FORUM

SUMMER 1966
VOLUME 8
NUMBER 3
PRICE: THREE SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

Content and Method in the Non-Streamed School

FOR THE DISCUSSION OF NEW TRENDS IN EDUCATION

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: TEN SHILLINGS (POST FREE)

Editorial Communications. MSS and contributions to discussion (800 words maximum) should be addressed to the Editor, 71 Clarendon Park Road, Leicester. Books for review should be sent to G. Richardson, 173 Cottingham Road, Hull.

Business Information. FORUM is published three times a year, in September, January and May. Three Shillings and Sixpence per issue (3s. 9d. post free). Postal subscription Ten Shillings yearly. Correspondence relating to subscriptions, etc., should be addressed to the Manager, 86 Headland Road, Leicester. Tel. Leicester 37348.

Published by P S W (Educational) Publications, 71 Clarendon Park Road, Leicester.

National Policy in Education

Education cannot, of course, be separated from politics since it is in Parliament that the laws are made which govern the education system. The Labour victory on March 31st means that the policy laid down in Circular 10/65 will be carried through, as also that in Circular 10/66 which laid down that new buildings for secondary education must be patterned on the comprehensive principle. There can be no doubt that the government has the right so to determine educational policy. Clause 1 of the Education Act of 1944 specifically states that it is the duty of the Minister 'to promote the education of the people of England and Wales and the progressive development of institutions devoted to that purpose, and to secure the effective execution by local authorities, under his direction and control, of the national policy for providing a varied and comprehensive educational service in every area'.

It is worth recalling that some fears were expressed lest the powers given by this Act to the Minister were too great, and that an amendment was moved in the House of Commons to omit the words 'under his control and direction'. The amendment was resisted by Mr. Butler and he was supported by the House. Of this episode H. C. Dent has written: 'Sir Percy Harris voiced the general feeling when he said that if the Act was to work it was vital that the Minister should be armed with full power and authority to force education authorities up to one common level; and Mr. Butler was warmly applauded when he declared that he intended the central authority to lead boldly and not follow timidly'.

Mr. Dent's comments on the importance of this clause are also worth recalling: 'There is an overwhelming case', he wrote in October, 1944, 'for effective central direction and control. It has been a major defect in English Educational administration that local authorities could be laggard or reactionary in their provision, thus denying children (and adults) in their areas opportunities available in the areas of enlightened and progressive authorities; and that the President of the Board of Education had no effective power to compel these backward authorities to raise their standards'. (*The Education Act, 1944,* H. C. Dent.)

In stressing these powers, no one, least of all this journal, would wish to deny the very important role local authorities can and do play in the development of new approaches in education. After all it was particularly to those few authorities which refused to accept the Ministry of Education's 'guidance' in the late 1940's to develop the tripartite system, that we are indebted for having pioneered the comprehensive school (London, Coventry, the West Riding, and Middlesex figure in this roll of honour). But it is one thing to develop progressive schemes opening opportunity to wider sections of the children; it is quite another to dig one's toes in, to refuse to take account of these new developments and deliberately to challenge what has now become national policy. Those authorities which are refusing to comply with Circular 10/65 will, if they are permitted to have their way, 'deny children in their areas' opportunities available not only in the areas of 'enlightened and progressive authorities', but opportunities which will, apart from their areas, become nationally available.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that the Secretary of State will carry through the comprehensive reform nationally, and if he decides that new legislation is in fact necessary, so that no doubt should remain, then it should be passed through Parliament. Indeed there is a very strong case for a new Education Act. The concept of 'age, abilities and aptitudes' on which the secondary clause of the 1944 Act is based is now outmoded. Certain authorities, such as London, cannot develop a fully comprehensive system because the law prevents the 'extension' of the 53 voluntary aided grammar schools in the area which therefore have to remain separatist. The 'parents

choice' clause needs remodelling, to say the least; indeed the restructuring of our entire educational system which is to some extent under way needs to be underpinned by legislation adapted to the contemporary situation, and this includes some form of democratic control over the so-called 'independent' schools. The opportunity now exists for developing the educational system as a genuinely unified system. This opportunity should be taken during the present government's term of office.

Finally it may be hoped that the schemes accepted by the Secretary of State under Circular 10/65 will not only be *genuinely* comprehensive (no more Doncasters), but also that the government will seriously reconsider its decision not to allot any extra resources for comprehensive reorganisation. There are real problems, particularly of accommodation, in this transition but the gains can be tremendous. The necessary resources to ensure that full value is gained from this historic change must be found.

Content and Method in the Non-Streamed School

In the past few years, FORUM has devoted a good deal of attention to the movement towards non-streaming, particularly in the junior school. The Editorial Board has recognised from the start that the abolition of streaming was more than a simple organisational act. It was a step which fundamentally challenged widely accepted ideas about the nature of the child and of learning. Above all, it implied rejection of the notion that the child is born with innate 'abilities', such as Intelligence, which are fixed and unchanging. The abolition of streaming, therefore, implied the restoration to the teacher of his creative role as an educator.

In the non-streamed school the teacher meets a new situation, one marked by a greater flexibility and consequently greater freedom of manoeuvre than existed before. Both in the primary schools, and the increasing number of secondary schools which are experimenting with non-streaming, this is found to be the case. As a result, the rigidly compartmented subject teaching characteristic of the early stages of secondary education is now called into question. Not only methods of teaching, but also the content of education itself, as it has been traditionally patterned, are now being scrutinised anew.

The articles which follow are concerned both with content and methods. They make no attempt to lay down what ought to be done. Their function is simply to give an account as to how some teachers are meeting this new situation, and of the solutions they are finding. If the experiences here recorded stimulate discussion and experiment on what is, perhaps, the most important *educational* question of today, this Special Number will have served its purpose.

The Junior School Approaches to Non-Streaming

JOHN COE

Mr. Coe works for the West Riding Authority as an Inspector of Schools. He was trained at the College of St. Mark and St. John, and the London Institute of Education. Most of his teaching has been with younger children. He has been head of a rural school and a large, unstreamed, urban primary school.

The debate about streaming is over. Ten years ago when one argued against the system, its defenders held firmly to the view that this was the ideal way to meet the needs of children differing widely in ability. The less able, it was said, were best served when they were on their own, proceeding at their own pace, free from the competitive stress resulting from contact with those who learn more easily. Similarly, the brighter children were best kept apart so that their progress would not be slowed down.

These were views sincerely held by the great majority of teachers. But times change. The experience of the schools and an increasing volume

of research have combined to bring about a decisive movement of opinion. Now, when streaming is debated the theoretical case is almost always conceded. Non-streaming is said to be an ideal. Only expediency remains and it is the presence of external examinations and large classes that are advanced as the obstacles preventing the achievement of the ideal. Thus, fundamentally the issue has been decided. Always in the end we cease to do what is merely expedient and begin to do what is right. More and more primary schools, and even some pioneering secondary schools, are changing the organisation of their classes.

A rural school

But, of course, we must look beyond organisational change. There are implications for our teaching and somehow we have to consider and meet the diverse needs of the children in our unstreamed classes. The way in which this is done varies very much from school to school. Let us hear first from the head of a small country school.

'I know all my twenty children as individuals. Of course, there are times when we come together and share in activities like music making, drama or perhaps just quietly listening to a story. But in basic work I give twenty different lessons. The children work individually, each at his own pace and I circulate amongst them; helping, guiding and correcting. Always I have the particular needs of a child in mind. Sometimes the children help each other. The juniors who are fluent readers might hear the infants who are at the stage of needing a lot of practice. Class lessons? They just wouldn't work. In my room I have a five-year-old who started school at the beginning of the term and an eleven-year-old who will be going to grammar school next September. I never teach a class. I teach children.'

This then is an almost complete individualisation of the curriculum. It is often achieved in country schools. Indeed there is no practicable alternative. Those who still feel that unstreaming is an unrealisable ideal might well ponder upon the very real achievements of such small schools. Not only are the classes unstreamed but they contain anything up to a six year span of age.

An urban school

Next, a teacher in a two form entry urban school.

'I have forty-two children in my class. About a quarter of them will go to grammar school in two years' time. At the other end of the scale there is a child who has been ascertained E.S.N. The great implication for me is that class lessons in the basic skills would be poor lessons. My teaching would be directed at the middle of the class. There would always be some children at the ends of the scale who had either already achieved the skill or who were not ready to achieve it. Therefore, for basic work at least, I break the class down into three or four groups. In addition, at the extremes of ability, the groups themselves break down into individuals. My E.S.N. pupil, for example, always has to have individual work. I must emphasise that the composition of the groups varies for different subjects and that children move from group to group as time goes on. I have found it dangerously easy to allow the groups to harden into permanencies. This, after all, would be streaming in miniature. To avoid this I often make a fresh start to the grouping when a new field of work is begun. There has to be continual opportunities for me to adjust my teaching to the varying rates of the children's development.

Some time ago we tried "setting" for maths. For forty minutes each day I took the better half of the Third Year. But we could find no real advantage for the system and abandoned it after a year. My set seemed almost as diverse in their abilities as my class. I felt, furthermore, that the isolation of maths from the mainstream of the children's work was artificial. On occasions during the week I would have to neglect teaching opportunities that arose naturally from other work. It may have been wrong of me but, in addition, I disliked losing half of my children, whose individual needs I felt I knew best, to someone else once a day for a very important part of their work. Basically, I suppose, "setting" ran counter to our wish to achieve a more flexible approach to learning. We are fortunate in having a free timetable and a syllabus resting upon interests and the environment rather than an allotment of work. There is an absence of examination pressure. "Setting" was a formality that did not fit the school.

Naturally, there is no grouping of my class outside the basic skills. Much of our work is shared; painting, craft, physical education, etc. But I expect, and demand, different responses and achievements from different children. What might be considered an excellent piece of work from John might only be passable from David. This has implications in the marking of work. Whenever possible I try to do this with the child by my side. Teaching in this way is hard work. Harder, perhaps, than dealing with a streamed class. Nonetheless, it is more stimulating and pleasurable. In my class there are always some children, and not only the same children on every occasion, who respond well to the demands of the day. They help to carry us all forward to greater achievement.'

Here we have a compromise, a well thought out combination of individual, group and class teaching. As in the country school the prime consideration is the individual child, his needs and his progress. It is the size of the class that has led to the formation of groups. Perhaps we may hazard a guess that the pressures of 11+ selection caused the experiment in setting. After all, it is easier to bring the possibles to the examination starting line if they are prepared together. However, we may hope that the reorganisation of secondary education will remove that

particular pressure once and for all in the next few years.

Now we turn to a head with very different views.

'These words from the Robbins report are written at the beginning of my school's scheme of work. "It is certain that much untapped ability exists at present in this country. But little is known about ultimate human capacities. The levels of education already achieved would have surprised those alive a hundred or even fifty years ago, and it is impossible to circumscribe with a formula the potentialities of the future." I believe that in the past we have exaggerated the differences between children. Even now we are still too attached to the I.Q. nonsense. Unless there is actual brain damage every child is capable of far more than we have ever imagined. Slow learning is more likely due to some circumstance of life; maladjustment, bad health or a deprived background. If we teach well, if we push children hard, if we never give up then they will succeed. In our school we plan a frontal attack on the basic skills and we plan it on a class basis. Grouping just encourages slow children to go more slowly. Let us suppose that a ten-year-old class is to learn a skill in arithmetic, say long division. We teach it to the whole class. Obviously some children achieve the skill quickly, others are left still finding the way. The first group are put to practice the skill, the others are taught again. And so on for a third round. By then the majority of the class will be succeeding and we are ready for the next step.'

Most of us will reject this approach based, it would seem, on an excessively rigid and inflexible attitude to children. Yet we must acknowledge the success of some schools which strive so hard in this way. It is almost as if victory is gained by not admitting the possibility of defeat. Probing deeper we find that the approach is founded upon three sound principles. And they are principles which are fundamental to our abandonment of streaming.

Principles of non-streaming

Firstly, we must reaffirm that we reject the Spearman view of intelligence that dominated our educational thinking for so long. As the Newsom report so magnificently said, 'Intellectual talent is not a fixed quantity with which we have to work but a variable that can be modified by social policy and educational approaches.' A school which refused, absolutely, to consider differences in potential indicated by testing, which said, 'You do not know, therefore we will go on teaching you until you do know' may be serving the interests of many of its pupils very well indeed.

Secondly, we must clear our minds of the assumption that a sure guide to eventual attainment lies in early progress, or lack of it, particularly in the linguistic skills. One meets more than a few teachers who claim, on the basis of written work or conversation with the young child, that they can predict the academic future. 'They've either got it or they haven't.' How often do we still hear such statements. Teachers holding these views should read the first appendix to the Robbins report and its destruction of the theory of a limited pool of ability. Again, we can begin to understand the success of a school staffed by teachers who refuse to admit the possibility of children having an inherent inability to learn.

The third principle which is implicit in the uncompromising methods that have been described is that children tend to fulfil the expectations of the adults concerned in their education. There is now ample evidence from research that parental and teacher attitudes constitute one of the most important factors affecting a child's educational success. That is illustrated quite dramatically in the work of Dr. J. W. B. Douglas published in *The Home and the School.* Most teachers, however, would not go as far as insisting that virtually all children can achieve success at any one point in time. Nonetheless, when we adjust a learning situation to the individual nature of a child we must be aware of the need to stretch that child to the limit and to show that we expect him to succeed. Groups within a class must not become comfortable resting places where there are insufficient intellectual demands.

Flexible use of resources

Lastly let us hear from a head who recently has moved his classes into a building formerly used by a secondary school. He now has seven rooms for four classes, an unusual situation which he is exploiting in an interesting way.

'Our concern has always been for the individual child. We regard a class as being an administrative unit and only very rarely an entity for teaching purposes. During the last few years we have gradually evolved an approach which does not separate the 3 Rs from the children's expressive work. Basically, we believe that children prepare best for the future, and more easily acquire skill, if they are leading a rich life now. So we try to have a lot going on. Stimulating, interesting things in which the children can become involved. Sometimes this leads to individual effort; making a map, writing a letter, painting a picture; sometimes a group effort, getting up a play, building a model, painting a mural. Note that the grouping is not for our convenience as teachers, it happens because that particular part of school life leads to group activity. If you're making a play about the Crusades then you need fifteen or twenty children. It's as simple as that. Our grouping is co-operative grouping and we think this is sound educationally.

This is how the work develops:

1. Stimulus to the whole class (direct experience wherever possible, observation, experiment, reading, film, film strip, television, even teacher talking, etc.).
2. Discussion.
3. Class breaks up into individuals and/or groups and gets to work.
4. Our teaching of active children as we move around amongst them. This is where the 3 Rs come in. We help the children to acquire skill so that they can lead life more to the full.

Our new building has given us more room to move and there has been a further development in our methods. Now, alongside the form bases we have a room biased towards books and reference material, a room used for model making and messy crafts, and a room used for discovery work in maths and science. The centres of learning that used to be cramped in rooms barely sufficient to seat the children are now established in rooms easily accessible to all the junior classes. It must be stressed that these arrangements have not led to a formalisation of the curriculum. We have no timetable and no specialisation. The rooms are used quite freely by the children whenever the need arises. The staff have begun to work as a team. At times, groupings develop which cut across the class organisation. I might walk through the school and find sixty children and a teacher with the local doctor talking about his work. In another room there would be five children reading with a teacher. I believe that for the first time we have really broken out of the old traditional straitjacket of the classroom's four walls, rows of desks and passive children listening to a teacher talking.'

If we are seeking a way ahead perhaps we need look no further. This is a real attempt to teach creatively, to meet individual needs and to use physical and human resources in a flexible, dynamic way.

Ultimately, of course, we all have to find our own way and each of the schools whose work has been described can offer us something. To bring down the selective barriers is not enough in itself. This is only the first step that gives us freedom. Now our concern must be to devise ways of using that freedom so that we might bring a greater good to all our children.

Anatomy of the Non-Streamed Classroom

Teaching non-streamed classes in the junior school

FORUM Observer

The Editorial Board set FORUM'S Observer a task that proved to be more difficult and subtle than was anticipated. It was to observe teaching in two non-streamed junior schools, and to report results.

In any class of, say, 30 children so much is going on at any one time that it is impossible to see and record all that happens. An Observer can only observe the external behaviour of the children—he cannot observe their mental processes, though he may try to deduce these from what they say, write or do during the lesson. He may find himself observing the teacher—who is dominant in a normal class lesson—rather than the children who are in the learning situation. It is difficult to observe more than one child at a time, but attempts can be made to observe samples of group behaviour.

FORUM's Observer evolved his own techniques during observation sessions in five classroom contexts in two non-streamed junior schools. Two of these were class lessons, the others based on group or individual work.

Class lesson 1. School A.

This was a half-hour lesson with a fourth year class (aged 10) on the general topic 'Structure in written language—the paragraph'. The class was arranged at individual desks as in formal class teaching. On the blackboard were three pictures; the first, a boy and girl going out of the house in winter; the second, the two skating; the third, one of them falling through the ice.

I started by noting the content of the lesson. It began with the teacher asking about paragraphs—'Who can remember what a paragraph is?' Many hands go up: 'A group of sentences'. Further questioning elicits 'A group of sentences about one thing'. Finally, the class defines a paragraph as being 'about one part of the story'.

The teacher asks for a suitable heading for the story. The class is a little slow but then various

suggestions are made: 'The fall', 'Skating mishap', 'Danger on the ice', and others. The teacher asks, 'What will the first part of the story be about?' She gets a title. Here she is pushing them a bit.

She then starts building up headings for sentences on the blackboard, asking 'Who goes skating?' and for a good opening sentence for the story. A child produces one but this is not written down. Instead the blackboard is built up through questioning as follows:

Going skating.

1. Who goes skating?
2. Where are they going?
3. How were they going?
4. Why were they going?
5. When were they going?

The teacher explains how to build up the first paragraph from the individual sentences.

The lesson continues on this pattern, the three pictures being dealt with in the same way. Finally, she asks for a title for the story and then, after 16 minutes' build up: 'Right. Away you go now—a really good story.' The class settles down and writes, the teacher going round having the odd word with different children.

This, then, was an example of skilled class teaching in the non-streamed situation. On the face of it, the method did not differ from normal class teaching in streamed schools. The teacher *ran* the lesson, building it up and structuring the situation according to her plan. She dominated the class and the situation as a whole. The class seemed well motivated in this context.

After observing the first few minutes of the lesson, which was spent basically in observing the teacher and the build-up on the blackboard, as well as recording the odd answer from a pupil, I realised that I was not observing the class—the children—effectively and noted: 'One could analyse, if the lesson were taped, how much oral speech was by the teacher, and how much by the children. So far, very little by the latter on the whole—and *how many* of the children have so far spoken at all? Many answers have been very short—a few words only.' For three minutes I switched to recording which children answered questions. Fourteen were asked. Of these, ten were answered by 8 children in the back row, four by 2 children in the front row. Sixteen children (in middle rows) answered none. Getting answers from the back and sides is, of course, a well-known skilled class teacher's technique. But so far as oral expression is concerned, the somewhat inhibiting nature of class teaching is evident. Nonetheless—an effective class lesson with a non-streamed class of ten-year-olds.

Class lesson 2. School B.

A half-hour lesson on 'Means of communication' with eight-year-olds. The children were arranged in five groups around tables, placed at various angles to each other, so that the room appeared flexibly organised. The groupings varied from 4 to 9.

Here I concentrated at first on noting different children's answers, being interested in the nature of and opportunity for oral expression in a class teaching set-up. The teacher's technique was again that of asking a lot of questions, so building up the lesson while involving the class as a whole. It proved impossible both to note the answers given *and* (on my plan of the class) who gave them. For this reason I later modified my technique.

Again noticeable was the shortness of the children's answers, very often one or two words. The topic is concerned with different means of conveying information. Only the first of the teacher's questions is transcribed.

Question: 'Are there other ways of telling us?' Many hands go up:

Answers: 'Letter.'
'People went.'
'You went on a horse and took it.'
'Picture writing.'
(An unusually long answer): 'Miss Thomas, I think a long time ago we used to have messenger pigeons.'

A question on ways of communicating produces answers:

'By train.'
'Telephone.'
'I know two—television and radio.'

A question, hinting at Morse code:

'I think I know—Morse code.'

This record covers three or four minutes of teaching. Finding it impossible to observe the class's response and behaviour (i.e. non-response) as a whole, I switched attention to a single group of six sitting round a table nearby—A and B were girls (sitting together at one side), the rest boys, C and D sitting together, E and F together.

How does the lesson seem from their angle? At first the group appears rather passive. All watch the teacher. The following events were recorded in the next two minutes:

F puts up hand—not asked to answer.

D puts up hand—ignored; hand remains up (he has something he wants to contribute, but the teacher has gone on to something else. Hand comes down).

E puts up hand. He is keen to answer. Another child asked instead.

A puts up hand and is asked. Answers correctly: 'A bell.'

F puts up hand. Not asked.

In these two minutes, one of the six answered a question with a one word answer. Three others had wanted to answer, two had not.

The class is now asked to write down all the means of communication they can think of. My notes record how the group sets about this. The teacher goes round the class, stops at F in my group, and says, 'Someone's got seven here.' Animation in class. F looks round smiling. (He has a huge book standing up open protecting his work from being copied!)
Teacher, 'Pencils down.'
'Anyone got ten?'
F. 'I could think of nine.' He stands up and reads them out.
E has some more and gives them.
C and D put up hands—they still have some. Others asked.
C and D still have hands up.
C asked—he has two.
D asked—he has one.

In observing this group, I note that at moments of relaxation A and B tend to chat together, C and D also, but E and F do not.

At a later stage the class is set to write out an alphabetical code and make up a code message. I go round the group:

A: doing it all right, but his mind wanders—i.e. he tends to watch what's happening elsewhere. Has written alphabet to O.
B: very slow—has written letters only to J.
C: covers his up from me.
D: has written nothing, is just sitting.
E: has written a few letters.
F: has written letters *and* numbers on neat lines he has drawn (is still shielded from observation).

A little later:
A and B tend to just sit—A gazes into space.
C and D chatting.
E and F seem isolated from each other.
The relationships differ.

This again was a skilled class lesson, with a pleasant atmosphere. The class *as a whole* seemed busily engaged most of the time, well involved in a lesson which contained a good deal of interplay between teacher and class. But observation of one group of six children showed a considerable variety in level of response—or 'involvement'—both during the oral part of the lesson (when the offerings of some were, inevitably in this context, rejected) and, more particularly, during the period of individual work; note, for instance, the record of D and E.

Group Lesson 1. School A.

A third year class of about 30 children, the general topic being 'The language of mathematics'. The particular activity was concerned with the expression of mathematical relationships in pictorial form.

The class was arranged informally in six groups of varying size. One group of 9, working with a student, was 'mobile' and allotted about half the room; four other groups were working on tasks at tables, one elsewhere. The groups had already obtained the data they needed or were doing so. Some were working out how to represent this data pictorially (different forms of block diagrams, etc.).

The groups were as follows:

Group A, 9 children. Working with student on the connection between height and weight (of children in the class).

Group B, 12 children. These had books 1 to 6 of the *Wide Range Readers*. First, they had had a game finding pages roughly similar in terms of amount of print. Now each is working individually making a count of the number of times each individual letter appears on the page. From this they will make a pictorial representation showing frequency of appearance of each letter.

Group C, 2 children. Making a pictorial representation of guesses by the class about the number of coins the teacher has in his pocket.

Group D, 3 children. Making a representation of the frequency of the class's birthdays per month (from registers).

Group E, 2 children. Working on class's spelling marks.

Group F, 2 children. Checking number of books in different bookshelves in corridors with aim of presenting this pictorially. (Not in classroom.)

In this situation it is impossible to do more than observe one manageable group. Ten minutes were spent in unobtrusively observing group D (three girls). Since this raised several points of interest, my notes are given in full.

The girls (A, B and C) work leaning up against a table, their heads very close together. They have a large sheet of graph paper and a list of the number of birthdays per month (which they had worked out). They are busy working out the scale of the representation—counting out the squares on the graph paper. Although only 2 to 3 feet away from them, I cannot hear all that is being said; communication too quick and abbreviated to record. Situation report:

Stage One:

A is in the centre of the group, B and C one each side of her. A has the paper and pencil. All very busy but procedure seems quite systematic. They agree on where to draw the lines.
B and C vanish, come back with coloured pencils.
A still has the paper, does the working out aloud (as

regards scale); consults the others who seem to assent.
B watches carefully; makes a suggestion or two.
C on the whole—watches. Cleans paper with rubber, etc.

'My feeling is that the intellectual effort is being made by A—it is she who seems to be solving the problem.'

Stage Two:

The group now shifts: B moves from A's left to the right of C (who is on A's right), but A still has the paper, is doing the writing, drawing, etc. After a very short time:

Stage Three:

B moves *between* A and C and takes the central position that A had at first. B now has the paper and pencil and is filling in one of the months. Suddenly, signs of upset between A and B, but slight. They have found their scale is wrong and so rub out one of the axes, and redraw.

Stage Four:

The group shifts again.

C now has the paper and pencil and fills a month in. They now have two months filled in. The children, with great triumph, show it to the teacher. Teacher asks what the numbers (on the axes) refer to. I ask C: 'Do you take turns in doing it?' Answer: 'Yes (smiles)—doing one each.'

The final product is a joint product. My note: 'The interaction between this group of three is interesting and subtle. For instance, it seemed as if child A was doing the thinking for the group (though of course it may only have been her turn to do this). She seemed somewhat dominant in the group—wore a bright red cardigan. The actual job the other two did was mainly mechanical. How do children fall into these roles and, if they do, who observes the process and corrects it? The teacher?'

Close observation of this group excluded observation, or even consciousness, of the other groups, including the 'mobile' group who were very near me. A tour was made of the other groups in the last 10 to 15 minutes of the period. All the children seemed closely involved in their work as groups or individuals; good order in the classroom but the situation flexible, the atmosphere permissive. According to the teacher, each of these groups was of 'mixed ability'—they are formed for specific jobs, and then reformed. This teacher is thinking of forming basic groups of three, with certain educational criteria determining both their composition and the shifting of children between groups.

Group Lesson 2. School A.

A first year class, the topic 'The use of mathematical apparatus in the building of concepts'.

The children were at three long tables (groups of desks) running up to the teacher, five on each side of each table. Sitting positions decided by free choice (friendship groups?) though the teacher reserves the right to move them around. The apparatus—Cuisenaire rods. The class worked as a unit for the first eight minutes, under the teacher's direction through questioning. The children used the rods to find the answers (some don't need them). I note that a child gives an impressively confident (and lengthy) answer to a question: '2 plus 2 makes 4; the four is worth four units and the two is worth two units' (a verbal answer indicating certain number concepts have been fully grasped). Teacher: 'Very good. Think carefully. Which two rods of some other colour make this one?'

She continues questioning well. Eighty per cent of the class is with her, at a guess; five or six seem otherwise engaged, or not really listening.

After eight minutes, the class are asked to get on with their work. Three sets of sums are on the blackboard, in different coloured chalk. A small group of six comes out in front of the class with their rods and sit on the floor. The teacher works with these—children who have not grasped the elementary mental operations necessary for the building up of number concepts.

The rest work individually on the sums on the board—they are to use their rods if necessary. I discover, through talking to a child, that there are three groups working on these sums—Group 1 doing those in white chalk, Group 2 those in red, Group 3 those in yellow. My informant says she is in Group 1 and is good at maths; her job, after doing the sums, is 'to write a number story'[1]. She has finished her sums and I ask her if they are all right. She says she thinks they are, so I ask why she doesn't know (they could be checked on the rods); she says the teacher marks them right or wrong. In fact, all are right.

I discover that the groups are not sitting together. I asked my informant who the rest of Group 1 were. She seemed uncertain, but then pointed out five or six other children sitting at different tables.

After the lesson the teacher told me that the groups fluctuate—they vary according to what they grasp, they 'flow' into each other. Sometimes a process seems to 'click' suddenly. Her practice is to take a new process with the class as a whole, and after that the groups are re-formed; she insisted that the same children are not consistently in each group.

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[1] Here is an example: 'One day there was a number called 100; he went out and in his amazement the detective number 50 sawed half of him—and he is now called 50 and the detective called 100.' (Logical if gory.)

A session of the 'Integrated Day'. School B.

A method of class organisation developed in Infant schools before the war has been put into practice in some junior schools, especially in Oxfordshire, Nottingham, Bristol and Leicestershire. The headmaster of School B, recently head of an Oxfordshire school, is now developing this approach in his present school.

The class observed was a fourth year class of about 30. The teacher had operated the 'Integrated Day' in the Autumn term and in the Spring term gone over to the 'Integrated Week'. This, in essence, is his method.

The teacher works out a model timetable given above, which is placed on the notice board. The shaded sections represent periods when the class operates as a unit (including physical education, music, TV lessons, etc.). These cover about 50 per cent of the time. For the rest each child makes up his own timetable, although all are expected, in general, to cover the various fields of activity set out in the Master timetable. The teacher does not check these—they are deliberately left as the children's responsibility—but checks the *results* of their work. If anyone falls by the wayside ('skives') his sanction is to put them to work on the model timetable. After eight weeks of the term he had not had to do this with anyone.

This system is another form of compromise between complete informality (children working individually all the time) and formal class teaching. The timetabled activities, on the whole, comprise class work—although these are the more informal type of activities (music, P.E. games). For instance, in mathematics the children are organised into three groups (A, B and C) according to attainment. The children in these groups work *individually* (using Dienes apparatus, Cuisenaire and work prepared on cards) nor do the groups sit together (they may sit where they like each day), but occasionally the teacher calls a group together for work on a specific phase. The same system is used for spelling.

The teacher has a series of duplicated sheets, covering the class as a whole, on which he records the work done by each child in various fields: maths, stories, mental tests, spelling, project work, etc.

The method, then, involves a combination of class,

Model Timetable

9.30	10.0	10.30	11.0	11.30	12.0	1.30	2.0	2.30	3.0
	Set Story Work		BBC Lesson	Hand-writing		Vocab-ulary	TV	Maths	PE
	TV / Science		Free Story Work			Maths		Bible Work	PE
	Maths and Language		Project Work			Art and Crafts Needlework			Story (literature)
	Poetry, Drama, Language		Maths			PE	Project	Free Story Work	Story (literature)
	Music / Maths		Art			BBC Lesson	Reading and Choir		Games

group and individual work, although during the 'free time' sessions the work is mainly individual (as recorded below), but including a class project. The object is partly to maintain 'cohesion' of the class as a class, while allowing opportunity for individual initiative through 'self-programming'. It is worth recording that, during the 40 minutes or so in which the teacher was explaining his methods to me, the children were busily and consistently engaged, though owing to my presence the teacher gave them no attention at all. No problems of any kind, of behaviour, vagueness as to what to do, etc., arose. The teacher said that the class continued working consistently when he was out of the room.

The class was visited between 10.30 and 11.45 on a Friday morning (the children did not leave the classroom for break—or very few did). The classroom was arranged informally, the children sitting at six tables at angles to each other. Nine of the children were at one table and their work is given as a sample:

A: Working out next week's timetable; she is copying down the 'set times' and will go on to make her own for the rest of the time available.

B: Writing about an insect (a beetle); she has three cardboard boxes on the table, two with insects. The beetle drops to the floor and is retrieved. She has drawn the beetle, greatly enlarged, and is now describing it.

C: Copying a poem from a B.B.C. book; this had been read in a B.B.C. programme (handwriting).

D: Working on an individual assignment 'Wild Cats'; this is part of a class project on 'Wild Life in Asia'. Each child has an individual job in connection with this.

E: Also working on an individual assignment 'Wild Cats'. Although doing the same topic and sitting together these two children are working individually. They have picture books and other material, some of which they have obtained themselves.

F: Copying a poem (as above).

G: Working on 'Wild Life in India'. 'We all choose a country from Asia and have to write all about the wild animals.' Part of class project.

H: Doing the same as K, but individually.

I: Writing a story (Creative writing). The class are given up to 14 days for a story.

In addition to the children working at the tables, two other activities were under way:

'Science Laboratory' (2 children).
This is in a separate alcove. Two boys are making shapes out of cardboard, paper and glue. The model when completed will be about 2 feet long and complex — it is called an icosidodecahedron. It is a combination of 12 pentagons and 20 equilateral triangles. The job was about half done; the children said they had spent a lot of the morning on it.

Painting: At an easel in one corner of the room two boys are painting. They are given all day on this if they want it (the class as a whole taking turns).

Conversation with a girl practising handwriting at one of the tables:

Q: Don't you do this on Mondays?

A: You can fit it in when you like. You *can* do it on Monday, but could do some on other days and then you have to chop something out.

Q: Who decides?

A: I do.

The class was relaxed throughout the visit—all engaged in work of one kind or another; no confusion. The teacher is not dominant in any way. When he talks to children he sits beside them, his voice is not loud. When the head and I first entered the classroom we neither of us saw him at first, then spotted him sitting by a child. He believes that what matters most of all is the teacher-pupil relationship.

It is worth noting that there was no group work of any kind going on when the class was under observation (except for the two model-makers). Although sitting in groups, all the children were working individually. Each child seemed to feel a definite responsibility for the organisation of his work. The teacher said that he had the class organised into seven or eight groups of four, but it was not clear, during the period observed, what these groups were for or how they functioned.

Observer's comments:

These observations raise a host of questions but only a few general points will be made here.

First, it should be noted that no specific difficulties attended the non-streamed situation either in the class lessons (second and fourth year) or in relation to group and individual work. True, the classes observed were on the small side, but there seemed no intrinsic reasons why the same techniques should not be employed with larger ones. Both schools, incidentally, were in working-class areas.

Second, it is important to recognise the *variety* of responses to the non-streamed situation, and all possible variations were not covered in these two schools. Some non-streamed schools operate on the *principle* of individualising the work, and indeed this seems to be one response to the non-streamed situation. The nearest approach to this was the 'Integrated Day' class, but here individualisation was

modified. The individualised school can itself operate through a spectrum from tightly controlled and systematised individual work to a full permissive, unstructured situation.

The different methods of organising 'group' work are interesting. Only one class had groups working independently and co-operatively, undertaking particular tasks as a group and deliberately using the non-streamed situation functionally; in others the children making up the 'groups' worked individually, or did so during observation (some are called together occasionally). Again, in one case the teacher stressed the fixed nature of the groups (in maths, calling them A, B and C); in another case (also maths) the teacher stressed the mutability of the groups as their main characteristic.

It seems probable that each teacher, while perhaps using some or all methods of organisation (class teaching, group and individual work), in practice emphasises one or other. Some methods of organisation, of course, may be better adapted to some forms of activity than others. But the various methods used must affect the children in different ways, and, in the last resort, each is based on some theory of child development and learning, even if this is not made explicit. Perhaps it is worth stressing, in relation to the tendency towards individualisation, that learning is primarily a social process.

The FORUM evidence to the Plowden Committee (Vol. 7, No. 1) concluded by stressing the need for research not only into the psychology of learning but also into 'the whole question of class organisation and teaching method'. 'Investigation into the comparative effectiveness of class, group or individual learning situations,' it went on, 'should throw light on important aspects of the educational process.' Such research is fraught with difficulty and requires, as a first condition, the working out of precise techniques of observation. It can only effectively be done as team-work involving practising teachers and others, and in the closest touch with the classroom. Teachers of non-streamed classes have shown great ingenuity and professional skill in solving the problems and meeting the challenges that arise in the new situation both as regards content and method. This pioneering work now needs to be underpinned and assisted by scientific investigation.

Finally, it seems probable that the problems which arise in the non-streamed situation are no different in kind at the early secondary stage than at the primary stage. There is a lot to be learned, at least as regards method, from the non-streamed junior school, especially as regards flexibility of classroom arrangement, the motivation (or 'involvement') of the pupils, and the need for frequent discussions among the teachers.

The Secondary School

Unstreamed methods in the 'Middle School'

C. J. HETHERINGTON

Mr. Hetherington is headmaster of Kibworth High School, Leicestershire. He was previously head of the Hanbury Secondary Modern School in the same county. When secondary education was reorganised in this area of the county, the staff and pupils of the secondary modern school transferred to new premises, taking over the buildings of a grammar school. From that time Kibworth High School has served as one of two county high schools contributing fourteen-year-old pupils to a common upper school at Market Harborough.

When Kibworth High School came into being in 1964, a considerable change took place in the role of the staff of the former Hanbury school. Instead of providing a secondary modern diet for non-selected pupils they faced the task of giving service in the junior section of a two-tier secondary comprehensive system of education.

Well before this move occurred, therefore, it was necessary for the staff to consider carefully the implications in these plans. Since a fresh start had to be made it was wise to assess, on the longest possible view, the demands the school would have to meet in the future. We might then at least hope to be able to adopt settled policies and follow a steady course during the early years.

A high school's community of eleven- to fourteen-year-olds carries a special significance. The pupils, the entire population in the school's catchment area over this age range, have ceased to be young children, but they have yet to reach adolescence. The school must recognise that they have special needs arising from those facts.

The High School's aims

What are their needs? The primary schools, we shall assume, will have provided them with a wide range of experience, and on that basis will have developed their skills and their confidence in using them. The high school should aim to foster the growing individuality of the child and to develop his increasing aptitude for systematic study and productive thought.

The pupil's personality should therefore expand by a broadening and deepening of his natural interests. The emphasis of study should be on a guided activity which can combine intellectual depth with the widest possible scope. It would obviously be a mistake to hedge the child about unnecessarily with subject limits.

This sketch of the high school's aims suggests that there should be special features in the high school's work, making necessary a break with many established secondary school methods. The curriculum of a normal secondary modern school must recognise the needs of pupils ranging from eleven to perhaps sixteen years of age who have failed to pass through a selection procedure for an academic type of tuition; that of the orthodox grammar school is adapted to an even greater age range and to the targets of external examination papers at sixteen years and eighteen plus. In each of these types of secondary schools existing under a bi-partite system the curriculum is customarily presented in a way that is likely to be especially intimidating and confusing for the younger pupils. The school timetable is the instrument by which a disjointed, subject-by-subject view of the world is set before them, and they have little opportunity to perceive any governing unity within it. Relevant connections between their individual concerns and their school studies are made, if made at all, with difficulty.

Similar rigidities within the high school could not be justified by the subject requirements of an external examination several years and another school away. The high school's role should be as distinctively different from that of the usual secondary school on the one hand as from that of the primary school on the other.

A middle school

I would argue, in fact, that a Leicestershire high school can successfully stake its claim to validity as an independent form of school because of its ability to act as an emergent middle school. It will undeniably present many resemblances, as well as contrasts, to both upper (secondary) and lower (primary) tiers—and not only because of its intermediate position. But the high school, existing to provide for the needs of older children of eleven to fourteen, has to do so by making radical changes in the curriculum hitherto accepted for the lower secondary years. Basing itself, as already suggested, on the needs of the young individual for emotional and intellectual development beyond the primary stage, it will prepare its pupils for the final transfer at fourteen. The maturing of the personality, and the analytical and fully purposive study associated with that stage of growth may then develop in the favourable environment of the upper school.

The Church Langton secondary modern school had been streamed in a similar manner to that which obtains in most secondary schools. It seemed, in 1963, likely that this form of organisation would block the way of any move in the direction I have described. The purpose of the arrangement was to group pupils homogeneously according to ability in order to make most effective teaching use of class instruction techniques. One negative feature could be clearly seen: streaming would give no help, to say the least, to a school which had decided to adopt the individual and not the class as its educational unit.

The end of streaming

But worse, in practice streaming would be a positive impediment in the development of an individualised education. Streaming places limits to the progress expected of the pupils within each stream, and the provision of educational opportunities for the streamed pupil is correspondingly and naturally limited as well. Yet if Kibworth was to provide scope for the fullest development of each individual's interests and talents the school's entire educational resources should surely be at the disposal of every pupil, without exception. The method of organising the school by streaming would have to disappear as soon as possible.

While, however, it was clear that non-streaming must be at the heart of an endeavour to provide for individual learning, it was not a policy which by itself would carry us any nearer this goal. When non-streaming was adopted it would be in order that we might introduce a new kind of teaching—a kind which a democratic society needs if the best is to be brought out in every child. The new ways are not easy to find, nor is it always clear how they will develop once they have been started, but the need for them is great.

A beginning was made at the Hanbury school in its last year of existence, 1963-64, with an unstreamed first year. (A further compelling reason for not streaming the new intake was the obvious injustice to many of attempting to categorise children who, transferring from twelve small and well-scattered rural primary schools, had passed through a great variety of educational experiences.) During this year individualised techniques were tried in several subjects. Group activities on project lines, and pupils' graduated assignments (similar to the job cards described in A. W. Rowe's *The Education of the Average Child*) were features of much of the English, geography, history, and religious education work of the first year classes. The experiences were thought to be encouraging, particularly the use of assignment methods.

In the next year, 1964-65, the opening year of the Kibworth High School, the first year's pupils were again not streamed. Assignment methods continued in use on lines similar to those of the previous year, and a new appointment to the staff resulted in the introduction of a similar approach in the teaching of physics. Here the pupils' work was to be based on individual experiments, each individually followed up with programmed texts. The attitudes and efforts of the children as a result of these innovations were also encouraging.

Some fundamental problems concerning the deployment of our human and physical resources had also to be faced. In an orthodox secondary school subject teaching is provided by teacher specialists using laboratories, workshops, library, and many other specialist facilities. In this respect, as with others, the flexibility which the high school required appeared to conflict with the situation prevailing at the Hanbury school. Either the specialist basis of the teaching would have to go, it seemed, or alternatively specialisation would have to be ordered by a high degree of organisation in the interests of the integration of teachers' efforts and of their specialist rooms and equipment.

Team teaching

Neither approach was palatable. To have abandoned specialisation would have been to amputate the very means by which we might hope to extract from our pupils the best of which they were capable. On the other hand, what ends would really be served if our 'flexibility' were to be based on detailed organising of teachers, rooms, and pupil groupings? Teachers would find their freedom of action restricted. And what of the pupil about whose individuality we expressed so much concern? What would become of the large measure of freedom he needed for the arrangement of his own studies? How could we then give him the assurance of help from teachers sufficiently close to him to know him as a person?*

The solution which was evolved after discussions and trials over two years was to ally the techniques of team teaching to those of individualised learning which have already been described. An outline of the work of this, 1965-66's, first year will give some indication of the extent to which Kibworth is able to fulfil the aims I have put forward.

I should first, however, stress the reservations

* A discussion of a similar problem by Michael Young and Michael Armstrong in *The Flexible School* (*Where?* Supplement No. 5, published by A.C.E.) leads them to favour the abandonment of much specialist organisation in favour of work in one class with one teacher for much of a pupil's time.

which we hold concerning this work. Not only are the pathways we are following relatively new, sometimes even unexplored as yet, but we are operating in buildings which were used by a traditional grammar school and which are widely dispersed and of various ages. For these reasons our methods are tentatively introduced and particularly liable to modification. Nevertheless, I think we can feel reasonably sure that our ways are promising ones.

Themes not subjects

For ten periods of the forty period week all four first year forms together take 'Humanity', a scheme for which the subject matter includes, but is not confined to, that which would normally be taught as history, geography, art, and English skills. While engaged on this scheme the children work with a team of five teachers, mainly specialists. Four members of the team also act as 'tutors', each taking responsibility for individual guidance of the work of the members of one form.

The first year scheme for Humanity is knit together by the theme of 'Mankind In the Making', and provides for study of five topics. The pupils spend about three-fifths of their time in working on carefully graded assignments. This activity is pursued under the guidance of the team, but considerable freedom is given to each pupil to choose particular aspects for study, the facilities he wishes to use, and the areas in which to work. This assignment work is interspersed with 'presentations' and visits for the whole year group (designed to provide signposts and stimuli for the detailed studies); weekly 'tutorial' periods; and discussions among small groups.

Another six periods of the week are spent on natural sciences. A team of three teachers and one laboratory assistant, making use of three laboratories, are this year providing an integrated scheme based mainly on individual experiments and programmed material. A pair of forms (sixty pupils) takes this course at any one time. When engaged on the scheme these pupils disperse among the three laboratories, each going to the laboratory providing the facilities needed for the particular work on which he is engaged.

A less elaborate form of team teaching functions in the field of technical studies, where each boy or girl chooses any two subjects from the group of metalwork, woodwork, housecraft, and needlework lessons offered by four teachers.

Normal class teaching, although with some modifications, still obtains during the remaining half of the first year's time in school. There is little doubt that further improvements will come, but in some subjects, especially in French and in mathematics, there are even greater problems than those we have tackled so far before a full programme of individual learning is established, even in our first year.

A planned transition

We have stood by one further principle: that when any change is introduced it is done only when there is the certainty that there will be at least some advantage to the pupils, and that much more advantage than that is expected of it. Within this limitation there is every reason for us to proceed, deliberately and yet cautiously. We now have, alongside our unstreamed first year, second and third year forms where streaming only obtains in relation to work in mathematics and French, and in which some of the individualised methods I have described are being used.

Kibworth High School is in a transitional state. It has, in some respects, departed from the ways of a traditionally streamed, subject-based secondary school, and is adopting some of those of an unstreamed middle school—a school in which young people approaching adolescence will receive every help and encouragement in developing their talents and their personalities.

Non-Streaming Conference

On June 4th, FORUM is holding its third conference on non-streaming, this time in co-operation with the Comprehensive Schools Committee (see the advertisement on page 85 for details).

Our first conference, on non-streaming in the junior school, was held in 1962, and attended by some 200 teachers; it undoubtedly had a considerable effect in assisting the movement towards non-streaming at an early stage. This was followed by a second conference, in 1964, concerned both with primary and secondary schools—this was perhaps the first conference which considered the practicability of secondary non-streaming.

Since that time, as this issue of FORUM shows, widespread interest in secondary non-streaming has developed, particularly in relation to the comprehensive school; a number of comprehensive schools are in fact experimenting with non-streaming, regarding it as a logical development of the non-selective principle. This conference, concerned specifically with non-streaming in the comprehensive school, will, therefore, report practical experiences in the schools.

The morning session will be led off by three head-teachers of comprehensive schools, and the afternoon session, by three assistant teachers. A hall holding 300 has been booked, and all comprehensive schools in the country (as well as local authorities, etc.) circulated. It may be the sort of conference that will help to make educational history. We hope that many FORUM readers will find it possible to attend and to make their contributions to the discussions.

Discussion

Non-Streaming in a Comprehensive School

In this comprehensive school of 1,050 children we began to non-stream last September. The impulse to do this was two-fold—the evidence of recent research, and our own dissatisfaction with the results of streaming.

Although our system of streaming was flexible, allowing a transfer rate between classes of five to eight per cent, we felt that many children were being denied incentives by being placed in streams which were really based upon assessments made at seven or nine years. One factor which supports this idea is our present Upper VI, which is drawn from three streams of ability. Fifty per cent of these pupils were eleven-plus failures, yet all are fruitfully following 'A' level courses which will lead to universities, Colleges of Education and executive positions in industry. Some of these children started in 1E, but through determination and effort moved up through the streams. But many able children do not possess this drive and so accept the categories into which they were placed in the Junior School. Such children form a group of fourth year leavers. In this class there is a wide range of ability ranging from C to F streams, but all are determined to leave school as soon as possible. We felt that such an attitude was in great part a direct result of streaming, and that if we non-streamed, these feelings of inferiority and deprivation, which clearly emerge in discussion, would not be allowed to develop.

A further consideration was the fact of being a neighbourhood school in an essentially working-class area. The majority of our parents have no experience of education beyond the age of 15, and although most of them are concerned that their children 'get on', they generally lack the passion for education which is found in more middle-class areas. We therefore felt that classification of children into C, D or E might awaken their memories of Elementary or Secondary Modern schools and so stultify any desire they might have to co-operate with the school by fully supporting the child at home.

A survey of the Junior schools which provide our intake justified these fears about streaming. One school rigidly streamed from the age of seven. 'A' stream children were given extra lessons and the 'best' teacher. The A forms had an extremely high pass rate at eleven-plus, but discussion, creative writing and oral work played a very small part in their education. A second school streamed less rigidly, and the third, the smallest school, was unstreamed. Therefore it appeared that four-fifths of our first year children had been streamed and had been inculcated with attitudes and expectations fitting to the streams in which they had been placed.

After two meetings, with the Headmaster actively encouraging the move, the staff agreed to try the experiment. We decided to remove those children who needed specialised teaching and to divide the remainder into five equal classes, deliberately mixing the I.Q.s so as to give a broad spread of ability in each class. The forms were then called after the surname of their teacher.

For the teaching of English a common syllabus was set up for the five forms: myths and legends of Greece and Rome; a history of language growth, based mainly on conquests up to 1066; creative writing; oral work; dramatic activity with a specialist outside the classroom, and remedial grammar only. No set grammar book was issued, but it was available on demand. The literature is issued each term, initially as a set for the whole class. In the first month of the term the book is read as a common experience, with the teacher encouraging comment on plot, character and style. After this first month fresh books are issued in small sets of five and as many as possible are read. Each group of five then presents the book in the shape of a review to the class. With the reading of the myths, as much direct reference as possible is made to current usage through words such as 'tantalise' and expressions like 'Achilles heel'. This is closely tied up with language work where origins are traced through the dictionary and words having interesting stories behind them, such as 'sincere', are used to bring home to children the fascination of language. Creative writing is encouraged in every way, especially by breaking down the barriers between subjects. For example, a poem written in the English lesson might provide the motivation for a painting in Art the same day. Strong emphasis is placed upon oral work through reading, discussion, and talks.

In all this work we have observed no lowering of academic standards, indeed our Junior Debating Society is the best of recent years. However, some group teaching is necessary for remedial work. This month we are carrying this a stage further by transferring parallel classes when the timetable permits. This will enable one teacher to have a group of 50 for a debate or film, while another will do remedial work with a chosen set of 20.

At the end of the year we will examine the five classes and take stock. It seems clear to me that one year of non-streaming is not going to eradicate four years of thorough compartmentalisation, nor do anything like enough to enable the school to compensate for inimical home backgrounds. If we can continue the process in the second and third year then we will have overcome the main problems. In the fourth year we have a 'pools' system. This allows children to choose a pattern of subjects which will be most beneficial to them, and so avoids emotional categories.

The inadequacies of the present approach are mainly due to inexperience. I feel that much more research and experiment must be carried out in the English Department to make teaching more effective. So far we have simply non-streamed administratively, without realising the full possibilities creatively. Two departments have virtually re-streamed by setting across the system—Maths and Languages. This greatly weakens the principle behind the experiment and if anyone has any ideas about teaching methods for these subjects, which would facilitate non-streaming, I would be grateful. Limited as it is, the experience so far has convinced me that non-streaming is desirable both socially and educationally.

R. MORGAN,
Head of English Department,
Bedminster Down School, Bristol.

English for the Non-Streamed

We are now in our third year of teaching English to first year mixed ability groups at Abbey Wood Comprehensive school. We use the house group, in itself a mixed ability group with social aims, as the teaching unit; in the present first year we have eight such groups taught by seven different teachers and timetabled in two blocks of four groups. The problem of 'converting' seven teachers to try teaching mixed ability groups was not difficult with young staff who are keen to try out new ideas. A blocked timetable, allowing for team teaching, plus fairly frequent departmental meetings, both formal and informal, made discussion of problems, work in hand and actual results, very easy and valuable.

One conclusion we have come to is that good teaching methods are good for streamed and unstreamed classes alike. More importantly, we have learned that in a large, or indeed a small, department there are bound to be different approaches and interests in English teaching: it would be wrong and in the long run futile to try to prescribe methods and materials for a whole department, as in the mixed ability class the differing interests and approaches need to be encouraged and the resultant experiences shared. There can thus be no single method of teaching within the department; rather will there be a number of individuals working towards a common goal using some similar methods, some learned from their colleagues and some peculiar to themselves. Furthermore, we are continually reconsidering our methods both individually and collectively; thus what follows will often indicate what we intend to do as much as what we have done.

It is obviously important in any class, and especially so in a mixed ability class, to get to know the children as quickly as possible; one way, after they have had a few days to settle in, is to give them a short series of diagnostic tests:

a. A composition—which should be triple marked.

b. Schonell Group Reading Test 'B'.

c. Schonell Spelling Test—optional.

This system is both brief and effective; we've found that the relationship with the class is impaired in the vital early stages if too much time is spent on tests.

Once this is done, work can commence on a sounder footing than if either the eleven-plus results or subjective estimates were relied upon. I myself break down my first year timetable into half term (six week) units within which I deal with one, two or three themes (see later). At the end of each unit a review or report on the work done is produced; this might be done by individuals, friendship groups or the whole class and might take the form of a diary, group plays, stories, or a taped report to be passed on to other classes. I break my week down as follows:

Lesson 1
a. Secretary's Report 10 mins. Each child takes it in turn to prepare and present an oral report on the previous week's work, about which he must answer questions from the class.
b. Reading aloud previous week's work. Optional. 10 mins.
c. Copying up and correcting this work. I go round marking and encouraging the children to help each other.

Lesson 2 Library Period; alternate weeks:
a. Borrowing books; finish copying up any work; silent reading but encourage brighter ones to help slower ones.
b. Learning to use the library; friendship groups; job cards; lots of activity learning; research directed to theme work where possible.

Homework Arising from reading (further reading, preparing written and oral reviews) and library work.

Lesson 3 Individual and group work; reading groups composed of children of similar ability; whole of first year class readers broken down into sets of five or six books, supplemented by remedial and very easy books; a few children withdrawn for remedial work; group and individual reading followed by individual written corrections and practice work, sometimes using formal textbooks also broken down into small sets of varying difficulty; I go round and hear groups and individuals read; encourage able children to help others with corrections where appropriate.

Lesson 4 Flexible: link as necessary with work in lessons 2, 3 and 5.

Lesson 5 Theme Work; central core; done as a class, in friendship groups or individually; involves listening to teacher—read and broadcast poems and stories, watching films and TV, responding to various sense stimuli, group discussion, reading and group acting. Some themes that have worked well are: animals; the sea; fire; children's TV; other children; myself. These themes are explored in any way that seems exciting or appropriate, imaginatively or formally, through a poem or a taped interview.

Homework Written or other work arising.

This approach is, I think, reasonably well suited to a mixed ability group, and indeed, as I said earlier, this means that it is also suited to a streamed group. It involves little extra work or preparation beyond the initial re-thinking of the organisational pattern. The slower children are given ample opportunity to shine in the oral and imaginative work, for the most imaginative and perceptive children are by no means confined to the upper streams. The average and brighter children can all move at their own level and speed in the theme and individual work. The whole ability range benefits, I am convinced, from the experience of working with other children of differing interests and abilities. In particular the slower children receive precisely the kind of oral stimulation they need if they are to break out from, in Bernstein's terms, a restricted into an elaborated linguistic code.

Broadly, then, we have arrived at three main conclusions:

a. English is basically about speaking, listening, reading and writing. To carry out any of these activities effectively the children need to be involved and excited by what they are doing.

b. Classes are composed of individual children. Individual assessment and encouragement are therefore vital; accumulative individual marking consisting of comments rather than marks will be most useful.

c. Children, like adults, learn through doing, teaching and explaining. Co-operation should therefore be encouraged.

The inherent, and very obvious, heterogeneous nature of a mixed ability class seems to be singularly well suited, unlike the deceptively homogeneous streamed class, to encourage teachers to implement these conclusions in the classroom. Certainly this has been the case at Abbey Wood and we now look forward to the task of doing it with the second years.

RAY BOLAM,
Abbey Wood School, London.

Review Criticism

Your reviewer of W. A. L. Blyth's *English Primary Education* (2 vols.) in the last issue of FORUM commends these studies as 'an immensely valuable compendium of our existing knowledge of the primary school' quite justifiably, but there are some serious omissions which ought to concern FORUM readers. Professor Blyth should be familiar with the many articles on non-streaming published in this journal, especially the important contributions of George Freeland and Edward Harvey. He refers in a footnote on page 62 to the book on *Streaming; an education system in miniature,* by Brian Jackson, but there is no reference to the symposium, *Non-Streaming in the Junior School,* a FORUM publication reprinting some pioneer material. I am surprised, too, that there is no reference to the work of Ash and Rapaport; in their book *Skills in the Junior School,* reviewed in this journal, they deal specifically with social education and stress the importance of building up community responsibilities in young children.

One realises that these books were intended to survey the primary school territory before Plowden reports, but besides FORUM there seems to be a neglect, too, of the forward looking journal, NEW ERA, and of the National Froebel Foundation Bulletin now the Froebel Journal. It will indeed be very amusing to watch the growth of professional practitioners in educational sociology; in the primary field one does expect some real knowledge of the seminal articles in journals specifically concerned with this area of education. One wonders if either Professor Blyth or your reviewer writes with the experience of organising the learning activities of primary children behind them.

Finally, one would have hoped that a serious study of primary education by a professor of education would have given more attention to the significance of curriculum organisation as distinct from the syllabus—following which is so common. Here one would have expected more detailed reference to the U.N.E.S.C.O. survey by Robert Dottrens with its important Piaget contributions.

ERIC LINFIELD,
Newton Park College of Education, Bath.

Team Teaching

Lest Mr. Freeman think that nobody tries anything, and lest others think that the idea of team-teaching is of no use save in a school large enough to field a team the size of Swinton's (FORUM, Autumn 1965), may I describe two uses which, in their small way, proved valuable in a school of 450?

Some years ago our geography department was under strength and economies in specialist-hours were made. In two junior forms lessons were timetabled simultaneously so that a specialist could have the doubled class for teaching, and then one class would be supervised by another teacher while both worked on identical exercises, practical or theoretical, the specialist learning from his group where queries lay and clearing-up by visiting the other group. Answers and model scripts were provided for the other teacher who shared the marking. Thus, the cost was a little rigidity, but a by-product was more careful planning.

The second economy involved the partnership of two specialists and the timetabling together of the geography lessons for two fifth form classes who were not following examination work. Topics were followed by the use of films in the doubled class, background preparation and follow-up being done separately. Thus, while one teacher took the film lesson, the other was released for more valuable preparation or marking.

Perhaps these relatively minor applications will help extend the use of team-teaching, and help some other under-manned outpost.

D. W. CLOKE,
Crownhill School, Plymouth.

The Next Forum

The next issue of FORUM (September 1966) will be a Special Number on the Schools Council. It will make a complete survey and assessment of the Council's work to date. Contributors include Dr. J. C. Daniels, Professor J. F. Kerr, Stuart McClure, Edward Blishen, David Wheeler and many others. Reviews of all the main publications issued will be included.

Inter-Disciplinary Enquiry : A new approach to secondary education

PETER MAUGER

An account of a course for experienced teachers, attended by 21 heads and assistants, held at Goldsmith's College during the autumn term; it met daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the tutors were Charity James and Edwin Mason of Goldsmith's College, and Dr. Florence Roane, visiting professor of education from Florida. A full report of the course, The Raising of the School-Leaving Age: second pilot course for experienced teachers, *is available from College Bookshop, University of London Goldsmith's College, New Cross, London, S.E.14, 5s. 9d. post paid. The first pilot course was described by Charity James in FORUM, Vol. 8, No. 1; this, the second course, is described by Peter Mauger, headmaster of a secondary modern school and member of the FORUM editorial board, who attended it.*

Since the publication of the Newsom Report, and with the raising of the leaving age in mind, there have been various courses for teachers concerned with the education of children 'of average or below average ability'. The members of this course realised, from the first day, that these terms of reference are too narrow, that it is impossible to discuss the education of a section of secondary school children in isolation. This approach implies that children can be divided into tidy categories, for each of which there is an appropriate type of 'education'. It implies a contempt for children who cannot profit from a so-called 'academic' curriculum, and at the same time implicitly assumes that all is well with the education of the 'able' children; the capacity theory is a long time a-dying. The course turned, therefore, to an examination of the curriculum of secondary modern and grammar schools in terms of the needs of children.

As a result, we found ourselves engaged, in the words of the course report, 'in an inter-disciplinary enquiry, identifying what seemed to be the most significant questions in education today, discussing them in large and small groups, defining them, dividing them into component parts, assigning ourselves work on these parts according to our interests and skills, visiting schools and observing, reading, writing, listening to and analysing the advice of experts . . . called in'. The tutors had the patience and confidence to allow us to chase up blind alleys, and the skill to know when and how to help us to choose more fruitful paths. In general we sought to define and account for the inadequacies of the present curriculum—using the word to cover everything that goes on in school—and to propose changes making it more relevant to the needs of adolescents, so enabling their potential to be developed much more fully. The following are some of the main conclusions.

Changing the Curriculum: a shift of objectives

We found that the traditional subject-based curriculum has fundamental educational limitations. The division into separate subjects, each with its own syllabus, is reflected in the chopping-up of the school day into short periods. The teacher's task is confined to imparting disparate and unco-ordinated bodies of knowledge. However skilled, his role is of necessity didactic with the emphasis on instruction. The pupil's role is relatively passive, and accurate recall of the facts and processes taught him is the greatest virtue. But knowledge cannot be confined within rigid subject-boundaries. It is common experience that when keen interest is aroused in a lesson on any subject, questioning often takes children—as it should—over the boundaries of that subject into another, sometimes several others. However encouraging the teacher may find this interest, he cannot satisfy it, partly because he may not have the specialist knowledge, partly because he does not want to encroach on the field of a colleague, and partly because his time is limited by ultimate public examination requirements.

Were there indeed a fixed body of knowledge these criticisms would be serious enough. But with the staggering growth of human information, which will soon be *doubling annually*, a static nineteenth-century type of curriculum is in urgent need of radical change. Knowledge often advances most rapidly in the areas between subjects. Yet the present system encourages the repetition of old 'facts', and does not allow for learning of the development of new ideas.

Children cannot be expected to reason, to question, to enquire, if they have been brought up in a

mould of accepting uncritically, as truths, the information given by teachers and textbooks. This is not to prepare them for life in a rapidly changing society, for work during an age of technological revolution which may face them with jobs not yet invented. Nor does it develop the capacity to help forward these changes, to become an active participant in new forms of social organisation, to live a full life in an age of increasing leisure. Faced with dynamically new conditions of living and working we must break out of the straitjacket of the present system, of instructing children in bodies of inert knowledge so that they can give this back at will. Memory-recall has its place, but there are many more valuable qualities that are either not developed or at best developed by chance, despite the system.

In considering new objectives, two books by Professor Benjamin Bloom* were a quarry of ideas about the qualities to be developed, and we made a preliminary summary of some to guide our search for wider educational aims. They were: (a) self-understanding; (b) self-direction; (c) originality; (d) awareness: sensitivity in personal relationships; (e) appreciation; (f) curiosity: organisation of knowledge; (g) communication: oral, written, and visual; (h) decision-making and intellectual behaviours.

Enquiry as the basic concept

This approach involves a complete change in the classroom situation, from the teacher-instructing-the-class relationship to the placing of the children in a co-operative learning situation with the teacher acting as a skilled adviser. Our report runs:

'As soon as we think primarily in terms of learning as an active process we have to start thinking from the needs of children at the stage they are at that time. If the enquiry comes from the child he can at once make use of that most vital human characteristic, curiosity. The desire to enquire, to find out the nature of problems is a human need, which we can see in operation from earliest childhood. We often wonder why the curiosity, the eagerness to learn, of the primary school child gives way to the apathy of the secondary school leaver. A large part of the answer may be that our subject-syllabuses, imposed on him, or rather imposed on the whole class of which he is a part, with little relation to his interests, have deadened his curiosity and given little opportunity for originality or creativity to develop.

If this is so, and if he does not see his school work as relevant to his needs and his interests, it seems clear that a radical change in the curriculum is needed, so that it can consist of investigations into significant problems.

In the course of their enquiries children will find out that they need certain disciplines and skills to enable them to progress with the solution of the problems in hand. This is the most impelling way of becoming convinced of the necessity of acquiring skills, but a qualitatively different degree of school flexibility in organisation will have to emerge before the acquisition of these skills can be catered for as the need arises. A need that should no longer arise would be that of "balancing" the Sciences and the Humanities. Since enquiry enters all fields of knowledge *as the course of the enquiry directs* it is conducted with all the relevant skills, using both the sensitive imaginative skills commonly thought to be especially applicable to "Arts" studies and the experimental and analytical skills commonly thought of as "scientific"; the separation of these approaches has been produced by separating teaching of "subjects", by dividing the mind. Enquiry need not imitate the earlier pattern, and so enforce the use of only one approach to any matter under investigation; all matter may be approached in a variety of ways, so that the pupil can discover for himself which approaches yield the most rewarding harvest.

Part of the working week, therefore, will be devoted to supportive skills, for instance mathematics and foreign languages; these must be regarded not only as supportive but also as subject to enquiry in their own right. Time is also needed for art, crafts and physical activities; they can be enjoyed for themselves, as forms of communication, for therapy or as a part of inter-disciplinary enquiry.

The grouping of children into "ability" streams would be inappropriate for inter-disciplinary enquiry, the object of which is to provide an educational environment permitting and encouraging the development of every child's potential in as many different ways as possible. Each child has his individual contribution to make, and in making it he will grow.

An additional advantage of the enquiry method is that the standard class unit is constantly broken up. The size of the group will vary from one to one hundred according to the needs and scope of the investigations. Both teachers and children will be freed.' (Course Report, pp. 5-6.)

New assessments for new objectives

A curriculum based on inter-disciplinary enquiry calls for new methods of assessment. Appraisal of children's behaviours, the development of which are the prerequisite of their progress and ultimate educational attainment, should be continuous, and should be made when observing children in many different situations and activities.

A convenient method of recording such observations is in the form of a grid (like a mark book) listing pupil's names vertically and the behaviours horizontally. The behaviours must be carefully defined beforehand, so that all the teachers are working to the same definitions. As a teacher observes a child in various learning situations he will

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* *A Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Professor B. Bloom, Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1956.

make entries in the relevant sections of the assessment grid, either by ticks, plus marks, or symbols denoting stages along a previously agreed continuum. Periodically these appraisals, made by every teacher, may be collated on to each child's cumulative record sheet; this will then show the teachers' opinions of the child's interests, potential aptitudes and relative strengths. A trait noted by one teacher may encourage others to look for and develop it in their specialist fields.

This way of making assessments should have many advantages. It has a good educational backwash, in that teachers are encouraged to look for traits previously agreed to be desirable, or to look for relative strengths and try to develop them instead of concentrating on weaknesses. Fuller and more accurate information about the child will be available when it is required, for counselling, for reports to parents, or to employers. The cumulative record sheet should, in fact, be a positive aid to the child's development during his school life, and at the end of it make possible a much more descriptive and useful school leaving statement, especially for the child who has not taken public examinations.

The Certificate of Secondary Education

In practice, more children every year *are* taking public examinations and must prepare for them; how will schools that embark on inter-disciplinary enquiry fare? Our discussions produced two answers, long-term and short-term.

First, we agreed that the effect of G.C.E. is to confine teaching within narrow limits but that the C.S.E. offers much more flexibility, especially if Mode 3 is adopted. In the words of Sir Edward Boyle, in a Foreword to Bulletin No. 1 of the Secondary Schools Examination Council, it 'presents the teachers with a unique opportunity to create, for the first time in our educational history, an examination system which is wholly the servant of the schools . . . ' This bulletin refers to 'subject courses, combinations of subject courses or integrated courses which cross the boundaries of subject divisions' (para. 30). It also gives examples of the ways in which knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation are capable of assessment within objective tests (paras. 56-60), and Bulletin No. 4 covers these matters in much greater detail.

We hope, therefore, that teachers will work together to liberalise the C.S.E. system of examination so that inter-disciplinary enquiry can be accommodated. In particular, this requires that assessment of the work of pupils during the whole of their fifth year, moderated externally, should play at least as large a part in determining grades as the traditional written papers.

Second, on a short-term view, we hope that children educated in inter-disciplinary enquiry for, say, three years will develop more fully than at present, and so be able to tackle even the normal G.C.E. and C.S.E. papers with confidence and success.

These conclusions arose from free and unstructured discussions ranging over the whole field of secondary education.

We are convinced of the value of in-service courses offering this opportunity. Freed for a term from the daily rush we were able to think back to basic principles, discuss books that we normally never have time to read, share and learn from each other's experience. Schools and colleges of education gain much from working closely together, and we have forged links with Goldsmith's that will benefit both. We discussed many aspects of school life that there is no space to refer to here—the physical necessities for the school that is a learning workshop, the creation of a learning environment, flexibility of grouping, counselling, moral education —but these are covered in the full report. In this we have asked questions which we think secondary school teachers should be, and are, considering; and we believe we have made a beginning in answering some of them constructively.

Experiments in Theme Teaching: New methods in the unstreamed secondary school

These accounts describe first steps in putting into practice, in two secondary modern schools, the methods worked out in the Goldsmith's College in-service courses for teachers.

1. Nightingale Secondary School, Redbridge

BERYL JONES

Nightingale Secondary School, opened nine years ago, has 450 pupils and a three-form entry. It is unstreamed throughout with 'setting' only for mathematics. Last September we began an experiment in 'theme' teaching with the first year intake of 98 pupils. The theme we chose was 'Man makes Himself' and, working on it, the first year course became, within a term, one of enquiry and exploration. The theme provided a framework of ideas, a sense of purpose and direction, and so a stepping stone away from the rigid first-year syllabus. But this very success led to a transcending of the pattern adopted; children and staff moved naturally on to pursue lines of enquiry which stemmed from the theme and this has led to the introduction of 'biassing' or block teaching in particular fields such as science, history, English.

Time to develop interests

Our general aim is to enable children to pursue a chosen field of enquiry across subject boundaries so that they see several disciplines as necessary to complete a picture; this, rather than thinking of something as specifically history but not science, or as geography but not English. But we also want, having stimulated the children's interest, to allow them the time and facilities to develop that interest, to let it deepen and lead on to something else. This cannot be done in normal school periods. Science can be exciting but what happens to the interest when the subject only comes round once a week? To give it a block of time allows for discussion, deeper investigation, time for real study; things are not left to 'get cold'. To use this method in science, in particular, has shown that children can attain knowledge usually belonging to the third or fourth year of the course, that they have time to develop the necessary skills and put them to good use.

The first-year intake studying the theme was divided up into four groups, the only factors taken into consideration being the relative number of boys and girls and the breaking up of groups from contributory junior schools. Only mathematics remained outside the theme, the teachers concerned arranging their own setting during the term. Otherwise each group had fixed periods for P.E., French, Music and Art but the rest of the timetable was flexible, each group being allotted a teacher. Responsible for the block teaching of a particular 'bias' was a main group of four teachers—one covering science, one history and geography, two English—and these took one of the groups for a considerable proportion of the week's timetable. When a particular topic of enquiry ended, the group moved on to another bias. This can best be illustrated by describing what could happen to a particular group. They might, perhaps, have ten lessons a week with the science teacher, then move on to the English teacher but continue with two or three lessons a week in science to maintain a carry over. Since two or more of the main team of four teachers are always with the first-year, the groups can remain flexible and move from one teacher to another by agreement between those concerned. Otherwise teaching on the theme is undertaken by other members of staff.

This plan of organisation has evolved, rather than being planned. Initially we drew in as many teachers as possible, which we thought desirable, but this has proved limiting and we now aim to reduce the number concerned with the first-year groups. The obvious difficulty is the timetable one, that a teacher involved with other years is not easily available as and when wanted; moreover it is difficult for a teacher taking only two or three lessons a week on a theme to become an integral part of a team.

Introducing the theme

We led into the general theme on the first morning of term by showing three short films—on primitive weapons, on the use of oil through the ages, on the building of a modern city—which were followed by discussion. Then the four groups began work on the theme, each taking a different bias. We concentrated on the basic needs of man. Science—food, air, water, etc. Social Studies—food, shelter, etc. English —language, psychological needs, etc. When any group completed some worthwhile work they could present it to the whole year. Any independent study

or project was recorded in a diary and other material displayed. The groups could also come together for a dramatic presentation or discussion to build up a whole picture of the aspects under study.

As an illustration, this is the ground covered by one group during the term. Basic needs of man, with the science teacher: examination of air and water—metals—uses of metals in ancient civilisations—practical casting—astronomy. Primitive man, with the history teacher: primitive man, ancient and modern—river civilisations—practical study of river Roding, source to Thames—Sumerian and Egyptian river civilisations.

Evolution of man, with the English teachers: early man—folk lore—legends, etc., growth of language—early stories, e.g. Beowulf—drama project—working out of play with movement and music and unscripted dialogue—group work—five minute film—taped play from written script.

Some of the art and craft work stemmed from this, for instance one group made a composite picture of their Beowulf play. Special music projects included 'Man makes Rhythm' and 'Man makes Melody'.

The teachers

As a result of this method of work, teachers are no longer isolated in their 'own' classrooms. We can talk, glean ideas from others, contribute to a common store, so that the children do not get the impression that 'subjects' are in watertight compartments. We began by keeping a central record of progress but this proved unwieldy and the teachers in the main team now meet at least once a week for discussion and planning ahead; this also ensures that teaching in each bias does not become unrelated to the whole. We have made no provision for formal examinations, which are clearly inappropriate to this type of learning and teaching, but are compiling an individual record designed to build up a composite picture of each child's development.

The first-year children working in groups according to this method have been busy, interested and enthusiastic, so leading us to believe that we are achieving our aims. We hope to extend the method—which aims to encourage asking, thinking, and so real learning—up the school.

2. Fairlop Secondary Girls' School, Redbridge

MARGARET HORNE

In this three-form entry secondary modern girls' school the need was felt for an overhaul of the junior part of the school organisation where streaming seemed to have become outmoded and out of character. This also suggested revising the curriculum to cover a coherent whole of subject matter in place of thoughtfully taught but diverse and unrelated subjects. In September 1965, the first year entry of 100 was allocated to four forms, each of which contained pupils from several or all of the five contributory junior schools, and so far as possible some 'able' and some 'less able' children according to information from the junior school records. Five teachers volunteered to take the first year teaching according to a chosen theme.

First term's theme

The theme for the first term was 'Man and his Environment', under which heading the following subjects were amalgamated: music, English, history, geography, art, science, physical education, dance, R.I. and an area survey. A total of twenty periods a week was allotted for this, that is, the whole of each morning except for the first lesson on Friday when the year group was taken by the deputy head. This freed the first-year staff for a weekly staff meeting which was vital for keeping in touch. The reason for selecting the particular subjects given was that these fell within the specialist scope of the five available teachers. Outside the project, the remaining fifteen periods in the weekly timetable were devoted to language, either English or a foreign language (in sets), mathematics (in sets), cookery, needlework, swimming, all taken by other members of staff.

Economical use is made of the teachers engaged on the project wherever possible—for instance, a single teacher can introduce a film applicable to the age-group, take the radio series 'How Things Began', or take the choir, freeing others for work elsewhere in the school. The team has first call in the mornings on the library (also suitable for dance as it has a large floor space), one laboratory, one general purpose room, one art room, one classroom with piano.

No set syllabus

The first requirements of teachers engaged in such a project seem to be sympathy with non-streaming and the idea of theme-teaching, willingness to think originally and creatively (there is no set syllabus to fall back on), readiness to work together and, between them, ability to cover a group of specialist subjects. Those involved teach broadly within their specialisms. The art teacher, besides teaching art within the theme, is doing an area survey of local institutions as revealed through the buildings in the district. The dance teacher, well read in literature, teaches English mainly through literature, using relevant poetry and stories as the basis of her dance work. It is an unusual asset to have a team of

teachers offering art, music and movement and this strength in aesthetics has been reflected in improved communication between pupils. Questions are framed more lucidly, ideas better explained. The frustrations that are too often found between groups and individuals seem fewer. We hope that the frequent opportunity to act out roles will produce sympathetic people who can easily 'put themselves in another's shoes' and appreciate another's point of view.

Teachers' opinions

We are generally very pleased with the way the work is going, although at this early stage no assessment can be made. But it may be of interest to record impressions collected from four of the five teachers engaged in the project.

M.A.J. (teacher with responsibility for backward pupils). When I first decided to take part in the experimental year of non-streaming I had many reservations regarding the backward pupils. Would they be able to play a full part in all class activities, have emotional security and have the confidence to work to the best of their limited ability? Would the more able be tolerant of their slowness to learn or would the backward pupils feel social outcasts?

After working this scheme, I am now convinced that non-streaming is socially and morally desirable. Socially, each girl is accepted not on her academic ability but on her personal merits: in the playground there is no distinction between the 'able' and 'less able'. No one is despised for lack of academic ability but given help; only constantly disturbing behaviour is found less tolerable.

Because all mathematics and English groups are run concurrently the movement of girls from one group to another is simple. It also gives each girl the opportunity of working to the best of her ability in each of these subjects rather than being placed in a stream. There is a small nucleus of seven girls in the slow group for both mathematics and English. Had normal class streaming taken place at least 15 girls would have formed the bottom class; eight of these girls would have been wrongly placed for a large proportion of their education.

A.T. (head of music department). I think the project is good, encouraging independent research and thought, giving a broader background of knowledge for adult life than can often be achieved with more conventional methods. Lack of streaming, except in English and mathematics, helps the girls to learn to fit in with all abilities socially and encourages the quicker child to help the weaker, thereby raising the overall standard. Flexibility of timetable is essential if the best results are to be achieved with a logical follow-through of ideas. The danger is in choosing a theme too broad, thereby allowing too much divergence of ideas, resulting in lack of unity, when unity is an essential part of this kind of work. Care must also be taken not to treat a theme in such detail that the overall general plan is lost sight of, for surely we are concerned with the general idea whilst encouraging each girl to discover for herself the detail of something which interests her personally. If the best results are to be achieved the staff involved must have frequent discussion reviewing constantly the co-relationship of each area covered.

J.F. (assistant mistress in science). During the short time that this project has been going on it has been interesting to note the benefits to the children which have become apparent, although it is difficult at this stage fully to assess the advantages and disadvantages of this form of teaching. From the academic point of view this project has been of great benefit to the less able children and this is very apparent in the way they have tackled their individual enquiries and found joy in being able to cope with and benefit from this form of learning. Although the process is less apparent the able children seem to have benefited also in the fact that they have on many occasions been able to explain work and give assistance to the less able child. The children have also gained socially from the project for they have learned much from their contact with other children of varying abilities.

It is also interesting to note that it is not always the more able child who takes the initiative and often a less able child, having taken the initiative, then works very well alongside the more able child, for they feel they have made their own contribution and that they are therefore a useful and interested member of a mixed ability group. It is always difficult to assess how the child of average ability fits into and benefits from any scheme, but in this form of teaching these children lose the feeling of being 'in-betweens' and are therefore more willing and co-operative, and are eager to play their part in any form of work set. The most outstanding gain from this project must surely be that the naturally curious mind of the young child has been guided and directed in a way which they will be able to develop and use in later times to an even greater advantage and that their willingness to learn has not been stunted by too rigid a form of teaching.

W.D. (history and modern educational dance). By non-streaming definite social advantages are gained; a more tolerant attitude is gained with girls of varying ability working side by side. Academically the 'C's' are benefiting from the extra stimulus of mixed ability groupings and friendships between 'A' and 'C' girls are observable in most forms. The pupils are encouraged to participate in the planning of their

work. They are asked to find out facts for themselves and therefore more decisions and responsibility are laid upon the girls themselves. Sometimes difficulties have been found in finding adequate sources of information and reference.

I found that the theme 'Man and His Environment' was so comprehensive and limitless in its possibilities that often I was 'unable to see the wood for the trees'. This was particularly so for the English work, although the Dance and Dance Drama fitted very well into the theme. In this respect the team work between the teaching staff is essential so that integration and direction is given to the work covered.

IN THE STAFF ROOM

JULIAN ENNIS

That these white and expected ones will die
Is past believing, too miraculous;
Knowing by rote their personal cases,
How can they decline themselves, these who stay
Behind after the rest of us go home?

Admirable, they challenge us to store
A wiser hoard than theirs of anecdotes,
Until one day we, too, seniors here,
Safe in photographs, rich with parents' notes,
Tick off our last summer term and mark time.

Appointed for good, did they ever make
Progress? What, for or against them, can now
Be in their reports? They came long ago,
Like myths; belong to chairs; gowned up, they work,
Absolute with chalk, masters of this room.

So, a guest, I sit with them drinking tea,
My cup running over, and see, outside
The blue window, gulls, land-locked, hungrily
Swooping about the strange cliffs, and the broad
Sky beyond, and its endlessness, its gleam.

Counselling and Personal and Social Welfare

A. W. ROWE

Mr. Rowe is headmaster of the David Lister school, a non-streamed comprehensive school in Hull.

Further to Paragraph 204, Recommendation (d), p. 71, of the *Newsom Report* reads: 'There is an urgent need to strengthen all existing links between home and school, and in difficult areas create new ones, as, for example, in the appointment of members of staff with special liaison or home visiting responsibilities.' And further to Paragraphs 193, 194, and 207, Recommendation (f) says that 'It is of the greatest importance for schools to build up a knowledge of individual pupils and to devise some system of supervising their personal welfare'.

The two statements are clearly complementary. The problems they hint at are common to all schools. Good schools have always been aware of them and have tackled them; they have established many links between home and school; they have built up a knowledge of individual pupils and devised systems of supervising their personal and social welfare. The Newsom recommendations are obviously directed mainly towards the nightmare world of bad schools where the 'urgent need' still exists, and where it still has to be pointed out that 'it is of the greatest importance . . . '; but this is a world it is no part of my purpose here to consider.

Good schools are already doing much. They are not at all complacent, though, and are increasingly asking themselves what more they ought to be doing. The question has a peculiar urgency in a comprehensive school if only because it is commonly larger than other schools and has 'everybody' in it. The question becomes even more urgent if the comprehensive school is largely a neighbourhood school, and the neighbourhood is wholly or in part—to use the Newsom term—a difficult area. In such a school it will be necessary, as Newsom suggests, to create new links between certain homes and the school by appointing a member or members of staff 'with

special liaison or home visiting responsibilities'.

A new post

To create these new links there was established in the David Lister School a new post, Counsellor and Head of Personal and Social Welfare, with a Grade C head of department allowance. It is of the work of this Counsellor that I intend to speak. First, however, I must give you a few background facts and set his work in the context of what the school as a whole was doing to implement the Newsom recommendations. This can be very brief because the measures will be familiar to readers of FORUM as already being used successfully in comprehensive schools:

1. The school is set in a dock area and is a purpose-built all-through comprehensive school for 1,500 pupils.

2. It is in the main a neighbourhood school, though a percentage of its 'grammar-school entry' comes from further afield. (A small but increasing percentage of other children is also seeking to be admitted from outside the zone, though the school is not yet two years old.)

3. Around the perimeter are five house-blocks. Each contains: head of house study; house staff-room, two equivalent rooms, Studies A and B, used for a variety of purposes, *e.g.* model office, careers reading-room, teaching-machines room; pupils' cloakrooms and lockers; kitchen; dining room; two classrooms. (The dining room and the classrooms can be thrown into one common room for house assembly, pupils and parents social evenings, dances, etc. During the lunch break and after school, the two classrooms are used for homework and quiet games, *e.g.* chess and cards. The library is also open till six each evening for reading and homework.)

4. Four houses are *General School Houses* containing pupils in Years 1 to 3. Each is named after its head of house. The fifth, *Lister House*, contains the fourth-year students upwards, and has its own coffee-bar. Older students have additional accommodation but join the Fourth Year for assembly and social activities.

5. Under such ideal physical conditions the head of house and his team of 14 are able to get to know the pupils in their house intimately, to establish links between home and school, and to be responsible for their pupils' personal and social welfare. A pupil's house tutor is also his form tutor and will whenever possible teach him. (This is easier to arrange than in some schools because the house tutor group = the form = a mixed ability group taught as such.)

6. The *David Lister Record Card* for each pupil is held and maintained by the head of house. This is very detailed and complete and covers all aspects of the pupil's growth and development—academic, personal, and social. Extra information is passed to the head of house from Bursar, Counsellor, Senior Mistress, Deputy Head, and Headmaster. In addition, each house tutor keeps a *Confidential Form Log Book*. It contains personal observations, and embodies other relevant information, and is handed on to the pupil's next house tutor.

7. The head of house has the greatest possible freedom to run his house in his own way, writing and signing letters to parents, seeing them, arranging his own social events, concerts, outings, etc. Two small but significant pointers: the *General School Houses* are called after the heads of house to emphasise that in a very special sense they belong to them; there is only one school notepaper and this does not bear the name of the headmaster.

So much for background and general context. Yet it is perhaps worth digressing a moment to point out once again to those who still persist in believing that size necessarily means less personal knowledge of individual pupils that under some such system as is described above the 300 pupils in a house can be known to the head of house and his team more intimately than the pupils in schools of, say, 500-900, to head and staff.

Personal attention

It soon became plain that, as had been suspected, all this was not enough. There was a percentage of pupils who needed more time and attention—and attention of a more specialised kind—than a head of house and his team, even when supplemented by S.M., D.H., and H.M., could give them. (For an interesting discussion of these pupils and their difficulties, see the Department of Education and Science *Reports on Education: Education Under Social Handicap*, Nos. 1, 2, and 3.)

To help these pupils meant in most cases helping their parents as well—or first, even: new and special links would have to be forged between school and home. The sheer difficulty of this was not underestimated; the idea current in certain quarters that teacher can go along to such pupils' homes, knock, and be welcomed in, just like that, is really too naïve. This comes, if it comes at all, only after much careful and skilful work.

To meet this need, as I have said, a Counsellor and Head of Personal and Social Welfare was

appointed. Care was taken to ensure from the outset that the work to be undertaken by the Counsellor was understood and accepted for what it was, i.e. a strengthening and extension of the pastoral work already being done. (This was relatively easy in a school where staff teamwork is fostered ubiquitously and where the unavoidable hierarchic structure is played down as much as possible.)

Counsellor, not teacher

The exact title finally decided on for the post is important. Abbreviated in practice to 'Counsellor', it has helped speedily to establish the necessary rapport and special relationship both with clients (pupils and parents) and with the various statutory and voluntary welfare agencies upon whose co-operation much of the success of the work depends: Pupils and parents will only talk freely and truthfully when they are convinced that in fact they are in the hands of a Counsellor, not a teacher, vested with absolute authority not to divulge what he is told to anyone; to statutory agencies in particular the title is a clear indication that the person bearing it possesses the necessary expertise in what they are still only far too prone to regard as their own exclusive preserve.

Qualities required

Obviously the person appointed must have this expertise. At present such persons are rare, but the new courses launched in some colleges of education and universities should help to remedy this. Ideally, as ours does, the post should carry the salary and status of a major department. The man appointed should himself be as good and mature a teacher as any other head of department and thus able to hold his own among them *qua* teacher. If he is experienced in remedial teaching, so much the better. In addition to this and the more obviously necessary personal qualities, he should have done a great deal of successful outside social work in such spheres as Citizens' Advice Bureau, Samaritan Service, T.A. Welfare, Marriage Guidance Counselling, Child Guidance Clinic work, or work with any of the voluntary social service agencies. Nothing else, as things stand, enables him to establish so quickly and completely the bonds of mutual respect and confidence between himself and the stautory and voluntary agencies, and between himself and parents. Even more important in a sense, such successful work is the kind of assurance a head needs when taking the plunge that he has to in making such a pioneer appointment carrying such an allowance, well aware as he will be that the results must begin to show themselves quite rapidly if disaffection is not to spread among the staff and the cure become worse than the disease. And this in the knowledge that the very nature of the work with the majority of clients precludes speed.

An outline of the more important of our Counsellor's duties is as follows:

1. He teaches a quarter of his time (or rather less at his own discretion), and this within the Remedial Department. He and the head of the department and her team of three work closely together. His work within the department is so arranged that it becomes an important extension of his counselling; her work and that of her team is obviously of seminal importance to his counselling and is recognised and taken into account as such. The fact that he teaches within a department prevents him from becoming separated from the staff, a separation that could well hinder the present free to-and-fro of views and information as well as weakening their sense of shared experience and purpose.

2. The greater part of the remainder of his time is taken up with direct counselling of pupils and parents. (It is common for a single session with pupil and mother to take two hours or more.) Uninterrupted privacy is essential. The Counsellor has his own study, with a filing system and telephone. The telephone is essential: first, because the work necessitates frequent contact with outside agencies on behalf of the pupil, *e.g.* school clinic personnel, school attendance and welfare officers, children's department officers, probation officers, psychiatric social workers at the child guidance clinic, probation officers, or the N.S.P.C.C.; second, on behalf of the parents, *e.g.* Marriage Guidance Council, Citizens' Advice Bureau, National Assistance Board, or police. The fact that the enquiry can be made at once and in the parent's presence is proof that the Counsellor will in fact take action and this reinforces the parent's confidence and trust in him.

   The effectiveness of the counselling will often depend upon the free and full exchange of information between counsellor and agencies, and upon enlisting their aid or supplementing it when it is already being given. As we have already proved, agencies very rapidly realise that a good counsellor, because of his unique position with its possibilities of daily contact with pupils, will have information of value to themselves and will turn to him for this. Often, too, the most effective counselling of a pupil will be a highly-concentrated attack in private upon his learning difficulties, his poor reading, say, and here the special skills of a teacher

experienced in remedial education are invaluable. Sometimes the Counsellor will decide that the next step can best be achieved with other help; and in this school he calls upon S.M., D.H., H.M., all of whom have a special interest in these pupils.

The amount of time the Counsellor spends in out-of-school counselling and allied activities averages at present 10 hours a week and will increase. These include case conferences with Child Guidance Clinic staff, study and discussion groups organised by local social organisations, supervisory work with juvenile delinquents at the Attendance Centre, as well as counselling in the home (often father can only be reached in the evenings).

3. Each Friday afternoon he goes through the registers. The thorough probing of certain patterns of absence, not only of truancy but of genuine absence due at root to unhappiness and strain, and culminating in school phobia, are sometimes the first indication that a pupil needs counselling. (The free meals and free clothing registers are also very relevant. Often a free-clothing enquiry reveals other kinds of grave need.)

4. He summarises the mass of information he accumulates about a pupil and passes it by means of special *Confidential Information Sheets* to those who should have it if they are to add their help, *e.g.* head of house, house tutor, certain subject specialists, and (always) S.M., D.H., and H.M.

5. He keeps all the agencies he has contacted about a pupil, or who have contacted him, informed in detail of progress. This takes a great deal of time but is an aspect of the work that cannot be neglected.

At this stage, all that needs stating is that already the results are such that my colleagues and I are very glad indeed that this appointment was made. One further thing ought to be said. Perhaps the most important point that the 17 headmasters and 15 headmistresses made in *Education Under Social Handicap* (*1*) was that in addition to the handicaps that an unfavourable social environment imposes upon these pupils, schools often impose their own handicaps. The pamphlet touches upon some of these. There are others that we ought also to be taking account of—streaming, competitive mark lists, prefects, prizes and prize days, and so on—for counselling is but a part of an evolving pattern of education which seeks to give to every pupil the greatest possible equality of educational opportunity.

Book Reviews

Which kind of deprivation

Deprivation and Education, by M. L. Kellmer Pringle. Longmans (1965), 307 pp., 42s. 6d.

In recent years there has been a notable increase in studies of the problems and treatment of handicapped children. Among these studies particular attention is being given to a special kind of handicap which, while it arises from no physical defect, may be just as severe in the life of a child. This is social deprivation: the handicap of a child brought up in an environment which is detrimental to the healthy development of thought and feeling—in more precise terms, his cognitive and orectic development.

The controversy on the relation between heredity and environment, which thirty years ago raged so fiercely here and in other countries, has by no means died down. It has, however, taken a new turn, more especially in the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. A generation ago much time and thought were given to the attempt to estimate the relative proportions of heredity and environment in human development. This is now seen to be something of a statistical will-o'-the-wisp. And where earlier the emphasis was on the eugenic significance of heredity, today the weight of investigation and thought is on the effects of environment. Different aspects of social deprivation are the subject of systematic research and practical experiment.

This is what this book is about. It is a collection of papers gathered together by Dr. Kellmer Pringle, for the most part reports of investigations by herself or with colleagues. While a good deal of recent work has been concerned with the effects of social deprivation on cognitive development—such things as measured intelligence and the development of reasoning—this book lays special stress on social influences on emotional life in infancy, and their possible far-reaching effects on subsequent development. But this book is not merely a collection of research reports. It also attempts the difficult and delicate tasks of offering advice on the practice of child care.

Some extremely interesting and important things emerge. Among the early deleterious effects, few are so clear as the relationship between social environment and language. The book brings out three aspects of this: (1) unfavourable social environment causes linguistic retardation; (2) there are reciprocal effects; (3) the relationship has far-reaching consequences.

On the first of these, a paper by Kellmer Pringle and Bossio cites much evidence in support of their own conclusion that the extent of backwardness in language is greater than any other aspect of development. It is remarkable how early the beginnings of this appear. Brodbeck and Irwin had shown that even in the first weeks of life, children living in institutions were retarded in rudimentary speech. Kellmer Pringle and Tanner bring evidence of the persistence of these effects in infancy and childhood. The limitation of language tends to have a restrictive effect on play with other children and on social relationships with adults. Reciprocally, these restrictive effects cause the further retardation of language and 'such language difficulties are likely to have long-term consequences unless remedied'. It is striking to find here an echo of Sir Alexander Ewing's view of the effects of deafness: 'It has been shown that the linguistic development of most deaf children can and should be prompted by special training before the age of two years. Otherwise, their social, emotional and intellectual development begins at once to be adversely affected.'

Workers in U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. have shown that the effects of social deprivation are not irremediable. And this book details cases in which early remedial treatment has been tried, and with what success.

As a book it suffers—as such collections often do—from repetition. But if we have to choose between the book as it now is and waiting until it could be given a more systematic form, I believe that most people would prefer not to wait. We cannot afford delay in our efforts to help deprived children. M. M. LEWIS.

Success in a difficult field

Introducing the Younger Woman, by W. R. Page. Cambridge University Press (1965), 212 pp., 30s.

Twelve years ago, at the North London College of Further Education, Mr. Page found himself faced with a 'general education' group of girls on day release—workers from the local cigarette factory, junior civil servants, telephone operators, shop assistants. They were bored and difficult 'because they didn't really see the point of what they were doing'. They resorted to all the tricks they had learnt at school—'even the primary school trick of falling off the seat'. They saw no point in writing—' "Wouldn't write for a job," complained Kate. "Get the Youth Employment Officer to phone." ' Determined that 'work was going to be done or I would give up the group', Mr. Page hit upon the idea of starting a magazine. Not a school magazine, but 'a girls' magazine: like the magazines they read'. And so was born *The Younger Woman.*

As Mr. Page says, the novelty here was not in the teaching method that surrounded the production of the magazine: the discussions, the visits, the reportings and writings and re-writings. It lay in the notion of such a magazine—one that enabled the girls to 'identify with the world outside'. They were given occasion to write stories that dealt with their own problems and dreams: they invented a columnist (Mary Hope, later reincarnated as Eve Faith) in whose name they gave one another advice. Each issue was organised round a theme. When the theme was a slum street near the college, they went to look at it for themselves. Their vision sharpened by the need to report, they were strongly stirred. 'The factories are right on top of the houses; even the little

Dairy there has a big factory plonk right next door to it.' A cobbler's shop was 'like a cardboard box'. They looked at the plight of old people—which took them into local institutions: they looked at schools, and they bravely visited other colleges of further education. 'By this time, "considering" a topic meant going to see for themselves.'

Slowly it became clear to Mr. Page that the magazine was 'a means to embody in one activity the four strands of the county college curriculum as set out by Crowther'. In the tactful persistent polishing of their work for publication they were making good their educational deficiencies: in the poetry they wrote and their comments on reading, films and music, they were carrying over into adult life some of the aesthetic pursuits practised at school: in their visits to magistrates' courts, schools, old people's homes, hospitals, they were learning to understand the adult world and the Welfare State, and were gaining some notion of the principles of responsible citizenship: and in their advice column, their practical nagging at such questions as the nature of honesty or the right attitude to immigrants, they were approaching some definition of moral standards.

This claim of Mr. Page's is very convincingly justified by his account of these years of work and by the liberal quotations from the students' work. Here is a most difficult teaching field, and a record of undoubted triumph in it. Yet almost the most important quality of the book, to my mind, is the incidental picture it gives of a resolute, resourceful and very honest teacher at work. Mr. Page records every setback: is anxious never to claim too much: is sensitive to his own weaknesses. ('I never know when to leave off.') He is shrewdly sympathetic to his students (recognising, for example, that 'generalisations do not come easily to them', and aware of the vast importance to them of personal attention—'someone is troubling about them'). He knows how to startle them into seriousness—as when he was able to show one girl, statistically, that her span of attention was two minutes only. He is unaffectedly modest—says, for example, that he was dissatisfied with the students' progress in storywriting, and put this down to his being 'trained in Economics and not English literature'. This is a book that must hearten and inspire anyone working in the same enormously difficult field, or one related to it. The specific idea of the magazine was clearly a winner. Yet probably the strongest influence of this book—and I expect it to be very influential indeed—will turn out to lie in its demonstration of the teacherly resolution, resource and objectivity.

EDWARD BLISHEN.

More on Mass Media

Understanding the Mass Media; A Practical Approach for Teaching, by Nicholas Tucker. Cambridge University Press (1965), 198 pp., 30s.

Despite the somewhat grandiose title, this is a useful little book for secondary school teachers. Nicholas Tucker is a lecturer in Education at York, and his approach falls in the tradition of Leavis and Thompson, Hoggart, Williams, and, latterly, Hall and Whannel, to all of whom due acknowledgment is made. The implicit assumptions of the book are those of the *Use of English* school, rather than of the New Left, in the sense that there is relatively little discussion of the mass media institutions as such, although the technicalities of the media—which are likely to be of greater interest and comprehensibility to the secondary pupil—are dealt with.

The exercises suggested are mainly 'practical criticism' of mass cultural products, including newspapers, women's magazines, advertisements, films, television programmes, and teenage music. The classroom activities sound as though they would be stimulating and engaging; the suggested essay topics are probably particularly worth adding to one's stock list (though it is questionable whether one would want to use the transcript of the Vassall enquiry as the basis for a first exercise in the comparative analysis of press content). The comparison of film technique with that of the Elizabethan stage sounds a promising line of approach to both topics, although a class would probably need to know a particular play fairly well before the discussion became fully worthwhile. It is perhaps a pity that the discussion of mass media dynamics is not carried over to the analysis of teenage fashion, where the marketing processes are similar and perhaps more readily appreciated.

Tucker recognises the healthy degree of critical self-defensiveness which most adolescents are able to summon in the face of the more manipulative advertisements and films, and this is something to be grateful for. But this commonsense (perhaps working class) reluctance to be 'taken in' can distract attention from the *total* effect of the media, which provide one milieu within which most of us live, however cynically aware we may be. This raises a larger question, and one that could probably only be tackled at the sixth form stage, which is apparently rather above the level of teaching which Tucker is considering. But a realisation that the media are in this way *inescapable* does surely need to be part of a course in media awareness; the citizen of a mass media society is still that, even when educated as a discriminating consumer.

ROGER L. BROWN.

Primary School Organisation

Family Grouping in the Infants' School, by Lorna Ridgway and Irene Lawton. Ward Lock Educational (1965), 176 pp. 21s.

Experiment and Tradition in Primary Schools, by D. E. M. Gardner. Methuen (1966), 212 pp., 27s. 6d.

During the last two or three years the need for educational research at all levels has been brought into the forefront of educational discussion. The Robbins Report, the Schools Council, Nuffield Projects, the expansion of the National Foundation for Educational Research, and the establishment of the 'More Interest in Educational Research' (M.I.E.R.) committee are all

factors in this development. However, Michael Young rightly distinguishes between innovators and researchers in his recent book. FORUM readers, one suspects, are probably more interested in the former, and only expect the latter when their research is related to current or possible educational practice.

Both these books are concerned with experiments in primary school organisation and record the activities of innovators, despite Miss Gardner's title. The change of emphasis in the infant school from concentrating on a limited range of rudimentary skills, traditionally known as the three R's, to providing an environment which encourages the all-round development of the child, intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally, has arisen largely as the result of enthusiasts working with a twentieth-century view of the child in mind, and has not followed the publication of a series of longitudinal studies.

Miss Gardner believes that her pioneering work needs the confirmation of some form of testing to substantiate its claims. Her courses and lectures at London University Institute of Education, where she is Reader in Child Development, are well-known already but in this new book she reports her researches from 1951 to 1963. She was especially concerned with attempting to measure the attainments and attitudes of children in their last year in the Junior school when they had had the whole of their primary education in an 'experimental' as distinct from 'formal' type of school. She has re-introduced some of the information from her previous studies, described in *Testing Results in the Infant School* which is now out of print, but the greater part of the book consists of her *Top Junior Attitude and Attainment Tests* with results and very interesting detailed comments. Unfortunately, some of her test material is rather conventional; there are no mathematical or concept tests but only mechanical and problem-arithmetic types. She admits this limitation herself but one feels that some open-ended type of testing would be more appropriate for assessing the long-term results of the innovators' energies. Despite the changed views about so-called 'innate ability' generally accepted today, one senses still the influence of the early Burt.

Family grouping has been common practice in rural primary schools for a very long time, largely through necessity. In the infant class of a two- or three-teacher school, one is bound to have a wide age range with children learning together in the same environment. Now, many urban schools are experimenting with this pattern of internal organisation, more often called Vertical All-Age grouping. Social and emotional criteria play a larger part in assessing the value of such organisation than the intellectual demands of yesterday, and schools so organised are extremely stimulating institutions. This first book to chronicle the development of family-grouping in infants' schools reads like the exciting first instalment of possible more general experiments in school organisation for other age ranges of children.

One hopes that all teachers, students and educators who are concerned with providing in the infant and junior schools a sound basis for further educational growth will read these two books. ERIC LINFIELD.

Facts for answers

Special Education in England and Wales, by Stephen Jackson. Oxford University Press (1966), 147 pp., 13s. 6d.

When being hailed as a pioneer more than 100 years ago, the great French teacher of mentally handicapped children, Dr. Edouard Seguin, remarked: 'At certain times and eras the whole race of man as regards the truth seems to arrive at single point, so that it is hard to say who is the first.'

In special education 'the whole race of man' has been reaching a stage where books covering the entire range of provision are seen as necessary. In the U.S.A. several substantial volumes have appeared during the past few years, providing research-based textbooks on 'The exceptional child', the term used to cover all handicaps including exceptional intelligence. In the U.K., apart from official pamphlets, it has been left to Stephen Jackson to lead the way with this slender book.

In some ways it is tantalising to begin to review this book. To some colleagues the history of special education seems to be one of uninterrupted advance. To others it seems misleading to study special education in isolation from the background, and from the changing pattern of society which has given rise to it.

How then is one to view a book which seeks only to give factual and brief answers to typical questions on each handicap or provision heard in Colleges of Education or at certain general lectures? Yet this is the strength and purpose of the book. It sets itself typical questions and gives factual answers to them. In less than 150 pages it provides a handbook on provision for children within ten recognised categories of handicap, a chapter on 'Children Unsuitable for Education in School', an introduction to 'The Training of Teachers for Special Education', and brief lists of voluntary organisations, suggested reading, and films.

Given the intentions of the author and the limits he has set himself, this book is a welcome and successful one. S. S. SEGAL.

A View from Abroad

British Secondary Education, edited by Richard E. Gross. Oxford University Press (1965), 589 pp., 30s.

To produce this book, its editor set the heads or their accredited representatives from 23 schools the task of giving an account of the nature and special characteristics of their institutions. On the basis of the information provided, supplemented by visits to other schools of all types during the year 1961-62 as Fulbright lecturer in teacher-education at Swansea, and an active study of the British scene with concentration on its social aspects, he adds a 30-page appraisal of secondary education in the United Kingdom to complete a volume of nearly 600 pages.

The book assembles information of educational interest from a great variety of schools: from Win-

chester, Manchester Grammar, and Millfield, and the many kinds of grammar school, new and old, that represent the tradition; from urban and rural secondary modern schools for the masses; from 'schools for tomorrow', comprehensive, multilateral, and technical High; from schools for the 16-18 group, county college, technical college, Welbeck, and Atlantic College. Some of these are *sui generis,* or nearly so, rather than representative.

Rivalling my own school, Wandsworth, in having had only two heads since its foundation at the beginning of the century, Barton Peveril Grammar School offers 'an example or a warning, or both, of the tradition of empiricism and improvisation' that has characterised much else in the English state system. As well as a retrospect, the author's critical appraisement of the present and the prospective in a grammar school deserves close attention. However, the application of new educational thinking to actual practice has gone further in Cray Valley Technical High School. The illuminating account of the evolution of the junior technical school along the lines of the Spens Report to technical high school, and the penetrating study of the nature, aims, and practice of this under-represented component of the tripartite system cannot fail to be significant and valuable to those responsible for embodying technical studies of appropriate quality in the comprehensive school.

Dr. Gross is favourably impressed by the Leicestershire Plan and clearly, if somewhat uncritically, decides that it is the best way out, as against creating 'an entirely new institution, as is threatened by the establishment of comprehensive high schools'.

In his appraisal, the praise of what we would all praise in the British system and tradition is qualified by reservations; in the matter of scholarship by noting exceptions, in aimlessness and laxity on the one hand, and 'austere, strait-jacketed, brain factories' on the other. He has doubts about the efficacy of much religious instruction and 'colourless non-denominational' approved syllabuses. He warns that the autonomy of the school and the independence of the head may prove dangerous if they result in social insularity. He is astonished at the degree of State support for denominational schools, and the promotion of educational mediocrity by spreading funds, already too thin, among far too many school units. He questions the common arguments for small schools, praising the quality of personal relations he has observed in British schools of near 2,000, which research in the U.S.A. into the matter of optimum size has shown to be the minimum numbers for a high school.

He condemns what most readers of FORUM would condemn, reacting with moral horror against the 'infamous 11-plus examination'; deploring the abysmally poor salaries of teachers (1961) and the lack of auxiliaries: the disastrous shortage of science laboratories, audio-visual aids, and supplementary material; the rigidity of curricula induced by examination pressure, premature and narrow specialisation, and curricular unawareness of contemporary issues.

He considers that much mediocre teaching is due to the appointment in grammar and independent schools of university graduates without professional training, and to the segregation from the universities of training institutions for teachers in other kinds of school.

But he finds the real curse of British education to be the division of children into different streams at the primary stage and different schools at the secondary, through which most secondary modern schools bear the stigma of second-class institutions. And why do we eschew co-education?

British schools, he concludes, signally fail for the most part to draw strength and purpose from organic relations with the communities they serve.

From an American who patently likes Britain and admires its land and people, such candour is acceptable. In some ways at least we have moved in the direction he points since 1961. H. RAYMOND KING.

A Television Series

Discovery and Experience, on BBC-2, Weds. Jan-March.

BBC-2 viewers have recently had a remarkable opportunity to observe primary school children learning, co-operatively in groups and individually, through some of the new methods designed to enable them to find out for themselves. In such learning children are led to form concepts commensurate with their particular stage of intellectual maturation, and so to progress on sure foundations to the next stage.

The *Discovery and Experience* series of eleven programmes showed infants and juniors learning in this way in ten schools, and then had Dr. Ruth Beard demonstrate Piaget's experimental theories which are fundamental to the structuring of this approach. The final discussion among teachers, other educationists and parents revealed some scepticism among teachers conditioned to formal class teaching with its attempt to impart blocks of knowledge and then revise them.

Discovery methods make great demands on the teacher who must create a structured environment that stimulates experimental inquiry, extend this beyond traditional curricula and the classroom, and cut across subject boundaries into integrated fields of study. Timetables dissolve as an integrated day takes shape: one programme showed staged planning of this process. Individual records become vital.

Self-reliance, absorption, purposefulness and clarity in oral communication were evident. The complexity and quality of the work seen were often remarkable. Above all, real understanding was revealed by children who talked or wrote about their work.

Is it significant that these exciting approaches to learning were, with one exception, being pioneered in non-streamed schools? Where schools were too small to stream there was no streaming within a class, though small groups were sometimes brought together for exposition and practice. Even vertical grouping was seen in action. For learning in this way seems to preclude any call for streaming.

These programmes should be shown on the wider network. Meanwhile, they can be hired, and the pamphlet itself is well worth reading. N. WHITBREAD.

THE RIGHT RESPONSE

Notes on teaching English in Further Education

SYDNEY BOLT

The author writes, 'One of those teachers of English who feel uneasy in the priestly role offered by some educationalists, I find significance in what my pupils have to say without plumbing their psyches. My thesis is that any response to literature, sunshine, or the dilemmas of modern life, is right if it is genuine, so that the teacher's job is simply to encourage his pupils to know their own minds. The examples I supply show, at any rate, that this approach can produce a lively use of English, and may also hearten people who doubt teen-age capacity to survive the pressures of contemporary society without the ministrations of Arts graduates.' 21s net

Hutchinson EDUCATIONAL LTD
178-202 Great Portland Street, London W.1

Printed by Blackfriars Press Ltd., Smith-Dorrien Road, Leicester, and published by P S W (Educational) Publications at 71 Clarendon Park Road, Leicester