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FOR THE DISCUSSION OF NEW TRENDS IN EDUCATION

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Streaming and the Methodology of Teaching

One of the most encouraging features of the present educational scene is the growing questioning of what, until quite recently, seemed to many the inescapable method of organising the junior school—streaming. When FORUM was founded five years ago this was one of the issues which we intended to take up, and, over the years, we have published a number of articles on this topic. This growing interest was well reflected in FORUM'S first conference, held in November, on "Non-streaming in the Junior School". With some 200 present from all over the country, it can be counted a success. At the conference, however, more issues were raised than solved and we hope it may be possible to take this work further in the future.

Although the conference was well reported in the educational press, we felt that FORUM readers deserved a fuller report which is here presented by Edward Blishen. We are glad also to print in full in this number the very interesting survey carried out by Mr. Clegg for the West Riding Education Authority, which is concerned specifically with the question of streaming at the secondary stage — one as yet little explored. Eileen Sanders also contributes an article based on her practical experience of teaching English in an unstreamed junior school; the question of the methodology of teaching unstreamed classes is clearly a crucial one. We hope to carry further articles of this type dealing with other subjects in the future.

Closely connected with this question is that of teaching a common syllabus across the full age range in the comprehensive school—and here we follow up our last Special Number on the Comprehensive School (which, incidentally, achieved a record sale) with R. Champeney's article on the methodology of science teaching, one based on many years' experience, as well as R. S. Fisher's analysis of the educational purposes of the comprehensive school—especially in relation to the "average" child, if there is such a person ! David Wheeler also raises some very fundamental questions concerning the methodology of the teaching of mathematics relevant both to the primary and secondary stage.

The outlook of FORUM's supporters is often described as "egalitarian", and to them are attributed—by their opponents—extreme views as to the nature of the child which are then easily denounced. For this reason we welcome Klaus Neuberg's careful statement of what we mean when we say "that all human beings matter and matter equally", and his analysis of the educational implications of this standpoint.

Conference on Non-Streaming

EDWARD BLISHEN

Over 200 teachers attended the first all-day conference arranged by FORUM, on 'Non-Streaming in the Junior School', which took place at the London University Institute of Education on Saturday, November 17th. A keynote of discussion during the day was the desire of many of those present that FORUM, having with this conference enabled general principles to be debated, should go on to provide opportunities for an exchange and airing of practical details and problems. The report that follows is necessarily a very concentrated account of some of the main contributions.

The chief speaker in the morning session (chaired by Mr. H. Raymond King) was Dr. J. C. Daniels, of the Nottingham University Institute of Education. Dr. Daniels said it would have been inconceivable in 1950 that there should be a conference such as this one. There was now universal interest in the

question, if not universal agreement about it. This interest was not due to the recent experiments that had shown streaming to be ineffective, nor to our sudden discovery that almost everywhere else in the world streaming in the junior school was not practised, and in most places was strictly forbidden. It was not because there had been high pressure sales talk in favour of non-streaming. The practice was being re-examined partly because, as Stewart Mason had said. "the comprehensive tide is flowing in": partly because in recent years psychological theories, especially those relating to the nature and measurement of intelligence, had been largely re-assessed: and partly because developments in technology and industry were pointing to the need to give more children an advanced education.

Many people rejected streaming for social reasons, arguing that it sows the seeds of social class division. He had a great deal of sympathy with that point of view: but it was only a half-truth. For streaming was a mechanism that actually *manufactured* the intellectual differences which then fed the various strata of our industrial and social life.

It was certainly true that, in our English way, we were fumbling towards comprehensiveness. In the areas where the Leicestershire plan had come into operation, the junior schools had almost absent-mindedly stopped streaming: they felt that, since there was no longer an 11-plus hurdle and it was possible to begin to think in terms of realistically reassessing courses of study in the junior school, streaming seemed to be an anachronism.

The origin of streaming

It was interesting to look at the history of streaming in this country. Teachers did not seem to believe that it had a history—they thought it was natural and had always been there. But it was possible to date its beginning in 1926 with the Hadow reorganisation which provided for the break at 11 and the establishment of senior schools and consequent formation of junior schools. The first official mention of streaming was in the 1931 Primary School Report, the reason given for it being that you needed a small group, an 'A' class, in which to put your scholarship winners, and another small class for the backward. No experiment was carried out to determine the validity of streaming: the word of the psychologists was simply accepted. As it happened, it fitted in beautifully with the then-accepted definition of intelligence. But even at the beginning everyone had stressed the need for flexibility: it was thought very important that streaming should not impose final decisions.

The main justification for the practice was, in effect, a self-proving hypothesis: it lay in the familiar statement, "I guarantee that at the age of 7 I can pick 'em out!" And those who made such statements were usually proved right — because streaming was in the nature of a message to the teachers: it told them what to do. It told the 'A' class teachers, "These are the ones who are going to go forward—for them, the sky's the limit." To 'C' class teachers it said, "Go carefully and much more slowly with these—don't stretch them too much." It could not help but be true that after four years of this *different* treatment the children developed into rather *different* children. We had to beware of this and of a good many ideas about the nature of the growth of ability planted in our heads in the 1920's and 1930's. Built into our teacher-culture was the theory of natural ability: the theory that the spread of ability increased with the increase in age. It was now known that, in fact, this was an artefact partly of the method by which the test of ability was constructed and partly of the system of school organisation that followed from the ideology of the test. That the theory was so widely embraced was not a sign of stupidity; it reflected very deep social pressures.

Dr. Daniels quoted findings of Mr. Brian Jackson, director of the Advisory Council for Education, which showed that, given that 75% of children were of working-class origin and 25% of middle-class origin, there were in an 'A' class in the first year in the junior school 38% of middle-class children, 62% of working-class children. At 11-plus, 50% of those selected were middle-class, 50% working-class. Higher education was achieved by 4% of all working-class children, 21% of middle-class children. These figures reflected our middle-class estimates of social worth.

In England, no research into streaming was conducted until the 1950's, when streaming had become a firm dogma, but it was coming also under close critical scrutiny. Following up attacks on the practice by Brian Simon and others,[1] Professor Vernon had set the ball rolling—though it was uncertain whether he knew how far the ball would roll—with his experiment that showed that children could actually be taught to do intelligence tests. This shook an article of faith—the belief in the inborn pattern of abilities—and began to call into question the whole theory of the types of child. Professor Vernon took the issue a stage further when he began to show that the type of secondary education a child receives has an effect on intelligence scores. It became clear that

[1] For instance, in *Intelligence Testing and the Comprehensive School* (1953).

the modern school was holding back the intellectual development of its children. If this was true of segregation as between grammar school and modern school, was it not also true of streaming in the junior school? Out of this question research sprang in 1954-6, and the period since had been one of dramatic changes in the field of educational psychology and especially in views of the growth of children's ability. What came out of it all was an understanding of the tremendous importance of early learning and the way it determines the pattern of later life.

Research into streaming

Dr. Daniels quoted a number of relevant studies. The first, in which the abilities of 13- and 14-year-olds in various countries of Western Europe and America were compared, showed that the range of achievement in England was much wider than anywhere else. This was not a pointer to something special in the English genetic make-up: it was a result of the way we organise education.

Rudd had shown that at the secondary level the threat to demote children to a slower stream or the promise to promote them if they worked hard were poor incentives. Blandford, studying 11-plus results in a number of one-class entry schools, had demonstrated that the spread of attainment and ability in a big school was greater than that in a small school.

Dr. Daniels himself, in 1955, had questioned a fairly random sample of 169 teachers from the East Midlands on the effects of streaming. All had been completely wedded to the idea of streaming, their main reason being that it helped the more backward. He asked them what they believed to be the amount of interchange between streams, and then compared their views with the reality: they had overestimated by 400%.

To find the real effects of streaming, he had compared two three-class entry schools under different authorities, unstreamed on principle, with two streamed schools—all four having kept very exact test records. He discovered (unexpectedly) that the bright children were better in the unstreamed schools than in the streamed schools: that the mean scores of the streamed schools were considerably lower than those of the unstreamed schools: that the spread of test results in the unstreamed schools was smaller than that in the streamed schools: and, following from this, that the backward group was dramatically helped by being in an unstreamed school. This last finding contrasted sharply with the belief of teachers that the main virtue of streaming was that it helped the more backward.

Non-streaming itself could not be looked upon as

a panacea for all educational problems. It implied something about the way in which one approached children and their education. Teaching machines were beginning to make programmed learning respectable—that is, it was possible now to think in terms of breaking up the acquisition of knowledge into stages. In all the unstreamed schools he knew, the idea if not the name of programmed learning was already familiar. Some unstreamed schools he knew less well claimed results because they had *individualised* most of the teaching of basic studies according to step-by-step programmes. He would be interested to follow this trend. In the unstreamed schools he knew best, class teaching (not to be equated with rote-learning) was the main approach, but the syllabus had been carefully graded. The aim was step-by-step acquisition of skills and knowledge by *all* the pupils. Unstreamed schools knew that if a child got behind-hand they had to think in terms of a mechanism to bring him up to the front again. Unstreaming, in fact, produced a systematic approach. The effect on the teacher was dramatic. No longer was there an 'A' class teacher produced by an 'A' class, a 'C' class teacher produced by a 'C' class. Indeed, one of the most important effects of unstreaming was the change it produced in the outlook of teachers and so in the response of children.

It was possible now, Dr. Daniels concluded—in that oft-neglected and even despised segment of the school system, the junior school—to raise the most important aim of all for our time. This was an age, one of potential plenty for all and actual deprivation for many, when every man and woman had a high-level part to play in production and in running society. In the full development of the highest educational achievement for all, streaming and the restrictive practices allied to it would have to go. And they *were* going.

In the discussion that followed, Dr. Daniels agreed it would be a good thing if the Ministry could be persuaded to allow staffing so that there was one intake a year into the infants school. Asked if there was such a thing as innate ability, he said that part of what we call intelligence is a substratum of inherited ability about which we knew nothing. He was of Wittgenstein's opinion that about that of which we know nothing it is best to be silent.

Asked if he believed in the development of the E.S.N. school and of occupational centres, Dr. Daniels said he thought they had their place, though it seemed to him there were a number of children who needlessly found their way into the E.S.N. school. He was not sure that it would not be better to have special classes in normal schools, as was

beginning to happen in the case of deaf and blind children. In reply to a speaker who said he was delighted to deduce from this answer that, after all, Dr. Daniels believed in streaming, he said the problem of the E.S.N. child was a special one like that of blind children.

Asked if there was a difference between streaming and working in groups within a class, Dr. Daniels said you could organise a class so that you had three or four groups of ability, and thus divide your time by three or four : on the other hand, there was a way of working in groups for a whole range of topics that was productive and did not require grouping by ability. He was not convinced that setting in the junior school was a good thing.

Non-streaming in practice

At the afternoon session, chaired by Mr. J. Walton, statements were made by three members of the FORUM editorial board, themselves heads of unstreamed schools.

Mr. G. Freeland, Headmaster of Mowmacre Junior School, Leicester, said he was anxious to make it clear that unstreaming was not a gimmick or an avenue to promotion. He himself had found out in the hard school of experience that the theory of streaming was wrong. He had begun to have doubts about its social effect and was particularly worried by the hopeless atmosphere of the backward classes.

Socially, in his new school, non-streaming worked 100%. Educationally he thought it was bound to work, because educational success followed from social success.

There was the problem of placing children as they came into the school into different categories. This you could do by chance, by alphabetical order, by I.Q.s, or with the same range of I.Q.s in each class. Since he himself did not believe in I.Q.s, he had put his children strictly into age groups, calling them 4O (for O!d), 4M (for Middle) and 4Y (for Young). At the suggestion of an H.M.I. he later changed this, numbering the classes through the school from 1 to 13.

How were unstreamed classes taught ? There were various choices : individual methods, grouping within classes, setting across classes. He was against individual methods, because they meant sacrificing the collective atmosphere. So in his school there was as much class teaching as possible; they broke classes down into groups, within the class setting, for basic skills like reading. An incidental virtue of unstreaming was that every teacher was forced to become a teacher of reading.

What did one teach ? Non-streaming did not change the curriculum—but it changed the emphasis given to different parts of it. The idea of a ceiling of ability was rejected, and a teacher had to think very clearly how he was going to raise standards—especially in language, the core of the problem of educability. The teaching of English, especially reading, must take priority : other subjects were as much fields for the employment of language as they were means of teaching children historical or geographical facts.

From parents he had had fewer queries than before unstreaming; they felt that every child had a chance in the 11-plus. The school was not in fact very 11-plus-minded : but he was confident that no one had lost a place at a grammar school as a result of non-streaming.

Mr. E. Harvey, Headmaster of Weston Lane Junior School, Otley, Yorks., said he had been appointed to a new two-form entry junior school and had decided to stream. Difficulties followed immediately. The school was not completely full and so he had from time to time to re-adjust classes as new children were admitted. Children had to be put down from 'A' classes to 'B' classes, and he had to try to explain this to parents who wanted to know how the entry of three or four extra children could transform a child from 'A' to 'B'. The school was rapidly becoming two schools under one roof, and he came to the conclusion that they themselves were creating the 'B' children. The final straw came with changes of staff, and the conflict between his desire to give 'A' classes to new teachers and his promise to give these classes to existing teachers who had taken 'B' classes the year before. So he had de-streamed.

He had nothing to regret. In 11-plus, they had done better since unstreaming. There was more time to deal with the backward while the brighter ones got on by themselves. It had been possible to take out the backward readers and give them special classes. Improvement in some of the backward children had been spectacular.

Mr. Eric Linfield, Headmaster of Redlands Junior School, Fareham, spoke of the social implications of non-streaming, and made a plea for extra staffing —one member of staff for schools of 200 or over, and two for schools of 400.

Questionnaire results

Mr. Adams, head of Taylor Street Junior School, Leicester, reported on replies to a questionnaire on non-streaming given by 25 head teachers of schools covering the whole socio-economic range. Twenty-

five of the schools were unstreamed in the first and second years, 19 in the third year, and 18 in the fourth year—one stating that streaming in the fourth year was a result of pressure from parents. Eight arranged their unstreamed classes by random selection : seven by age : and three by attainment. The others used a variety of methods.

In 22 schools teaching methods were a mixture of class, group and individual teaching : one used class-teaching mainly, two group-teaching mainly. Six arranged inter-class setting for basic subjects. Most of the schools reported a co-operative attitude from teachers; in three the attitude was 'tolerant' and in only one 'hostile'. Twelve schools reported a co-operative attitude from parents, nine 'tolerant' and one 'mixed'. The rest thought it too early to comment. None reported hostility. Asked which ability groups benefited most from unstreaming, five said the low groups, six the middle groups and 15 all groups. Three head teachers thought unstreaming had slightly lowered the standards of the brighter children, but the rest had found no lowering. All agreed that the effect on the curriculum had been a broadening one, bringing greater freedom. In almost every case the comment was made that the school was a happier place.

The discussion

In the discussion that followed, Mr. Wilkinson, from Stoke-on-Trent, said two of the speakers had said they withdrew small groups for special treatment in reading. Was that not begging the question? Mr. Freeland said he thought this was merely to be realistic—it was legitimate in the early years to use any device to minimise the differences between children.

Mr. R. S. Fisher said he felt the attitude towards remedial work was crucial. Regarding remedial work as a means of bringing children back into the mainstream was one thing—segregating on the basis of the belief that certain children could not progress beyond a certain point was quite another matter. Most of us were empirical and suspicious of educational theory—with reason : this protected us from theoretical extravagances, but it had the bad effect that it made us forget that educational practice is based willy-nilly on a theory. Our present theory decided which children should *not* be educated.

Mr. Pemberton, from Yorkshire, said it seemed to him that to assess properly what had been claimed for non-streamed schools you would need to know what sort of buildings and children they had. New buildings attracted good staff. In reply, Mr. Linfield said the three schools he had taught at dated from 1874, 1931 and 1958. Dr. Daniels said that of the four schools he studied, two were in post-war buildings and the other two in pre-war buildings, all on council estates. Mr. Adams said his own school was old and very inconvenient.

Mr. Jinks, of Leicester, said that he went to a school with an entry of 135 a year from the infants school. He could have had 'A', 'B' and 'C' classes of 45 each, or a small 'C' class of thirty and 'A' and 'B' classes of fifty plus. He solved the problem by creating three equal unstreamed classes of 45. It was hard work but they felt everyone was benefiting; his own time was better spent in dealing with small groups in his class while the 15 academic children were doing bookish work he could mark later.

Mr. Morris, from West Hampstead, whose school has been unstreamed since 1955, drew attention to the problem of supply teachers. These were of very mixed quality and it was extremely difficult to tell them what stage a class had reached. His solution was to get leading members of a class to put the teacher right. A quarter of his school was of foreign origin. If he streamed, the 'A' stream would be mainly English; the 'B' stream would consist of West Indians, Nigerians, Ghanaians, Indians and so on. He had an off-quota teacher for half the week, and what he did was to get this teacher to take each class for two periods while the class teacher took the children with reading difficulties.

Mr. Neil, from Scunthorpe, said that Mr. Morris's contribution had been the most valuable of the conference. The general statements made during the conference were known by all to be true : what were needed were particular statements of what to do in the schools from day to day. He himself was disturbed by the fact that there were a number of teachers, doing their best, who could not take unstreamed classes. One of the things training colleges would not do was to teach young teachers how to organise their classes. In an unstreamed class you had to be a better organiser than you needed to be in a streamed class : you had to keep daily records of each child's progress. It was in this field that our teaching fell down. For some reason or another class teaching had fallen into disrepute; he had heard many excellent lessons given to three children, with 39 others paying no attention whatever. He believed this had happened because people were frightened of being accused of *chalk and talk*. Problems like this were real, and it would be a disservice to the cause of non-streaming if the difficulties that faced the ordinary teacher in the classroom were minimised.

Mr. Rees, of Andover, said he had unstreamed his school five years ago. He had a teacher in the backward class, taking 12 children; but the children were

'Streaming' in Primary and Secondary Schools

This report was drawn up for the West Riding Education Committee by Mr. A. B. Clegg, the Chief Education Officer. Although excerpts were given in the educational press last year, the full report will certainly be of interest to FORUM readers. We are grateful to Mr. Clegg for permission to reproduce the text here.

The practice of 'streaming' in schools is currently receiving close scrutiny, and it is the purpose of this memorandum to draw the attention of the Committee to some of the reasons for concern about it.

When children are admitted into large primary or secondary schools at the age of 7 and 11, it is common practice to divide each age group into class groups according to their ability and for the most part to keep them in these groups as they progress up the school. The main principle behind this is that clever children learn more quickly than those who are less clever, and it is desirable that the former should not be held back by the latter.

The organisation of schools in this way is relatively recent. As late as the 'twenties children in elementary schools were grouped not in age groups but according to the standard they could achieve. This system of standards was established under the old 'Code' which laid down that children 'who could read a short paragraph from a book not confined to words of one syllable, who could copy in manuscript character a line of print, do simple addition and subtraction of numbers, and who knew the multiplication table up to 6 × 12, should be placed in Standard I regardless of age'.

In the 'twenties the disadvantage of teaching, for example, children of 8 with children of 13 was realised, and children were promoted according to age. Once this was done, streaming the age group according to ability followed almost as a matter of course in order to obtain homogeneous classes. Small schools, however, could not be streamed, as their teachers had to teach a class in which the individuals varied both in age and ability. This was done, and is still done, by teaching them in groups.

Criticism of streaming

Some of the present criticism of the practice of streaming is undoubtedly valid.

In this county, the N.U.T. has drawn the attention of the Education Officer to the fact that proportionately more children born between January and

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CONFERENCE ON NON-STREAMING (*cont.*)

in that class only for part of the day. He had a much happier school than before.

Mrs. Ensor, of Highgate, speaking as a parent, asked Dr. Daniels to say something about the particular benefits of unstreaming for the bright children. In California, where she came from, they were busily and excitedly engaged in *streaming*. Dr. Daniels said an attempt to switch from non-streaming to streaming was made twenty years ago in New York and had been a complete failure. Assessment was difficult, for education, besides being an acquiring of skills, was a social process and a network of relationships. But in an unstreamed school, for a considerable part of the day, the brighter ones would be helping the backward ones: they tended to be rather better teachers on specific points than teachers themselves, and there was no better way of sharpening the understanding than to have yourself to do some teaching.

Summing up the day's discussion, Mr. Walton said he hoped a similar conference would be called in the North of England. But it was clear that members of the audience were hoping that something other than further conferences might come out of the day's proceedings. He asked for suggestions. Mr. Fisher wondered if FORUM might not publish a collection of articles going more deeply into the question of non-streaming. Mr. Linfield said the question of such a symposium would be raised at the next meeting of the FORUM board.

September fall into the C and D streams than is the case with children born between August and December. Some say that this is because the younger children are admitted later into the infant schools; others that it is due to the fact that the younger children, because of their limited attainment, tend even at the infant stage to be put into the C streams and treated accordingly. It is probably due to a combination of the two, but, whatever the reason, as things are at present parents who produce children who are unlikely to go to grammar schools would be wise to arrange for them to be born in the autumn.

The headmaster of Weston Lane School, Otley, who is one of a number of heads in the county who have unstreamed their junior school, gave positive reasons for his actions in an article which he wrote in FORUM.

> 'The atmosphere in the A classes was bright and had the zest to which I had been used, but there was developing in the B classes a dullness and lack of interest which was most disturbing. More particularly, the top children in the B stream were falling farther and farther behind the bottom children in the A stream so that transfers up or down were apparently justified in very few cases.
>
> 'The result of streaming was quite clear. The school was rapidly becoming two schools under one roof. There were two standards of work, of behaviour, of cleanliness, even two standards of table manners. Most regrettable of all, there was a tendency for members of staff to look on their colleagues as either A or B teachers.'

A recent enquiry

The children's own reactions to streaming have recently been revealed by essays written by 160 children in the C, D and E streams of secondary modern schools in the county on the topic, 'What I like and what I do not like about being in a C or D stream'. The children were encouraged to write freely but no advice was given to them.

There were three main reasons for liking the form in which they were placed. Forty-nine of them said they liked being with their form friends, 39 said the work was easier, and 21 emphasised the personal attention they received.

The reasons for dislike are somewhat more cogent. Nineteen said they were neglected or too often blamed. Nineteen also mentioned feelings of inferiority which were distasteful to them, 14 said that they would not get a good job because they were in a low stream, and 15 complained in one way or another that they were given insufficient responsibility.

Reasons for liking their form

1. *Being with friends*

The form tends to be a homogeneous group and its members acceptable to each other. Being with one's own kind gives a feeling of security which many commented on and probably more took for granted. As a 4C boy put it, 'We understand each other, we do not talk posh and we don't want to. We do the same things: when we buy something we are always willing to share it. We are not perfect angels but we are not bad ones!' More simply, a boy from 4E, 'There are a lot of nice lads and lasses in our class.' The same sentiment came from 3E, 'There's nothing I don't like about being in 3E. I wouldn't change class for anything in the world.'

Movement into a new class can be frightening: 'On the day of my return and my entry into the fourth form I felt slightly older and scared too, partly because I felt some members of my new form did not accept me as one of them.'

2. *Easier work*

Almost all the writers, when asking themselves whether they would prefer to be in another form, were inevitably thinking of a higher form; they were not thinking of lower or unstreamed forms. They were content to work within their own capacity and did not want to face harder work. 'If I was moved to 3B I would be like a dope to them because they can do it better.' Or from 2C, 'I wouldn't settle in 2B: I don't like the sums they do—they are hard ones.' Or, more explicitly still, from a boy in the remedial form who will in all probability welcome release from even the simplest reading when he leaves school, 'I am not Brane a nuff, if I was Brane a nuff By all menes, if I was Brani I would like to very much.'

3. *Personal attention*

As might well be expected, good teachers were deeply appreciated. They were respected and loved for their patience, interest, help, and above all for their understanding. Again from 4R comes this moving tribute, 'We also have very understanding teacher (on average) who seem to enjoy the lesson just as much as we do and that is half the battle.' 'It is no longer a bore coming to school because we have found interest in what we do he helps us all he can . . . it makes me anyway feel more in it and not out of the lesson has I use to before.' 'The teachers helps us in lots of ways they pay a lot of attention to us more than other classes' . . . 'they go more slowly about the lessons.'

Reasons for dislike

1. *Personal neglect and blame*

Just as personal attention was appreciated, so neglect and blame were lamented. Often complaints were of a personal nature: 'I don't like Holy Joe because wenever we come into is room he treats us like convicts he says we ort never to be in this school.'

Some forms felt particularly ill done by—'if anything crops up in or around school 4C usualy get blamed'. Harsh discipline was resented, but so was indiscipline. It was lack of those qualities which are mentioned in the preceding section that really mattered—'But sum teacher just say pens and pencil out and get going' (4R). ' . . . the teacher all ways saying shut up or I cain the lot of you, but I like Art because the teacher is so kind . . . he doesnt shout at us' (2D).

2. *Feelings of inferiority*

Feelings of inferiority were widespread from the first to the fourth year. The pupils were made very much aware of their inferior position by other children's attitudes towards them and by their parents' and friends' remarks.

Attitudes inside the school drew these comments:

'When you go in 2C people tease you about it and they say I'm in 2B and your in 2C your a dunce but I'm brainy.'

'Sum Boys says I am daft becast I am in 2C.'

'Some of the A form Girls dont talk to C Forms because they are in A Forms.'

'I don't like 3D because the higher form would push you over than walk round you, allso they think that we are not hallowed to be at this school.'

'Practicly everybody treats you like a scruff' (4E).

These criticisms, and the feelings they produce, are by no means restricted to school:

'If any body askes me what form I was in I would be a bit ashamed.'

'When visitors come and see that Im in 2C I feel that they are saying to themselves "that person must not be very brainy in things she is teached" and I feel terrible.'

'My friends laugh at me and my mother said only bad skholars go into IC.'

' . . . when my mother starts to complane about me being in 2D and the famlay in, I feel a fool.'

'If you tell outsiders that you are in a d form they think we are not very clean . . . '

Such comments are very frequent and it is small wonder that the girls in 4C and D avoid the stigma that comes from telling their boy friends what form they are in.

Sometimes the staff contribute to these feelings of inferiority by referring to 'C Form handwriting' or 'D type behaviour'. Such cases fortunately are rare.

3. *Better jobs*

Particularly in the later years of school life the C and D children realise that to get a good job they must be able to claim, if not a certificate, at least an A or B Form background. Although many mentioned this, few elaborated upon it. But the boy at the very bottom of the ability range has no doubts—'I would santd a beter canst of get a good job in a work whit you like but all 4R are good for is the pit filling tubs and clevering roads why the B class get the top jobs.'

4. *Lack of responsibility*

There was some resentment that prefects and monitors should always come from the A and B streams; proportional representation was suggested by some. Others just disliked those who had this authority and had little desire and certainly no hope of emulating them. It was, of course, in the fourth year that this sort of comment occurred most: 'I just dont think its fair that all the prefects should be chosen out of the A & B.'

In many of the essays practical work in the crafts was singled out as something which not only gave pleasure but was believed by many to have a vocational purpose, but this was equally so in the A and B and in the C and D streams. On the other hand, some lessons were condemned as profitless.

What is clear is that the children who wrote these essays are very keenly aware of what 'streaming' means and of the significance of their position in the hierarchy which leads from A to D.

They enjoy the natural security offered by their form group and few of them wish to leave it. Most of them appreciate the easier nature of the work they do and their own academic limitations. They also appreciate the personal attention, understanding and care which some teachers show them.

Likewise they are as sensitive as most of us to undue neglect and censure; they dislike those teachers who bully and those who do not try to understand. Some of them feel they should be given a little more responsibility, a chance to show what they, too, can do if trusted; many of them prefer working with their hands creating things they can understand. Others fear they may not land a good job.

Conclusions

The case against streaming has not yet been established but when we know that children born in the later months of the year are disproportionately represented in the C and D streams of modern

English in an Unstreamed School

EILEEN SAUNDERS

Miss Sanders has taught in both Primary and Secondary schools and is at present Headmistress of Thornhill Junior School, Southampton. She lectures on junior school work for the Institute of Education, Southampton University, and was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1958.

One of the aims of all types of schools is to provide children with skills to communicate with others and to express their ideas both orally and through the written word. To do this adequately the atmosphere within the school and the class must encourage the child to talk and to write freely without fear of ridicule or blame, so long as he speaks and writes in good faith and gives of his best. The opportunity to discuss and to write must also be given him and this must not be limited to the amount of written work his teacher can mark, but limited solely by his own capabilities, and therefore in an unstreamed school the quantity and quality of the work will vary within the class to a much greater degree than in classes of a school where the children are streamed according to ability. The organisation of the class-work will be complicated and the success of the teaching of English will depend to a great extent on the organising ability of the teacher, and the skill with which each individual child's interests are used to provide an urge to write and present the best work possible.

To a great extent the child's efforts will be influenced by the expected fate of his work. The spread of the standard of content, the use of vocabulary, and the length of the finished work in an unstreamed

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schools, that these streams have more than their share of delinquents and truants, and that the pupils in them are conscious of inferiority and rejection, the practice of streaming is surely one which heads of schools should be encouraged to scrutinise closely.

This is, of course, already happening. For instance, more and more grammar schools which used to stream their pupils on entry are delaying the process one and even two years, and some rely entirely on setting for different subjects. Moreover, more primary schools are likely to unstream when they realise that there is no evidence that those who have already done so have secured fewer grammar school places as a result thereof.

In connection with the whole problem it is important to bear in mind that the resentments which the children express are not so much the result of streaming as of the attitudes in others for which streaming is responsible.

If in any school the D stream children stood high in the affections of the head and staff, if they could command the expert teaching strength which their deficiencies in ability require, if they received their full share of the school's amenities and were deliberately given such responsibilities as they could shoulder, and if their inability were not condemned as if it were idleness, it is unlikely that being in the D stream would have the effect that it so patently does have on many children. The damage only occurs if faith in the children is rationed or expectations of them limited.

Even so, to put a child into a D stream is to classify him according to his inferiority and he knows it. Those of us who do this would hesitate to compel into one group all the girls who were plain or all the boys who were puny on the grounds that this would emphasise their deficiency to an unbearably hurtful extent. It is a curious fact that when in other circumstances we group together children who are inferior in some way—the defective, the blind, or the deaf—their deficiencies attract sympathy and pity. Yet one feels from these essays that this does not happen with the D stream child. All too often he feels that he is lightly regarded, and at worst what in him is a mental disability is treated as if it were a culpable defect. How widespread the feelings in these essays are we do not know, but the Committee will realise that the essays themselves come from schools in which the heads were brave enough to ask for criticism and honest enough to reveal it. They are, in fact, from schools where the children in the C and D streams are likely to receive consideration well above the average.

class is wide but not so the presentation of the work. If each child knows that his best effort will be mounted and shown on the classroom wall or in communal books or in some other way include a wider public than his teacher and himself, then the general standard within the class, despite the varied abilities, will be high. The possibility of a wide public for his work will help much in the desire to write, so now the teacher must endeavour to see that each child is asked to express himself through a project that fires his imagination.

The incentive may be a class magazine in which all the children's varied articles are incorporated, written in their own handwriting and illustrated by themselves. This will be for all the class to read and published at irregular intervals when the work for an edition is completed. The magazine should never become the master and control the work of the class but be used as and when it is convenient, and not have too long nor too regular a life so that the issuing of the magazine becomes a burden instead of a joyful occupation. A school magazine is different in that it will be a regular termly or annual publication which will be printed and contain the best and most original work of the whole school. This latter is most valuable for the publicity of the work of the more gifted children in each class, and especially so if there is a permanent editor to whom work may be submitted throughout the year.

The habit of spending some time each day writing a passage of free expression is of great value in the unstreamed class for here each child writes at his own level of technical skill and sustained effort. The results of this daily work give a guide to the teacher of the work required to improve the skill of different children, and he can also note which of the more common mistakes are causing trouble in the written expression of the class as a whole. If this daily writing takes the form of a diary or news book then the children will require guidance and encouragement in the form of suggestions as to development, and there might well be a progression as the child matures, from the writing of personal news to school news, to the life of his neighbourhood, and then his town and finally world events.

Most children enjoy writing letters if there is a reason for the effort, therefore letter-writing will be a constant means of providing practice in communicating on paper. If a child is away sick or on holiday or moves to another neighbourhood, then the whole class may write to communicate and comment on the class and school news of the time, and ask questions which are to be answered by the recipient. These letters will vary according to the individual skill of each child, but all will want to send a letter, and the only reason for the exclusion of any child's effort would be that it was below the standard that could be expected from him or her. Opportunities for sending letters are limitless and may include letters to other schools or departments, sending of invitations to Open Evenings and School Events or letters of thanks for help given or interest taken in the school. Replies to these letters are of great value too, especially if written by the children who are absent from school. It is very difficult to sustain a lengthy period of correspondence between pen-friends at this age but the few children who are capable of this should be given the opportunity and encouragement to do so.

In the lively classroom practice in written and oral English is given throughout the day and in all subjects. There will be simple research work when the children will record by word and picture the knowledge they have gleaned from their teacher supplemented by their reading in the fields of history, geography and natural science. The success of this means of communicating knowledge will vary within an unstreamed class but all will be working on a common topic and pooling work which is accepted from each child according to his ability. All children from the brightest to the slowest will contribute to the final group of booklets, to the information sheets on the wall, or to the museum and nature collections which are most useful when they are carefully arranged and provided with informative notices. The class care of a pet will also provide opportunities for writing and the compiling of records of its care, progress and antics. Scripture lessons will add their quota to the volume of written work with the composition of stories or the re-telling of well-known passages from the Bible in the children's own words, or the original composition of prayers for use in class or school services.

There will be some children in an unstreamed class who do not respond enthusiastically to any of these incentives towards written English but would be willing to write about their current efforts in handwork. With help from their teacher and/or their more gifted fellow-pupils they will concentrate upon a factual account of how a model was constructed, and with encouragement, attempt an imaginative piece of work with the created model as the inspiration. These children's minds are stimulated through some actual work of the hands rather than through abstract ideas. Art may also be a channel through which children's ideas are directed towards a finished piece of written work, in the composition of which there has been enthusiasm and delight. The whole of an unstreamed class may have worked on a composite picture such as a circus, or on a common subject such as a tramp, and then been directed towards a composition which may be imaginative or

descriptive or a factual account of how the picture came into being.

Other children within each class will be almost untouched by all these efforts to provide opportunities for willing co-operation in written work but are most enthusiastic about the mathematical aspect of their education. These children may increase their powers of communication by concentrating on mathematical topics such as the history of number and the origin of our weights and measures or on writing stories told by graphs, particularly if these are on school activities such as school fund, attendance, sizes in shoes of the class, pets kept by the class, maximum and minimum temperatures, or barometer readings. A further stimulus to writing for children is through reports of games played, school visits, or any events of interest which will be communicated to the class or, if of general interest, to the whole school at morning assembly. At the top end of the scale the more able children in each class will be extended if given the opportunity to write about their fresh experiences and newly acquired knowledge in the fields of science and mathematics or to compile reports from their study and observation through the use of meteorological instruments.

The detailed marking of the volume of work that will be produced by an unstreamed class of children who are eager to express themselves through the written word will be impossible. The conscientious teacher will correct as much as is practicable, and read and make general comment on the remainder of the work but never limit any child's output to the quantity he can manage to supervise in detail. This perennial problem will be partially solved by the use of many small books for the work rather than one larger book. Plain paper is preferable to lined and the children should be encouraged to illustrate and decorate the pages so that they are proud of the standard of presentation.

It is essential in an unstreamed school to provide many different types of text books for formal work instead of one book to be used by the whole class. The children are made aware of their own weaknesses and are directed to practice work according to their needs instead of wasting time working endless objective exercises which the majority perform correctly and therefore did not require the practice in that particular skill. The most beneficial kind of English exercise work is that which deals with the study of words so that an interest in both the sound and the meaning of words is encouraged. This vocabulary work will cover a wide range of words according to the ability and home background of each child.

ENGLISH IN AN UNSTREAMED SCHOOL (*cont.*)

Throughout the work much may be done in each class to prevent mistakes by the use of dictionaries, or advice from the teacher or other children who are capable of helping their weaker friends. The constant writing of errors helps to impress the mistakes on the child's mind rather than the correct form. Spelling must also be learnt and time given to this but on words that the child is likely to use or will come across in his reading or has already proved that he cannot spell. The degree of difficulty will vary so that children will be grouped and a few at either end of the ability scale will require individual guidance.

Punctuation is another skill which requires systematic teaching and regular practice the degree of which will vary within the class according to the ability of the children. Reference to the well printed book will help some children to acquire a high standard in the use of punctuation in their work. Time must be given to the correct formation and spacing of these symbols, and this may be stressed in the time used for the setting down of work.

A widening of vocabulary and the development of style is brought about by the class sharing with the teacher a book of literary merit which is read to the class. The choice of book must be carefully considered so that the degree of difficulty is such that the majority of the class could not enjoy the work were it not for the teacher's reading which needs to be of a very high standard. Another literary treat which is shared by all is the enjoyment of poetry when the children are lead towards an appreciation of the poet's economical use of words and to realise that the effect is heightened by the very order and sound of the words. Many children of this age enjoy writing their own poetry and compiling anthologies within the class. Encouragement to join the Public Library and guidance in the intelligent use of the facilities provided there and in the class will play its part in the development of each child's skill in both written and oral English.

The teacher's problem in the unstreamed class is to be sure that each child is producing the best work of which he is capable. The highest standard will come from the willing child who is eager to express himself and to communicate his ideas and thoughts. The degree of his willingness will depend to a large extent on a congenial atmosphere with a happy relationship between all who belong to the class coupled with an air of liveliness, trust and vitality. In order to show his true ability in the use of the English language a child must be asked to express himself on a topic about which he has something to say.

Poetry and Personality

ROGER MANSFIELD

The traditional idea that written work in English exists mainly to provide the teacher with a means of discovering what linguistic deficiencies in his children need eliminating is rapidly being replaced by more exciting concepts. Today less emphasis is placed on spelling and grammar and more upon encouraging children to write honestly and sincerely from first hand experience.

It has been recognised for some years that uninhibited written expression, along with free drama and art, can provide a valuable outlet for the hidden conflicts in maladjusted and emotionally disturbed children. Their writing quite frequently and naturally takes the form of poetry, unsophisticated and intense.

The return

One day my grandmother died;
But it was very funny in a way
Because my granny used to say
    I will die,
    I will die.
She was eighty three and used to say to me
    Go and buy my beer
    Buy my beer
And I keep thinking of things
That will happen to me
When my grandmother has gone.
What will I do?
What will I do?
Will I go too?
I am even frightened to go to bed
In case I don't wake up.
O mummy! what will I do?

(Girl, 13 years)

Such poetry, written with the driving force of emotion behind it, can also lead to a marked development of personality in many 'normal' children. Adolescents, for example, often appear over-confident and aggressive because they are unsure of their own thoughts and emotions and their relative position in society. Analysing their feelings and communicating them through the concentrated medium of poetry can help to give teenagers a clearer picture of themselves.

This 'self-awareness' can begin with straightforward reviews of immediate surroundings and events.

My road

An old road
A grey road
A cautious road
A silent road
A dead road.

Look out

The pad of paws across the gravel of the road.
A queer sort of yelp.
The terror in its eyes.
A mad screech of tortured tyres.
A lump rises in your throat.
Running feet.
Horrified faces.
A scream of terror.
The twisted body crumpled in the dust of the road.

And eventually extend to their reactions to both particular and more general issues.

One afternoon

It was a most beautiful
afternoon.
The rich smell of the long green grass
was overpowering.
As we lay in the long green
grass.
And felt the soft caress of the blades.
It was so quiet
we could almost hear the billowing of the
clouds.
As we lay in the long green grass
hand in hand.
Then we kissed
quickly.
And for a moment we were able to leave
this world of hate and
sorrow.
Then we kissed again
and this time you kissed hard and greedily
in the beauty and
quiet
of the afternoon and the long green grass.
And a feeling of nausea
came over me—
because you had spoilt it all by being
greedy.

(*continued on page* 71)

Discussion

Glasgow Query

Mr. Macrae's article on 'Comprehensive Education in Scotland' was far from convincing. It left too many questions unanswered. Before his claim that Glasgow 'is moving rapidly towards comprehensive education' can be substantiated, he must tell us how the three categories of pupils he mentions, SCE pupils, J.S.1 pupils, and J.S.2 pupils are distributed between the two types of school, four-year secondary and six-year secondary. If, as I suspect, all SCE pupils go to a six-year secondary, all J.S.2 and the majority of J.S.1 pupils go to a four-year secondary, then we simply have the old hierarchy of superior senior secondary and inferior junior secondary all over again. The fact that the selection of the pupils is done by a committee of headmasters instead of the old control examination is beside the point. Indeed, many parents and not a few teachers would prefer the old test, which at least had the merit of being objective.

We cannot get round the principle that a truly comprehensive system means that all children go to the same type of school, and any categorisation that takes place is done inside the school. Mr. Macrae knows that since the introduction of the new 'O' Grade in the Scottish Certificate of Education many Junior Secondary schools are adding a fourth year; this does not make them into comprehensive schools.

HARRY MILNE,
Leith Academy, Edinburgh

Problems in Comprehensives

(Notes based on three years' teaching on a supply or temporary basis in two London Comprehensives.)

It seems to me that the central problem facing the new Comprehensives is the transition from domination to co-operation in the relations between heads and their staffs, and between head and staff on the one hand and the pupils on the other. We badly need new and better methods of consultation.

Co-operation between teachers and pupils is at its worst in the lower school and in the forms of fourth year leavers in the upper school. Where it is bad, this is caused:

(a) by teachers having oversize forms and too many of them, and so far too little time for marking, preparing and planning their work. The staff-pupil ratio in S.E. London Comprehensives has been cut twice in two years;

(b) by the very high rate of turn-over of staff and the high ratio of temporary, supply, and exchange teachers, and the failure to study the difficulties arising from this and to make any real effort to mitigate its evil effects;

(c) by streaming, both in the primary and in the secondary school;

(d) by the tendency to ape the grammar and public school, in curriculum, method, and organisation, when in fact a wholly new approach is needed;

(e) by afternoon school.

With regard to (c) above, it is significant that the 'A' stream forms, which do not obviously suffer from the streaming system, and are shielded as far as possible from over-frequent changes of staff, are almost invariably co-operative For the rest, a great deal of the harm is done on their very first day in the Comprehensive.

Four years in the junior school have given these children a pretty good idea of what to expect, if you fail to get into the 'A' stream, both from teachers and from parents: and finding themselves once more among the rejected, they are hardly likely to be predisposed towards co-operation with those responsible.

Add to this that disturbed emotional relations, either with adults or with other children, are very often the cause of a child failing to make, or remain in, the 'A' stream, and it is not surprising that in the Comprehensives as I know them there are different levels of classroom discipline in the different streams.

'A' stream forms, for example, do not often put wet French Letters or other phallic objects on women teachers' desks in hope of embarrassing them, but, as one headmaster insists, in the 'oblique' streams 'We have to face the fact that this happens'.

The most difficult and embittered forms are often the third year 'B's'. With an intake of over 400 first year pupils, many 'B's' must be excluded from the 'A' stream by little more than a single mark: in other words, they are 'B's' more for an administrative than for any other reason: five more chairs in each of three form rooms, and fifteen of them might be 'A's' By the time they get to the third year they realise that as a result of suffering more changes of staff, carrying a larger proportion of the less co-operative elements, and the other disadvantages of belonging to a lower stream, they have fallen noticeably behind the 'A' forms, and they realise that this was not inevitable; it has happened to them.

I have noticed other causes of distress in 'B', 'C', and 'D' forms. 'Why don't we do French?' asks C.1. 'B.3. do, and Miss Smith says we work as well as they do!'

'A and B forms have textbooks for History and they take them home for homework: why can't we?'

Two London Comprehensives have in the past year made some attempt at unstreaming. One tried an entirely unstreamed first year, the other a first year streamed into four main streams with three parallel classes in each stream. Both have now abandoned the attempt.

The reason given seems to be that the English and mathematics teachers, or some of them, found that teaching what they called mixed ability 'A' forms presented difficulties. [As the range of scholastic attainment is almost invariably much greater in 'B' forms than it is in 'A's' and often greater in 'C' than 'B' and so on, this would seem as much an argument against streaming as for it.]

One difficulty of the Comprehensive at present is that a great many of the teachers have a poor opinion of their human material. I should estimate that less than

5 per cent of them would send a child of their own to a comprehensive in preference to a grammar school if they had the choice, and many are convinced that to get comprehensive children through G.C.E there must be good solid cramming from the very first year. There is a tendency, therefore, for the worst features of the grammar school, an over-academic and G.C.E.-conscious approach, to afflict the 'A' stream and spread out over the rest of the school: sometimes 'B', 'C', and 'D' forms have to tackle a highly academic syllabus worked out for the 'A's' but with some of the 'harder' bits left out

Contrariwise, in the school which had an unstreamed first year for a time it was noticed that teachers found a new approach was called for, and as there were many of them all confronted with the same problems at the same time, there was more lively and useful discussion of teaching matter and method than had ever previously been heard in those parts.

In 1863, N. W. Senior told a Social Science Congress that afternoon school uselessly added to the labour of a teacher, 'while he not only fruitlessly but absolutely injuriously, wastes the time, health, and energy of the children'. I have myself been responsible for marking the school-leaving examination paper over several years from a school where the children had lessons for only three hours a day and worked for the rest of the day on a copra plantation: with no special advantages of staff or equipment or any other factor these children regularly achieved a better-than-average percentage of full passes. On the other hand, in London primary and secondary schools over the last fifteen years I have met form after form that could and would work with energy and keenness in morning school, whereas teaching them in the afternoon was like pushing water uphill. If we want willing co-operation from our comprehensive pupils we must devise a school day more reasonably divided between school lessons and other forms of activity: it may be that one form of activity we should include is some sort of work which is obviously useful to the school or its environs. KEN FORGE.

A Disastrous Paper?

We wish to offer some comments on the 1962 Use of English Paper of the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board, in the belief that discussion of this paper is not only desirable but also urgent. The paper seems to us unsatisfactory for reasons which we hope to make clear, not the least of which are its presumed effects on sixth-form studies. *Our comments assume that readers will scrutinize them in conjunction with the question-paper.*

Question 1, which is presumably meant to occupy most of the candidate's time, asks for a précis of a prose passage, and for comments on the passage in answer to the following questions: '(b) (i) Is it clearly expressed? (If you think not, indicate obscurities.) (ii) Is it self-consistent? (If not, point out any inconsistency you detect.) (iii) Is it applicable to your own experience?' Our answer to (i) is that it is not clearly expressed, but that to talk of 'obscurities' is misleading, since the real issue in this passage is one of content, of the author's whole attitude, rather than one of mere syntactical obscurity: the basic question involves not clarity of expression, but the fundamental clarity and rightness of thought. The question, however, suggests that candidates are being asked to accept, to subscribe to, the rightness of the content, the attitude, and merely refine the means of communication; but the communication is faulty at the level of premise, idea, and awareness, and candidates are being invited to scratch the surface, in attending to 'expression' and particular obscurities. As for (ii), the passage's self-consistency is well-nigh impossible to determine, because its vague generalisations, lack of examples, loose comparisons and apparent non-sequiturs render examination of its dialectic impossible. Again, as in (i), what is requisite—and what a good candidate might well enjoy—is a fundamental questioning of the whole content, and nothing less. As for the précis, what is the virtue of summarising a passage of this kind, of acting as a passive accomplice in the regurgitation of inevitably ill-digested and uninteresting material?

Question 2 tests the candidate's knowledge of synonyms, and operates at a level more appropriate to the third year of the secondary modern school than to a university-entrance paper: certainly it is difficult to see how candidates, in answering this question, can demonstrate the quality of their literacy. The rubric of the first part reads: 'Bring out the meaning that may be intended by the word *good* in each of the following sentences by substituting one or more alternative words. Re-write each sentence with your substitutions.' Such a rubric seems to us unsatisfactory in its vagueness and in the difficulties it may create in the correlation of marking; as for 'one or more', surely the candidate should be allowed to know where he stands, and *exactly* what the examiner is looking for? Specifically, '(iii) Be a good boy and do what I tell you' seems to invite the answer: 'Be an obedient boy and do what I tell you'. But whose usage is this? Is the tautology acceptable? In a normal living context it is not simply obedience which is at issue; it is, rather, the whole complex of attitude and response, which can be conveyed only by the word 'good'. The examiners, by offering isolated sentences abstracted from a meaningful context, are inviting candidates, possibly against their better judgment, to adopt an artificial and mechanical response to language so that words, losing their 'halo' of agreed meaning, become mere abstract counters, apparently precise, but in fact deprived of essential overtone and dimension. The second part of the question reads: 'Distinguish three main ways of using the word *good,* basing your answer on the examples given and adding others if you wish.' This again is an unsatisfactory rubric since it lacks firmness and clarity: 'How many others?' one asks. 'Where does one stop? Are the others marked? If so, why "if you wish"?' Furthermore, the question tends to assess explicitly what should have been elicited implicitly in the answers to the first part.

Lack of space precludes further detailed examination of particular questions: suffice it to say that Question 2 (c) still seems to us, after careful scrutiny and discussion, quite pointless; and the essay-question is relegated,

Some Thoughts on Equality

K. NEUBERG

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In a world of increasing standardisation many thoughtful people rightly fear whatever makes for greater uniformity, but wrongly suspect the champions of equality of wanting to bring about such uniformity and wanting to get rid of all diversity. Egalitarians themselves are partly responsible for this misconception. In their fight against unwarranted discrimination and privilege their positive statements are only too often confined to fervent proclamations of the equality of all men. These lend themselves to misinterpretations which are then often given prominence by those whose privileges are threatened.

Not even the most fanatical egalitarian has ever meant to suggest that human beings are equal in all respects or that the ideal society is one in which such equality is attained. What he may have done is to point out that all men possessed certain characteristics—a common capacity for feeling pleasure and pain, for example, by virtue of which they should have an equal chance to lead a satisfying life. Not that the egalitarian's case depends on the demonstration of any identical qualities shared by all men. In fact this has not proved a particularly reliable argument as it is dependent on the findings of physiologists, psychologists and others, findings which are subject to change. It is perfectly possible to acknowledge the diversity of human talents, potentialities and natural endowments of all kinds, and not only to acknowledge such diversity but to glory in it, and yet to hold on to one's egalitarian convictions. Nor is there any need to deny that certain abilities are valued for certain functions and that key positions in a complex society must be occupied by people who excel in particular respects. It does not follow from this, however, that any one person is of more account than any other or that a particular group constitutes an élite in a general sense. Any such claim would violate a fundamental egalitarian belief, namely that all human beings matter and matter equally.

This belief deserves much greater prominence than is usually given to it in discussions on equality. It has been asserted by some on religious grounds, others have claimed its self-evident character. However, it is not essential to fall back either on revelation or on intuition. While a commitment can never be simply deduced from facts it need not therefore be irrational, and it is indeed in the light of reasoning and as a result of experience, much of it very bitter experience, that many people have arrived at the belief that every individual is of equal intrinsic importance, no matter how unattractive, weak, dull or corrupt he may be. It is related to the simple 'thatness', not the 'suchness', of persons. At a superficial level the belief is generally endorsed, but the extent to which it is violated suggests that its acceptance at any deep level cannot be taken for granted.

School education far from exemplifying and promoting this belief indeed bears much responsibility for undermining it. Schools, perhaps by their very nature, tend to highlight certain kinds of excellence in most of their curricular activities, and it is only too easy for children as well as teachers to confuse some particular thing in which a few excel with the surpassing merit of these few as against the rest. This tendency is given additional emphasis by the constant rating and labelling which is so striking a feature of many schools today. Nor is there much likelihood of any abatement of this tendency. On the contrary, with ever fiercer international economic competition and the consequent stepping up of the talent hunt the inclination to select, stream and segregate will be strengthened rather than weakened. It is not that egalitarians try to keep a lid on individual aspirations and that they grudge intellectually able children the chance to develop their gifts. On the contrary, it is largely thanks to the spread of egalitarian ideas that opportunities to cultivate talents are no longer confined to the privileged few. But the war against privilege was not waged in order to exchange one kind of stratification for another. The object was to provide greater equality of opportunity to find personal fulfilment and to make a valued contribution to the life of the community, not merely opportunity to get to the top.

DISCUSSION (*cont.*)

with seeming ignominy, to the end of the paper, and then further curtailed, with an illiberality which one had hoped was peculiar to R.S.A. English papers, to 'about 400 words'. Moreover, two of the three topics offered don't seem to allow the candidate to show the quality of his response to *real* knowledge and experience.

We end by suggesting that the effects, on sixth-form teaching, of a paper which stresses précis, comprehension, and the hunting of synonyms, could well be disastrous.

CHARLES BASHAM

GEOFFREY SUMMERFIELD

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The equal intrinsic importance of all children demands much generous and human concern on the part of teachers. Impartiality is not enough, important though it is, just as in the wider community equality under the law is not enough. Impartiality after all is quite consistent with a judgment that all the children in one's D-stream class deserve to be treated with equal contempt. What is called for is genuine care, sensitiveness and warmth of personal sympathy, coupled with respect and moral concern for every child's dignity, autonomy and integrity. Nor is this a one-sided affair. A similar concern must be cultivated in the children themselves. They must learn to give as well as to receive, to be considerate, to respect other people's feelings, and not to treat their fellows as things.

There are many handicaps, not least the teacher's own educational background. Graduate teachers in particular, preoccupied as they have been for many years with examination success and with academic attainment, have much to unlearn. The basic reorientation they require can hardly be achieved in the course of nine months' training. There is much self-understanding and understanding of others to be acquired, much insight into personal relations to be gained, much scrutinising of values to be done, and much charity, patience and humility to be cultivated. All the more credit to those teachers who in spite of all the difficulties pay more than lip-service to the belief that all children matter and matter equally.

BOOK REVIEW (*continued from page* 71)

held and advocated these views consistently down the years; he has also put them into practice; over a period of forty years he has demonstrated that a school made to fit the child instead of expecting the child to fit the school is a practical proposition and does not produce monsters and misfits. As Neill says, 'We set out to make a school in which we should allow children freedom to be themselves. In order to do this, we had to renounce all discipline, all direction, all suggestion, all moral training, all religious instruction. We have been called brave but it did not require courage. All it required was what we had—a complete belief in the child as a good, not an evil, being. For almost forty years, this belief in the goodness of the child has never wavered; it rather has become a final faith.'

This book is a record of the translation of that faith into action and works. It is the achievement of a man whose realism is as outstanding a characteristic as his idealism; as Fromm puts it, 'His capacity to *see*, to discern fact from fiction, not to indulge in the rationalisations and illusions by which most people live, and by which they block authentic experience.' There is a challenge on every page of this book; and it is a challenge no less to those of us who call ourselves progressive than to the traditionalists. J. W. TIBBLE.

The Need for a New Methodology of Mathematics Teaching

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The unprecedented amount of discussion and criticism of mathematics teaching, taking place at the moment inside and outside the teaching profession, is creating an atmosphere of unrest, uncertainty, and an anticipation of considerable changes in the content and method of mathematics teaching. There is an opportunity for some striking advance. But much of the discussion is unfocussed and the criticism shallow. There is confusion in the advice being given to teachers and a danger that this instant of opportunity will be over before it has been seized.

The present 'crisis'

The present time is crucial, perhaps a turning-point, but it has few features, quantitative or qualitative, that distinguish it substantially from the situation that has obtained for many years. The attention that has suddenly been given to the teaching of mathematics is adventitious, arising from circumstances beyond the control of teachers. There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that there has been a *sudden* failure of mathematics teaching. The current shortage of mathematicians—which could, indeed, have disastrous effects for teaching in the future—is solely due to the demand for mathematicians having increased spectacularly faster than the supply. Society is now requiring that mathematics be taught *better* than before so that the production rate may go up. (We can welcome society's interest without accepting its statement of the goal.)

Is this desired improvement just a matter of raising the general level of teaching competence? Of spreading a known tradition of good teaching through the ranks? The question is unrealistic. If the present apparatus of teacher training, advising and inspecting, and the paraphernalia of textbooks and equipment, cannot between them pass on this tradition, nothing else we can devise is likely to succeed. In fact, of course, all the evidence shows that most teachers do know the tradition and sincerely and conscientiously teach by it.

It is best to face these facts squarely. The failure of mathematics teaching is not a contemporary phenomenon; the faults are not those of incompetent teachers. The trouble is deep-seated, running through the tradition that has been put before teachers and which they have accepted. Nothing less than a radical revaluation of the whole complex of aims, content and methods will lead to a permanent advance. We need a new methodology of mathematics teaching.

The traditional way

Embedded in the tradition of mathematics teaching is a distinction between 'tool' and 'application'—'learn it, then use it'. An inevitable result of this view has been the tremendous effort that has been devoted to finding efficient ways of teaching mathematical techniques; for how can we apply a tool that we have not mastered? It is entirely understandable that a large amount of drill has been thought necessary—'practice makes perfect'. So the textbooks we use are choked with examples of a routine type. Repetition of a process fixes it in the mind.

Whether we know it or not, the psychologists call this S-R (stimulus-response) associational learning. This kind of learning (because it is inherently unattractive) has to be bolstered with external motivation, and we have devised a system of rewards and punishments, praise and blame, to supply this. This often appears to work, and any disquiet can easily be rationalised—"see what pleasure they take in getting their sums right!" Unfortunately, the use of external motivation has its drawbacks. Typical consequences are that the successful pupils learn to value the reward (a pageful of ticks? an examination mark?) more than the skill (see *Wertheimer*[1]), and the unsuccessful acquire an inhibiting anxiety (see *Briggs*[2]).

There are other disadvantages of rote-learning. Since the associational bonds weaken with time, they have to be sent for repair periodically. We have an answer to this: revision—a polite name for a frequent rehashing of the same old stuff (we need all the rewards, punishments, incentives and threats we can lay our hands on to see this through).

This silly procedure fails with the majority of our pupils. (Visit a secondary modern school and watch the leavers' class being dragged, protesting, through the seventh annual exposition of addition of fractions. One is struck not so much by the incompetence of the pupils as by the crassness of the system that can't even cut its losses.) Even with the successful pupils, where are we after this strenuous labour? More often than not they are masters of techniques which they do not understand and which they are unable to use. Don't let us be deluded by the textbooks again. Those exercises called 'Problems' are not *real* applications—just further routine examples thinly disguised.

But I am taking too much space saying things which are now old hat. Most of us have long ago paid a summary lip-service to the dangers of rote-learning. The real point is more general and, perhaps, more subtle. The above discussion becomes unnecessary when we appreciate that the antithesis of tool and application on which we have built is a part-truth at best. The futility of the typical textbook application is deservedly an old joke by now, but we do not yet seem to have seen that the real tools of mathematics aren't just the fiddling little bits of manipulation to which we devote so much time, but include the basic ideas which, because of their generality, have application over a wide field. These latter are swept under the carpet by an exclusive concentration on particular techniques for particular occasions.

How often, for example, does primary school arithmetic teaching pay any attention to the 'algebra' of the arithmetical operations with which it is concerned? If the *general* properties of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, the notational system, etc., are known, we are not only in a better position to understand *why* the usual techniques work, but we can fashion any new ones we want for a specific purpose. I can only suppose that it is because we have believed that these general ideas could not be taught, or because we have not thought it necessary for a pupil to know why a technique works, or for a mixture of these reasons, that we have not tried, until recently, to do this.

The methods of Gattegno and Dienes are the two most convincing demonstrations of the possibility of putting techniques into a proper perspective. These two men know the dangers of concentrating on manipulative techniques, but they do not suppose either that these are unnecessary or that (as some would have it) their acquisition is bound to be rather cut off from the rest of mathematical activity. They have created a learning context in which the basic mathematical processes become explicit, and they have seen that a child, provided with an appropriate task to perform or a situation to think about, makes no distinction between acquiring a technique and using his mathematics; they are not two separate acts, but two aspects of his mathematical activity generated by his desire to solve a mathematical problem. The techniques are acquired as it were in passing, through the solution of the task.

This kind of teaching is very far removed from the instruction that is so common in traditional teaching. Instruction is a rigid, authoritarian device, through which the teacher directly prescribes and controls in detail the responses of the pupils. It is the only medium available for teaching mathematical techniques divorced from understanding. But, conversely, instruction is quite inadequate for teaching which has a wider aim.

It's possible to philosophise for a long time on this issue. But the important aspect here is a pragmatic one. Most teachers say that they abhor instruction, and that teaching involves two-way communication (or some such phrase). Simple observation (or introspection) shows that they act otherwise—in the mathematics classroom at least. Question-and-answer teaching can be just as rigid and one-sided as a plain straightforward beating over the ears. (A quick test: is it always the teacher who asks the relevant questions? Is every answer greeted with a "yes" or "no", "good" or "don't be silly"?)

This almost exclusive use of instruction (straight or devious) may be due in some cases to laziness. It's the least demanding method of teaching. But when one sees sincere and conscientious teachers using it, it is clear that they believe that this is the only way of meeting their responsibilities. It is linked, in fact, with further misconceptions about mathematics. It is thought, for instance, that mathematics has a large factual content about which children have to be told since they couldn't acquire the information any other way. There is hardly any truth in this. A child certainly has to be told the language and the notation that mathematics uses, but the additional factual information that he must have can be drawn from his own direct experience. He will need at times to know other facts—'1,760 yards make a mile', say — but these are not *mathematical* facts since they are quite arbitrary relations which have no effect on the *nature* of any calculation involving them.

Again, it is supposed that mathematics is rigid, unchanging; that it is 'known' once and for all; that all its processes are in their optimum form; that there is no room for personal opinion. This is a more subtle error as there is enough truth in it to make it difficult to refute. One can point to the violent changes that take place periodically at the level of creative mathematics; and one can show that an apparently unique way of performing a calculation or solving a problem can almost always be matched with others. But this doesn't touch the vital point that any unanimity about mathematics is not imposed by men (or God) but is an agreement through conviction by consent.

It is the peculiar property of mathematics that, ultimately, its hypotheses are tested by logic and not by evidence. So mathematical arguments and sequences of arguments are eventually cast in a logical (mainly deductive) mould. But this device is primarily a means of checking the soundness of arguments and is not necessarily the best medium for communication (see Polya[3]). We have only to think of the stages through which our thinking passes before we are in a position to set up a formal exposition of, say, the solution of a geometrical rider, to see that the logic we use in our proof plays only a small part in the act of solving the rider. Deductive logic cannot be equated with mathematical thinking, although it is a common mistake to suppose this. It follows that it is a poor pedagogical principle to display mathematics deductively if we want it to be understood.

My last point in this discussion of the traditional way of teaching mathematics is pedagogical rather than mathematical. It is customary to try, at every stage, to present mathematics in a gentle step-by-step procedure, ensuring that the difficulties are met gradually. This is associated with a method of questioning which requires the child's assent to each stage, with a reward of praise to encourage the child to face the next step. However rational and conscientious this may seem, and however successful it may appear to be, I believe it to be dangerous and debilitating and to have done considerable damage. First, it is a basically authoritarian (however paternal) device which is designed to reduce the effort of thinking to manageable proportions; second, it gives the child confidence from the wrong source and does not induce self-criticism and judgment; third, it assumes that the child's assent at each stage is a necessary and sufficient condition for complete understanding of the whole process. I cannot feel that a method which encourages docility and dependence, eliminates the need for hard thinking, and is content with piece-meal comprehension, should be a major part of teaching technique. It is certainly an important factor in the creation of that atmosphere of boredom which is so common in mathematics classrooms.

If any or all of these points are valid as principles to guide practice, we can list some items which should be viewed with considerable suspicion :

Sets of carefully graded mechanical examples

'Diagnostic' tests of mechanical efficiency

Programmed learning and teaching machines

'Standard' methods and the imposition of uniformity of method

Almost all textbooks

The way ahead

This discussion so far has contained mainly negative advice. In this transition period it is inevitable that positive recommendations are harder to come by, for there is not yet enough experience of the new things that must be done. There are two significant movements for reform beginning to operate in the schools. The secondary school movement is engaged in refurbishing and modernising syllabuses.[4] This does not really come within the scope of this article, and there is only space to say that this kind of reform is urgently needed for many reasons, but that I am afraid that this movement's preoccupation with syllabus content for grammar stream pupils may lead it to forget the methodological principles that I have put forward. The reform in the primary schools is more directly relevant. I have already indicated that the work of Dienes[5] and Gattegno[6] (more profound and considerably under-rated) is of great importance in demonstrating a new way of teaching mathematics. The strength of their contribution is that they have taken account of the way in which mathematics is really learnt.

By picking these two trends and recommending that both should be supported, I must not give the impression that this is the whole story. Neither are bandwagons to be jumped on. Both reforms are as yet more impressive for their potentiality than their achievement and in this difficult period they need the hard and humble dogwork of teachers prepared to experiment.

Unfortunately—and as usual—it looks as if the secondary modern school is not catered for by either of these reforms. It can, of course, learn a good deal from both through its overlap with primary and grammar school work. (Have a look at the new textbooks by Mansfield and Thompson[7] to see how the movement for syllabus reform could have an influence.) It must also break with the tradition that

puts a premium on a high standard of arithmetical competence and efficiency from the less able pupils. Routine drill and memory work of all kinds should be ruthlessly dropped. Mechanical calculations (except for very, very simple ones) should be done by mechanical means—ready-reckoners, multiplication tables, adding machines, etc. There is plenty of simple arithmetic, algebra and geometry that can be done without any facility in long division or multiplication of fractions. If and when the teacher can get his pupils to begin *thinking* again, they may be in a better position to see the purpose of a little elementary technical skill.

The way forward for teachers at all levels is essentially the same—and there are no blueprints as yet. We must acquire the skill of finding, selecting and devising *situations* which put a mathematical question and call for investigation. The field of sources is large—the ordinary environment, various forms of concrete material, mathematics itself—but it takes alertness to choose the fruitful instances. Gradually, by starting with just one situation which looks as if it might be good for an odd lesson or two, putting it before the pupils and observing their reactions, conviction begins to grow, and, with it, confidence to experiment further. And so on . . . This is the only way.

Postscript

For those readers who have found all this stale stuff, I put three difficult questions. It is my guess that classroom research into these could provide us with provisional answers and point to ways in which we could make further advances in methods of teaching mathematics.

1. What is the nature of mathematical language? How do we learn it and how does it relate to the way in which we think mathematically?

2. Piaget has said[8]: ". . . if one goes back to the first traces of the child's spontaneous use of arithmetical and geometrical operations, and above all to the primary logical operations which he needs, one finds at every stage a fundamental tendency to organise totalities and systems . . . followed by a redistribution of these systems according to three kinds of properties which correspond exactly to algebraic, order and topological structures."

Is this true? If so, does it tell us something about the kind of mathematics we *could* teach?

3. (a) We do not know the exact nature of the mathematics that our pupils will require to know when they are grown up. The demands of society may have completely changed.

(b) We also know that a major advance in our own learning frequently requires a destruction and reorganisation of existing thought habits (or 'schemata'[9]).

How can we teach "for the future" and avoid establishing barriers to change?

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The 'Average' Child in the Comprehensive School

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The recent, and continuing flood of official educational enquiries indicates a decidedly guilty conscience regarding the state of education. Aspects of the Crowther and Beloe reports and, of course, the current Newsom Committee enquiry specifically, reveal a dawning awareness both that the educational possibilities of 'ordinary' or 'average' children, i.e. the great majority, have been grossly underestimated, and that our economy cannot afford it.

This is very welcome, albeit belated. Regretably however, if inevitably, these well-meaning committees have been hamstrung by tripartite ideas. The section in Crowther on 'The Ordinary Child' which departs, incidentally, from the general trend of the report, describes the ordinary children variously as 'middle streams', 'below average' (!), 'relatively dull' and 'backward'. The Beloe report dismisses forty per cent of the children as non-examinable, and sixty per cent as virtually so. The Newsom Report, in view of much of the evidence it has received, may prove more positive. To judge, however, from the Committee's terms of reference, it too accepts the notion of rigid categories and the rigid stratification of educational needs, and seeks benevolently to ascertain what is the best but truncated form of secondary education for the majority of our children.

The doctrine of 'fixed abilities'

Thus the great official inquest still accepts *a priori* the crude and much discredited tripartite doctrines that children are endowed with 'inborn fixed abilities' which determine their 'potential ceilings of attainment', and that these 'fixed abilities' are distributed according to a normal curve which 'proves' that only a small minority of children are capable of a full secondary education. With the best will in the world, of which there is plenty in these committees, any proposals based on such a standpoint can only perpetuate the educational underestimation of our children.

A very different approach is found, in my experience, in discussions of this problem among comprehensive school teachers. The supreme advantage of comprehensive schools is not that they automatically solve all problems, but that they present them clearly, urgently, inescapably, not sweeping them into tripartite compartments to be accepted as facts of life; that, moreover, by confronting the whole range of teaching experience with the whole range of children and attainment, they present these problems in their correct perspective—as problems of secondary education generally, and not as peculiarities of a particular 'type' or 'category' of children.

The doctrine of 'fixed abilities' does not 'stand up' before the stream of '11-plus failures' who rise above their educational station to the sixth form, training college and University. The pessimism of the normal curve looks slightly ridiculous in Anglesey where three-fifths of the entire secondary population have been tackling G.C.E. with an average of approximately three passes, little short of the national average for grammar school pupils.

The middle streams

In practice, most comprehensive schools have encountered the problem of the 'middle streams' in relation to the difficulties of the G.C.E. Understandably, simply because the G.C.E. constitutes the key to so much opportunity in future employment or further education, the comprehensive schools have catered generally for G.C.E. courses open to pupils from the middle as well as the upper streams.

The resulting experience varies according to circumstances. The Anglesey figures show strikingly what can be achieved given favourable conditions—well established schools (11 years), a balanced intake (all secondary education in Anglesey is comprehensive) and a tradition of substantial educational opportunity (the old Welsh intermediate schools). But even in schools where local grammar school competition prevents a balanced intake, or where it only exists in the first form and has to work up the school, fifth and sixth forms appear, recruited from the second, third and even fourth 'twenty per cent' group of the age group (according to the 11-plus ratings) who effectively tackle the G.C.E.

The hard fact remains that the comprehensive schools find that the G.C.E. does not provide

reasonable possibilities of worthwhile success for a considerable proportion of 'average' but sound and hardworking pupils. Does this then vindicate the claims of the tripartists that only a small proportion of children are capable of a full secondary education? But failure to reach the arbitrary pass standard of G.C.E. does not necessarily imply low standards. Many average children who 'fail' would have passed the old School Certificate examination which was until 1951 the first objective of all grammar school pupils and was then regarded as beyond the reach of the secondary modern pupils. Indeed the new G.C.E. was designed to prevent secondary modern successes. The Beloe report frankly admits that it was "devised" as "an examination which would, in practice, be beyond the reach of any but those in selective courses," the devices used being the raising of the pass standard in reality above the old credit standard, and the concentration in syllabus matter upon the avidly academic, the mechanically factual and the purely manipulative.

Thus the G.C.E. was not designed to meet the real intellectual needs of children aged 16, but rather to ensure the exclusion of secondary modern pupils and so provide the justification of tripartite selection, from which *all* pupils suffer, including the top 20 per cent who do not so much 'benefit' from this so-called academic approach as 'survive' it.

It would be wrong to overestimate the importance of examinations or to hope that their reform would solve all problems. It would be unreal, however, to ignore their powerful impact upon the work of the schools, particularly as the G.C.E. continues to be the key to opportunity to a degree that no other external examinations, including the proposed 'Beloe type exams' can be. Clearly therefore renewed pressure for a radical reform of the G.C.E., its pass standard but even more its syllabus content, is vital in the interests of all children whether 'average' or 'above average'.

The suppression of potentiality

Now we come to the hub of the problem. Experience proves that the standards of *all* children can be raised, and those of average children much higher than tripartism would admit possible. But it also shows us, particularly, to use current jargon, in 'socially under-privileged areas', that a degree of mass backwardness exists among the 'below average' pupils which comprehensive schools find difficult to eliminate. Does this then mean that tripartism is only wrong in that it draws its dividing line too high? Contrariwise again, what it shows is that the restrictive effects of tripartism do not begin with the secondary stage but distort the whole of education from the infants' school onwards.

As soon as the negative notion of *fixed* inborn abilities comes under fire, emphasis falls upon the positive notion of mental *development.* We are becoming increasingly aware that in a child's mental development, the earlier years are crucial, if not decisive. Thus the notorious 'Cinderella' treatment of primary education, with extremely large classes, low capitation grants and the tacit official belief that staff with inferior or no training and inferior salaries is all that is needed, wreaks havoc on the mental development of many children, above all those whose background provide the least educational stimulus. Thus the assumption that only a few children are fully educable itself leads to a situation where in fact only a minority do reach the attainment level on which the next educational stage can readily be built.

Differences in intellectual achievement

This, together with the downward pressure from the 'eleven plus', then seems to justify the practice of streaming in the primary school which only tends to render differences in attainment even more acute by the education of a large section of children less intensively, to lower standards and often by less experienced teachers than others. Thus the conditions imposed upon many primary schools limit the mental development and the attainment of countless pupils and give rise to the mass backwardness which secures for its victims the description 'below average'. Conversely, given small classes, ample staff with facilities and training in diagnostic techniques, freed from the limiting 'incentive' of the eleven plus and able to concentrate on the vital objective of bringing all primary children up to satisfactory level of attainment, the primary and comprehensive schools together would banish the problem of the 'average and below average' children in its present form. Of course differences of intellectual achievement would exist but in a context where all children are able to pursue a systematic secondary course with common aims suited to that stage.

Clearly then, a radical increase in primary educational opportunity is vital to the problem of the 'average and below average' pupil. It is urgent but inevitably long term. But we are faced now with the 'problem of the middle streams'.

The implication would seem to be that we know what to do with the top streams, i.e. G.C.E., and we know the necessity for remedial work at the 'bottom end'—given a staffing ratio permitting small groups and teachers with the necessary experience, and that in between lies a mass of children not capable of much but not in need of remedial treatment.

The implication is largely false on all counts. True, providing G.C.E. courses is no problem in itself, but we have seen that its aim academically often prevents it from serving the real needs of the top streams. They need the radical revision of the G.C.E. syllabuses referred to above—one which will link the basic principles and systematic study of the major disciplines to the world around them and to the role and use of those subjects in that world. This would not only stimulate and enrich the work of the top streams but by stripping G.C.E. courses of unnecessary academicity and endowing them with relevance and interest, would make them worthwhile objectives for the 'average' pupils.

The relaxation of streaming

It is pertinent to ask whether, even with the present G.C.E., the time has not come to relax the razor-sharp streaming which most comprehensive schools have felt compelled to maintain, partly it is true to prevent criticisms that the 'bright children suffer'. Experience has shown that, where fifth and sixth forms composed of 'eleven plus failures' develop before the 'grammar selection' streams have reached the top of the school, they achieve quite good, and sometimes extremely good, results in G.C.E., yet when their later counterparts, pushed down by the 'grammar selections' into the third, fourth and fifth streams, reach the top of the school they often do less well. The explanation is simple. The earlier 'eleven plus failures' were the 'top streams' in their time and therefore got the 'full treatment' from the staff, anxious to establish a tradition of high standards. Later, when they largely comprise the upper middle streams, the staff, unconsciously influenced by tripartite ideas, lower their expectations and therefore their standards with the results mentioned. That is, after all, the logic of streaming.

The only effective way to overcome this 'tripartite hangover' is to relax the streaming as far as is possible in practice. Thus, for example, in a ten-form entry school the four top streams could be mixed to make four parallel streams, the next four likewise and the remaining form as many small remedial groups as staff power will permit.

The need for remedial work is by no means a monopoly of the bottom ten, or twenty per cent of the age group. Experience shows that the objective of raising standards throughout the whole age group is, to a greater or lesser degree, a remedial one. It immediately presents two fundamental educational tasks which have never effectively been tackled, if at all, because they never arise with the same urgency in the context of tripartite organisation.

The need for remedial techniques

The first is the task of diagnosing the many forms of 'dilute backwardness' in the basic skills found in the middle (and sometimes the top) streams, analysing them and evolving remedial techniques to overcome them. This applies above all to the key skills of speaking, reading and writing. There is a growing realisation that linguistic development provides far more than a means of communication, namely the essential means for developing logical concepts, logical, purposeful thought. In this general sense it cannot only be the province of the English department but is the joint responsibility of all teachers, and calls for a serious discussion of the problem and concerted action by all departments. I do not know how far it is a practical proposition to organise in a school a conscious, co-ordinated scheme for the development of oral and written expression of suitably increasing complexity and implemented by all teachers in the course of teaching all subjects because it has never been attempted to my knowledge. There is no doubt that it would raise sharply the attainment and what we call the 'intelligence' of the 'average' and 'below average' pupils in particular.

Where number is concerned I have neither the space nor the authority to comment. It seems clear that there is urgent need to get away from the abstract and mechanically manipulative tradition well entrenched in mathematics as well as great scope for diagnostic and remedial work. Interesting things are already afoot in a number of comprehensive schools of which one would like to hear more.

The other new educational task facing teachers in comprehensive schools parallel with such general remedial efforts, and, therefore, before they have had their effect, is that of evolving the technique, using simple language, practical devices, visual aids, etc., of teaching the *basic essentials* of their subjects, not just a diluted taster, to children of average attainment and less. Remedial work in the techniques is very important, but not enough. There must be a will to learn. Our syllabus content must be seen by the 'ordinary' children (and the 'bright') as relevant and therefore worthwhile and interesting. What needs to be done is not a simple matter—a complete overhaul and re-assessment of the content of secondary education, its mode of presentation and methods, so that, as was proposed above in connection with the G.C.E., it is linked much more clearly, much more actively with the world our pupils live in, but at the same time does not fail to deal systematically with the basic features and discipline of the subject concerned.

Science For All: Its Methodology

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It is one of the main tasks of the school to lead all children to an understanding of and an interest in the world in which they live and the past, present and possible future achievements of man in understanding and controlling his environment. In doing this the teaching of science has an important role to play. The fact that many children have a keen interest in natural phenomena, like doing simple experiments and are aware of scientific achievements through everyday experience may make our task easier but it needs to be understood that the teaching of science to all children is important in its own right. There is no doubt that correctly taught science has many beneficial side effects such as developing a disciplined attitude to study, an improved command of language, a critical approach to 'common sense' and a deeper understanding of other subjects, particularly mathematics, history and geography—but these are not the main reasons for teaching science.

A common syllabus

A common course of study in science for at least the first three years of secondary school for all children, based on an objective consideration of the needs of future citizens who are going to live in a world where scientific understanding will play a part of growing importance in their lives, taught in the light of the subjective needs and possibilities of the children themselves is what is required. In my experience such a common course for all children is possible, although the depth of study and the teaching techniques need modification from one group of pupils to another, though to a lesser extent than is

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THE 'AVERAGE' CHILD IN THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL (*cont.*)

Let me repeat, these are not problems for the comprehensive schools alone, or for the 'average and below average' pupils only. They are problems of secondary education as a whole and concerning all secondary school children, but in the comprehensive school they cannot be shelved. They are fundamental and complicated problems and we need help. First comes 'self-help'—we need organised discussion and exchange of experience among comprehensive school teachers. We need research and specialist study of the problems by educational psychologists, Departments of Education and Training Colleges—above all we need new teachers to be trained to carry out the new tasks of secondary education. We need new text-books in practically every subject, those produced to meet the needs of the tripartite school are of little or no use for such a job. We need lively, simple, well illustrated books which are at the same time, systematic and fundamental. We can be helped by the stimulus of worthwhile external examination which accords with this approach.

Here are challenging tasks for all sides of the education service, but how infinitely more humanist and rewarding than the endless and negative pursuit of ever more refined techniques for measuring the 'average children' for their places on the educational junk-heap.

commonly thought. What is impossible to do is to compensate for the deficiencies of an educational system with a low statutory leaving age, a too small percentage of children continuing their secondary education to the age of eighteen and a glaring shortage of further educational facilities for our youth. The shortage of well trained science teachers, large classes and the lack of adequate facilities for the teaching of science all make our job more difficult; but much can be done at present while at the same time working for an improvement in these matters.

I do not intend to give here a detailed syllabus although we have at our school, as at many others, a syllabus planned by the joint efforts of the science teaching staff, one which is modified from year to year in the light of our experience. Certainly the time is ripe for discussion of the details of such a syllabus but I would rather make a few points for consideration when planning the course.

The need for breadth

Whether the course is to be one of General Science or be divided into the three main branches of Physics, Chemistry and Biology is not of paramount importance—this will be dictated very often by the staff and teaching time available. What is important is that the children are made aware of the breadth of scope of science and its interest and use to mankind. The more aspects of science that are included the better and certainly aspects of astronomy, however simple, must be included now that we are moving into the space age. Atomic physics may well be beyond the scope of such a syllabus but not to bring in the concepts of the atom and molecule, simply because the children cannot see them or because class experiments are difficult to devise, would be to turn our backs on the very ideas that all will have to be familiar with in the future.

Field work is important not only for town children but for all because science is concerned with the real world, not just the world of the laboratory. The homely topics of electric wiring circuits and fur in the kettle are important in emphasising the value of an understanding of science and technology for all. The class experiment is vital in showing children that it is theory based on carefully performed experiments and observations that lead to discovery. Gravitation is important not just in explaining why things fall or how a spring balance works but because it is a universal concept applying throughout our universe and acting on all states of matter, including gases. If this contradicts what many children call 'common sense' so much the better—so much of science is an exposure of what goes by the name of common sense.

One of the difficulties of devising such a syllabus is that much that is desirable has to be omitted; the aim should be to achieve a balance between what is relevant today and what is likely to be relevant in the future rather than to attempt an historical survey of science in the past. Through the study of simple fundamental principles the pupil gains confidence that science is comprehensible to the layman and that anyone who is interested and seriously prepared to study can understand even the most obstruse aspects of the subject. The chemistry of plastics is complicated—our pupils must not only know that it is a branch of chemistry but also that ordinary people prepared to make the effort can grasp it.

I make no apology for devoting so much space to a consideration of what to teach because this is inseparably linked with the methods we adopt. For too long what we teach has been governed by what is easy to teach, what keeps the children occupied and what is cheap on apparatus. These are all important considerations but they are no substitute for deciding objectively what work should be included.

In deciding how to teach our first consideration must always be to determine what methods will most effectively develop the understanding that we want in all children. Class practical work, demonstrations, films, visits, field expeditions and projects all have their place, but without a carefully thought out course of work they can so easily make the subject disjointed and leave the child with little idea of the unity of science.

Class work

Class practical work is most important for all pupils because it is here that what is universal in science, the scientific method, the unity of theory and practice can be most obvious. At the same time it is here that the children can learn least, most easily lose a disciplined attitude to work, most easily jump to false conclusions and most easily develop a frame of mind that makes the task of the teacher most difficult.

There is no substitute for careful planning of all class practical experiments, especially with large classes. We use duplicated experiment sheets as the basis of such work. These are directly related to the apparatus we have available, pose the experiment in the form of a problem rather than a verification,

and lead the pupil by experiment, observation and thought to a conclusion which he has to try to find for himself. The apparatus needs to be ready and carefully checked by the beginning of the lesson. The pupils study the experiment sheet and copy down the heading and any other essentials. While the practical work is in progress, usually in groups of twos and threes, the teacher helps groups meeting difficulties and answers questions—always by reference to the experiment sheet. Time must always be left to count in apparatus and to check it—a most important precaution. It is surprising how quickly children learn what is expected in practical work if there is a definite routine to be followed and if it is clear that every help is being given to them. With some groups it is necessary to demonstrate the experiment first but in the end we find that all children benefit enormously and develop confidence and interest from the opportunity to do experiments themselves.

The use of experiment

Class experiments need to be carefully written up by the pupils and here again a definite routine is helpful. Every experiment the pupils perform should lead to a discovery, if not by each individual child then by the group as a whole in discussion afterwards, and the heading which poses the problem is only second in importance to the conclusion at the end. More or less help will have to be given to the children in writing up their experiments depending on their ability, but all children must take part in this vital aspect of experimental work if it is not to degenerate into little more than playing with apparatus.

Field visits with the children, if only to discover animals and plants in their natural habitats, come under the same general considerations. They are much more difficult to organise in a city, take more time and are more difficult to control, but if properly organised are of tremendous value. Here again we brief the pupils beforehand, give each pupil a duplicated sheet of instructions and let them work in small groups.

With the younger secondary school child one should always work from the particular to the general and from the simple to the more complex. Never should a general principle be stated and then examples given, but rather the examples be given or investigated out of which the general principle emerges. This is not only sound teaching method but also good science, but so often the text books do the reverse. However, sufficient emphasis must be given to the principle once arrived at, for it is the principle rather than the examples which is at the heart of science.

The cyclic approach

In working from the simple to the complex there is much to be said for the cyclic approach, since in this way something of the breadth of science can be given already, in the first year. Why, for instance, should the eleven year old be denied the excitement of making batteries and using electricity simply because, in the name of consistency, it is better left to the third year? Surely we should whet the appetites of as many children as possible in the first year by as broad a coverage as can be arranged and then come back to the topic again later to deal with the more complicated aspects. It is true that there is the danger of the work becoming fragmented but the unifying principle should be seen as 'science in action' rather than the specific topics studied.

Science is a human activity and an attempt should be made to emphasise that it is people who build science. One possibility would be to ask the children to make a study of the life of one scientist each term, using any references they can find. For this a number of simply written short biographies would be a great help and some thought might be given to this by our publishers. In this way the link with the school library and with other subjects such as history and English can be strengthened. Certainly the science teacher has considerable opportunity to help the child improve his written and spoken English. In science the need for clarity of expression needs continual emphasis and we have the advantage that we are usually considering something concrete so that there is nothing artificial about our demand for good English.

I have purposely concentrated my attention on the general course of science to be followed by the secondary school child in the first three years, because it is here that we have least experience in this country and because it is the basis for the more specialised courses to follow. With the growth of more large secondary schools in such centres as London the real possibility arises for co-operation in designing a consistent and well thought out scheme of work in science for all children. This is the need of the hour and if this short article in any way helps science teachers develop this sort of work I shall be well pleased.

Where?

ACE—the Advisory Centre for Education publishes the educational journal *Where?* It was founded as a non-profit making body by Michael Young: a parallel organisation to the Consumers' Association and its journal *Which?* Young felt that information on education was even more important than even the best discriminations between washing machines or cars, and saw the creation of ACE as part of his battle against the Meritocracy.

But the parallel with *Which?* should not be taken too far. ACE is not an organization to help the upper crust choose between Eton and Winchester. Its new Director is Brian Jackson, co-author of *Education and the Working Class,* and his intention has been to create an educational quarterly full of facts that will build up a body of highly-informed readers pressing for better education for all. This is, after all, a familiar and sympathetic aim to readers of FORUM. Recent issues of *Where?* have included reports on Streaming, Discipline, 'First Class' Teachers, the public school hold on Oxbridge, the absurd inconsistencies of Grammar School places and one of the most detailed profiles of a school ever to be published—Nechells Secondary Modern School, Birmingham.

The journal is only available to annual subscribers, who also have the right to have their educational queries expertly answered. Questions flow in at the rate of hundreds a month: they include requests for statistical ammunition, definitions of headmasters' rights, details of maintenance grants, university entrance and so on.

It is to be hoped that *Where?* will be available and discussed in every lively staffroom (much the same goes for FORUM !). The annual subscription is £1 and should be sent to the Membership Section, Advisory Centre for Education, 57 Russell Street, Cambridge.

Ministry of Education List of Comprehensive Schools in England and Wales (1961)

(We were unable to print this list, referred to by Dr. Pedley in Vol. 5, No. 1, owing to lack of space. It should be remembered that, apart from these schools categorised as 'comprehensive' by the Ministry, there are well over 100 other schools listed as 'bilateral', 'multilateral', and 'other secondary schools', many of which are 'comprehensive' in character.)

(County and co-educational unless otherwise indicated)

ENGLAND

Counties	
Cumberland	Millom
Derbyshire	Westfield
Devon	Tavistock
Dorset	Alfred Colfox, Bridport
Essex	North Romford
Lancashire	Kirkby : Brookfield
	Ruffwood
	St. Gregory's (girls) (R.C.)
	St. Kevin's (boys) (R.C.)
Middlesex	Mountgrace, Potters Bar
	Mellow Lane, Hayes
Oxfordshire	Burford
	Chipping Norton
Staffordshire	Tettenhall
	Willenhall
	Tividale
	Ounsdale
Warwickshire	Nicholas Chamberlaine, Bedworth
Westmorland	Kirkby Stephen
	Windermere (boys) (C. of E.)
West Riding of Yorkshire	Calder
	Elland
	Settle
	Colne Valley
	Tadcaster
	Penistone
County Boroughs	
Birmingham	Great Barr
	Sheldon Heath
Coventry	Coundon Court (girls)
	Foxford
	Lyng Hall (girls)
	Whitley Abbey
	Binley Park
	Tile Hill Wood (girls)
	Woodlands (boys)
	Caludon Castle (boys)
Leeds	Foxwood
	Allerton Grange
Liverpool	Gateacre
Manchester	Yew Tree
	Plant Hill
Newcastle	Kenton
Nottingham	Fairham (boys)
Sheffield	Myers Grove
West Bromwich	Churchfields
London	
Battersea	County Secondary
Camberwell	Collingwood (girls)
	Thomas Calton
	Peckham (girls)
	Kingsdale
	William Penn (boys)
Deptford	Samuel Pepys (boys)
	S.E. London (boys)
Finsbury	Risinghill
Fulham	Henry Compton (boys)
	Hurlingham (girls)
Greenwich	Kidbrooke (girls)
Hackney	Edith Cavell
	Brooke House (boys)
Hammersmith	County (girls)
	Christopher Wren (boys)

Islington	Barnsbury (boys) Barnsbury (girls) Holloway (boys) Tollington
Kensington	Ladbroke (girls) Isaac Newton (boys) Holland Park
Lambeth	Vauxhall Manor (girls) Norwood (girls) Tulse Hill (boys) Dick Sheppard (girls) Stockwell Manor
Lewisham	Catford (boys) Catford (girls) Churchdown (girls) Forest Hill (boys) Sydenham (girls) Sedgehill Malory
Paddington	North
St. Marylebone	Rutherford (boys) Kynaston (boys)
St. Pancras	Haverstock Parliament Hill (girls) Sir William Collins (boys) Acland Burghley
Shoreditch	Shoreditch
Southwark	Walworth Trinity (girls)
Stoke Newington	Woodberry Down
Wandsworth	Ensham (girls) Garratt Green (girls) Mayfield (girls) Southfields Wandsworth (boys) Spencer Park (boys) Hillcroft (boys) Elliott Bishop Thomas Grant (R.C.)
Woolwich	Abbey Wood Eltham Green Crown Woods

WALES

Counties

Anglesey	Sir Thomas Jones, Amlwch David Hughes, Beaumaris Holyhead Llangefni
Breconshire	Builth Wells Cefn Coed Maesydderwen, Ystradgynlais
Caernarvonshire	Dyffryn Ogwen, Bethesda Ysgol Botwnnog Brynrefail Dyffryn Nantlle Eifionydd
Cardiganshire	Lampeter Aberaeron Cardigan County Tregaron
Carmarthenshire	Llandovery
Denbighshire	Ruthin, Brynhyfryd
Glamorgan	Sandfields, Port Talbot

(*continued on page* 70)

Book Reviews

Educational Inequalities

Education and the Urban Child, by John Barron Mays. Liverpool University Press (1962), 208 pp., 25s.

The theme of this book is a very important one: that in spite of the Butler Education Act, residents of working-class areas in our cities still do not enjoy equality of educational opportunity. They are brought up in a neighbourhood climate which is hostile to education, and also to occupational advancement outside a fairly limited range of manual jobs. As a result, the slum child does less well in 11+ selection that his native ability would justify. In an important and revealing study of reading attainment and I.Q. by Dr. Agnes Crawford, reported in this book, there is shown to be little or no difference in intellectual capacity between children in these areas and those in other parts of Liverpool. At the same time, the former gain hardly any of the selective secondary school places.

Dr. Mays fills out this picture with a wealth of descriptive detail. He gives us, in the process, a telling description of life and of the educational process in the Liverpool slums. In particular, his long experience of social attitudes in these neighbourhoods has enabled him to give, in one chapter, the most concise account of the slum sub-culture which the present reviewer has yet come across. To recognise that the forward-looking, provident and ambitious attitude of the more respectable classes in our society is not shared by other groups, is the first step in understanding problems like delinquency, and is vital to a proper appreciation of the social ramifications of education. What may seem unsatisfactory or even deviant behaviour to the rest of us, may be treated as normal, or even laudable, in its own lower working-class setting. And although Dr. Mays seems unaware of this aspect of the problem, to assume that our standards, because they are socially dominant, are necessarily the best, is to beg important questions of value.

But, of course, the slums are also areas in which the physical environment is poor and decaying. Housing is unhealthy, and grossly inconvenient for (among other things) study. The schools themselves are badly housed; if one adds to this the generally inimical attitudes of the neighbourhood, it is not surprising that the organisational structure of many of the schools remains unimproved, and that few teachers are willing to work in them long enough to become really effective.

May's solution is twofold. First of all, existing inequalities of educational provision should be remedied. Slum schools must be improved. The schools must also make closer contact with the neighbourhood, in order to interest the children's families in their education. This is to be achieved through out of school meetings, more determined attempts to persuade parents to visit the school for functions of various kinds, and even home visits. By such means it is hoped that an inroad may be made on the social attitudes which hold the child back. But the second leg of his approach to the problem recognises that for many of these children school may never have much of a hold. A possible future rise in the school-leaving age may thus be unwelcome to them. For such children he recommends leaving school-leaving age at 15, but following it by attendance on a day-release basis at County Colleges, working in close collaboration with the Youth Service. The former should be vocationally oriented to appeal to the very practical motivations of these children, and this need not destroy its value as a form of general education.

The social injustice which still pervades our educational system is seen very clearly in this book. One cannot, however, help feeling that Dr. Mays is expecting too much of the 1944 Act. Parity of esteem between the modern and other secondary schools is surely a chimera; therefore even if 11+ selection can be improved, the future prospects of the sheep and the goats are going to be very different. And our society will continue to be divided in its aspirations and mores. It is a pity that, nowhere in this book, is there any discussion of the solutions offered by the comprehensive schools, or the alternative of 14+ transfer as in Dr. Pedley's book and the Leicestershire Experiment. HOWARD JONES.

Challenge to Progressives

Summerhill. A Radical Approach to Education, by A. S. Neill. Victor Gollancz (1962), 329 pp., 25s.

In the preparation of this book, Harold H. Hart, originally for American readers, sorted out thousands of words from four of Neill's earlier books, edited them and combined them with new material. The first section deals directly with Summerhill and describes various aspects of the life of the school. Succeeding sections give us Neill's views on a variety of topics under the general headings of Child Rearing, Sex, Religion and Morals, Children's Problems, Parent's Problems and there is a final section giving Neill's answers to questions which have been put to him.

In the section on Summerhill there is a reprint of the Report by H.M. Inspectors who visited the school in

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(*Continued from page* 69)

Merioneth	Festiniog
	Towyn
	Harlech
Montgomeryshire	Llanfair
	Llanfyllyn
	Llanidloes
	Machynlleth
	Newtown High (boys)
	Newtown High (girls)
Pembrokeshire	Fishguard
	St. David's
	Preseli
County Boroughs	
Newport	Hartridge

1949. Since that date the fees have increased from £120 per annum to £250, but the number of children has fallen from 70 to 45: it is therefore unlikely that the practical difficulties referred to in the Report have diminished. As Neill says in his notes on the Report, it is a fair, sincere and generous one and gives us a view of Summerhill as seen from outside but by people highly skilled in such assessment. The Inspectors' most serious criticism is given in these sentences: 'To have created a situation in which academic education of the most intelligent kind could flourish is an achievement, but in fact it is not flourishing and a great opportunity is thus being lost. With better teaching at all stages, and above all the junior stage, it might be made to flourish, and an experiment of profound interest be given its full chance to prove itself.' Neill thinks this is the only point at which the two inspectors did not rise above their academic preoccupations and asks: 'Is it not true that we put academic education in its place?' One suspects that what the inspectors mean by 'good teaching' implies a process of pressure, moulding and coercive, however painless and indirect the form in which it is applied, that is anathema to Neill. The moral of this is well brought out by Erich Fromm in his foreword to the book. He distinguishes between overt authority, exercised directly and explicitly, and the anonymous indirect authority exerted via persuasion, suggestion and manipulation which is typical of our modern industrial society. As both worker and consumer, the individual is managed and manipulated so that he *wants* the things the system provides 'The same artifices are employed in progressive education,' says Fromm. 'The child is forced to swallow the pill, but the pill is given a sugar coating. Parents and teachers have confused true non-authoritarian education with education by means of persuasion and hidden coercion. Progressive education has been thus debased. It has failed to become what it was intended to be and has never developed as it was meant to.'

The significance of A. S. Neill as an educator lies in his uncompromising challenge to this process of child manipulation in all its varied forms, not less when it uses reason and persuasion, extrinsic rewards and appeals not to let the side down, than when it resorts to threats of punishment and the use of overt force. The purpose of social organisation, whether in state or school, should be to provide the conditions in which the individual can progressively discover what he is and what he can do in a world where other people have equal rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Education in Neill's view is basically emotional and the early substitution of thinking, largely other people's thinking, for one's own feeling is, in Rousseau's phrase, the beginning of the ruin of judgment. To have independent and autonomous adults, we cannot encourage too early some exercise by the child of freedom of choice. This must, within the limits of the child's experience and maturity, be a genuine freedom: and since it is a mutual freedom shared by other children and by adults it does not mean licence.

It is the achievement of Neill that he has not only

(*continued on page* 57)

POETRY AND PERSONALITY

(*continued from page* 53)

The white stick

Red brick, grey slate, cream road.
My eyes ached.
Same old walls, same old houses,
Old churches, old shops, old railings,
Everything was old,
No grass or trees.
I was sick, for want of the country;
I looked around me,
My eyes were drawn
To a solitary figure, walking, slowly.
I saw in the figure's hand a white stick,
Blindness.
I imagined the eternal blackness.
What had he done
To earn this mockery of man?
The figure turned into another street,
Tapping, feeling for the next shape,
Dependent on the white stick.
I wanted to help him.
What use was I? Just to show him the next corner.

These poems were written by fifth year boys of moderate ability, following a technical-engineering course. They had no special literary talents, and yet every boy in the class, when grappling with a topic which was real to him, instinctively used words and phrases which were vivid and original. Probably for this reason much of the best poetry was written in their own time about subjects of their own choosing.

Discussion revealed, however, that most of the boys felt the value of this writing lay not so much in the poems themselves (although these were often the centre of much critical appreciation) but in the "feeling of relief" which followed a successful piece of work.

There is a great deal of criticism levelled at English-teaching methods such as this. Since less importance is attached to the technicalities of language and more to content and expression these approaches are blamed for an alleged decline in standards. I have not found this to be true. There are usually fewer errors when the subject is one in which the child has become involved.

But in any case, this concern is trivial when set against the wider implications of "an education for life". For the lives of both teachers and pupils were much the poorer before such resources of communication were opened up.

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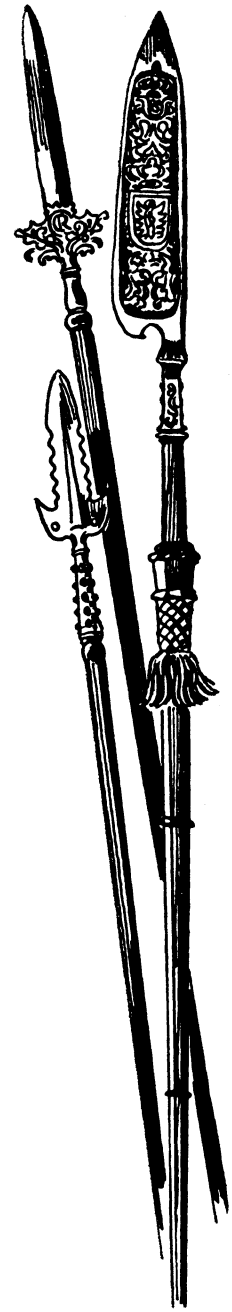
THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT
reviewing *ENGLAND.* Book 1



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