development.

Implementing Change

When government formulates educational policy, the assumption is that it will influence and change what happens in classrooms. However there exist enough research findings to suggest that whether real change in fact takes place depends, to a large extent, on how the policy fits with the beliefs teachers already hold about their work practices. The critical importance and value of the first stage in the education process needs to be appreciated by all, but the greatest adaptation to change may have to be made by reception class teachers. Evidence

from research suggests that whilst the focus is on play as the context for learning in pre-school establishments, it quickly turns to work on entry to the reception class.

An explanation for the work ethic in reception classes may be due to the real or perceived pressures coming from other colleagues and/or parents. The recent shift towards more accountability introduced with the National Curriculum, together with the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies may also have added towards a more formal work-based curriculum. For too long the early years of education have been viewed as the poor relation of the education system resulting in a lack of status for, and low morale amongst, early years educators. There has been a lack of willingness to try to understand the practice and language of the early years by other professionals working with other age phases. Many in the later stages of education have been happy to make derisory remarks about the value of play rather than consider its role as a powerful teaching/learning medium. Wassermann (1992) went so far as to ask:

> Is it possible that serious play is, in fact, the primary vehicle through which serious learning occurs? If that is the case, might we consider introducing play at all stages of a student's learning, from kindergarten through graduate school? (Wassermann, 1992)

Teaching colleagues in other age phases should begin to appreciate how their own practice could be enhanced through good quality early years provision. Given an appropriate curriculum, well-trained early years staff, and time to mature socially, emotionally and intellectually, the evidence suggests that children are better prepared to benefit from later more formal schooling.

Consideration of Parental Voices

There is also an urgent need to raise the consciousness and understanding of parents to the changes and expectations set out in the Early Learning Goals for education at this first level. If, or hopefully when, reception class teachers adapt their practice to take account of a curriculum which has at its core the concept of learning through play, then many parents may feel anxious because they do not understand or value the role of play in school. Lack of knowledge about the kind of play children participate in at school may cause parents to assume that playing about at home is merely duplicated in school. All parents have high hopes for their children's success and later life achievement and may erroneously believe that the best way to become successful is to quickly acquire academic skills, particularly reading, writing and mathematics. Many believe that *real* academic learning occurs only within a formal curriculum and that schools should provide this formal environment. Such beliefs place teachers in the position of having to defend and consequently even question their practice of using play as a teaching strategy. Research studies supply evidence to suggest that parents and teachers do not see eye to eye when it comes to curriculum content and teaching methodologies. To prevent misunderstandings and misrepresentations of what actually happens in school,

parents need information about how 'home play' and 'school play' differ. They need to be helped to appreciate that education is about more than striving to attain narrowly focussed academic skills, that a developmentally appropriate curriculum aims to enhance the education and development of the whole child, that academic learning can occur through play, and that all that can be delivered through a formal curriculum can be achieved through a well structured informal play approach. The responsibility for parental education on the proposed changes to the curriculum and its delivery needs to be done at a national/regional level as well as at a school level and not left to individual reception class teachers. However, it will be the individual reception class teacher who will have to convince parents and produce the evidence to support their claim that children are using proto-academic skills while at play.

Reaffirming the Concept of Infancy

The introduction of 'The Early Learning Goals' for early years and a 'Foundation Stage' of education within the reception class in primary school should help to reaffirm the concept of infancy. By their very existence, the new proposals recognise infant education as fundamentally different and as such it requires different approaches from the later years of schooling. The adoption of 'The Early Learning Goals' both in pre-school establishments and in reception classes in primary school should help to ensure continuity and progression from one stage of education to the next. More importantly, it would appear that on this occasion, the Government has listened to professional advice, and has also taken cognisance of academic research. Taking tentative steps towards the actual implementation of a developmentally appropriate curriculum for children in the first years of schooling is another matter but crucial if infancy is to be reclaimed.

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The Funding Farce

Chris Tipple
Chris Tipple was Director of Education for Northumberland County Council between 1984 and his retirement in 1999. He was President of the Society of Education Officers in 1994. He is now an education consultant. In this article he exposes the 'huge and unjustifiable gaps' between Local Education Authorities in terms of funding and explains why he considers change to be so difficult to bring about.

If school funding had been a play running at the Whitehall Theatre then Brian Rix would have been proud of its amazing run. But school funding is much more serious than that. It is a principal tool of government policy and a means by which, in theory at least, a significant element of social justice is dispensed. It is a farce and it does originate in Whitehall, but there comparisons stop.

If you were teaching at a primary school in Lambeth you would receive £2832 per pupil. If, however, you were in Darlington you would receive only £1432 per pupil. Secondary schools in Cumbria receive £2516 per pupil whilst in Brent the figure is £3799. Table I, drawn from a very recent parliamentary answer, makes the point.

Whilst comparisons at secondary level, in particular, are distorted by the fact that some of the lowest spending LEAs either have many middle schools or no sixth forms, there is still a huge and unjustifiable gap between LEAs which, in terms of socio-economic make-up, are very similar.

Every other aspect of the English education system has experienced dramatic change in the last 15 years or so, including the mechanism by which money moves from the LEA to the individual school, yet these huge anomalies remain. Indeed many of the other changes which have occurred simply make the funding situation more unacceptable. We now have a National Curriculum and national assessment systems. Schools and LEAs are judged against national criteria through the inspection regimes. Yet all these measures to try and ensure that the

public, and parents especially, get equal treatment, are vitiated by the funding farce.

So far the only attempt by central government to deal with this problem has been to try and by-pass it by the use of specific grants. Early promises that these would only constitute 1% of education expenditure, at most, have crumbled. Specific grants, and particularly the Standards Fund, are now turning LEAs into little more than agencies of central government. What remains as local democratic accountability is undermined by a pragmatic acceptance that the mainstream funding system is rotten.

A little history is needed in order to understand why we find ourselves in the present situation and why change is so difficult. Between the end of the Second World War and the late 1950s local education was funded by specific grant from central government. LEAs received an education grant which could not be used for other services. Eventually this produced a feeling of resentment in the rest of local government which began to press for block grant funding to cover all local services and this was eventually agreed. Education then had to fight its corner with Social Services, Housing and everything else run at local authority level. Throughout this time local rates played a significant part in local spending, contributing generally between 40% and 50%. Indeed many LEAs used local rates to cushion fluctuations in central government grant and soften the impact on services which sharp changes in central grant might bring.

The rise of education as a national priority for

PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY FUNDING (Average £1,739 per pupil)					
Top 5		**Top 5 outside London**		**Bottom 5**	
Lambeth	£2,832	Bradford	£2,122	Poole	£1,518
Kensington and Chelsea	£2,649	Birmingham	£1,949	Hartlepool	£1,490
Tower Hamlets	£2,593	Newcastle	£1,937	Bury	£1,455
Westminster	£2,553	Rutland	£1,922	Stockton-on-Tees	£1,439
Hammersmith and Fulham	£2,535	Doncaster	£1,870	Darlington	£1,432

SECONDARY FUNDING (Average £2,359 per pupil)					
Top 5		**Top 5 outside London**		**Bottom 5**	
Brent	£3,799	Birmingham	£2,612	Wakefield	£2,108
Hammersmith and Fulham	£3,464	Derby City	£2,595	Darlington	£2,083
Kensington and Chelsea	£3,458	Essex	£2,540	Northumberland	£2,035
Lambeth	£3,363	Bristol	£2,532	Poole	£1,794
Tower Hamlets	£3,206	Cumbria	£2,516	Bradford	£1,605

Tables exclude the Isles of Scilly and the City of London

Table I. Funding per pupil 1999

government and the growth of distrust between central and local government which has been a feature for the last 15 years or so has meant that local rates now account for a relatively small proportion of education expenditure and the extent to which even they can be raised has been severely curtailed by various forms of cap. Local government now operates in a centrally controlled Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) regime with rewards or penalties for those LEAs which do or do not 'passport' any centrally determined education increases into school budgets. Meanwhile specific government education policies such as the literacy and numeracy programmes are underpinned by specific grants.

Despite its title the SSA is not an objective measure of an Authority's need to spend on a particular service. SSAs are not built upwards from first principles. They are a means of dividing a total sum arrived at as a result of broad political considerations across the whole spectrum of local authority services and constraints on government spending in general.

Mainstream education funding is therefore a mess, accountability is confused and schools in different parts of the country are expected to reach similar targets despite hugely different financial resources. No wonder the NAHT is now pressing for a national funding formula for schools.

What stands in its way? First, there is the great problem of 'winners and losers' on a national scale that would arise following a move to such central funding. Unless money could be found to level everyone up, which seems impossible, there would be a high political price to pay from articulate losers. Secondly, the introduction of nationally determined school funding would remove one of the last reasons for having an LEA. No recent governments have shown themselves friends of local

democracy and it has already been undermined in many ways, but nevertheless a buffer would be removed and transparent accountability would become possible between central government and the local school. This would be uncomfortable for the centre.

Thirdly, would it really be any better and any fairer? The substantial differences which exist between schools mean that only a simple 'core' of funding could be identified. There would have to be significant acknowledgement of local circumstances such as huge rural catchment areas, high proportions of ethnic minorities, ancient heating systems, split sites and a whole range of other matters. Is it really sensible to seek common funding for a 700-pupil inner-city Birmingham primary school with 95% ethnic minorities and the pupil who attends Holy Island CE First School in Northumberland on a part time basis when the tide permits? It could well be that the new funding arrangements would quickly become as complicated and obscure as they are now. Fourthly, there is now such a mosaic of additional funding possibilities open to individual schools including education action zones, 'sure start' initiatives, early years excellence centres, specialist college status, and single regeneration budget funds, to mention only a few, that anomalies of core funding become less significant.

Finally, to the chagrin of those who are poorly funded, these anomalies are not reflected in results. So long as that connection cannot be made the incentive for national politicians to grasp this very prickly nettle does not exist.

So I think you can book future tickets with confidence because this particular Whitehall farce looks set to break all box office records.
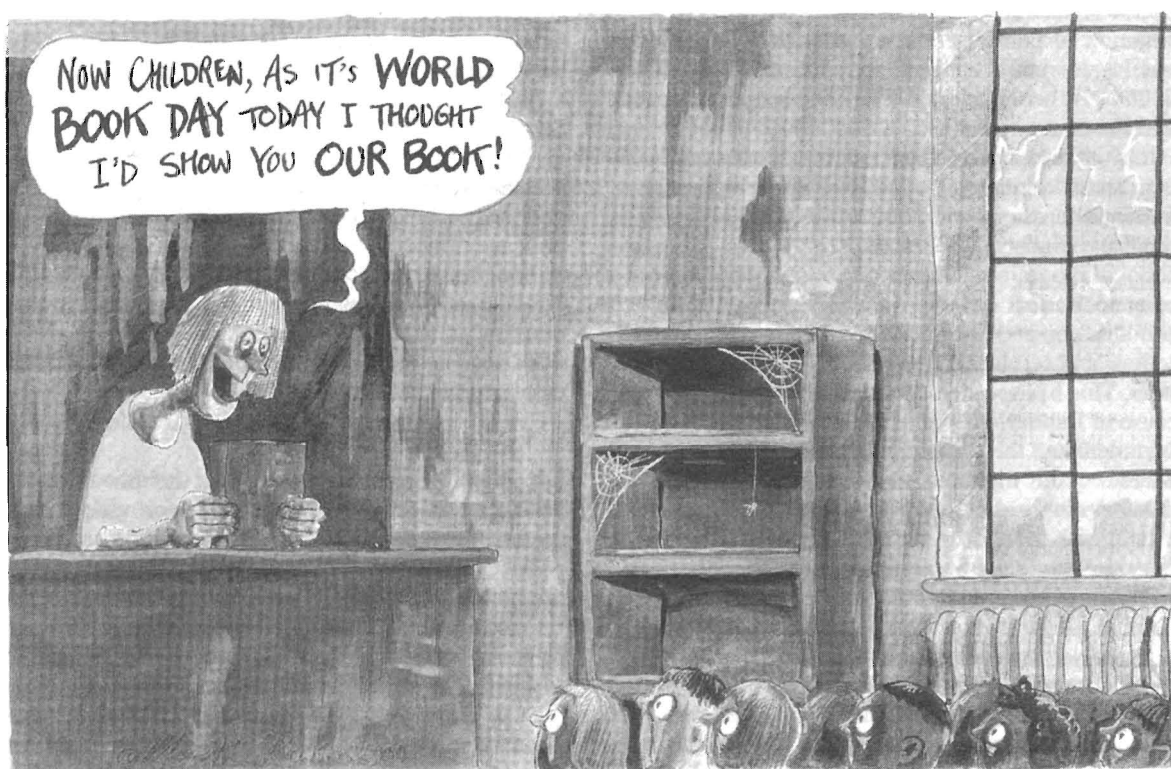
Martin Rowson, *The Times Educational Supplement*, March 10, 2000

The Third Way for Education: privatisation and marketisation

Dexter Whitfield
Dexter Whitfield founded the Centre for Public Services in 1973. His work for the Centre includes research into public services, the development of employment and public service plans and social and economic audits. He has published a number of influential books and acts in an advisory capacity to public bodies and trades unions in the United Kingdom and abroad. His convincing article, on the powerful forces behind the creeping privatisation of education, makes very sobering reading.

A new era of privatisation is emerging, driven by globalisation, neo-liberal/third way ideology, trans-national companies and business interests. Whilst public ownership and the welfare state remain strong in most European states, the flotation and trade sales of nationalised industries and state corporations in the United Kingdom is virtually exhausted, hence the core services of the welfare state – education, health, social services, social security (pensions) and housing – form the next phase in the marketisation of the state.

Conservative governments between 1979–97 established quasi-markets in education with open enrolment, local management of schools, opt outs from direct public control, competitive tendering for support services and a performance management regime consisting of standards, performance league tables, inspection, and the centralisation of funding.

Labour's third way modernisation project is based on a minimum reversal of Tory legislation. In practice, this has meant the continuation of the Conservatives' transformation of public services, although some policies are repackaged and justified by different objectives (Whitfield, forthcoming). The Labour Government continued the commitment to:

O The transition to a performance-competition state in which, albeit voluntary, competitive tendering is legitimised across the public sector in place of compulsory tendering of defined services.

O A national programme of privatisation, although on a smaller scale.

O Externalisation and transfer of local authority functions and services to the private and voluntary sectors. This has speeded up since 1997 primarily because of Labour's belief in the enabling model of government and their neutrality on who provides services.

O Escalating corporatisation and commercialisation of the state, with increasing use of company structures.

O Substantially increased role for private capital funding of the infrastructure and public services.

O A flexible labour market with performance related pay in selected services such as education.

O A greater commitment to promote fairness and flexibility but making redistribution and equality matters of local choice.

Why Privatise Education?

It is significant that those with a vested interest in privatising education consistently claim that it is only a matter of value for money, and that by selecting the most efficient supplier, more children can be educated to a higher standard. 'More for less' is the mantra. Choice and competition are an integral part of this system.

However, more fundamental issues lie behind such transparent and simplistic claims. First, the annual global education market is estimated at $2,000bn with the USA and United Kingdom markets valued at $700bn and £60bn respectively (EduVentures, 1999). Public expenditure accounted for 89% of total education expenditure in developed countries and 75% in developing countries according to a World Bank survey of 41 countries (Patrinos, 1999). So the scale of new 'markets' is enormous which accounts for the intensive lobbying by trade and business organisations for global markets and minimal regulation. The real agenda is capital accumulation, not efficiency or choice. Children are already big business – US retailers estimate that girls between seven and 14 spend $24bn annually and influence a further $66bn parental purchases (*Financial Times*, 26 September 1999).

Secondly, the intention is to transform the labour process, reduce the cost of labour, try to marginalise the trade unions in order to weaken opposition to such policies. Thirdly, to tailor and prioritise education and training to the needs of business. Finally, to transfer part of the cost of education from the state to the individual in order to pursue a low-tax/minimal-government model and to establish a market in which parents and students choose between competing suppliers.

Different Forms of Privatisation

Education is a public good but the privatisation lobby makes a distinction between public provision and private production. Schools and health care will remain free at the point of use but delivered by private contractors from privately operated facilities.

As a locally delivered public good it cannot be privatised via a traditional large scale sell-off. Instead, privatisation develops in a piecemeal and fragmented manner and it is only by examining the range of different initiatives, taking a long term perspective, that it is possible to identify the real consequences of government policy. The privatisation of education is increasing in seven ways – outsourcing support services, inspections,

training and related services; private finance for school buildings; private management of schools and LEAs; privately led information and communications technology projects; vouchers and personal accounts; and zones and partnerships. Each is discussed in more detail below.

1. Outsourcing Services to Schools

The Best Value performance management regime in local government came into effect in April 2000 which requires local authorities to review all services they provide, whether directly by private contractors or voluntary organisations, on a five-year cycle. Teaching is excluded but education management and support services are included. Local authorities must challenge why they provide the service, compare performance with others, consult with users and the community, assess the competitiveness of services and examine a range of options for future delivery of the service. Although Compulsory Competitive Tendering was abolished in January 2000, local authorities are required to assess outsourcing and privatisation options and to develop markets if there is no available private market. In effect, the Ofsted inspection regime has been extended to all local services with the creation of a Best Value Inspectorate.

Also, outsourcing of Ofsted inspection work has enabled firms such as Nord Anglia and CBT to establish themselves as increasingly large players in this field. They are by no means the only ones; currently there are a significant number of companies exploring ways of gaining access to this market by probing how they can package and operate services, reducing public resistance and increasing their own capacity by recruiting staff with LEA experience. Many own and operate 'public' transport, utilities, communciations and prisons – now they are coming for the children. For example, Group 4, a private company already involved in owning and managing prisons, are bidding for education service contracts and indeed the Labour government is inviting such firms to do so.

2. PFI and the Education Infrastructure

The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) requires the private sector to Design, Build, Finance and Operate (DBFO) facilities, usually for 25–35 years (7–15 years for equipment). The private sector finances construction and is repaid by the state, in regular payments for the use of the buildings and for the services provided under a facilities management contract. Payments for PFI projects are classified as revenue, not capital, and do not start until the building is completed. It thus has enormous short term political appeal.

However, the Private Finance Initiative is no longer about additionality nor is it about the limits of the public sector capital spending programme. The government is adamant that under PFI local authorities pay for a service, they do not acquire an asset. All assets such as schools which are built or purchased under the PFI remain in the ownership of PFI consortia until the end of the contract.

In the longer term it is inconceivable that PFI projects will be confined to buildings and support services or that only a relatively small part of the education infrastructure will be privately provided. PFI consortia have a vested interest in the quality of teaching and performance of schools they operate because this helps to maintain full capacity and maximises income from third party use of facilities. The division between core and non-core is not fixed in stone but is fluid depending on changes in teaching techniques and the division of labour thus giving private companies an opportunity to expand into educational services; by their nature private companies are constantly searching for means of diversifying and expanding markets.

It isn't far-fetched to suggest that if the provision of the schools' infrastructure can be turned into a service, there is no barrier, other than ideology, to prevent this service extending to core teaching. An emerging owner-operator industry in which a few multinational firms will own most of the (new) schools will increasingly be able to dictate the terms and conditions to LEAs and schools. The creation of a secondary market in which investments in PFI projects are bought and sold on financial markets will also have a similar effect. Thus, we will see increasing commercialisation of education and business involvement in projects, sponsorship help to create the ideological conditions and practical opportunities for more extensive private involvement in the supply of education.

There is, however, a clear alternative to the PFI. The government could adopt the European convention of the General Government Financial Deficit which would enable public bodies to borrow against their assets and revenue stream and for this not be counted against public borrowing.

3. Local Education Authorities

The government has twice advertised for companies to express their willingness to takeover the functions and services provided by LEAs. Facilities management companies such as SERCO and W.S. Atkins are expected to be added to the existing 10 approved contractors. Another is Group 4, as already mentioned, the well-known operator of private prisons!

Many of these firms have acquired educational and training companies in order to build up the educational experience and credibility – this sector has had some 30 takeovers valued at £1bn in the last 16 months.

It is not simply a matter of LEAs deciding which services to outsource, but consultants and contractors, accompanied by the DfEE, assessing services to determine what is feasible and profitable to outsource. This is providing opportunities for private firms to explore the potential for markets and set the terms on which they will enter into contracts.

4. Private Management of Schools

Private management of schools is starting with the takeover of 'failing schools' although this process is at a more advanced stage in the USA. Nonetheless, high profile firms such as Edison and Educational Alternatives Inc. have a very poor track record with broken promises of new computers, wage cuts and poor educational performance.

5. ICT Led Privatisation

Most information and communications technology (ICT) led education projects are dominated by private contractors with declining public sector input and control. Many claim to be partnership projects but the sorry reality

is that they are deskilling and reducing the capacity of the public sector.

6. Vouchers and Personal Accounts

Vouchers enable the holder to access both public and private sector schools or other services. They are highly controversial because they channel public money into private schools. Although they are presented as increasing choice, they are a means of marketising the schools system and leave the real choice with private schools. The theory is that successful schools prosper and unsuccessful ones go to the wall.

Voucher schemes in the USA have proved to be expensive, decrease accountability and channel public money into private schools at the expense of investment into the improvement of the public school system. There have been repeated and largely unsuccessful attempts, funded and orchestrated by right-wing organisations, to pass state legislation for voucher schemes. A few small schemes operate in Ohio and Wisconsin but these are not statewide having been confined to Cleveland and Milwaukee. In the United Kingdom a nursery school voucher scheme introduced by the Conservative Government was abolished by the Labour Government in 1997. It had proved to be costly, time consuming to administer and ineffective.

7. Zones and Partnerships

The zonal approach has been used by government to experiment with new quasi-public organisations and the promotion of private sector involvement. The Conservative Government launched Enterprise Zones, Urban Development Corporations (UDCs), the Estate Renewal Action Fund, City Challenge and the Single Regeneration Budget.

The Labour Government reinvigorated the zonal approach with health, employment, education and community safety zones and the New Deal for Communities. The first phase of 25 Education Action Zones (EAZs) are intended to raise standards in 'socially disadvantaged areas' with 'under-performing' schools. EAZs comprise two or three secondary schools one of which must become a 'specialist' school selecting up to 10% of its students on the basis of 'aptitude', plus associated primary schools (maximum 20 schools). Schools can opt out of the National Curriculum and national pay and conditions for teachers. EAZ's are run by Action Forums comprising representatives from schools, parents, business and the local education authority with one or two Secretary of State appointees.

Each zone receives an annual government grant of £750,000 with private business expected to fund and/or sponsor to the value of £250,000. Zones usually lack the presence of successful private businesses so large national firms such as British Telecom, British Aerospace and Andersen Consulting are supporting zones, usually in kind rather than hard cash.

World Trade Organisation Agenda

The marketisation and privatisation of education is not confined to Britain. The plans of the World Trade Organisation's General Agreement for Trade in Services (GATS) for the global liberalisation of public and private services could have a substantive impact on education worldwide. GATS sets out a framework of legally binding rules governing the conduct of world trade in services to ensure transparency and the progressive removal of measures which discriminate against foreign suppliers. Nation states sign up to a commitment to open services to market access on a ongoing basis through periodic negotiations. In addition to education, it covers over 160 services including health, social services, environmental services, libraries and leisure.

Services are widely defined, for example, education includes primary, secondary, higher and adult education. Each of these services is a multi-billion market hence transnationals and business interests are lobbying hard to gain access to these vast new markets. The WTO is singularly concerned ensuring the free flow of trade – social equity, health and education outcomes, working conditions and human need are not part of its remit.

The liberalisation of goods and services is based on two key principles, *most favoured nation* which requires countries to afford the same treatment to all GATS member states, and *national treatment* which requires foreign companies to be treated the same as national firms. Trade in services is classified in four modes, cross border supply, consumption abroad, commercial presence (provision of services by foreign-owned companies) and the movement of personnel. GATS defines government services as those which are provided on a non-commercial basis and do not compete with other suppliers. Since virtually all public and welfare services contain at least some element of private funding and provision, the degree is limited as to which nation states can protect core services against marketisation and privatisation under the current rules. The WTO has wide powers to deal with barriers to trade with a dispute settlement procedure and cross-retaliation provisions under which non-complying countries can be forced to change legislation, face retaliatory trade sanctions and/or financial penalties.

A new 'Millennium Round' of negotiations on further liberalisation was delayed by disputes in Seattle in 1999, although previously commenced negotiations on government procurement and subsidies continued. There is growing oposition to the WTO's plans

Many countries, such as Britain, are, behind a domestic 'modernisation' and reform agenda, committed to liberalisation. Building the foundations for liberalisation by introducing competitive regimes into public services, revising government procurement policies, creating purchaser-provider splits, restructuring the finance of services through per capita funding, commercial resource accounting and private finance via public-private partnerships, are all evidence of this.

None of these policies are inevitable, there are clear alternatives which maintain and improve public education and increase the capacity of nation states to challenge the neo-liberal marketisation agenda. It is these alternatives we need to vigorously and urgently promote at every opportunity.

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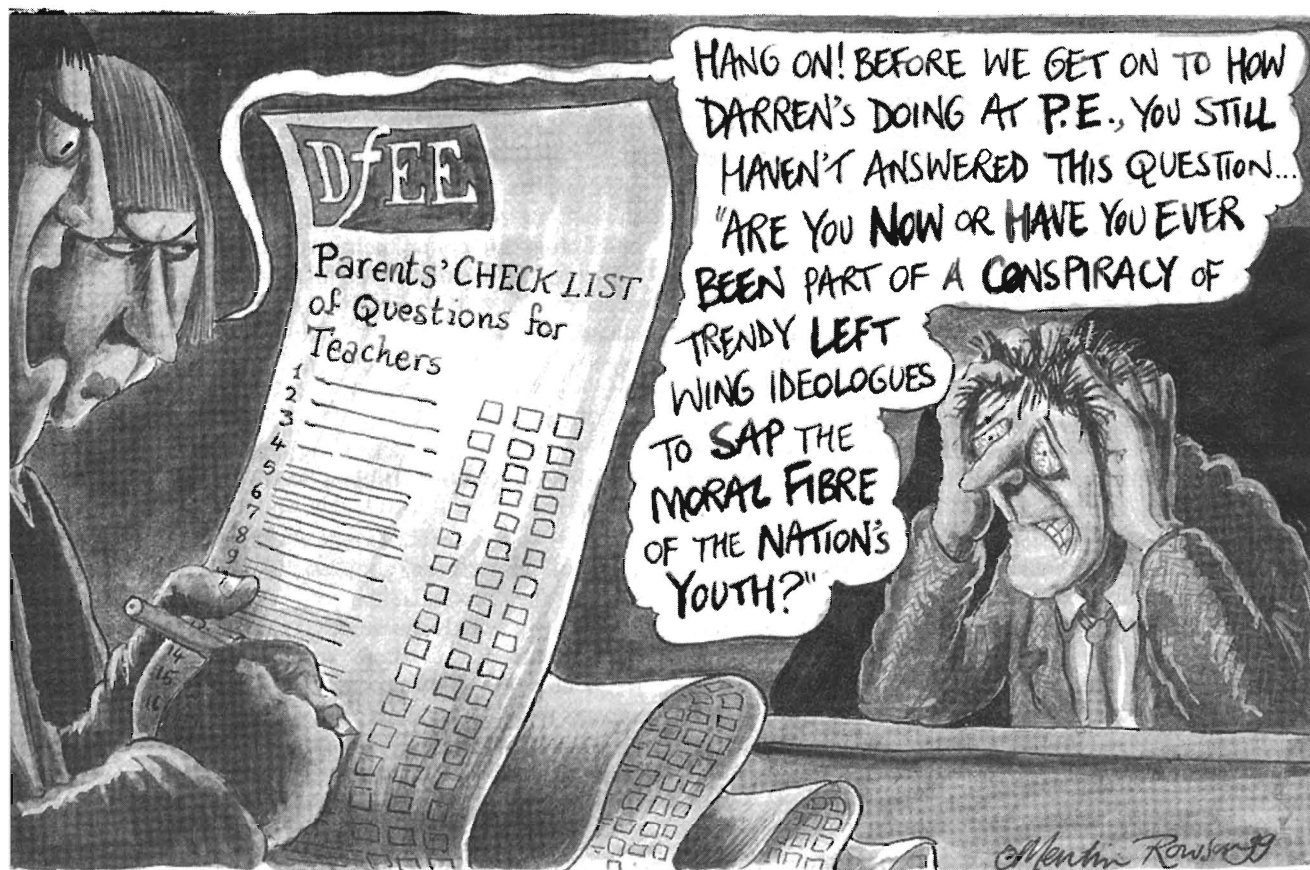
Martin Rowson, *The Times Educational Supplement*, December 10, 1999

REVIEW ARTICLE

Making History Teachers

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The aim of this book is to explore how to develop the expertise and professionalism of student and newly qualified teachers in the complex intellectual exercise of teaching history. Successively initial teacher education (ITE), the induction process for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and further professional developments are studied with the objective of enhancing the quality of teaching and thence, most importantly, of pupil learning. The authors stress their conviction that such development must be grounded in the realities of classroom interaction. Their refreshing and underlying respect for the professional skills and knowledge of practitioners is clearly evident throughout and much of the book is enlivened by detailed examples and case studies. For example, the first chapter begins with a description of three very different history lessons that demonstrate the varied ways in which teachers convey abstract historical concepts and substantial amounts of contextual knowledge, enabling new learning at different levels for different pupils. All this obviously needs careful and complex planning. Similarly the penultimate chapter contains a detailed case study of the members of one history department to show the crucial importance of classroom-focused professional development – a main plank of the authors' thesis.

The book is divided into three sections; the first and last are written by Anna Pendry and Chris Husbands who also edited the middle section written by James Arthur and Jon Davison. The first and longest section is devoted to initial teacher education. It rightly contrasts the broader and deeper reflective education desired in higher education with the narrower competencies and standards required by government for NQT status – ITE contrasted with Initial Teacher Training in fact. On the other hand, it also argues that the 'single most important person in the life of a student teacher is the mentor', the teacher who cares for and develops the student teacher's professional knowledge in the context of a school. Tutors in higher education supply the latest research and theories. Mentors, the authors state, have to have knowledge, skills and attitudes of enthusiasm, commitment and openness to new ideas. Above all they must ensure that mentoring is about student teachers' learning.

The problem is tackled of student teachers, and later NQTs, being learners in an institution in which they are trying to establish themselves as part of the staff and which is primarily designed for children's learning. The focus on how to move student teachers from a preoccupation with their own teaching to one with their pupils' learning and from basic competence to autonomous development is stressed by discussion and examples. In similar fashion the all-important mentoring practices of observation, evaluation and assessment are explored. Learning through their own practice is seen as the most powerful form of learning for student teachers but it is recognised that they have to develop an understanding of how to set targets, evaluate how far they meet them and whether they were worthwhile and appropriate in the first place.

Throughout this and the following sections on effective induction of NQTs and continued professional development in the history department, sight is never lost of the variety of paths of development. At the same time such development is contained within significant principles such as the worth of history as a 'mind-opening' subject, the need for all teachers, student or otherwise, to build progressively on their own expertise and the value of collaboration within the history department. History departments, say Pendry and Husbands, usually underestimate what they can do themselves – 'This capacity for generating change in teaching and learning from the inside is potentially the most powerful resource any department has.' The authors themselves, nevertheless, draw much on pertinent research, not least that of Paul Cooper, Donald McIntyre and Anna Pendry herself.

There is some need, however, to be cautious about some of the authors' conclusions as it has to be asked whether they recognise the realities of school life enough. Mentors are not always selected carefully: in small history departments it is often simply the history teacher, frequently the hard-pressed head of department who appears to be the obvious choice from a management point of view. Very willing mentors can become submerged under the multifarious demands of teaching pupils and find it difficult to attend to their own professional development, let alone guide that of others. The increasing paperwork and possibility of an Ofsted inspection which are also facets of modern mentoring, are daunting to many otherwise willing volunteers. All these factors militate against the more ideal situations annotated here.

Nevertheless, the book does offer an interesting, well-exemplified view on what can and, in many cases, should be done to enable the progressive development of thoughtful, skilled, enthusiastic history teachers. It should prove to be a boon to mentors, student teachers and, indeed, all who are concerned with enabling history departments to become centres of reflective and collaborative professional learning and practice.

Goldsmiths Journal of Education

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PRACTICAL VISIONARIES

Women, Education and Social Progress 1790–1930

Edited by Mary Hilton and Pam Hirsch

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This book examines women educationalists with nineteenth and early twentieth century intellectual history. Working with new paradigms opened up by feminist scholarship, the book reveals how and why women leaders engaged with issues of power and influence. Specific women leaders are shown to be concerned with questions of citizenship and social justice and engaged in transforming education in the quest for a better society. Previous scholarship has either neglected the contributions of these women altogether or has misplaced them and consequently intellectual histories of education have come to seem almost exclusively masculine.

This book presents a legacy of feminine progressive ideology and action. Taken together, these women leaders' habits of travel, their public appearances, their political activism and their acknowledged intellectual and cultural authority challenges the idea that middle-class Victorian women were confined to a private sphere. All these women were household names in their local communities, while several were national and international figures.

Contributors: Anne Bloomfield, Kevin J. Brehony, Norma Clark, Peter Cunningham, Mary Jane Drummond, Elizabeth Edwards, Mary Hilton, Pam Hirsch, Jane Miller, Hilary Minns, Wendy Robinson, Gillian Sutherland and Ruth Watts.

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