OBSERVATIONS ON LOCAL EDUCATION

COMPILED by R.O.LENKIEWICZ

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VOLUME ONE

'Anyone informed that the universe is expanding and contracting in pulsations of eighty billion years has a right to ask, "What's in it for me?".'

Peter de Vries:

The Glory of the Humming bird, Chapter One.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to this collection of observations.

My gratitude to Derek Cloke, Warden of the Plymouth Teachers' Centre; for drawing my attention to relevant aspects of local education, and for his generosity of spirit.

I am indebted to Geoff Stratton and Ron Godfrey for numerous instances of warm hearted advice and common sense.

Annys Blackwell deserves special thanks for the typing and ordering of contributions; and Lindsay Seers, Myriam Rivera and Carolyn Sozer for their help in correcting the grammar and spelling of many a teacher and headmaster.

I am deeply grateful to Simon and David King for their efforts involving the publication of this collection.

Finally, I extend a personal word of thanks to Michael Duane, Maurice Holt, Mark Vaughan, Ivor Elliott, and John Wright for a number of stimulating discussions and ironic considerations on that most contentious of subjects - education.

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NOTE

Clearly, educational policies and personal circumstances ebb and sometimes flow, giving applicability a soft edge.

A collection such as this one is the necessary victim of time. It can pretend therefore to be nothing more than a selection of views and feelings articulated between the years 1985- 1988.

Foreword

Michael Duane
Former Head Teacher,
Rising Hill Comprehensive;
lecturer and writer

Some years ago an experiment was set up to find out whether, given free choice, young children would choose foods that were good for them. Every day for a month a wide selection of foods was placed before them and they helped themselves to whatever they fancied. Records were kept of the kinds and quantities of food chosen by each child. At the end of the month it was found that each child had selected the varieties and amounts of food that together, over the month, made up a perfect diet.

Observers of wild animals had long before concluded that, after the initial period of total dependence, equivalent to the breast-feeding period in human infants, they did this for themselves. The human experiment confirmed that all living organisms operate on principles of self-regulation: they eat what is good for them; they do what ensures their survival and they reach a balanced relationship with other members of the same species, with other species and with their environment.

When young children are allowed to play together over a period of months some children will use their greater size or strength to get exclusive use of certain toys or more than their fair share of food and sweets. Provided that adults do not interfere too soon, corrective action will be seen to start. The persistent bully, the grabber or the cheat will find that the others will protest that it is 'not fair', and if he continues will ostracise him or simply refuse to play with him. The offender now finds himself deprived of what is more important to him than either sweets or toys, viz. the companionship of other children, and will begin to modify his behaviour to win them back. George Dennison in The Lives of Children shows in detail how the other members of a basketball team deal with the one who persistently flouts the rules. They stop the game and refuse to play on until he has undertaken to play fair. The offender is then very careful to keep to the rules because he wants to play. These children came, not from 'well brought-up' middle-class families, but from the slums of New York.

One of the most exciting intellectual feats is to master a language - linguistic studies over the past three decades show just how complicated are the structures of language for even daily speech: yet within three years of birth all but disabled children acquire such mastery of their mother tongue without effort. Young immigrant children acquire proficiency in the host language long before their parents, if they are allowed to mix with other native children. I often found it necessary to use Greek- or Turkish-Cypriot children as interpreters when their parents visited the school. Many of these children had had very little regular schooling in the remote villages from which they came: their education had come more through their helping parents and neighbours in the daily work of the village. Yet they displayed a higher level of curiosity and intelligence than most of their London classmates.

Many small schools have been started on the assumption that education should be an activity characterised by joyous absorption in whatever interested the children. A.S. Neill's Summerhill, Dora Russell's Telegraph House, Susan Isaac's The Malting House are some of the best-known in this country. More recently there has been a mushroom growth of Free Schools. In America, between the wars, a much larger experiment was begun, with the cooperation of thirty schools and a group of universities, to test the belief that children are better educated when they themselves participate in the decisions that affect them.

Records were kept of the sex, race, class, socio-economic status, I.Q., etc. of the children. Each child was matched as closely as possible with another child from a school not in the experimental group, so as to provide a control group. The cooperating universities waived their entrance requirements so as to leave the schools as free as possible to experiment with their own curricula and methods. They also undertook to keep detailed records of the students' activities and progress as undergraduates and graduates.

Within the group of thirty schools some decided to continue as they had done in the past, using the same objectives, criteria and methods that they felt had served them well. At the other extreme some schools virtually started from scratch. The staff, parents and children sat down together to work out what they should do and how they should do it. In the following Fall the first of their students entered the universities.

After twelve years the first report of the experiment was published. It ran to twelve volumes and was summarised by James Hemmings in Teach Them to Live. The results showed, overwhelmingly, that the students from the thirty schools had not only showed themselves to take part most fully in the general life of the university - clubs, sports, music, arts, drama - but that they had carried off all the major academic prizes. Further, when results were broken down within the thirty schools, those schools which had most radically revised their assumptions, contents and methods produced the students who distinguished themselves not only by being the most active in general university life, but by winning the most prestigious awards in the academic field. In only two areas did the experimental schools score lower than the control group: in the rote-learning aspects of modern languages and in attendance at church.

I refer to this study, The Thirty Schools Experiment, because it was systematically recorded, it was large-scale, and used control groups, and because there was no suggestion that it was politically motivated or funded. English experiments have always been on a very small scale and have, therefore, been dismissed by most academics. Nevertheless the results from these schools have shown trends similar to those in the American experiment - full participation in university or college life and good academic results. More importantly, though this is a subjective view formed after meeting many people from 'progressive' schools, they seem to retain a vitality, a sense of freshness and hope in dealing with life's problems that contrasts with the more subdued attitudes of those from conventional schools. Similarly, pupils who have spent some time in Free Schools have, in my own experience, shown a more vibrant curiosity and vitality than children with similar backgrounds in ordinary state schools.

Why then have such clear pointers been so obviously ignored by those who maintain and conduct our schools? Since 1870 successive governments and local authorities have made education compulsory and kept a close watch, through Her Majesty's Inspectors and Local Inspectors, on the content of curricula and on the efficiency of the teachers. Until very recently 'discipline' was universally maintained by physical punishment. Only Church schools have, so far, refused to abolish such punishment.

Some perceptive people in government and in administration are uneasy with the present system. John Newsom, Director of Education for Hertfordshire, who totally approved in principle of what my staff and I were doing in Howe Dell School, nevertheless told me, quite frankly, that he could no longer continue as Director if he supported me against his Committee and its Chairman, a wine gum manufacturer called Maynard, at a time when Maynard was trying to insist that I used the cane in the school.

The overwhelming fact of our society that makes it not only difficult but impossible to reorganise our system of education so as to provide a good education for all children is that we are a nation divided into rich and poor! Those who own wealth and exercise power send their children to private schools and have done so for generations, thereby ensuring a head start for their children. Those who do the manual and poorly paid work - nearly half the population - cannot afford such schools and have to make do with state schools.

This division of society reached its present intense form with the Industrial Revolution and the removal of the bulk of the people from agriculture and the more autonomous life of the countryside. Factories needed almost completely amenable people to suit the machine-like style of life needed by machine production. Schools, first founded by the Churches to teach literacy so that people could read the Bible and be saved, had to 'contain' the gangs of young people too young for work, while their parents worked in the factories. They too were built and run like factories, with learning subdivided and processed like raw materials in manufacture. Their effect was to condition the young to think of themselves as material to be dealt with by authority as it wished.

The curricula and methods of the schools focussed on commercial and industrial practice so that the students inevitably came to regard themselves as being shaped, like parts of a machine, for lifelong use as 'appendages' to machines - without individuality or dignity. Education was for work, certainly not for leisure or for life. People were part of the production machine for the generation of wealth. Their wages were part of the costs of production, not the reward for cooperation in that production, and so to be kept down to the tolerable minimum.

That attitude to education for the nation's children has remained to this day, though now less obviously blatant. Waves of rationalisation have sought to mask the evil facts of greedy privilege: intelligence was innate and some had it while most did not; the 'democratic' process ensured that the will of the majority would prevail; competition in examinations would ensure that 'merit' was rewarded ...

Whether we like it or not the mask is falling away. The press and TV, mostly providing 'bread and circuses', cannot avoid revealing some of the facts. A hundred years ago only the rich and their immediate retainers and servants knew just how they lived. Today we can all see it on the 'box'.

Parents intuitively know that with good education their children are capable of doing most jobs. This intuition is borne out both by practical experience and by research. Intelligence is created by good education - even Lord Boyle, the Conservative Minister of Education at the time, pointed this out in the first Newsom Report. That is why the wealthy send their children to schools which can employ the most highly qualified teachers to teach small groups of children very intensively. Because experience and common sense have long accepted that more personal tuition is better, those who wish to reduce expenditure on state education have funded questionable research that claims to show that larger classes do not affect the quality of the education.

In all societies, without exception, the system of education closely reflects in organisation, objectives and values, the structure of the parent society. It follows that no amount of propaganda will convince the people of this country that equality of educational opportunity genuinely exists or can exist until the deep class divisions between the wealth-power group and the mass of ordinary people are removed by more democratic participation of working people at all levels of government. The human body is a model for consideration. Whereas it was once thought that the head ruled the whole body, we now know that the harmonious integration that is the living organism is possible only because each part has a function in supporting the whole and each depends for its functioning on the healthy operation of the rest.

Kaveh Ahmadianteherani
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My personal experience of education has been mixed. I have been to schools in three different countries, spending the majority and final years, in England. I was never happy in my work at school, but compensated for this outside the classroom and in the absence of teachers.

I came back to England in 1979. I didn't start a full curriculum until the September of that year. I joined a private school, one which I had attended for a time some five years previously. I found that having come from a far more intensive system of education, I had already covered most of what was taught to me, with the exception of English, French and History. I actively participated in lessons but found the homework a tedious affair. The second year at this school proved to be the most fruitful of my whole education, but at the same time I was increasingly aware of the money-making motive of the school, and also I felt that I had outgrown the attitude and protective environment of the school. Increasingly it occurred to me that the other children there were in some way removed from the real world or were there for reasons of prestige. I didn't like to think of myself as belonging to either of these groups; I knew that the reality of life could come to me one day and I felt increasingly uncomfortable in the neuroticism which had started to take hold of my particular year.

By this time my English had reached an acceptable level. During that summer I sat the thirteen-plus examination. I passed and was offered the choice of three schools. I chose a technical school - there was a tendency for practicality in my decision making. When I arrived at the school, no-one wanted to know. Immediately I was placed in all the lower groups; for all my efforts that summer I might as well have gone to a secondary school. Another point of error on the school's behalf was to put me in the 4th year. I never went through a 3rd year of secondary education. This would have been all right if I had kept to the academic subjects, but I took a number of specialised sciences, in which I fell a long way behind. There was no-one of any authority to advise me on these matters, and my parents, being relatively new to the education system in this country, were in no position to judge either. So I was bottom pupil in the bottom groups. Added to this was the new system to cope with and new peer groups to deal with, which was no easy task. I soon lost my footing and became despondent in the work. From there the labelling theory took over. This did not simply apply to me, but also to many others, and teachers' bias also came into play in a mild form for many of us. The only teachers who took a serious interest in me were my English teacher and Geography teachers; the others soon gave up when they saw that I may become a blemish on the score sheet of examination passes. Rather than look into the problem, they made excuses for me and themselves. I was never happy about being labelled as having difficulty in learning.

That extra year of teaching may have made a whole lot of difference to my attainment at school. Whilst I was ahead of other pupils in the second year, I had not gone beyond that year. In effect I did one year twice and missed the next stage of my education. The reason for my placing in the fourth year instead of the third year, is due to my birth date. From what I gather I qualified for the fourth year by a matter of days. I hadn't come across the word "bureaucracy" at that time in my life! In fact I was quite flattered to have been put a year ahead of others my age, and I firmly believed that being in the bottom groups would only be a temporary thing. I was wrong.

At first it was only the sciences which suffered, as they were in the main alien to me anyway. Later, as the year came to an end, I found myself covering new ground which the other pupils had already covered, and who found the work easier. Looking back, it was at this time that I became despondent about the work. Only my English Language survived.

The last year of school was good fun. By this time, I had resigned myself to failure. I did not pass in any great number of homework pieces and no-one cared. I was not a disruptive pupil, in fact I was better mannered than some of the teachers, so they let me "get on with it." I was put in for C.S.E. exams for all my subjects and I duly failed them, except for my English and Geography, and perhaps Art - the only thing certain about that topic is that I would have had a better pass if the teacher had not thrown out my folder within three weeks of the exam.

I am glad to know now that those exams did not set an irreversible path for my future, as the teachers had preached to us. As I know now, in case of failure apply to the College of Further Education and do any five 'O' levels, from scratch, in one year, cost free. This was something that the teachers kept from me, and I don't remember ever seeing a Careers Officer at school.

The one thing that I did study in class was the behaviour of the teachers. The majority of them were more confused than the pupils. Being an all-boys' school, things like patronisation and timidity, or even "over courteous" behaviour were noticed and utilised. Some teachers were provoked into tempers, and we watched them, rather like a toddler having a tantrum. Some of them had nervous breakdowns. I still wonder if they

were qualified for their jobs, under the same education system. Probably my favourite teacher was the English teacher, probably due to the fact that on the first day he hit the boy next to me for saying the word "yeh" instead of yes. He was the only teacher to take an interest in things outside the subject and the only teacher who was not made fun of; he didn't even have a nickname. He made it clear that he was a no-nonsense sort of person, which I admired. There was no pretence about the status quo, he didn't like us and we were filling in time, and we'd all be better off if it weren't for the exams.

The odd thing about school, and even in further education, is the common dislike of examinations. There are several reasons for this. Ultimately everyone agrees that it is not a fair assessment of knowledge. The teacher does not have an opportunity to participate in the assessment of the child that he has been teaching; comments like "he does better in class than in the examinations" didn't count. Also a great many alterations are made to impress examiners, rather like job applications - "the more easily the examiner reads the paper, the more likely you are to get away with mistakes"; "put in a few dates and figures to show you know what you are talking about". Impressing the examiner is big business and essentially cheating, as in revision. After all, if the subject matter is learnt, a student should be able to recall it without further reference, but for examinations there is always this mass memorising to do. After the exam, most of it is promptly forgotten.

A pupil spends five years of a life in preparation for such exams, and what are they at the end of the day? A test of memory which has been accumulated over five years and revised in a final year. How accurate can the test be when a pupil's performance can be affected by something as fragile as the state of his mind on the day? What does that piece of paper, at the end of the day, say about that person, and what does it express in the job market? I believe that there is very little notice taken of school qualifications in the job market; it is still only the armed forces and civil service who require 'O' and 'A' levels, on the whole. Increasingly I find that employers are setting their own tests to prove literacy and numeracy; simple 15 minute tests, administered to everyone, 'O' levels or not. Increasingly employers have become wise to the fact that 'O' and 'A' levels mean very little in terms of competence and enthusiasm, or any of the pre-requisites of employment. I myself noticed that the best lecturers in college are those who re-entered education after gaining experience of working life.

Common sense is taking over from state education at the school leaver's end of the job market. This is not surprising, considering the nature of qualifications and the crude, subsistence level at which subjects are taught.

Subjects at school didn't seem to correlate with the living of life, options gave the impression that a particular combination of 'O' levels prepared a person better for a particular area of higher education. This is a mis-representation in most cases. There are courses to do an 'A' level in one year, from start to finish, without a prior 'O' level qualification in that topic.

Qualifications, unless specific, as for example trades or secretarial training, are only worth the paper they are printed on, and only of value to an individual as an access to the higher education strata. 'O' levels mean nothing and are worth nothing in modern society. The G.C.S.E. has yet to prove itself.

Education is essential. However, it is time for a radical change in the subjects taught. Many of the things taught in school, children can be made aware of in much shorter and more striking ways, and often if allowed will become aware of them through the media and documentaries. This would allow far more room for subjective matters to be dealt with in the classroom, and the idea of a test should be abolished for compulsory education; it causes far too much anxiety and confusion for the little value it has.

The goals of education should have changed along with the mode of society and as with society it should have a more specialised direction. And in an age where a great deal more information can be stored and communicated in a fraction of the time and space, more details and subjective assessments should be made of pupils.

Education, with modern technology, should be able to afford more time to the pupil's individuality, which it has always been accused of lacking.

Values and Personal and Social Education - one person's view

Garth Allen

Head of Applied Social Sciences College of St Mark andSt John Author: "Community Education (An agenda for educational reform)"

I feel the need to stress that what follows is almost completely my own work. I say this because I do not want to implicate anyone else in what could well be a blind alley. I am a newcomer to P.S.E. and the job of working on values came my way through a process that I cannot clarify, something to do with handwriting I think!

Hence, what follows is highly idiosyncratic and also unedited. I simply have started from scratch, as it were (well, more accurately, thinking through the previous meeting), and let it come out. Thus, I apologise for the repetition and I guess there may only be one point in it all. I just simply did not have time to do it any other way.

Its strength may be that at least you can see what the uninitiated teacher brings to the topic of values and at least you can see what confusions there are likely to be amongst us beginners!

INTRODUCTION

1. Main aims according to Atkins survey:
   "to help pupils become happy, well adjusted members of society" "to foster more favourable attitudes towards other people/groups".

2. What counts as a personally and socially educated person? key question can only be answered through exposure of values.

3. Schools start from different positions:
   doing P.S.E. and believes it is o.k. - how do they know doing P.S.E. and believes it's awful - what's wrong, how get better thinking about doing it - how to begin not considering doing it - why rejection thinking about replacing P.S.E. with something else

4. 3 hot potatoes for teachers!
   (i) it is contentious - it should remain a taboo subject; it frightens headteachers, teachers, parents and young people; teachers part of the status quo and should not challenge it but P.S.E. could result in such a challenge;
   (ii) it is vital - (can coexist with it); if an essential part of schooling, then cannot afford to make mistakes;
   (iii) the school itself embodies values and P.S.E., if directed towards the school, could put pressure on the school to reform itself;

5. Any P.S.E. should involve open consideration of the values which sustain it.

6. If P.S.E. is person centred and concerned with personal roles (parent, worker, friend) and with personal definitions of role, then conflict because no one set of values which enables people to meet their own and others' expectations - so inevitable that teachers make judgements about which values are of most worth?

7. Problems still of knowing what "having values" in everyday life might mean. There can be little confidence that two authorities who discuss about how and what values are attached to young people and to teachers?

8. Values not peculiar to P.S.E. and maybe less potent vehicle for transforming students' values than other experiences in schools but assumed to be of special importance and might be, so treat as if it is.

9. At core of areas of inquiry and activity such as H.E.C., Moral Ed., Relig. Ed., Careers Ed., Pol. Ed., Environmental Ed., is/should/can be an explicit treatment of values.

10. I have concentrated on programmes rather than Guidance and Counselling but we may want to say something about values in C & G (if there are different points to make).

11. Research: limited amount on the transmission and takeup of values and what there is suggests that we should treat generalizations about the process of values transformation with great caution.

12. If P.S.E. is concerned with behaviour then it has to cope with the mysterious relationships between what people say they value and how they actually behave. Verbal expression appears to be a very poor predictor of action and schools are generally places which deny action (so there is little planned learning on-the-job).

13. "Can I suggest that the chapter makes overt references to the effect of religious bodies on values. Too often the umbrella title 'values education' or 'moral education' is presumed to include an understanding of religion, when in fact no such understanding occurs. Religion has no monopoly of values concern and moral education can stand on its own without religion, but I don't want our paper to avoid the term 'religion' as an embarrassing enthusiasm" (correspondence from Ian Wragg).

14. Can we briefly describe the main features of the treatment of values in other programmes of Moral Ed., Health Ed. (see (9) above)?

15. It is a psychological and sociological fact that teachers do reveal their values, that schools reveal their institutional values and that students reveal their values, consciously, unconsciously and inevitably. A key feature of teaching is that one authority claims the right to change the values of others. This means that teachers have made judgements about the worthwhile of alternative values and about how they can export their values to another person. Schools are involved with improvement, of the present and future so teachers do stand for certain values. All teachers are involved in values education in so far as schools are concerned with the transmission of what is thought worthwhile.
    Values are generalised, complex terms whose meanings are not self-evident. One popular way of conceptualising values has been to distinguish them from facts along the lines that values are not something that can be disagreed with through claims to evidence but this can be done with facts. Is this now a totally discredited distinction?
    Definition-values are the basic motivational constituents of intentional behaviour and in which of which they may be explained. If there are such things as basic values and if people share them, then values can be the basis for settling disputes because reference can be made to the shared values. In this sense education concerned explicitly with values can be seen as an attempt to reach and sustain the status quo, as a vehicle for social cohesiveness, for social control, for social change.

16. P.S.E. is the one place in school where we could predict that controversial issues are being dealt with. We don't have a major study of what in the school context, counts as "controversial" but we might want to argue that any teacher doing P.S.E. has or should have clarified their own perceptions of what counts as controversial and their justifications for including or excluding issues in the light of these perceptions.

TEACHER-STUDENT CONTEXTS

Taking Trefor Williams' advice I spent a few minutes creating a logical, simplistic sketch of the possible range of teacher- student contextual relationships in terms of sharing values. There are many more variations but the following gives the flavour of the exercise.

TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND VALUES - WHERE THEY STAND

AS PEOPLE

1. Teacher clarification of their own values.
2. Student clarification of their own values.
3. Degree to which teacher and students confident about identifying the values held by others.

IN THE CLASSROOM

4. Students sharing teacher values.
5. Teacher sharing student values.
6. Teacher sharing other teachers' values (in team teaching).
7. Students sharing other students' values.

IN THE SCHOOL

8. Teachers sharing other teachers' values.
9. Students sharing other students' values.

IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

10. School shares neighbourhood values.

IN VALUES

11. Teachers and/or students promote some values rather than others.
12. Teachers and/or students are neuters (rational choice between alternatives).
13. Teachers and/or students believe in balance.
14. Teachers and/or students neglect or reject consideration of values.

Given this sketch, I have used it to make a number of points about values. This is not to say that the position of these comments under some section rather than other could be rigorously justified but that people coming to the document may be encouraged to reflect on their own values and the values of others from the context of teaching.

1. Teacher clarification of their own values

   (a) Is there a special obligation on teachers to make their own values known in some way to themselves? Is there a peculiarly special obligation on teachers involved in P.S.E. to do this?

   (b) Many teachers (I guess) carry around two cliches about values. The first is that the school is a powerful agent in the transmission and promotion of values and teachers are the major component of this. Second, that this learning has relevance to the wider problems of society. Each cliche is an umbrella sheltering numerous problems and there are sense in which neither, either or both seem true. The job of the P.S.E. teacher is to sort out these cliches with little other than personal judgement to fall back on (given a lack of evidence). Is the section on training for teachers going to say something about values clarification for teachers?

   (c) How can we identify values held by teachers? Number of possibilities:
   (i) ideologically active - in school to use school for the promotion of a worthwhile society;
   (ii) definitions of knowledge most worthwhile - selection of content;
   (iii) definitions of teaching and learning approaches - selection of approach;
   (iv) ethos of the school - sum of the parts?

   (d) What is values clarification? (As a teaching method). e.g. some limited situation where behaviour (decisions) are chosen which enable deductions about values? More rigorously, uses mock situations to encourage decisions about behaviour from possible choices (suggested or left open?), the decision reflecting motivations based on values?

2. Student clarification of their own values

   (a) Values clarification approach to P.S.E. is not value free. "Quite missionary in its zeal!" (Ian Wragg)
   (b) There has been some research done on the values clarification of Raths, Harmin and Simon (1978) by Leming and Lockwood. They found little or no support for the theory as an effective instructional technique. Remembering the earlier warning about research, and given that clarification approaches themselves are so ambiguous and hence the outcomes so difficult to delimit (e.g. behavioural outcomes have a potentially lifelong horizon), the lack of evidence is illustrative of the state of the art rather than proving failure.
   (c) By what rights do teachers compel (through a legal system?) students to make public their values? Have students a right to be quiet (at the risk of taunts of 'chicken' - from other students, and of laziness - from teachers?)
   (d) Schools <u>are</u> places of values education and are claimed to be more so the more they have programmes such as P.S.E. We cannot ask whether students should be involved in clarifying and changing their values since this is, in practical terms, a non-question.

3. Degree to which teachers and students confident about identifying the values held by others

   (a) One way of predicting, maximising or minimising conflict is through identifying potential areas of dispute.
   (b) Teachers must get to know their students and students their teachers and each other (presumably) as part of objective of P.S.E.
   (c) Teachers can make judgements about controversy based on misconceiving the values of other teachers, the school, students, the neighbourhood, Mrs Thatcher, etc. This is particularly true in multi-cultural context. By controversy here I mean where there is strong possibility of differences of belief and action - this should be predicted (i.e. minimise uncertainty) through obligation to know oneself and others (Ian Wragg - religious dimension strong here?). Conflict here with

peoples' right to keep their values to themselves. Students e.g. could assume that teacher wants to know about them "as people" in order to use the information against them (and vice versa).

4. Students sharing teachers' values

   (a) Where students (as group) share the values of the teacher (e.g. to caricature, in a Roman Catholic girls' school - on abortion, where a young sociologist shares his students' beliefs in the inevitability of juvenile crime and in its justification given youth unemployment figures, how could content be selected for P.S.E. and which teaching and learning approach should the teacher adopt ?

   (b) Notions of a generation gap appear to be prevalent again. Schools can be seen to alienate young people from adult society by denying them adult status through the over-protection of the consequences of personal actions. Can young people be taught their rights and responsibilities without allowing them to practise them? Should P.S.E. be the context where this can happen (if nowhere else in the school?)

   (c) We can make two mutually exclusive predictions about the impact of teachers on students: the more students are in school, the more they assimilate the teachers' values; or, the more students are in school, the less they assimilate the teachers' values. Which do we want?

5. Teachers sharing students' values

   (a) This is rarely conceded (in my experience) but often happens (certainly to me) - that is, teachers assimilate the values of their student(s) - e.g. they are converted to worshipping Ian Dury or 'Dallas' or the Anti-Nazi League, or the Women's Movement.

   (b) Take the following values, claimed to be representative of the "new values of youth": a rejection of authority symbols, growing toleration for chaos and disorder, decline in patriotism, anti-business, a selfish trend (me, me, me), a rejection of the art of compromise, a belief that virtue is no longer a virtue unto itself, a drive for male and female equality, a more liberal sexuality and a decline in the support for organised religion. I could be persaded to claim that many of these are goods rather than bads and if I am to be honest with my students, do I pretend and put up a counter culture (see later)?
   Take the example of pupil participation (see Jasper for this example), "Although it may not be admitted, teachers or parents may support or oppose pupil participation because of their general attitudes or because they themselves when at school approved or disapproved of the way affairs were then organised. Accordingly, pupil participation can arouse strong feelings involving substantial pre-judgements, which very possibly remain undeclared. Such a situation makes the task of successfully introducing pupil participation, already difficult enough, even more difficult" (from 'Political and Moral Education and Pupil Participation').

   (c) What if teacher and students share values and share the action consequences? If the outcome of P.S.E. is to be a confidence and willingness to act, both individually and collectively, what are the implications of this for student participation within and without the school (e.g. in attempting to redress injustice - recently, a London borough suspended youth workers for going on a protest march to the Town Hall to protest against the planned closure of an outdoor centre belonging to the Authority (young people who used the facility organised the march) - what do we think about that?

   (d) The basic point here is that any process of value transformation is at least two way, that teachers are involved in exposing their own values when engaging students in P.S.E., and should be aware that they could well be influenced by individual students or a group culture.

6. Teachers sharing other teachers' values (in team teaching)

   (a) Teams of teachers who plan and implement programmes make judgements about content and teaching and learning approach and given value diversity, such P.S.E. experiences organised for students can be uneasy coalitions of competing viewpoints, of compromised, etc. Do we have any strong feelings about how this can add to or detract from the quality of P.S.E. experiences (see 13 below).

7. Students sharing other students' values

   (a) In many contexts in schools, students do not know what other students think because either this does not come out in the classroom or because the issues do not enter everyday conversation. P.S.E. may or may not be like that.

   (b) Students, through dress, speech, achievement, tastes, etc. know that they are different and differ from other students - in P.S.E., these differences can be made explicit or more explicit, especially sex and social class and religious differences in so far as students are encouraged to make clear and justify their beliefs and actions.

   (c) The pedagogical difficulty arises of encouraging students to know themselves, to do this as part of a group activity, yet recognising the right to be silent (major evaluation problem obvious here

too). Do we need to make suggestions as to how teachers deal with student closure (e.g. redefining issues and silence). We could predit the conditions under which students are likely to clam up, e.g. where they stand for something no one else does, where they don't want to go against their friends, where they fear the taunt of 'extremist', and so on.

8. Teachers sharing other teachers' values (in the school)!

   (a) Teachers can use P.S.E. to form a sort of collective within the school which shares values which the rest of the teaching staff do not, P.S.E. being seen to be a context in which one does "what schools should really be doing" - i.e. can be used to create a counterculture as a bulwark or as a haven or refuge. Does this happen? Is it unlikely? What do we think about it?

   (b) P.S.E. can be context where students take on the right values to support their teachers' expectations about them throughout the school. P.S.E. can then take on a corrective role, students being explicitly encouraged to transform their values because it may cut out vandalism, bad manners, etc. in the school and its neighbourhood (e.g. bus-stops and sweetshops). Values then support the acquisition of knowledge and skills elsewhere.

   (c) Extent to which teachers differ in their values partly reflected in the implied, or hidden,curriculum. Schools at any one time represent a constellation of cultures and the degree of difference between cultures is seen through deliberate attempts or inevitable results of teachers differing from one another in what they stand for and in their explicit wish to impose their values on the school. There can be tension between the public statements of the school (e.g. through the senior staff) and what other teachers stand for. This can lead to cynicism and rejection by those teachers and students who see the "real world" of values in this way.

   (d) Should teachers of P.S.E., in particular, sort out, face up to, expose, the contradictions in schools as a part of the process of respecting their fellow teachers and students? It is much easier to influence schools by tinkering with the curriculum than by confronting institutional structures. Can P.S.E. avoid being neutralised by these structures? Can it make a positive, if limited, contribution to their transformation?

9. Students sharing other students' values (in the school)

   (a) Teachers can use students to propagate their views on the best possible value systems. This is usually done through the evaluation of some students above others, either as a group or through picking on individuals. As a group, I guess we think of prefects, monitors, the top academic stream in each year, etc. as positive reference groups, to emulate; the bottom academic groups, the head-shakers, the detention groups, as negative reference groups, to reject. Individuals can also be used by teachers in this way, setting up alternative role models as the situation demands (e.g. someone who always does their homework on time when the class has generally been late; someone who wears pierced earrings when this is generally discouraged and the majority of students acquiesce). Should we say something about this?

   (b) As a result (partly) of schools and their roles in P.S.E. some students may form groups within the school for action within and without the school (such as Schools against Racism), or may join groups which wish to enrole young people, such as the anti-abortionists and the Ecology Party. Some schools may include a student body who are not joiners at all. How do we expect P.S.E. to change the everyday affiliations of youg people? Do we put a premium on group membership?

10. School shares neighbourhood values

   (a) One reasonably non-controversial assumption underlying concepts of socialisation is that the success or failure of any attempt to transmit one specific set of values depends on the support or rejection of those values by others who we perceive as authorities. More strictly, this transmission process depends on the clarity and intensity with which salient individuals, groups or institutions, reference objects, are seen to hold consistent beliefs or engage in coherent actions. At any one time, young people may have a wide range of potential references which represent a pluralistic range. Then, presumably, we argue that the function of P.S.E. should be to use this plurality as nutriment for the development of mature, independent judgement. We use rationality as a counter to charisma and counter to contradiction. Young people may see the conflicts between values set as e.g. British or peaceful ideals, and what they see in their everyday lives. So we return to potential cynicism and disaffection, apathy and deference. Do we then counsel students towards happiness, self-adjustment, optimism, a person-centred approach to terms of correction, or a structural approach, where we correct the political system? Can we have a politicisation of the personal and a personalisation of the political in terms of treatment?

   (c) Teacher values can often conflict with parent values, given differences in the religious, cultural, racial and political antecedents which prop young people up when faced with P.S.E. We seem to find it easy to accept pluralistic arguments in this sense (of knowing and respecting students) and also to accept the monolithic and monopolistic arguments of the "needs on industry". What do we suggest that teachers should be doing in order to recognise and get beyond this conflict (is the training group going to say something about this? - it may be merely a technical problem, to be

resolved in terms of teaching and learning technique).

(c) "Values diversity - a clear reference to the multiethnic scene - needs to bring out the much closer links between religion and morality for Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, etc. than for most post-Christian Anglo-Saxons" (Ian Wragg),.

(d) Do we wish to make reference to the 1980 Act concerned with the public statements of schools, e.g. Schools Prospectuses. The production of such could be a valuable P.S.E. experience for the whole of the school.

(e) Many teachers, from my experience, do not live in the neighbourhood of their school. Indeed, they may see the neighbourhood as simply "catchment", i.e. something that keeps them in jobs (with built-in interests, seen through constant jokes, about catchment birthrates!). Have teachers in P.S.E. a special obligation to know the neighbourhood of the school?

(f) What if they know it and don't like it. E.g. some young teachers (and not so young) dislike and dispute the military stranglehold (as they see it) which the Plymouth dockyard has on jobs. They want the refitting and commissioning on nuclear submarines to stop, yet they fear for the material conditions of their students if this were to happen. Should P.S.E. programmes engage in considerations of this local or neighbourhood type? What do we think about the use of experience- based learning? Should the school be a base for social action where social justice is seen to be denied? Is an effective programme of P.S.E. likely to be rejected as an integral part of formal education because teaching or managing it is likely to be considered a subversive activity?

(g) For clarification, let me put "formal" education in context. Education needs to be seen in terms of incidental, non-formal and formal. Incidental arises out of situations and is unavoidable, such as learning the meanings of symbols. Informal means the organised education that takes place in addition to the school system, through the media, the family, group participation, the Church, and so on. How should P.S.E. in formal (i.e. the school system) contexts relate to the other contexts?

(h) Bluntly, how do we want teachers to act when there is a conflict of values, between what they stand for and what others want? An example, say that teachers on a P.S.E. programme fiercely disliked and disapproved of the involvement of young people with ultra-right organisations. Say this involvement is seen to arise from a neglect of the young by traditional organisations of the Labour Movement so that they retreat into the politics of the peer group or the extremist groups. A socialist strategy here may then be to encourage the building of links between the Trade Union movement and community organisations (e.g. to organise for job preservation) and to involve young people in this. What would we think about that?

11. Teachers and/or students promote some values rather than others

(a) A common argument against P.S.E. with the politicisation dimension is that children may be subject to bias, prejudice and indoctrination at the hands of teachers. Given that students are open to alternative sources of values both within and without the school, is this still a problem area, or rather, should it still be conceived as such (especially by headteachers and governors)? Do political upheavals become more likely if supported by the modern equivalent of the Children's Crusade?

(b) Should we encourage teachers to be as critically aware of the critiques of the personalisation approach, of the arguments against the social pathology of promoting certain sorts of values in order to deal with social problems?

(c) Much policy is justified in terms of community (with major implications for values built into the meaning and uses) I think we may want to mention community as something which needs analysis rather than as a slogan for action.

(d) This individualistic and collectivist polarity (the personal and the political) is currently manifest in notions of social control and social change. Given that we might predict that much curriculum change in P.S.E. is promoted by youth unemployment I think that we should point out this logical polarity and the possibilities of equilibriumization (the personalisation of the political and the politicisation of the personal).

(e) It has been said that religious education can only arise out of three basic approaches: direct indoctrination into particular religious beliefs, indirect indoctrination into more general religious beliefs and teaching about religion and religions. Is this true of P.S.E.?

(f) Who is to determine what beliefs and institutions are acceptable to P.S.E. and which are "extreme" or "unworkable"? Why should the status quo be kept together if it is so fragile as to require special pleading on its behalf within schools?

(g) Some teachers fear P.S.E. because they doubt the possibilities of open education in schools, believe P.S.E. to be necessarily conservative (or it wouldn't exist, so the argument goes) and don't want to add an explicit form of conservative indoctrination to the existing myriad forms of implicit ones. What do we say to them?

(h) How can P.S.E. in a democracy teach democratic values and democratic politial methods and still build a critical, analytical perspective on the political system?

(i) This is to acknowledge the supremacy of democratic values. We could also argue that P.S.E. must involve a commitment to values but not to the values of particular ideologies. How do we resolve this?

(j) Do we see as one of the proper outcomes of P.S.E. the development of ideology? (Given the social psychological evidence, for what it is worth, that most people make do with latent ideologies.) There have been numerous research studies of the values held by adolescents and the results are very unclear. However, crudely, it seems that young people are generally anti-utopian, realistic conservatists at heart but that during adolescence social idealism can occur, characterised through law and order themes, rich-poor themes and equality themes. Can we suggest techniques whereby teachers can diagnose values in this dominant social psychological, socialisation framework (in order to avoid the catch-22 of values clarification where diagnosis seems to be an end in itself - too selfindulgent for me!).

(k) We know that materials embody values (e.g. books). We don't know much about the way young people use books, the TV and so on in order to take on values which they otherwise would not, but we do have many content analyses. I imagine we might want to argue that teachers should be trained to be critically aware of this when choosing and creating materials, and should attempt to pass this critical faculty on to their students.

(l) I am assuming that none of us are absolute moral relativists and neither do we want teachers or students to be so. Hence, we have views about publically acceptable and privately acceptable behaviour. I think that students come to know what teachers stand for, that their perceptions are usually accurate and they know when teachers are pretending to stand for something they do not. This they do usually as a teaching device (e.g. to create controversy or to wake the students up). The result can be confusing to the students, who resist the ploy and doubt the sanity of the teacher! This issue of teacher integrity or honesty is one where we might need to offer advice. For example, I guess that many teachers have been caught in the situation where they are trying for a "balanced" treatment of, say, using drugs and are confronted by the blunt irrepressible question - have you ever, sir?

(m) Broadly, teachers can be put into three crude categories (in terms of the men and abuses of P.S.E.): reinforcing their perceptions of the ruling consensus; reforming this concensus through methods about which they perceive a concensus (in terms of their legitimation); and reforming through rejection of what they perceive to be the concensus values and methods of social change. What do we mean when we describe a teacher as a "radical" teacher of P.S.E.?

(n) They can be characterised too as follows: as committed (to the export of some values rather than others); as neuters (either or both within and without the school); as jugglers, preserving and demonstrating balance through keeping two balls in the air (though there are many more sides to an issue than two).

(o) Teachers in the U.K. are largely state employees. Is P.S.E. likely to be any different as a result of this, and if so, how? For example, when a teacher is making judgements about P.S.E. this is clearly related to judgements about the psychological and intellectual needs of children, the social and political climate and the specific directives of the teacher's employer. Where the teacher is employed by the state, the last two will be intimately connected. These mix up with what the teacher stands for and partly determines what the teacher stands for.
It is clear (logically and in practice) that these four may not be compatible and may even be in opposition (to have more of one may mean less of another). Let's imagine a P.S.E. teacher who is in the following position: state sponsored system of schooling; the system is committed to producing students who will accept youth unemployment as a temporary phenomenon that lies within the individual's capacity to resolve this objective is explicitly recognised as a worthwhile outcome of P.S.E. (e.g. it is enshrined in a Schools Council document!), and is explicit because of the objectives it imposes on teachers. What if the teacher does not believe this position to be of worth? Can teachers still function efficiently as a teacher and to their own satisfaction if we accept that teachers have to be honest in their intellectual transactions with their students? Are these implications for teacher accountability and do we want to spell these out?

(p) I think that indoctrination is the most prevalent form of P.S.E., hence the length of this section. School walls are often wallpapered with inspiring sayings and school rules; handbooks and guides concerned with codes of expected behaviour abound; students are admonished by those in authority for not observing codes and for failing to meet expectations about desired behaviour. These represent direct values of education and we need to consider how these more generally relate to substantive values such as honesty, respect for others and toleration.

(q) It could be argued that the task of the teacher is to prepare students for life as it is rather than as they would prefer to see it, but that doesn't help much ("life as it is?"). What teachers do in practice is to choose a particular combination of different sorts of values (moral, aesthetic, political) that they consider appropriate to society (usually seen as pluralistic, though not always). Given this difficult task, it is even more difficult when teachers are aware they are doing it. Given the problem of unintended consequences of policies, the only concensus is likely to be seen in things as they are (the status quo). Even here there are major conflicts (e.g. sexual chastity versus sexual freedom).

12. Teachers and/or students are neuters (rational choice between alternatives)

(a) I don't want to say much about this, though there is much to say! The emphasis of this position is tied up with notions of objectivity, of skills, of decision- making, of logic. My own experience

with political education leads me to believe that the attractiveness of the neuter arises from its public contrast with the ideologue. This is a reasonable point of departure but in practice it can mean deadly dull classrooms! It may reduce the problem (as it is seen) of indoctrination but it upgrades the chance of teacher dishonesty. In order to avoid the latter, teachers then have a vested interest in defusing the issue by delimiting the treatment to "safe" margins and ruling out student attempts to locate the issue on <u>their terms</u>. Crudely, I prefer McPhail to Stenhouse!

(b) Where different values systems conflict and where values are so scrambled as to resist straightening out, all judgements about the outcomes of teaching become difficult to predict given such uncertainty. What we need is a treatise on doing P.S.E. under conditions of uncertainty, similar to Shackleton's work on the economics of uncertainty choice about goods. Can a rational rationality be taught?

(c) It is possible (through logic!) to imagine a classroom climate scale which embodies notions of neutrality. Some U.S.A. work suggests that students rank highly those teachers who deal with P.S.E. (specifically, deal with controversial issues), in an objective and neutral way in the context of a free discussion climate; this is contrasted with a position where the classroom is not free because it is dominated by teachers' views, which suppresses student contribution. The pragmatic response, of course, is to have an armoury of alternative approaches to P.S.E., trying to intellectually clarify the relative strengths and weakness of each approach, given the situation.

13. <u>Teachers and/or students believe in balance</u>

(a) Much is done in the name of a "balanced" approach and we could do philosophy with this. All I want to say is that it is not clear what is meant, that it would be tortuous to tease out what it means through thinking about it and I don't know of any studies of teachers' and students' perceptions of balance.

(b) In everyday discourse, it seems that we find it useful to think of <u>both</u> sides of a question or issue (e.g. both sides on industry): that in the classroom it may be better to have two sides rather than one side (though not much better). It is certainly a tendency to analyse, i.e. how and why we use polarities, whether these are media products.

(c) A major difficulty is that a teacher can plan for balance but the outcomes (what the students learn) may be to choose one position rather than another because the teacher fails to achieve balance, rather than the student choosing between two equally weighted alternatives. I have simply never seen an example of the latter and wouldn't know how to test for it (beyond a gut reaction).

14. <u>Teachers and students neglect or reject consideration of values</u>

(a) Our system of democracy may well only survive because of apathy of the mass of citizens. We may not, in everyday affairs, feel the need to be able to give categorical replies to questions about our toleration of others, though we may be very clear about our favourite record of the moment or the football team we support, and even why we support it. Yet our values are exposed many times everyday (unless we are asleep or in recluse) and it may be this makes P.S.E. in schools different, to some degree, from other activities (do we do history and P.E. everyday, inevitably?). This is one way. I guess that people could (and may have, for all I know) argue for the primacy of P.S.E. Teachers and students are continually making judgements about good and bad, right and wrong, and P.S.E. goes on in all of the 3 contexts I outlined earlier.

(b) This argument could be turned around a little to argue against <u>programmes</u> of P.S.E. because of the role of the hidden curriculum and a Headteacher, acting as a curriculum gatekeeper, may use this argument (but couldn't hold it, if pressed, I imagine).

(c) My own preference would be for P.S.E. programmes to arise out of concerns for the political structure of education. This would counter my worry that some teachers may not realise that there is any "value stance involved in the selection and treatment of topics for study" (Rosemary Lee). I don't think that this would be a legitimate starting point for getting P.S.E. off the ground, however.

(d) Do we need to produce a breed of super teachers in order to do P.S.E. "properly"? What do we think would make the majority of teachers engaged in P.S.E. (which means all teachers, but some more than others) a little better than they otherwise would be (at least cost!) - question for teacher training groups.

Walter Allen
Teacher of English,
The Ridgeway School,
Plympton

"Perhaps I am not thinking clearly.
I am very sad and torn today."

- Arthur Sammler, central character in
"Mr Sammler's Planet", by Saul Bellow

* * *

Thinking clearly: yes, that's what it's about, isn't it? If only we could express our thoughts so that with their clarity, laser-like, they would cut through all obstacles, hindrances, interruptions and interferences and be understood instantly. If only we didn't stumble, didn't repeat ourselves, didn't have to search for words! Well, we'd feel much better in ourselves, wouldn't we? Wouldn't we feel somehow more capable, more confident, more interesting to other people? Wouldn't life be easier and more satisfying? We'd always be ready with a quick reply; we'd know that what we said was what we really meant to say; we'd know that our messages had qualities which would ensure that their intended purposes (to excite, to reassure, to illuminate, to relax, to persuade, to be ambiguous, to convince, to charm, to teach, to describe, to report, to speculate, to generalise, etc.) would be fulfilled. In short, if we could only think clearly we'd feel more complete.

Human beings are fragile creatures; we need a lot of reassurance. If our lives are to be bearable, we need to feel that our presence here is desired, that other people do care about us and our thoughts. If our messages are misunderstood, ignored, flatly contradicted, dismissed as unnecessary, laughed at as childish, we feel a sense of loss. If this frustrating and painful state of affairs continues day after day; if those we want to impress are never impressed by us; if just as we think we have grasped the crystal it is smashed into myriad fragments before our eyes by some superior being over whom we have no control; if any of these things happens then our sense of our own worth is lowered.

Our thoughts and our language are inextricably intertwined. We use our supply of words to establish our presence: we want other people to know we are here, to know who we are, what we think, what makes us laugh, how we see the world. As we speak or write, as we tell the story of our everyday lives, we re-define our ideas in the light of our experiences. Often, as we express ourselves, we realise (literally: make real) what it is we are thinking. We have the capacity to edit, to change our utterances, to reshuffle our communications in an instant. This power comes from our innermost being; from our desire to reach out and tell the world what we think. We don't want to feel isolated, or neglected by others, so we hope they will cherish our thoughts and return them with interest; with love even.

What about school then? What about English lessons? Surely we can't just let it all happen naturally? Of course not. English teaching, though, is concerned with a natural phenomenon: the desire to communicate. We are concerned to find ways which will help pupils to become clearer, more effective communicators. We are concerned with the creation of situations in which children's responses, both written and oral, will be valued. We do our meagre best to make the situation right for growth. It almost always feels like failure. The results are invisible, hard to detect, harder still to measure.

Still, we must not stop trying: like Mr Sammler, children cannot think clearly if they feel sad and torn.

Adult Education

Richard Allman
Warden, Swarthmore
Adult Education Centre

However education in schools is carried out, and whatever its successes or failures, there is no reason that it should stop at 16 or 18 or at 75. Humans are curious animals and throughout their lives they want to find out different things at different stages, experience new experiences at different times and have a rest in between. Formal school education requires a pre-determined process until a defined age, when everything stops and work is supposed to begin. Adult education takes a different view, particularly at a time when work certainly doesn't begin at 16 for a huge number of people. 'Education' should be a lifelong experience - whatever is of value in it should be available to people at whatever stage of their lives that suits them best, and in the form they choose. Some people will want a formal course immediately after school, others might want a part-time course at the same time as doing a job, those with no jobs might want to be involved in some continuing creative process, some retired folk might want to take up something they never had time for earlier on, and others might have no interest in what they see as 'education' at all. But 'education' to some is 'life' to others.

Adults should be able to decide the form education takes. The regular weekly meeting of a course is one form but there are many other models, different types suitable for different people. Traditional adult education seems to cater well for people who want to share specific experiences, such as learning languages, making their own clothes, achieving some sort of fitness - they vote with their feet and we hear of their satisfaction. But where we fail is in actually finding out what people want - if they really know what they want - and initiating some sort of dialogue between the organisers of adult education and the people who are going to use it. The majority of the population don't have any idea of the relevance of adult education to them. That is the fault of adult education and we've got to do something about it.

If high unemployment is with us to stay, education could be the only growth industry. If finances permitted, there would be a great opportunity for people with real time available to develop themselves creatively. The 'Protestant work ethic' is no longer valid in the 1980s and beyond. Adult education's (or Community Education's) role should be to adapt people's view of education to the real world of the 1980s, to encourage people to define education in their own way and to make sure that the organisers come up with the goods.

Anderson John
Principal of the College
of St Mark and St John

The ability to learn is perhaps the most valuable of man's assets, for it allows experience to be used creatively and, to a certain degree, for man to influence his own destiny.

Since the Industrial Revolution learning has, for most of us, been given expression in formal education and the mass school system. More recently, particularly in the post Second World War period, and the emergence of new nations, a worldwide understanding developed which saw the school as a universal symbol of hope, development and peaceful co-operation within and between nations and cultures. Today, that hope has given way to a more more pragmatic, even cynical treatment of schooling. 'Hopes', based on education, have been overtaken by 'realities' based on economics.

There are a number of explanations for this, but they do not belie a situation in which, whatever their shortcomings, schools are still the best institutions we have for seeking to understand and learn constructively about human development. Herein lies a challenge for our times.

The very notion of constraining the provision of learning opportunities implies a limiting and diverting of human talent. It raises the basic human paradox of choosing between individual fulfilment with communal need and gives power into the hands of those who select: the priorities for education spending, the candidates who are to benefit, the accreditation procedures to be followed. As parents throughout the world know only too well, formal education now controls the gateway to life chances.

Of course, education provision must take account of techno logical change and social upheaval, and in particular the need to select and train effectively those who are to lead. But it must not become trapped into a narrow, instrumental mould. More than ever before our formal education institutions are open for inspection and comment. The nature of the curriculum and the standars of performance are key reference points. However, the right to influence carries within it the responsibility to under stand. Employers expect new employees to be literate and numerate, but they should also make clear what particular skills they seek and know the indicators for those skills. Profiles and reports, as well as examination performance, indicate commitment and individual achievement. Do the work places reflect these values? Good learning involves at its core the evaluation of experience.

By the same token, teachers and lecturers must offer know ledge and skills that engage the issues of the times across a full spectrum of possible interpretation, and not rely upon their control of examinations to protect 'limited academic' interests.

No society can allow one particular group to be the arbiters of acceptable knowledge. If education is to eschew narrow professionalism and be open to meet the challenge of change it is the self interest of professionalism that is being challenged, not education.

What is the point of going further and further down the high tech. road if those freed from unnecessary labour are not given the opportunity to benefit from and seek the dignity of self fulfilment?

School

Kelly Louise Anne Arkins
Former pupil, Austin Farm Primary; present pupil, Eggbuckland School

At school the Dinner ladys are Gits exspecelly Mrs Lech because if you goto the tolet, with out permichon from the dinner ladys they tell you that you are to stand on the pateow for 30 min. Mr Green is thick because he douse not exsplan your work prople toyou and he mumble a lot and douse not speck clearley but my techer is skill he lets you do things that you whant to do suchas Reding English maths ect once donna Willis Sarah Bagnell and I arived at school late and we were sent to Mr Green and he said that we had to stay in his office at playtime and do work.

Ruls

The Ruls are silly because you should be aloud to were makeup to school because it has nothing to do whith prezentshon of your work. and I thinck that wer should be aloud to were fashaneble shoes to school. But twat head Mr Green. dose not let us were them. I like school But I hate the dinner ladys and I thinck the Ruls are crap

School

Lee Christopher Joseph Arkins
Pupil, Eggbuckland School

At school the teachers are very strict. They set a lot of work for you to do and don't give you much time to do it. My term tutor is called Mrs Ward. The lessons she takes us for are Religious Studies, Geography and History. When Mrs Ward gives us tests such as 20 Questions about Anglo Saxons, when she takes in our marks out of 20 if one of her favourites in the class gets a low mark she will add on marks that she thinks they should have got right. So if somebody gets 13 out of 20 if it's one of her favourites she will give them 16 out of 20. My Head Master is very quick to fly off the handle. If your tie is not straight or your shoes aren't clean you have to go on litter duty; litter duty is when Mr Caddy gives you a bin liner and he does not let you have your dinner until you've filled it up with rubbish. I think Mr Caddy is not right for the job of Head Master because the punishment is too hard. Some boys say when they've been sent to Mr Caddy's office that he has thrown them against the wall and hit them. He thinks he's funny when he calls everyone Cyril because your hair is too long. He said if you don't get it cut I will cut it.

John Arnaud
Former Devon County
Councillor and member
of Plymouth Advisory
Education Committee

Education affects us all at some time. We all enjoy, or to some minds, suffer the process of being educated or being taught. This immediately makes me ask, is learning the same as education? We can be taught facts, we can learn how to carry out various tasks; to be educated, however, implies perhaps displaying culture, taste and a wide knowledge, being cultured, a complete person.

Is this what we are trying to do in our schools today? To produce adults who can take their place in society, and more importantly, contribute to it in a worthwhile way. I sometimes doubt it. The majority of children leave school, as young adults, with some knowledge of basic facts. They satisfy examiners that, at that moment, they can answer various questions to a pre- set standard; whether this is a test of knowledge or of memory is a debatable subject. Of course, educational authorities must do their best to ensure that young people become literate, to have a working knowledge of mathematics, to have an understanding of moral standards and the world's religious beliefs, and these days, to explore scientific facts. But do we really teach them how to think for themselves, to be self-reliant and not to depend entirely on other people to solve their problems?

Going to school should be a happy experience. Learning should be a pleasure. The majority of young children are curious. If you have spent time with a lively youngster, you will know they keep asking questions, they want to know about everything - in fact it can become tedious, as they exhaust your own knowledge. What happens then when they go to school? Why does learning itself become tedious and many children lose all interest? Look back to your own school days and you will know the answer.

There are many teachers, of course, who hold children's interest all the time, make learning and thinking an exciting process. They inspire children to want to become educated. This I believe is today, where there is a vast improvement in our schools. Learning is not the dull task it was, of learning facts by rote, but there must still be a long way to go, otherwise why is it then, even today, there are sixteen-year-olds leaving school, who are barely able to read or write? This is not a common problem in a County such as Devon, but is a very serious one in some inner cities, leading perhaps to the feeling of despair and inadequacy among teenagers of all races and creeds, leading, in turn, to mindless vandalism and violence.

Where does our educational system go wrong? - does it start with the selection of young people who want to enter the teaching profession? Now that we have falling school numbers, and fewer teachers are required, there are as I understand, as many as ever applicants for this profession; therefore, should there be a more comprehensive selection system? A great deal is known about assessing young people to find out if they are suitable for a particular career. Training a teacher, as training for any highly-skilled job, is expensive and it seems sensible that applicants should undergo a thorough selection process to discover, at least, if they have the right temperament to teach. It is quite obvious that not everyone is suited to giving interesting lessons, to arouse the inherent quest of knowledge that most children have, and more importantly, have they the strength of character to put up with the tensions of dealing with children each and every day? This last requirement is, I believe, one of the most important. Like many arts, the technique of teaching can be learnt to some degree, but experience plays a big part in producing an outstanding teacher - however, without the right temperament, other talents are wasted.

I have outlined some of my concerns; I have no easy answers. Much research is at this moment going into improving the curriculum, examinations conditions, and examining the types of schools which give best results overall. Unfortunately we do not have an average child, the kind of education that suits one does not suit another. But what I do believe is, that everyone of us has some talent of some kind. It may be academic, it may be physical, if only this talent can be found when a child is young, and can be developed, it helps in so many ways. Most of us have seen this happen, a child who is perhaps a slow learner, who matures or develops at a later stage, suddenly discovers he or she has a particular talent, in sport, music, art, or in any subject you can think of, when this is brought to the fore, the child gains self confidence, and there is an all-round improvement. This is where parents and schools can play such a big part, and where at the moment, unless the child meets an interested and dedicated person, he or she just remains part of the machine, the present education machine that tries to turn out children to fit the average mould.

I believe it is important to imbue children with the idea at an early age, of aiming high in all they do. Not to be content with second best. This means to aim as high as they can with their particular talents, rate of learning and rate of maturity. We all understand that everyone is different, but everyone can try to give of their best. This requires a great deal of attention and dedication for all concerned with children, parents and teachers. This is one of the great problems of today, insufficient time to deal with individual children who perhaps need more special

handling. The answer to this is more money to be spent on Education. But already Education takes such a large proportion of our financial resources, it is in competition with demands for other equally important services, that I cannot see any hope of extra cash until this country as a whole becomes more prosperous. It is another spiral, we need better education so the young can produce more wealth for the country to produce better education. But in spite of this I view the future of education with optimism. With the dedicated experts that are working on this problem, the situation can only improve.

Education - From Inside and Out

Susan Avent
Mother of Charlotte, aged 7
Student: Religion and Philosophy; B.A. in Humanities, College of St Mark and St John

I'd had a feeling for some time that competition was responsible for the 'unsatisfactoriness' of our existence. Completely unread and politically ignorant, I thought a degree might be useful and three years in which to philosophise on the subject seemed quite attractive.

Almost everyone I knew took competition for granted. They saw it as natural, "look at the natives in the jungle". But when I look at the natives I see them co-operating. For my own sake and for Charlotte I wanted to discover one of the secrets of human nature. Are we competitive or not? Can a society function without it? Can we function in this society if we fight it?

Twelve months further on I now realise that I won't discover the secret at Marjons or probably anywhere else for that matter. What I have discovered to my relief is that I'm not the first to have been pondering on the subject. Historians, theologians, philosophers and sociologists have been at it for centuries, churning out theory after theory. But still it remains ever present around us.

Whilst we discuss it in its many manifestations and usually end up condemning it, we perpetuate it in the way in which we run our lives. The education system seems to be operating with a double standard. In 'buzz groups' where we are presumably supposed to be helping each other, we guard what scanty knowledge we have in the fear that someone might steal it from us, only divulging enough to prove that we have enough intelligence (whatever that may be) to justify our presence on the course.

It seems to me that whether or not we are inherently competitive, the education system from beginning to end is determined to make sure that we end up that way. I now know that efforts are being made to minimise the negative effects of competition, especially in primary schools, but the way I see it as long as five year olds are forced to humiliate themselves in public by running in the sticky sports-day sun, then the system is not going far enough in its efforts.

I'm not much nearer the answers but at least I'm aware of the question, which is a step in the right direction. Education in general would benefit by concentrating more upon the questions and less upon the answers.

Education

Patricia Avery
Former Teacher

Life itself is a continual learning process, or should be, and education encompasses much more than the schoolroom. Schools can often be too rigid and impersonal for children to learn what direction they should try to aim for in their lives. Many people have the idea that learning and education are the exclusive domains of the schools, that knowledge comes only from the teacher, that learning is confined to the years of school attendance and accept that education consists of courses and gaining certificates. This is not a healthy attitude to hold, as learning from books is certainly not all that education should be.

In our schools the majority of teachers have spent their entire lives within the education system. They generally go from school to university or college with no thought of doing anything else and then they return to the schools to teach. In my opinion it should be obligatory for all students to pursue something different for at least a couple of years before going on to further education after their school years. Surely someone who is to teach young, impressionable minds should have a good all round knowledge of life, not purely of academic subjects. Teachers also tend to share a common background in that they will have been successful at school and from a family background which is encouraging to them but which is also happy with the system of education and narrow in its view of life. Our best way of educating must be to give as wide a variety of subjects as possible and in a wide variety of ways, and to give appropriate credit for experiences outside of school; to do this it is important that teachers have a knowledge of more than the education system in which they are caught.

Our traditional method of teaching encourages memorising, answer-centredness, apparent learning and 'getting by' in place of real learning. The aim of the teacher should be to give the pupils the love of discovery and finding knowledge for themselves. The teacher should be honest and sincere in his desire to impart to children the joy of discovering for themselves and must try not to be an alien and superior being to them. Children are naturally motivated to learn and find out about the world around them. We often hear the older generation today saying that there is a lack of motivation inherent in young people but in fact it is more a loss of motivation and can be partly attributed to the structure of our schools and the expectation of children to learn exactly as the school expects them to. In young children there is a chance of adults destroying the intelligence and creative capacities because of making them do things they do not find of any interest or use to them. These capacities can be especially damaged by making children afraid of not pleasing, of not doing what teacher wants, of making mistakes. This can make them afraid to gamble and experiment. There is a danger of children feeling that what is worthwhile is what is taught and that if it is important to learn something it is necessary for someone to teach it to them. Often we can see a struggle going on in the classroom; children are expected to respect their teacher always and to accept mindlessly that he is right. Children are forced to take the views of their teachers and often not enough acknowledgement is given for their own personal discoveries and interests; the significance of incidental, casual and informal learning is often ignored.

There is also a danger within our school system of keeping all children at the same level. It is certainly more educative for them to discover for themselves at their own pace and to choose for themselves what to investigate than to be dictated to by anyone. The definition of a successful life is different in each individual child and he will learn specific skills and mental operations only when he is ready and cannot be hurried. Most teachers have a very rigid idea of what a child should achieve in a particular subject at a particular age. It is expected by our system that a group of thirty to forty children of the same age should have the same interests and developing skills at the same time, which is obviously going to cause some children to be repressed from learning and cause others to misunderstand and miss out on that particular piece of learning. It is, of course, very difficult for the teacher to successfully aid each child to achieve its full potential in the direction most suited to it in our classroom environment.

There is also a danger within our system of education to structure the curriculum totally towards getting a job when the student has to leave the educational establishment. Education should have little to do with the work people will do, "education is for living, not earning a living." People must be able to structure their leisure time in a way beneficial to their future well-being and happiness. The technological era we are in means society in general has more leisure time and it is obviously important that they fill it in a useful way. In order to do this it is important their interests and activities are as wide as possible and to facilitate this our education system should be structured differently and not be entirely work orientated.

Within our education system there is also a tendency to make people look at our government as the only possible way; it assists in making people conform. We are often led to believe that schooling and book learning are the only way to get on in life and the only worthwhile thing to do.

In conclusion, I think it is vitally important for our teachers to be facilitators of learning rather than instructors and should act as a resource for a student to turn to when in need of advice. If a teacher could pay careful attention to the individual child rather than to the group and respect his individuality and self-development this is bound to react well in later life. Education should be more concerned with forming people to lead worthwhile lives in whatever way they see fitting for them. It should form the general public to help alleviate the injustices and inequalities of our social system. Education is a life long experience and takes place everywhere. When dealing with children we should all remember this and assist them in development at every opportunity in every way and not leave education to the schools.

Education

Vera N. Bailey
B.A. in Humanities,
Secretary to the
Senior Counsellor,
Open University

It is my belief that in this country we offer a very good standard of education to our children and, if they have help and guidance from their parents, children can achieve good results. Obviously the children themselves have to put in some hard work along the way but so many of us do not realise the importance of learning and studying hard for our examinations until later in life.

In my own experience I have no complaints about the standard of teaching at the schools which I attended and I did get quite good results up to 'O' level. But my parents were not able to afford to keep me at school past the fifth form and were of the opinion that further schooling was wasted on a girl who would probably get married and have a family. So I left school at 16 and got a job in Local Government.

My husband was sent to a boarding school and was very happy there but at this school it was left to the boys to decide which lectures they attended and there wasn't a careful enough watch kept on their results and, therefore, some of the boys, including my husband, did not reach a high enough standard to actually sit the 'O' level examinations in subjects like Mathematics and English. He, too, realised far too late just how useful it would have been if he'd had those precious 'O' levels. The fact that his parents were not terribly interested in his education was not the only reason he was sent to this particular boarding school but was also another reason why no-one complained to the school about the fact that some of his results were not of a very high standard.

In both our cases, therefore, it was because we hadn't received the proper advice and guidance from our parents (and the boarding school in my husband's case) that we didn't really do as well at school as we could have done. It was for this reason that when our two sons began their education we tried to give them the encouragement that we hadn't had. They both progressed quite happily through infant and junior schools and then on to Sutton High School where they both chose to stay until sixth form and to go on to university - one going to King's College, London, and the other to Southampton University. I don't think that either of them has any regrets as they have both enjoyed university life and learned a great deal from it, not only about the subject they were reading but also about life itself. Unfortunately even a degree doesn't necessarily guarantee them a job but they have got more to offer a prospective employer and with so many people looking for work at the moment the employers are getting far more selective.

I've worked for the Open University now for five years and in that time I've seen hundreds of people trying to get their degrees later in life and finding it very difficult to manage this as part-time students and whilst trying to hold down a full- time job. Others are realising that the reason that they are unemployed is because of the lack of qualifications and some of these people have therefore got plenty of time for their studies but very little money to pay for their course fees and set books, etc. We should try to make sure that our children are given the advice whilst they are at school which would prevent so many from missing the opportunity of going on to university if he or she so wishes. We should make sure that each child gains as much knowledge from school as he or she is able to absorb and therefore leaves with as high a qualification as he or she is capable of reaching. Hopefully there will always be places where people can go on even further and increase their knowledge just as far as they wish. From our own experience at the Open University there has been an explosion of interest in adult education courses. Our first aim was to offer people the opportunity of studying towards a B.A. degree but we have found it necessary through demand to offer Community Education and Continuing Education courses in a great variety of subjects. So people do not only want to improve their job prospects but some want to use their spare time constructively to learn a new skill for their own pleasure.

Education in our schools in future years is obviously affected by government policy and the economic situation but we must surely all hope that if there are any changes at all it will be for the better and that everyone will be working together towards even higher standards and more opportunities for the young people.

Martin Edward Baker
Former Attendant,
Plymouth City Museum
and Art Gallery

With regard to our educational system, I would like to start with our school education.

If you would have asked me some ten years ago what I then thought of school education, I would have said without a shadow of a doubt, THE BEST IN THE WORLD. But over recent years, due to shortsighted people in our system and the greed of a percentage of its staff, the educating of our youth is starting to go backwards, with the integration of schools putting up their attendance into the 1000's with classes ran by one teacher in some cases doubling. How can one teacher give the attention required to its students? My final comment on school education must be the private school, is it not time that everyone (and not only those born with a silver spoon in their mouths?) had the chance of this exclusive system.

It is not for me to say how we are to make the changes required to bring back an educational system that is second to none (money is the obvious big divide), then again that is why we have highly paid puppets in our councils. It is time we brought the people with money and the people without money closer together.

I wonder how far some of top politicians who brag they come from working class backgrounds would get if they had to be educated today. But school albeit the most important part of our education today it is still only part of it.

Museums can be very dowdy places but a great deal can be learnt if the time is taken when wandering around these places and in Plymouth there has been a great deal of time and work spent on one of our museum houses which I think has made it one of the most interesting in Devon and with several other large houses around this area which are well looked after with all the artefacts of their periods in prime condition make Plymouth in my opinion the prime historical area in the country.

It is such a pity that the main museum and art gallery in Plymouth cannot ensue the same enthusiasm from me. With council spending very tight and getting tighter if something is not done to brighten up this museum and to try to split it from its pathetic art gallery it will remain as a lot of visitors have pointed out to me (boring with little to look at) and comments about the art gallery like "I would not give these pictures the light of day" and "What a waste of wall space" - some comments I'm afraid I couldn't put down on paper.

Let's bring in some dinosaur skeletons and treble the size of the natural (or un-natural museum as someone has put it) for the smaller kids, and have a futuristic section. Because not only should the main museum deal with the past, but look to the future as well.

I know all this will cost money but after all we are here to serve the public and the public are the ones who are paying and at the moment I don't think they are getting value for money from these sections of our museums.

I hope by the time this picture starts its rounds someone will have started to sort out the main museums.

One section of education all around the country has gone from strength to strength - our social education. More and more effort is going into entertainment so our younger people can get out and meet others with different creeds and ideas with the hope of some sort of relationship at the end, with discos, night clubs and coffee bars springing up around everywhere, and reaping the profits from their vast expenditure. One area of our social education I do have a comment on is with regard to sex and video shops. Why courts refuse licenses to these shops because a few prudish people disagree with them is beyond me. After all sex is one of our major pastimes when we grow older and for people to think that if younger people see sex books or videos they will turn into Jekyll and Hydes is just stupid. After all we came into the world naked.

I feel if the same effort was put into other areas of education as has been put into entertainment our education system would without doubt be the best this or any other country has ever seen.

My final words are on the item I was asked to select from the museum. These three birds are called "The Conspirators"; every time I see these three pretty beasts I think of three politicians cuddled together in a dark corner deciding the fate of the world.

The State and Education

Malcolm Baldwin
Former Student at
Sutton High and College
of Further Education

In the British educational system there is an emphasis upon the teacher that he/she must always be correct. This is highly understandable because they have their pupils' futures in their hands but the fact is that once they are given this pressure, along with the status of elder and better, they generally abuse it by not listening to their pupils. This rigidity often leads to mistakes. The people being educated are rarely allowed to state complaints of a major side. They instead are forced to endure mistakes by stubborn teachers. Qualities of teachers are often highly below an acceptable standard. Some teachers are weak willed under pressure whilst others allow no freedom of expression whatsoever. Many teachers have actually lied about grades to join schools. It is also often the case that teachers retire through old age and stress and then return. This is despite the fact that it is physically and mentally beyond them. I myself have had to endure all the constant changing of teachers, often near 'O' level and mock exam times. I have had no less than ten changes of French teachers and three changes of Physics teachers, including three who had not fully qualified and were on a trial period; one of these was further replaced during an exam period.

Often because of this poor standard of teaching pupils lose all faith in the academic system. Pupils are often made to work at subjects they do not fully understand or do not know the purpose for such a lesson. The only motivation given is the ever constant warning of unemployment hardships, that the only way to work is to attain good exam results. This is in effect no motivation at all for the pupil who has always been secure in academia. The actual education is made to keep at a set regular pace. In reality the only way to motivate a person to work is to either stimulate his curiosity and will to learn with a thing of interest or to appeal to his creative side; they must then be channelled creatively so as to successfully induce individualistic results. As education stands today the balance of intellectual, physical and creative lessons are all wrong. We are currently brought into a basically craft inclined atmosphere at the age of five while the teachers work at building up the intelligence and leaving children to their own physical challenging. Then they are brought into a junior school where education is suddenly forced upon them. The arts are just touched upon each subject and physical sports are made more challenging. In senior schools all emphasis is upon intellectual subjects and practical crafts such as woodwork, metalwork and electronics; the arts are just briefly used because they are deemed unnecessary for today's society.

The educational system has been geared almost totally around the examination grades achieved. Although the grades were originally designed for being able to pass into University, they have been taken up by employers to judge as if they were qualifications. Because of this all of the schools have deemed it right to work upon qualifications as solely important so that today a person's whole career is now summed up by the grades on his paper. An aptitude for exams bears little relevance anyway upon his educational skills. Some of the most intelligent men in history have been useless at exams. It has been said that if Einstein had lived today he would not have been given a good job. People react in different ways to exams; while some thrive in the atmosphere, others freeze. The pressure induced upon the pupil nearing exams has made many people ill. Many nervous compaints arise around the age of sixteen. The whole system is in fact more suitable to the class distinctions of earlier in the century and keeping people in their social classes. Moulding them into the sort of citizen governments prefer. The laws like the one that religious education must be on the syllabus of which most is concerned with Christianity, also the assembly to teach about the system when at school. The F.E. and night school system is good to aid those who wish to learn but the comprehensive system should be totally altered; as for the college and university I have had little experience of full time college and none of university so I believe it best to leave the subject.

The bureaucracy of the system is totally absurd in places as schools often turn heating off in winter to conserve heating costs and during summer when the bills are met they turn on the heating.

The equality desired in the educational system cannot be produced if we continue to teach that our way is better and not teach about other cultures. Lessons with a sexual bias should be introduced to both sexes at once. The important subject of sexual education should be brought down to the age of nine, because sexual influences do begin at about this period.

The whole purpose of education should be changed. It should not be to produce an acceptable citizen for the society, but to make a person more aware of his or her surroundings and stimulate their own learning process so they will have a greater understanding of the situations. They will then inevitably think more creatively to get on in society rather than just becoming automatons.

David Ball
Social Worker
People with
Learning Difficulties

I have spent sixty percent of my life involved in something called education, as a recipient. Its contribution to my personal growth and development, however, is infinitesimally small. True, at some points it has played a small part in shaping my persona, the social vehicle of identification, and yet other things, outside of me, have played a larger part in its formation.

So many things in the past have been a waste of time, a negation of life. Yet education stands out as the greatest waste. It might be comforting to say that I hated it, that I reacted against it and that it provided an impetus for something better. The truth is perhaps much more damning than this, for it made me feel nothing.

As a recent optimist, I thought that education might have changed for the better, but generally I see no evidence for this. It still seems to remain a process of marking time, of enforced childhood and dependency, which meets the needs of 'adults' and not 'children'.

On a very simple level, it seems to make life much tidier and easier for parents who care only enough to conform but who cannot be bothered to produce change and development themselves. Slightly more complex are the needs of the educational bureaucracy itself which are much greater than just pupils and teachers. Any bureaucracy tends to be self-perpetuating but attempts are usually made to conceal this general truth. Educa- tion does not seem to even bother with this masquerade. It is quite brazen in its process of self-perpetuation.

During my time at school it seemed that education was largely a means to an end, the latter being defined largely by the unfulfilled, and often warped expectations of parents and other adults involved with oneself. I held a secret, unpopular thought that mass unemployment might alter this. With no end in sight, education might become a thing in itself, for itself, something to be lived through, not afterwards.

Perhaps this will happen eventually, when teachers and those who manage education recognise that the goals of education are now mythical, not real. However, I do not believe that education will change itself, nor can I see a general attack upon it from elsewhere. The sniping attacks of others much better equipped and more motivated than I score very few hits on such a massive, but largely unseen opponent.

My own education entailing periods when I really did learn something took place outside of any formal provision. For periods of time I lived with Marx, then Jung. I learned about the outer and inner worlds and tried to bring together theory and practice, so that one informed the other. In essence they were periods when the self was engaged in the process of life and living, of learning and acting.

At those times, education did not take place in a vacuum, and furthermore it met my needs over and above those of anything or anyone else. In the land of welfare state fascism that is not an easily tolerated proposition. In fact it would seem that anyone who tried to inject life into education is either stamped upon or effectively neutralised by the army of moral police which is made up of teachers, and people like myself, and most adults in general, the weapons in the war to achieve uniformity and conformity.

Sometimes parents and children do attempt to free themselves from the educational straitjacket, and they do this most successfully by quietly opting out. Sometimes we can protect them and allow these shoots to grow. Policemen can successfully collude with criminals.

Sometimes as well, we can break in to education and allow children to look out through the entrance of the burglary or inwardly at themselves, but like any other organism, education has an effective immune system and foreign bodies are surrounded and neutralised and destroyed if they stay too long.

In a lengthy experiment with a local school, we were allowed to 'socially educate' groups of young people so that eventually learning about oneself and the world became part of the timetabled curriculum. That seemed to produce some relief, and at times, even excitement, but in general our biggest enemy was in- ertia, whether hereditary or conditioned.

Certainly some people, and I would include myself in this, are prone to, or have a tendency towards passivity. The way that education is organised, and its dominant ethics both produce and reinforce this tendency. Children seem to be viewed as dependant lumps of clay who need to acquire knowledge and skills to become, if not complete, at least functional. This places teachers in a very powerful position because most people accept this hypothesis. In that sense there are many parallels with the positions of doctors, and to a lesser extent priests.

This is, I can see now, an elaborate confidence trick. Knowledge, skill and enthusiasm for life cannot be implanted. They are there already. They need to be drawn out. However, because they are ignored or suppressed, we produce stunted travesties of human being who in general have little faith in themselves, but a great deal of faith in the 'experts' of the social order.

For children to avoid this at present, they need bravery, either personally, or from their parents, or if

they do not possess this, they can, with extreme luck, be labelled 'extremely disturbed' and enter some of the

more interesting and pro-life experiments in education at the fringe. Locally, the school at Kilworthy comes to mind as a place where young people can pursue learning themselves whilst avoiding the expectations of most adults. As it is, nothing much is expected of them anyway so they are freed of many of the burdens which bind other children to the collective mass.

In adult life, similar opportunities seem to be afforded to those who 'go mad' for they are freed of most 'normal' expectations and are forced upon an often long, and frequently painful journey of parental expectation. At least they are afforded the opportunity to <u>feel</u> something deeply. Perhaps it is this which our educational system can least tolerate - that is the discovery of real feeling. Education uses intellect as a barrier to feel- ing and not as a vehicle towards it.

My Thoughts on Education

Mrs Judy Barnacle
Former Governor,
Southway School

Education and learning have different definitions in the dictionary, but to me are intertwined. We start learning from birth and continue throughout our lives until death. Education or training starts young: as children we are trained to eat properly, to talk correctly, to go to the toilet and dress ourselves, etc. But formal education for most in this country starts at the age of 5 when our children start school. Some will have become used to numbers of other children through playgroups, mother and toddler clubs and nursery schools, but for many when they enter infants' school it will be the first time they meet with a lot of other children. They have to adapt to others' needs and wants and learn to do what the teacher tells them. It's the most traumatic time for all, whatever background they come from, having to accept discipline and correction from little known adults. From my experience, the majority enjoy their infant schooling, learning to read and write, and playing with things they never had the chance to use and do in their homes, a great new experience. At seven when junior school is reached, it's becoming more serious, the greater part of school time is spent in learning and not at playing, but is accepted. By the time they are eleven and at senior school, most children have long ago accepted the fact that they have to attend school and do the best they can if they are to pass exams, which might or might not help them to get a job.

The majority of our children do want to work and most want a job that will interest them and use their minds, but with the state of the country now, some know they might never have a job. But I still believe that very few give up before they even leave school. I think they hope. So now not only do the teachers of our young have to impart knowledge and skill, and prepare them as far as possible for exams, but also try and prepare them for likelihood of rejection and no work. They have a difficult and demanding profession, the teachers of our young, and because they have the future of our country in their hands for many years, they should be chosen with great care. Only the best and dedicated should be teachers and to get the best, we should make certain they have good conditions and salaries. I don't agree with the current teachers' strike, but the situation should never have been allowed to get as it has. Our country's future, our children are in the hands of the teachers, we must do the best for them and in so doing, it will surely reflect on the youngsters.

The change in education has been great over the years, with the raising of the leaving age, changes in exam systems, and types of schools. One of the major changes I deplore is making the schools larger, I don't believe larger is necessarily better, in most cases I think not. The facilities might be more and better but the effect on the individual I feel isn't. Children can get lost and fade into the background in a large school; that doesn't happen in a school which is of a size where the teachers know all of the pupils. I feel that smaller units get better results and have a happier atmosphere because of the greater sense of belonging.

A lot of parents go through financial hardship over several years sending their young to private school where the actual school might be large, but classes aren't. Because smaller numbers are taught together, individuals have a greater chance, and the academic achievement is usually better. In this way, although these schools are the privilege of the rich, some poorer children get a better chance of a good education than others. I'm not saying all state schools are bad, only that there appears to me to be a greater advantage in the private sector because of a larger pupil-teacher relationship.

I hope against hope that we aren't approaching a time when it will be only the rich who get a decent education, because with all the cutbacks, places in colleges and universities seem to be progressively less available. Even in the state system, more and more has to be paid for by the parents, and as some just haven't got the money, is it going to be a case of only the rich and talented and intelligent that will get on? If so, it will be very bad for this country's future. I know of two cases of talented children from working class families.

One, a boy accepted as a chorister for a famous Cathedral choir, whose parents couldn't get a grant to help pay the fees. The grandmother moved in to look after the family, while the mother worked full time to pay for the boy's education. The other case, an 11 year old girl passed for a ballet school, and again no grant. But this time there was no grandmother, so the girl couldn't accept the place and develop her talent. It would have been a great financial strain for the parents with a grant, but without, impossible.

We all know there isn't a bottomless pit of cash available, but the education of our young is of the utmost importance now and always. To develop the talent and intellect of our children is a must, the future depends on them.

Education

Darren Barnett
Former student of Psychology
Currently Youth Worker
To be student of Ideas, Religion
and Culture and Modern English

The best years of your life? Fiction spread by people, whose view of school is clouded by the years or who've found themselves in even worse situations. Maybe for some it was good - a chance to be top that they haven't achieved again, Captain of the team or the school psychopath, acclaim that disappeared at 16.

For me school was bad, mostly boring, forced to mix (as little as possible in my case) with people you hated and feared. Failing the 11-plus was the worst, when everyone assumed you'd go to the Grammar School like your Dad did. "You don't want to go to the High School, they're all yobs there" and then suddenly you're in it.

I felt stupid and inferior for much of the time, being in the first sets was no consolation, I just felt like the worst in the class. The only exceptions were English and R.E. which I found interesting in part. Coming from a church primary school I'd had lots of experience picturing the life of Christ, and I found reading easy and pleasurable. The only suffering I found in those classes was being read to at an unbearably slow pace, although it was conducive to day dreams. Mostly I imagined being the sole survivor of nuclear war or a great flood.

I felt it was an experience in alienation, I made no real friends in secondary school, I got along with my 'class mates' when I had to but saw none of them out of school. My time out of school was spent with two friends from primary school who shared my taste for escape in comics, films and playing God over an ant's nest.

The best thing attending school did for me was confirming my belief that I didn't want to be part of the conventional system. At age 15 I was attracted to the handful of punks in the school, feeling they would sympathise, a unity created by being different from the mass and presenting a visual appearance to show it. I tried too hard to become part of that group but was never really accepted, and even became, for a short time, the target for 'hate mail' from some of them. I found that attack devastating as it added to my negative feelings about myself and my sense of aloneness.

I passed my 'O' levels with C grades and the minimum of effort, joining the 6th form after as it seemed the easiest path. By then I had perfected avoiding the crowds which I found so oppressive. I would arrive at school at 5 past 9 so most of the kids would already be in class and I'd leave early whenever I could, disappearing for large periods of time after registering in the morning.

For some strange reason I was made a Prefect and Social Secretary of the 6th form. I managed to avoid doing one prefect duty, there was no way I wanted to walk 'round the school at lunchtime shouting at kids. I enjoyed being Social Secretary though, booking parties in a local night club that turned a blind eye to the fact that we were all under 18, the snag for me was I didn't enjoy the party once I was there.

The actual educational contents mostly escape me now. A Maths teacher that was too clever and failed to understand why others couldn't grasp the subject; an Economics teacher who could easily be diverted into talking about anything but Economics. English teachers who seemed to decide I was awkward and argumentative in order to irritate them.

A continuing horror in my school week was the Games lessons. As one of the slowest and least physically fit kids in the school I found them humiliating and they were made worse by sadistic and stupid Games teachers who seemed to take great pleasure in embarrassing kids. I used most of my ingenuity to skive the lesson. Dentists' and doctors' appointments always coincided with the lesson and my Dad would leave the date off any excuse note so they could be recycled if they weren't collected.

Hiding from age 5 to 18, avoiding pupils and teachers, an initial need to appear average replaced by a desire to be different. Not super smart or dumb, my education showed me just what I didn't want and maybe I should be grateful for that.

something even odder. When the water was drained away, they just lay there, as if saying: 'Oh God, not again!' And they would prefer to die rather than go off looking for water.

Rubinstein and Best were baffled by this behaviour, and one of them came up with the extraordinary suggestion that maybe the worms were bored because they had learned too easily. The other said: 'Don't be stupid - how can they be bored when they've got no brains?' However, they decided to devise an experiment to test this hypothesis. What they did was to take a new lot of planaria, and to use two tubes. One of the tubes was made of rough plastic inside, and the other was smooth - so the worms could tell the differences with their stomachs. In the rough plastic tube, the water was down the lighted alley-way, and in the smooth plastic tube, the water was down the dark alley-way. They then transferred the planaria from one tube to the other between experiments. This 'double ambiguity' principle was far more hard to master, and only about one third of the planaria succeeded - as compared to about 90% of the previous lot. <u>But that third never regressed</u>. The experiment could be repeated a thousand times, and still they made straight for the water as soon as the tap drained the tube. In other words, they <u>had</u> got bored because they had learned too easily. The result is that the learning had not got through to the 'subconscious' mind of the worm, where it sticks.

The basic principle seems to be obvious. Real education is something into which you put your total attention and enthusiasm.

I suspect this is what W.H. Auden meant when he told a friend of mine, Hugh Heckstall Smith, that the aim of education was 'to induce as much neurosis as the pupil can stand without cracking'.

Some Thoughts on Education

Margaret Bate
Head Teacher,
Salisbury Road Infant
School and former
Devon County President
of the National Union
of Teachers

The dictionaries define education as "the bringing up - as of a child", "the training that goes to cultivate the powers and form the character", "systematic instruction", "Education forms the common mind".

Since my training college days I have been more interested in Education, note the capital E, and find S.E. Curtis' "History of Education" my reference book as to why what happened when. His writings, of course, are general but thoroughly researched - yet one has to compare some general happenings with the particular ones experienced personally.

My own working class background necessitated good performance at school. "None of us had your opportunities lass, so you mun do your best."

No anticipation of my getting a Scholarship Pass to High School. Non-one in the family had EVER done so (and my cousin was denied his chance because of the inverted snobbery of his parents).

Great family discussion, "Can she, can't she, shall she, must she?" before it was finally agreed that I could go - financially blessed by joint wages of my uncle and mother - and dressed up by the generosity of donated clothing coupons by a now- proud family.

Incidentally - they are the sort of folk who went to evening classes for carpentry, car maintenance, to make up numbers so that deserving lads wouldn't lose out on instruction by classes being closed.

If I thought Primary School an alien world, full of children while I was the only child in an interested family of seven adults living in one house - then High School was a SHOCK. Scholarship was a dirty word to some of the long-established teachers. Panic if and when we got best marks in the class, anxiety if we showed more than promise in the sports field, agony if we produced remarkable art work.

By our second year we scholarship girls took over the upper two classes of the three stream year.

Up to VIth form diligently kept up to scratch doing homework by a family who couldn't understand the use of Latin or the need for French (and who adamantly refused to let me learn German!) - but which appreciated 'book learning' and commended application. Geography was remote, history was past, "Learn from its mistakes. Find out what went wrong. Progress is positive."

Once School Certificate gained, on to work in a Nursery School. Second VI studies not economical - war years had taken their toll in many, various ways. Was further education at University or Teacher Training College worth the cost - or the final product? Again good common sense prevailed over the family purse.

At College I realise that we were all accepted on our own merits - all equal - no class barriers - just recognition of worthwhile effort.

A church college with a lot of sympathetic history, the child being considered before the subjects taught. My goodness, methods of teaching were thoroughly expounded and reasoning given by experienced tutors who had comparisons to offer.

We all worked hard. Those students experiencing unease, anxiety or lack of interest because they had chosen wrongly were given utmost counselling and were advised of their best future.

Some were 'weeded out' after the first term - something unheard of these days when it seems that ALL students who choose to teach are encouraged to last the course - and come out as TEACHERS. Those with unsocial habits and those who defied the rules laid down by authority were expelled. Our manner of dress was criticised, shorts (only worn for games) had to be only two inches above the knee.

Teaching practices were extremely well prepared and monitored by our tutors. The visited schools were staffed by willing, helpful teachers. I have remembered with gratitude the kindly assistance and try to do the same for any students coming my way.

Yes - education has changed. We were given detailed programmes, precise timetables, a strict (narrow) curriculum and definite targets in almost every subject.

It may have been a little restricting to those who wanted to experiment - but if you did show an excited willingness and a genuine need to individualise then a co-operative headteacher usually let you try out new ideas.

Criticism was expected but the blessing of a successful trial was a great bonus.

Present trends leave too much valuable time to experimentation and I really doubt whether there is a full and true assessment of projects and their contents. Time does not allow.

It is not sufficient to 'do' a FARM project just to itemise a list of animals one can see there. Even a reception class can be taught animal sounds, family names, natural foods, natural environment. The maths side can compare sizes, amounts of food eaten, space needed for natural movement. Art/craft - tactile, rough, smooth, colour, camouflage. Science - food, growth, pelts, feet, mouths. R.E. - most domestic animals are

mentioned in our scriptures. Use the Bible for reference. Stories, poems, drama - unending availability.

But once projects take over the school - and that can happen so easily - one must monitor the progression of teaching and learning.

It is so comforting to get good results - but are they at the price of much repetition? So boring for the children. Advance is the motto.

The one thing I notice particularly in schools these days is the complete lack of genuine curiosity. The early days of Infant Inquisitiveness seems to get dampened down before the children arrive in school. Such items as different coloured and shaped roots of trees, a box of nuts and bolts, photographs of past and present views of local places - all placed at the children's level, get ignored by them.

In Science we fabricate experiments for the children - monitor and mark the results. Of course there is need for such definition, but oh! for the opportunity to watch an impromptu session of children experimenting for FUN.

A visit to the Devonport Gun Crew Run should encourage the construction of crane, pulleys and winches. But does it? We are all so aware of the need to 'get through the syllabus' - being answerable to society for results. Who ARE we answerable to? Goodness knows - but the guilt feeling is always there, that we aren't doing 'something' for 'someone'.

The curriculum is so wide that we teachers fear we cannot know sufficient 'in depth' of all subjects. We teach the basics and some embroideries - all worthwhile knowledge - but do the children learn? Surely they should WANT to. Life is an excitement; it should be enjoyed.

An elderly uncle of mine, denied 'school learning' by infantile illness and leaving school very early - was a mine of self-taught education. He was always alive to everything around him. The names of flowers, colours of leaves, flight of a bird, changes in nature, the propagation of plants, the care of animals. He learnt because he was interested - and that is why all children should learn.

Some things need to have interest encouraged - it can be arranged. It is never too early to introduce a definite teaching point.

Quotes I live by:

"A good foundation is the core of good education - don't undermine infant education by undervaluing it."

"Every child possesses a creative spirit and our job is not to teach creativity but to stimulate and nourish what is already there."

"If one is not prepared to take the opportunity - make sure it is presented to others."

"Many things we can wait for - but not the child. Now is the moment in which his bones are formed, his blood is constituted and his brain developed. We cannot answer his tomorrow - his name is Today."

"The more talents are exercised the more they develop."

"Mothers and teachers hold their children's hands only for a while, their hearts forever."

"The growing point of education is in the classroom."

"Teachers must be sensitive but not expiate to society."

None of these is to be taken lightly. The hidden meanings require thought.

Child-centred learning in the right hands produces confident, happy children with a steady improvement of standards, knowledge and application. But it needs to be in the hands of experienced and able teachers. There are lazy children.

Teachers are given libraries of books to read, learn from and implement.

We TRY to comply with all the modern trends and follow the blueprints for each ever-expanding subject.

I have often been told that my heart overrules my head. It may - it probably does. It is a common phenomenon. The world of education is wider - the opportunities of learning are immense - the demand for expertise is emphatic. NOT for us the leisure to let the child learn from osmosis.

If a child-centred interest is to be encouraged one often has to plant the core of interest. A good teacher knows when that is necessary and chooses the moment.

To my Teacher

Put learning in my way, then stand aside
to guide my footsteps.
But do not push.
My steps are small because my legs are short -
and there is so much to see that you have seen
but see no more ... too bad.

When I have travelled all the roads through
books up hill and down
my head will overflow with so much knowing.
Don't make me go too fast to see and heed
this lovely world.
Let joy keep pace with growing.

Education - Privilege or Right?

Dr Roger B. Beck
Staff Tutor in
Science for the
Open University

During the 35 years that I have been concerned with education, initially as a customer and then as a provider, it has come to me that one of the problems we have in education is the number of people complaining about how bad the education system is, instead of identifying the good things about the activity that is now there for all. Such complaints tend not to be productive in the educational sphere of activity, but no doubt do produce welcome boosts to the battered egos of those who make them in an attempt to forget lost opportunity. My own educational experience is probably similar to theirs in starting at a standard county primary school and then continuing at one of those now outlawed institutions - the grammar school, which required passing the oft-maligned eleven plus examination. Whilst still at school, I attended night school and day release during my last year, and then having missed university on the first round of application, crept in by the skin of my teeth to a London university college, whose charter had just been changed to allow admission of male undergraduates, and in consequence, was desperate for people! Having survived the rigours of being one of thirty men amongst 900 women, most of whom were not of the predatory type, I then went to what is, in my opinion, the pinnacle of conventional universities, namely Cambridge, to do research for three years. I can therefore claim to have experienced as broad a range of educational institutions and methods as most of my contemporaries, and possibly a lot more than some of them. On the basis of this range of experience as a customer, I am convinced that education should be regarded as a privilege shared between teachers and fellow learners, and not something to be debased by being claimed as a 'right' alongside social security and free school milk from a reluctant establishment.

As a provider of education, I have taught in a college of technology, and in a conventional university. I spent five years with the Workers' Education Association as a tutor organiser in a 'deprived' rural area - North Devon - although the deprivation was largely identified by those seeking it from outside with the jaundiced eye of the problem seeker. Currently I work for what is one of the greatest unconventional educational bodies ever established, namely the Open University. My experience as a provider therefore is such that education must be regarded as a generally shared privilege and learning experience between those at either end of the piece of chalk, but still we are surrounded by the notice-seeking, drum banging, 'education is a right' brigade (or should it be left brigade?), whose major contribution that I can see, is to so distract people from the true act of learning that the original objectives of education are long forgotten.

The Concise Oxford dictionary suggests that privilege and right can mean one and the same thing, and seems to me therefore, that those concerned with education, and in its widest definition this means all of us, would be well advised to keep this firmly in mind at all times. With the advent of the Open University and countrywide interest in all other areas and levels of continuing vocational and non-vocational education, it is quite possible for anyone and everyone to participate in the experience of learning. The argument used by the drum banging right brigade are twenty years out of date and it is now possible for everyone, regardless of income or station, to extend their mind and alter their lifestyle.

One is led to suspect that the 'education is a right' brigade are possibly too lazy to extract themselves from their pits of righteous indignation to take the opportunity that is there for the seeker of knowledge. Today, therefore, it is becoming less necessary to adopt the traditional view that all education has to be pushed rapidly into peoples' heads during the formative years of their lives. This view led to the situation whereby a kind of national lottery took place to establish those who 'got educated' and those who did not, and the criteria for success were to say the least, difficult to establish, and there was no proven common denominator to the so-called privileged class who got it. However, one suspects that some of these people who did not get it would not want it given the chance, even if it were wrapped in tissue and presented on a silver salver.

This has therefore produced a race of people who regard themselves as educational have-nots, but really are educational don't-wants who are still affecting the learning situation today with their incessant bleating. Many people today, despite the bleating, are able to see the range of opportunity available to all, and more and more people are taking this privilege which is there for all. It is the small men who continue to whine from all levels of society who prolong the confusion between right and privilege in education.

Lorri Bein
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Humanities, College of
St Mark and St John

Education is a ticket, or it should be, but sometimes it feels as if the benefits of travelling are nowhere in sight and just the hassles are present. If there wasn't a destination printed on the back of the ticket I often wonder if I would stick it out. Like a never ending trip on the circle line, lots of bumps, crazies, swerves and an occasional glimpse of light - only no return of your 50p.

No immediate return is the catch. College is a phase - a stepping stone to a part of life which is considered the 'real' bit - the life of a working woman. A working whatever. College is not real. We are not preparing to be adults here - simply whiling the time away - learning how not to get our work done, spending our psychic energies devising ways not to be responsible. This is more the phenomenon in England than in America - although there is definitely an element in both.

It has been quite a shock, this year I've spent in England. The students are much more politically aware than any I know in America. My eyes have been opened up a good bit to things not made particularly visible in American society. But along with this awareness also comes the conclusion that they can do nothing to change the fact that college is in fact a futile effort. So, as the typical American student doesn't mind what's going on in the world around him unless it affects his allowance - he also has the knowledge that he will graduate and get a job. This creates a feeling of competitiveness not present in the British system.

For me - I've found the competitiveness of my university at home was an integral part of my education, and also an invisible part - unfortunately, one I can't do without. True, I feel no pressure here, but I also find I don't do anything academic until the last possible minute and then it's a half-assed attempt. But I don't mind because all around me, my peers are doing the same thing. So, I find I do not learn for the simple joy of learning. In fact, I find material covered boring and unmotivating. I'm not surprised the English students I've met are as uninterested as I am.

I have learned enough about myself and others to make this year here worthwhile. But the real kicks is the exorbitant amount of money I pay to remain in the education system here. I often feel that since I gain nothing from my classes here and have learned mostly from my contacts with other people and travel that the #1000 a term that comes from my pocket is very ill spent. It almost makes me sick how they feed off foreign students and offer nothing academically exciting in return. Surely, they must realise that the attitude of the average British student will eventually be recognised and assimilated, creating an environment where little work or anything productive in relation to the future is being done. I am glad that I will be returning to the American system after this year, where I will resume the effort not to be unemployed rather than extending the years until I am.

John Benions
50 years a Steiner Teacher
One of the founder Members
of Wynstones, Gloucester

Rudolf Steiner's Art of Education is based on the understanding of the human being as described in his World Outlook, Anthroposophy. A renewal in many branches of work and knowledge has resulted from what he had to give, and Education is just one. Medicine, Movement as expressed in Eurythmy, Architecture, and many more could be cited.

In the six thousand or so recorded lectures, not to mention his many books, he shews how Man is a spiritual being, using a material body to carry out his actions upon earth. The spirit, or Ego, incarnates gradually from birth until at the age of about twenty-one, it has reached a certain completion of this process. He shews how at each stage it has achieved another milestone and then how the subject matter dealt with must be appropriate to this development. And, which is equally important, how it must be offered to the children, who by the way are grouped according to chronological age and not according to intellectual achievement. The teacher also modifies his approach according to the temperament of the group he is addressing, for he seats his pupils in the four groups, Choleric, Sanguine, Melancholic, Phlegmatic, keeping the Sanguines just in front of him, as they are the most likely to be distracted, and can be most helped by his nearness. The Melancholics, on the other hand, prefer to be somewhat towards the back of the class. Each temperament has very special gifts, also dangers if allowed to go to excess, and Rudolf Steiner goes into great detail on these points, as indeed he does on all aspects of his work.

To return to the incarnating of the Ego; we see the first manifestation of this in the child's efforts to stand upright at the age of about one. The animal keeps his spine in the horizontal position; only the animals highest in the scale of evolution approximate to the vertical.

At the age of two the child begins to speak, stringing words together; and at three he utters the word, 'I'. Previously he has referred to himself as 'baby' or 'Tommy', as if he were outside of his body and pointing to it. Now with this word he speaks as from within. It is however not until the first three times seven years have been fulfilled that the 'I', or individuality, has completely settled into the human organism. Dr Steiner details this gradual development in his many lectures, pointing to observations we can make to verify what he says.

Then from another point of view he describes how Man consists not only of Body and Spirit, but between them he has an organisation of life forces which he calls the Etheric Body, and the Soul, or as he sometimes terms it, the Astral Body.

Just as the Ego comes to its fulfilment at the age of 21, when it should be prepared to face the world and play its part in it, so does the Astral Body or Soul reach a point where it has settled ino the Physical at the age of 14; the outward sign of this being the change of voice and the onset of puberty.

The Etheric Body achieves this settling in at the age of seven.

Because the forces of the Etheric Body are required later on to be used in thinking, a Steiner education delays the teaching of intellectual subjects till after the seventh year. Should we use them for this purpose before that age we are depleting the physical body of its full potential and depriving it of much needed life force in the later years of life. The pre-school class has so much to do in the way of activity and art that these strengthening pursuits more than fill the time available.

When the child comes into the first class of the school proper, around the seventh year, he comes under the care of his class-teacher, who takes the first lesson each morning. He knows that he will have the same children for the next eight years for this first lesson each day, and that he has a certain curriculum to cover. But how he chooses to do it is for him to decide. In those eight years he has to make an introduction to all the academic subjects, and many more beside, e.g. Farming, Housebuilding, Astronomy, to mention but a few.

His aim is to interest the children in life, and develop their social qualities, as well as solving some of their deeper problems, which could easily be missed where a change of teacher took place each year, if not more frequently. In the time that he has he gets to know his children intimately, a necessity if one is to be able to offer the maximum help. After the first lesson the children have their specialist teachers for the other subjects, such as Languages, Gymnastics, Eurythmy, Handwork, Woodwork, Singing, Art, etc. - and so have the opportunity of meeting all the teachers in the course of their work.

Lest it should be thought that a class teacher might give an excess of the subject he most favours, the way of working amongst teachers keeps a check on this. There is no head master. All the teachers work as a college, even sharing out the various responsibilities such as finance management, buildings, timetable, etc. to those whom they agree are most suited to discharge them. Each Thursday the whole college meets to discuss children, business, etc. and to study a lecture of Dr Steiner. In this meeting when the work of a particular class

comes to be discussed, any shortcoming on any subject becomes obvious, and the specialist teacher who will be responsible for that subject in the upper school, that is when the children are fifteen and over, will be the first to point this out, and see that it is rectified.

For when the children reach puberty at 14 the main lessons are taken by specialist teachers, each qualified in his own subject.

The main lessons in a Steiner school, that is the first one each morning lasts for nearly two hours, and the subject is continued each morning for two, three or four weeks at the direction of the teacher. In this way a continuity of interest is maintained, and the time of two hours, because of the way in which the lesson is taken, is often not long enough.

Man is a threefold being in his make up of Thinking, Feeling and Willing, and an equal emphasis, or greater on one or the other according to the age of the child, is the secret of a successful main lesson, combined with a knowledge of, and a working with the temperaments.

So the change of teeth, about the seventh year, is the signal that the Etheric Forces have completed their first task of rebuilding the body structure, as medical science also points out. The child then enters Class One of the school proper, and the three Rs are gradually introduced. In the first year or two the child still lives strongly in his Will, and so the more intellectual work only works up to a crescendo in the latter years of the seven to fourteen period, when the thinking, because of its early protection, now becomes strong.

The middle two or three years of this seven year period is very much an expression of the Feeling life of the child. It is the time when the 4 to 1 rhythm of blood circulation to breathing is stabilised and the child is very sensitive around these years.

Rudolf Steiner in his many lectures shews how some physical or psychical change accompanies the passing of the years and how and why the various subjects should be introduced at that particular age.

The upper school should go to age eighteen, when the external examinations can be taken if required.

Perhaps the best way to convince oneself of the results of a Steiner education is to meet some of the senior pupils who have been fortunate enough to have had that education throughout - of course, children can join the school at any time - or better, perhaps, to meet the old scholars who are now taking their part in life. A practical experience of this description is far better than any theoretical claim I can give.

Dilemmas in the Education System

Ron Billings, B. Com.
Governor, Southway School

The current education system could be said to have its prime base in the Education Act of 1944. But since 1945, and the post-war period, we have experienced in this country, changing legislatures and changes in the opposed dogmas (by successive governments of Conservatives and Labour, in our two party system) have resulted in an education pattern that is generally patchy and, overall, unsatisfactory. The establishment of the comprehensive concept most favoured by Labour governments but adopted, too, in some Conservative controlled areas (e.g. Devon) for some years since 1945, has not yet, it seems, proved itself beyond doubt; but more on that later. The grammar schools system based on the 10+ selection test structure has, in some areas, survived, albeit, in other areas, alongside a comprehensive one, whilst the public schools have continued and positively thrived, against the other systems, where money was available to parents to enable them to opt out for their children. The Labour objective that all children in their education should have the same opportuni ties to achieve the highest educational point, has not been achieved due to the political conflict and its changing fortunes under government controls which has brought about the patchwork system referred to above. No government has tackled decisively the grammar and public schools continued existences, consequently the situation is much more chaotic, perhaps than it was in the pre-war period up to 1939. The comprehensive system in essence would appear, as it were, on paper, to hold the answer to a system that could provide equal opportunities to all children but it does not have seemed to have fully provided such a state. Moreover, the period of trial of that system did not prove anything absolutely conclusive and there are still Conservative controlled authorities who are not convinced of its possibilities and consequently, the grammar schools and public schools survive and produce, in the main, the greater number of those young people who get to Universities and especially to Oxbridge. Thus, up to the present, the desired equality of opportunities in education are not an absolute fact.

It seems probable that, leaving out the so-called preparatory schools for pupils, up to the age of 10/11 years, the majority of our children achieve a reasonable standard and equalable education. It is after 11 years of age that the variations in opportunities occur.

To turn back to the comprehensive system, it may be that the concept of a school engendered to cope with up to 2,000 pupils in one unit is not, thereby, an optimum one since, it seems, after a total of pupils, perhaps 5 or 600, the required administrative, resources provisions and controls, tend to reduce in effect, directly in proportion with such increases in totals. In addition it seems that discipline, perhaps one of the most adjacent matters to pure education, lapses at the same rate. And it follows, that the theoretical advantages of the comprehensive system are bedevilled by these sort of adjacent factors. Vandalism too seems in incidence, high. It might well be that middle schools and 6th form colleges, thereby splitting up the comprehensive concept, may well provide a better solution. Numbers would be reduced in units thereby increasing individual attention and discipline. The 6th form colleges (age groups, say, 16 to 19) could be organised on a type of campus system with a nucleus of practical education sectors and a grouping of social colleges on the same campus, each containing numbers of manageable proportions of children and young people. Certainly the present organisation of education appears wasteful in manpower and other resources, hence the present efforts to reduce costs that have incensed the teaching staffs and resulted in union actions, are not in the interests of pupils nor the system.

There seems no doubt however well intended are the various dogmas and concepts, our present education system is deficient in a number of ways and seems unfair since private money can still give advantages. Perhaps it is time for the setting up of a Royal Commission on Education to examine in detail the present deficiencies, and find a way to a more equitable and satisfactory system that will give our children reasonable chances if they have the wills to take them.

Meanwhile, staff, parent teacher bodies, Governors and the local education authorities must endeavour to make the most of a bad job in effect. The right curriculum, prudent use of resources, reasonable staff attitudes and regard to achievement of discipline that may well have fallen in the comprehensive systems, are all items that need attention until such time that better parameters for our education system can be discovered and proven.

Backward into the Future **Beth Blackshaw**

It was a prerequisite for the continuity of the Victorian aristocrats' social position and Imperial glory that they had control of the intellectual elite - in order to defend their greed and extend their grip.

English education is still trapped in this 19th century mould of what it is to be educated. This anachronistic system was devised to create a loyal elite that would ensure the continuity of the British Empire in mind and in deed. This has carried over into the present days but by this spreading of nationalistics, distorted and class based views, it is damning its youth to a backward, narrow, self-defeating perspective.

Both the written and unwritten rules of this elitist system were intended to ensure the eternal continuity of the Empire. They did not envisage that the whole Empire would collapse along with the pride during the next half century, but their system would and does endure.

The system itself was cruel and narrow, designed to thrust minds into colonial sized boxes, narrowing viewpoints with a zealous glee. The educators, directionless and looking for a cause, were easily caught up in this doctrine and, in their womb of security and ignorance, recycled these beliefs from hiring to retirement, continuing their rehashing of untruths even today and dangerously so - for the survival of Britain.

As a result of this past-obsession, Britain is decaying and behind the times. It depends on an intelligent adaptation to the present but this requires an acceptance of Britain's fall from eminence and domination of 'backward people' who in many cases were socially more civilised than Britons ever have been.

But the shortsightedness of Education, the stupidity of the ruling class and the dream filled resignation of most Britons to their fate, prevents the removal of this anachronistic conditioner of youth, this stumbling block to truth, inspiration and action.

But if nothing is done, little can stop the slide into insignificance and backward dreaming down which slips the talents of Britain.

Lyn Blackshaw
Former Headmaster
Dartington School

I am only interested in self-education that is life-long. As an educator, I am able to help people towards that goal while developing my own talents.

In visiting over a hundred schools in England, I have met some rare and amazing individuals among staff and pupils, but I have never known an entire school that, in my eyes, was truly educational.

After speaking with hundreds of teachers, teachers in training and senior pupils in schools, I have rarely encountered people who did not feel threatened by the presence of a person (child or adult) who was an unashamed free individual, rather than a conforming member of some peer or social group.

Most so-called educational establishments merely echo and support the existing power structure and promulgate the prejudices and attitudes of principle and sub-groups in today's society.

For schools to justify their existence as educational centres, they could be analysing the basis of power, prestige and wealth and questioning it. They could be leading their members towards a refreshing examination of the social attitudes that block the development of the individual.

For a school to be educational it should stop segregating young people as if they have some contagious disease. It should welcome people of all ages into the school and encourage young people to live and work alongside others in the larger community who are different from them. A school (and that includes much of further and higher education) should stop putting education into a separate box and trapping in it people from five to twenty- three.

For schools to continue, they could concentrate more on the continuing life education of the teachers. For any institution to encourage the flowering of the individual, all of its members could benefit from being interested in their individual growth and development.

To encourage true individuality, which is the freedom of the individual from the ghosts and restrictions of the past, the adults must feel free from their own inner neurotic knots; other wise the same mistakes will be perpetuated.

For a school to foster excellence, its adult members must be dedicated and committed to the use and development of their own talents.

For a school to encourage creativity, then the grownups in that community must be excited by new ideas, able to explore the unknown, and say, enthusiastically, "Yes!" to Life. For an educational institution to be adventurous, then the staff must be able to take risks, leap at a challenge and not go to pieces when they cannot control what tomorrow may bring.

Faced with the lack of sense of achievement and satisfaction among many young people in these artificial institutions, many adults might turn either to further repression or to an abandonment of the adult role; both are equally anti-educational. It is through the model of the creative, risk-taking, open, honest, generous adult, able to make loving intimate relationships and able to be unpopular without feeling inadequate, that children and young people grow in self-confidence, start to realise their potential and eventually surpass the older generation who are their role models.

Yvonne Blumenkhal
Parent

Our society today governs that children attend school from the age of five years at a state school. This is the conventional attitude, but from a personal view I have found it difficult to agree with. Firstly, because I think education has started from the moment a child is born. Secondly, a child who is eager to learn, and able to mentally absorb and actually enjoy being taught before the so-called 'school age', is being deprived of a place at school; formal learning should not begin at the age of five. Thirdly, I think that a child with a higher than average intelligence is frustrated, bored and can even become destructive, if he does not have an opportunity to channel his energy productively.

I believe that children could and should be capable of attending school from the age of three. Luckily, both my children were able to attend a small school with few pupils to each teacher from about three years. This made an enormous difference to each of their characters, and both have such individual personalities, that from my point of view was and I hope will be of great benefit in moulding them towards a more stable and happy life. For example, by the age of five years, my daughter Natasha was able to read virtually fluently, and write her own stories without prompting. Sums, such as adding, subtraction, multiplication and even division were within her grasp, and her confidence shone through. Conventional teaching at that level would not have commenced until after the age of five, which proves my theory that children can develop and learn before their fifth birthday, and they need to be encouraged.

I find it very hard to grasp that not enough emphasis is made on pre-school facilities. Toddlers seem to be shunned and frowned upon in public; I feel this attitude to be very prominent in England, whereas Mediterranean countries are far more flexible in their approach towards children. They are made to feel wanted and liked. In my opinion children should be treated with respect.

There are not enough opportunities in state primary schools today, such as learning musical instruments and languages. It has been proven that young children learn quickly and easily. So many years are being wasted. I do think it is important to cram in as much as possible as early as possible without confusing youngsters. They do have such amazing memories, and as they get older it seems to slow down; some children even lose interest as they get older, and simply do not want to learn in the confinements of school. And for this reason I believe that there should be an alternative. There should not be a fixed leaving age, for these children who find school an unhappy event, they should be steered into new environments, finding out a skill that will interest them. Unfortunately, although my own experience regarding my own education was a happy and very varied one, it was not in any way beneficial to an interesting and fulfilling career. I realise now that from the age of about thirteen, subjects that were compulsory would be of no use to me. Actual lessons about life in the big wide world were non-existent. Reality was not a subject. I now see that school cocooned me. In fact leaving school was a traumatic and depressing event, because after so many years of having a regular timetable week after week, a way of life, that after the final exam everything came to an abrupt end. Far more emphasis should be made on life after school for people who are not yet aware of their vocation. This is the problem with the system at the moment, this is why the unemployment figures are rising dramatically, because school leavers have not been steered into an interesting career.

Education is important, but I do feel that the English class system categorises people and makes it impossible for everyone to have an equal opportunity, unless they are very intelligent, or very determined to succeed.

In the end I think life is the biggest education of all. Contentment and happiness cannot be taught at school, only life itself does that.

Some Views on Education as seen through the Eyes of a Music Teacher

Denise Bowden
Viola Tutor,
Devon County Council

Music teaching is so different from other branches of education, and it is important to generate with greatest care the extremely powerful means of communication through music, and to equip young people with a lifelong source of satisfaction. Perhaps it would be wise to remember at this point that education nowadays is not entirely limited to the young - we have our evening classes and other similar adult teaching sessions. Whilst the approach may in these circumstances differ, the end product is the same.

Training and discipline are most certainly needed for the performer and composer, and it may be said that there is no specific need for preparation for the listener to music. The latter may be true, as humans instinctively respond to music and rhythm, as is seen in reaction to the heavy beat of pop music, the fre- quency of which is not very different from the human pulse - a step further from the unborn child's early percussion lessons from his mother's heartbeat.

I feel though, that, whilst people can and will respond to this and other sorts of music, some training is necessary to appreciate music at greater depth. Even an animal can respond to musical sounds and we deserve to respect the greater capacity of human emotional and thinking powers.

How often does one hear the remark, "I wish I had been given the chance to learn music as a child!", or "Would that I had persevered with my music lessons!". A parent speaking thus might give his children more encouragement and chance than perhaps he experienced. I think that no adult in our supposedly educationally-orientated world should need to make these remarks. Parents do not need to pay vast sums of money for the privilege of private instrumental lessons for their offspring. All children could benefit if music at all levels of education were not treated as a poor relation to other subjects. By all levels, I mean-even in the earliest years of life. Parents and playgroup leaders should be more aware of adding musical knowledge and skills, both visual and aural, to the upbringing of even the youngest children. They are encouraged in the fields of numeracy, writing and artistic skills, but all too often not in music.

Children learn by absorbing naturally what is surrounding them. Music can so successfully be used in games, colourful books and other suitable material. The aural side is even more important - most people can sing - and there is some good music on tape and record specifically designed for the very young. Children need to be taught an awareness of music.

Not all children attend playgroups, and the latter are not in business to educate their charges, but I have not experienced one that includes music in its morning activities. With so much parental involvement in these organisations, hopefully some could assist the leaders in a musical sphere.

Unfortunately even primary schools all too often let down the children musically. Whilst some are first class, others are variable or useless. Primary education comes at such a wonderful stage of eagerness in the mental development of children. They respond with joy to what is presented imaginatively by properly trained teachers, who can be assisted by much well- designed material. Development of concentration, rhythmic awareness and awareness of variation of time can be fostered by means of experimentation and example.

By the time a child reaches secondary education, they should have acquired some sound basic skills of notation and appreciation on a limited level, upon which high standards and a growing critical ability may be built. Not all children will like classical music - why should they? - but whatever they play or listen to can be appreciated with knowledge. These children are informed and critical and will at least be able to decide what music is good and what is of poor quality.

I have experienced schools where music appears in the first year as a class subject, with no proper syllabus. Thereafter it is 'dropped' until after Ordinary Level examinations, to reappear as a means of occupying, occasionally, those children who are unlikely to be bright enough to attempt Advanced Levels. Even in schools where music is taught after the first year, it is unlikely that any real form of syllabus is in evidence. What a limited view of education - and how many schools are guilty of this limited view? Are we not educating children by means of information? If part of this education is withheld, then they are not fully educated.

The young specialise so early nowadays in the subjects they think will help them in their future careers. My own children are, at the ages of 13 and 14, having to decide which subjects they wish to 'drop' from their curriculum. They hardly know anything at this age, let alone whether they wish to cease learning any more! We are told to expect more leisure time in the future. We should therefore think of musical education as part of equipping children to live fuller lives in these forthcoming days. They have to learn to avoid becoming idle cabbages. Perhaps one day my hopes will become reality!

In all teaching of music, we must do more than convey just the mechanics of musical education.

Particularly with individual tuition, one must literally strike the chord of understanding with pupils. One cannot convey the soul of music to someone with whom one is not in 'tune', or encourage them to develop the required discipline to raise their performance to the highest level of which they are capable. To carry this further, having established a good relationship with a pupil, through music, one has a great chance of assisting the pupil in some other aspects of life.

Music has the means of stabilising the otherwise disorderly mental processes of some humans, and one can see the benefits of the work of a musically-trained teacher of the mentally handicapped.

As a teacher I experience great satisfaction in training a gifted pupil. I am also rewarded seeing the love and appreciation of music as experienced by the less gifted mortals, in whom I have had the privilege of sowing the seeds of this love.

John Bowen
(Banger Bo)
Visiting miner

In my personal opinion the standard of present day education is very poor indeed, there are many reasons for my opinion. The main one being that the formation of large centrally located schools do not have the feeling and friendliness between teacher and pupil which usually occurs in small local schools, usually they have so many pupils that they are unable to involve themselves with individual pupils which I think is very important as this encourages the pupils to involve themselves in their education, instead of being impersonal, faceless types of character who is merely regarded as another number in the register. In the modern day large schools, discipline is very important but sadly, today in many schools this is regarded as an old fashioned prin- ciple, many teachers complain of unruly behaviour, but many of the teachers have the wrong attitude towards their pupils, especially as many teachers think that by humiliating children this is punishing them, but my opinion is that you cannot get respect and understanding from someone unless you respect and understand them; also many teachers are unfair in that they do not encourage the slower pupils to work harder but ridicule them in front of their classmates which has a damaging effect on the pupils' morale, which in turn affects the standard of work, which creates a vicious circle of resentment and content between the teacher and pupil.

Many modern schools do not encourage their pupils to wear a school uniform, which in my opinion is very important, as by wearing of a uniform weaker pupils more equal and have a pride in their appearance, the appearance of many teachers today leaves a lot to be desired, how can teachers expect pupils to be clean and smart in appearance when many of them do not set a good example. In spite of all things mentioned a good reason for a good education in today's youth lies with their parent's attitude and encouragement towards the education of them. Many of today's parents seem to have a carefree attitude towards their children and cannot be bothered with their children's educational and personal problems. A child and pupil should be able to discuss any educational problems but sadly this is disappearing along with many other important things.

Society also has a major role in today's education, many pupils feel that a good education is worthless because when they leave school they have no hope of finding a good job.

When you are a pupil you are told that if you work hard and leave school with a good education you will have a good prospect for employment, but sadly today many pupils are all too aware of the economic situation of this country and the mass unemployment which accompanies the situation of today, so it's easy to see why many of today's youth have no heart for education and think they are wasting their time at school.

Long live Scargill, may he reign for XXX many years.

Ian Brhall
Supply Teacher

The education system in England and Wales is probably the best in the world and its importance in maintaining a stable and mature society cannot be overstressed. In a society faced by greater competition for jobs of all descriptions it is more important than ever for our educational establishments to get the most out of their pupils and help them fit into and take their place in society. To this end I must express regret at the passing of the tripartite sytem, the allocative functions of which were far more efficient than the socialist conception of the all-in school which has taken over most of the country, though, thanks to our councillors, it is still retained in some form in Plymouth.

There is no question that the distribution of ability is uneven in society. Why try to paper over natural differences which only re-emerge in a comprehensive with the resulting rounding down of standards? Some kids are more intelligent than others, some are stronger, etc. and it is the job of the education system of the country to prepare its future workforce, inculcate the right values and allocate the school leavers to their appropriate station in the economy and society.

To do this, exams must be maintained and I would counsel against any further disguising of differences with the adoption of the GCSE in two years' time. Employers must have some credible and accurate measure of ability, more necessary now as applications exceed vacancies so markedly.

To make sure all pupils have as fair a chance of success, children must be streamed and settled into teachable groups of similar ability. If you adopt an "all-in" procedure, the bright ones will be held up, become discontented and counterproductive. How can they be helped when being taught alongside the thick ones? During the war, we always used to recognise the speed of the convoy was the speed of the slowest ship. Well, that would totally waste the ability of the quick ones who would remain permanently unextended. What a waste of resources!

Unfortunately, since the days of war and with full employment in the '60s, the expansion of the teaching service saw the recruitment of teachers who thought of themselves as social reformers. There seemed to be attacks on what was to be taught, the discipline system and the whole organisation of a school. Uniforms and rules were abandoned or changed beyond recognition, subjects like social education (nowadays personal, social and moral education), sex education, sociology, politics and other keyhold and commonsense subjects were being taught. When in 1975 Sir Keith Joseph competed with Mrs Thatcher for the leadership of the Conservative Party, he wrote that one of the things he wanted firmly re-established in Britain was belief in "The Family". Now we all know how social standards have fallen. Divorce is rife, many kids' names don't coincide with parents' names on reports and the modern school curriculum seems to condone all this. Now perhaps he will see to it that traditional values are reasserted and headmasters should be appointed on a pledge to see that this is done. After all, who pays their salaries?

When parents tell me that their children come home saying they've had media studies, world studies, sex education, etc. I can sympathise with them. Media studies is an excuse for letting children watch the box all day. World studies? Why should our kids learn about that without first finding out about their own back yard? Surely sex education can be left to parents and doctors - it only promotes promiscuity and adds to the profits of sexy shops, thankfully due to close in Plymouth soon.

Perhaps the most disturbing slide in standards is in the problem of discipline. The simple truth is that it doesn't exist. If teachers use the stick - which never did me any harm - they can be taken to courts and successfully prosecuted. Kids talk in class, answer back, don't do homework, chew all day and are generally noisy. And they've got too much money.

Unfortunately, there's too much emphasis on this pastoral stuff, treating troublemakers as if they were misguided and in need of treatment (when a bloody good beating would have done!). The woolly approach of courts and an emasculated police force don't help either. The church is playing a less conspicuous role. One wonders where our youngsters will obtain discipline if parents continue to ignore their obligations and governments fail to restore power to the courts, teachers, police and other officials. Perhaps the Govt should consider the unmentionable - not employed in Britain since 1960 - conscription. With all the unemployed plus the discontent surrounding Youth Training this might be a cheap effective answer though politically unpopular amongst the wets.

It is important for everyone in power to remember that what they allow to pass for education today will be reflected in future values. Too much social claptrap, the teaching of bright kids alongside the dolts, the absence of any real assessment and the absence of any firm disciplinary hand will produce a population of normless, dispirited, aimless, idle adults ... and imagine what they will be like as parents and imagine how their

children will turn out? I am afraid that by tolerating anything and everything, explaining bad and often criminal behaviour away as being the result of deprivation and so on will lead to an anarchistic society which will be beyond salvage ... so it is up to teachers, politicians, employers, churchmen and even the social commentators to get round a table and sort out with the Education Secretary a plan to restore the good and right things in our education system which have gained the system's good reputation over the years, before it is too late.

I woz ere DRJB '87

David Brown
Former Student
B.Sc. Biology
Plymouth Polytechnic

I was here with cramped fingers and shavings of dry desk dust, boring inscriptions of boredom into the wood, scratching the gnarled surface until my excavations never would accommodate my boredom.

I was here head in hands and a world in my head that I would not admit the old bastard at the front into. I was plotting rebellious acts of wit. I was working hard to produce the fantasies that could be used as excuses for the work I was not producing. I was here with more ink on my fingers than on the page.

I was here, staring out of the window; the breeze playing with the litter and sparrows playing with the breeze, and a tempting freshness teasing my face: in a too stuffy room with a too stuffy teacher stuffing us with too stuffy things. And forever five minutes to the harsh chime of temporary freedom; five minutes of trepidation because homework was due and I hadn't done it. Anticipation of the challenge of delicious insolence - I could look teacher in the eyes and tell incredible lies as if they were Godsown truth. Scientific facts, surreal prose or whatever suited the subject.

I was here, fascinated by the sharp sarcasm of a hated teacher, or the twinkling eyes and bushy beard of one I admired, and gazing at the chink of hope between the buttons of the drama mistress' blouse. All the time I had as much enthusiasm for their preachings as they did themselves.

I was here before I ever carved my name as an expression of self- frustrated. I discovered poetry as a means to escape the slow words of text books and essays. I received poor marks for writing poetry rather than essays, but at least they did not criticize the poems, and here I was free.

I was here in detention, in inky resentment.

I was here in examinations, proving my worth to the percentage boundaries of a statistical curve.

I was here in college, a brave new world afraid of its own shadow. Indifference and aggression of teachers metamorphosing into nonchalance and sadness of lecturers.

I was here with drugs in my bloodstream and never so engrossed. I was not here because there were more fascinating and important things elsewhere. I was here with after-effects and listlessness, behind with my work and falling into despair and the imitation relief of more narcotics.

I came expecting to be pushing back the boundaries of human knowledge, and found myself training to be a lab assistant. I guess I should have known better.

At the end of the first year, my coursework "did not reach the required standard". Not knowing what else to do started again, and five terms later came examinations.

"Under achievement" has been one of the principles I have always lived by, but sudden, utter failure was a new and terrible experience. I would stare at my books and call them senseless, and after a suitably studious length of time I would watch television to a sensible hour, then retire to bed and dreams of more fulfilling intellectual exercise. And on every examination morning I would walk calmly down to the fresh horror of my stupidity.

So here I am in my place amongst the generations of desk borers, with a message of hope and despair for desk borers to come. They would teach you the dread of the mind that is their own! So carve on until the desk collapses, or the bell rings, or the teacher goes for a well deserved cup of tea and a breakdown.

Do this in my name, for I was here.

Sarah Brown
Former pupil, Public
High School for Girls

I did not enjoy my secondary education; in fact, I hated it.

It was a small, private, single sex school about half a mile from my home. From the start I resented being sent there, all my friends from primary school were going to the local comprehensive. And that's where (I thought) I would be happier.

So I went to this school at eleven, totally resentful and rebellious from the start. It seemed so archaic and old fashioned, the way it was run, the strong Catholic beliefs, the way they forced religion down your throat. That's why I think I am a total atheist now, and will not give religion a chance.

The nuns who taught us irritated me too. They were obviously narrow minded and lived in such a closed way. The whole school environment was like one small protective world, living in total seclusion to the real one.

I hated the discipline. It was my opinion, at this time, that they took it too far. It seemed to run on rules and principles devised for school in the earlier part of the century. Somehow it didn't seem to be of the 1970, 80's era. We had to file everywhere in lines, stand up when the teacher entered the room, etc. Everything had to be just so.

It's not that I think discipline is a totally bad thing. And having also been to a comprehensive I don't think a complete lapse of discipline and respect is a good thing. I just wish there could have been a happy medium, and there wasn't, at least not in my experience.

Some parts of the school were o.k. You were at least a person, with a name, and a personality, not just a number, like in larger schools. Some of the teachers were good too. They gave you individual attention and really pushed you to fuller achievement. The nuns also, in their strict, austere fashion, were caring and kind.

If I hadn't have been sent there I don't think I would have come out at 16 with 7 good 'O' levels. At that age I was more of a waster, and more inclined to be lazy and mess around. But I feel I have lost or missed out on some part of my youth.

I don't disagree with private education, although some people think it unfair that money can buy a 'better education'. And I can see their point. What I dislike is single sex schools. It leaves you totally unprepared to mix with people of the opposite sex. Either you go completely mad when eventually you are thrust into a male populated world, or you are so wary of men that it takes years to relate to them as ordinary people, like yourself.

There was good and bad in my school life, but I did not enjoy it and was quite unhappy. My attitude made it worse, and also the fact that I was persecuted to a certain extent by people from the comprehensive up the road. I think it has subdued me, too. When I went there I was brighter, happier and more 'free'. Now and ever since, I am too controlled, restricted and conscious of what I do. Whether my education is to blame, is open to debate.

Jottings on Education

Sister Kathleen Bulley, S.N.D.
Head Teacher,
Notre Dame Comprehensive

Notre Dame is a school founded by the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. This society of religious women was founded in 1820 by Julie Billiart, a French peasant. It grew from a profound concern for girls who were destitute and deprived in the time after the French Revolution. At that time, Julie's concern was to provide young women with a means of livelihood and to share with them her appreciation of God's goodness.

Today, the education given in Notre Dame schools continues the work of this woman.

In the late 20th century providing young women (and men, too) with the means of livelihood demands teaching the accepted skills of numeracy, literacy, communication and modern technology. It means helping young people to equip themselves for rich and positive lives in today's society, this demands a basic and real acceptance of the value of each human person in the knowledge that she is unique.

Working with the home, the school community is the milieu in which the young are initiated into the inheritance and culture of the society in which they find themselves, and in the case of Notre Dame, the rich inheritance of Christian belief and culture. It is a group which lives, works, studies and prays together.

Schooling and education are often accepted as synonymous, yet this is not so. Schooling is often systematic, regimented, standardised: it can be the tool of politicians, philosophers, theologians, sociologists, industrialists, or economists. It can be based on methods which have clearly defined objectives as their aim. It can take place in an academic factory in which measurable and clearly defined success is the sole purpose of its being. Examination results are still the measure of good schooling, in spite of all the lip-service paid to personal development, education for leisure and character training.

We must admit that schooling and politics have always been closely aligned. The altruism of 'education for all' was forced on Britain in the late 19th century by the rise of industrialism and the need for men who could succeed in business, and thus contribute to the status and power of the British Empire. The structures of society, the types of schooling offered at each level and the freedom to participate in the process were controlled by status and finance. Political ideology still directs the schooling of children, and recently, economic pressures have been more overt.

It is difficult to educate in today's schools. The imparting of knowledge, the induction into social mores, the acquisition of marketable skills are so time-consuming that fewer and fewer resources are available for real education. The demand by society for more and more knowledge, higher and higher examina- tion grades (often called 'standards'), and specialised technical knowledge, narrows the field of pupil experience, individual research, personal interaction and creativity.

The work ethic whereby a person achieves his value by his job, his pay packet (or salary), his place in the hierarchical management structure and his power of production, militates against the Christian respect for person as person because he is intrinsically of value.

Education should consist partly of the objectives of schooling listed, but is so very much more. Each person has unique gifts and talents waiting to be stimulated and developed by environment and society. Education should provide these opportunities, these experiences, these contacts. It should awaken in each person an awareness of her own latent powers of every type, and help develop the confidence and self-image which is necessary if these gifts are to flourish. Education should develop real individuality and self-respect. A sense of wonder and gratitude to God for these gifts, together with a sense of responsibility for their use, places which education within Julie's basic appreciation that 'God is good'.

In an age where might is right, where the majority decide and rule, where bureaucracy dominates the individual, such education is suspect and even judged anarchic. Those who have shown themselves prepared to stand as individuals are admired and feared. Ghandi, Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King and Solzhen- itsyn are such figures of contradiction.

If Christian education develops the individual, it must also consider the society in which it operates. Mutual help, sharing and upbuilding are of the essence. However, this does not mean a cosy closed society which withdraws from planetary problems. Pious platitudes are of little use in a world faced with pollu- tion, starvation, oppression and the prospect of holocaust. Education must sensitise individuals to these evils, and students must learn to use their talents and powers to face them. Whether it be through political, economic, legal or financial action, involvement is necessary. The goodness of God can be communicated not only by caring, nursing, cultivating and distributing, but by those who set up businesses, learn management, research and trade. It is not so much what is done but how it is done. When such activities are based on true respect for persons and are directed to providing the means for others to fulfil their humanity, we see true education.

Education is a lifelong development, schooling is not. Process is the essence of education, not aims and objectives, as in schooling. It is not quantifiable or measureable whereas schooling is becoming more and more so.

Education and schooling should be complementary and mutually supportive. I suggest that they are becoming less and less so.

In a society where power and success are respected and failure unacceptable, the message of Christ which is one of fulfilment through 'failure' seems ill at ease. But what else is Christian education but this?

Karen Byrne
Parent and ex-product
of the British education system

The long, dark corridor. A feeling of tension, vague nausea. When the pattern had been set, the indoctrination complete.

Fear still bitter in my mouth after fifteen years, just with remembering.

'Up through the wood,
Down to the water's edge,
Sitting in the reeds,
There's Cherie's date with death.'

My imagination faught hard, the more "they" tried to contain and shape my existance.

'At the witching hour
Wait until the stroke of twelve,
Then a figure all in black,
Glides up to the water's edge.'

During an English Literature lesson, I had begun to write a poem. Not the word I would have used to describe, at fourteen, I would have called it thoughts.

The teacher was a balding man in his fifties, who enjoyed twanging the bra straps of young girls far more than explaining Emily Bronte. We were reading "Wuthering Heights". The way in which it was presented and enforced producing the boredom. The combination, a catalyst, allowing my mind to escape to other realms, making some use of this waste of precious time, a place to escape to that was only mine.

'Did anybody see her born?
Anybody know just how,
Cherie's perfect human mouth,
Came to kiss the water cold.'

I was caught out, my garden subject to intrusion. To my astonishment, no shouting, no clip round the ear. I was presented with a clean notebook specifically for my 'poems'. Of course he would correct them, make a few suggestions. The book was used to write a few flippant verses, then I told him I wasn't interested in 'poems' any more.

'They' would not control me that easily. My thoughts were private, my only stronghold. 'They' interfered with my freedom, had me jumping to their rules. I wouldn't go over to thier side so easily. I had put up a vicious fight so far.

They had changed tactics, so could I.

First day at school. Four years old. Resignation. Frustration, terror. Why do they keep on screaming? Head aching but I won't cry. When will it be time to go home? It's been so long.

In the playground. Freedom, of a sort. I won't talk to them. Sitting on the top bars of the climbing frame. I won't go back in. They didn't even miss me, dont even remember my name. Shall I run through the gate? Mother told me I must stay. I'll just wait and see how long it takes before they notice I'm gone.

I could be at home now, in the garden with my animals. On the swing singing songs of Mrs Fields and her seven fat daughters, of standing up Cow Land and the Gollesians.

Is this meant to be better than my world? Do I really have to be here forever?

The long, dark corridor, musty, claustrophobic. Siting on a chair waiting for assembly to finish. The sounds of discordant hymns wafting to my ears. The so called 'naughty ones' pretended to be more tone deaf than they actually were, a giggle working it's way up from my belly.

Mr. King skulking around heard my involuntary chuckle, leapt at me like a rabid serpent caught me by the neck threatened and shook. He knew my little game, had seen through it all along! Only needed him to mention a few words and I would be in with the rest for assembly - who did I think I was anyway, everyone else was in there.

I tried to prise his fingers off, shouted obscenities. He was not in assembly - I did not believe in any religion and was not going to recite the Lords Prayer so he or they could feel superior.

I had done it now, his face grew red with anger, he would make it his business never to let a day pass without some trouble for me. My head was full, I panicked. I screamed, piercing and shrill, had to escape, I kicked his leg. He floundered. I ran, slowly, legs like jelly, people opening doors to see what had happened, I ran faster, reached the light. The sun was shining in through the window. I would show them, for making me feel this way. I picked up a fire extinguisher and hurled it through the window, the force of the throw echoing the strength of my feelings.

Now I would get what I wanted. I would leave this place.

So the struggle started again. Only this time I was expected to explain myself. I was not allowed to hide away. I felt the push and shove of authority even more and I thought, I would never get out alive.

However after a time, when my personality was dissected, categorised, listed, they tired of me, moved on to more interesting, newer experiments, and I was allowed my anonimity, my only escape.

When I left school, I
danced in the High Street.
Manic with optimism.
The dream of freedom
realised.

My little boy is now five years old.

He likes school. I wonder how long that will last? How shall I answer him if he says, "Mum I don't want to go to school?"

Do I say - But you must - it's the law.

What words would best bring to mind my experience of school?

Heartbreaking, soul destroying, horrific, boring, twisted, degrading, de-personalising, fear of authority instilling.

They taught us what we should feel.

We were told what we were allowed to feel.

We were never asked for our opinions, just a parrot fashion reply of the euphemistic, blinkered information we were seduced or tormented to ingest.

Being a square peg in the round hole of society is painful. Instead of being forced to conform, adjust, be absorbed into the many layered quagmire, for which our education system is now defunct, it would have been comforting to know that there is room for all kinds of people. Perhaps I could have found contentment, fulfillment, instead of guilt, and emotions turned inside out - frustration turned to anger - (the language of the repressed?)

The chains still show,
even now.

Secondary Education for All

M.E. Caddy
Headmaster,
Eggbuckland School

If one tries to analyse those influences which have produced a particular personal educational stance, there is a danger of becoming either introspective or unduly pompous. However, for those who would claim to support an egalitarian view of education, both a personal and intellectual justification is required as a substitute for its lack of historical legitimacy. Indeed, the concept of equality of opportunity is far from universally accepted even today and there are always attempts to reverse any progress that has been made.

The three significant personal influences which underpin my perspective of education are religion, a background in the industrial working class and the inadequacies of my own and my contemporaries' education.

As a practising Christian, I realised in my late teens and early twenties that the Bible had to be taken seriously. Thus it became clear that in God's sight there was no difference on the basis of race, social status or sex (Gal. 3:28) and hence Christ's followers would be untrue to Him if they discriminated between people unnecessarily and unfairly. It is interesting to observe that almost all British Christians would oppose racialism but far from all would oppose educational apartheid which has been shown for many years to be substantially class based. There is an essential dignity and equality in man which results from his being formed in God's image. The Christian must attempt to approach his fellow men in the way of Christ, that is, balancing care, love and a firmness in dealing with that which is wrong. Needless to say, one's dealing with others often fails to reach the ideals professed.

A further aspect of Christianity which has a bearing on my approach to education is the assurance that the answers to man's deepest needs exist outside himself. This surrender of one's personal autonomy is, of course, an individual choice and having the information, skill and independence to make valid choices is one of the fundamental choices of education.

The realisation that access to material comforts and wider cultural horizons is partly a function of education was impressed on my mind from an early age. However, it took many years to realise that access to education depended not only on innate intelligence and studious application but on social background and Local Education Authority sponsorship through a discredited procedure called the 11+. The way in which a one hour verbal reasoning test opened doors for me but closed them for equally intelligent friends and relatives has slowly developed into an abhorrence of the whole selection process. Indeed, the discovery that the fundamental research by Burt which underpins selection was bogus ensures that those who continue to justify the practice are guilty of intellectual dishonesty.

I confess that I have not resolved the question of whether selection on the basis of wealth which tends to produce an increasingly divided and heterogeneous society should be allowed or halted. The conflict between egalitarian and individual freedom is difficult to conclude. Is it legitimate to force those who are rich to do that which might be most advantageous for the overwhelming majority of citizens? Access to education based on wealth may be no more acceptable than it does on successfully solving some word puzzles and sorting strange shapes on a dull November morning.

If one accepts that early discrimination is educationally unacceptable, i.e. that all people have a right of access which has neither to be earned nor result from charitable benevolence, then it is important to decide on what education people should be able to obtain. The inadequacies of the traditional academic education, which was often no more than the incoherent sum of a number of examination subjects, is now generally accepted. There is, however, now an insidious trend to limit education to those skills which might be economically advantageous. This attempt to produce an updated elementary and utilitarian education suitable for a technological world is both illiberal and diverse. It is significant that the control of some facets of education is slipping away from the Department of Education and Science to the Department of Industry.

The doctrine of separate but equal has never been successful. In the eyes of society as a whole one of the educational paths will have higher status than others. Reform can only come about by altering the high status track and not merely by improving those less valued systems. It is very easy in a school to alter the curriculum of the less able or younger child. Very little pressure will ensue on a Head who does this, either from parents or the public at large. The introduction of more relevant curricula for those who are already disadvantaged is relatively easy but a price has to be paid. This is the reinforcement of second class education designed to give limited horizons.

Reform of the school curriculum will only come about when we stop pretending that pupils' needs are limited to that which can be loosely described by seven or eight subjects with labels which are generally recognisable. The needs of all pupils must be the starting point for any discussion on the whole curriculum. It

would appear to me that education has the purpose of promoting personal autonomy within a framework, where the needs of others and how one interacts with them is fully appreciated. One man's freedom may well be another's constraint. Education must therefore balance individual desires with collective needs. When such an analysis of the knowledge, skills and attitudes which the young person requires is established, then a coherent educational programme might be arranged to meet it. There is, however, a certainty that such a programme would be radically different from the organisation of learning which is regarded as appropriate today. It is not until we abandon the use of high status, single subject tests as the assessment of who is regarded as educated that a more valid form of secondary education could be established.

The question must be faced, however, who is to control the analysis of needs and the subsequent education which flows from it. The current position is that schools take upon themselves the burden of this task. However, the pressure to conform to what is perceived as desirable in maximising the number of pupils obtaining high results in high status subjects produces a considerable degree of uniformity. We have substituted an undemocratic national examination system for central control of education. The timidity with which Government of any colour approaches even relatively trivial reform of this system, e.g. the joint 16+ proposals, is amazing. We have a highly centralised system of curriculum in this country, which is based on no theory but on the principle that only a limited number of pupils must be allowed to jump over the hurdles at sixteen or eighteen. The demise of the Schools Council indicates clearly a shift of power away from the teaching profession as such and towards nominated and less co-ordinated bodies. However, if the broad outlines of the curriculum of schools is to be produced instead of the present incoherent examination system, then it is most likely to come from a broad based national body. The task cannot be left to politicians alone, nor to teachers, never to civil servants, and the conservative nature of parents would make reform by them impossible.

What of the pupils, how do we give them a say in what they should learn? Should we allow pupils to miss out parts of the established educational programme because they wish to? To what extent should pupils have control over their own destinies?

In order to acquire personal autonomy, it is important that young people have some control over what and how they learn. However, when should one allow a pupil to take steps which will inhibit future development? The balance between freedom, coercion and counselling is one which needs a long debate. Suffice it to say that a programme of essentials plus balanced alternatives may allow for individualism without too much detriment.

My conclusion is thus that English secondary education needs a total rethink. It must move away from the needs of higher education and more towards the needs of individuals and society as a whole. The idea that employment is no more than a means of preparing people for employment should be resisted. We need curriculum led assessment rather than the present assessment led curriculum. If we desire a more homogeneous society, then we need a more, not less, homogeneous curriculum and school system. All pupils have a right of access to education and such education needs funding in a way which clearly indicates the priority we give to the needs of future generations.

Suzanne Caley
Parent; working with
young offenders and
training schemes

According to the dictionary, 'Education' is "systematic instruction, schooling or training, in preparation for life or some particular task; scholastic instruction; bringing up. Educate - Bring up from childhood, so as to form habits, manners, intellectual aptitudes."

For me, my experience of education as a pupil was fragmented and mediocre. The first two years spent in an overcrowded classroom in a prefabricated hut, only divided from another overcrowded classroom by a folding room divider, here the keener pupils struggled for recognition and the quieter pupils enjoyed the anonymity of the situation. Apart from the noise and general confusion of this place, my only other recollection was a huge mental home across the road, where the patients spent their day wandering around a huge field, some making loud, strange noises, occasionally appearing naked, and other times scaling the school fences and landing in our playground.

Following this seven years in a convent where I learned elocution, crochet, how to feel guilt, hardship, and best of all not to question religious issues.

My final five years were spent in one of the first London comprehensives. Here learning thrived. It was an enormous school but managed to remain personal, self expression was encouraged, 'Responsibility is the price of freedom' was the motto. The few rules were backed by reason. Every encouragement was given to learn at any level, there were vast resources. The headmistress was an amazingly strong, energetic woman, backed by her staff and pupils. A black music teacher untaught me much of the luggage I still carried from my convent experience. An English teacher whose voice was poetry would encourage everyone to read endlessly. Here you were given responsibility, support, encouraged in social awareness, a springboard of learning or anything you wanted it to be.

But of course this was at a time when there was money for education. Also employment was a right. Most people had a choice of jobs. But of course the more qualifications you had, the wider your choice was.

All very different from today, the comprehensives now seem to be run by administrators, they seem impersonal, many teachers seem to have no enthusiasm, money is gradually taken out as rolls drop, rather than spent on trying to improve the situation. Many schools seem unsure of their role and lacking in direction. Many teenagers that I come into contact with through my work with young offenders or my work with Youth Training Schemes seem to come out of the education period, totally unprepared for their adult life, they seem completely lacking in any skills. Most can barely read or write, they have no creative awareness, so find it impossible to be occupied in their long periods of unemployment. They have little knowledge of contraception, relationships, how to claim benefit, or what leisure facilities are available to them. I find this sad as they have been unchallenged, whereas with a little encouragement they are keen to learn all those things that are relevant to their lives.

With my own four sons ranging from four to fourteen, who have been to many different schools, because of the fact that we have moved several times, the general pattern seems to be that they learn in leaps and bounds from nought to five, and once at school, they slow down, they all seem to spend most of their time getting involved socially with the other people at school. There is also a conflict between the way I educate my kids, and the way the school does. This is about being competitive. I have always encouraged my own children on their individual achievements and never compared them or expected them to reach certain targets by a certain time, whereas the schools ignore many of the vital qualities they have and push them academically. I feel school is good in the way that it's an opportunity for them to mix with others fairly freely - much learning happens at play time - also it can be a springboard to learning and security. I'm sure that it's more relevant to have a clear understanding of your surroundings and of people, and to be unafraid of expressing your questions and opinions. I encourage my children to try many different hobbies and experiences. They have travelled from a young age, and got very involved in many of the tasks we are involved in, whether it be building or youth work or decisions or whatever is going on.

It is interesting that many people who visit our house comment on the children, saying how capable and intelligent they are, and yet the schools usually regard them as underachievers in their early years. Never questioning the quality of what they're offering, I feel strongly that education is my responsibility, ultimately, and that, given the right experiences, they can achieve anything they wish. Myself, I've found that although the schools I went to have some bearing on my personality and the way I think, it had no bearing on the career I chose, and I have been, in the main, self-taught or influenced by some fairly exceptional people. Also, when I was eighteen and leaving school I had no experience or idea of how I wanted to spend my life, that came much later after plenty of experiences. The thought of someone leaving school at eighteen, then spending three years

at college, then going back to school, to prepare people for life, is appalling.

Education

Alanna Carty
Pupil, Notre Dame
Comprehensive School
14 years old

I think that the government are wasting money on useless schemes like the channel tunnel: the money could be spent on better facilities in colleges of further education, also for improving teacher training courses.

Education is used for many things but most of all helping us to choose a career or job. All young people of my age are now taking their options. I don't know whether the Education Board or our school chose them but they were rubbish.

We definitely need better facilities in secondary schools and in colleges, although they are quite good. I think they need more in the science range and in History. Education is used in leisure such as inventing new games with higher and higher risks. Many of the men from the Education Board are really wierd; they come around asking stupid questions, like what does your mum work as, and where were you born. I expect they are trying to be social but sometimes they are really queer.

We need education and actually I enjoy it, finding out about all the new things around us. It's very interesting to me.

Education

Esther Chapman
Former pupil,
Eggbuckland School;
17 years old

I think education is an essential aspect of everyone's lives. But the system under which it operates suppresses the real spirit behind it. Instead of children learning from an early age how to communicate, survive, and become complete individuals, they are weighed down with exams, preparing themselves for a working life, and not breaking rules, and the teachers are so obsessed about how much money they're earning, and keeping the children 'in line', that they forget what the children actually need.

At the age of sixteen, children leave school, able to recite french verbs, and regurgitate simultaneous equations, but they are, invariably, boring, incomplete people who wouldn't know individuality if it stared them in the face. Children need to be treated separately, and the present educational system cannot cater for this.

Children are brought into secondary schools at the age of eleven, which is an extremely unnatural process for a young child to go through. Their youth is suppressed, and they are forced into an immediate level of maturity, and often they sadly miss out on what should be a time of finding out for themselves, experiencing difficulties and learning from their own mistakes.

All children are born with a natural spirit which should be encouraged and developed, so forming an interesting, free- thinking adult, but this spirit is forcibly suppressed. I wouldn't go so far as to say it destroys it, because I think, depending on the strength of character of the child, it can be retained throughout the eleven years of compulsory education but unfortunately, most people allow themselves to be dictated to, and moulded into the expected image, that the headmasters, governors, etc. .. wish to portray, and so not developing into the kinds of people they might have been if they hadn't been pushed through the education system. Taking into consideration that education is supposed to be the starting off point, the foundations, upon which to build your life, it is badly thought out, badly designed, and badly carried out.

The exam system has got to be one of the cruelest processes of elimination in the world, it dis-regards people with a low academic ability, and wrongly builds up the importance of people who, by chance, find they can answer irrelevant questions on one particular day; this system provides no hope, future or alternative for those seemingly 'ungifted' children, and those children are left feeling isolated, unwanted, and stupid. The teachers ignore them, or help them only because their job requires them to, and if they don't do the required job, then they don't get that all-important pay-cheque each month. But those children who can pass exams, making the teaching look as if it must be good, so needless to say, they get all the attention.

Even when you make it into the sixth form, the rules become even more rigid. You have a lot of free periods, sometimes whole mornings, even days, but you are still required to be in school full-time, even if it means sitting there all day doing nothing, which means you have nothing constructive to do, which the teachers find impossible to believe, you get bored, and that is the worst environment in which to educate people.

The number of people in our sixth form has nearly halved since last year, and the teachers sit back and think that the individual couldn't handle the work, when really they have been driven into boring dead-end jobs because of the lack of personal responsibility given to them.

On the other hand, we do need some sort of education, because if left completely to ourselves we would grow up with basic, animal instincts, and education is all about developing an individual beyond that stage. Unfortunately the people at the top don't see it like that. Why is a person with 10 O' levels treated with a lot more recognition and respect than someone who didn't get to the stage of taking exams? Because you can almost be sure that the person with no qualifications has regrets about not having any, because he's treated as an outcast, his prospects of a job, an interesting one at any rate, have vanished. Schools know this to be true, but they still insist on 'pushing aside' those who can't cope academically. This in itself proves the lack of intimacy, which should appear. The new exam system that is coming in, the G.C.S.E, should hopefully be a lot fairer, in that everyone's doing the same exam, there's no settings, but the prejudice will never disappear, those who've got what it takes in the way of school subjects will get all the help they need, those who can't might just as well stay at home.

Vocationalism: Fact and Fiction

Dr George D. Chryssides
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When one reflects upon it, the belief that we should educate people for paid employment is indeed a strange one. In a typical working day, only one third of that time is spent on one's work. Bearing in mind that those who work, work on average a 40-hour week, the proportion of working time is reduced even further. And, of course, one does not work for the entirety of one's life. Making the somewhat generous assumption that a person works from the age of sixteen until the age of sixty, on my reckoning we arrive at the statistic that only 15% of one's life is actually spent in paid employment, and this figure reduces even further when we take into account holidays, time spent off sick, early retirements, shorter working hours, and, of course, the spectre of redundancy and unemployment.

In a situation in which there are well over three million unemployed, and in which the figures for long-term unemployment are the highest since the depression of the 1930's, the problems which are posed for the educational system are obvious. First, is there any point in training students for a degree or even a vocational qualification when these are no longer passports to employment? Secondly, how are we to respond to the situation in which a student actually has to choose between receiving an education and getting a job? I recall very clearly an occasion when an extremely able student sought my advice on whether he should abandon a very promising career in order to accept a post he had been offered as a chef. Understandably, when jobs are scarce, one is very tempted to give up one's education if one is offered a job, for there is no guarantee that at the end of the day the student will be able to find suitable employment.

It is understandable that, in the face of mass unemployment, an educational establishment should take the view that its curriculum should be geared towards ensuring greater employability for its students. From the student's point of view this may make sense: if I cannot get a job, I will want to improve my qualifications for employability so that I can increase my chance of doing so. In response to this kind of demand, we therefore not only ensure that students are adequately trained for employment (as far as possible), but that they also acquire basic employment-seeking skills such as writing a curriculum vitae, and interviewing techniques.

Such training will assist those individuals who are fortunate enough to obtain employment at the end of their training. But they are really of no value in coping with unemployment in general. If I am trained well in how to perform at an interview, I may obtain my job, but this will inevitably be at the expense of someone else who simply was not so well briefed about his interview techniques. The more techniques of this kind that we teach, the higher the requirements for attaining employment will become, and in the long run the unemployment problem is simply redistributed. Those who have learned the relevant additional skills will secure employment, whereas those who have not, but formerly might have had a serious chance of employment, will not. To advise an individual to stand on tip-toe in order to see a spectacle makes sense; but to invite the whole crowd to do so makes the activity of seeing universally more difficult.

In fact, it may be contended with some justification that to go on training people for jobs when the number of jobs appears to be diminishing seems quite absurd. The reason for this philosophy, one suspects, may be a political one. If it is possible to persuade people that the fundamental reason for unemployment is that, on the whole, the unemployed are insufficiently trained, then one may hope to persuade the unemployed, and indeed the public at large, that the unemployed are in their present situation through their own fault: if they had only taken the trouble to better themselves they would not be in the state in which they now are. Thus it is impossible for a government to exonerate itself from blame in the face of mass unemployment.

It seems likely that the trend towards less time spent on paid employment will continue, partly on account of the unemployment situation, and partly because of increased automation and computerisation. If this is so, then it behoves the educational system to respond to such a change in society. I want to suggest a number of ways in which it might do this.

Firstly, and most obviously, there is a need to recognise the value of 'education for life'. If employment occupies 15% of one's life, the other 85% still needs to be taken into account by the educational system. It is a fallacy to suppose that what is done outside 'working' hours is less demanding and more 'mindless' than the work for which one is paid. The tendency to exalt paid employment and to downgrade leisure is largely the result of the Protestant work ethic which stems from the Puritans. The whole philosophy on which the 'work ethic' is based is questionable. The notion was derived from the Calvinist doctrine of predestination: that God had pre-ordained that certain individuals should form the 'elect' who would, through divine grace, and not through their own efforts, inherit God's kingdom, whereas the 'damned', equally through no choice of their own (but rather through sin, which they inherited genetically in any case) were destined to eternal torment. As a confirmation of this doctrine, the Puritans looked to the earthly realm to discover whether

they could find this doctrine reflected in human affairs, and they detected a reflection in the respective economic prosperities of the rich and the poor. Although material prosperity was not a means of attaining God's favour (for one's eternal fate was decreed from the moment of creation), nevertheless it was a sign of God's blessing and a reasonable indication that one was on the way to the right eternal destiny.

The theological doctrines on which such contemporary materialism was based are now, to say the least, suspect. Nevertheless, the conclusions on which the Puritans drew about the value of work and the desirability of financial reward continue to prevail. Yet it is not the case that work is necessarily absorbing, ego-involving and significant, while leisure, by contrast, is not. Much of one's paid employment can be trivial, even unskilled. Equally, one's unpaid activities can be highly significant. Reading a newspaper, voting in an election, identifying with a particular movement or cause, even pursuing a hobby or engaging in a stimulating conversation, can demand as much skill and intelligence, if not more, than paid employment does. It was the educationalist John Dewey who was most noted for his recognition that there was more to the self than one's paid employment:

> There is doubtless - in general accord with the principle of habit - a tendency for every distinctive vocation to become too dominant, too exclusive and absorbing in its specialised aspect. This means emphasis upon skill or technical method at the expense of meaning. Hence it is not the business of education to foster this tendency, but rather to safeguard against it, so that the scientific inquirer shall not be merely the scientist, the teacher merely the pedagogue, the clergyman merely one who wears the cloth and so on. (1)

If Dewey is right, then the educationalist should not have so much of an obsession about what employers want, moulding the student to fit 'the demands of industry'. Apart from situations in which a company is directly sponsoring a student to pursue a course of study (and it is only a minority of students who are in this situation), the industrialist is not even paying for his demands to be met. (Indeed, one might even, with justification, reject the logic that it is those who have the money who should control the channeling of other human minds.)

In most cases, of course, it is the public, or 'society', who pays for the education of our students. Yet if the putting up of funds for education were to give the payee the right to decide what should be taught, then education would become a form of social control. The aim of producing 'good citizens' may sound laudable enough, until one realises that what is a good citizen is a contentious question. Would one describe the Greenham Common women as 'good citizens', for example? If one's criterion is obedience to the law, then perhaps not. Yet many would contend they have taken a responsible and reflective stance on a highly important issue. Whether or not one supports the cause of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, it seems vital that the educational system should enable individual students to support or even initiate changes in society, rather than to conform mindlessly.

A 'good citizen' is certainly not identical with a conforming citizen, and in particular a good citizen is not necessarily one who accepts the Protestant work ethic and regards gainful employment as a virtue and unemployment as a stigma. The value of paid employment is in fact grossly overrated. It is highly questionable whether someone who works, let us say, in the advertising industry is doing society a service by persuading people to adopt standards of living which they cannot afford, or to buy commodities which they do not need or necessarily even want. Conversely, if one is unemployed, it is not the case that one is on the scrapheap or incapable of doing anything useful. Much unpaid work in our society is grossly undervalued: for example, the Citizens' Advice Bureau worker who accepts no payment for his or her services, the prison or hospital visitor, and so on. I recently met one of my former students who, as yet, has not secured a full time paid position. He was undertaking some full time unpaid work to travel round the city ascertaining what facilities various stores offered for the disabled, and what provisions they would be willing to implement. The work was unpaid, but yet surely much more valuable than many a paid job.

If, as I have argued, life is more than paid employment, we should expect to see this reflected in the patterns of our education system. It does not follow from what I have said that this is a plea for the old-fashioned 'liberal studies' approach, where it used to be fashionable to inject students of plumbing, mechanical engineering or electronics with a timetabled slot of 'high culture' in which the unfortunate students were dragged along unwillingly - often on a Friday afternoon between four and six o'clock - to receive doses of modern poetry, drama, ballet or whatever. Such an approach was patronizing in the extreme, implying that those who were studying science or engineering subjects, or those who were learning a trade, lacked culture, which we, the high priests and custodians of this esoteric knowledge, could dispense as a great privilege.

To acknowledge the fact that life is wider than paid employment, rather more radical changes are needed to education than the occasional injections of liberal studies for engineers or 'scientific culture' courses for humanities students. Firstly, the requirement that educational courses should have to justify themselves in terms of available job opportunities for graduands is one which should be radically reconsidered. A very high proportion of students, in fact, end up in paid employment which bears little, if any, relationship to their formal qualifications. If it makes sense to train students vocationally, then arguably the best vocational commodity which one can teach is the ability to be versatile and adaptable. Indeed, if one's course of study has been devised with regard to the current situation, what one has acquired during one's course of study may be precisely what enables the graduand to lead a fulfilled life without paid employment. When a polytechnic is briefed to meet the 'needs of the community', this need not be construed as vocational skills, but individual psychological and human needs.

But it is not just the subject matter which requires reappraisal in the light of dwindling employment opportunities. What is needed is a reappraisal of the entire structuring of the system of higher and further education. The conventional undergraduate is one who is preparing for employment and who is using a course

of study as a kind of apprenticeship for paid vocation. Many graduates will testify that one's education, if not wholly geared to the employment which one attains (if one is successful) provides one with many indispensable skills and much necessary experience for coping with the 'outside world': one is able to be more confident and assertive, to argue one's case well, to appear well-informed on the matters one has studied, and so on. Yet, while education provides valuable experience for work and for life, it is also true that a background of employment and experience in the 'outside world' can stand one in better stead for receiving an education. The mature student is often much more able to see the value of the subject-matter with which he is presented, to be more articulate in discussion, and to bring to bear on the taught material a profitable background of skills and experiences. There therefore does not seem to be any good reason why the accepted norm should be that full time education should precede vocation, rather than vice versa. Indeed the prevalent convention that full time education is the precursor of full time vocation is precisely what gave rise to my student's conflict about whether to continue his course of study or to accept the chef's job.

If one is to cope with such dilemmas effectively, and if one is to recognise that it is just as desirable for employment to precede education as for the reverse, then much more flexible patterns in our educational system ought to be emerging. The existence of more part-time courses of study would enable those who had secured employment to undergo further education without sacrificing a career on which they had embarked after considerable difficulty. A pattern which enabled more transference from full-time to part-time modes of study would assist the student who, mid-way through a course of study, secured employment.

When one looks at the conventionally accepted norms for undergoing education, they really seem on reflection to be illogical in the extreme. To take a degree one must normally be fairly immature, in one's teens (preferably 18). One normally qualifies for the privilege of higher education by having passed two examinations ('A' levels), which need not have any bearing whatsoever on the subject to be studied, and at which one's success bears no correlation to the quality of the degree which one finally earns. During one's course of study, one may not earn, with the possible exception of holiday jobs, and one is condemned to a period of poverty, in which one is deprived of the opportunity to earn a proper wage or salary, but rather must survive on a very low 'grant'. One may not normally interrupt one's course of study, and if one wishes to do so, a convincing case has to be made and accepted by the institution. After three years, one's education is deemed to be 'complete': one is not normally permitted to return, and few normally do so. Those who wish to do so find that the chief barrier is that no awarding body will sponsor them: after all, have they not 'been educated'?

When stated in this way, such attitudes of course seem absurd, as indeed they are. What requires recognition is that education is not something which one 'completes'. To complete an educational qualification is often to abandon it entirely, annulling many of the benefits which one's formal education has endowed.

As someone who has actually secured employment in what is basically a not very marketable subject - namely, philosophy - I can recal my former philosophy professor taking aside his intending specialist philosophy students and counselling us that philosophy was not a subject by which one could normally expect to earn a living. Predictably, most of my fellow-students ended up in professions which demanded different skills - the legal profession, the civil service, the church. Having lost the ability to pursue their specialist subject, on their own admission, they have now forgotten most of what they ever learned. This points to a case for enabling a subject which is studied to become part of a continuing process of education, with facilities for erst- while students to return, if they so desire, to keep abreast with what has developed in that subject since their undergraduate days.

For those who are unemployed, or for those who have time which they wish to use outside their main employment, education can actually form part of life, as well as preparation for life. Classes, in extra-mural departments of universities, or in organisations such as the Workers' Educational Association, perform a highly important task here. The Open University also fulfils a role in continuing education, with much more flexible patterns of study than conventional universities and polytechnics. It is unfortunate that recent government policy has caused the Open University to increase the financial demands on its students, so that for many men and women the Open University's doors are closed.

I have put the case for placing education more in the context of 'life' than of paid vocation, and argued that much greater emphasis should be placed on this notion. Of course, any system which is more flexible than our present one will in-volve enormous logistical problems in order to make it successful. It is not my task as a philosopher to suggest how my proposals might be tackled logistically, although it cannot be denied that what is educationally desirable has often to be subordinated to what is practically possible. What I hope I have done, however, is to suggest by my analysis of the function of education, that such a reappraisal of our educational system would be worth working on, and that it would place the respective roles of paid employment and life in general in a much more balanced perspective.

References:

1. John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York and London: Collier-Macmillan, 1966), p. 308.

Sarah Churchward
Former Pupil, Public
Girls' High School,
15 years old

Sometimes school is a good laugh, but most of the time it is boring. When I'm out of school and in my own clothes, I feel older and as if I've been let out of prison, because when I'm in school I feel and look so small and have to wonder whether everything I do is allowed in our pathetic list of rules. We are 15 years old and are treated like ten year olds, our uniform is the worst thing. It is the most strict uniform in Plymouth and is meant to look smart, but I don't think tents as skirts look very smart!

Education of some sort is important and I am glad I've been able to be educated, although some things we learn are useless. There aren't many jobs around nowadays and there is more of a chance of getting one if you have qualifications. A lot of people get really good exam results and can't get a job, that is really bad and a waste of time. On the whole, it is much safer to look for a job with qualifications, because you definitely won't get a good job without any.

Being educated is so boring and dull, I hate most subjects. I think the school hours should be cut down because we spend so much time there. Some teachers are o.k. but others are bad; I am more willing to work for a teacher I like and they are the not so strict ones. A couple of teachers are right Hitlers, and I don't work so good as I could with them because they make me feel so small and a criminal and always wrong. I hate the teachers who think they are always right and us pupils never have any opinions about anything.

I have such a horrible feeling Monday morning, just thinking about all the lessons ahead that week. If we weren't made to do so much writing and more talking, then it would be better. Another really boring thing in school is assemblies. We are made to stand and listen to a teacher or the head going on about something that usually turns out religious. I bet more than 6 out of 10 girls in our assemblies don't believe in God or Jesus and we still have to stay so silent and listen.

The things I like most about school are the Games lessons and the dinner times where we all pile in the bogs and get shouted at by the dinner bags who come in every minute and try and catch us smoking or doing other things we shouldn't be doing.

Sometimes we have school field trips which we don't have to pay for, so that is quite good.

Near the end of a term at school it is better. The timetable is changed, so we don't have so many lessons. On the very last day of term it's bad because we are not allowed out in the playground 'cause the boys next door bung eggs and water over the wall. The teachers think that our parents would go mental if we had any egg stains on our uniforms. Some parents would mind, but most of 'em don't care coz the uniforms are washed at the end of terms anyway.

I think we should be allowed to wear make-up because most girls like to wear it and it wouldn't harm anyone if we did wear it. Some girls wear a little make-up but usually get 'caught' and are told to wipe it off.

I also think that the 16 year olds should be allowed to smoke at dinner times with the parents' permission if they wanted, coz it's their health they're ruining.

My personal feelings about school are, I would enjoy it more if it wasn't so strict.

Karen Ciambriello
Parent and
Philosophical
Preggee

Soap Bubbles

From years of study and of contemplation
An old man brews a work of clarity,
A gay and involuted dissertation
Discoursing on sweet wisdom playfully.

An eager student bent on storming heights
Has delved in archives and in libraries,
But adds the touch of genius when he writes
A first book full of deepest subtleties.

A boy, with bowl and straw, sits and blows,
Filling with breath the bubbles from the bowl
Each praises like a hymn, and each one glows
Into the filmy beads he blows his soul.

Old man, student, boy, all these three
Out of the Maya-foam of the universe
Create illusions. None is better or worse.
But in each of them the Light of Eternity
Sees its reflection, and burns more joyfully.

THE GLASS BEAD GAME
Hermann Hesse

Wendy Clay
Community Development Worker
Devonport; Plymouth Community
Devt Project; The D.A.R.T.
Project (Devonport Information
and Resource Centre)

I did not go to school properly until I was 11 years old. It was wartime and I travelled the length and breadth of England with my mother who took jobs as mothers' helps, mainly. I spent odd weeks in classrooms, here and there, but these are vague memories and left no deep impression.

I consider myself fortunate as I learnt about life through finding out by watching and asking. I learnt a great deal.

I cannot remember any time when I did not read or write. Books were my dearest friends and I spent many hours scribbling poems and stories, some of which I sent to Uncle Harold in London. He worked on the Stock Exchange. I only met him once, when I was 10. He took me out for tea at Fullers in the city, just after the war ended. He wore a pin stripe suit and carried a bowler hat and a rolled umbrella. He told me to be 'mother' which meant pouring tea from a metal pot with an impossibly hot handle. We had chocolate cake.

When I was 8 my mother and I spent 3 months at Longleat. Lord Bath allowed a school for officers' daughters to use part of the mansion, but I was not eligible to attend classes. The drive was a blaze of rhododendrons and azaleas when we arrived there in June. I recall it so vividly - It was my first taste of culture and beauty. Lord Bath and I spent a lot of time together - on fine days we walked in the gardens, and he wore an old panama hat. On wet days he took me round the rooms filled with art and treasures and fine furniture, all covered in white dust sheets. He taught me so much about all the beautiful things and I had history lessons from him. We got on well together because he was very old and I was very young, and we were both out of place in the giggly girls' school.

Lord Bath also taught me to tell the time. I learnt mostly from the big clock outside near the orangery.

When I wasn't with Lord Bath, I was with the gardener and I learnt about fruit and flowers and animals and birds. I was very sad to leave. I learnt about sex when I was 10. My mother took a job as a housemother in a boys' prep school. I was invited to a farm for a weekend and the farmer's son told me all about it. On my return to the school I built a little twig and leaf hut in the woods behind and shared my newly acquired knowledge with the boys. They used to wait their turn outside the little hut, then come inside, take off their shorts and lie down. We would explore each other's bodies in the half-light among crackling twigs all mingled with the smell of peat and leafmould. My mother was asked to leave because I had an 'undesirable influence' on the boys - life was very dull afterwards, but I had a good grounding in sex.

I learnt social skills through living with 34 different families by the age of 11, in both urban and rural surroundings. I learnt how differently people lived and a wide variety of standards. I learnt how to blend into surroundings quickly and what was expected of me.

For me, my childhood travels and my mother were my primary education.

My mother always looked lovely. It was a top priority. She brushed her thick glossy hair 100 strokes each night and NEVER went down to the air raid shelters at night without her corsets which were pink and had hundreds of hooks and eyes. She always wore scent and would never sleep in damp beds or with fleas or bedbugs. Her high standards meant that we were always on the move.

My mother taught me kindness and how to laugh when life was difficult. She taught me to always look for the best in what there was and to find comfort in small things, like the glorious black paraffin heater which she bought for our cold bedroom in one of the bleaker houses we stayed in. She taught me to love music and to always say my prayers and clean my teeth before bed.

We settled in Worthing when I was 11 for 6 years in different houses, but it meant that I attended school full time until leaving at 16 with my school certificate in 5 subjects.

I loved school. I soaked up learning, like a sponge. It was all so new and exciting. All my life I still love to learn and have just recently completed the 2 year course certificate of qualification in Social Work.

From my own experience I know that there are many paths to learning and I feel that there should be alternatives to the present system. I believe that education is for life and that places of learning should be available to everyone at all ages through life - not in separate compartments as it is now, but all ages learning side by side, from 5 to 95. Not with a statutory set of years in which to calcify learning but to come in and out of it whenever it feels the right time in one's life - young and old to share education together.

It is no wonder that teenagers are often restless and rebellious after 14 or so years of being tied to one major form of learning - school. It is not surprising that they revolt against the system and are unskilled in learning how to live well. Those who conform may get their certificates and move on to perpetuate the same system. But how much talent and creativity is lost - how often practical skills are undervalued in the quest for academic achievements?

Some children are not suited to this type of learning, while for others the desire to learn may come later in life - it is about giving choices.

Schools need to be a focal point of the community - somewhere to be enjoyed and to be open. Not buildings closed in the evenings, weekends and holidays. If the schools belonged to the community and became catalysts for the free exchange of skills and for recreation, they may not be vandalised.

I believe that education, learning and life are all so intertwined that artificially separating them out does not work. Once looked at holistically, the present education systems could be swept away, schools just for children abolished, and new bright places of learning for EVERYONE on every level would be the basis of new systems of education for us all.

A.A. Clayton
Former Headmistress
Devonport High School
for girls

Behind that pitted wall that skirts the way
With signs and slogans, blight to greet each day,
There in his noisy palace, placed to rule,
The pale headmaster manages his school.
A man remote he is and hard to view;
Few know him well, still fewer wish to do.
Gone are the fears of truants, gone the cane,
No sanctions bind, no measures serve to rein
Their straying footsteps; (strange, that with no zest
They roam the town for pleasure - painful quest).
But still the busy staffroom rings with sound,
And paper silts up tables, lists abound;
The staff are kind, or if severe, they curse
Society's dead hand - or stingy purse!
The parents manifest each point of view -
Care, worry, apathy, and loathing too.
Meanwhile, advisers write official notes;
The councillors are mindful of their votes;
Administrators fill their files with facts;
Inspectors make pronouncements - but the axe
Pursues its ruthless, ministerial way.
"This school to close." Now fury! Now dismay!
"Unite to save ..." this school? (by Fate chastised)
Which almost all had covertly despised?
But still are all those tongues. The very spot
Is sold to Commerce - and the past forgot.

**With acknowledgements to Goldsmith,
who, in harder times, took a kindlier view.**

Bob Clement
County Adviser for
Art and Design

From Where do we Begin -

When I was a child
I could easily see and feel things
They were so real, they were at the dawn of my knowing:
My experience of them was all part of my becoming.
The smell of grass when you'd finished rolling down a bank
Or the mowings through which you tumbled your hands,
Until it became a throwing game,
I hadn't thought about drawing grass,
It just was.

Later,
With my friends,
We chased through woods and trees
In the yellow evenings when the trees were black.
Our games were serious and of real intent,
and our value marked in each other's eyes
Whatever talent we could show.
For I could draw
They said.

One day back home,
A man called, a friend of the family,
"When you can play 'The Bluebells of Scotland' I'll give you a pound".
So, there were things worth striving for,
Real achievements that grown-ups recognised,
and then there was the first box of oils
And the underground sea from 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth'.
It recreated something for me;
They liked it.

Next
Came a lake and a glen;
My father's pound for that.
But the oils still worked in nasty lines
Even the sky wasn't as flat as it should be.
He's good at Art they said, and so
To Art School I was sent.
That's where the journey into me
Began.

It seemed,
From what they said,
That there were ways of doing things.
But I liked lights and shades across woods and fields,
And to escape into symphonies and the elemental forces.
Even so I did not exist in my imagery
Nor yet in theirs, they made that clear.
My approach was wrong
And my darks a fake.

So it was
That inside me
Nothing connected any better
For all the compromises I had made.
Any vision was passed through the jaws of discussion
And masticated on endless thoughts.
The forms and images which grew in paint
Did not connect
With feeling.

But sometimes
I feel real inside
And my imagination strives for form.
Ideas grate over a sea of shallow cliches
That anchor the spirit in empty shapes. Their shapes?
Sensation breaks on a barren shore and like a blind bat
The vision flits about my bone cave
Seeking sanctuary
In real form.

From where do we begin?
That which is outside forgets;
That which is inside knows.
Of course we must learn more about the outside
Its structures, harmonies, language and order;
And how to communicate and solve problems.
Perhaps the forty minute periods repeated often
Enable us to grasp patterns and strategies
Through a certain imprinting.

Yet time flows through me
And I sense another pattern,
A more enduring and persistent reality,
Not dissolved in the acid tests of a designed solution,
But a reality that identifies meanings
Enabling me to seek their origin
And restore the language whose inner light
And outward form
Are one reality.

Above all else
The trust we seek
Was there at the beginning.
Believing that there is an inner life of images,
Rooted in sensations which we only later know,
Striving for persistence in material form,
Its times and rhythms beyond our knowing.

But yet a task more real to see
Because it's there in you and me.

Keith Gentle

Anne Cliefe
Supply Teacher

When the word 'education' is used, it is generally accepted that most people are usually thinking of what boys and girls are taught in school. R.S. Peters remarks in his essay 'The justification of education':

> "There is a general concept of 'education' which covers almost any process of learning, rearing or growing up. Nowadays, when we speak of education in this general way, we usually mean going to school, to an institution devoted to learning."

Often the terms technical and university education are referred to and an educated man is considered to be someone who has spent years of his youth in the classroom.

However, the word is being used in a narrow sense if it is supposed that education is a matter of one's early years only. Etymologists tell us that the word comes from the Latin verb educare, which means to bring up (children), but it is also related to educere, to draw out, and so we have the idea of continual drawing out of the powers with which we are naturally gifted. In this sense, education is a process which goes on, each day providing a learning situation. For most people their schooldays finish when they are in their teens, but their educa- tion is never really completed. All through life they are learn- ing - from books, from the observation of the world around, from their varied experiences, and their contacts with their fellow men and women. All these influences affect the way in which we think and feel and act.

It was Gibbon, the great historian, who wrote that, "Every person has two educations, one which he receives from others and one, more important, which he gives himself." Although we "live and learn", the foundations of knowledge gained in later years are laid in the school. Often some obscure or apparently useless item of information or skill is proved to be of consequence in that the education we get later from life is all the richer and fuller for a sound education in our youth. School serves the purpose of providing the basic training to make education possible - essentially the learner must be motivated to feel that learning is something valuable.

Deway asked that education should be for the "process of living" and in today's world there is little place for the man or woman who knows how to read but has no knowledge of what to read, who can listen without understanding and who has little idea of weghing the pros and cons of a situation. Consequently, schools have long been aware of the importance of enriching the curriculum beyond the classroom. Field trips to museums, art galleries, planetariums, industrial plants, local Government departments, etc. have always been considered of great value, to encourage pupils not only to pursue any special interest to its fullest extent, but to broaden experiences and interests generally.

In addition to encouraging creativity, there has been great emphasis to ensure that the basic skills have not been neglected, for it is realised that higher proficiency in these will be needed. Such vast changes have taken place in all technical aspects and advances over the last decade that teachers have become more and more aware of the need for educational change and opportunities to meet the needs of society today.

In a fast moving world of research, experimentation and discovery, greater emphasis must be placed on teaching the techniques of research, where to find material, how to outline, organise and summarise and evaluate that material. Not only is society changing rapidly but also the knowledge and volume of facts each day is accumulating. It would be facile of us to imagine that one could assimilate all this. Therefore it is important to know how and where to find information.

Teaching and learning in schools have always monitored and amplified the changes in society, but such a task is becoming increasingly difficult. In the light of such change, teachers have realised the process of change in schools must accelerate. Not only teachers, but pupils, politicians and employers have all voiced a need for a more practical and vocational bias in the curriculum. It is recognised that to fulfil these needs better facilities, specialist teachers and methods are required to benefit such practices already being tried today, in the form of careful grouping and special classes.

Evidence suggests that in the present system a substantial proportion of non-academic teenagers are unable to make the most of their full potential. Poor performers at school are not necessarily poor performers at work. The advent of the Warnock Report has highlighted the percentage of children with special needs and in the light of our present economic situation, it is questionable whether the present pattern of education is actually meeting the needs of society. What is the future?

Education and Teaching

D.W. Cloke
Warden
Plymouth Teachers' Centre

It is the eternal destiny of Mankind to strive towards the achievement of mastery of the environment. This creative Being in a creative Universe is a dynamic organ within a dynamic system, in reciprocal relationship with it. The individual mind views the incomprehensible envelope with awe and curiosity. Patterns are teased out of the chaos of sensory input, understanding is painstakingly layered on understanding.

Education should help children to feel at ease with this condition and to interact with the Universe, both socially and physically. Our instincts are of the order of achievement rather than survival, and call into existence a constant demand for learning and improving. The child comes into the world to join this process. From birth, in the course of interchanges with others, the infant engages in the task of making himself into a being capable of taking a place among others as a personality who is able to choose different ways of being and acting.

The purpose of Education is to help children to interact with the Universe so that they are encouraged to grow in consciousness of what they are and where they are, and to gain competence, confidence and fulfilment in their transactions with life. Thus Education occurs in the human situation as a matter of evolutionary necessity, without which there would be no Culture. Personality, Education and Culture form the basic tripod of human evolution.

Today Education is both a desirable aspect of democratic society and a means of achieving a better democracy. It is concerned with opportunities for individual growth and hence the improvement of the quality of individuals and society.

The curriculum should be that selection of materials which initiates children into the culture and the process of material interaction. So planned this experience allows children to come to terms with the culture and with their own personalities. The teacher, in the exercise of legitimacy, leadership and technique, encourages common understanding, links mind with mind towards a Universal and life-long search, and exemplifies this in the pursuit of knowledge and professional development.

Teachers represent the ideals of the educative society combined with those of a profession - esoteric knowledge, public trust, personal autonomy, and a service ideal taken to an extreme of vocational commitment to their immediate clients, their pupils.

Teachers' Centres represent the 'congregationalist' and 'established' celebration of this god.

My views on education

Traci Coleman
Former Pupil, The Ridgeway School, Plympton; aged 17 years

From my experience of working with five and six year olds whilst myself a student in the 5th year doing work experience, I can honestly say I'm not very impressed with the standard of education. The children seemed to do the same thing each and every day and the only subjects were English and Maths. Music did occur once or twice a week, but then the children were only shown percussion instruments and it seemed to me that music was made into more of a game than an actual subject where the children could learn to play instruments and know more about the ins and outs of music, and maybe find they would like to do music later on in their so-called education.

I thoroughly disagree with what was and still is in some areas known as the 11+. Why should one exam, when a child is between the ages of ten and eleven, determine whether that child should go to a secondary or grammar school? The child may be a slow starter and then develop later on. It seems extremely unfair especially as the child may be put into a secondary school and classed as slow, and then no help is given to develop what could be an intelligent mind.

It would appear that some grammar schools tend to cater for the extremely clever minds and the not-so-clever ones are pushed into secondary education.

But on the other hand at the secondary schools, children are classed as thick and no attempt on the teacher's part is made to push them. Teachers tend to class C.S.E.s which practically mean nothing if you want to get a good job, unless they are Grade 1's as first importance, and then 'O' levels which mean far more as secondary importance.

Surely this is wrong. Children should be pushed for 'O' levels and then, and then only, if they're not capable of 'O' levels, should C.S.E.s be used. It seems to me this is a 'can't be bothered' attitude from the teachers, as obviously it is far easier to sit back and take the easy way out, than to work hard and push one's pupils.

I also believe that far more children are far cleverer than they are given credit for.

Thoughts about Education

Diane Collinson
Faculty of Arts
The Open University

What is it to be educated?

It is to be a person who lives well; whose mind and heart attend to what is good and beautiful; who is able to delight in and care sensuously for the world; who brings thought and imagination to every activity; who faces life with an undeceived intelligence and with the desire to understand and to know.

At its very centre and core, education is about persons and personal development. I intend a precise meaning for the word 'person' here. I mean 'person as opposed to merely human being or individual'. Treating someone as a person means according dignity to his or her very existence, regardless of his or her usefulness or otherwise for achieving ends. We are not persons ourselves, nor do we treat others as persons, when this attitude is absent from our dealings. Education is not even about producing persons, for the relationship of producer and pro-duced cannot, logically cannot, obtain between persons. The education of others can be undertaken only by persons.

In a sense, once it is said that the educated person is one 'whose heart and mind attend to what is good and beautiful', then everything has been said. For the person of moral and aesthetic sensibility will act and live well as a matter of course. Social concern, sympathy, understanding, fairness and right judgement will follow from character and from being a good person. This is why education must be concerned with personal development. It is why, too, the best teaching is done by example. For it is what a person is that shows others what they might become; not in the sense that if my teacher is an able mathematician, or craftsman, or ornithologist, then I too may become one, but that if my teacher works with dedication and concern, patience, perseverance and imagination, then I too see how to go about my activities. I do not imitate what is done; I acquire the admirable ways of doing anything.

There is a clear difference between education and training, although it is easier to distinguish between them in thought than in fact. In thought we can separate the idea of training human beings to function skilfully from the idea of initiating them into personhood. This is not to discredit training processes but to preserve the important distinction between them on the one hand as means to ends, and the essence of educational intention on the other as the recognition of intrinsic values. Most of us, for the most part, wish both to be trained in skills and to become persons and the two types of development can co-exist with ease. The tragic mistake is to think that in undergoing training we inevitably become persons: to suppose that to function skilfully is to possess intrinsic value. And this mistake is easily made because we have a world in which survival has come to depend almost wholly on acquired mutual and reciprocal skills. We have no doubts as to the importance of those skills and are clear, too, as to the best methods of transmitting and measuring them; so their acquisition has come to dominate us, whilst our vague and inarticulate desires to 'live well' have become submerged or are manifested only in feelings of dissatisfaction, disappointment and emptiness. Part of the trouble is that when we do try to speak about 'living well' we do not seem to be dealing with anything that is objectively measurable or which is achieved through precisely describable skills or methods. Because of this lack of scientific objectivity about the good life we tend to fall into two sorts of error in our attempts to encompass it.

The first sort of error is to think of the good life as a kind of superfluity or verbal gloss which, analysed, is seen simply as a way of describing the state of being of a well- equipped individual operating in a favourable environment. Thus, this error cashes out the good life in terms of skilful functioning. The second sort of error is more subtle, for it is a kind of pastiche or misinterpretation of what I shall argue is the real thing. This second error consists in attempting to cultivate for oneself an ostentatiously idiosyncratic personality by concentrating on self-expression, introspection, and the exploitation of feeling. In this error the good life is cashed out in terms of an over-riding and false individuality. Unhappily, the attempt tends to yield loneliness where independence is sought, sensitivity as a bewildering substitute for sensibility, and meaninglessness in the place of the desired enrichment of life.

These, I suggest, are the common errors we may commit in seeking a way to live well. The commission of the first error sells one out to being a functionary; the commission of the second to an empty individualism. But I believe that education, properly construed and engaged in, can save us from becoming merely functionaries on the one hand and from the false self of individualsm on the other.

Education begins with an awareness of the remarkable fact of one's own existence in the world and among other existences. Its development depends on a contemplation of ideas and phenomena which widens and deepens consciousness gradually to form a personal realm, a 'life within life', which links the inner life with the outer world. Perhaps this description seems vague and uninformative: it says nothing about how its ideas are to be carried through into the details of daily life. More seriously, someone may object that there is no

difference between the approach it suggests and the one already described as erroneous in that its self-concern yields an empty individualism. There is, however, an important difference between the two approaches.

I described as erroneous the way of individualism that employs self-expression, introspection and an exploitation of feeling in its attempt at living well. This, of course, is not to say that those activities are intrinsically bad. The point is simply that we are mistaken if we deploy them as means to living well, that we are in error if we do so. I believe the approach fails to enable us to live well and that it results in loneliness and loss of meaning because it ignores, or does not take seriously, the well-known piece of perennial wisdom that tells us that we must first lose the self before we can find it. This is the key to the fundamental difference between individualism and personhood. I emphasise that these observations are not offered here as items of psychological sagacity but for the sake of making philosophical distinctions that will help us to reflect more clearly about the meaning and practice of education.

But now we are in a position to see the exact nature of the difference mentioned. The abandonment of the self that is required in order to find the self is signally achieved by what I shall call disinterested involvement. Such involvement may be with subjecs studied, with pursuits, interests, with the sensuous care of the world. By disinterested involvement is meant not an involvement that requires a skill in order to achieve some end, nor an involvement which collects information with which to adorn one's individualism, but one which actually affects the mind and character solely because one has become totally absorbed in the contemplation of a problem or situation entirely independent of oneself. This is the loss of self that is required. Through disinterested involvement one imaginatively, laboriously, inhabits another segment of reality; the self is lost in total absorption in what is contemplated, and subsequently is found, bearing about it the authenticity of the original and personal experience it has undergone. Disinterested involvement is attention precisely of the sort that is the logical requirement for being a person, for treating others as persons and for becoming educated. It is an engagement of the heart and mind; not the acquisition of a portmanteau of cultural equipment to be carted around and judiciously opened for display when occasion seems to require it.

The difficulties of creating, discovering and receiving a true education are great, especially for those who, in 1984, are within a system of formal instruction at schools and colleges. If such people cannot think clearly about what is on offer they will be deeply confused by clashes between what they are urged to do and their own emerging purposes and life-values. There is the sense, which is not an illusion, of being processed through an instructional machine, and the knowledge that such a machine can be both useful and a conveyor-belt to disaster. There is the question whether, flamboyantly or stolidly, to reject the insult of being thus processed; the question whether to compromise over it; the question whether it is in fact, ultimately or totally, just a processing machine and nothing else. The dilemmas multiply in recognising the desperate need to acquire skills for survival in the world as given, and for changing the world; and in realising, too, that if there is some further splendour to be discovered in human life, now is the time to find in which direction it may lie.

Perhaps these problems may be understood, some even dissolved, if we can be clear as to what one is about, what one may or may not become committed to in any highly-organised instructional set-up. In acquiring a skill one is not necessarily selling oneself to a processing machine: for following a method and undergoing training are the logically appropriate ways of acquiring skills and, once acquired, a skill can be enjoyed in itself. Nor is someone who - and this must be obvious - becomes deeply engrossed in a non-examination subject or pursuit wasting time: here is the very activity of disinterested involvement into which education initiates us, and which can not only survive the business of being examined but can be generated by it. The acquisition of skills by training and the practice of disinterested involvement can and do co-exist and support each other.

What I have wanted to show is that some of the dilemmas that confront us can be dissolved if we think carefully about the nature of education and the various activities that shelter within its penumbra. It is important to be able to reflect in an illuminating way about what one might be committed to and what one might become.

It is supremely important to recognise that becoming educated is not just a matter of undergoing a process, but of engaging personally in a range of activities, and in each one for its own sake.

Some thoughts on education

Douglas Colton
Founder Member, Plymouth Arts Centre, liaising between the Unions and the Arts

Education is a lifelong experience. From the moments after birth when one is directed towards one's mothers nipple, to the day or hour one has to take leave of this human existence. Who educates us plays a profound part in our lives. To live amongst skilled educators is a sublime gift enjoyed by few. For many, education is acquired by that tough task-master, experience.

Some of us have had the good fortune to become acquainted with literature, that greatest of all teachers. To me, reading a book is comparable to being in the company of the author. The authors are talking to me directly, they are my guests, and I endeavour to listen and digest what they have to say. Sometimes one regrets the invitation, your guest bores you or tells stories or facts you have no interest in whatsoever. The great advantage with books is that one can close the book and your guest leaves unoffended.

The human species is without doubt the most inquisitive of all the world's living creatures. This inquisitiveness could well be the reason for Homo sapiens' rise to such a supreme position in this planet's hierarchy. One of the most profound maxims that I have come across is, "The more one knows, the more one realises one does not know".

Man's early concentration on Theology was, I suppose, essential for his future exploration into Anthropology, Biology, Psychology and finally Cosmology. Books have in the past been the predominant method of handing on to future generations the accumulated knowledge of the past. New technology will see the printed book superceded by electronic contrivances now beginning to appear. Education is a desire to inform the new generations of what has taken place previously, what lessons we have learnt, giving them the maps and useful tools for their onward journey. 'To where?' and 'why?' are the great questions.

Sarah Connolly
Former Deputy Head Girl
Notre Dame Comprehensive;
Present Display Team
Leader for Woolworths

From the ages of five to sixteen years we have to accept school as a way of life. The law forces us to attend some kind of educational establishment and therefore it is important that we make the most of whichever school we are expected to attend.

Rebelling against the system of education that this country has will do little to help us in the years to come when we are reliant upon qualifications in order to obtain jobs and develop a career.

There are, of course, many good and bad points about our country's schools. If I had the chance to complain about anything to do with the general education that I have received I think I would first of all discuss the education system. It is drummed into us from a very early stage that in order to make anything worthwhile of our lives we have to leave school with qualifications. In order to gain qualifications we have to pass our examinations, in order to do that we are expected to follow a course for two years and then cram all the information that we have gathered over that period into about four hours of exams per subject. If we experienced an 'off day' when we have our exam, then that is hard luck and your whole prospective livelihood rests in the balance.

When we leave school we need our qualifications to stun our would-be employers. Initial lists per interview are made upon the examination results that you put on your application form. This means that your personality, practicability and suitability for the job are not taken into account until you have passed all your exams and can impress the interviewer. Those with few or no exam pass marks are often pushed to the bottom of the pile and do not receive any chances to prove their character or suitability for the job.

When in the fifth year we take our exams it is a tremendous anti-climax to receive nothing but a piece of paper which represents all the hard work put into the two year course. Looking back over the last year and considering my own 'O' level and C.S.E. results, I find that I cannot even remember most of the information that I put into those exams. Once the 'O' levels are over, if what you learnt is not needed for your every day existence or for further exams, then it is just forgotten. I think that this is another valid reason for a revision of examination systems.

Schools are communities of people brought together to learn information; therefore I consider that it is very important for teachers to develop a community spirit within their schools. Many young people resent the authority that school and teachers represent. They show their resentment by rebelling against the system and refusing to obey the rules set down by the school. I think that there must be something wrong with a system which produces so many people who are against authority. The seeds of this are sown while at school. All through our working lives we are going to have to cope with people who are unpleasant but have the power to tell us what to do, and in order to preserve our jobs and security we will have to do as they say. If we cannot even respect what teachers say, how will we cope with other people?

Students who do not do well academically often have a harder time when it comes to finding a job. This seems very unfair, as these people often prove to be the most practically minded and have the greatest potential for putting the knowledge that they have into use. What is the point of being exceptionally clever if you have not the slightest idea about how to apply it?

Many children rebel against the school system with which they are forced to comply because it represents authority and restricts their freedom. What they don't seem to realise is the harm that they are doing to themselves. The codes of conduct to which we are expected to adhere in the outside world are much harsher than those laid down in school and regularly appear to be much more unreasonable. School is a good starting point for the self discipline which we will have to exercise during our working lives - if we are unable to cope with the school rules, then it will be much harder to cope with more stringent ideas. School should also develop a pupil's feeling as part of a team - many schools fail to do this. If a school does not have an identity and represent something for a pupil to be proud of, then it is hardly surprising that so many schools are vandalised and gain bad reputations. The teachers and their attitudes affect the pupils' reaction to the school and also the amount of involvement that parents have with their child's education. If a teacher has a bored approach to lessons and the life of the school, then pupils will consider this the correct way to behave and react in a similar way, while at the same time losing respect for the authority that the teacher represents. Young people need to be guided towards the realisation that school is more than an educational establishment, it is a place where our minds are allowed to grow and develop, a school is what you as pupils and teachers make it, and how you as parents support it. Qualifications are not the most important things that someone brings out of school - character, a sense of responsibility and respect for fellow human beings are far more important and are what many schools appear to neglect when educating children.

On Education

Christopher Cooper
Modern Language lecturer,
Steiner School

At a time when more and more sections of humanity are sinking deeper and deeper into materialism, there rises the great question: how can one cultivate a new altruism based on insights into the true nature of human beings?

Kindergarten, schools and colleges are the seed beds where the new impulses can be sown which will then later bring in good harvests for the social life. These can then radiate within the dying and decaying elements of our overripe civilisation.

If we look around us we can see very few leaders of humanity who have the necessary spiritual insights to pour into education. In so many of them lives the picture of man as the naked ape or the black box with input and output. The hope of these thinkers for the future is in genetic engineering and not in radical new forms of education which improve the depleted stocks of human resources. This leads to a deep fatalism and sense of recognition in the millions who cannot find a new way forward. This can then take many forms: violence, anarchy, suicide, hooliganism, alcoholism. These are the hidden caricatures and perversions of those forces which should have been developed in the Kindergartens and classrooms: creative imagination, strength of character, rich feelings, unshakeable will power, living thinking. How can these develop when the force of competitiveness (= educational Darwinism), of premature intellectual learning ("Teach Your Baby to Read"), together with the early mechanisation of human learning (computers, videos, T.V., etc.) all bring the chilling winds of materialism into so many schools.

One of the few giants in the educational world of our own century is Rudolf Steiner. His own exact researches into the true nature of the human being led him to widen our views considerably. He showed how, far from being a blank slate at birth, the child's soul has matured in many earth lives before and brings with it a complex web of strengths and weaknesses. It is up to the teacher to lead out ('educare') these strengths so that gradually the human weaknesses are transformed. There will be a big difference between the teacher who subconsciously regards his class as young apes with a certain amount of intelligence and the one who can sense what the children have brought with them as human potential. These two quite different soul moods colour a lot of what is learnt in the classroom.

Steiner gives the educationalists some golden keys of insight when he describes the three great periods of seven years which lead from birth up to adulthood, each containing its own laws. In the first seven years, we should surround the child with a rich world of things worth imitating. It is not too difficult to see that the influence of the media and of forced intellectual learning act as discords in these years. From about 7 to 14, a child should feel the warm companionship and authority of one class teacher who gradually and lovingly opens the doors of learning so that wonder and joy at the beauties of the world can be experienced. This is not a sentimental attitude, even though at first it does not seem to take note of the harsh realities of the world today. The growing soul does need some protection from the dehumanised aspects of modern life.

In puberty and adolescence, the young person will be awakening to his or her real powers of thinking and these powers will be warm and supple as long as the teaching has not been mechanised and not merely intellectually oriented in the earlier years. Colour, music, finger and limb skills, rhythms, will have prep- ared this thinking so that its gradual appearance from puberty onwards is full of qualities and not merely a quantitatie thinking, only able to register factual information.

Speaking as a person who works in one of the 400 Steiner schools around the world, I can vouch for the fruitfulness of these methods and attitudes. In time they will create more and more oases within the arid elements of our civilisation and rescue much of education from death in the desert.

Education

Margot Cooper
Rudolf Steiner School

Education is perhaps the Supreme Art because it works with the human being as raw material, the most malleable material of all. The human race itself as raw stuff of future life on earth holds the key to the future. If human beings become degenerate, even evil, through misguided forms of education, evolution will go backwards. The right forms of education can, on the other hand, lead to a gradual regeneration of our ailing civilisation. We are at a critical turning point in the present time since both creature as well as destructive ideas are exerting their different pressures in schools. If education is a powerful key to the future it places great responsibility in the hands of all educators. Fundamental regard for human freedom has to prevail otherwise education becomes a dangerous tool in the hands of those who seek to manipulate human raw stuff for their own ends. We see the beginning of this in Marxist activists who infiltrate schools for political reasons.

In my own life I have found that Rudolf Steiner education is education towards freedom. It answers needs not only of children but also deeper social needs of parents, for they too remain in the 'School of Life', and find important stimuli in such schools which help their own development.

Many modern school and college buildings, despite the thousands spent on them, seem stereotyped compared with the existing architecture arising in Germany for the Rudolf Steiner schools and colleges there. How can boring blocks ever stimulate? - they only produce fatigue. The environment for learning should be truly beautiful, and our feeling for the beautiful should expand to include quite new forms. The forms should have a rhythmic flow, all long static deadly corridors and four square rabbit hutch classrooms could become a 'thing of the past'. Materials should be sympathetic and natural, creating with glowing colours a warmth almost touchable. The building should also harmonize with its environment and should express the meaning of the work going on in it, it should not be merely functional. Sussex University buildings answer some of these requirements.

Drawing on my experience as a Kindergarten and music and movement (Eurythmy) teacher, I feel that children should not start formal schooling until they are at least six years of age, preferably seven! It is good if they don't learn to write and read until about the time their first teeth are beginning to change. Ideally a child should be with its mother until it is four or five, then the transfer to Kindergarten should be gentle. Here the children should not be overstimulated but should live in a dreamy playful atmosphere.

There ought to be no question of computers in primary schools for children as young as five. This is the intrusion of very sophisticated adult software into the world of the child. Real childhood needs special safeguards today, it is threatened on all sides. Arithmetical calculations can come after seven and it is good to involve the whole body actively in clapping, stamping, skippig the numbers, so that the bodily experience of numbers counteracts all tendency to abstraction. Computer learning leaves out the heart and will, involves the head, but children live in a world of will, of doing.

Foreign languages, on the other hand, do have their rightful place in the Junior school. Properly taught, they can lay the basis for world consciousness.

Writing should come before reading and the early writing of letters should be linked with pictures just as in the early days of hieroglyphs. As an example, teacher could draw a wave on the blackboard and slowly let the W arise out of the picture. This coud be in colour and the children could also paint it, dance it, step it. This counterbalances the danger of the abstractions of modern letters which put many children off reading, writing and learning. In this country we have, after all, thousands of school drop-outs who cannot connect themselves with what they are taught.

From my own experience I know that artistic work in schools and colleges is of great importance. Not because we want to turn out artists, but in order to give people special qualities for life, courage, sensitivity, flexibility, imagination. We need to bring much more colour, music and movement to a society which is already so very intellectual in so many of its dealings. To some extent even the most unintelligent people cannot avoid being intellectualised!

In puberty and adolescence the teenagers shoud find their real thinking powers awakening, especially if the earlier education has been full of pictures, otherwise premature intellectualism can frostbite many young minds. A vacuum is created in the middle sphere, the heart region. Once this is weakened, drives and instincts from the will sphere and cravings rise up demanding fulfilment. Is it surprising that we have a 'drugs' problem, or that more children in the U.S. smoke pot than those who don't?

The signs of crisis are all too abundant and yet the methods used to deal with them smack of outmoded 19th century thinking. The great changes that will have to come about to avert social catastrophe will have to be made in the educational system. Present day, materialistic, scientific, technological and even psychological

systems of thought are all inadequate to deal alone with the problems. The Rudolf Steiner schools and colleges pave the path for new directions. I have witnessed the work arising in these schools. It is a living testimony of a new form of consciousness. This consciousness is emerging anyway all over the world. We need schools, colleges and universities that can recognise what is happening and take part in the great educative purpose of freedom. The freedom to find oneself, be oneself. The alternative is an educational system that so conditions its human raw stuff that it can be endlessly manipulated all its life without ever realising it, no true freedom.

Notes on Craft Teaching

D.S. Cousens, B. Ed.
Teacher of Craft, Design
and Technology,
Estover School

Craft has had a long association with organised education. For the majority of this time, craft has struggled to define and justify its existence in terms of the aims of education as a whole. I would suggest that it has constantly failed to do this and continues to fail. Despite its efforts to become a facet of education, craft in schools is still justified and taught instrumentally. It exists as a form of training, not a means of education.

Education versus Training

Any attempts to define the terms 'education' and 'training' in terms that would stand up to rigorous philosophical education would demand an impractical amount of space and time. I will therefore propose some loose working definitions from my own personal point of view and leave it up to the reader to accept or reject them.

I see the process of education as a development of a structure and a philosophy through which observations, knowledge, ideas and emotions can be ordered and understood (although it must be recognised that this structure does not exist as an empty framework but only because of its constituent elements).

Once this structure is recognised it becomes the tool to gain an overview of human experience. Any new information can be fitted into the existing pattern or it can challenge and change the perception of that pattern.

A useful analogy is the view that in a drawing or painting, the spaces or negative shapes within and between objects are just as important as the positive shapes of the objects themselves. To perceive the whole picture, the objects and their spaces must be regarded as a harmony.

At a simplistic level, education is the ability to recognise and appreciate the pattern as being as important as the knowledge and experience that constitutes the paint.

Training tends to value the products of a certain period of teaching rather than the process of ordering that teaching into education's overview. Thus a well trained craftsperson will possess skills that are observable through the products that he or she produces. In itself there is nothing inadequate with being well trained, but unless the person is also well educated they will always be in possession of seemingly autonomous and dissociated parcels of knowledge.

Such limitations can be very useful and this use has been long appreciated. The 1852 H.M.I. Report for Schools proposed:

> "... Any education of the children of the labouring classes that is not accompanied by industrial training and their actual employment in manual and useful labour, will entirely fail in checking the growth of crime."

Since the boundaries of a person's training can be defined, as a person's 'training' runs out simultaneously with the limit of their acquired skill and knowledge, the person can be manipulated and controlled by controlling what is taught. In the same way, a mynah bird can be taught to speak beautifully without ever understanding a word that it is saying and without ever being able to formulate a new sentence from its acquired vocabulary.

Craft Education or Craft Training?

I would suggest that craft in schools has never developed from training into education because it has always sought to gain status through the apparent usefulness of its skills and products. It justifies itself instrumentally and thus remains instrumental. As the supposed need for various skills and products changes, craft teaching must distort and mutate in order to encompass the trends and preserve the validity of its justification. Teaching blacksmithing and technical drawing may have given way to technology and graphical communication but the purpose remains the same. The teachers and their subject become trapped within the confines of their own justification and may fail to make the conceptual connection between their subject matter and the rest of the educational pattern. If the teachers fail to see the connections, the pupils have little hope.

If craft continues to justify itself in this way, the future is grim. The products of traditional craft are becoming less and less useful in terms of work and employment, thus the long held justifications will start to lose their foundation. The rapid expansion of craft teaching into the 'new' areas of computing and technology can only provide brief respite from this process. As long as craft continues to justify its new subject matter in the terms of nineteenth century popular education it cannot escape the process of decay.

Not only is craft teaching still a form of training, it is rapidly becoming training to little observable purpose. The new initiatives of the M.S.C. and the Y.T.S. schemes have predictably been embraced by craft teaching with enthusiasm. These schemes bring new recruits into static or contracting sectors of industry. The much lauded concept of transferable skills is a sham. The skills are transferable only as far as the trainers allow them to be. The trainees become so many mynah birds.

This training is still an overt method of social control, as is obvious from the structure of the trainee's points of assessment. The respect for traditional figures of 'authority' and acceptance of the work ethic constitutes a major part of the disciplinary training.

Perhaps the lack of practical purpose to craft teaching of most types makes the need for a pliable, docile and unimaginative population even more acute.

Education

Rachel Couter
Pupil, Devonport High
School for Girls;
12 years old

It is said that our schooldays are the happiest days of our lives. I do not know who first said it, but it must have been an adult. Most children think that school is something to be endured, like chickenpox or parents, and if our schooldays are the happiest, what are our later days going to be like?

Personally, I generally like school, because I want to learn. I was very lucky to have my primary schooling at a school where the headmistress and the staff were very dedicated, and cared about standards of behaviour. They believed that the three R's were very important and considered it their duty to educate us in good manners, self-discipline and caring about other people. I try to remember to use these qualities, as I think they make me a happier person.

Having learned, at primary school, to read fluently, write clearly, spell correctly and be competent in simple mathematics, I am now fortunate to be at a good school, where the teaching standards are high and the discipline is firm and fair. A good education depends so much on the competency of the teachers and the right environment in which to learn.

George Bernard Shaw, the famous playwright, once wrote: "He who can, does; he who cannot, teaches." I do not believe this, because a good, dedicated teacher can make even history interesting, despite all the dates. The teaching profession is so often underrated.

Of course, I do not like every subject, but I would not want to spoil it for others, so I just do my best. Who knows, one day, if I keep trying, I might even enjoy hockey and P.E.!

I especially enjoy History. It is so interesting learning about civilisations, which existed hundreds of years ago, and I am sure that we could learn a lot from them. The Ancient Greeks had the right ideas about education. They studied literature and music, gymnastics, philosophy and started the study of mathema- tics and astronomy. They believed that education should aim at a healthy mind in a healthy body. There were itinerant teachers for remote regions, elementary schools for the young and advanced education for older children. Athens even had a kind of university!

I love mathematics and Latin as well, and find great satisfaction in using my brain to work out the problems they provide.

My music at school is encouraged. I love making music, as it gives me such pleasure to sing or play. I have been learning the piano since I was five years old, and I am now learning to play the clarinet. The clarinet can be made to make such beautiful mellow sounds, and I enjoy playing it in the school orchestra. The most exciting (and nerve-racking) time is when I play solo music in public, especially during morning assembly, as it is difficult to lead six hundred girls into a hymn, but so satisfying when it is achieved in unison.

I also enjoy needlework and cookery. These subjects are very important for the future. Most girls, when they grow up, eventually get married, and good cooking and 'stitches in time' help to keep families happy. There is nothing better than a happy family life. I get so much pleasure and comfort at home with my parents and brother, and it makes me unhappy to hear of boys and girls who are not as fortunate as myself.

I believe that the only fair system of education is one which encourages every boy and girl to learn, and helps the brighter and more industrious pupils to a higher level of education. But there will always be inequality; the inequality of ability, intelligence and diligence. Having said this, I still believe that there is more to education than academic achievement, and learning to face life is equally essential. Surely the old-fashioned ideas of good manners, self-discipline and caring for others are just as important.

We all have our own individual talents and it is up to us to use these to the full. I want to make the most of my school days, to enable me to use my talents to the full, so that I can eventually be useful, in some way, to other people. To this end, I need to work hard at school, read as much as I can and learn to converse with, and respect my elders.

Museums in Education

David Curry
Keeper of Natural History,
Plymouth City Museum
and Art Gallery

> "Museums acquire and study objects of historic and aesthetic value which serve to illustrate certain developments and trends, and from these select objects and exhibit them in installations planned to inspire and educate the public" (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Museums are in essence a collection of collections which were born of a 19th century desire for knowledge. Gradually, throughout the century a record of Man's artistic, technological and scientific achievements were built up and from these humble beginnings grew a desire to provide prestigious places of culture where citizens could visit "to instruct and improve themselves". Museums were regarded as institutions which were more concerned with aesthetics and conservation than with popular education and very little encouragement was given to the children to visit their local museum.

Attitudes changed slowly and it wasn't until the 'fifties that a large network of Museum Schools Services had developed throughout the country. It is interesting to note that the museums' contribution towards formal education was specifically based on the provision of activities for schools, as if this was the only educational field in which museums had a part to play.

Museums are clearly intended to serve the public at large but many adults have never entered a museum nor are encouraged to do so. Those who do venture as far as the local museum, usually to shelter from the inclement weather, are usually confronted by a large, austere, cathedral-like building with a forbidding orn- ate entrance and a multiplicity of warning notices served to put off all but the brave. After entering and venturing as far as the front hall, the public are confronted with a uniformed attendant and regimented glass cases containing a miscellany of objects, often bearing no relationship to the adjacent case or to any reality, past or present. These are the remnants of the Victorian establishment which had a somewhat elitist view of education in museums.

Fortunately this exclusive attitude towards the public is being modified, albeit slowly, and most museums today are making increasing efforts to come to terms with the increasing numbers of school children and adults who form not only their new public but a source of income.

But whatever else our museums do well today, they still do not provide the visitor with a good educational experience. The basic problem seems that the meaning and significance of the exhibits tend to be lost on the generally uninformed lay visitor. A display may be full of meaning to the visitor who already happens to know something of the subject matter, but this type of visitor is by no means typical of the general public for whom such exhibitions are laid on. The great number of visitors simply wander in, tour the galleries and leave in a state of bemusement, having learned very little.

The most obvious failure of museums today, is their inability to create exhibits which communicate. Too much emphasis is placed on the display of the object rather than on the transmission of ideas and when attempts are made to transmit ideas very little consideration is given to the needs and interests of the public. Labels are either too brief or too long, explanatory captions or wallcharts explain nothing, children are unable to see the displays and viewing distances of large objects are often cumbersome.

Misjudgements of this kind are inexcusable as they could easily be avoided at almost no financial cost to the establishment.

In their quest for new techniques in education and interpretation museums are in danger of overloading their displays with audio-visual paraphernalia, drowning the objects under a mass of 'gobbly-gook'.

Audio-visual aids may brighten the displays and enlighten the visitor but they also bring other technical problems in their wake which may mean that the solution is more trouble than the original problem!

The museum has so much potential to offer in providing variety of methods through which the school and adult visitor can receive insight into and enjoyment of its collections. The interdisciplinary possibilities of these collections, together with the services of multidisciplinary staff expertise open up exciting and limitless potential learning situations. The casual visitor visits the museum more out of curiosity 'to see what they've got', and this underlines the unique and fundamental attraction of museums. They collect real objects ranging from pictures to pots and from bronzes to dinosaurs, which when correctly displayed will stimulate the curiosity and we hope invoke a demand for some form of follow-up.

Today with the ever-increasing demands made by schools the whole concept of education in museums is changing. The former traditional techniques of talks, lectures and displays no longer suffice and the museum's educational role has become more complex. A great deal of progress has been made but still major

problems of curatorial, teacher and committee indifference remain.

Why Comprehensive Education in Plymouth

Councillor Reg Curry
Former Leader of the Devon County Council Labour Group;
Principle Spokesman on Education for the Devon County Council Labour Party Group;
Now City Alderman

Plymouth has suffered a Grammar-School system for many many years, causing dissatisfaction because Grammar education by definition is only for a minority. Worse - an 11-plus test decides that four out of five who don't pass are classed as educational 'failures'.

Not all children develop at the same rate, but all can succeed in a basic secondary education, given the right attention and resources. Citizens of Plymouth will not accept that Secondary Modern Schools are as good as Grammar Schools, with much less chance to get qualifications.

Equal access to the mainstream of education should be every- one's right. This is not possible in a City offering two different types of school. How can every pupil be tested equally in a broad range of knowledge and skills required today? No-one can say for sure how his or her capacities will develop in the future. Some politicians resisted the change to comprehensive completely, it is true, but their number is small now, even in the most Conservative areas. Some sections of the media put strong views forward in support of a Grammar system, even before comprehensie education really started.

Comprehensive education is not opposed nationally or in most local areas by the Conservative party, it is only in Plymouth where such strong opposition has resisted for too long; even now under proposed restructuring of education in the City the Conservative party insists on keeping three Grammar Schools, two girls' and one boys', declaring loudly, "Freedom of choice". What choice? When people are asked to choose - in theory - between Grammar and Comprehensive systems, they imagine their children would be offered the Grammar School, but four out of five would be directed to the other type, a school with a more limited education, far fewer resources and sometimes lower esteem.

Recent education acts suggest that parents have more choice, but in fact the majority were only given a chance to express a preference. They still have no legal right to choose a comprehensive education, and again this choice is restricted to those who can afford to pay their own travelling costs if over 3 miles.

Some may consider it possible to have both Grammar and Comprehensive systems in the City, ignoring the fact that comprehensives are by definition schools for everyone.

Grammar schools in the same catchment area are bound to contract the range of education offered to everyone else in the comprehensive school, where they will get fewer resources, and eventually affect the school's morale, and parents' willingness to choose the school. They will realise it is no longer fully comprehensive.

The G.C.E. examinations, designed for a grammar school system, causes problems in a comprehensive school, by demanding the lion's share of attention and resources, downgrading other courses and pupils, and encouraging practices like streaming. We need examination reform, and progress in developing a common curriculum, including a 'core' of learning which everyone can experience.

We must make sure that Conservative extremists do not succeed in forcing a system that fails the majority of pupils, and once the local Conservatives realise that people will not accept their system of selection, they are more likely to postpone their ideas indefinitely.

Comprehensive education will never be safe from selection open or hidden, education cuts are still depriving schools and colleges of essential facilities and teaching, even basic upkeep. Until these are made good, there will be a desperate struggle to keep education the free service any democracy expects as of right.

Taxpayers and ratepayers pay over a million pounds a day to subsidise private schools - directly or indirectly. They get some of this because they can claim to be 'charities'. That is not freedom, that is privilege, the better off living off the rest. New laws are needed, even to define what a full comprehensive education is, and guarantee it to everyone, including the resources. More democratic ways of running schools and colleges are needed too, and better equality programmes for women and minority groups.

Education after 16 should provide a flexible combination of academic, practical and vocational study. There should be an agreement on how to develop a tertiary system. Training for work: is the Manpower Services Commission the right agency? All young people need a decent living wage or allowance, to enable them to continue in education and training without putting an impossible burden on the family. Training schemes should be carefully designed and monitored, providing real skills for real jobs. The present Youth Training Scheme provides none of this; no wonder young people feel it is only using them as cheap labour.

Comprehensive schools and colleges are part of a community's services, and should be available to everyone right through life. Everyone should take part in developing Comprehensive schools and colleges - councillors, parents, teachers, students, and all who care about education - to make sure of an educational future for all our children.

Education:
A curious activity

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One well-known psychology experiment set out to examine whether monkeys were simply driven by basic psychological needs such as hunger, thirst and sex in preference to psychological needs such as curiosity. The monkeys were contained in solitary confinement in a cell-like chamber. Periodically they were given the opportunity to view a variety of scenes through a peephole in the door. It was discovered, of course, that the monkeys given a choice between food and the opportunity for a 'peek' would often choose to 'peek'. What's more, similar findings were found in that much-maligned non-conformist, the rat.

It seems to me that the above little experiment illustrates many things (not least that some experimental psychology is simple-minded and contemptuous in its treatment and assumptions about animals). That apart, one conclusion that can be drawn is that curiosity, which can be regarded as a prerequisite and basic feature of learning and investigation, is shown in animals. An obvious enough conclusion. Even still more obvious is that we would therefore expect humans to demonstrate this even more acutely. But here, it seems to me, lies one of the tragedies of education today. Far from stimulating, cultivating and protecting this precious curiosity, we allow it to be constantly mangled in the cogs of the machinery of the education industries. Worse still, being blind to the perpetration of this crime, educators and politicians then ascribe the dull apathy of students to their personal qualities.

To take an example from my work as a psychologist teaching for the Open University, it is extremely common to note a contrast between the articulate and perceptive way students can apply their minds, not only to practical but abstract problems outside of their academic context. In the bar, on a train, at home, they may be articulate, yet when engaged in their academic work they often flounder and produce alienated pieces of work which merely traffic in academic ornaments and trinkets. Unfortunately the malaise runs deeper than the academic arena. In my research activity and explorations into therapy I have seen people, for example, in art therapy, frozen and unable at their first attempt to even put a line on a piece of paper. When encouraged to paint they usually say something like, "I was no good at art at school, I couldn't paint or draw anything." Unfortunately this is not mere modesty but the sad legacy of ten or more years of education. On the other hand, my own experience and many psychological studies confirm that young children feel little embarrassment about drawing, painting, singing, dancing and generally investigating and exploring their world.

How some of this damage occurs is obviously at the level of the relationship between teacher and pupil. I remember an elderly music and religion teacher saying to me when I was ten that my voice was like a frog's. Since at the time I was a bit too embarrassed and shamed (not to mention biased by the badpress frogs get in children's literature), I did not proceed to consider that perhaps her God nevertheless enjoyed their croaky voices raised in praise. I subsequently went musically mute for many years. She was not of course simply to blame, but merely a symptom of a much wider malaise. Some interesting studies by Rosenthal (1964) and his colleagues have shown that teaching situations frequently involve a process of self-fulfilling prophecies. In one study the performance of pupils was found to alter dramatically in line with the spurious intelligence quotient given to the teachers. Filming of the classroom interactions showed the teachers to be engaging in subtle, covert forms of encouragement of which they were totally unaware.

Nevertheless I remain an optimist, but unlike Voltaire's Dr Pangloss, I do not think that all these ills are for the best. The destruction of one person's spirit of curiosity and creative energy is unforgiveable. At the same time, though, it is this very spirit of curiosity itself which is food for optimism. Curiosity is reflexive, it leaves no stone unturned and eventually (sometimes at the prompting of a curious artist fascinated by worms, such as Robert Lenkiewicz), education itself is examined. So studies like Rosenthal's remove some of the dark oppressive fallacies about innate abilities which serve as excuses for the incompetence and class politics surrounding education. I am not optimistic enough though to hope that the diseases of education are easily to be cured: rather I believe only that the flame of curiosity and creativity is hard to extinguish.

Compassion

Prebendary Norman Davey
Director of Education of
the Diocese of Exeter

Lost Ideals

One of the important pastoral responsibilities of the Church today is to those who have, in one way or another, misused God's gift of sex. I wish to suggest that many young people leave the church, not for intellectual reasons, but because they have seen the contrast between their present behaviour and their earlier religious aspirations and ideals. The teaching of Christian moral principles is no reason for young people abandoning their faith and parting company with their Church.

Open Channels

Surely the Church must seek to keep such offenders within her fold, so that the ideals they reject may be still held up to them; that they may never be allowed to lose touch with the Church; that we need to keep open the channels of communication between God and human beings, of which the Church is the appointed agent. If this is truly one of the reasons for lapses, it makes one wonder how far it is the fault of an excessive emphasis upon the flesh as the main, in fact the only, source of sin, and to long for a constructive approach.

Communication

It raises the problem of communication, for the idea, we would probably all agree, in most peoples' minds is not that Christ died for sinners, nor that the Church's prime concern, care and love, is for the sinner who time and time again fails, and needs so desperately to know that he or she can start again with us and with our help. This vital Christian doctrine we failed to com-municate meaningfully. We have too often given the impression that the Church is a 'closed club' with a membership limited to the elite who never sin.

Guilt

Perhaps we have encouraged guilt, with all that that implies in terms of fear, petrification and the vicious suggestion that to live with the fearful evil we know is better than to break away from it to face the even more fearful penalties of sin.

Repentance

What a travesty of the Gospel of Love we think we preach! We seek to engender not fear, but repentance - a turning again in hope and confidence. Shame - and young people know what this means - needs the encouragement of compassion in order that it may bear fruit in a new start.

Condemnation

We must never abrogate our prophetic task, which impels us to speak forth boldly and convincingly. But today we are surrounded by people who indignantly point to the modern woman taken in adultery and watch to see our reaction. Like the Jews St. John tells us about, they desire condemnation - a categorical judgement, not merely individual, but more often general - concerning a whole generation. St. John wisely records that in the case of Jesus, this was an attempt to test our Lord. They, like many people today, were quite willing to hold up hands in horror,but when challenged, if themselves without sin, to accuse the woman,, melted away stricken by their own conscience. Our Lord's words to the woman were simple enough, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more."

Its Harm

What incalculable harm we do to Christ's children when we given the impression of condemnation. It may be due to disappointment, frustration, shock, a plain failure to understand why John or Joan has so behaved. It matters not what is the reason, only that this is the impression so often given.

Love evokes love

The result is a withdrawal by the sinner who feels and thinks that the love he expected and had been taught to expect has itself been withdrawn. What bad psychology! What a travesty of the Gospel! This may not be true of us individually, but it is true even if unintentional of many Christians, and the task of many is to help Christians to see the uselessness of this and its unworthiness. We may think, alongside the woman taken in adultery, of the 'Woman who was a sinner in the city'. Again our Lord was surrounded by an indignant crowd demanding excommunication. At once he obtained their agreement that it is the power of love to give and forgive

which itself evokes love. So her sins, which were many, were forgiven.

Cost

Notice that in this dominical compassion, which the Church claims to follow and represent, there is the cost of freely and frankly giving and forgiving - the sacrificing love which, it seems, sometimes, is prevenient. And reflecting on this, one longs for this to be made more apparent to the thousands of young people who are being tragically exploited and encouraged to sin, despite their better selves given them by God.

God understands

And then note also that the motive and circumstances are taken into account "for she hath loved much". Young people who are adults' responsibility, like us all, long to be loved and to love. In seeking this goal, they fall into sin more often in ignorance than in wilfulness. God understands and knows this. Do Christians communicate this great truth to them? Or do they more often, by their bearing and approach, suggest that excommunication is the only decent thing a young person can accept in this situation?

Personal Experience

Much more often, it is a personal experience which has led individuals to unchurch themselves and to believe that this is the desire of the Church. Intellectual difficulties per se are seldom the real stumbling block.

Compassion

No amount of compassionate pastoral care can in the least relieve Christians of the duty constantly to proclaim the moral ideals and principles of the New Testament. Proclaim we must - loudly and persistently - but proclamation is not the same as condemnation of an individual or a generation. The point is that the two are often associated and confused in the public's image of the Church. That this is so today is due more than anything else to Christians' failure to balance proclamation with compassion. Failure to express compassion and to let it be seen does lead to voluntary excommunication. The compassion of the body of Christ is then hidden, and the glory and peace found in response to it denied and rejected. This, perhaps more than techniques or teaching, is the challenge today, for it is the compassion and friendship which is at the heart of the love which all people want and need. It is this which itself shows that there is a way back and encourages repentance. Christians have a dual task: constantly to proclaim the ideal that the true way forward may be seen and known; and constantly to extend compassion that the way back may be seen and known, with equal assurance, when the ideal has not been achieved.

Education Today

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Today when we mention education most people think of the word in its narrowest sense - a period of time in an institution where children or adults are introduced to specific skills and given information about specific subjects. The word 'educate', however, has a dual source from the Latin verb 'educare', which means to bring up (children) and from 'educere' which means to draw out. In the widest sense education is a continual process from birth to grave; a gradual drawing out, developing and exten ding of the natural powers and qualities we have been born with. All through life we learn - from books, from observation of the world around us, from our varied experiences and from contact with others. Gibbon, the historian, once wrote that, "every person has two educations, one which he receives from others and one, more important, which he gives himself."

The rate of learning, however, is not uniform. If you sub ject two people to exactly the same experience they will not necessarily come out with the same conclusions; give two people the same book and they will not absorb the same material; give two people a list of facts and they will not retain the same in formation. We learn at different rates and in different circum stances according to our level of intelligence, our previous experiences and the amount of concentration we feel the particu lar activity merits. We also learn at different rates throughout our lives. Although we are not emotionally and physically mature until we are about twentythree years of age, the human brain reaches its peak at about sixteen years. It is therefore vitally important that in our early years we build a strong foundation on which our learning will be based.

Schools are the obvious answer - places where children are collected together with an informed person in charge, who has himself studied the subjects considered essential by a particular society to be basic subjects for study, and the way the children develop and learn. Schools are not a new concept. Children in ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome were subject to the same discip lines and taught the same skills we are today. In fact it would be difficult to find a brand new concept in education one that has not been conceived and tried before. Theorists and educa tionalists would often have us believe they have discovered a brave new world in education rediscovered occasionally maybe, but not discovered. Froebel died over a hundred and thirty years ago yet we are told today that children learn through play and must be given structured activities as if it was a radical new idea! In fact, one of the things that distresses me most in education today, is the tendency of many of those who are promo ted to higher office to then attempt to justify their promotion by uncovering and extolling the virtues of a basic truth that the rest of us, they apparently think, have missed. In fact, so eager are some of them in their quest for unique knowledge that they will acclaim loudly the theories of anyone who writes a thesis on his or her view of the latest approach to education. Thus arise disasters like the William Tyndale school, where the radical approach to the people involved was at first praised to the skies then later condemned when the extreme policies had already had a disastrous effect on a whole generation of school children.

Methods which have been tried for generations are not neces sarily the best. We must all have open minds and be prepared to examine any 'new' approach; but we should not be in haste to throw out of the window what we know does work, to replace it with something we have not been convinced will do so.

Our complex modern democratic society accepts that it is the right of every child born in it to have an education which will enable it to play a role in that society according to the level of its ability. The paramount questions which arise at this stage are: How is that education to be provided; what form will it take; and at what ages will it begin and end?

The history of the British government's involvement in education is a long one, beginning with the granting in 1833 of #20,000 to voluntary societies to enable factory children to be given two hours a day of formal education at primary age. Pre vious to this all education was in the hands of voluntary soci eties, individuals or churches. In 1902 the Education Act laid down the basis for our modern system when Local Education Auth orities were created to be responsible for the organisation and funding of local education at all levels, with the provision of government grants; although private organisations could continue to run schools and colleges and receive government aid. This continues to be the basic system today, although some of these primate schools now fall into a bracket that receives no govern ment or local authority aid. The government appoints inspectors, H.M.I.s, who make sure that satisfactory overall standards are being achieved in educational establishments in all authorities. Local authorities appoint advisors who advocate the methods of teaching and set standards the local authority wishes to perpet uate. In the last few years the line between the two has become somewhat blurred and most advisors now have peripatetic assis tants who do the job the advisors were originally appointed to do.

Added to this dual control by government and local author ities each school has a board of governors or managers who deal with the appointments to and the internal running of schools. Although this has long been the

established system it is considered by many people to be far from satisfactory. Basically it means that education is controlled by people who are noneducationalists. The government, civil servants, local authority workers, architects, and governors all play their part in appoin ting people at all levels and controlling the organisation and building of schools yet their expertise in the field of education is often limited to the fact that they themselves once received a basic education. The vast majority have never worked in a school and have no training based on the development or needs of child ren. This seems to me ludicrous. You must train for three, four or five years to become a teacher, but you need no training to appoint one! Architects design schools for teachers and child ren often with little regard for the needs of children or their natural behaviour patterns. What person who has ever dealt with young children in large numbers would build a wall with off-white walls that would not wash without the paint coming off and cream floors that have to be cleaned with a special machine and cleaner every day? Yet the new school in which I teach was designed in this way. Most of the shelves were not within the reach of the children and storage space was limited to one small stock room, a visual aids' cupboard and a shelved area curtained across in the middle of each room. I have been a teacher in three brand new schools and each time problems like these have arisen. Most new schools are either overcrowded or half empty within ten years of having been built because no heed is taken of the future housing plans for that area.

The main area for controversy, however, lies in the problem of how much control central government should have over educatio nal establishments, as opposed to local government control, and where should that control begin and end?

The first disadvantage of central control is obvious. Changing governments mean changing policies. No overall long-term plan is possible if central control is complete, because a new government may mean a complete change of direction. Education becomes a political football and no party ever places education at the top of its list of priorities. Yet the youth of today will one day be in control of the country at all levels and the better their education the better the future prospects of that country are. The present government has been criticised for its attitude to education and justifiably so. The cuts have been savage. They may attempt to point to rising costs and say they are spending more money on education than ever before, but the argument is a false one. Rising numbers in classes and shortage of basic materials and inadequate buildings and closures of nurseries and colleges bear witness to this - to say nothing of the eroding salaries of the teaching profession. The truth is that schools today are expected to be equipped with more and more costly basic equipment - science equipment, language laboratories, gardening tools, art and craft materials, televisions, video machines, computers, tape recorders, cameras, radios, elaborate P.E. equipment - the list is endless. These do not figure in the accounts of previous governments on anything like the present scale, but the costs have to be met by schools today. Children now stay at school longer than they used to. The leaving age is now sixteen but most stay on to take some form of final exam, and many return again to add to their examination results. All this enters into the escalating costs. Education, to keep pace with modern technology and society's demands, must have a constantly expanding budget not a contracting one in real terms. The pupil-teacher ratio has often been quoted as evidence of improving standards, but that, too, is entirely false. It takes into account none of the thousands of non-teaching appointments or part-time teaching appointments. The constantly expanding size of schools and the expansion of the number of sub jects that are supposed to be covered by a school and the constant changes in the system, mean that more and more organi sation posts are created each year and actual class sizes go on rising.

Reliable forecasts by experts indicate that unemployment in this country will probably have reached seven million by the end of this century. Politicians make no comment and continue to close technical schools and cut university places. Could their negligent attitude towards education have sinister implications? Could it be that they have decided that an ill educated unemp loyed section of the population will have a more muted voice and cause less trouble than a well educated one? Place their atti tude towards education side by side with the deliberate buildup on the front of law and order and the armed forces, and this may not seem so farfetched an idea.

What then have the opposition to offer? The Labour Party seem to place about the same emphasis on education that the Conservatives do. The only clear educational policy that deserves mention is the proposal to abolish private schools com pletely. On the surface this may seem desirable to many people - but is it? Firstly, it is anti-democratic. It is part of the democratic idea that people should be free to use the money they earn in any way they choose within the law. If they choose to buy a large car, become alcoholics, take holidays abroad or spend their money on their children's education, they should be free to do so. Secondly, they provide a viable alternative to a set pattern of education. We are all familiar with some of the con troversial schools based on unusual concepts of education like Gordonstoun or Dartington. Not so many of the public are aware that there are also schools in this group which provide special ised remedial education for problems like dyslexia. Thirdly, it is impossible to abolish private education. Should the govern ment close down all private schools in this country, many of them would simply re-establish themselves abroad and people who wished would accordingly pay for their children to go to school in France, Switzerland, Germany, etc. A few thousand children would then fall back into the state system and the state would have to pay for their education. The kudos of the education would rise, not fall, and nothing would be gained.

The third alternative party, the Liberal and Social Demo cratic Alliance, has unfortunately produced no clear statement on their policy for education, but Dr Owen has stated that educa tion should be given more priority in government and that unemp loyment is here to stay, and we must plan accordingly. This sounds a realistic and frank statement for a politician to make, so let us hope that he can persuade the Alliance to make a clear statement of their policies so that there really is a third alternative.

Whatever the main party in office, it would seem that the cost of educating the nation's children is so vast that a degree of central government control is inevitable, whether we like it or not. How far, then, should this control extend? Some people advocate complete government control. Looking at countries which operate in this way, it would seem that this would mean that every school at each level would have the same ratio of

staff and pupils; every school would teach the same subjects at the same time each day; every subject would be clearly defined in a central document which laid down exact lesson content at each stage and every teacher would be trained for a set group of children in an establishment which was centrally controlled in the same way.

This may all sound perfectly reasonable to some people but I think anyone involved in education can see the dangers. Non educationalists at government level would dictate the pattern. Mistakes would be nationwide and very difficult to correct because of the vast expenditure involved. Vast sums of money would be wasted should a new government wish to make radical changes and only remain in office for a short length of time. But the worst effect would be the less obvious one. The best lessons are often unplanned. They arise from unexpected oppor tunities in and out of the classroom. The arrival of a fire engine to put out a fire in a nearby house; cranes working on a site adjacent to school; American and French visitors to the school; trees and plants uprooted by vandals, are just a few of the events that spring to my mind as having led to questions, impromptu discussions and activities of immense value. These and much more would be lost if one was tied to a rigid timetable. The individuality of the teacher would disappear too. Under the present system, we all tend to use the gifts we have to give an extra zest to lessons. If our talent lies in music or art, we give more emphasis to this in our classrooms and in our present ation of lessons. If our strength lies in drama or language, we enliven the proceedings by dramatising events or stories. This provides for variety and in giving we enrich the syllabus. All this is lost if there is a set, tight pattern of presentation, and a rigid timetable. I personally feel that all the indica tions are that the state intends to exercise more direct control over education and I believe it has already reached the accept able limit of interference.

The control at the moment is balanced by the degree of con trol exercised by the Local Education Authorities. Unfortunately the present government is not content to accept local authority control. The rate capping bill effectively stopped the Local Authorities making their own decisions on finance. In fact, at the recent salary negotiations between the teachers' unions and the Local Authority, one of the chief officers of the Authority actually said that they could not agree to a rise in the offer made, whether it was justified or not, because if they did, they would move over the limit and be penalised by the government. Every one percent they offered, he said, would normally cost them one million pounds, but with the new law in operation it would cost them two and a half million pounds. The reply, of course, was that if they disliked the status quo they should say so and complain to the government, not to the unions.

Not content with tying the Local Authorities' hands in this way, Sir Keith Joseph then suggested that even if a big award was agreed to by arbitration the money to pay for the extra amount would not be available and there would have to be cuts in jobs, supplies, etc. to meet the new award. It appears that he feels that teachers should sacrifice themselves and their families to pay for the education of the rest of the country's children. The Local Education Authorities could, of course, stand up against the goverment's edicts, but Plymouth is a Conservative council by nature and political bias, so even at this level education be comes a pawn in the political game.

The third element of control is that of the governors. As these are individual appointments they are as effective as the people appointed to the posts. Even at this level politics enter in and some governing bodies are politically biased, though attempts are often made to prevent this happening. You cannot ask a prospective governor what his political opinions are unless he has previously declared them, as these are not supposed to be political appointments. Thus you may end up with a board of governors who will always toe the party line in any subject that arises. You may also end up with governors who like the kudos of the appointment but feel obliged to turn up to meetings about once a year and are totally ignorant of how the school operates and content to remain in ignorance.

Where then does safety lie? I should like to say in the hands of the people most involved teachers themselves. How ever, the profession is often bedevilled by problems within as well as without. "As many men, as many opinions" seems to sum up teachers as a whole. Unions were created to deal with problems that arise with governments and employers and to protect the individual, but unions are only as strong as their members allow them to be. Teachers seem to have missed the elemental point that unions function by the motto, "United we stand, divided we fall." In the past many members have resigned from a union be cause they were dissatisfied with the way it functioned. They formed small splinter unions that have no real power and very little voice. Had they stayed inside their original union and fought from within they could have achieved much more. They could have taken office and fought to change the direction the union was taking. If enough had spoken out they would have been effective. Many teachers seem to feel that there is something demeaning about association with a union. They quote words like 'professional' and suggest that strikes are harmful and that money is a word that cannot be mentioned. They belong to a union because it provides them with an insurance policy if anything happens to them professionally the union will fight on their be half and they are covered financially for any accidents. This is utter hypocrisy. We all work for a salary and they, like everyone else, expect to be paid. Some of us may be second salary earners and have a satisfactory income apart from our salaries; but this does not alter the case that for most people that salary must be sufficient to keep a family. Surely if we are to preach morality it is only right that we should fight for the poorest paid members to be adequately reimbursed for all the time and training it took to make them teachers. Like it or not, society equates money with status and the lower a teacher's salary falls the lower his or her status in the social structure becomes. Professionalism is an outdated, term people today equate it with soldiers and footballers, the professionals created by the media. As for strikes - yes, they are harmful and undesirable but surely it is necessary and ethical to make a legal stand against injustice. Unions fight for standards as well as salaries. They protect the interests of the children as well as the people who teach them. To use a union simply as an insurance and be prepared to accept salary awards which other people have gone on strike for and lost money to gain, is surely the true immorality.

What then can we hope for in the future? Beleaguered with out and within, the prospect sometimes looks grim. Would it be too much to hope that teachers should unite and say, we believe in the cause we serve? We will control our own destiny. We will only vote for a government that will pledge itself to make edu- cation a priority. We will fight as one for standards we feel are necessary and not be intimidated or coerced into accepting less. We will be appointed and controlled by people who have spent some considerable time working in schools and have qualifi cations related to education. We will not operate systems or use methods we do not believe in. "Such stuff as dreams are made of" - but I shall go on hoping, for "Hope springs eternally".

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I have just re-read parts of E.P. Thompson's "The Making of the English Working Class" to remind myself that the struggle for freedom, equality and rights has been long, bitter and fluctuating in its strength. From "the planting of the liberty tree", as Thompson calls it, the social history is mirrored in education.

In my own life time, I have seen that tree flourish and fade and, recently, be viciously lopped. After the war, in spite of lack of resources, schools, teachers, we had great hope and worked with zeal for the new world we were to build. We saw educational opportunity as part of that new world. I started in a school built for 250 which opened with 700, surrounded by a sea of mud, gaps where building was planned when supplies improved and in which none of our children up to seven had been to school. I had fifty-two children in part of a factory building. All of the staff were young, few of us had homes, but survived in rooms or shared houses, but we were all glad to have men back home and the chance to build anew.

The next years of struggle saw more schools, much debate, the move towards comprehensives and a reduction in the divisive nature of education. Soon there was the political swing to the right, the building of the welfare state and the message, "You've never had it so good." The products of western industrial society cars, furniture, houses, affluence - were the new fruits of the "liberty tree" and had to be packaged and sold as such. In education, the message was, "Work hard, use the system and these fruits shall be yours." Jobs for all, access to climbing the social scale, we are all middle class now, were all part of the deal. We still had large classes in school, but we had lovely, new buildings, great incentives to experiment, to question and to innovate. It was exciting, full of promise, and women at last achieved equal pay. The consensus society appeared to have arrived.

There was, of course, the McCarthy era in America, with its spin-off here, and the struggle for Civil Rights in the U.S.A., and later the Vietnam War. Waves of reaction from these reached Europe, along with other effluence from that society. We had our own waves of newcomers, and teachers were in the forefront of coping with their impact in schools. We saw the last struggles of Empire and the rise of Aldermaston and all that that implied. But on the whole it was an era of hedonism summed up by an American economist, Heller, as "When the cost of fulfilling a people's aspirations can be met out of a growing horn of plenty, instead of robbing Peter to pay Paul - ideological road blocks melt away and consensus replaces conflict."

During this era my husband and I worked for 7 years in Special Education with the severely maladjusted. I also did work in special classes, Primary and Secondary, a particularly happy period in a new Hertfordshire Primary School, and when my husband died of a coronary at an early age, I was head of a Village School. I re-routed my life after his death and was one of the mad fools who went into Colleges of Education to cope with vastly increased numbers, new courses and new challenges; a period when from growth and planning we suddenly moved into decline and cut back. A large part of my work in colleges was directed to fos- tering awareness of children with special needs and for the last 15 years this interest has been dominant. Special schools I have always found to be oases of genuine care, staffed by the best, where achievement is measured by a scale relevant to human need. Although I believe in integration, have worked hard to achieve it, I have learned to distrust policies which will bring integration on the cheap.

There has been a downward slide in the last ten years, where hope and belief have given way to pragmatism, conformity, struggle for jobs, and the driving underground of initiative and innovation. There are, of course, exceptions, areas of resistance, where cynicism has not dulled the quiet, centuries-long guerilla war waged by teachers who search for the development of potential in all children. Today it has to be more cunning, subtle, underresourced. Many teachers feel they have no carrot and no stick. To refurbish the old slogans of social control, religion, morality, hard work and job promise, is to get cynical responses, particularly for those teachers of the less able who would have filled semiand unskilled jobs. Now, such teachers have to be magicians in the classroom to find stimulus, credibility, and the fostering of hope. But they are there, even if equality of opportunity has come to mean an equal place in the dole queue. At the same time, the private sector of education flourishes as the state schools return to fund raising, begging for resources and the remedial departments suffer more staff cuts.

I'm now retired, but go back to college to participate in courses on Special Needs. I hear the tales of teachers as they struggle to cope with the less able; the caring and imagination is there, but there is also despair. Many teachers are involved in the cosmetic games played by the range of Youth Training Schemes, the cover-up name for emptiness and lack of future promise. Others are involved in the enormous range of institutional care for the deviants, the maladjusted, or the rapidly increasing number of children in care. I have searched in recent years for a rational explanation of what is happening to millions of our children and what the

future holds. I have thought along these lines:

There is increasing insecurity because of family breakdown, compounded with poverty. Even in 1981 the D.H.S.S. showed that 15 million people in Britain were on or below the poverty line, of whom 3.75 million were children. Parents who were raised with expectations of security and gratification cannot offer rational explanations to themselves for what is happening, let alone their children. Schools' attempts to offer examples of the old morality find themselves at odds with external values, the deliberate fostering of sectarianism, patriotism, the old game of creating enemies to divert the bitterness of reality.

To foster this old ploy, there is the new Grand Master of illusion, the media, with its concentration on the frivolous, the violent, and the transient, by which the swollen bellies of the Third World appear of no more significance than a pet food advert. There has been little challenge to this power, little discussion at home or school of this all-encompassing influence on the concepts of the young.

Soon we shall have three generations of people who have known little morality except self-gratification and a significant part of one generation who have never known achievement or the experience of contributing to society. Amongst them are included those who have learned the benefits of operating on or over the fringes of legality, who care nothing about the processes of government or any consideration of their own ability to effect change. At the same time, the schools have been directed not to offer courses which could challenge concepts, peace studies has become a dirty word, controversy is suspect. Is it better to tolerate glue sniffing and drugs than provide experiences to blow open the minds of the young with challenging ideas, opportunities for creativity and dreams of a better world?

I once held a parent's evening on the new Maths, when I managed to get all the fathers in the village school to discuss and use the new resources. At the end, discussion turned to the future of their children, their expectations and hopes. One parent, from Chad, did not join in. As he was leaving, I asked him what he wanted for his son, and he answered with a wry smile, "to be a citizen of the world." I find it very hard to believe that I would hear such a response in a school today, and it is the memory of this lost hope that keeps me an angry old woman today.

But I have to believe that the liberty tree will flourish again, and that the schools will continue to provide those secret gardeners to nurture and feed the roots in the hope that the fruits of their labour will not have been polluted by the acid rain of the environment we have all allowed to form.

Local Education

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Firstly, I am annoyed that the government are reluctant to co- operate with teachers, with regard to the money needed to teach children. Teaching requires a lot of resources and many new materials, and I don't see why children's potential has to be repressed, through lack of capital (as well as the teacher!). Why many people revile teachers, merely through the amount of holidays offered, as well as short working hours, I don't know. They forget that no doubt much of a teacher's time is spent at meetings, at planning lessons, assessing, evaluating and marking children's work. It is a vocation which thus demands a somewhat dedicated, unselfish response. Teachers work (or should work) quite hard, and it is certainly not a routine job where that kind of employment money is put at a higher premium.

It is annoying that there is a constant lack of capital to resolve problems like falling rolls, staff cuts, resources, and strike action. Perhaps if the teachers were regularly examined - through various in-service schemes, and more attention and priority given to the development of each child's ability there would be more money expended in the right areas.

It's nice to know that more training is given to teachers and concentration is placed on developing various skills of teachers, e.g. integration. Perhaps in the future it won't be 50% of teachers which are supposely proven to be 'inadequate' throughout the whole country.

I like the open-plan methods adopted in primary schools - no doubt it must give plenty of scope for the children to develop their interests through the senses, and through freedom of movement.

I don't like the new comprehensive systems brought out. I think the system could cause deterioration of standards - i.e. created through discipline, streaming examinations, and even options. I think maybe it depends to what extent should each child's education be considered, and would the ability of more capable children be repressed or undermined. Are equal opportunities offered?

Education for what?
Notes for a critique of schooling

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Part One

Work and education in primitive societies

Human beings evolved in groups that were tiny in comparison with modern villages in Britain today. Since they depended on gathering food and hunting they were for long periods nomadic, moving according to the seasons and to the migrations of the herds on which they depended for food and clothing. The education of children could not be delegated to specialists - it had to take place in the living context of the group at work and at play.

When food was plentiful and the men did not have to be away hunting for days they would share in the care of the young children and in the work around the village, making or repairing shelters, making hunting weapons and teaching the boys to interpret weather signs.

For women pregnancy would be a common state as infant mortality was high. That and the care of infants would prevent them having to trek over long distances in search of food, except when the group moved to a new site. Even when the later development of agriculture and farming led to more geographical stability, frequent pregnancy would tend to make the women specialise in the domestic arts, including gardening, cookery, medicine and the education of infants. All children would become familiar with those arts since they would be expected to help the women according to their age and capacity.

The youngest children, breast-fed of necessity for far longer than is customary in our culture, remained close to their mothers and surrounded by other women and girls (and men and boys when they were not hunting) as they went about their work of gathering food, brewing, making pots, weaving, painting, making magic or singing and talking - as still happens in many non- industrial societies today.

Because they lived in one large round hut like the Round House of the Iron Age, or in the close assembly of smaller huts as in an African compound, the care of children was communal, the nearest adult or older child attending to the immediate needs for food, drink or solace - as tends to happen today when a group of parents jointly runs a play group. This pattern of care would be in contrast to that exercised by the modern housewife, isolated for much of the day on a housing estate with only the company of her youngest child. The 'primitive' children would be constantly surrounded by speech directly relevant to the work in hand - a factor essential to the growth of intelligence.

Education was obviously necessary to perpetuate the knowledge and skills required for survival. It had to be incidental to normal work since the pace and intensity of that work depended on the seasons and would vary from day to day or month to month especially in a changeable climate. At any one time the number of infants, i.e. those too young to produce enough goods or services to support themselves, were always a small proportion of the total group, so instruction in any skill would normally be individual or to a group of not more than three or four; much of the elementary instruction would be given by older children.

This relationship between work and education remained so long as productivity depended on manpower, animal power or the power of wind or water harnessed by simple machines. It operated from the time when human beings emerged as a distinct social species until less than two hundred years ago - a period during which speech appeared and transformed the difference between them and animals. Speech rendered the process of evolution itself less subject to mere chance, by the power it provided for people to change their environment through, for example, selective breeding of animals and crops.

It was under conditions like those outlined above - during a period of some fifteen million years - that the human brain evolved to its present size and complexity and, according to the evidence of prehistoric artefacts, displayed a sensitivity and intelligence that we today feel as our own.

Speech

The point at which people became distinct from animals is most usefully indicated by the emergence of speech, speech being defined as a system of vocal symbols socially structured to convey meaning. Sounds associated with meaning are uttered by many species but the range of meaning is normally restricted to fear, rage, alarm or parental reassurance to the young. Variations from this include the territorial songs of birds and the dawn chorus or whale 'songs' which serve to reestablish contact between members of very volatile groups. Human vocal sounds are used for these purposes too, but are also used to indicate objects and events outside the speaker.

The human brain, superficially similar to that of the higher apes, differs in having a larger associative cortex in proportion to the older sensimotor cortex, the function of the former being to bring together into association stimuli originating in sensory experiences of different kinds, and to produce symbols or social- ly agreed referents to those experiences. These referents can then become, as sounds, visual or tactile signals, forms of experience themselves. Sounds uttered in the context of action can be used to symbolise those actions as words.

Pavlov described speech as 'the second signal system,' the 'first signal system' being the actual sight, sound, smell, feel or taste or the object. So the word 'tiger' in certain contexts can produce the same feeling of panic as the actual sight or sound of the animal. Because of this power to recall experience, speech, together with all the other systems of symbols that have been invented - writing, music, dancing, painting - makes possible memory, history and eventually all that goes to make human culture.

It is important to realise that the word as symbol is part of the social context in which the adult or adults are working, handling tools or materials and talking about what they are doing, either incidentally or in the form of specific instruction to the child. It is the association of the word with the action or object that provides the 'meaning' of the symbol.

Children educated in this way - through the coordination of activity and speech, find little difficulty in absorbing most complicated procedures and out of a multiplicity of concrete experiences coordinated with language, forming abstractions that derive from the common elements in those experiences. In this way, as Piaget has shown, children develop skill in abstract thought or 'intelligence'. Attempts to force children to think abstractly by getting them to manipulate symbols before they have had the range of sensory experience that lies behind those symbols will confuse them and actually delay or even impede their capacity to handle abstractions with ease.

Other desirable consequences follow from the education of children through participation in work undertaken by groups. First there is an inbuilt corrective mechanism at work; any faulty description of an object or process or any misconception about function on the part of the adult instructing the child would be corrected by the other adults - a feature rarely present in modern education. Second, any idiosyncrasy of character or behaviour towards a child would, if seen to be harmful, be corrected by the others. In the modern nuclear family of 2.3 children cooped up with their parents during their leisure hours children can become burdened with the personal hangups of the parents to the point when they may be more or less handicapped for the rest of their lives. This does not seem to happen under systems of group living. From personal experience I know that my West Indian and African friends who had been brought up in compounds or close communities show a buoyancy, independence of thought and relaxation about sexual and personal relationships and a general level of vitality that my British and European friends envy. Their attitude to old people is more loving because no single adult could dominate their lives as they can with us.

A third consequence is of importance not only to the psychic health of the individual but to the cohesion and survival of the group. Because the child grows up among a group of people who have nourished, protected and educated her, she is bound to them by multiple ties of affection, interest and a deep sense of identity. The social structures that emerge in such groups may have some of the outward trappings of class divisions but they lack the gross exploitation to which western industrialised societies have inured. As Bruno Bettelheim showed in his study of children in the Israeli kibbutzim, Children of the Dream, children brought up together in this way develop such close bonds that in time of danger or war they readily risk or even sacrifice their lives for the group or for any of its members - a fact that was commonly noted by British Army commanders when opposed by 'the natives' during the nineteenth century imperialist wars.

In such societies the education of children is a well-integrated totality, growing naturally from the close, intimate care of the infant by the group of women, through the gradually extending circle of observation and participation in work and play, to the full and responsible role of the adult member of the group. The core of that education is the community itself and its daily work. With the exception of particular ceremonies associated with initiation to womanhood or manhood, every child has the full range of his own culture available. Each acquires a breadth of knowledge, skill and sensitivity that is co-extensive with the whole culture - a thing that cannot be said for our modern industrailised cultures where class, occupational and educational divisions cut off large areas of activity and sensitivity from every child.

The speech of such societies reflects their cohesion. Whereas in societies riven by class and occupational divisions speech usage intimately reflects those divisions, in the types of society referred to above, language both reflects and reinforces their integrity.

To claim all this is not, of course, to pretend that many of the customs, beliefs and habits of many groups were such as we could tolerate. Cannibalism, female circumcision, bodily disfigurement, cruel initiation ceremonies, the murder of female babies and the exclusion of women from decision making have all, collectively or individually, appeared in groups that otherwise seemed free of social strife and were generally solicitous of the welfare of all their members.

Under simpler conditions the adults know intimately what the child is able to do and what he can understand because he is in constant touch with them as they are with one another: factual knowledge and understanding go hand-in-hand. Today in school the child is too often saturated with masses of facts to be learned by heart. How far they will become part of his understanding will remain a matter of chance.

Part Two

Pre-Industrial Britain

Work

Before the Industrial Revolution patterns of work were dictated by the seasons and by the culture of crops and the care of animals. Periods of intense activity in spring and autumn alternated with quieter summers and winters. The pagan festivals marking and celebrating the progress of the year had been absorbed into the Christian calendar. A technology based on manpower, animal power and the power of wind and water produced enough food and materials to tide over until the following year. Late frosts or prolonged droughts could mean hunger or even famine, and there were few safeguards against such disasters as a plague.

Villages and most towns were small enough for everyone to know everyone else from infancy by their first name - until late in the eighteenth century they had no second name other than that of their birthplace or the craft they practised - and most people died where they had been born, a fact borne out by the evidence of tombstones and parish registers. Neighbours cooperated to plough, harrow, seed and gather the harvest or to build a cottage or a barn. Good times and bad were shared; only thus could the poor, viz. the mass of the people, survive. From my own personal experience in a small village in the south of Ireland during and after the first World War I can vouch that many of these conditions survived into the twentieth century in more remote areas of the British Isles.

Such conditions induced a state of mind and a set of values that was wary of innovation, wedded to old and tried traditions, generous and loyal to friends and neighbours, modest in consumption and careful of tools, materials and the environment. People survived directly on their knowledge and skill and so were disciplined and far-sighted in planning and effort. Because many of the conditions were similar to those in so-called 'primitive' societies, they fostered similar attitudes and values. I recall the similarities that I found between my own childhood experiences and those of children in my London school who had been brought up in Cypriot villages. These children consistently displayed levels of practical intelligence well above average and qualities of generosity, responsiveness and initiative well above average. So the reputation that Englishmen held for love of good craftsmanship, for ingenuity, for loyalty and for fearlessness in stating and holding to a point of view was not specific to Englishmen: it derived from social conditions of a particular kind.

Education

Formal education was restricted to the children of the upper classes destined for careers in the Church or the State, and was largely carried out by private tutors at home or by clerics. Grammar schools or 'scholes of grammere and song' had been founded by kings and bishops from the time of Alfred to ensure a supply of trained candidates for the Church and the newly-emerging Civil Service.

The bulk of the population educated their own children at home and at work by incorporating their young energies into whatever work had to be done. Craftsmanship was passed from father to son and mother to daughter. The education of the child of the commoner, as for the child of the statesman, was for work. For the child of the statesman, Latin was at the core of the curriculum because Latin was the international language of politics and law.

Part Three

The Industrial Period

Work

Within a few decades the Enclosure Acts, the application of steam power to agriculture and the building of factories in the new towns swept the working classes off the land and into the towns in search of work. The story of the overcrowding, the lack of hygiene, the squalor and the depravity that were created by the greedy exploitation of the poor has been too well documented to need repetition here. What has not been so fully explored was the change in the general psyche of the countryman and woman caused by degrading conditions of work and housing and by the switch from patterns of work founded on felt social need and applied with reason, to patterns of work dictated by the drive for profit and regulated by the machine rather than by human need.

The first massive change was that from work patterns determined by the regular rhythms of the seasons and the regular variations in the amount of daylight, to those fixed by the mill owner intent on keeping his mills working for as long as possible every day in order to make as much profit as he could. Because he could lengthen the working day with artificial light he could impose in winter a working day as long as that in summer. The varying patterns of work within the day characteristic of the agricultural pattern - herding, feeding, milking, harnessing, ploughing, watering - gave way to the fixed and mechanical repetition of actions that had to accord exactly with the motions of the machine. Men and women and very young children had to become, in effect, 'appendages to machines'.

This mechanisation of labour eliminated the need for thought and judgement by the worker. The country worker had to deal with a number of varying factors in his work, such as season, weather, crop, type of animal, availability of raw materials and so on. His decisions were reached jointly with others since so much work could only be done with the help of others and since they were all, to greater or lesser extents, concerned with the outcome.

In this sense, and in the sense used by both Marx and Dewey, work was also education, the growing-point of culture: it was a praxis or the continuous interplay of practice and theory. The modern machine-minder, whether in the factory or on the land, is isolated by the sub-division of labour and the greater productivity of the power under his control. Decisions about his work are taken by others who are often quite remote. He has no say in the organisation of his work or in the disposal of what he produces. The tractor driver on a big farm often works alone for days or weeks on end. He is as isolated from his fellow workers as the men on the production line of a car factory. He can only talk with others during breaks or in his leisure time. At work he has become as anonymous as the standardised products he turns out.

But the social consequences of these changes are also damaging. Where work is done together for purposes held in common the individuals feel enriched both in the process and in the result. The work, if it is tedious, can be enlivened by conversation or song; where it is novel or difficult it can be eased by explanation. The factory or mill workers spent twelve or fourteen hours a day at their machines and returned to their over-crowded and often insanitary back-to-backs with little energy to do anything but eat and sleep. All the leisure activities of the old village life - fishing, poaching, collecting herbs, gardening, bee-keeping or brewing - were no longer available. In the evenings they could go to the tavern and on Sunday, their one free day, they could go to chapel or walk in the country which had now become not the living context of their every waking hour but something remote in space and function from their daily work.

Social reformers there were in plenty but they had no power to control the rapacity of the new generation of employers until the scandal caused by the condition of the poor reached national proportions and forced Parliament to pass the Factory Acts. It was during the period leading up to those Acts - a period of squalor, degradation and brutality that we now associate only with apartheid and other forms of fascist oppression - that the once independent spirit of the labouring poor was beaten into servility. When desperate workers tried by collective action to improve their wages or conditions of work the landowners and factory owners, as magistrates, fined, imprisoned or deported them. The most peaceful meetings were dispersed by the military.

Poverty, fear of unemployment, malnutrition and disease steadily killed the natural altruism that had bound the village communities together under even the most difficult conditions, and created the anxious self-interest and materialism that is the hall-mark of workers under capitalism. Meagre wages for men forced women into factories leaving their babies with old, crippled or pregnant women who could not work, so, for the youngest child the vital links between care, speech, work and education was snapped. Older children were either at work that had no value as education or they were running wild.

Schooling

A powerful drive behind the passing of the Education Act of 1870 was the fear of the revolutionary movements on the Continent spreading to this country. Schools for the poor had been built very early in the nineteenth century by the Church with the object of teaching children to read so that they might read the Bible and be saved. Shrewd observers noticed that children so schooled were more amenable and 'well-behaved' than those who had run wild. The docility they displayed was exactly what the factory owners wanted of their work force. They began to press for all children to attend school: the move to compulsory and universal education rested on economic and political foundations.

New forms of production required not only new forms of organisation but new attitudes to authority on the part of the workers. The old schools had been seen to produce obedience, punctuality and docility, so they could be used as training grounds for the habits and virtues required of an easily controlled labour force. It is not surprising that the School Boards approached the problems of school design with the concept of the factory firmly in mind: the processing of raw materials to predetermined standards. Factories had machines set out in ranks and files: the first impact of the school on the observer is of a building with desks set out in rows and files. School organisation, content and methods reflected the new work methods and relationships. Knowledge was subdivided into subjects, stages and grades and was frequently tested - a form of 'quality control'. Instead of hooters, whistles blew or bells rang to mark the beginning and end of each period; the teacher surveyed his pupils from a dais, issued commands and delegated authority to monitors who were trained, like future foremen and women, to exercise minor responsibilities such as giving out pens and ink, collecting and even marking work and generally preparing the classroom for the teacher and tidying up after the lesson.

Children were marshalled into and out of the school, waiting in lines and being called forward by numbers; registers were marked and punishment given for absence or lateness - the forerunner of 'clocking-in' where lateness or absence automatically reduces pay. Everything in school was modelled on some part of the system of mass production, even so far as to attempt to standardise the selection of ability in groups of children being taught together - later more systematically applied as 'standardised tests of intelligence'.

Moral education centred on ideas of unquestioning obedience, punctuality, regularity, modesty and respect for authority. Children were made to feel guilty for loss of time or waste of materials; theft and disobedience were major sins to be punished by the fires of hell. Religion was invoked to justify such conditioning of future workers. The sense of guilt, which paralleled what was being preached in the chapels to which most of the workers went, was fostered in school to the highest degree because it had the effect of convincing pupils that authority, whether of the teacher, the boss, the local council or the Crown, must be right, must derive from God, so that rebellion must be the gravest of sins. Power had to be seen to rest with authority so the cane came to be the symbol of education: its shadow still obscures the light.

The 'hidden curriculum' of conditioning the young for servitude permeated the content of lessons. History was the history of kings and queens, battles and conquest; geography revolved around the idea of an empire on which the sun never set; literacy and numeracy focussed on handwriting in copperplate, the endless totting up of bills, the correspondence and the learning by heart of poems and stories intended to encourage to virtue and to dissuade from depravity. Physical 'jerks' or Swedish drill was used to get pupils into the habit of keeping fit for work rather than from enjoyment through games and for love of the open air. Then, as now, the image of royalty was that of a military or naval commander and the national anthem was associated with all public functions to condition the association of the ruling class with power.

In The Mass Psychology of Fascism Wilhelm Reich describes in detail how the young in capitalist societies are made to have a 'fascist character-structure'. Just as the fasces of the Roman lictors were held in place by the straps bound round them, so the coherence of the individual character or personality is made to depend on the forms of external authority that give shape and direction to individual impulses. By bringing children up in an environment made for the convenience of the manufacturing process; by surrounding them with dangerous machines like gas cookers, electric cookers, washing machines, power points, accessible windows in high blocks, toxic substances and fast traffic, we force the adults to exercise close and constant supervision over the children for their safety. This contrasts with the freedom of the village and the village green where all chidren were well known to all adults.

In the modern town or city the child finds few outlets for his natural curiosity that are not thwarted by the anxiety of the parent or teacher. He concludes that he can only engage in action if the adult consents. In time, especially when he has been punished for not heeding adult advice, he comes to doubt the validity of his own impulses; he must be wicked by nature since adults have so often to control or punish him. In the long run since he cannot beat them he joins them, as Freud so clearly shows in 'the internalisation of the parent'. The strength of authority springs from fear of punishment and doubt about one's own worth.

The association of fear with a authority thus brings about the most effective form of control - internal control - for the purposes of authority. Only thus can you produce people who will not rebel against degrading or inhuman conditions. A few may try to do so, but because they are a few they can easily be brought under control by more severe punishment or, in the last resort, by incarcerating them in mental hospitals and so institutionalising what hitherto they had experienced only as a secret doubt - the fear that they might be 'mad' because they so often had the desire to rebel. When internal control can be brought about by early conditioning then external force has to be used only in emergency, hence the popularity among educational psychologists of B.F. Skinner's theories of 'operant conditioning' in colleges of education.

Schools today have changed from their Victorian counterparts only in minor details. Essentially their function remains, for the bulk of the population, what it was from the beginning - to train the young into desirable work habits or, failing that, to contain them and keep them out of the labour market as long as possible since automation steadily reduces the number of workers needed to produce a given volume of commodities. That the schools find their task more and more difficult is not for want of trying. Other agencies more powerful than school - radio, television, youth culture - have appeared and raised doubts about our national assumptions. New attitudes to child-rearing, following on the spread of Freudian ideas, have changed many of our attitudes to authority. Teachers, selected because they have shown themselves to be traditionalist in values and behaviour, have been unable to make clear the true relationship of education to society and too often flounder into a slack 'permissiveness' that they mistake for 'progressiveness' or 'democracy'; or they retreat into authoritarianism and provoke rebellion from their pupils.

Part Four

Looking for a Way Out

Progressive Schools

It was in protest against the dehumanising function of school that the progressive school movement started in Britain in the early twenties, following growing familiarity with Freud's ideas. A.S. Neil started Summerhill and Dora Russell started Beacon Hill to create small communities where sex repression could be obviated, the child's confidence and freedom to express his true feelings fostered, a wide range of interests encouraged and punishment as an incentive rejected. Susan Isaacs started The Malting House with similar objectives. All three schools were small; Summerhill at its largest just exceeded seventy, so they were able to maintain something of the atmosphere of a family.

An important difference between Summerhill and the others was that while Dora and Susan set out deliberately to teach through art, drama, literature and the keeping of small animals, and the discussion of problems and topics arising incidentally, as happens in a normal family, Neill, although providing teachers and classrooms for different subjects, brought no pressure on children to attend lessons. He set great store by the Saturday evening meeting and the various tribunals set up by the children to deal with breaches of laws made by the whole community, because he wished to dispel traditional fear of authority and restore it to its rational place as the collective will in which all had shared.

There was always pressure from some parents on Neill to put children in for examinations. So long as he lived he resisted that pressure. After his death Summerhill entered pupils for state examinations as other schools did, so far as I know, bringing pressure to bear on pupils to attend lessons.

Progressive schools are available only to those who can pay the fees; they are, therefore, limited effectively to the upper class or "one of its subcultures (the creative, permissive intelligentsia)" as Royston Lambert writes of Dartington Hall School. As boarding schools they isolate their pupils from the real world even more effectively than do day schools. Maurice Punch's book Progressive Retreat is a critique of Dartington up to the end of the period when Bill Curry was Head. It was written at a time when we began to realise that any form of progressive education that could not apply to ordinary children was a misdirection of effort.

Dr. Royston Lambert, the Cambridge sociologist who had undertaken research for the second Newsom Report on the possible integration of the private school system with the state system, was appointed by the Dartington Trustees as Head of the school to give effect to his recommendations. Among his many experiments seeking to link Dartington with schools in working-class areas was a scheme to exchange pupils with Northcliffe School, an ordinary state school in Conisbrough, Yorkshire (see: An Experiment in Progressive Education in a State School by M. Duane, M. Phil. Thesis Nottingham Univ. 1977). Although the school was brilliantly successful in raising the consciousness and the confidence of the pupils from the secondary school, it was abandoned, ostensibly for economic reasons, but, on the evidence of some adults directly concerned with the scheme and of some Dartington parents, at least in part because it was a political 'hot potato'. The statement by both the Doncaster Education Authority and the Dartington Trustees to the effect that the scheme was too expensive to continue in its original form was, in effect, equivalent to saying, "We are not ready for children of the working classes to be treated like children of the elite. We cannot contemplate the prospect of the widespread social change that would result from such assumptions realised on a national scale." Just as Neill preached sexual freedom for adolescents but could not allow it in practice in Summerhill because the school would be closed instantly by the DES, so progressive education may preach that we treat pupils democratically but is instantly prevented from putting that belief into practice, should it start to do so.

Free Schools

If the progressive schools gain in the freedom and self- confidence of their pupils they do so at the expense of isolating them, even more than state schools, from the ordinary world of home, work and neighbourhood for long stretches at a time. The Free Schools for Neill signified an important break with the old assumption that progressive education was OK for middle-class children (an opinion voiced to me by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors when he visited Howe Dell School, a secondary modern school in rural Hertfordshire), but not for children of working-class parents. Neill's original inspiration had come from Homer Lane whose Little Commonwealth at Monkton Wyld in Dorset was run for working-class youngsters who had been sent to him from the Courts rather than to Borstal.

Where the Free schools have a philosophy it tends to call on Paul Goodman, Paulo Freire and others, notably Illich, advocating alternative forms of social organisation. But in America George Dennison opened his First Street Free School and in Britain John Ord opened his Liverpool Free School in response to the many children truanting from State schools because they found them hostile and oppressive. In 1965 the then Education Officer of the Inner London Education Authority asked me to give him some suggestions for what to do with the many pupils who were roaming the streets of London during school hours because they had been 'expelled' by their secondary schools for disruptive behaviour. On the basis of the suggestions which I and others made, the ILEA formed a number of units which later became known as 'truancy centres' or 'sin bins' to which schools could send pupils whom they could not manage.

The aim of these centres was to enable small groups of pupils to work with more sympathetic teachers in a less formal atmosphere, to gain the confidence of even the least cooperative and to return them eventually to school for the last few weeks so that they might end their compulsory school period with a reasonably good report and so have a better chance of finding employment.

The failure of such solutions to touch more than a minute part of the problems facing schools lies in the assumption that the children they deal with are somehow rare 'exceptions' to an otherwise well-functioning system, with the consequent refusal even to recognise that a deep-seated and extensive malaise permeates our society, a malaise that appears under different aspects as crime, drug addiction, absenteeism and the many stress illnesses that we seem unable to obviate.

Over a period of more than eight years the A.S. Neill Trust and Association, formed to foster the idea of greater freedom for children and more say for them in their own education, has found many of its members among those who work in Free schools. Active discussion of the place and fruition of Free schools has taken up many hours, but conclusions have tended to remain at very abstract levels.

A paper, written by one of the Bezugspersonen ('people who are important in the child's life') from the Frankfurt Free school, expresses many of the problems and dilemmas voiced at ASNTA meetings. After visiting a number of progressive and Free schools in Britain he wrote:

> "they are all adult-dominated or at least predetermine the children's decisions for them.
>
> "They mainly reduce the idea of freedom to the freedom of choice between different offers ... The kids can choose between maths and English and woodwork. In White Lion (School) they can refuse to do 'anything' (of course, they want to do something and everybody is doing lots of things the whole day through. But it might be 'just hanging around or playing around'). It is not the young person's own active wish. It is the reaction to what is on offer.
>
> "The question 'What is life about?' is already answered! It is: growing up, being socialised into the adults' world. The child's freedom is the freedom to choose her or his own way to a destination already fixed by the adults.
>
> "Each of these schools offers much more freedom than any state school could do ... Sometimes, when a lot of fighting is going on in Frankfurt Free School (between kids, Bezugs-personen and parents), I wonder whether I wouldn't prefer the nice, smooth atmosphere of Kirkdale School. But in the end I stick to Frankfurt thinking that the other schools are 'adult- schools', whilst Frankfurt is a 'children-school'."

The Free school teachers with whom I have discussed the Frankfurt paper agree that we too often turn a blind eye to the sense of aimlessness that seems easily to pervade a Free school if it is not organised by adults so as to occupy most of the pupils' time. The paper continues, after describing how things were done in the early days of the school - projects, visits, classes in English - set up in response to the demands of the children:

> "The problem that appeared after doing things in this way for more than five years was that only very few things happen with continuity. Things started and then petered out. Projects which needed concentration over a longer period of time were very rarely finished. The school day was dominated by activities which it was possible to do spontaneously such as playing games, roller-skating, soccer, reading or telling stories."

The Frankfurt paper highlights the problem of how, under school conditions, to maintain genuine freedom for children while ensuring that they become literate, socially sensitive and skilful in a wide range of skills. In the Free schools, as in Summer-hill and the rest, children develop much strength of character and the ability to be clear about their own responsibility in making decisions affecting their lives.

Free schools in Britain suffer from many restrictions: they have to raise funds, fight off Local Education Authorities and find teachers who not only sympathise with their aims but are mature and qualified enough to give something of value; they also are expected to work for little or nothing. They mostly operate in the poorest parts of our cities where parents may have little time, even if they desire, actively to cooperate in the work of the schools.

For these and other reasons Free schools have appeared like mushrooms and as quickly died away. A very few have survived for more than a few years simply because the adults have been deeply committed to the fostering of free spirits.

Progressive ideas in state schools

It is commonly claimed by politicians and administrators that progressive ideas already operate within state schools and that, for example, caning has virtually died out as a result of the work of heads and teachers. That caning was diminishing in middle-class areas because middle-class parents were uneasy about it is certainly true. But the experience of those like Bob Mackenzie in Braehead School and in the ironically named Summerhill Academy, makes it clear that it was still flourishing in schools in working class areas. 'Was', since the pressures brought to bear by STOPP - the Society of Teachers and Parents Opposed to Physical Punishment - have come to a critical point with their support of parents who have taken their objections to caning to the International Court at The Hague and received favourable verdicts from that Court. Now Local Education Authorities are moving to outlaw the cane in all schools or have undertaken to do so in the near future.

Without going into a philosophical analysis of what is meant by 'freedom' and accepting, with A.S. Neill, as a practical formulation for everyday purposes, that there is an important difference between 'freedom' and 'licence' - the former meaning 'having the power to act or think according to one's own will or choice', and

the latter, 'acting without regard to the feelings or rights of others' - it is clear that state schools cannot permit children to be free in the sense in which Neill used it. State schools exist to create young citizens modelled on the prevailing criteria of what is acceptable in matters of belief and behaviour.

In a sociey fragmented by wealth and class state schools would not, could not educate children to believe, for example, that all men are equal or that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. Especially if the schools impressed on the children that belief without action is hypocrisy. Of course such doctrines are preached and taught in schools but the actual practice that we live by is seen to contradict the belief. The fact that there are different types of school for the lower classes, for the middle-classes and for the upper classes - comprehensives, grammar schools and public schools - which are staffed and equipped to prepare their pupils for those social roles, is a daily denial of both the democratic and the Christian message. Sociological research over the last twenty years has clarified with massive detail the different social roles of our different types of school.

Freedom for children - illusory or feasible?

What do we mean by 'freedom' in the context of schools? Is it enough to say that we are free when we can choose to act or not at will? There are many aspects to the concept of freedom, such as 'absence of restraint', 'power and skills to act', 'a context relevant to the action', 'the question of consequences in action' ...

A young child can exercise freedom to the extent that he can envisage an objective, has the physical power and skills to attain it and is aware of the more obvious consequences of his action, including the reactions of others.

Because we know that the child's ability to foresee consequences is limited either by his stage of development or by lack of experience, we take care to provide an environment that is safe. The absence of restraint that allows the adolescent safely to cross a busy street could be fatal if applied to a three-yearold. But because we also know that the child is growing in both power and understanding with experience, we take care to withdraw restrictions gradually and to provide a wider range of experiences on which to exercise his burgeoning strength and intelligence. The playpen may be necessary at the crawling stage but is likely to be harmful to the child who can walk with ease. A pass to the Reading Room of the British Museum would be useless to a five-year-old but could be an 'Open Sesame' to some adolescents.

As social beings we live fully and harmoniously to the extent that we are in constant communication with those around us and are aware of their wants and needs as we are of our own - what Illich describes as 'conviviality'. Schooling that does not provide experiences that will develop sensitivity to others along with awareness of self is grossly deficient.

Summerhill was frequenly denounced, mostly by those who had never visited the school, as a 'Do as you please' school - despite Neill's reiterated distinction between freedom and licence. My own first visit to the school in the late forties made further reading of Neill's books superfluous, though I have read them all.

In all the many Meetings that I attended over a period of twenty years the agenda were made by the pupils. Most items were complaints by individuals that others had bullied them or their friends, stolen or borrowed their personal possessions or disturbed their privacy or sleep. The ensuing discussion made it clear to the culprit how others reacted to his behaviour and, because it came from his peers, it seemed to have much more force than rebukes given by teachers to pupils in conventional schools. Sometimes the Meeting upheld the case of the defendant when it was discovered that the complainant was lying, acting with malice or distorting the behaviour of the defendant for his own ends. Sometimes complaints were made by the Staff and were dealt with in exactly the same way as they would have been if raised by pupils.

Some opponents of progressive education have argued that it is unrealistic to give children responsibility that belongs to adults. Neill was clear about where boundaries lay. Pupils could not decide whether or not the school should pay the rates imposed by the County Council. They understood that there were some things not in their power to change, as when they found, in Wales, that their customary games of hockey on Sunday morning would offend their chapel-going neighbours, they simply decided to play on another day. Or as when they were wiring a barn for a school play and Neill told them that he could not have the barn insured against fire unless they used wire of a heavier gauge, they just accepted it as fact beyond their control and used wire to suit. So the concept of freedom requires, as Engels pointed out, 'the recognition of necessity'; the recognition that there may be, at the time of having to make a decision, some things that cannot then be changed, even if it might be possible later to work to bring about change.

Part Five

Some Criticisms of Schooling

Any criticism of schooling must bear in mind not only the organisation, methods of teaching and curricula of schools but their function in relation to society as a whole. In this paper I have not dealt in detail with the manner in which different social classes are schooled in different types of institution - compre- hensives, grammar and Public schools. More than twenty years of research have shown how this is done in great detail.

We also have to bear in mind the learner - hitherto almost universally regarded as wax or putty to be moulded according to what the decision-makers, or the ruling classes, find to be in <u>their</u> best interests. Attitudes to children have changed since the war, as a result of the spread of Freudian ideas about the effects of early training and the growing demand for more democratic participation by the 'lower classes' and by women. Educational debate is riven by arguments between geneticists and environmentalists, traditionalists and progressives, believers in God and believers in Man. At the core of the arguments is a huge political crisis about

the very nature of the society we want. Each side holds spoken or unspoken assumptions about the form it should take.

I believe that we are entering what may be a final struggle, not so much between Left and Right - there are too many protagonists on each side who are indistinguishable from those on the other side - as between different views of the nature of Man. The argument on one side is for widespread dispersal of wealth and power from the centre to smaller and more autonomous areas. Under such a development institutions hitherto associated with the control of power by small elites - banks, police, the Forces - would be replaced by centres of communication and resources easily accessible to all.

The alternative is an acceleration of the process whereby power, wealth and control moves into the hands of smaller groups linked to similar groups in other countries and modelled on existing systems operated by multinational corporations in the interests of a cohering international elite. In such a development the system of education would reflect the change, schooling for the masses being intensified in the direction of operant-conditioning based on reward for conformity rather than punishment for non-conformity.

My own conviction - if we can avoid the danger of mushrooming wars throughout the world leading to nuclear war - is that we shall move towards a greater dispersal of wealth and power, so I write in hope, however tenuous that may seem in the context of the Thatcher government's determination to destroy the trade unions piecemeal.

The first criticism of schools is that they segregate children into buildings remote from the processes of work and the human speech and activity incidental to that work. In consequence they do not develop an adequate awareness of the complex interdependencies between different forms of work and between different people. They have to submit to a process of forcefeeding of streams of facts which are academic abstractions divorced from the real activities from which they derive. For eleven years or more children sit for many hours every schoolday to undergo what is a distortion of mind and body that has become, apparently, a permanent feature of western schooling.

I remember showing a sound and colour film about iron founding to a group of boys. They seemed interested and sat for nearly an hour watching the film. As I watched with them I recalled the time when, as a small boy in southern Ireland, I would stand for hours watching the blacksmith at work. When work was slack he would teach me how to heat the iron to a white heat and then pound it on the anvil. My memory is compounded of heat, flickering light, dull thumping sounds and sounds as clear as bells; of smells of the fire, of sweat and sizzling horn; of glistening muscles, swinging body, hard breathing and the grunt of effort. I can recall in clear detail every step of the process because I learned with all my senses and through my own activity.

The boys to whom I showed the film retained a generalised impression immediately afterwards. A week later the bright images had all but disappeared and they could not recall the order of events.

In reflecting further on this event I remembered the various ways in which I had been drawn into the work of my grandfather's small farm; how I picked up the many skills to do with the handling of horses, the care of animals and the use of machinery. I saw the discipline of work not as an unpleasant adjunct to the task but as an intrinsic part of the relationships between agents, means and ends.

John Dewey in The School and Society writes:

> "(There was a time) when the household was practically the centre in which were carried on, or about which were clustered, all the typical forms of industrial occupation. The clothing was for the most part made in the house; the members of the household were usually familiar also with the shearing of the sheep, the carding and spinning of the wool, and the plying of the loom ... The supply of flour, lumber, of foods, of building material ... was produced in the immediate neighbourhood ... The entire industrial process stood revealed, from the production on the farm of the raw materials till the finished article was actually put to use ... The children, as they gained in strength and capacity, were gradually initiated into the mysteries of the several processes ...
>
> We cannot overlook the factors of discipline and character-building involved in this kind of life: training in habits of order and of industry, and in the idea of responsibility, of obligation to do something, to produce something, in the world. There was always something which really needed to be done, and a real necessity that each member of the household should do his own part faithfully and in cooperation with others. Personalities which became effective in action were bred and tested in the medium of action. Again, we cannot overlook the importance for educational purposes of the close and intimate acquaintance got with nature at first hand, with real things and materials, with the actual processes of their manipulation, and the knowledge of their social necessities and uses ... Verbal memory can be trained in committing tasks, a certain discipline of the reasoning powers can be acquired through lessons in science and mathematics; but, after all, this is somewhat remote and shadowy compared with the training of attention and of judgement that is required in having to do things with a real motive behind and a real outcome ahead."

When children grow and learn under such conditions they display qualities of reason and foresight and a lively intelligence that can rarely be seen under conventional school conditions. Conventional schooling, except for the fortunate few whose homes provide opportunities for action and learning, steadily stultifies natural curiosity and induces a feeling of helplessness in the face of authority. Those who pass 'standardised tests of intelligence and achievement' and public examinations are permitted to go on and learn more. Those who fail learn the 'salutory' lesson that they must not value their own power or ability to the point of criticising the system of teaching, or taking initiative of their own. It is when the system of schooling has succeeded in inducing such

self-derogatory feelings that it has indeeded succeeded in its purpose of preparing the 'lower orders' for their role in a class-structured society.

Both Marx and Dewey saw work and the human relations that developed around work as the growing point of culture. William Morris in The Factory as it Might Be (1866) came to a similar conclusion. All three saw it as a powerful medium of education, but the crucial difference between work as they envisaged it and the work that has come to be the norm under either capitalism or state-capitalism is that the latter is done for profit and organised, not by those who do the work but by those who own the tools and the materials; whereas the former is work done for the satisfaction of need by those who both own and control and tools and organise the work themselves.

A second criticism of schools follows directly from this point, viz. that the work done in school does not arise from the need of the community in which they live: it is laid down by university examination boards or other bodies external to the schools. Even when the teachers are represented on such boards, as in the setting up of C.S.E. schemes, the validity of such schemes is negated by the attitudes of the universities who regard them as inferior to G.C.E., and refuse to count them as being of equivalent value in entering the universities.

Little of the work done in school, other than in art, sports or crafts, is either pleasurable or seen by the children to be necessary. I recall that when the headmistress of a nearby Infant school asked some of my boys to make some badly-needed toys for the infants they went about the work with enthusiasm and care. When they took the toys to the infants and saw them play they asked eagerly whether they could make some more.

A third criticism that arises from the isolation of the school from the community is that the teachers are not seen by the children to be doing work of importance, as is the bus driver, the bricklayer, the farm worker or the doctor. Those who teach art, games or crafts less often complain that their classes are unruly or bored than do teachers of the academic subjects who can rarely be seen to practise what they teach. How often do children see the work of their English teacher in the local press or published as a book?

A fourth criticism is that the pupil-teacher ratio, even in Free and progressive schools and certainly in state schools, far exceeds the ratio of adults to children in non-industrial societies where education has not yet been separated off from productive work. The teacher, therefore, has to make his main activity not the production of goods or the more obvious services, with the education of a child or perhaps two or three at a particular moment, a subsidiary element of his work. His main preoccupation is the control and teaching of a large number of children remote from the actual work that is the basis of the abstractions that form the subject matter of his teaching.

A fifth criticism is that work in school has no natural beginning and end, no natural relationship to other forms of work and little variation in rhythm and form that calls for minute-byminute assessment, judgement and decision. School work that comes nearest to having such qualities is seen in domestic subjects, games and handicrafts. In the hands of a good teacher a mathematical problem starts with a problem in real life - it might be the planning and costing of a camping expedition - and ends with the practical solution - the expedition whose success or failure is part of the judgement about whether the methods used in the solution were correct or not. Unfortunately, even the best of such teachers soon find themselves under pressure to abandon such methods in order to 'complete the syllabus'.

The Project Method, sometimes used in Primary schools, seeks to integrate knowledge and methods from different subjects around a central task. The idea arose from the work of Kirkpatrick, a contemporary of Dewey, who had observed that engineering students set to build a railway between two towns had to solve problems that included an analysis of the commercial interchange between the towns, a geological survey of the region to find the best and most economical route between the towns, and so on. When the railway had been built the students were seen to have a wider and deeper knowledge of what was required by engineering and a more profound satisfaction at the completion of the task than had been seen at the conclusion of courses undertaken by previous generations of similar students.

A sixth criticism is that the judgement of whether work done by students is good or bad, correct or incorrect, is too often seen by the students as an arbitrary decision by the teacher. A child whose rabbit hutch lets the rain in and the rabbit out knows, without being told by the teacher, that the job is not well done. And when he has found for himself he will then be ready to listen to the technical information that will help him to get it right. I have heard many teachers complain that allowing children to learn in this way would be wasteful of raw materials. They miss the point that if this way operates from the very beginning when the child starts to want to fix things together the child's attitude to instruction will be very different from what it is when he is compelled to practise dovetail joints until he gets them perfect before he is allowed to make something he really wants.

There are other criticisms to be made about schooling, whether state or progressive. A few families have kept their children at home and absorbed them into the work of the farm or the smallholding; they have then organised the education of the children around that work. Such an option is open only to those with such resources: it is not so easily available to the city dweller. It is very much preferable to ordinary schooling but it usually lacks at least two important components - the group of adults with varied skills, interests and personalities that are a healthy corrective to the suffocating dominance of one pair of parents over their own children, however cultivated and liberal they may be. The other missing element is the presence of other children from different parents and of different ages.

Closed family groups are incestuous in a cultural if not in a literal sense. As John Layard discovered in his work with the Stone Age people of Malekula, the 'incest taboo' was imposed not so much for genetic reasons as to ensure both that new discoveries made by one family - such as the invention of the plough - would, by exogamous marriage, be rapidly dispersed throughout the clan; and that the idiosyncratic relationships fostered by one pair of parents might not cause sources of division within the clan for too long.

We have now begun to realise afresh what 'primitive' societies had never forgotten, that the process of creating in the child not only knowledge and skill but, more importantly, the feelings and motives that will make her an intelligent, aware and effective individual, sensitive, responsive and cooperative, are much, much more complex than we had imagined and are certainly beyond the resources available to a single family or a single school. Through the linguistic work of Sapir, Chomsky, Bernstein and others; through the work of McV. Hunt, Hebb, Piaget, Luria and Vygotsky - not to mention the new generation of brain research emerging in the second half of this century - the intricate relationships between perception, action and symbol are steadily being understood. Speech encapsulates social experience and forms a 'frame of reference' or self-regulatory mechanism to guide action. No longer do we conceive of the brain as a 'tabula rasa' on which society inscribes its lessons but rather more as a restless, probing, active 'fountain of symbols' seeking to make coherent form of the endless stream of sense data and associations that surge through the body unceasingly.

Freud and those who followed him made clear that the intellect is so deeply affected by the love, hatred or indifference experienced when we were children that we may as easily become social and moral cripples or brutal psychopaths as loving people. We know, too, that such emotional injuries can only be put right by a consistent application of care and love that seeks to secure for the victim what the healer desires for himself.

But perhaps, beyond all this, there is a deeper criticism of school to be made, namely that it is an obstacle to the evolution of society. Because it tends to focus on to and holds our attention on the past; because it overvalues memory at the expense of intelligence or understanding; because it stresses competition and personal achievement and plays down cooperation and the collective good, it has the effect of desensitising us to the here and now, and it is in the here and now that the decisions we make shape both our world and our own perceptions of reality.

Simpler societies maintain themselves on oral history and tradition; they cannot, therefore, lock themselves onto the past to anything like the extent that we do. Societies that have chosen the path of class-division find themselves compelled to maintain those divisions. It suits their purpose that the writ- ten records which go with the growth of technology serve also as models for the conduct of current affairs. It is one thing to store records of discoveries and achievements: it is quite another to make those records the armature on which permanently to mould the form of society.

The evolutionary process dispensed with permanent and immutable forms and moved towards flexibility in adaptation. The language that the child learns is not exactly the language of his parents: some elements have begun to fade and some are emerging in response to changes in the society and its culture. Culture is more like a whirlpool that maintains its overall form but changes the details of that form and the elements that make it up. In this way each generation is closer to its own environment and better equipped to solve the problems that environment presents than if it had been equipped with the exact culture of its parents.

What can be done here and now?

The more fully democratic a society becomes the more readily do its institutions respond to the will both of those who control them and of those whom they are intended to serve. Schools are no different from other institutions except that, because most teachers have been chosen as 'safe' conventional people, they may be slower to change than most.

The 1944 Act resulted from a widespread appeal during the war to Local Authorities and others to state how they hoped to see education in the future. The Act embodied a more democratic system than had been seen before, vesting much more authority in County Councils to shape the pattern of schools according to local need. Parents were made responsible for seeing that their children were educated - a requirement that could have directed democratic pressure effectively had not the Ministry of Education frustrated those parts of the Act which also were intended to bring parents into much more direct control of schools by bringing them onto Managing and Governing Bodies to the extent of one- third of those bodies. More recently we have seen a tentative start to correct that blockage by the appointment of a parent representative and a teacher representative. We can now hope that control of schools will begin to respond more sensitively to local need.

Parents can, of course, help their children in the preschool years to develop the habit of making decisions for themselves; at first small decisions about food, clothing, toys and friends. Good habits begun early are established as normal in the mind of the child, so that he will expect to be consulted about things which affect him when he starts school.

Teachers can continue the work of the parents by bringing their pupils into decisions about work, organisation and discipline and by establishing reasoned argument as the way to reach sound decisions. Discussion about matters that directly concern the children is one of the best ways to develop language skills and to teach the important democratic lesson that other people, too, have a point of view.

Some schools do undertake real social work as part of their normal programme - reading to blind people, changing books for the old and infirm, cleaning and decorating for old people, taking care of gardens and pets. Some have even undertaken the design and manufacture of aids for the disabled. In a period of massive unemployment the Trade Unions may not easily allow real work to be taken from them, so it may be necessary for the teachers, as fellow trade unionists, to proceed with tact and to explain why they are seeking to change the curriculum. Even when they fail and are forced back on purely academic work they should, as good teachers have always done, make clear the relevance of that work to the real world with which the pupils are familiar.

Dartington Hall School has for some time adopted an 'Earn and Learn' scheme in which young apprentices work in the various industries that form part of the Trust - agriculture, horticulture, weaving, glassmaking and the building trades - while using the facilities of the school such as the library, the canteen, the leisure resources and the advice and friendship of interested staff. Unfortunately the scheme has not worked as

well as hoped because the rational, permissive ethos of the school where everyone knows everyone else by their first names and where disciplinary problems are 'talked through' in an amicable way, does not marry well with the 'employer/employee' relationship between apprentices and their instructors who have to maintain 'normal' industrial standards of competitiveness in the interests of profits. So the apprentices oscillate uneasily between the two worlds in the early days of their course and then, to avoid the stresses, have to opt to stay in the world of work and the leisure pursuits available to them in Totnes of an evening. Had the original intentions of the founders been carried out the School would have educated the children of the workers of the industries and some closer integration of education and work been possible.

In view of the arguments set out in previous sections of this paper it may seem inconsistent that I now argue for schools to be improved. I do so because I cannot yet see reliable signs that a transformation of our society to more genuinely democratic relationships is about to take place: no sign that the rigid social-class system with which we are burdened is beginning to melt. If anything, the concentration of wealth and power at one end of the social spectrum is more intense and the impact of unemployment and poverty at the other even more massive. Nevertheless changes have occurred to make people more conscious both of their condition and of the possibilities open to them, despite the unremitting appeals to self-interest and greed that assail their eyes and ears from all forms of the media.

Though I sympathise with many of Ivan Illich's sentiments about the predicament of the citizens of modern industrial nations I cannot agree with his analysis. I would, however, completely agree with his answer to a questioner at a press conference in St. Pancras Town Hall. The question was, "Do you think that your programme for deschooling society can be carried out without far-reaching social, political and economic changes?" His answer was, "Certainly not! Of course not!"

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Q. If so-called societies only value their members for their skills in hunting or building or farming, how are they different from our society?

A. These skills are necessary for survival, but these societies also value their members for their powers to sing or paint or dance.

Q. Do you mean that not any other society except this one does those things?

A. No, no. I said that the societies which model themselves on our pattern, whether Russia, Italy or Britain, tend to produce similar structures, both in the parent society and in the education system.

Q. But don't you suppose that that structure is an inherent part of any society, any large society? It seems to me that what you are most concerned with is restrictions on social mobility, with which I would agree, but I don't see that you are going to change, you are going to directly affect mobility by attempting radically to dis-order the order of society which exists.

A. When I referred to mobility I referred to it as a commonly desired attribute of this society. I do not refer to it as a necessarily desirable feature of other societies. It was this society which claimed to be demoractic, to assert that mobility was desirable. We claim to be a meritocracy, to give any position to any child which has the talent.

Q. But I don't understand what you mean by democracy.

A. It can be seen in the assumptions that lie behind the actions of the Creator - if I may use a poetic concept - in giving us all one head, one stomach, two arms and two legs. That is a basic democratic equipment. We are all the same in that basic, material sense. What we do with that is very different. For some children we magnify their sensitivity; we enlarge their capacity to think, to communicate in a variety of media. For some children we ensure not only that they can use a spade but that they can also play a Bach Prelude. So that, on the basis of a common pattern of equipment, society makes widely different models. Those at the upper end of the social spectrum have been provided with a much wider range of behaviour than those at the lower end.

Q. But they still have one head, two arms, two legs. They are still basically democratic in the sense you described.

A. Oh, no. No man can drive more than one car at a time, so to have two is stupid when many people at the lower end have no car at all - assuming that motor cars are to be desired.

Q. I agree with you, but that doesn't alter the fact that they both have one head, two arms, two legs and one stomach, which is what you described as democracy. I don't see that it affects it. Property - the ownership of property - doesn't actually affect democracy.

A. Well, let us take Neville Butler's figures. He is Professor of Medicine in the University of Bristol. He made a study of children born in one week, some 70 or 80,000, and showed that the chance of a young mother and her baby at the lower end of the social spectrum developing disease or dying is at least three times greater than it is at the upper end.

Q. What has that to do with democracy?

A. It has to do with the concept of society which, as a result of evolution, has to care for its members. Man cannot survive if the members of a group do not care for one another. That was the whole point of my discussion of the evolution of the human brain and the 'abandonment' of the weaponry and localised adaptations of the lower animals. Democracy implies care and concern for all members of the group, but the kind of behaviour which results in higher rates of death or illness among the poor than among the rich does not suggest that we have the same care for those at the upper end.

Q. No, sir! It means that one kind of woman with a child is more likely to get or communicate a disease than another. That's all you can say.

A. Now you are using a phrase I don't understand - 'one kind of woman'. Are there different kinds of women?

Q. Will you repeat the words that accompany that graph illustrating Neville Butler's findings?

A. Yes. At the lower end of the social scale, in the unskilled and semi-skilled area of occupations, young pregnant mothers are at least three times more likely to contract various illnesses, and their babies are likely to contract various illnesses, and to die than women of the same age at the upper end of the social scale.

Q. I'm perfectly ready to agree with you, but we have had a succession of lecturers and generally their arguments have been emotional. I have yet to hear a reasonable and rational and logical argument to support their views.

A. Well, obviously I cannot present in an hour the whole of Butler and Ross's findings on the hazards of childhood in terms of medical care in our society. If you want that evidence all I can do is to invite you to read it. But if you say that because I quote that evidence then I am being emotional, then there are clearly very great differences in our assumptions and our language.

Q. I want to know what your conclusion is.

A. My conclusion is that although we call ourselves a democratic society our behaviour is not in consonance with that description.

Q(2) Aren't you being over simple in drawing that relationship, in the sense that the fact that a mother at the lower end of the scale is more vulnerable to illness may be due to her attitude to medicine and her attitude to the doctor and whether she takes the prescribed dose?

A. But don't you see that, in turn, corresponds to the degree of education which they have had and their susceptibility to listen to advice of that kind - that these two things correlate?

Q. Yes, but it may also correlate with their actual basic ability.

A. You are suggesting that they have a basic ability which is distinct from their educational attainment?

Q. I think they have <u>some</u> basic ability.

A. Here we have a fundamental difference of view. I do not accept that, apart from brain damage or genetic defect, there is a difference in 'basic ability'.

Q. I refer to potential ability.

A. Potential refers to the basic material structures upon which society acts.

Q. You say that environment determines ...

A. No. I don't enter into absurd arguments which polarise genetic as against environmental. Any child who is not genetically well-endowed can have the best environment in the world but he will not become intelligent. He may, on the other hand, be genetically 'perfect' but if he is not well educated he will not benefit from his endowment. If you put a highly equipped child into a cupboard and keep him alive but do not educate him, he will emerge a moron. Intelligence arises when a healthy body receives the best and most appropriate stimulus. If someone can show that women at the lower end of the social scale have a poorly structured nervous system which renders them incapable of learning ...

Q. You are taking education to start at the time of birth. Alice Helm in <u>Intelligence and Personality</u> reckons that the age from eighteen months to three years is the most vital, and yet nursery education comes after three years.

A. I would say that the period from birth - in fact before birth - is vital because, clearly, the diet of the mother ...

Q. But now you are talking from a different view than education!

A. Yes. I thought I had made the point that teachers delude themselves in thinking that they can change the world. Much of what happens to the child before he comes to school may be fundamental in blocking or retarding what he can take from the educational system.

Q(3) Then it appears to be a vicious spiral!

A. Maybe, but we can help it to change to a virtuous spiral by changing the nature of society so far as lies in our power. Change the society; change the nature of the relationships in work; change the levels of social reward for work; change the forms of participation in social control of those who now have no say; change the purposes of work from profit to need.

Q. How?

Q(4) But you can't do that through the education system!

A. I think we are in the process of trying. We did try to establish the Welfare State. It is, of course, a poor caricature of what a loving society would be, but in many respects it is much better than what went before. To the extent that the miners and the engineers and the others make the conditions of their work more tolerable; to the extent that the men at Merriden make decisions about their work that extend beyond the manipulation of tools at a branch; to the extent that they make financial decisions or decisions about whether or not to make Japanese bikes here; to the extent that they have to decide about publicity, distribution and management; to that extent linguistic skills are demanded by their work and they become more fully human in that work. So if we make the work of society fuller for all, and not simply relegate purely mechanistic functions to certain people while preserving the intellectual and creative fun- ctions for others, we will then begin to make a more humane society. I am not convinced that we will alter the structure of society by simply altering the schools. When the parent society becomes more democratic then the schools themselves will respond and, in turn, sustain a democratic society by producing people oriented to democratic modes of work and relationships. No society exists which does not, through its education system - including the family - perpetuate that society.

Q. But all societies have the same fundamental structure. You said that Marxist society has the same type of relationship as we have.

A. No. Not all societies have the same type of relationship. Russia has not yet moved away from capitalist forms of organisation and capitalist forms of relationship. It has a kind of class structure where levels of pay as between the upper and lower strata of society differ by a factor of twelve or fifteen times. It is a form of state capitalism. We live in western Europe and are familiar with societies such as France, Germany and Italy - all capitalist states - but if you read the work of the anthropologists about groups and societies in Central India or Africa or South America you will see very different types of society. Malinowski's studies of the Trobriand Islanders, corrupted as they have since become by American capitalism, showed a quality of society quite different from ours where the capacities and the range of individuality of its members were wider; where there were no qualitative differences between the skills or the sensitivities displayed by different members.

Q. But were they civilised, in the sense that there were some skills which could only be exercised by a few people at the top?

A. Apparently not.

Q. But was it not just a general level of skill, much lower than ours?

A. Some were better potters or fishermen or dancers than others ...

Q. But if you have a society like ours today it is ludicrous to assume that someone, without a certain level of education, without, even, a certain kind of historical background from birth, is going to be able to take the type of education which society run in this way demands.

A. But this is surely not the point. No one is saying that some people may not become far more skilful as a potter or an engineer. What seems to me to contradict the essential nature of humanity is that somebody should have a style of life which is twenty times more luxurious than that of another person, when both do work that is essential to the organic unity of the whole community.

Q. What you are saying is that no one should be rewarded more than others no matter how responsible their job, just because their natural endowment gives them an advantage.

A. Precisely!

Q(5) You referred to 'social expectations'. Can I ask you where these social expectations come from?

A. Social expectations normally come from the family in which the child grows. A child who grows up in a barrister's family obviously hears much more talk about a barrister's work, about its importance, its relationships with other work, and the style of life which accrues from having that level of salary, and so on. The child is therefore naturally attuned, if not to that precise form of occupation, at least to something comparable. He might become a doctor, an architect or a politician, but the style of lie is manifestly different from that of an unskilled manual worker who does not, on the whole, talk about his

work to the same extent as a barrister or a teacher. So expectation is built into the child, partly by his own family, partly by other families and the children with whom he plays and associates. Barristers' children rarely play with dustmen's children.

Q. What can we do about that in schools then?

A. Well, it is a bit late. Primary socialisation has taken place before the child comes to school.

Q(6) If you believe that education is so powerless, why do you go on?

A. I often wonder!

Q(7) This society claims to be a democratic society and it also claims to be a free society. What are your views on the question of parental choice in education?

A. There should be no parental choice. I said this in a letter to The Times in reply to one of St John Stevas' curious pronouncements. I simply said, "Given parental choice, 'good' parents, i.e. well educated parents, would choose 'good' schools for their children who would, in turn, and as a result of their good education, grow up to be 'good' parents. But this would mean that of necessity the 'bad' or stupid or ill-educated parents would be left with the bad schools. How does St John Stevas propose that we get out of this vicious circle? If, on the other hand, all parents <u>had</u> to send their children to the nearest school, then the good parents would raise hell with people like St John Stevas until those bad schools were made good."

Q(1) Do you mean that the good parents will demand the schools which they term good, and the good schools are those they would send their children to if they had not been compelled to send them to the nearest school?

A. Yes. The good schools are, for parents at the upper end of the social and occupational spectrum, the schools designated as Public, Direct Grant, Grammar or Progressive - such as Dartington Hall.

Q. It seems you are equating intelligence with linguistic ability and humanity with intelligence; and you are saying that the Public and Direct Grant schools achieve a higher level of linguistic ability than do the lower class schools, and that, therefore, the higher class schools achieve more success in actually creating humanity.

A. For the purposes of this society, yes. We were talking in the context of this society.

Q. Well, then, you are not using 'humanity' in the general sense.

A. Not in the fullest general sense, no. In the broadest sense the schools at the upper end of the spectrum are restrictive of certain kinds of activity classified as human ...

Q. And if that group of people can and do control the form of society as it is and tend to perpetuate it, and if they represent the highest intelligence, why is it not right that they should continue to perpetuate this kind of society?

A. Because the forms of intelligence they develop and operate are too restricted, too narrow socially.

Q. You propose and then you qualify! You say the highest intelligence and then you say it is not the highest intelligence because it is too narrow. You say, this is humanity and then you say, ah, but it is not really humanity because ...

A. Yes, but intelligence is not really a defined term in the sense that it has strict limits - unless you mean it to cover all forms of human activity. What I am saying is that our society demands certain forms of linguistic skill which are seen to operate throughout the social spectrum. The mother-tongue, for example, operates throughout that spectrum, though with different modes and at different levels as Bernstein has demonstrated. There are certain forms of skill which operate at the upper end which do not operate at the lower end. The skills which we associate with high levels of academic work in language, in physics, in the manipulation of forms of control over institutions - Parliament, the courts, the banks, business corporations - the skills effective in securing the maintenance of power and wealth at the upper end of the spectrum; these skills are not developed at the lower end.

I am maintaining that in a democratic society the kinds of skill developed in schools at the upper end of the social spectrum should also be developed at the lower end.

Q. Fine! But I would say that the way to do that is to move the kind of teaching which is current at the highest end of the scale into the middle. You are suggesting that you should take the characteristics of schools in the middle and move them up to the top.

A. I would share the resources across the board. Under conditions of extreme urgency, as in war, we, in fact, do that.

Q. Are you suggesting that the style of teaching which we see in the traditional Public schools is not superior to that with which we are being prepared to teach in Comprehensive schools?

A. But it is being used for a limited social purpose!

Q. And what is that?

A. The maintenance of power! Linguistic skills are developed in those schools, not to extend the human capacity of the individual to relate to all other human beings in sensitive ways, but to perpetuate a society in which power and wealth remain with the upper classes. Bernstein's other line of research - the examination, in the paper entitled 'On the classification and framing of educational knowlege' of the thesis that "How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control", makes this point very clearly.

Q. But there is nothing remarkable about this; it is a feature of all societies. Societies are self-sustaining organisms. That is how that structure occurs.

Q(8) It may be a feature of society as it is now, but not necessarily a feature one has to accept! You do not have to sit there on your backside and say, "It is like that so we have to accept it." You must be prepared to do something about it.

Q. Oh, fine! I am sitting here in this lecture with you; I am not sitting in the Master's Lodge of one of the colleges. I am just as emotionally engaged by what I see to be the injustices of our society as everyone else is. All I am asking for is something other than emotional argument. You can get agreement very easily if you say, "This is terrible!". We all agree it is terrible, but what are you going to do about it?

Q(9) What can teachers do about it? That is, perhaps the question we would all like to know.

A. You can, first of all, make your relationships with children depend less on force. Now I am not suggesting that everyone here is likely to enter a classroom and wield a cane, but an awful lot of teachers still do just that. So start by removing fear and use rational argument. Too many of our schools unhappily rely on force and on punishment to maintain order and control.

Secondly we should ensure that our institutions, our schools, colleges and universities, are run more democratically; that, for example, the students in our schools and colleges of education should, together with the staff, decide the best ways in which education should be taught. That teachers in schools should have regard, more often and more fully, to the capacities and wishes of their students. Good teachers already do that, but they are a tiny minority. If we are a democratic society then we train our young by practising democratic modes of relationship.

Thirdly we should operate at the level of our professional relationships to ensure that the teaching profession works for a greater equality in the distribution of the available resources through all our schools. There are very many ways in which we as teachers can start to change.

Q(10) And how do you ensure that parents send their children to the nearest school? It seems to me to be important that children of all classes do meet in school.

A. That is an excellent thing about the real village school - a true comprehensive. But so long as the social rewards for work at the upper end of the occupational spectrum so greatly exceed the rewards at the lower end there is strong resistance to change in those who benefit most by the present system.

Q(12) You seem to be going against what you said before when you said that it was too late, by the time children entered school, to change the system. Now you seem to say that you can alter it within the classroom and the school.

A. As an individual, if you hope for change in the school and the classroom without reference to your colleagues you will not get far. You <u>have</u> to work with them and the more you do the more effective will be what you set out to do. No single person could have transformed the behaviour of the children in Risinghill School as it was transformed. We made our decisions and our policy collectively. The children saw this and realised quickly that they could not play off one member of staff or one group against another.

Q. But the headmaster, because he has most power and influence, is in the best position to bring about change. If he makes a policy for change it will be likely to be more successful.

A. Only if he can carry his staff with him. I have come across many heads who believed themselves to be progressive and forced their ideas on an unwilling staff. That is just as bad as a reactionary head doing

likewise. The policy must be democratic and reached democratically. Time and time again I had to accept compromise at Risinghill because I failed to convince the staff to adopt the policy I suggested. For example, when we had decided that we could do without corporal punishment I went on to suggest that we might abandon the concept of punishment entirely, but this made them uneasy; they wanted to retain lines, detention and so on. I accepted that and then we found that within two years or so punishment had begun to die naturally because we were finding that argument had more lasting effects.

Q(12) Where will the State come into all this? I take it that in your ideal system the State will be all-powerful. I would have thought that you would have learned from your experience at Risinghill that the more power the local authority has the less opportunity there will be for experimentation and for progressive ideas to be implemented.

A. That presupposes a situation that is true at the moment, viz. that there is a fundamental division between the State and ourselves, the citizens. But, to the extent that in our different areas of work, engineers in their factories, miners in their pits, teachers in their schools, we establish democratic relationships, to that extent will we compel the State to reflect our views - we will take power from the State and so compel to cease to operate as an instrument of repression for all but the tiny minority who wield power. Our present society is run, not by one man one vote but by a group of powerful vested interests. The press and the media in general reflect their wishes rather than ours, and because the mass of the people have no voice in the media, except at the trivial level of voting for sports personalities or sex symbols, the views of the wealthy and the powerful are dinned into the rest without respite. No radi- cal alternative is presented with equal force or in an equally pervasive manner.

Radical change will not happen tomorrow. I am trying to outline the relationship between an education system and its parent society and to suggest - that is all I can do - ways in which we might begin to start that change. No State can be other than repressive. If I am to have a label it is 'pragmatic anarchist', but I find myself in congenial company with John Dewey, Herbert Read and A.S. Neill.

Q(13) On what basis do you assert that the difference between man and the animals is man's use of language? Might the difference not be in the matter of creativity or in morals, might it not be man's need for religion? Man can create an infinite number of sentences; might it not be more a matter of his creativity? Might it not be a matter of his appreciation of morality; his ability to make moral judgements? Unless you can get rid of these considerations the view of man that you present rests on shaky foundations.

A. These are, in my view, aspects of the complex being we call man. Man's vulnerability as an individual and his dependance on both the human group and his physical environment, is another aspect of religion. When Christ said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself", he was saying, in modern terms, "Un- less you have democratic, loving relationships in your society, you will perish". That is a religious concept; it is a human concept; it is a political concept.

Q(1) That's a very humanistic form of religion. What about the more mystical aspects of religion?

A. I cannot know, nobody can know whether you or I love God - even if we could agree on what we mean by 'God'. We can know whether we love our neighbour. What we choose to beleive in our own private world is entirely up to us as individuals.

Q(13) In every society there has appeared religion, not only in the moral sense but in the mystical, transcendental sense. Creativity, appreciation of the arts also seem to me to differentiate man from the animals. Unless you can explain that then the view of man you present is very limited.

A. But I did define art - painting, music, dance, all forms of art - as imagination made public, made available to others through linguistic skills.

Q. On what basis?

A. On the basis that all those forms of art use symbols which are, in essence, similar to the symbols used in language - they convey thought, feeling - they communicate with others (and sometimes with the artist himself as a dialogue, an internal dialogue) to the extent that the listener or the observer or the participant shares the meanings attributed to the symbols.

Q. But may it not be that they are creative in the same way as language is creative? Might it not be, not that they use symbols but that they are creative?

A. But that is essential to the concept of language. Creativity and language are part of the same concept; art and creativity are inseparable; art is a medium through which people communicate; language is a medium for communication. Most of us have only language as our creative medium. A few of us are lucky enough to have been educated in a number of media - language, music, painting, dance ...

Q(14) I cannot understand the equation between intelligence and linguistic skills.

A. Intelligence, as used technically, is simply a measure of the depth and width of linguistic skill. All

intelligence tests are couched in linguistic modes of one kind or another - language, shapes, colours, patterns - which have to be manipulated or interpreted from certain assigned meanings. All tests are symbols to express meaning in terms of shapes, colours, patterns, words, relationships and so on.

Q. But surely man has to be taught to express himself linguistically?

A. Exactly! That is why the concept of inherited intelligence - except in the special sense used by Donald Hebb when he speaks of Intelligence A (the physical apparatus through which man communicates) - is a nonsense. No baby inherits the knowledge that this is black and that white - he has to be taught those names in association with the relevant objects. No baby inherits the language to express the sensa- tion he feels when he touches iron or cotton wool - he has to be taught it.

Q. Are you saying that a person cannot be described as intelligent until he is in a position to exploit his knowledge?

A. Of course! That is why Prof. Vernon made the mistake of saying, for example, that the Australian aborigine is less intelligent than the Australian white. If so many whites die in the outback where the aborigine normally lives, then they must be less intelligent, i.e. less knowledgeable and less skilled in what is required to survive there. The ability to survive is surely the ultimate intelligence test. Prof. Vernon also categorises West Indian children as less intelligent than British children. But what has happened is that the aborigine and the West Indian have learnt a different set of skills appropriate to their environment. Put them into the environment of the Stock Exchange and, of course, they will fail, until they have learnt the appropriate skills. Move the stockbroker into the outback and he will fail by aboriginal standards. The concept of a universally valid intelligence test is untenable.

Q. So you say that intelligence can only be defined in terms of a given cultural context?

A. Yes.

Q(15) How do you account for differences if intelligence is measured in very similar circumstances and by similar criteria, between people brought up in the same environment? You may get two brothers brought up in the same way and in the identically same environment who display wide differences in intelligence.

A. Sigmund Freud showed clearly that in the question of intellectual achievement the emotional background can be very important, either in sustaining or in lowering the expression of intellectual capacity. Take a very simple but obvious example of a mother with a pair of young twins. The twins are, so far as the mother is concerned, lying upstairs fast asleep when a thunderstorm starts. Being herself nervous of thunder, she rushes upstairs and finds one twin asleep and the other awake but showing no sign of distress. Her own state of mind causes her to pick up the wakeful twin, reassure it, walk up and down murmuring to it until the storm has abated. How can she avoid communicating her own nervousness to that twin? The next morning these twins are not the same, even if they were before. One has had a new experience that associates for him a thunderstorm with a nervous mother.

The human brain some 100,000,000,000 cells or so - is so complex that variations in the immediate situation here and now cause differences which affect wider and wider regions of allied or comparable areas of experience as the person grows older. One twin listening to the story of the Three Little Pigs while sickening for measles will obviously not absorb the story with the same attention as the twin who is quite well. The same event can cause two people to react in widely different ways to the same stimulus - as we have experienced here this evening - because of the differences already established in their knowledge, values and emotional state. People do not love their children in exactly the same way, though most claim to do so. We cannot make statements - and certainly not 'scientific' statements - about children from 'identical' environments simply because the staggering complexity of the human brain, even in babies, renders our reactions to any stimulus idiosyncratic.

Q(14) Cambridge psychologists have shown that in very early life - within the first few days - there are innate differences in children.

A. Differences, certainly, but not necessarily innate, except in so far as the differences are differences in physical structures - hair colouration, skin texture, disposition of body fat and so on. Already there is much evidence that the environment of the womb can cause different reactions on the part of the baby. Luria's statement that the baby is born conditioned to its mother's voice is an example of this, since conditioning is a form of learning.

Q(16) Why is not that an innate difference?

A. Because it is a difference that is acquired <u>after</u> the conjunction of the genetic patterns from mother and father has already taken place. 'Innate' is that which is already part of the genetic structure and which

may or may not, according to the environmental conditions in the womb, be allowed to develop. Babies conceived by parents who were fully healthy at the time of conception may nevertheless be born impaired if the mother is undernourished during pregnancy or smokes to excess during that time.

Q(1) I am surprised at the inconsistency between your statement about democracy and your refusal to allow parents to choose the schools for their children; would you explain that?

A. If access to all careers were equally available to all children and if the rewards for the work done in all careers were the same, then there would be no objection to people choosing what they wanted to do. But at the moment access to different types of school results in different rates of access to different jobs in our society and, therefore, to different levels of wealth and privilege - that is the central objection. Selection for different types of school is, in effect, social selection - that, surely, is the clear message of all educational research from 1950 onwards so we are not surprised that such research has been stopped by Conservative governments.

Q. How much freedom are you going to allow the individual?

A. I cannot make such decisions! The democratic processes of the society will decide that, as, to some extent, already happens.

Q. But 'democratic' means that the individual should be free to choose. You are qualifying it now.

A. Yes. 'Democratic' does not mean that every whim must be satisfied irrespective of the consequences to others. No individual should be free to sell heroin to young people. That's licentious.

Q. Sir, you are being emotional!

A. I am simply taking a rather obvious example to illustrate the abstraction you have flung at me. Certain forms of activity in the business of this country are undemocratic and we have made laws against, for example, the monopolistic control of certain goods and services, though few lawyers would agree that we have succeeded in eliminating monopolistic practices altogether. During the war a fellow tank officer designed an oil filter that would have prolonged the life of lubricating oil several times and saved the lives of many merchant seamen killed by enemy action while transporting it. The design of the filter was bought up by an international oil corporation and never heard of again.

Q. The effects of heroin are well known. If you were to say to me, "Nobody in our society should be free to sell cotton wool," then you would be affecting the complete freedom of the individual.

A. But in an interdependent society no one has complete freedom of action if his acts limit the freedom of others in that society. That is why we differentiate between freedom and licence. Access to a Public school is significant because it makes available to that child a range of occupations that is not available to the child lower down the scale.

Q. The child of rich parents will always have privileges and will always have more choice. That is a matter of fact. The Duke of Westminster's son will still be the Duke of Westminster's son whether he is educated or not.

A. Not in a society which does not have dukes! Nor in a society which does not afford special privileges or prestige to dukes. Remember John Dewey's statement, it is worth pondering. He said, "What the best and wisest parent wants for his child, that must society want for all its children. Anything less is ignoble: acted upon it will destroy our democracy."

(End of discussion)

Comments Following Fifteen Years of Teaching

Bill Dufton
Officer, Devon National Union of Teachers, Former Head of Environmental Science, Southway School and School Governor

There is trouble in the schools, once again. The two largest of the teachers' unions, while remaining mutually aloof, are taking strike action in order to influence the annual circus of salary negotiations. Why do dedicated, intelligent, well-educated men and women do this? They know and care about the effect of their actions on their pupils. I set out below some of the factors involved.

1. Their salary is too low for what they do, the responsibility they bear and the training they have. In spite of ministerial misinformation their salary has not kept pace with inflation. (Watch for the year any government spokesperson chooses as a basis for their comparison. It will be a year of a low salary award so that increases since then look larger - this is a process called "massaging the statistics." Our government is very good at this.)

2. Their salary has dropped behind similar groups with whom they were promised compatibility. The Houghton and Clegg reports, which set levels for teachers' salaries, have been unilaterally repudiated by the government.

3. Teachers are undervalued. Rather than spend money on positive efforts to educate the young we now put our priorities on the police and the military and give to them the roles of containing and punishing non-conformity in the community. This is called "The Law and Order" approach.

4. Authorities are envious of the long holidays and the apparently short working week. Evidence of the actual hours worked is ignored. No thought is given to the problem of maintaining creativity, liveliness of mind and a good flow of ideas in the face of stress and exhaustion. How can discipline by personal example, force of character and interesting teaching be maintained when the mind is fatigued and stale from continual and unremitting effort? "Black Paperites" and certain Tory politicians (notably some of the women) think that education consists of the 3 'R's drilled into large classes of conforming children. How little they know.

5. In the schools the bureaucratic style of management, borrowed from industry and encouraged by the local education authorities, does not suit the education scene. Each level of the organisation has its responsibilities and these are tending to be more narrowly defined. At the tip many schools now have a body called "The Management". These are the prestigious teachers, usually on senior teacher pay, who direct the policy of the school, or rubber stamp the ideas of the headmaster. In their personal roles they direct activities or direct staff who are directing these activities. They also make lists (usually of pupils' names). These lists may be pinned on the overcrowded section of the noticeboard labelled 'TODAY', where they will stay for a week or so. If the school possesses a photocopier every member of staff will tend to get a copy of every list, whether relevant or not. This forces the staff member to create a personal filing system and to negotiate with his head of department for a filing cabinet. This will add greatly to his status but may not prevent the important lists being mislaid so the teacher will never have time to catch up with his personal filing. So a system, based on a hierarchy, and which is inefficient treats well-qualified, grown up (yes, really) men and women as rather "long in the tooth" kids. Working under this ethos teachers are expected to guide the mental, social, physical, spiritual, aesthetic, etc., etc., development of the young generation. In a bureaucracy consultation is a charade and their influence on the "management" is little. Does all this do anything but destroy the dedication to their jobs teachers are supposed to have and surprisingly do retain?

6. Most young teachers believe in an egalitarian society in which the pupils, as they grow older, can express their feelings, criticisms and beliefs. They believe that schools should aim to equip pupils to do this and to recognise that they have the right to be sceptical, to have independent judgement and to fight for their beliefs. Tory thinking now, sadly, seems to be more concerned with social control. Industry, conveniently aided by the Manpower Services Commission, looks for a docile work force which will do what it is told, while it creates the wealth from whence the profits and power of the employers come. Education is being replaced by training (how well computers fit in here!).

7. Teachers have NEVER been given the time or the resources to do their job properly. No industry would multiply objectives and tasks and still expect to get meaningful results if, at the same time, it did not supply the input of manhours and material necessary. The education system seems to think that this necessary organisation does not apply to them. Consequently teachers dash frantically around more crowded schools accomplishing less and less.

8. The Tories, with their simplistic belief in the supreme value of profit, wonder how to apply this to education. So we get the idea of teachers giving "value for money". How do you measure the education process? How do you know a good teacher? (Many think this means a quiet class what about "busy noise" or "the hum of activity"?) Some would tabulate examination success, conveniently forgetting the variability of the intake. No one has yet managed to define what is a good teacher or even what actually constitutes learning. More cynical is the diversion of state funds to centres of privilege located in the private schools. These schools divide society and hold themselves aloof from ideas of community building.

9. As teachers now lack the time and resources to do their job properly they are unlikely to support negotiations which will increase their workload, making much of what they now do voluntarily into part of their contractual obligations. Offers of salary increases (since withdrawn) appear good in the year they are made. However the salary level erodes more and more as the years progress but the work load never gets less. In the end you have the extra work and the salary is back where it was. Many groups which have unwisely negotiated "productively" deals must now regret it. It is no good ministers saying that this will not happen. We have seen them lie too often in the past to trust them in the future.

The salary negotiations bring to a head all the grievances against this society. As the "police state" becomes more of a reality as peoples' liberty is threatened by the secret service, as our society is devalued by monetarism and consumerism, so groups find themselves in confrontation, sometimes violent, with the government. Government never was synonymous with the state, as a politically biassed judge recently stated. A government is awarded temporary stewardship of the state but the state goes beyond and around the government. In our time the monarch represents the continuity of the state, not the government of the day.

Just as consensus policing has disappeared so has consensus government. No party which merely has a majority of seats in parliament has the right to totally ignore sizeable groups of people, sometimes the majority of the people, in its governance. Against this moral collapse of government teachers have to inspire their pupils with a faith and hope for their future. For many this is a future in which they will be denied work, or will be forced into deskilled work tending machines, or forced into entrepreneurial activities, making a profit, at any cost, out of their fellows. A pathetic belief lingers in most politicians, that in a world of finite resources and starving populations, when the rich nations continue to exploit the poor nations, that economic growth is possible or desirable for us.

When a government refuses to remove the tax on a pop record's profits, which was to help the starving in Ethiopia, while itself giving a lesser sum in aid, and that money was diverted from other needy projects, then can one wonder at the collapse of trust and a retreat into self-interest?

What about the Plymouth scene? Only "Shire Tories" are capable of claiming that they have an education system suitable for each individual child but which actually reflects the rejected ideas of generations past and is the laughing stock of informed educational opinion. Here we have backwoods politicians fighting for privilege as perpetuated in the grammar schools and the county-supported direct grant schools. The gullible electorate is taken in by the smooth talk of the neatly besuited politicians that this distribution of resources is for their good and is of the nature of things. BUT a divided school system produces a divided society. This division is being opened up now by those protecting their advantage and by those who believe that the pursuit of material wealth is a noble priority for themselves.

A fully comprehensive school system taking ALL pupils between the ages of eleven and sixteen, based on its feeder primary schools and serving its community is the ideal. For many the comprehensive school will offer no freedom of choice, especially in the rural areas. This is too bad but there are several other areas where parents have no choice. What can the parents do about this? They can seek to influence their school to the utmost by getting deeply involved in it, understanding it, helping it. After all it will be a community school. They could well be using its facilities for themselves. Why are there no pupils of seventeen and eighteen? Because they are in an open access sixth form college which has strong links with academic, vocational and community education. The comprehensive schools will be run by their fifth forms who will be, in addition, making contacts everywhere in the community and in the world of work. As there is no sixth form the schools can be much smaller and therefore more suited to human values. In cities this may provide some parental choice while still retaining the community links originated in the primary schools. Out of the window will go the inaccurate charade of selecting pupils in the 11+ examination and the manipulation of scores, which goes on in Plymouth, in order to get enough under-achieving boys into the grammar schools. Meanwhile the comprehensive schools should be helped to continue the many initiatives they are already undertaking (education for work, or unemployment, aesthetic education, pupil assessment, social and world studies, dare I mention peace studies?, and many more too numerous to list here). Staff should have their loyal service recognised and by guided career development be able to extend their career possibilities, keep up to date, continue to extend their personal philosophy and adjust to this rapidly adjusting and very confused world.

The organisation within schools needs radical change. All posts of responsibility should be abolished. Teachers should move up a common pay scale, which was indexed against inflation. Each department can act as a team, opening co-operating with each other and taking on all the tasks needed to be done in school, to which

they are able to contribute. Strengths and weaknesses will be shared. Assessment will be unnecessary, everybody will know how each person operates, progress and practice will be openly discussed anyway. Headmasters will be abolished or their powers drastically curtailed. Though a very few have some power for good their authoritarian power too often turns out destructive of teacher dedication and initiative. Local authorities still have to be content with responsibility resting in a committee. Staff delegates can serve in rotation on this body and must be broadly representative of the school. Co-operation towards the common good will be the aim. Forget all this head's talk about "my school"; it belongs to the community who will watch closely that it works and make their views known through their representatives.

Equality, peace without violence and co-operation (as well as the many other desirable qualities) will never grow in society if they are not enthusiastically and effectively pursued in the schools. Democracy and the political awareness which makes it work must be held up for critical evaluation by our pupils. The roles of the schools are many and never get less. To cope with this growing task we need to conserve the most valuable resource available to the education service and that is the dedicated service of its teachers. This priceless resource has been squandered, like so much else on this planet of ours.

So much of what has been written here suggests that education and schooling necessarily go together. This is not so on several counts, though dedicated effort by teachers does help many pupils to cope with some of their problems and decisions. Education is still mainly academic and based on separate subject disciplines. Knowledge is a whole and in our progress through life we extract from that entity of knowledge those parts which we need for our perceived purpose. Be clear that these parts utilised by us are not the subjects of the school curriculum, but relevant pieces of knowledge which we need at that moment. Except for those who can respond to "education for education's sake" the bulk of the school curriculum has no relevance. Thus we get a majority of unmotivated pupils who become increasingly alienated from the ethos of the school. How well are schools preparing pupils for their future life? Their world will be increasingly polluted with man-made chemicals and radioactivity. Third World starvation will be a continuous moral concern. Their personal freedom will become less and less as the nuclear state sees it to be vital for its own security, in the "plutonium economy", and for the protection of the privilege of the minority to increase surveillance and control and to reduce the freedom to protest. Their quality of life (its human-ness) will suffer as they become increasingly linked to machines and computers. Thought control, developing rapidly now, will ensure that they like what they get and come to believe that it is in the natural way of things. Unmployment will continue to be regarded as a sin in order to protect the work ethic and because the private capitalist system will be unwilling to share out the extra wealth their investment in technology and automation will bring. Educational authorities and schools will not dare to admit that full employment is a thing of the past as a private capitalist state is quite unable, for ideological reasons, to nationally plan a fair distribution of resources.

In Plymouth, and elsewhere, many (including teachers) do not believe that they have the right to question what the government or their "betters" (at all levels of the bureaucracies) organise for them. Good, loyal, dedicated, misguided teachers worked long hours in lousy schools to make the local education system work for their pupils. They worked on in meagre secondary modern sheds (called schools) for fewer resources and more pupils than the grammar schools or the new comprehensives. Now as the secondary moderns close the new heads of the comprehensives don't want these Plymouth teachers, loyal and dedicated as they are. Nothing is more destructive of teacher morale than unfairness and mismanagement. Every time politicians, both national and local, and members of the country administration insult the teaching force, as they do in many ways, the more the teachers withdraw into a "minimum commitment" and look for ways to get out. Luckily the opposite is still true. Due respect and understanding draws forth a deluge of good will which is then manifested in care for the pupils way beyond the demands of the "contract".

The Government's White Paper

This is another noble non-event from the minister which tells us all the things we ought to be doing. What it ignores, in common with most of this type of communication, is that thinking teachers throughout the country have been working at these initiatives for a long time. Results would be better if governments supported this work with adequate resources. It always wants something for nothing and then pretends, for obvious political reasons, that it is the dilatoriness of the schools, with their long holidays, which is to blame. What a cowardly stance this is. A similar situation exists in the teaching of mathematics. For years teachers have been thinking up schemes which would make the subject more bearable for the lower ability. The others are expected by the employers and pushy parents to beaver away at exam syllabi. However there are two parts to the maths situation. To a small extent the subject is taught for its usefulness but to a far greater extent it is taught for intellectual reasons, as mathematical concepts are important in our understanding of all aspects of our life.

Indoctrination

Why are the Tories so frightened of CND?

Why don't they discuss the issues instead of attacking teachers? One can only believe that they are so worried at the wide appeal of CND's message of peace. It represents the views of the many who feel a deep moral outrage at the intention to use nuclear weapons in retaliation in a conventional war or even to threaten to use them at all. Teachers have worked at the problem of indoctrination in teaching for more years than Ted Pinney has been a councillor. The idea of a neutral chairman has been shown to be good in theory, but in practice, it has proved to be fairer and more honest to admit to one's personal beliefs and then to be as neutral as possible, with one's background known.

The wearing of badges or other signs and insignia is widespread. Never has this been regarded as indoctrination. The county's pathetic attempt to stifle free expression has not been to proscribe such insignia (this would be impractical anyway - no regimental ties, Rotary badges, etc.). This would undoubtedly have infringed

basic civil liberties. No, teachers have been asked not to wear them. People who do will be investigated. What an underhand threat. Will secret files be updated with the evidence (?) of this heinous crime? Will promotion be mysteriously denied? This is what most of us believe. Note that this is one more insult offered to teachers. They can't do their job, they are unprofessional, they indoctrinate children. All this stems from the fear of the message of peace. The Russians want peace, and support peace movements, therefore (ideologically) it must be suspect. CND is one of the best, well balanced and informed sources of peace education material. All these sources are attacked with misinformation and character assassination of those who research and use them. The most dishonest, indoctrinating material comes from the government itself. In no way has it kept its word, given at the UN Special Disarmament session, to promote the cause of peace by all means including education. To label peace education as political and then on the justification of this distortion to endeavour to ban it is evidence of intellectual aridity. Some would call it criminal behaviour, as it is an attempt to prevent us seeking alternatives to war as a means of solving international disputes. On a slightly optimistic note, perhaps the loss of control by the Tories in so many councils may allow better sense to prevail.

Andrea Edwards
Former pupil,
Montpelier Junior
School

I like school because it has a swimming pool and I like the school dinners. I don't like my teacher that much but he's all right. I like doing maths. And I like drawing as well. And I like spelling tests too. They are fun. I like to watch T.V. in school, we watch Zig-Zag. And I like to read and I like project too. And I hate science because all we ever do is right. After the summer holiday I will be going to the 3rd year. I have got a friend, her name is Sharon Clapon. She is in the same class as me. But the girl that I don't like is Cathrine Murry, she is always miserable. We have three computers. I like to have points and I like playing games and we play hockey and badminton. I like time-table tests and I like painting and I like S.R.A. Sometimes I like stroy S.R.A. And I like to play hang-man. But I don't like sewing. And I don't like singing in the hall. And I don't like the playing reading tests. Sometimes reading tests are good but most of the time I do not like them.

Donna Edwards
Former pupil,
Montpelier Junior
School

I like doing my maths and I like doing drawing. I like drawing houses and gardens. I like doing maths because it's got lots of different things in it and I like writing short stories. I like writing short stories of me. The book is called my news book. And I like swimming because I can play and have lots of fun and swim. I don't like school dinners because they are cold. And I don't like morning assembly and hymn practice. My teacher's name is Mrs Stafford and she's nice. I am going to the Juniors after my summer holidays. My mummy is teaching me my times tables. So I will know them when I go to my new class. My new teacher is called Mrs Price and I hope she won't shout at me and I might do hard things. My new teacher is going to look at my work. I will be going to the Juniors. I hope I will see my sister and I hope she will play with me. My friend's name is Jodd.

Reasoning for a Reason

Ivor D. Elliott
Schoolmaster, Ilfracombe
Comprehensive School

Having taught for many years, I had for a long time been aware that something was missing from the content of the education the children were receiving. However, it was difficult to perceive the exact nature of that elusive missing element. Slowly I came to realise that in the English school system it was taken for granted that children would learn to think and reason effectively, and that this improvement in thinking skill would occur naturally as a result of the childrens' exposure to the curriculum content they were being served. This false assumption was at the centre of my concern, for the development of childrens' thinking and reasoning was not the focus of any subject the children were being asked to study.

Here then was my missing element, for there was much evidence in the behaviour of young people to indicate that they were either incapable of reasoning effectively, or, if they could reason well, that they were unable to use this skill as an active guide to reasonable behaviour. Many examples abound to illustrate this fact, but one will suffice in this instance. It is a well documented fact that pregnant women who smoke seriously put at risk the health of their unborn child. Doctors, surgeries and maternity clinics unambiguously advertise this fact, and yet some women continue to smoke during pregnancy. Here is prima facie evidence of the implementation of behaviour based on deficient reasoning, or upon the rejection of the results of efficient reasoning. Either way, the problem with children is that they are still capable of wondering about the world they live in, and if presented with such models of unreasonable behaviour are likely to arrive at some sort of conclusion that will eventually have a part to play in the future behaviour of the children themselves. The danger is, of course, that they will arrive at the wrong conclusions, and continue to perpetrate, from one generation to the next, the unfortunate consequences of poor thinking. It is important that the mould is broken, but this cannot be effectively achieved by complacently assuming that children today are automatically learning to become better thinkers. Some carefully structured programme of intervention is required to enable teachers to guide their pupils to behave rationally and reasonably, and the best way of achieving such a goal would be to encourage the children to learn to think for themselves. Implicit in such an achievement would be an ability to reason well, and the final step to secure independence would be the ability of the pupils to govern their behaviour on the results of their thinking.

It is difficult to imagine pupils brought up to espouse these ideals manifesting some of the self-destructive and antisocial behaviour that is exhibited by too many of today's young people, and after all, the criminals, drug adducts, alcoholics, etc. have all passed through our education system, apparently unable to accept the basic modicums of conformity and restraint that are necessary to ensure that the society in which we all live is fit for all to live in.

How, then, if my hypothesis for change is acceptable, can children be taught to think? This problem has been addressed by an eminent American philosopher, Professor Matthew Lipman, who has for the past twenty years been devising a programme designed to do exactly that, i.e. to teach children to think more effectively. He has written a most comprehensive and original curriculum package entitled, 'Philosophy for Children,' and this came to my attention in the early 1980's. It is designed to be the subject of three lessons each week for children from the age of eight onwards, and it is not only the content that encapsulates the necessary principles for children to acquire the ability to think and reason well, but its very implementation serves as the necessary model for the mental behaviour that is to be encouraged. What Matthew Lipman wrote was a series of novellas, adventures of a group of children who are themselves embarked upon a journey of discovery. The content of the novellas themselves serves as the paradigm for the intellectual adventure that pupils exposed to the programme will themselves undertake.

I have been working with a group of young children for two years now, and three times each week they meet together to consider some of the fundamental issues that Matthew Lipman's programme addresses. But before I relate some of the effects that the programme seems to be having upon the abilities of these children to think more effectively, I must first put the content of this programme into some kind of perspective. The introduction of any new subject to children, or adults for that matter, is necessarily structured to take into consideration the current knowledge and intellectual maturity of the students. Thus no-one would seriously advocate the introduction of A-level mathematics to pupils who had not yet mastered the basics of O-level mathematics. Lipman has structured his course to take into consideration the basic requirements necessary for good thinking to take place, and thus his first two modules are concerned with the acquisition of formal and informal logic, and it is only after these three components have been subsumed, that pupils are deemed to have their basic thinking skills refined to a point from which consideration of more complex issues can be reasonably considered.

As each of the first three modules requires about eighteen months' study, it can be seen that the programme is quite comprehensive in its scope, but the fundamental elements of good thinking are not themselves trivial. Among the many concepts that the children are invited to consider in the first two modules are those of ambiguity, relationships, similes, metaphors, analogies, rules and reasons, mystery and myth. If this seems like a prosaic academic diet, then the following conversation will perhaps put the children's response to the course into some sort of perspective.

The children had been introduced to the nature of ambiguity and had revelled in the pleasure of being able to play around with words and sentences, including correcting me when I was careless in my own use of language. A few weeks later, one of the pupils shared with the rest of the group an article he had read in a newspaper, which stated that King George the Fourth had died from injuries sustained when he fell off the lavatory. Of course the rest of the children immediately burst into laughter when they heard this, but when they had regained their composure I asked them who King George the Fourth was. One child immedia- tely informed everybody that he was the fourth king of England called George, and straight away a girl said that that statement was ambiguous. Several pupils agreed with her and very quickly every child had perceived the nature of the ambiguity. They then enjoyed themselves for a few minutes determining unambiguous ways of stating a correct answer to my question.

This is not an isolated example of the pupils' response to the content of this programme, for it illustrates well not only the children's ability to understand and retain the ideas they are introduced to, but also shows the facility they have to utilize those ideas to enhance their own understanding of new and different situations. The children were nine years old at the time this interchange occurred, and had been engaged with the course for about six months.

As the programme progressed, the children had to try to come to terms with many ideas that many people perhaps think about only occasionally. Thus they discussed the nature of prejudice, justice, freedom, truth, friendship, rules, trust, respect ... the list is comprehensively long. In the process, the children formed their own community of enquiry, learning to respect each other's point of view, gaining from the insights offered by other pupils in the group, for of course each of the children is able to contribute their own experiences to the discussions, thus enriching every conversation with a wealth of thoughts and opinions. The childen learned to be comfortable with criticism, and readily seek to challenge unsubstantiated statements or incautiously uttered remarks. Even I am not immune from their willingness to seek clarity and meaning, and more than once have been upbraided for making comments such as, "Are you all ready to continue?". Statements of this kind are now met with gently disapproving corrections of the kind, "Excuse me, Sir, but how can any one of us possibly know if everybody is ready to continue, for no-one can know the state of another person's mind?".

And so the course progresses and the children are becoming more and more capable in their ability to think. They rarely offer comments without giving reasons for the opinions they are stating, and they are becoming more and more adept at seeking meanig and understanding. A recent one-hour lesson was spent discussing the statement, "All squares are rectangles", and during the course of their examination of the truth of the statement, they spent twenty minutes arguing over the meaning of the word, "same", before concluding that any decision had to be dependent upon the definition of the word, "rectangle". And then the final comment of one pupil was, "Can we carry on with this tomorrow, Sir?".

The pupils are now ten, and have finished two years of the course. I am excited by their progress and by the fact that they have only just begun to learn the rudiments of good thinking pratice. The room in which we meet is across the playground from the main school building, and I am constantly amazed to see them, two years on, running to get to the lessons. As their thinking skills develop, their challenge to currently held thoughts and opinions becomes more and more sophisticated. They are not going to be easy children to teach in future, for an active and curious mind will seek to understand more completely the nature of the society in which that person lives. They will reject cant and hypocrisy, for they are beginning to develop a passion for reason and truth, for meaning and understanding, for thinking and ref-lecting upon the experiences that affect them during the course of their lives. Their humour and creativity seems enhanced by their exposure to this course, and as they mature they become more and more enjoyable to work with (even if they do continue to respond to my imprecision of expression with devastating ease!).

The future for these children should be bright, for they are beginning to enjoy the benefits of an educated mind - educated not with facts alone, but with an ability to utilize the considerable powers of thought that they have at their disposal.

At the end of one week a little while ago, the group had been discussing the concept of freedom. It was nearly the end of the lesson, and we only had time for ten minutes' discussion on this theme, so were unable to explore the idea very much. At the beginning of our next lesson four days later, Simon came rushing in and couldn't wait for the lesson to begin. "Sir, Sir," he panted, "just because we live in a free society, it doesn't mean that we are free!" (not a question, this, but a statement carrying much conviction - and this from a ten year old). I was somewhat unprepared for such a powerful opening comment, and rather inanely responded with, "Where did you think of that?" "In the bath," he replied. Now what does that remind me of, I wonder?

Anthea Evens
College of St Mark
and St John

"For there is a personal nobleness, and even sacredness in work ... in idleness alone, there is perpetual despair."
Thomas Carlyle

"The last product of civilizations is leisure."
Bertrand Russell

What relationship has education to such different philosophical values? Where within the discussion of work and leisure does education reside? How does education fare, when viewed through the work-leisure dichotomy within the community?

This contribution attempts to evaluate the issues surrounding education in relation to work, non-work, leisure and community. Leisure is often viewed as the antithesis to work. This concept raises questions as to the real and underlying purposes of the development of the 'leisure society', and of the increasing role that education is required to play.

The issues surrounding work and non-work

Leisure is accepted as being present in any human activity or situation that enjoys an element of freedom and choice, and is recognised as being 'leisure-like'. Thus, if instead of taking the residual concept of leisure (time left over after work and other obligations), we take a state of being, a holistic view, then the artificial divisions between work and leisure are removed. There will be a blurred intervening area of obligation, family duty and so on.

James Murphy points to work and leisure as concepts that are fundamentally opposed. He highlights the problems central to non-work in relation to leisure:

"In the discretionary time conceptualisation of leisure, the fundamental values around which behaviour is organised are contained within work, not leisure. The valuation of the person is structured in terms of his work performance. No important judgement of the person occurs within the context of leisure per se. This conceptualisation relegates aspects of life contained with the sphere of work and leisure to the status of spare time activity.

"Work and leisure involve definitions which are not conceptually equivalent. It is a fallacy, defining work implicitly in terms of behaviour, and leisure in terms of time. This creates no particular problem so long as there is a scarcity of leisure, and little reason to be concerned about its explanation in terms of behaviour. The difficulty of interpreting work and leisure has arisen in part from the narrow, singular discretionary time reference given to leisure, a by- product of the antiquated Protestant work ethic which still dominates the post-industrial society."(1)

Consequently, if leisure is abundant (and the phrase, enforced leisure, has become popular), there arises an urgent need to explain leisure behaviour. In the light of participation rates, developing educational programmes, vandalism, hooliganism, truancy and so on, it becomes necessary to focus on leisure and its value to both the individual and society, within its relationship to work and non-work.

Increasingly, education must reassess its function to society: as a preparation for work, or a preparation for life.

As Margaret Talbot points out:

"The productive work ethic, although only two centuries old, permeates industrial society's thinking, to such an extent that recreation is still seen as re-creation, whose function is to restore the person to mental and physical fitness for work." (2)

In order to consider the implications of the removal of work from people's lives, one must understand the centrality of work to human life which has generated values and attitudes peculiar to industrial society.

However, when considering readjustments to social attitudes to work, Sherman argues that being needed and useful is a more fundamental need that productive labour.

Schumacher (1975) suggested:

"It might be said that it is the ideal of the employer, to have production without employees, and the ideal of the employee to have income without work. The question is: can the pursuit of these two ideals, undertaken with the marvellous ingenuity of modern science and technology, lead to anything but total alienation and breakdown?"(3)

Education has been given the responsibility of preparing people for work and/or an age of leisure, and then blamed for its success or lack of success, depending on your point of view. Kelvin (1981) states that while work may be central in giving structure to an individual's life, it is also the key element in local value systems. The relationship between schooling and occupation, and the demands associated with an employee's role have been continually stressed in works on education (Nesbit, 1957; Entwhistle, 1970)(4).

Work equals status and identity; therefore, where do those experiencing non-work (retirement, unemployment, redundancy) find their motivation for fulfilment, and as Maslow suggests in his hierarchy of needs, where do they find self-actualisation? Is it to be found in the sphere of creativity and participation that exists within leisure activities? How much of these activities or experiences should be state provided? To what extent do we rely on education for the formulation of our identity and the appreciation of our culture? These are the central questions to our perception of education.

However, secondary school education has been seen by many pupils, teachers and parents as being primarily a preparation for work. As in government vocational training schemes, this emphasis helps to reinforce assumptions about the centrality of work to the human life plan, and by implication increases the individual's social and psychological dependence on it. Yet the studies of Weir and Nolan et al. (1977-1980) suggest that there is a possible conceptualisation of the labour market in dualistic terms by adolescents and that many young people are pleased at the prospect of putting their schooldays behind them.(5)

Will the term 'unemployed' become an accepted term of reference for young people's self-perceptions and for their position in society? However, Kitwood (1980) points out that at present:

> "When a boy or girl personally accepts the label 'unemployed', the subjective environment changes: it becomes a state of inactivity and lassitude, where personal powers cannot be adequately used or expressed."(6)

We may construe from this that two identifiable trends are emerging: firstly, that the influence of unemployment is extending beyod the boundaries of work/non-work; and secondly, that young adolescents face major problems, of how to cope with unstructured free-time, and how to use it in order to bring to their lives some purposeful meaning.

The development of youth sub-cultures is perhaps a meaningful expressing of identifiable cultural forms which provide creative stimuli and identification, and more importantly, these cutlural activities are enjoyed as ends in themselves, rather than as an opening to external reward. The need to return to a system of intrinsic as opposed to extrinsic rewards for society, is highlighted in the call for a return to the 'play' element in our community. Slogans such as 'put the fun back in sport', and organisations being set up by the government, such as Playboard, suggest that there has been identified a need for a greater appreciation and understanding of the creativity or skill for its own sake, and for the perception what the activity creates for the person involved, not just for the end results of that skill. Perhaps this manifests itself in the arguments against passive 'spectatoritis' and for active participation. The suggestion that people have to work at their leisure, is surely one of contradiction. Perhaps those involved in teaching recreational activities are in a privileged position; for they work with and through the play element. However, the very fact that it is 'play' and 'recreation' may be the very reason for the low status of those involved!

Raffe (1983) suggests that perhaps schools need to offer pupils greater insight into the processes and patterns of living in modern society, without lessening the emphasis on qualifications and work.(7) Surely, the role of schools in the adolescent's transition to society is crucial, and yet it would appear that there is a widening gap between the activities offered in schools and the activities to be found in the adult world. National bodies such as the Sports Council recognise the need to bridge that gap with their campaigns such as, "Ever thought of sport?"; they say in their pamphlet: "the future of our youngsters is not in the hands of any one individual or organisation. It is up to us all. Let us pull together and make it a success."

Hargreaves et al. (1982) refer to youth training schemes and job sharing, continuing education and changed emphasis within leisure education programmes, as examples of how schools need to offer a wider breadth of education.(8)

However, Marsden and Duff suggest:

> "To fill many jobs our educational and occupational systems are calculated to limit talent and to persuade individuals how little they are capable of doing."(9)

More hopefully, Mumford (1957) outlines:

> "Paedia is education looked upon as a life-long transformation of the human personality, in which every aspect of life plays a part ... (it) does not limit itself to the conscious learning process, or to introducing the young into the social heritage of the community. Paedia is rather a task of giving force to the act of living itself ..."(10)

A sobering thought is that alongside the current cuts in expenditure which are affecting the school system, the adult and community sectors of education have been dramatically cut at a time when probably they are most needed.(11)

Indeed, we are at a time when an integrated system is vital to many people, young and old, who may encounter enforced leisure, or who simply wish to change direction with retraining or continuing education in order to expand their experiences. Where does the responsibility lie to counter apathy and disillusionment, by the motivation of leisure activities? Educationalists must adopt the prime role. Clearly, there has been a marked

trend towards a shifting of emphasis towards art, craft and sports teachers.

There have been successive government sponsored reports, which have given responsibility for education for leisure to the schools, in particular to physical education teachers. The White Paper on Sport and Recreation (1975) referred to the place of teachers of physical recreation:

> "They have a dual role - to encourage young people generally to take part in physical recreation, and to develop standards of excellence among the more gifted. The Govern-ment wish to encourage them to play an increasing part in fostering plans for physical recreation in the community generally, and in particular, in assisting local authorities in the planning of provision of recreational activities." (12)

Margaret Talbot refers to preparing teachers for the challenge of a non-work age and continues:

> "One of the problems in referring this 'problem' of leisure to the schools, is that schools have traditionally been seen, particularly by parents, as places of preparation for work, and subjects are assessed in the instrumental terms of their contribution to 'getting a good job'. If that main perceived function is removed ... schools will need to find a more immediately relevant justification for their activities."(13)

Community, education and leisure issues

The development of community education is another signpost in the growing trend towards the concept of education for life. Any attempt to incorporate the local community and those who have shared interests in the development of our society must surely underpin the concept of democracy and actively involve people in determining their own lives.

N.D. Sidway (1978) pointed to community aims:

> "at its narrowest - or most precise - it is seen as a geographical neighbourhood. If, however, community is defined as 'those of like interests', then perspectives expand, areas overlap and the unique characteristics of schools may be allowed to flourish into a broader community"(14)

The Devon Youth, Adult and Community Sub-committee (1983) issued a document 'Bridging the Gap

- Education and the Community', which attempts to put forward the principles of community education, and underline the fact that it is not the exclusive domain of the adult education and youth service.

The document proclaims that:

> "Within a delicate and changing social structure, there is a need to focus on education as appropriate to the concept of community which has evolved over the last quarter of a century as symptomatic of the breakdown of the real commun-ities around us."(15)

The idea of community education is central to the problems surrounding contemporary society. Education as a means to counteract the numbing effects of the welfare society within which we live, must become increasingly important. On this issue the document continues:

> "The concept of a predominantly centralised welfare state has been challenged from both ends of the political spectrum: there is no denying the benefits of institutionalised social care, but we have become increasingly aware of the system's numbing effect; the embrace which often stifles initiative, destroys selfconfidence, and replaces the natural inter-dependence that develops through personal contacts, commitment and shared responsibility."(16)

Community education can be experienced through adult education classes and activities, through youth schemes, various activities, and can be through the community's involvement in decision making with management of recreational or educational establishments. It can refer to the content of the programme, the perception of the individual of the experience and the interaction that accompanies such involvement. A shift of emphasis can occur from professional to non-professional leadership, and of greater interaction between the voluntary sector and the local authority.

However, the emphasis needs to move from the demands of a society where education is based on meritocracy - a work-reward syndrome - to one that focuses on education in the holistic sense, where the non-specialist can be involved in a sharing that does not depend for its validation on boundaries,

> "but gathers its strengths and meaning from trust, fellowship, shared interest, a common sense of continuity and place,"(17)

and also from an awareness of perceptions and preoccupations with self and thus with one's environment and

community.

Learning and its relationship with living should not be confined to school and college or to time. Adult education in both a formal and non-formal sense has grown enormously over the years, and requires only motivation and stimulation. A change in attitudes and expectations within our society is required for this fluid process to evolve. Processes that are essential to continuing education are not measurable; their values are as much a question of quality and quantity.

The latter part of the report of the sub-committee goes on to say:

> "The experience of community development of all kinds suggests that people without professional skills often lack self-confidence, particularly in a society that places such value on professional training and qualifications. While some degree of training is often necessary, the main qualifications for community work are a commitment to place and an unshakeable will to serve and help others. With effort and application, people are often surprised at their own abilities, as organisers, leaders or more humble co-workers. There is no doubt that the process of developing a greater sense of individual responsibilities and self-reliance can be helped from within the education service.
>
> "It requires, however, a measure of humility from the professional, a shift towards an image of themselves as catalysts or supporters rather than educators or leaders. The idea of 'doing good' will need to be replaced by the idea of 'empowerment', of allowing ordinary people increasingly to shape their own lives and look after their own 'good'."(18)

If the school is to be seen as the focal point of the community then as J. Steel, H.M.I., points out:

> "Schools are not islands, but must think beyond their immediate boundaries."

Community education involves people in their own education at all stages ... it is fundamentally opposed to 'consumerism' - we provide, you accept.

The suggestion that any education should be consumerism must be counter-productive. Without interaction within the educational experience there can be no feedback. "Parity of esteem", opportunity for all within education, was the cry of the 1944 Butler Education Act. However, arguments still rage around the reality of opportunity for all and class issues. Paul Willis (1977) identifies the differences operating within education for the middle class minority: that they only are offered the promise of material reward and advancement, while asking the majority to give up other ways of using their capacities for an illusory reward.(19)

School is thus perceived as irrelevant by those young people who look primarily to their jobs for self-esteem and identity. The principles of deferred gratification as operated by the middle classes in the main, ensure that cultural capital is reproduced along the lines suggested by Bourdieu, Coates and Silburn.

Thus there is a basic conflict: those young people who are in most need of assistance in developing personal resources and self-perceptions, are those who are most likely to lose the very source of their identity, but are also the most likely to be alienated from schooling as a relevant experience ... they may not regard the use of their leisure as problematic, as authority does, but they do regard being workless as a problem.(20)

There is a fear that the very formalisation and "enschooling" of learning leisure skills will be dysfunctional, particularly for those groups of children who are already alienated from school. Ken Roberts is indeed sceptical of the role of the physical education teacher in preparing young people for leisure:

> "Many teachers of art, literature, sport and music, suspect that they have found a new justification for their tradi-tional fare: they tell us that they are educating for leisure ... when recreation is assimilated into school education it tends to be in forms that are convenient to the schools, irrespective of whether they are likely to prove permanently interesting to the pupils ... most recreational skills are learnt outside the school."(21)

Talbot (1979), however, argues that physical education introduces certain selected activities to children and, in order to make sense of these activities, children interpret them according to their experience and imbue them with meaning; if this activity interpretation is favourable and reinforced socially the activity becomes an interest which may in turn become a lifelong occupation.

Historically, education has reflected the traditional concepts of community - that a few take the decisions and the majority are educated to follow them. The first task of the school has been seen to be one of selecting appropriate training so that they themselves become experts. The second task has been to ensure that the others will be able to respond to the expertise of the experts and, above all, to see their role as necessary and legitimate.

Yet evidence shows that young people are unable to conform, they seek their own identity within their own counter-culture; one which goes against the tide of mainstream culture. Frith argues that the youth of today demand not the right to work, but the right not to work.

Within the broad framework of leisure a new definition is being brought about and contemporary changes in education closely reflect this process of redefinition. It is within the concept of community involving mass decision making by its members and especally in the exercise of leisure that the new definition is most apparent.

"However, the concept of community is not only ancient, but also surrounded by nostalgia, evoking the concept of a small intimate society in which man can live his life wholly and satisfyingly, in close mutually supportive relationships with his fellow man, and enhance the quality of both his life and theirs. Rights and duties are not only properly balanced but shared," suggests John Eggleston.(22)

In a contemporary western society there is an important distinction between traditional concepts and those of today. Membership of the rural and urban community in earlier societies was inescapable, and the only form of social organisation available to man; exclusion from it removed virtually all protection. Decision making was not a democratic process. Conversely, in modern societies there is no inevitability about becoming a member of a community, indeed it requires conscious decision and considerable effort by the individual. New towns and suburbs do not become communities automatically because of geographical organisation, it has to be worked at by a whole army of professionals together with the members of the neighbourhood. This exercise in itself may remove the initial motivation and alter the experience.

There are, however, many reasons for advocating community invovement, which can relate to economic use of resources, political involvement or seeing the democracy is substantiated.

J.A. Haworth highlights the emerging recognition of an active view of man.(23) Man being seen not just as a creature of comfort, a consumer, but also as an agent of change; a person who creates his own reality and who has the potential to shape his own future. Creativity, curiosity and exploratory behaviour are the hallmarks of each of us. The psychology of need may not be the psychology of participation, but the dynamic nature of each individual would seem to demand that effective opportunity for involvement should be available as of right, even if the individual chooses not to participate.

When focusing on the question of needs, there is a complexity in levels and type. Needs change in relation to one's stage in life, and one's preoccupations, interests and activities. Needs vary according to gender, marital status, family environment, work-occupation or lack of it. Education is often a central issue in the question of needs and their consequent satisfaction. Thus, needs are diverse and will change.

George Torkildson suggests that in terms of need, man is a three-dimensional person:

> "he is like everybody else, requiring the basic needs of security, belonging and shelter, he is like some other people, sharing the same wants, the same groups, the same interests; he is like no other person - a unique individual, the only one."(24)

Leisure opportunity and education in the holistic sense may enable a person to become a three-phase man or woman, to become all he or she thinks he or she is capable of becoming.

There is a diversity within leisure. The move from mass spectator sports to individual participation is well recorded. The growth in adult education and cultural and physical activities is to be seen within our communities. Decision making within the leisure experience and the quality of the individual performance has also led to an important collective effect, in that the extensive exercise of decision making in this way has added to the determinant of the human environment in which we live.

With the decline of the community and the rise of the industrial revolution, a development of contractual relationships has arisen, most notably to be seen in work, where the worker sells his skills, muscle-power and mental agility to produce a specific product or service in return for an agreed reward or compensation. Is this where leisure appears? Instead of re-creation on the seventh day for six more days of toil, are we offering compensatory leisure in exchange for five days of boredom? Are we exchanging work to the glory of God, for recompense in a society of, or for, leisure? The individual after discharging his obligations to his society or community, is then at leisure to be a different person in non-work activities, and relationships. Is the role of education to be seen in this context? Instead of the multi-purpose member of society within the community, a person becomes a series of different people in different social contexts of modern society.

Within this model, how does the individual with no contractual work justify his non-work activities and relationships? How does he or she perceive their status in the hierarchical structure of the community? Though the content of community embraces the whole of human life and not solely its educational arrangements, it is of central importance and concern to educationalists.

To take a final look at the relationship of leisure, work and education, one must see these issues in the context of the life-style and life-cycle; and Roberts supports the holistic view.

> "If we are to take a holistic view of the role of education, then the principles of a more flexible lifestyle run parallel. There is a certain contrast with our linear life-styles: we go through education in youth, work in mid-life, and retirement in old age. This pattern may have worked fairly well in the past, but there are signs that it is now failing to meet human and societal needs. Most advanced industrial societies face an increasing problem of unemployment, which particularly affects those at the beginning and at the end of the normal work career. This is because, in a situation of job scarcity, those in mid-life have advantages in the job market: they have acquired skills and experience without being regarded as too old. But it may be better for their personal, familial and leisure lives if they are allowed and even encouraged to reduce or temporarily leave their jobs and thus effectively share their work with others."(25)

It must be stated that the whole issue of leisure and education raises the question of whether people can be 'educated' to make better use of their time and thereby derive greater satisfaction, when one of the basic notions of leisure is equated with freedom: freedom of choice and freedom of action. Some feel that such an approach smacks of paternalism - others take the more philosophical view: that the beneficial use of leisure

depends on an inner capacity and that this capacity can be learned.

Haworth supports such a view. His plea is for education for living, and a more holistic approach: the education of the 'whole' man, body and mind and spirit. In this respect, he says, education shares the same goal as recreation.(26)

In this contribution we have considered the different functions and benefits of education to the individual within society, with specific reference to the issues surrounding work and leisure. Therefore, when viewing education as a recreational experience, rather than an activity geared towards meritocracy, a definition suggested by Gray, might equally apply to both recreation and education.

> "Recreation is a person's experience, an emotional condition within an individual human being that flows from a feeling of well-being and satisfaction. It is character-ised by feelings of mastery, achievement, exhiliration, acceptance, success, personal worth and pleasure. It reinforces a positive self-image. Recreation is a response to aesthetic experience, and achievement of a person's goals, or positive feedback from others. It is independent of leisure, activity or social acceptance."(27)

Certain danger signals, however, are being glimpsed amid the euphoria surrounding education and leisure issues. Nothing, it would seem, is free fom political prejudice and some concern is expressed with regard to recreation becoming an issue of welfare.

Fred Coalter (1984) points to the argument:

> "That much leisure provision is to be understood in terms of such things as the needs of capitalism to socialise the costs of reproduction ... and to use such provision for purposes of legitimation and social control. Thus just as leisure effects are caused by nonleisure policies, so non-leisure goals are pursued via leisure policies. The idea of 'recreational welfare' in which the emphasis is on the in-herent benefits to be had from participation in a range of sporting and cultural activities - is not too far removed from the idea of 'recreation as welfare'".(28)

The 'problem of leisure' is now one associated with the 'collapse of work'. Redefining broader social and economic problems as a 'problem of leisure' can be seen in the misnomer of 'enforced leisure' as associate with unemployment. Fred Coalter goes on to paraphrase A.H. Halsey, when he says:

> "That leisure is in danger of replacing education as the 'dust-bin of social policy'."(28)

The involvement of recreation within the community is however seen by some as 'wholesome' in that it is sanctioned performance. Meyer and Brightwell (1964) viewed recreation as a social force. If community recreation is not consciously performed for the sake of any reward beyond itself, but is a force influencing people's lives, it can be interpreted as a system of services which provide 'wholesome' experiences, to counteract disruptive social trends that tend to prevent individually selfselected, pleasurable expression. It is logical to perceive from this value orientation that 'wholesome' individual recreation will lead to recreation as an influence for a social 'good'. From the viewpoint of Meyer and Brightwell, community recreation is a means for improving and maintaining societal cohesion and the quality of life; its development is dependent on social participation. Hence community recreation is a system of services for wholesome, positively sanctioned activities.(29)

Examples of leisure as devoted to community service can be seen in such organisations as Child Poverty Action, Action Sport, Shelter and Greenpeace, and such schemes as Community Sports Leaders Award. In other circumstances these activities might be regarded as drudgery, but the sense of invovlement with decision making and the participation in a collective challenge offers a new perspective to the experience.

Shivers suggests that the distinguishing feature of recreation is its consuming and absorbing quality. Could the same be said of education? He continues that the recreational value will be noted after the consuming experience has occurred, whereas recreation occurs at the time of the experience. Is this concomitant with the educational experience witnessed in deferred gratification?

The community needs to be involved at many levels of socialisation, if any sense of freedom over the direction of one's life is to be maintained. F. Hirsch reminds us that changes in life style may not just make community involvement in decision making desirable; they may necessitate it if the imposition of ideas is to be avoided.(30)

Perhaps the 'dress' of leisure for the future will be more and more in the style of education, for education is a seamless garment, a continuing process, where we strive to achieve a more integrated and caring society.

As the A.A.C.E. Working Group on Community Education (1979) pointed out:

> "Community education responds directly to local, practical, concrete situations; and that response is a local one - from the community outwards, not from central authority inwards."

Ed Berman, in his L.S.A. paper entitled "Leisure is dead: Long live reality. Community Education and

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the 4th R", points out:

> "One of the most important community initiatives during the last couple of decades has been an attempt to develop the latent energies of diverse social groups and communities - to encourage people to take control of important aspects of their lives.
>
> "Neighbourhood schemes, play initiatives, community campaigns - these have represented significant initiatives in urban living."(31)

1. Isolation (protection) from the adult world and its problems - work, money, sex, politics, responsibilities, decisionmaking.

2. Over-indulgence ("the freedom to be a child") of childhood in school, where children are occupied with childish tasks for their own good and no one else's, and with "educational" (abridged and expurgated) culture.

3. Dependence (welfare) on institutions for learning, on parents for economic support.

4. Subserviency - children's lack of legal rights gives them slave-status, which is necessary to keep them in school as consumers (education is a massive sector of the economy) and out of production and political significance.

5. Extended age-span - while biological maturity occurs at an increasingly lower age, childhood is extended to adolescence and young adults as education expands.

6. Uniformity - with age-grouping in schools, children are expected to do the same sort of things at the same age - parents anxiously pursue the ideal of the "normal" child, precocity and backwardness are problems.

7. Commercial exploitation. Industries have developed which supply, and in turn define, the needs of children and adolescents, for example, sweets, toys, comics, some kinds of pop music.

Further questions

1. More historical clarification is needed - Aries' work is only a beginning. We need to know more about what childhood was like before the seventeenth century (and is like in other societies), about how its development is linked with education, and about what advantages and disadvantages it has brought to children.

2. Clearer definitions of childhood need to be established if the term is to continue to be useful. We need to make a distinction between biological childhood and the "institution" of childhood, and to specify and trace more exactly the undesirable aspects of modern childhood.

3. A new vision of childhood is needed for the "leisured" society of the future - what useful tasks can children perform and how can they gain economic significance in view of largescale unemployment?

4. What legal reforms, alongside deschooling, are needed to eliminate childhood? (Holt has attempted to answer this one, but not satisfactorily, in my opinion.)

The most important point I have to make is that modern childhood is not a pedagogical but a political problem. Children suffer most of all from exclusion from the "hard" adult world, and over-indulgence in the education world; they are simultaneously made nothing of, and made too much of. Attention to the problems of childhood, then, is most needed, not from those who are already involved with children, but from the adult world of politics and economics. This is why the contributions of Illich and Reimer, despite their brevity, carry more weight than all the thousands of words of John Holt. This is not a battle for saviours of children, exuding love and benevolence, but a political power struggle. Liberating children, like liberating women, is about liberating everyone.

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The Education of Hearing Impaired Pupils in Eggbuckland

Tina Fisher
Teacher of the Deaf
Vale Primary School

Up until 1984, hearing impaired children in Plymouth were educated in Hartley House School for the Deaf. However, the shift in placement policy over the past decade towards integration for children with substantial hearing losses resulted in a huge decline in numbers at Hartley House. Although a purpose built building of only 8 years' standing, housed within a minute's walk of Eggbuckland Comprehensive and Eggbuckland Vale Primary School, Hartley House was closed.

The hearing impaired children were transferred to either the secondary unit within Eggbuckland Comprehensive School or to the primary unit attached to Eggbuckland Vale Primary School.

Not all teachers were in favour of the move, and several parents expressed their apprehension. Despite many protests the trend towards educational integration rolled forward, taking with it Hartley House School for the Deaf.

The past two years have seen a gradual assimilation of the deaf children into Eggbuckland Vale Primary School.

It has not been easy, due mainly to the class sizes within the school. Most teachers have a teaching ratio of 1:37, making it very difficult to place the hearing impaired child with a teacher who has the time to give him/her more than the usual amount of individual attention and also the sympathetic understanding he needs in order to feel accepted and therefore part of the class.

In such large classes, the high levels of noise can cause serious problems for our hearing impaired youngsters, due to the inability of standard hearing aids to discriminate between desirable and undesirable sounds, although the level of background noise that the child has to contend with has been greatly dec- reased by the acquisition of individual radio hearing aids linked by frequency direct to the child. I'd like to add here that although these radio aids are an absolute necessity if the child is to function to the best of his ability in and out of the classroom, the D.E.S. provide only limited funding for the purchase of these essential aids. We have therefore to rely on the generosity of local charities, or on parents to organise fund raising events. Devon Education Authority do, however, pay for the maintenance and repair of the aids.

The hearing impaired pupils at Eggbuckland Vale Primary School are lucky compared to many throughout Britain. There are four teachers of the deaf plus two auxiliary helpers within the school to give the children the additional support they need in the classroom and during withdrawal time in the unit. Many units in Britain have only one or two specialist teachers employed to support the hearing impaired children. This is not enough if the children who are severely and profoundly deaf are to succeed within an 'ordinary' school.

At Eggbuckland Vale, the staffing level of teachers of the deaf allows the children to have additional support within main- stream lessons as well as being withdrawn for language work in the unit. If this additional support was not available in main- stream lessons many of our profoundly deaf children would sit staring at the teacher and pick up very little of what was being said.

All the hearing impaired children at Eggbuckland Vale have gained much from their move into mainstream education with unit support. They now have access to a wider curriculum (the low number of children at Hartley House School had resulted in a more restricted curriculum); the children have more opportunities to learn from a greater variety of people; I believe we now expect more from our hearing impaired children as a result of being in constant contact with hearing children.

Socially, the children have moved forward in leaps and bounds. They now have to 'take turns', 'borrow and give back', 'share' and generally learn to cope in a community of hearing people.

They are surrounded by the natural and colloquial speech of their hearing peers and so have much more opportunity to 'hear' and use spoken language.

Of course there were some sad departures with the closing of Hartley House. Some parents who are themselves deaf, no longer involve themselves so willingly in school happenings. Hartley House School for the Deaf was very much viewed as part of the deaf community, along with the deaf club, etc. Deaf parents always felt that they could walk into Hartley House at any time during the school day. However, now that their deaf children are attending a 'school for hearing children', they are not so relaxed about calling in.

The opportunities for the deaf children of hearing parents to meet deaf adults has therefore been greatly reduced. This is very sad, as I do feel it is necessary for deaf children to have adult deaf models; to realise that there is a deaf community in Plymouth who converse using sign language and who have their own culture. And if they want to, they can be a part of this community in the future.

A central purpose of education is to enable people to increase their choices and enlarge their opportunities in life. Through integration in Eggbuckland Vale and Eggbuckland Comprehensive School we

hope to do just that for our hearing impaired children. If they want to move into the 'Deaf World' on leaving school, they can. Sign language is taught in the unit, and opportunities are presented throughout the year for deaf children to meet socially and communicate in any way they want. However if the child wants access to a wider community then his/her school life at Eggbuckland will have substantially assisted him/her in coping in a hearing, speaking world.

At Eggbuckland Vale, we are educating not only the hearing impaired children to adapt to the ways of the majority, but also the hearing children, their parents and teachers. We are educating them to make the necessary allowances for deafness and to show special consideration towards people with a hearing handicap.

For successful integration to occur, both hearing and hearing impaired pupils must respect each other's differences and try to meet each other's demands and needs.

Threnody

John Forster
Senior Area Music Tutor

I like the idea of a national curriculum. It has always seemed odd that our free state schools have been controlled by central and local government legislations in so many respects yet have had no clear requirements as to what to teach (except R.E., which is so bizarre as to be dismissable). It must be right that a parent sending a child to a state school should be able to have some assurance that, regardless of accident of home address, a balanced and considered curriculum will be provided.

But there my support for Mr Baker and his like must stop. I can just understand the view that numeracy and literacy have a particular significance. If all other education has failed for a child, then these skills may at least allow him or her to function on a day-to-day, hand-to-mouth basis, enable him or her to read the label on the medicine or tender the correct fare.

Beyond that the 3 'R's attitude has been one which most educationalists over the last few decades have tried to break down and broaden, recognising that to educate means more than provide these functional skills. Yet Good-Old-Victorian-Values Mrs Thatcher and Co. will put the clock back, put Maths and English (they mean Arithmetic and Literacy) on a pedestal because (a) they think it will appeal to an electorate whose education gave them little more than that, and (b) they lack the vision and guts to do anything more perceptive or progressive.

To underline their preoccupation with the functional, English and Maths are to be joined by Science as the Big 3, the Core. When I was in the sixth form, I remember being invited by liberal-minded teachers to examine the perceived polarisation of science and art, scientists and artists in our society. Science alone lacks humanity, art alone lacks reality, and so on. Twenty odd years on and our hopes are dashed as Science gets the big O.K. and the arts appear at the end of the list of also-rans.

What would have been so frightening about a national curriculum in which six or eight areas of human expertise or activity were accorded equal status? All subject areas sitting together as equals in a broadviewed core. What is so alarming in the prospect of a curriculum which would help young people develop balanced minds and bodies, inquisitive, supple, adaptable, with historical, social, ethical perspectives, expressive, sensitive, realistic?

Remedial help in numeracy and literacy is fine when appropriate and necessary. Otherwise surely we hope for all-round development and maturity.

And as Mr Baker scribbled the list of 'in' subjects on the back of his envelope, why did he not listen to someone saying, "O.K., science is an area of experience, an area of intelligence. Good thinking, Ken, to prescribe Science rather than the old divisive school subjects (Chem, Phys, Biol) - it says what you are about, ways of thinking, of observing, of reasoning, of predicting. But hang on, what about The Arts, that complementary way of reasoning, observing, expressing, being human? Why are you not giving The Arts the same integrated status? Why separate and weaken them? And why name just art and music? Why omit drama? Why preclude mixed media - O, come on, Ken, don't shudder so, it's not that trendy, the Tory party likes opera." (Maybe it's all a clever plot; knock out drama and combined arts like opera - folks stop going to theatres, no need for whopping subsidies to RSC, ENO, etc - ACGB budget can be cut - Bingo!)

As a partisan for music I must of course be pleased that music is there at all. It will prevent it from becoming an option discardable amid the scramble for available time. It may even lead to the introduction and growth of the subject in some schools. It may lead to resources being directed its way for the massive Inset requirements which will arise as teachers are required seriously to take it on. It may lead to a raising of musical awareness and standards of teaching.

My fear is that the prescription for music which falls from the back of a later envelope will be as unhelpful and muddled as the recent H.M.I. guidelines which were only able impotently to verbalise the patchy status quo and offer no sense of purpose or structure.

The Arts are an area which depends on imagination, experimentation and open-mindedness. Prescription of course content and attainment targets is therefore potentially restrictive. Too rigid a curriculum may stultify the work of just the sort of teachers whose vision and commitment has led, for example, to the revolution of music education over the last twenty years and its radical reappraisal in G.C.S.E. And we all know the potentially deathly pressure of the cramming syndrome on any course.

On the other hand, too vague a syllabus with the sort of bumbling general statements that H.M.I. have currently let dribble effectively allows everyone to continue in much the same way as heretofore with no yardsticks, standards or other well-considered expectations in mind.

A solution - not a fudge - is possible. A clear plan of conceptual developmnt is available, age-related

criteria can be established for composing and performing skills and aural perception. Within this progressive structure teachers must have the freedom to develop and mould their own syllabuses. Such a structure for music is now being developed by Devon. Hopefully central government's prescription and expectation will enhance rather than hinder this local progress.

I fear, observing the Tory's manic obsession with absolutes, right and wrong, black and white, straight and queer, that the curriculum designers will be expected to impose this sort of arrogance onto the very area of experience which enables human beings to challenge, explore and express ideas and ideals and to feel at ease with shades of grey.

When concern is voiced at the ills within society you can be sure 'education' will come in for blame. It's the teachers' fault; it's ILEA's fault - two targets big enough to be immune from rational, objective proof or disproof. You can allege it's their fault and no-one can prove otherwise. But it is good political fuel so Kenneth Baker leads his pack in a blinkered, self-protecting pre-occupation with conventional, political and educational objectives at the expense of other values and other educational scenarios. He conveniently evades the intangible and subjective facets of experience which are complex and difficult to penetrate, which may defy simple, functional language and may in any case be politically non-profit-making. He will sacrifice the Arts on the tree of objective politics. The impractical and subjective can quietly be ignored and the cost of doing so cannot be quantified and weigh in economic debate.

We need people of perception and creative vision to see beyond economic theory and political convenience. We need philosophers and artists to offer reference points, a base line of human experience, a basis for human thought and action. What is more, do we not each individually need to have some of all these qualities, skills and areas of experience and perception as the basis and root of our own lives?

I was selected at eleven, went to a grammar school, they said a good one, kept up with the express stream, performed well enough eventually to get a good degree. I actually liked school most of the time. But the things I left not knowing, not understanding, not feeling! I emerged tantalisingly and frustratingly incomplete. I envy those with historical perspective, those who feel fluently at home among scientific concepts, those who can appreciate and respond to works of literature. It was at school that a lifetime of habit and prejudice was established, that doors were closed as well as opened.

And now I am part of the same system, dimly conscious of the untapped potential it is stifling. I am inside the system with an urge, maybe even a duty, to be revolutionary - not to undermine, but in a constructive way to inspire change, some little growth, some little move towards a curriculum which is person- centred rather than politically convenient, a curriculum to prepare young minds for life in all its dimensions.

I am saddened that the ethos so far revealed in the national curriculum proposals, the elevation of functional subjects above others, understresses the need to help minds grow in a perceptive and creative way: that is, overlooks the fundamental values of artistic experience, that it appears to ride on a wave of supposed national need (we do so need scientists, you know; insensitive ones) rather than to seek out personal potential, that it is largely inculcative rather than truly educative.

If only one thought the government paid any more than lip service to the arts, if the Minister for the Arts had the clout of that for Defence or Industry or Social Services, instead of being a dispenser of peanuts! What has the Arts Minister said to him at Education (& Science) at the parity it should have with Science or Maths? When will he make it to the front page of the Times Ed. and earn some editorial evaluation?

As possibly the least politically active man in the street I have no party axe to grind, but I have failed to see anything in the rest of Baker's Bill that is likely in any way to improve our education provision. As power is pulled more and more towards his own office and/or towards the self-interested parental groups most certain to be his supporters, the potential corruption of absolute power increasingly becomes alarming and even disgusting.

Our education system is far from perfect, it harbours severely distorted perceptions and is probably the inevitable product of the limited resources invested in it. Nevertheless it is a medium through which and in spite of which we may do our best. It must not be broken up in the interests of a minority. Fringe alternatives may healthily serve to challenge but they cannot themselves effect radical change. Our system must be all-embracing, comprehensive, and it must have a structure which allows itself to be challenged and refined from within; proposals for national curriculum control must not be so tight, insensitive or ideologically motivated as to strangle the opposition.

Our sanity as a nation, and as individuals, depends on it.

Further Education

W.B. Foster
Principal,
College of Further Education

The world of Higher Education in this, the last quarter of the twentieth century, is highly complex, inextricably linked as it is to the rapidly changing needs and activities of industry and commerce and the social changes being brought about in society by a multiplicity of pressures.

About a hundred years ago, Mechanics Institutes were founded to provide in "night classes" an educational background - basic literacy, numeracy and science - for apprentices and others involved in engineering, textiles, pottery, etc. After the 1914-18 war, the subjects covered expanded to include motor vehicles, electricity and building, and new "Institutes" - for commercial studies and "Homecrafts" for girls - were started. Before the 1930's, "Institutes" became "Technical Colleges" and classes were held in the day for full-time as well as evening and part-time students. Some establishments were in the forefront of developments and were recognised by professional bodies (Inst. Mech. Engineers, Inst. Elect. Engineers, etc.) and London University, as centres in which their qualifications could be studied.

After the 1939-45 war, amalgamation of separate "technical", "commercial", "catering and homecrafts", and often Art Institutions occurred to form the "Further Education" institutions of today - multi-disciplinary and multi-purpose in nature. About 30 of the over 500 colleges pursued advanced academic work, became recognised as centres of excellence and passed through the stage of College of Technology and Regional Colleges to become the Polytechnics of today.

The Further Education institutions of today, then, have a long history and a record of continuous development, all of it firmly rooted in the needs of industry and commerce for the production of a skilled, competent, well balanced labour force, both well grounded in basic principles, and aware of modern technology. Each College is based firmly in its local community with its strengths - indeed, often its specialisms - originating from its own region. Thus, mining departments are to be found in the West Riding, Wales and Nottinghamshire, textiles in Bradford, agricultural machinery in Norfolk, aeronautics in Bristol, marine engineering in South Shields, etc. Over the century as the economy of the region - or the country - has changed, so has the nature of the service provided by FE. Foundry work, shipbuilding, textiles, etc. have all decreased and in some cases disappeared totally, whilst new specialisms or departments, e.g. in the service industries - hotel catering, retailing, nursing, electronics, robotics and so on - have all appeared.

Thus the whole ethos of FE is one of continued transition and no-one in this sector of work can remember a stable time. Always some elements are being phased out as others are phased in. However, overlaying these organic changes are certain periods of major upheaval. The last great one for FE was 15-18 years ago when as a result of technological advances in both industry and commerce the whole structure of FE courses had to be rethought. The "old type" craftsmen were no longer needed - at least in the number previously required - but higher level "technicians" and single skill "operatives" were in great - and increasing - demand. Technology, however, was advancing so rapidly that any educational programme would be outdated in three to four years, so a "unitised" or "modular" programme had to be devised, so that "retraining" or "updating" in technologies would be considerably simpler. This in turn has had a "cascade" effect into not only other courses in colleges but into the schools which provide a "feed" for Colleges and into Higher Education which takes the FE products.

Currently, FE is undergoing another seminal change. The emergence of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) through the Department of Employment has brought a major influence into a field hitherto affected primarily only by the Department of Education and Science (DES). The considerable funds within the control of the MSC have caused the relatively narrow vocational aspects which are MSC's main interests to assume great importance in the planning and delivery of Further Education. As yet the full impact has not been felt but already politicians and educationalists alike are aware of massive forces imposing changes of direction. This in turn brings - as always - uncertainty, even apprehension to some in this field, but to the majority well accustomed to the vagaries of the field over the decades, it is clear that the opportunities are great.

Most Colleges are involved with four "client" groups:

a) With full time students following educational training courses to enable them to enter employment or Higher Education - or re-enter employment having been unemployed.

b) With part time students "on release" from their employment to obtain the "back up" education and training to assist them in their career progression and their employer in his labour efficiency.

c) With full time or part time students pursuing "General Education" courses to supplement the technical competence they may already possess. Often this is to enable entry to Higher Education.

d) Updating or retraining of mature people whether in employment or not, particularly in relation to new technologies. Motivation here is usually to keep or progress in a job already held or to improve chances of re-employment in an increasingly demanding labour market.

These client groups range in age from 16 to over 50 and cover the whole spectrum of subjects. Distances learning - tuition by correspondence, audio or video tapes, etc. - is becoming more important and most colleges now operate "drop-in" facilities for limited tuition in new technologies on a "demand" basis rather than in organised classes. In the jargon - FE is becoming more "student centred" than "course centred".

Where these, and the next moves will take us, is a matter of considerable debate at the moment. It is a fact that manufacturing industry, from utilising 43% of the workforce in the 1950's, is now down to 25% and will continue to drop - possibly to 12-15% by the turn of the century. New technology will ensure manufacturing output will be maintained or even rise. Service industries, of all types, are taking an increasing percentage of the labour force and, since "service" cannot be automated (at least in the near future) as easily as manufacture, this would well absorb the excess from the manufacturing field. What this means is that the probability of unemployment falling is remote and in fact it could well rise in the future decades.

Thus, a significant proportion of the population is likely to be "non wage-earners" in the foreseeable future. Shortening the length of the working week, reducing the age of retirement and raising the age at which compulsory full time education and training ceases are all feasible and are likely to be implemented. This means that even if fortunate (?) enough to be a wage- earner, a person will STILL have a considerable proportion of time non-wage-earning, and for those not fortunate, most of their time will be in this state.

Two things are obvious. Firstly, the wealth produced by the nation must be utilised to enable those who, for no fault of their own, cannot wage earn, to live a dignified and fulfilling life. Secondly, the educational system of this, and other developed countries will need to address with speed the problems which are ahead to provide suitable opportunities for everyone involved.

Within this scenario, Further Education, with its long experience and proven ability to absorb change, will clearly need to play a major role. The social needs of the problem, already considered in our curriculum discussions, will become even more important. This will probably be the next major upheaval in the FE world.

A Parable

K. Elizabeth Frederick
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student, College of
St Mark and St John,
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Once upon a time there was a little old man with no name who lived on the very top of a huge mountain called Academia. He lived in a large house with a few servants and spent his days sitting on a tall stool in front of a big dusty desk. On the top of his desk was an enormous stack of books, and on either side of the desk there was a basket. The basket on his left was quite small and bore a sign that said 'Approved'. The basket on his right was much larger; it was almost as tall as the stool. It was labelled 'Rejects'. The little man would perch on his stool for hours at a time sorting through the pile of books which, incidentally, never seemed to get any smaller. Usually he tossed the books into the reject basket; but once in a great while, he would pause in his frantic sorting to snatch up a rubber stamp and stamp the words "GREAT BOOK" in red ink on the cover of a volume. Books like that always went into the approved basket. The odd thing was that the little man never actually opened the books to see what was in them. He would just glance at the covers, which all looked exactly alike.

When he got tired of sorting through the books, the little man would reach into his desk drawer and pull out a fat scroll. On this scroll was a seemingly endless list of school subjects. Next to subjects like Arithmetic, Spelling, Geography, and Penmanship, he would place ticks of approval. When he came across such subjecs as Forming Friendships, Enjoying Life, and Sexuality, he drew thick black lines through them. He could go on like this for ages, making ticks and lines as the fancy took him. When he eventually got bored with the scroll, he would simply tear off the completed portion and drop it into the approved basket. The rest of the scroll would be tucked back into the desk drawer.

Then the little man would take out a small pad of paper and scribble notes to himself. He wrote whatever he felt like writing, whether it made sense or not and whether it was true or not. He had a habit of humming tunelessly while he wrote. His notes frequently said things like this: "Man is a generic term even though the statement, 'Man is a mammal and he breast feeds his young' is absurd." or "Heterosexuality is the norm. Homosexuality is deviant. Monosexuality, self-stimulation, is not even to be considered as an option." or "People must work for a living and try to get ahead of their neighbours or else they are failures." When he had written a lot of notes, he would sweep them into the approved basket to get them out of his way. Then he would put away his pad and pen and go back to sorting out the books.

Once a day a servant would come in to empty out the baskets. The large one would be emptied into the rubbish bin and the small one into a special machine. When the machine was turned on it would make a terrible racket and eventually spew out a great number of packed lunches in white boxes that looked exactly alike. Another servant would take the boxes and load them into a cart. She would then drive the cart to a village at the foot of the mountain. The village was called School and the villagers spent most of their time standing around waiting for the packed lunches to be delivered from Academia. Once the lunches arrived the people would sit down and eat them in the village hall.

This might sound nice to you at first, this having your food delivered to you, but very few people in School were satisfied with it. There were a lot of problems with this way of doing things. To begin with, some of the people were vegetarians. If the lunches one day consisted of roast beef sandwiches and watermelon, the vegetarians would turn up their noses in disgust at the meat. They would devour the watermelon with great gusto and greedily lap up the juice that dribbled down their chins and hands. Much as they might enjoy the fruit, they would go away hungry because they couldn't eat the sandwiches. Other people liked both the fruit and the sandwiches but didn't properly enjoy their meals because they happened to prefer mustard on their roast beef and salt on their watermelon, and these things didn't come with the packed lunches. Some went away hungry because the lunches were too small for them, but others left feeling ill because the lunches were too big. You might ask, why didn't the hungry ones eat what the others were too full for? Or, why didn't people bring their own salt and mustard? Or, why didn't the vegetarians trade their roast beef sandwiches for someone else's watermelon?

The people in School thought of these things too, but there were some rules that went along with these packed lunches. You weren't allowed to trade or give away bits of your lunch. You also weren't allowed to eat in the village hall if you brought your own lunch or even a bottle of ketchup to make what you were given taste better. And it was forbidden to leave the village hall before everyone had finished eating. This meant that those who ate fast had to sit about twiddling their thumbs in boredom while the slow eaters plodded along. In turn, the slow eaters couldn't stop to savour each bite or chew slowly and thoroughly because of all the angry looks they got from the people who had finished. Slow eaters would frequently wind up with indigestion from gulping down their food to try and keep up with the others. Nobody in the village was very happy with this system of doing things or with the lunches, which happened to be bland and unappetizing a lot of the time.

In spite of their dissatisfaction, the people never complained to the servant who brought the lunches. They would often grumble to one another, but all were silent when lunchtime rolled around. The reason for this was that they were afraid of losing the lunches if they complained. A free bland lunch was better than no lunch at all, and a lot less trouble than making your own special lunch. Besides, if you fixed your own lunch, how could you be sure you were getting the proper vitamins and minerals? Everyone assumed that the little man on the mountain knew what was best for them because he had always chosen what was to go in the lunches. It never occurred to anyone to actually question his judgement. None of the villagers had ever met him, and none of them realised just how very old he was. Likewise, they had no way of knowing that living by himself in the rarified climes of Academia had made him go a little bit mad. So they sat, day in and day out, eating their lunches, too full of apathy and complacency to bother with questioning or changing the way things were.

If I'm not mistaken, they're sitting there still.

Education - A Future?
(remedial and special education)

Edward Fry, Dip. Ed.

Headmaster, Hillside Secondary School for pupils with moderate learning difficulties;
former Member of National Committee of the National Council for Special Education

It would seem appropriate to state at the beginning of this article that the views and opinions expressed here are those of the writer and not necessarily those of Devon Education Authority. However, they are made from a background of teaching in mainstream and in special education, and from seven years' experience as the Head of Devon County's only secondary special school.

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Special schools arose from the needs of pupils who, to a large extent, were not having those needs met within ordinary schools. Day schools for the mentally handicapped and epileptic arrived with the motor car, whilst the first schools for the blind and deaf were founded in the lifetime of Mozart.

The Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People was published in 1978. This took the Chairman's name and soon became known as the 'Warnock' Report. At that time it was reported in the Times Educational Supplement that '... the best way to improve the education of children with special needs is both to ensure early detection and identification of specific disability, and to improve the quality of the teaching and care the child receives, wherever that may be ...'

In 1980, in the Government's White Paper 'Special Needs in Education', in acknowledging the Warnock Report it was stated, '... only when the economic situation improves sufficiently will it be possible to bring to fruition all the committed efforts of those engaged in meeting special education needs ...'

The Education Act of 1981 assisted with legal powers, but it was a disappointment as it neglected the Warnock priorities of teacher training, further education, provision for the under fives, and totally ignored the need of extra funds. Yet we are now becoming more aware than ever before of the special educational needs of many children who are currently in ordinary schools and there is now a legal responsibility to cater for those needs.

In schools, children have been encouraged to ask questions, parents have opportunities to participate in the workings of schools, yet there is unhappiness in our schools. Many teachers fear a contraction of the education service. In this city dependable schools are disappearing and with change there is uncertainty. Local communities such as Plymouth will need to start to generate their own structures and programmes to give people a sense of belonging and support, particularly where many adults will be without meaningful and paid employment.

By the year 2000 microelectronic equipment will probably have been so enormous as to have completely changed our school system. Most secondary education will probably take place in the home, or at least not in a school as we now know it. Pupils will need to be prepared for life which will probably consist of much leisure and little paid employment. Education could well become locally financed with University, or higher education, being on a regional basis. Schools are likely to become centres for the community with open access for all ages, data being readily available through microcomputers. There is a growing realisation of the need to use natural resources sparingly and that individual responsibilities outweigh individual rights.

In the future the state will have to provide more people with financial allowances which could in part be vouchers for learning modules. Politicians, local and national, will have to be more accountable. Microelectronic computers will be used for lcal and central elections with referenda often through the home terminal. An example of this was the 'telection' portrayed in the 1984 Cambridge Footlights Review. This depicted a quiz-type by-election for Parliament with show business presentation, mid- Atlantic accents and audience participation through fireside voting. In the future there will be little requirement for unskilled labour and, for some, leisure will be television-type with some 'arm-chair' passive participation. However, others will find a new interest in culture pursuits such as sailing, fishing, horticulture, painting, pottery, etc.

It would appear likely that after a decline in the birthrate there would be financial inducement from the Government for children to be born.

Without further speculation and to summarise, in the remaining years of this century there will be vast changes in education, particularly in the way it is received, offered, where it happens, its scope and clientele. Similarly, there are likely to be considerable social changes which could range from parts of the country with extremely caring communities to other parts where law enforcement would be possible only with the active participation of citizens' law enforcement groups. In fact, it could be that this country would attempt to exercise social control to the extent that some handicapped and some criminals would be forbidden to procreate.

If there is this polarisation, its degree and its direction, either to left or to right, would vary with different regions of the country. With more locally, or regionally, delegated responsibilities, the provision for children in

need of special education in special schools, or in mainstream, would vary enormously. Meantime, the Head of a school has to lead a team of teachers and non-teachers to serve the needs of pupils. He or she should give some direction, yet, at the same time, be mindful of the wishes of parents and of the views of the local community. He should encourage creativity, follow National or County policy, with slight local variations, be mindful to respond to the thoughts of the school governing body and whenever possible, raise or encourage the raising of funds for the school. Important though these may be, it is absolutely essential for the head to be able to double as the caretaker, first-aider, supply teacher, mealtime supervisor or father confessor. At times the Head seems to be expected to walk on water. This is quite beyond the writer's capabilities. However, he can keep upright on water, but it has to be frozen and often the skating seems to be on thin ice.

Mr Ian Gallacher, Dip. Ed.
Former Headmaster,
Honicknowle County
Secondary School,
now working as a
freelance writer

"There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into an abyss of in-justice where they experience the bleakness of corroding despair."
Martin Luther King

I count myself a third generation Irishman, and pessimistic to boot.

My pessimism is not about the attitudes of the young people I come into contact with, or about their morals, or their behaviour in school. Indeed, I find them to be not very much different to the youngsters of twenty years ago. In the main, they manage, school day by school day, to sustain the difficult switch from what may be a 'sophisticated' adolescent life style back to the schoolgirl or schoolboy image, and I admire them for it.

The root of my pessimism is my fear of our post industrial technology, and my vision of the world it may create. If we are in truth going to see a world where paid employment is for a substantial number a minimal experience, where many may lead lives without significant employment, then I am despondent.

Douglas Hamblin of University College, Swansea, foresees an increasingly divisive society in which prejudice and mutual antagonism develops between three groups:

"a) Those who have a job which is essential for the creation of wealth.
"b) Those who have a job which is at least partly 'created'. Such jobs may carry connotations of inferiority and artificiality.
"c) Those who do not have a job and are not likely to ever have one. This group will not be restricted to the disadvantaged and less able."

Crude forms of identity by belonging to certain groups rather than identity by selfawareness may operate. Divisiveness will be accentuated by demographic changes in which a larger geriatric population has to be supported as we approach the 'nineties'.

University lecturers are not omniscient, but even a superficial examination of our society must underline his comments. One thinks of the Bristol riot, the physical attitudes adopted by many pickets in the recent miners' strike, the behaviour of many young football supporters - indeed, the eager tolerance of certain forms of tantrum on Centre Court at Wimbledon! The list is depressingly long.

Careers Officers working with young people are now beginning to express their concerns about 'compound unemployment'. This is a pattern of young unemployed sinking into the family background of unemployment - with ready resignation.

If the education service is to play its part in attempting to grapple with these problems, then it must have three things. These are - sufficient finance, commitment and imaginative backing from central government/s, and staff of the right calibre. I see hope in meeting the latter condition. The difficult job market and the drop in child population have allowed a start to be made in improving teacher quality, and not before time. There have been too many of us in the profession, heads and assistant teachers alike, who have lacked the vital ingredients - imagination and the ability to communicate with young people.

It is far easier to highlight problems than to find answers. Indeed, it is quite unrealistic to expect schools to shoulder the whole burden of preparing young people for the rapidly changing world. Nevertheless the stark fact remains that in the month of October 1984, 40% of young school leavers were either unemployed, or on Youth Training Schemes. Many face considerable spells without work. Have we done our best to ensure through the attitudes we have fostered, through the curriculum we have devised and are now re-examining, that we have prepared our youngsters as best we can for these uncertainties? I am not sure that we have. There are glimmerings of hope, though. The personal, social and moral education courses now taught in most of our secondary schools are attempting to assist teenagers in developing their personal resources. Pupil profiling offers a young peron the opportunity to take away from school a 'portfolio' of successes. These are successes in fields that are not examination based - and such a scheme at last gives recognition to the fact that examination results may not tell us much more about a person than their ability to pass exams.

I suspect, though, that such a scheme at national level is going to require a considerable investment in teacher time if it is to work properly. It will be well worth it, though, if it raises the levels of aspiration of our pupils and improves their self concepts.

We need to spend money on a structured and systematic effort to improve the interface between

education, voluntary agencies, community workers and staff engaged on the Youth Training Scheme. This fledgling scheme is proving popular with trainees. There would appear to be overlap though in some areas of the scheme between work done in school, and then served up afresh in the life skills section of the course. Whether at the end of the day it will have proved possible to teach broad based transferable job skills remains as yet unproven; and this is one of the great hopes of this expensive venture.

My other great hope is that the stimuli and new experiences offered by this scheme will cut into the dreadful awful boredom of the young unemployed. Many of them come back to see me at school, nearly always in the afternoons - they 'sleep on' in the mornings. They are depressed, bewildered by the reality of the outside world, and wistful about bygone days. These teenagers never visit libraries or community centres - notices of activities for the 'unwaged' pass them by. Many of them are fringe members only of youth clubs. Unless we devise a way to reach them, then I am fearful that Hamblin's prophecies will come to pass.

I am equally fearful for John. John is twelve and devoted to his BMX bike. He wrote about it for me.

> "Me Hopey are BMX in like BMX Rayig and Freyling to and Joping in Fraeyling and like we are. to I do weaning on a said to and I do run to Horse-piting I got six korgrrs. and my Frind Tomon got Ten korgrrs and we triud to Katin skollyll to and we mete to nigt we are going in the boot in the coittan and wemoing to we are going FoFF tha brig. to Ensation to. on Satday in am got to the BMX corate to Ramues Jon and I met to sleep at Sunday"

Who, I wonder, will find a place for John in our brave new world?

Daniel Gill
Teacher
Private School,
Westminster

My opinion today is that the goal of education (if indeed it needs one), whatever form it takes, is the attainment of the truly independent spirit; to enable the individual, ultimately, to create and realise on his own an experience which culminates in freedom.

Education, for many of the children, parents, teachers, I have met is seen as a means to an end; a currency to be exchanged in a market place where the spirit of arbitrary invention, or the disposition to leave things to chance have been penetrated by standards which seek to control and predict the future. Daring, uncertainty and inspiration are going, if not gone. Play is lost.

Muriel Glanfield
Domestic Cleaner/Attendant
Plymouth City Museum and
Art Gallery

I live in an inner city area, and what with the confusion of the city and county education systems over the past few years, plus the running down of the inner city schools, it would be surprising if any of the children from the inner city areas had any fair chance of an education which would give them a standard in the future.

Speaking as a mother, I was bitterly disappointed with the way my youngest son's education was carried out. He was quite an intelligent boy and did well at school. When he sat the eleven plus, being very methodical and having to get things right he didn't do enough of the paper to pass, although according to his teacher and Headmaster he did an excellent paper, and should have gone to high school, as he had a very high I.Q. and was academically suited for it. There was no way round this, so we had to agree that he should go upstairs into the senior school. My son was caught up in an experiment that year regarding the eleven plus: instead of streaming pupils as was always the system for the eleven plus, both classes 1A and 1B were thrown in at the deep end, and no extra effort put in, at least that is what I believed. It wasn't until much later that I found out that beta and alpha books were used, beta for the majority and alpha books, the more advanced book, for the few fortunate pupils whose parents were on the Parent Association, and mothers who did voluntary work in the school, and worked as dinner ladies at the canteen. This showed in the results. No beta book pupils passed and only 7 children passed from the two classes, so need I say more regarding this? You can draw your own conclusions. Perhaps if I had been involved more with the school, my son would have been one of the lucky ones.

The evening arrived for the open evening for the new pupils going into the Senior School for the new term in September. Both my husband and I went along. After meeting staff and looking at classrooms, etc., it was Question Time in the Hall. My husband asked the Headmaster what chance my son would have for taking the over age exam on the thirteen plus, as it was also known, he was told, that boys who came up from the Juniors were not High School material and were quite happy to amble through the school until school-leaving age, as many boys weren't interested in going to High School, in other words the school wasn't interested. My husband and I left there quite despondent and very concerned for my son and his future.

September came, and my son went into the Senior School. I felt I couldn't leave him there, in my view, to rot away in this systeem. My only alternative was to consider private education if he was going to have any chance at all. I gave this quite a great deal of thought, as I knew it would mean quite a few sacrifices to pay for it.

My son started his new school in November. His first reaction was things were very different there. He was no longer one of a number, he was an individual person with a Christian name and was treated as such. The school helped to build his character and gave him confidence in things he did. It had its drawbacks; it wasn't as good in the way of sport as it had no playing fields of its own, but the thing was my son was being educated to 'O' level standard. He found that his friends had far more pocket money than him, as they came from middle class homes and he was from a working class home. He came to terms with this and accepted that there was a difference between him and many of the pupils at the school, but he was quite happy there and was Head Boy of the school when he left. He acquired seven 'O' levels and now has a very good job with good prospects. To me the sacrifices that were made were worth it, and I know my son is grateful for the chance we gave him.

My conclusion to this is if I had left him in the Secondary Modern School, he would have been with the rest of those unfortunate pupils leaving school with no 'O' levels and very little chance or hope of getting a job. You may think after you read this, "She was lucky to be able to afford to send her son to private school", but may I add it took the money I earned as a part time domestic to pay for those five years. I was often told I was stupid to go without to educate my son, he wouldn't think any more of me for doing it. We shall see. To me, I did what any caring mother would do, sacrifices or not: to give her son a chance in life and an education.

Ernest Goddard, B.A., F.R.S.A., F.B.I.M.
Headmaster, Southway School

"What is the matter with the world that it is so out of joint?
Simply that men do not rule themselves but let circumstances rule them."
Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1803-82

I have often thought how neatly Emerson summed up the human condition and how pertinent his observation remains today as for any other point in history.

It is, quite simply, just as important for the individual as for the great mass of humanity that we learn to live in harmony with each other and our physical environment and, as far as "formal" education is concerned in our schools and colleges - there is no contradiction between the essentially utilitarian concerns of the State on one hand and the celebration of individualism on the other. Individual and collective freedom, confidence and strength need a stable social, economic and political environment and, sensibly, that requirement must be reflected in our educational aims and objectives.

This is, I feel, well put in the following statement about the goals of education which we have adopted as a Statement of Endeavour for our school:

> They are, first, to enlarge a child's knowledge, experience and imaginative understanding and thus awareness of moral values and capacity for enjoyment; and secondly, to enable him to enter the world after formal education is over as an active participant in society and a responsible contributor to it, capable of achieving as much independence as possible.

This implies a curriculum concerned with skills, attitudes, concepts and knowledge which is broad, balanced, relevant and allows for individual differences: it should also be readily understandable by parents and others who should know how a pupil's progress in learning is monitored and assessed.
All of this is much easier said than done!

Thinking about how such aims can be realised, I am attracted to the extension of a commitment we have at our school to ensuring that our curriculum and the way we operate reflects our concern for the importance of the 3 'C's for all of our pupils, i.e. that the process of education should nurture and promote their CONFIDENCE, CAPABILITY and sense of CARE. We have the same commitment for our parents in their relationship with our school.

When I look at the provision of State maintained education, I would like to see the same commitment.

CONFIDENCE in the system rests in part on knowledge and in part on trust and, in my judgement, both would be enhanced if the "leaders" of our society, e.g. in business, manufacturing, public service and politics, entrusted their own children to be educated within a common system of State maintained education. Such an act, as a statement of CONFIDENCE, could only be unifying especially when supported by Cabinet and other ministers whom we entrust with the government of our nation.

Such confidence would, of course, be based upon an informed assessment of the CAPABILITY of the system, appropriately resourced, to work successfully towards clear and agreed goals: in everyday language, "to deliver the goods".

And, not least, there would be evidence of a shared CONCERN that all our children receive an agreed educational "entitlement" and an acknowledgement that education is a life-long process which, when properly supported, benefits the nation as a whole.

Sadly I am bound to conclude that on the basis of my experience to day, and in the light of impending legislation, I cannot feel confident that there is an agreed national commitment to the simple criteria of the 3 'C's for a common system of State maintained education and, to that extent, our future unity, stability and freedom are threatened.

To a desert island with eight floppy discs and two quaint books

Ian Goodfellow
The Senior Counsellor,
Open University,
Plymouth.

A period of economic recession is both a good time and a bad time for fresh thinking on education: a good time because it should encourage a critical examination and a sharp focus on priorities and a bad time because little financial resource is available to effect necessary improvements. This latter aspect was the obverse side of the verbal coin which Sir Keith Joseph spun before an appreciative audience at the last North of England Education Conference and elaborated subsequently. It is not easy to see why the Education Secretary's speech should have been accorded quite so enthusiastic a reception, unless the acclaim was given in the spirit of the form prize for progress, there having been little previous cause for cheer from that quarter. Clearly all but the most misanthropic should welcome a situation where it is envisaged that 80 or 90% of pupils will get better results through a system based on absolute rather than relative standards, where the aims of the curriculum in each subject and at every age are clearly defined, the whole enterprise being manned by a corps of better trained, higher quality teachers. If, as Sir Keith hopes, the outcome is less boredom, higher pupil motivation and less hooliganism, that is an agreeably acceptable bonus.

Such aims, however, are laudable but limited. It is essentially 'middle-ground' activity. Moreover, given the present social and economic malaise of much of the United Kingdom we may merely be placing more highly qualified but ultimately equally frustrated youngsters to join the ranks of the unemployed or, as 'other ranks', to garrison Goose Green, but this is terrain over which Sir Keith's write does not run and in itself no argument against the proposed improvements. We find, however, little evidence of basic, deep radical thought on what should be the nature and goals of education for our age. Education inevitably reflects society, but it also shapes it, whether by intent or neglect. The identification of goals and the fostering, even the pursuit, of values is difficult in a society which seems to lack any unifying principle. We have long ago thrown off the domination of a religious ideology and thus far we have escaped the tyranny of a political one - our 1984, mercifully, is not Orwellian. We do have, however, an increasingly fragmented and directionless society with, at the government end, the gross national product and at the individual end, consumerism, as perhaps the only discernable and enunciated common values. We are cynical and suspicious, probably rightly, in regard to philosophies, values and ideals. Moreover the difficulties are compounded by economic and social conditions. Despite or perhaps because of the difficulties the task needs to be essayed. We need to consider now in basic terms what kind of education we should provide for the citizens of the twenty-first century. Our system at present is geared towards selecting the minority who will proceed to higher education and, hopefully, equipping the residual majority to be sufficiently literate, numerate and disciplined to secure and hold down a job. That the school system is skewed by the former aim is a matter of frequent comment, whilst the prominence of the latter aim in a society where there will be more leisure, enforced or otherwise, is increasingly open to question. In the last century whilst the 'public' schools spoke of producing 'Christian gentlemen' and stressed 'manliness', first as against childishness and, later, with the quickening tempo of imperialism, as against effeminacy, the elementary schools of the general public turned out 'hands' adequate to service the industry of 'the workshop of the world'. These relatively clear aims may strike us today as quaint, misguided, derisory, or even dangerous, but alongside them was at least one notion which has relevance to our situation - the idea that education was necessary for the operation of a democracy.

The 'public' schools saw themselves producing leaders through 'character building' whilst the elementary schools equipped the common citizen with basic skills to enable him to get by. It is a perilous and perhaps mistaken undertaking to reduce something as complex as education to a simple slogan but the notion that we are educating citizens for democracy might give some focus, unity or goal to educational activity. Within that aim obviously could be subsumed, for instance, an awareness of cultural heritage on the one hand and the contemporary, technological environment on the other. It has, moreover, an obvious relevance for now and for the future: people may or may not have jobs, they may or may not have more leisure, only a few will go on to higher education, but one hopes that all will be engaged not only in preserving but in operating a democracy. Moreover, there are indications that people increasingly want to participate actively, to exercise their rights as citizens, to help shape the policies and destiny of their community and country. To be an adult free citizen means nothing less. Education should actively help in pointing the way towards greater participation and self-determination. Education for democracy will, it goes without saying, ensure that it is not side-tracked into a 'saluting the flag' patriotic syndrome. It will consider the workings of central and local government, the legal system, the financial institutions indeed, the whole anatomy and metabolism of the country should be common and central concerns. Political studies, peace studies are controversial, so we stick to French and welding for beginners, each of which may be admirable, even useful, but less crucial for an active democracy and a fulfilled citizenry. This may not be the right vision, and vision and ideals may seem to be luxuries in, say, a tough

inner-city school where 'survival' may be a more basic consideration, but the maxim that 'where there is no vision the people perish' is, one senses, as applicable to education as it may be to any other area of activity. Now, despite the recession, might be the time for the government to establish a broadly based independent think-tank to give radical consideration to the kind of education we should provide for the next century - broadly based because one suspects that education is too important to be left entirely to politicians and teachers.
Meanwhile, away from the complex and difficult sector of full-time school education and its future, there is an area where the government could take immediate steps to improve the educational well-being of the nation, namely part-time adult education. The case for adult education scarcely needs to be made: the increasing trend of one or more career changes, the need for retraining, unfulfilled potential at school, the acquisition of new interests, the realisation that learning is or can be a life-long activity these currents, already strong, will, presumably, grow stronger in the future. Yet we hear that funds for University Extra-Mural Departments, the Workers' Educational Association and the Open University are being reduced. The latter, hailed as 'the university of the second chance' is increasingly open only to those who can afford the fees since the University's Financial Assistance Fund is now unable to meet the needs of all the applicants who cannot study without its help and great numbers have to be turned away disappointed, unless they are registered unemployed, in which case government funds are available. Adult education, then, is another area which requires imaginative development but instead we find insensitive pruning.

In this pruning we find perhaps some indications of the government's values in education: a utilitarian and materialistic approach leads it to regard more benignly the scientific, technological and commercial areas - they are said to have economic and vocational relevance. Are the humanities dispensable frills and are there, one asks, other kinds of 'relevance'? C.P. Snow, currently given a new topicality through TV, warned of the 'two cultures'. The government's approach, rigorously pursued, would lead to one culture or none at all. Roy Plumley's future guests will, presumably, choose eight floppy discs for their desert island and will find the Bible and Shakespeare novel, even incomprehensible, whilst by the time Mr Neil Kinnock is in a position to return the Elgin marbles the more topographically erudite of the electorate may believe that some objects are being despatched to the Moray Firth area, perhaps as a concession to Scottish nationalism, whilst others may imagine that the Return of the Elgin Marbles signals but the latest indoor game to win commercial sponsorship and wonder why they missed it on TV first time round.

What I want in an Education for my child?

Lynn Good
Mother of child at Rudolf Steiner Kindergarten

This is such a complex and involved question. If schooling is all that is wanted, to enable my child to be able to read and write, to add and subtract, then the question is not so complex.

But if I want an education, a start, a grounding in life and living for my child then it is more complex. What I seek from the teachers, the school and myself, the parent, becomes vaster requiring much thought, caring and involvement.

For I believe that the education of the child is not just done at school, it's a 24 hour a day process with the parents playing the greatest part, as it's through them the child is educated.

So the education for my child needs the parents and the teachers working together.

This education should be child centred, meaning based on the child in his/her various stages within childhood. The young child with his/her great imaginative play, with the imitation of all that surrounds. The junior child with his need for real life heroes, (not T.V. idols); the older child, the adolescent needing to be treated as a young adult, needing to study the science and technology of the Twentieth Century.

So the education should allow the child to develop as a child, to experience and explore the different levels of childhood to the full, and nourish him in his endeavours. To be allowed to be a child. To unfold and blossom on his journey towards adulthood gently and with reverence. (Our children today are pushed into adult ways earlier and earlier, therefore, by the time of pre-puberty they have had experiences which harden and close them to the sensitivity of people and the world. It's no wonder they hit out at society in their early teens, there's nothing left of the wonder of the world for them to experience.)

This education should address the child as a total being, a thinking, feeling, physical being. A being that is spiritual as well as having a physical body. A being that has more than just a brain for intellectual learning. So if my child has no great mental ability, he should not become a failure in society's eyes. There are many other facets that can be developed in the human being, e.g. the creative, the artistic, the feeling and the imaginative. Education should develop these, bringing forth from the child, who he is, an individual, a personality with gifts to offer.

A school should not be full of individual personalities, however, who cannot work and be together, but should rather be a group of children who are able to integrate and interact together socially. Social awareness should be developed, therefore, to enable this to happen.

The education needs to develop the same physical powers of the will, so enabling the child to endure, to stick at life and life's foibles, to take responsibility for his or her life.

It needs to develop the emotional, the feeling side of life, the caring, the sharing, the helping, to take part in life.

Lastly to develop the more spiritual side of life, the crowning of mankind, the thinking quality. So as a young adult, the child can reason and rationalise, take and make decisions using the powers of creative thinking.

The education of my child should allow him/her to come to maturity, to adulthood gently and as fully developed and balanced as possible, ready to take up his/her life with responsibility, sensitivity and a willingness to tackle life and its problems with love and with joy.

Bjorn Grage
Former student,
College of Further
Education.Present Student
of Photography with
philosophic interests.

As a student I made some first hand experiences in the educational system of England. In it I found many reasons for criticism and much room for improvement.

The most upsetting features of the system to my mind are its high resemblance with a factory, the undesirable nature of the examination system as well as the rigidity of the whole apparatus. When I use the metaphor of a factory for the educational system that is by no means exaggeration. The problem here, as in the systems of other industrial nations, is its functionalistic background. The main concern of the British educational system does not appear to be the good education of individuals, but much more the production of a maximum of people with an optimum of knowledge required to carry out a specific job, a process comparable with programming a computer or the assemblance of a car in a factory. Collectively this mechanism is supposed to drive the economy of the nation, and indeed, education seems to serve this purpose well, but it does so at the expense of the individual students, i.e. children and young people are commercially exploited, something which in my eyes is untenable!

The function of education really should benefit the individual on an absolute level and not only secure a financially successful future.

This means there should be a range of options provided which enable the student to enjoy an education which will prove useful to the students after leaving the system and it also should be intellectually stimulating, carefully adjusted to the individual's ability.

In other words there should be a sound, all round education with a variable balance of practical and academic skills, the overall effect should be something from which the individual can benefit in his life, a sound base which enables the student to manage a bank account as well as to solve basic interhuman problems. This education should never be regarded as 'complete', but it much rather should provide valuable stimuli which can be further developed after leaving the educational system.

This is a vital component of a good education which seems to be non-existent at present, in my experience I found that students attend courses either to achieve a career or to bridge the gap between public house and bed. Hardly ever does the education they enjoy (or, more to the point, suffer) correspond with their real interests. At the moment encouragement or creation of interests or even general awareness is non-existent, this is extremely depressing and in the anyway dull life it results in creating a dominating anti-intellectual and apathetic atmosphere, which somehow leads mottoes like, "Non scolae, sed vitae discimus" ad absurdum.

In the whole situation of a useless and dull college life the form of the examinations by the universities do hardly help. In the process of these few hours of exams, students are supposed to put something on paper which is intended to reflect their knowledge of a subject they studied in years. This seems unfair to many students and their argument is that two years of work mustn't depend on a few hours of examinations. Through my own experience I know that it is very unsatisfying to sit in an exam writing a one-hour essay on a subject one could write a book on, or equally bad to find that one could easily have done with much less work as a short exam couldn't possibly detect deficiencies in knowledge. Moreover many people find it hard to produce anything which reflects their knowledge under the stress of an exam. Something which once the exam is passed is entirely unnecessary anyway, as it is totally unrealistic that one has to produce one's entire knowledge of a subject in hours. Continuous assessment and a series of longer exams as well as project work are surely good improvements.

As the above account illustrates, there is urgent need for a number of reformations in the system to prevent students from suffering disadvantages. However, it also must be mentioned that a student with motivation and specific interests can obtain a fairly satisfactory education. However, such a rara avis cannot really feel at home in our present educational system as its atmosphere is hostile to such individuals as it was originally designed to create the human mass product, 'qualified worker'.

David Gribble
Former Teacher,
Dartington Hall School;
Present Headmaster,
Sands School, Totnes

A progressive school is marked by reasonableness, affection and mutual respect. Its discipline is the discipline of reality, rather than a discipline invented and imposed by teachers. The success of progressive methods has been demonstrated at state schools like Countesthorpe and Risinghill, as well as independent schools like Summerhill and Dartington Hall. A great many teachers in conventional schools try to put progressive ideals into practice.

Why is it that, in spite of all this, so many people regard progressive education with virulent hostility, and when a progressive school reaches the headlines, as Dartington Hall did last summer, the press so rejoices in its misfortunes?

It is not just because most progressive schools are in the independent sector. Countesthorpe College was treated extremely roughly by the press. Risinghill was closed by the I.L.E.A.

In the private sector, there is evidence from a different angle. In the very summer that Dartington was being picked out as a vice school, when even the local police said it was no worse than anywhere else, the press reported several sensational incidents from other independent schools. According to national newspapers, Eton expelled one boy and suspended six others for vandalising the local parish church, finally trying to remove the organ pipes, Stowe sacked twelve and suspended seven for drug usage after pupils had stolen a master's car to go to a party in the middle of the night, five cannabis-smokers were expelled from Fettes and two from Eton, four 'suppliers' of cannabis and LSD were expelled from Repton, and a dead baby was found in a locker at Badminton. None of these incidents received more than half a column. Dartington, where the police did not make a single prosecution after a drugs raid, was on the front page for weeks. Evidently the hostility it arouses is not merely because it is an independent school.

If you send a boy to Eton and he vandalises the parish church it is thought to be his fault and not the school's. The reaction would be very different if a child from a progressive school attacked a church. The story about the baby in the locker is so extraordinary that it is hard to believe, but the public would have had no difficulty in believing it about Dartington. "I told you so," they would have said, and felt that their prejudice had been justified.

However, to condemn a progressive school you do not need anything as sensational as a vandalised church or a dead baby. A disorderly classroom is quite enough. This illustrates the basic paradox of the public attitude - people expect pupils at a progressive school to behave perfectly at the same time as they expect them to behave badly. If the system works, they feel, the children must behave perfectly. They simply ignore truancy and crime at other schools, they forget their own adult misdemeanours - breaking the speed limit, smuggling the extra bottle of wine, losing their tempers, drinking a little too much - and assume that perfect behaviour is an attainable norm. A progressive school's pupil's unconventional appearance and informal manners are worrying, though not enough to condemn it, but as soon as one of the normal adolescent misdemeanours occurs, it is seized upon as a proof of the general inadequacy of the school's philosophy. The fact that most of the time the children behave well is conveniently forgotten.

According to this approach, if the children do not behave perfectly, the school is a failure. It would seem fairer to say that if they do not behave badly, the school is a success.

There are several possible reasons for this prejudice. It may be just that we all believe, at least subconsciously, that nothing pleasant can do you any good, and the better a medicine is the nastier it tastes. Perhaps most of us would reject this view in this simple form, but the puritan in each of us certainly suspects that all pleasure corrupts, and the ascetic believes that the only way to virtue is through suffering. These are unhappy attitudes, and for that very reason people who hold them will be particularly harsh on any system of education that contradicts them.

Another reason may be that if you have struggled through a difficult journey for a dozen years, exhausting yourself and perhaps damaging your health permanently, you cannot look with equanimity at travellers who came an easy way, enjoyed themselves thoroughly, and are eager to travel further. You will of course feel still worse if you are forcing your children to undertake a similarly unpleasant journey, and these despicable progressives keep suggesting that though the journey is important, the unpleasantness is quite unnecessary.

But perhaps the most important reason for opposition is this: progressive education, gentle and lacking in cutting edge though it is thought to be, nevertheless appears as a dangerous attack on the establishment which has to be vigorously resisted. It has to be rsisted for many of the same reasons as Christianity had to be resisted by the Romans. It rates truth above authority, persuasion above force, charity above conformity. Conformity, force

and authority have been questioned by moralists ever since moralists began asking questions, and the establishment has persecuted them. Perhaps the reason so many people hate the progressive ideal is that if it is right the whole basis of their lives is false, and they have an uncomfortable feeling that it may be.

Reservations about the Educational System

Michelle Grove
Pupil, The Ridgeway School, Plympton

I have been taught within the 'old' secondary modern method of teaching. Being an eleven-plus failure, I have had to fight against the popular belief that secondary modern schools were considered inferior. The secondary modern was also associated not only as being the school where the eleven-plus failures went, but also as the old, central or modern school which had previously given an education to the working class.

It is due to these deeply rooted beliefs that many children, like myself, have been made to suffer the snide comments from the "creme de la creme" pupils of the grammar schools. The grammar education incorporated within its curriculum the lessons of hierarchy and supremacy over others. The pupils absorb these teachings, then go forth and 'do battle'.

The move to abolish the old eleven-plus tradition in many of the schools eliminates some of the deeply rooted hierarchical feelings amongst adults. Indeed, it is most parents that contribute to the maturing attitudes of self esteem within their children.

It is, however, only in the last decade that a widespread move for comprehensive education has arisen, although the ideas date back as far as 1944. It is now, as it should have been long ago, realised that a child cannot be fully assessed on its potential/mental ability at the early age of eleven. The classification of three mental types suitable for three different types of school has proved to be equally ridiculous.

What has also disappeared with the old schooling system is the traditional format of education. The Parrot Fashion learning required for the CSE and Ordinary level examinations has finally been discarded, and the education of pupils is on a much more relevant and useful level. The traditional Advanced level examination techniques still exist, and I hope that these abstract bodies of education will soon be revised also.

I am currently pursuing 'A' level courses in Geography, English and Music. The Music course, for instance, is in the traditional format, following the characteristics of composers throughout history. This will prove to be of little value to me on leaving full-time education except for personal enjoyment and entertainment.

By seeing the progress of fourth and fifth formers pursuing the new GCSE courses, I find the traditional nature of the courses to be exemplified in their abstractness. The new GCSE Music course pursues music in its 'true' sense with the learning of music through personal experience in compositional exercises. This is the real way to learn about music and not from textbooks, which destroys any emotion or feeling.

However, although in theory the new courses prove to be successful when carried out, their worth is often destroyed by the teaching methods of the staff. In certain cases, some teachers regard teaching as merely a job and not a profession, concerned with the upbringing and teaching of children in both moral and educational areas. Indeed, what will happen to our new generation of adults who spend the most influential period of their lives in an atmosphere of indifference?

Education

Laurence John Hale
B.A. Business Studies,
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Education can be seen as many things in many ways to many people. Education should not just be seen as the somewhat regimental learning process which we are all put through. It should be seen as an experience or experiences. If we remember these experiences, then they have truly been an education; if we forget, then they were mere occurrences.

One of the most important educational experiences that any of us can face is learning about oneself. To understand oneself is a gift that encompasses all other experiences.

One of the most unfortunate phrases of our time is "to be educated." It is a term that many of us have used, often flippantly. What do we base education on, what has that person done to be educated? On the whole, most of us fall into the trap of believing that to be educated we only have to have achieved certain standards at school and at college, together with a degree of general knowledge that is achieved through a certain level of perception, via reading, viewing or experience. This conception of education is gravely biassed, as it bases its analogy purely on traditional educational merits, i.e. he that is able to recite literature, compute or speak Latin is often praised against he that may be able to deliver a lamb or appreciate the natural glory of history or nature; for the latter may have had experiences/feelings that education alone could never create.

Education can be seen as preconceived and often very limited. This can be seen in the division and the prejudice of the young, even in the early stages of our lives, where we are so ignorant we have our set beliefs, based more often than not on second- or third-hand information. We tend to believe what we see and what we hear, what is around us and what will happen. We all believe that as individuals we are free-thinkers; that our opinions do not just depend on the opinions of others, but how much is this so untrue! We are all led by the thoughts and actions of others; it is only the very few who are really independent.

The educational institution is a mere farce; a stage upon which to perform a tightly scripted role. We are directed to perform in set ways, ways which can be averred and compared. The institution often sadly drowns the individual amongst barrages of rules and regulations that accompany the process of education.

One of the most amazing facts about our somewhat contradictory society is that we will leave many possessions - health, etc. - in the hands of the very best, yet often quite happily allow ourselves and our children to be moulded and shaped for adult life by very poorly qualified individuals, individuals who quite often are unable to face the rigours of the real world themselves, let alone teach us to do so.

The great educational institution/process has become too far removed from society. From our protected, high-walled conclaves of primary school to the palace-like fairy tale kingdom of Oxford that typically inspired literature such as "Alice Through the Looking-Glass". With this in mind, education can be seen as doing the very opposite to that which it set out to do, removing us from reality rather than preparing us.

Brian Hall
Former Teacher in
charge of Commercial
Studies, Southway
School

'Education is notoriously difficult to define,' read the first line of a Memorandum to staff issued to me on the first day of my first full time teaching appointment. Not surprisingly, education and the 'education experience' will mean different things to different people.

It is convenient to define education as being the formal transmission of culture, a specific aspect of the broader and lifelong experience of socialisation. Being a formal procedure (marred often in time and space!) education is carried out in specialist institutions with people referred to as teachers, lecturers, tutors, instructors, etc. who carry out the task of the successful transmission of this culture. They are paid mostly by salary and in most cases receive a fairly lengthy period of training. Such people are called - or call themselves - professionals. Additionally, education as an organised service requires the input of non-teaching personnel for administration, catering, cleaning, etc.

So far anyone who has managed to stay with this will think the git writing it has a gift for explaining the obvious - he may have studied for a B.A. in "The Obvious". However, some equally obvious things follow ... in the form of a few pertinent questions on this theme in the Human Relationship series. Whose culture are we talking about? Who set it up? Who approves of what is to be taught; how, when, where and to whom? To what end or ends is/are the educators and educated directing their efforts? Doesn't it sometimes seem odd that many of us would prefer to be doing something else rather than being at school, at work, etc.?

Now, the links between education and power are looming like boulders down a cave. It has been written that keeping politics out of education is like keeping the liquid out of water. How far does the education system mirror or shape the power system in this country? Who makes the fucking rules? Who raised eyebrows at the foregoing bad language?

It may well be that most of us are too busy in the day to day urgency of carrying out the tasks, administration and other activities in response to the needs of pupils, parents and 'the system' to spend much time worrying about ideals. One aspect of professionalism is the constant initial awareness and ability/-willingness to continue research in the general accumulation of a body of theory (couched in discreet terminology to separate professionals from plebs). Yet less is being spent on inservice courses!

It isnt surprising that many teachers find it difficult or unimportant to locate their beliefs, activities, purpose and behaviour at work in a broader social schema. The possibilities of objective critical thought retreat behind a tirade of anecdote, bearing the streak of cynicism and frustration, symptomatic of the dysfunction between ends, means and ideals.

Though the practitioners of pedagogy don't generally have a particularly close relationship with either capital or labour the expected idealistic attitude is often missing. By what criteria were or weren't they doing their job? Who defined what their job should entail?

In the '50s and '60s there were so many surveys into educational success and failure that it became an industry in itself. In most cases success and failure were explained as largely determined by things outside school like home background, neighbourhood, friends and peers, parents' interests and aspirations, position in the family, etc. Then a less positivistic approach gained some credibility in the early '70s when consideration was given to how people, particularly kids, perceive the world and the classroom around them. This was often referred to as the interpretist approach and was used usually in conncection with deviance. In this time one would be reflecting on deschooling, freeing children from the repressive environment of school. Often teachers find 'school visits' more successful than anticipated and a difficult class suddenly 'comes good'. Yet if de-schooling became the norm how many (and how soon) would demand the return of 'the ordered society' of a school? What became clear was the point that peoples' perceptions of what counted for knowledge and reality would vary and the alienative process of education was a function of an ideological hegemony in Britain (and other Western cultures) whereby the culture of the dominant group became the culture of the society. The education system would then be seen to be subservient to the economic system, which Marx and others latterly considered the overriding force in power relationships in capitalist Britain. The education system is inherently conservative and such changes as are made may only be a palliative to any disgruntlement amongst the deprived and underprivileged - who, trapped by a 'vicious circle of poverty', with a 'restricted' language code, without a voice in Parliament or agenda setting, and hampered by 'false consciousness' are hardly likely to offer a challenge to the decision makers. And the silent majority? ... Well, power is most effective as ideology. - Ideological hegemony again, the ability to indicate to and obtain compliance from the masses that what is in their interests, really isn't. And for the educators who might ask the awkward questions and articulate discontent? ... cut their funds off!

Feelings of a Classroom Teacher

Kathleen Harland, M.A.
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As a classroom teacher my predominant feeling when facing a class is one of exhiliration. No matter how I have been feeling when walking down the corridor - possibly ill-prepared, almost certainly rushed - whenever I walk into the classroom and meet the eyes of the class, there is that feeling. In it there is a sense of anticipation, of anticipatory pleasure, and it is the same whether it is a class of fractious first years, wondering whether to draw a margin or not, or a class of petulant fourth years, trying to disguise fear of inadequacy. This sense of exhiliration must stem from the fact that one is dealing with youth and all the demands, problems and challenges which it makes. It follows, therefore, that a good teacher should like the young and like a challenge. Wishing to spread the word about one's own subject is insufficient. And I have to be confident enough and stable enough to cope with the unwilling, the non-cooperative and the downright aggressive, and to be flexible enough to draw them into a rewarding learning experience or, to put it in a more old- fashioned style, draw them into having "a good lesson".

A subsidiary feeling is one of satisfaction; not self- satisfaction, but the satisfaction gained from seeing others achieve through the medium of one's own efforts: tomorrow's voters do understand the reasons for the quarrel between Charles I and Parliament, and so they learn about power and the true basis of power; the VIth Former, his thoughts and ideas initially cloaked by the "misery of language" really does learn to write an articulate essay. Of course, this satisfaction can only apply to objectives fairly easily identifiable as being "good" or "worthwhile". There has been much agonising over what should/should not be taught in schools, which is doubtless inevitable. The classroom teacher, acting within the bounds of what is fashionable, at the time, should choose material for pupils with two objectives in mind: that they should think and that they should know, always remembering that they cannot do the one without the other.

The sphere of the teacher, however, does seem to be expanding. Pastoral care, tutorial work impinge on the realm of the parent, the social worker, the doctor, the priest and the new teacher, immersed in her own subject, an expert in that alone, might well feel not only bewildered but threatened in the face of these new demands. The answer seems to lie in a commonsense response, always realising that the influence of the teacher is limited. The home and the home environment are, and rightly so, the dominant influence in the child's development. I remember only two of my own teachers.

To return to the matter of material: it is in this respect that a feeling of doubt casts its cold shadow. It takes time, very much more than is allowed for, to find and exploit appropriate material, not so challenging that it will produce failure, nor so lightweight that it will produce boredom. It takes time to present a syllabus in an appealing way and too often the energies of a classroom teacher are drained by administration, though who is to say that that is unnecessary? Doubt creeps in where the material is unsatisfactory. Self-questioning is a good exercise, but too much doubt saps confidence and - for a teacher anyway - produces ineffectiveness.

I have a feeling that a classroom teacher should be young or certainly young in heart, or should come to it either early then leave, or come to it late and stay on. It must be difficult to maintain enthusiasm for forty years and cynicism is the enemy of youth. Yet how difficult such a policy would be to put into practice, how difficult it is to satisfy everyone's career hopes, whether realistic or not, how difficult for the individual also to change boats in mid-stream. How refreshing it would be to have sabbaticals, on the university lines, how refreshing to have job sharing, more part-time work, more materials and, above all, more time. Yet the new examinations do offer hope that an individual's skills will be recognised, that success, though by no means guaranteed, will be attainable.

Then perhaps in the classroom we will hear
the surprised laughter of unexpected achievement
the murmur of committed discussion
the quiet turning of pages during engrossed reading
and perhaps we will see
the quick, sharp glance of the pupil who has learned
the upward smile as sensitivity softens the heart
the quick turning of head and eye as argument ebbs and flows.

We do see and hear these things now, most definitely we do, but not frequently enough. It is the classroom teacher who, with the right backing, will generate them.

Cliff Harris
Head of Year, Southway
Comprehensive School;
Formerly Teacher of
Social Education

I, along with the others of my generation, experienced an educational provision whose ideological assumptions have been expressed as egalitarian.

Throughout my formative education, and indeed in my subsequent work, the paradigm of contest mobility (Turner, 1960) has been the norm: a system in which education was seen to be meritocratic and aspirations to life's chances mediated through it by individual ability and endeavour. Of course, such a paradigm has always been contaminated by private sector education, but nevertheless the public provision did allow the working classes to become socially mobile, and today, many of them function in positions which would have been inaccessible to them before 1960. Indeed, the education service itself contains a fair proportion of personnel from working class origins.

In a civilised society, contest mobility ought to be the modus operandi, which would include removing from that society anything which sponsors any individual unfairly in relation to another's life chance. Alas, as I reach mid-career in education, I can only perceive on the horizon a complete contradiction of egalitarian principles being asserted through centralisation, man-power and social policy.

A bid for more central control of what goes on in schools, currently an objective for the present Government was predicted by a civil servant in Ranson (1984):

> "I see a return to centralisation of a different kind with the centre seeking to determine what goes on in institutions. This is a more fundamental centralisation than we have seen before." (p. 238)
>
> The purpose of such centralisation is:
>
> "to facilitate social control as much as encourage manpower planning." (p. 241)

How this control will be exercised is now much in evidence through course development and systems of assessment readily exampled by TVEI. Certainly there is a concern that education linked to notions of social mobility should not continue without some intervention. Fear of the social consequences of not intervening centrally were expressed by a Labour Minister of Education in 1971, who said:

> "by making continued full-time education the norm, we may be encouraging unrealistic career aspirations among young people." (p. 241)

In Ranson's research, this was echoed by a senior civil servant, who argued that in education:

> "there has to be selection because we are beginning to create aspirations which increasingly society cannot match. In some ways, this points to the success of education in contrast to the public mythology which has been created." (p. 241)
>
> and:
>
> "There may be social unrest, but we can cope with the Toxteths. But if we have a highly educated and idle population, we may possibly anticipate more serious social conflict. People must be educated once more to know their place." (p. 241)

It seems I have lived through a unique period in educational history and that my experience and perceptions of what education is about has been affected by a philosophical orientation which has now become unfashionable.

I remain grateful, however, for the opportunity I have enjoyed to aspire beyond 'my place'.

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some other measure, I do not know, but one inescapable conclusion may be drawn and that is, in the future everyone will have more leisure time. Whether this greater freedom from work will lead to boredom and the seeds of a future revolution or a more meaningful and fulfilling time on earth, only time will show. However, it does mean that schools would be failing to anticipate the future needs of their pupils if they did not 'educate them for leisure'. This phrase is now an old one, in educational terms, but one which will need to be examined more and more closely as this century draws to its close. Our aim must be to produce a complete person, for such a person has no need to be told how to fill her or his leisure time. Such a person has retained throughout life, the joy and excitement of being alive, intellectual curiosity and the ever present wonder of nature which far exceeds any vacuum space created by leisure.

Thirdly, more than ever before, there is a need for teachers to encourage and develop an enquiring mind, one which will ask questions and not easily accept answers without subjecting them to intense scrutiny. The pupils must become self reliant and be able to seek out truth by research and observation. Their minds must never be able to be captured by clever slogans, written or repeated ad nauseam. Their knowledge must include the religious and political forces of the world. However, it is not for school to teach ideologies but to ensure their pupils' awareness of the existence of these forces. Ours is fast becoming a participating society and it is necessary for our pupils to take their place in that society and be sensitive to and sympathetic of all people making up its structure.

Nowhere have I mentioned a subject's syllabus; this is the concern of the curriculum planners, not mine at this time, but, what is essential to say, is that every subject is important in its own right. A pupil must aim for excellence in every subject and its creation must bring the same reward whether it be an English essay, Foreign Language prose, a piece of pottery or a beautifully made coffee table. We must break down the attitude that that which can be written about and examined is of greater value than that which is made ... but this is another question!

School - My Thoughts

Ruth Harvey
Age 11, Former pupil
Pilgrim Primary School

One of my biggest adventures in my life was starting school. When I was very young I did not want to go to school, but when I started school I found it most enjoyable.

I am eleven years old and have been to two schools. The first was a large school and the second rather smaller. I enjoyed my first school although the classes were rather large, and we only had a trip or outing once a year in the summer term. In my second school the classes are smaller and we go on a variety of trips all through the year. During the last year, I have been to London twice. I have also been to a farm to find out about milk produce. I have been down a mine near Morwellham due to a project concerning mining. My school won first prize for this project for the Tamar Valley Exhibition. We also go on educational trips, for a week, to either the Dartmoor Centre, Maker Camp or Beaford. Usually twice a year.

In my school we also do environmental studies. We have two animals in school, being a rabbit and a guinea pig. I look after the guinea pig. We also grow our own vegetables, such as carrots, runner beans, lettuce, cabbage and onions. These vegetables are used in the school kitchen, and the animals get any surplus leaves. We also grow fruit, being red currants, black currants, blackberries and gooseberries, which are also used in the kitchen for pies and such like. We have two compost bins, to which we can donate our household debris that will rot. We also put in mown grass, weeds and leaves from plants from our gardens. There is a chequer-board garden for the infants to look after which is a square plot of ground divided into paving stones and earth alternatively. The infants grow flowers. They also grow tomatoes and onions. We have a pond with a bog area. In the pond and bog area we have toads, frogs and newts, which were given to us by people as spawn. In the pond we have many pond plants which were given to us by the warden at Beaford. We also raise money from the Tuck Shop for buying plants, etc.

The lessons I most enjoy are art, craft, maths and reading. I enjoy writing stories, but I don't enjoy doing nouns and verbs and such like. I like doing physical education with apparatus but I do not enjoy sports day, or even practising for sports day. We have our own playing fields adjoined to the school, where we can play rounders, football or cricket.

The school I am in at the moment is only two years old. It replaces an old Victorian building. I much prefer the old building for its size and atmosphere. In the old building the school dinners were brought in, but in the new school the dinners are cooked on the premises and are of a much higher standard.

I think education is most important, because without it I would not be able to get a worthwhile job. Life would also be very boring without school, although when it is pouring with rain and freezing cold I wish I could stay in bed.

What is Education?

George Hatherley
Chairman, Plymouth Branch
Workers Educational Association

It does seem to me, as a layman involved in the activities of the Workers' Educational Association, that, although we have seen many deviations from the paths leading to an educated society, there has never been a crisis as acute as that which now puts educationalists at the crossroads. Of course we all realise that education costs money to implement, but the dramatic changes in society brought about by increasing unemployment and uncertainty about the future have posed acute dilemmas to a wide stratum of eduational establishments. All this goes without saying, nevertheless if we do not face up to the fact that a crisis exists then we are behaving like ostriches and putting our heads in the sand!

From the point of view of the Workers' Educational Association, the basic concepts developed from its 1903 beginnings remain largely unchanged, yet the pressure now put on us to be "entrepreneurial" (as recommended by the government) are ridiculous to say the least. If we accept "entrepreneurial" to be risk-taking in the broadest sense, then this organization has been nothing short of that throughout its history. As implied by the government's response to our current appeals about funding, we are expected to charge tuition fees which not only cover our costs but provide additional resources for class provision in an increasingly demanding environment. Are we to take it, then, that education is not available if profit cannot result in terms of cash! We have always put provision as the top priority, cash as secondary.

The profitability of enterprise seems to have blinkered the present government. Surely the best investment any civilised society can make is in the provision of an educated citizen. This postponeent of responsibility by the "establishment" will not lessen the problems of the country, for are we not accepting as fact reduced numbers in employment and coddling people with leisure facilities? "Keep them amused and we will have no troubles," seems to be the attitude! We say "leisure" should be so broadened that adult education becomes an accepted part of it and will thus lend it dignity. We are aware of many needs in adult education and would earnestly wish to involve ourselves in them. For example, appreciating that uneducated people younger people in the dole queues are not desirable, the W.E.A. would like to do something positive in this direction. We have always been in the forefront of innovation to meet needs and remedy deficiencies in education but the seas are high and we cannot act like Canutes in stemming the tides.

Many professional educationalists and others attribute the economic problems this country faces to a lack of adequate technical and vocational emphasis in educational provision. The argument is put by some that our society would be in a position to afford the funding of non-vocational education if this had been done. This is a highly debatable viewpoint because it implies that the government cannot afford to meet the demands for non-vocational education! I take the view that management of the existing revenue that is extracted from the wealth creators of society has not been, and is not, fully efficient. We can all cite extravagant misuse and misdirection of our money (as squeezed from every available source) by the "establishment", which has actually led to, in some degree, a sense of frustration by both employees and employers alike. Getting back to the levels of emphasis on vocational training, I would say that whilst every form of education that increases a man's worth is desirable, it would be wrong to assume that technical merit and expertise could, or would, be panaceas for all the problems that beset us. It is attitudes and actions which utilize the skills and resources we have and these emanate from the whole sphere of the educational spectrum.

The more educated a people, the greater the chances to develop a more caring government. Education does seem to have created an imbalance. By this I mean that common sense, compassion, and tolerance are concepts swept aside in the struggle for short term gains and self-preservation, as obviously certain attitudes arise from the education we have or have not received. How does adult education then improve this situation? It is commonly supposed that specialised education leading to formal qualifications equips one to have a rational outlook and yet many grave mistakes are made by educated leaders because of the weaknesses, not the strengths of specialisation! Now the "God" of hope is called the "specialist", whether he is a scientist, a doctor, or an economist; whatever, he has been made to conform to the expectations of the establishment.

Although we cite the leaders of society as specialists they are not the only ones. We can lay the charge at the door of the Trade Union leader, the Shop Steward, or the rank and file worker. I am not vilifying the "specialist" but defending an educational provision which broadens man's vision. If you doubt that this is so, then do examine the amazing range of subjects taught at W.E.A. classes to practically every category of worker, male and female! Surely bringing dissimilar minds into contact and ideas into discussion must mould better citizens! For instance, why should we not encourage an interest in philosophy or psychology on an equal basis with other subjects as being just as important to the man in the street as car maintenance or keep fit courses?

Another comment I wish to make is on books. It is highly laudable that in this country we have a free

public library service, but one of the difficulties that students experience is that of reading without learning. Without ownership of books, educational attainments are acquired very often by short term recall, as opposed to thorough understanding. I believe that the way we read books, constantly refer to them, seek full interpretation and extract the essence available can be improved by ownership. Books have become so expensive (even paperbacks) that borrowing on a short-term basis is forced on many students. This impermanency tends to lessen the opportunities of real learning. Not the staff of life perhaps - nevertheless it is unthinkable that we should neglect so obvious a need as that which exists for the easy ownership of good literature. I do not subscribe to the view that education depends on the price one pays; it has no price, and mercenary motives must be avoided in every possible sphere. Advancement in life is usually measured by education but leadership and initiative also bring the wrong people to the front. It is the blend of all three aspects which seem to me to be the best formula for a better society. Books can help one to question the quality of life and leadership so that we do not blindly accept the views of any one authority on the basis that, as an educated person, he or she is to be trusted as having the answers to current dilemmas. Sharing views with others, examining the sources of learning, and debate and questions on an informal basis are all adopted as the best approach to an informed opinion, as provided by W.E.A. courses.

I have not mentioned the media, and to do so briefly is perhaps unwise. However, I will refer to the use of television as a source of learning. We are aware of the contribution made by the Open University schemes, but such schemes demand an understanding family environment, and many find it difficult in crowded home conditions to exercise the concentration necessary. Perhaps our schools which in many cases are under-utilised at certain times, and I include rural areas most especially, could be venues of learning with the right equipment, i.e. televisions and ancillary facilities, so that a wider stratum of participation could be brought about not only for Open University students but for others who do not wish such a deep commitment but would like some participation in the levels which could be made available. Tutors are now placed on such a scale of fees that they must be used wisely and fully to enable courses to function at a reasonable and affordable cost to would-be students. I therefore suggest that in some instances we could improve viability by adopting this form of 'teach-in' as a supplement to tutorial methods.

This brief survey of education, as it has reference to my own views, ought perhaps to relate some of the dilemmas faced by my colleagues in the W.E.A. with reference to organization. The size of this movement is statistically phenomenal because of the economies made by a great dependence on voluntary workers. Branches extend throughout the British Isles in villages, towns, and cities, and the skeletal structure of administration and organization is deeply reinforced by committees which arrange classes and even enrol students. A National Executive Committee including a few paid officials and represenatives of various districts has to cope with pressures from the rank and file membership, various organizations associated with the movement and governmental policies. This leads occasionally to some degree of frustration in the implementation of decisions. Much of this frustration could be removed with resources provided by adequate funding, i.e. a modest improvement in staffing and communication. What is posed with this problem is the dilemma of professionalism and the autonomy sought by it and the sometimes different views of the lay membership. It may be seen from this, however, that the problem is one which is kept in perspective. A balance is achieved, which at the moment is in reasonable equilibrium. The danger is the erosion of freedom of action posed by the pressures put on the W.E.A. to conform to and work with precepts adopted by others. The Association wants to hold its own reins and fix the pace and direction it is to go, ever bearing in mind the original concepts of its founder, Albert Mansbridge, that labour and learning should have an alliance through continuous provision of liberal education.

My Thoughts on Education

Jean Hatherley
Honourable Secretary and
Founder Member of Rudolf
Steiner School

When reflecting on what education means to me, what I think it is or should be, it became so large and important in my consciousness that I know it will take time to 'bring it forth'.

Now that really could describe what I feel education should do, it should 'bring forth', from within and allow to unfold and develop, all that an individual soul is in need of knowing in order to fulfil its life's purpose. If the correct surroundings and conditions can be provided for each living person at any given period of their life, then they stand a very good chance of having a rich, full and responsible one. If however they are faced with the wrong environment, with wrong restrictions, and incorrect guidance, especially in the early years, then frustrations and blockages can be built up which show in their lives through inhibitions, anti-social behaviour, ill health and the like.

In order that the right opportunities can be presented to individuals to be 'educated', there needs to be right understanding of life and its purpose. Life is for living and our education should be to teach us how to live, not how to earn a living. Our values of life will then be all important to us, and what each one becomes will benefit not only ourselves, but the whole human race.

Education, that is true education, one that is brought forth and allowed to develop, is one towards freedom. Freedom of spirit where the whole of a being is allowed to awaken at the right pace and in a wholesome and balanced way.

In order for this to take place there is need for those who aid and teach to really know what it is they are aiming to do, and have a deep dedication and commitment to the task and an awareness of the tremendous responsibility they carry.

Becoming a teacher, and becoming responsible for the shaping of the lives of young people, is in my thought second only in importance to being responsible and loving parents. For education we know starts at birth and what we are, is what our children will soon imitate.

Education then will be a life long process. Starting from birth within the home and following through our early years at school, on to our middle working years and continuing through until we let go of this physical body/life. This education or unfolding is really an unfolding of soul consciousness, that part of us which we brought with us from before physical birth and take with us after physical death. What we accomplish and achieve in one earthly life will bear fruit beyond our three score years and ten.

For education in schools to allow the correct development to take place, the curriculum and the administration of the school should be left to the educationalists. They need to be free from the pressures of county and state and able to follow the needs of their children fully. In order that today's children can once more become social beings, they need the security of a sound environment, where teachers feel secure because they are allowed to be fully responsible for their school without outside pressures taking away the school's individuality. Just as a child or teacher is a living being, so is a school. It breathes and has rhythm and goes through phases as we do. The recognition of this keeps things alive and in constant movement, it remains interesting and challenging.

Education will be vital and alive if the teachers are themselves stimulated and constantly learning. So if a class teacher is taking the same pupils for main lesson every day for seven or eight years, he will be covering many subjects and continually re-awakening and re-learning with the children.

If the way of learning can be approached through feeling and doing as well as through thinking, then it will allow children with different abilities and temperaments to have an equal chance of finding a way of understanding.

When children are recognised as being equal, meaning each one is worthy of a place in society, the idea of co-operation rather than competition is more appealing. Each has their own gifts and abilities and all are necessary to humanity. So our schools and our educators should be able to encourage co- operation in a class and discourage competition for competition's sake. By encouragement and praise the positive rather than the negative is emphasised. All children will then have their unique abilities highlighted and through co-operation all will benefit and 'bring forth'.

Education as we know it today in the majority of our schools and universities is ripe for change. When something becomes crystallised and set, then the time of breakdown comes ready to allow for breakthrough. A breakthrough in individual and school education is now needed.

Just as we live, move, and breathe, our ways of education must live, move, and breathe.

Life has a pattern and a plan. Recognising it and working with it and not against it, will benefit all. Listening and learning from those whose gifts enable them to see and to know, is wisdom itself. Wisdom comes from within, knowledge from without. Our in-tuition can show us the way if we choose to listen. However, we need help in receiving this intuition. Help by being given the right stimulus and right opportunity at the right time.

With right thought at the right time, right speech and richt action can help right attitudes develop right situations for right learning and right living, leading to right ends.

Education

L.H. Heselton
Former President,
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Union of Teachers;
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I count myself very lucky that my Secondary education was completed at a time when there seemed to be plenty of money and resources available to schools. These were the heady days of the '60s when many new schools were built and the whole attitude towards education was being changed, Government reports were being compiled, which were to change the face of Primary teaching and this of course was to extend throughout the whole education system. New ideas and philosophies are all very well, but there must always be the resources to back them up, the agreement of those who have to put new ideas into practice and money spent on assessment and evaluation of these new practices. At this time there was the finance available for these innovations. The picture was not ideal by any means, but a movement had been made away from the rigid forms of teaching, which in some cases had changed very little since the 19th century.

Change is slow and in education this is doubly true. It takes a long time, naturally, for new thinking to be implemented, but in the '60s alterations seemed to be going apace. My school, in common with others in the area, in the space of five years was given first new science labs, two language labs and a business studies dept. together with first class equipment and increased numbers of staff. The methods of teaching were being changed also. Formal teaching gave way to group work and streaming was far less rigid. There was an emphasis on child-centred learning and an increased awareness of the creative arts. Many flourishing Drama depts in schools have their origins in the early '70s.

I came into teaching in 1975, having been trained in a College that was full of enthusiasm generated by the reports of Plowden and Newsom. Primary Education was flourishing, so many exciting things were happening. Group work, learning through play, thematic learning, creative dance and drama, and so much more. These were vibrant days full of hope in the future of education. Training teachers and established teachers were caught up in a common aim to provide a stimulating environment within the school where real learning and self-expression could take place and the old rote learning could be swept away. Open plan schools were built where work areas for crafts and classes became hives of activity, not rows of writing pupils.

All this filled me with great excitement and as I embarked on my teaching career I came to see very quickly how marvellous it was to be in a profession that was evolving to meet the needs of the pupils it served. At the start, my school had the resources it needed and there seemed to be enough money to provide more than the basics for learning. Where a child-centred approach was adopted the need for more equipment and resources was obvious. Teachers were not content with a clean board and a box of chalk! Massive amounts had to be invested in the system if the ideals of the new thinking were to be met. Classrooms seemed to change overnight - tables, not desks, class libraries, wall displays, art areas, displays of work - this changed the face of education and provided the kind of environment which would make children curious and encourage them to explore the world around them.

What happened to those heady days of hope and enthusiasm? Over the last ten years I have become disenchanted with the system of education. I have seen education become more and more of a political issue and this does great harm to a system which should be left basically in the hands of the professionals. Minister after Minister for Education has made no real attempt to find out what schools are like. The present incumbent has made an effort, but an hour in one school is no fair test of the situation. It should be mandatory for every Minister to spend a week in a school, perhaps one in an inner city school and another in a rural primary school. Perhaps then some sensible steps would be taken concerning Education.

Theories of Education and ideas for new areas within the curriculum have not stopped being propounded. In the profession we are constantly being bombarded by reports into this and that - curriculum innovation, pupil assessment, pupil profiles, personal, social and moral education, vocational skills learning, etc. etc. Most of these are good ideas in theory, but where are the resources?

It is all very well to expect teachers to innovate and improve, but unless resources are given then there is a limit to what can be done. If teachers are expected to understand current thinking about their subjects they must be allowed time to retrain or time to attend courses. Successive cuts in Educational spending have meant that the very areas which are vital have been cut to the bone. In-service training has been savagely cut, in some cases we are expected to pay for our own professional development.

Serious cutbacks within the service can only mean a lowering of staff morale, as they become increasingly frustrated by not being able to provide the kind of environment that they wish for their classes. For not only has financial restraint meant fewer resources, but also the maintaining of high numbers of pupils for many classes. With so many teachers unemployed it seems wrong that classes are kept numerically high when there is such an opportunity to lower the pupil/teacher ratio. The same applies to the falling rolls

situation. Here is a real opportunity to improve the quality of teaching by maintaining staff levels, despite the falling number of children in the country. Areas such as remedial education and nursery education could be improved, instead of which these are the very places where cuts seem to fall most heavily.

However slowly, financial restraints filter through to the classroom and teachers begin to feel the effects of such cuts. Fewer books and equipment, little money for outside visits, less clerical help and cleaning hours, all this causes a lowering of morale in the schools.

Added to the problems caused by financial stringencies are the pressures from society. Teachers and schools seem more than ever to be obliged to take over responsibilities normally taken by the home. Some would argue that sex education and moral education should be the responsibility of the parents, nevertheless it is now part of the school curriculum.

Social problems are more openly seen in schools. Broken homes, single parent families, unemployment, drug addiction and so on do put pressures on both staff and pupils in and out of school. Increasingly I speak to parents who, in the course of an interview, will wish to talk about their problems. It seems that as teachers we have to be social workers and marriage guidance counsellors as well as teaching channels. This type of added pressure on teachers does take its toll, especially in areas which have increased social problems such as high unemployment and bad housing.

With an increased bureaucratic state, the amount of red tape and paperwork in schools is phenomenal. The ordinary classroom teacher is involved to some extent, but much of this increased workload is laid at the feet of the senior staff within the school, which means that their pupil/contact time is reduced. In the case of Heads this is, I believe, detrimental to the school.

The majority of teachers are dedicated and professional people who are interested solely in doing their work well for the benefit of the pupils they teach. Most of us try hard to keep abreast of current educational practice and use our spare time to develop our teaching skills. However, over the years the status of teachers has been eroded and the teaching profession has been devalued. So many feel that a sound and well-funded education system is the only hope for the future, and to see that system constantly under attack does little for those concerned with children. Our present system is not without its faults and often teachers are themselves disinclined to accept change, but making education a political football does not help to give the system any coherence or stability.

If the system is to survive without serious mutilation because of the restraints put upon it, those in power must be made to realise that in the hands of this system lies the future of the country.

Andie Higginson
"LESAND" Trust, Teacher
of the Deaf and
Disadvantaged, Mime
and Drama

Education, what education? No one, it seems to me, is actually educated (prepared for the big wide world) as you're always told at school.

Oh yes, of course everyone can count to a hundred and so on, and of course everyone can spell yesterday, today and tomorrow and know what order they come in, but is this type of "education" any real use to anyone? It is, yes, if you're going on, like everyone else, to do something like working in a shop, factory, garage, building shops, factories, garages - but is this only because the pupil has never been 'educated' beyond believing that that is all they can, and will, do?

Individuality is a word which the teacher or education body seems to dismiss nowadays as more trouble than it is worth.

A child is taken in at one end, taught its maths, english, biography, science, woodwork, metalwork, etc, etc, etc, not to mention only cooking for the girls and no needlework for the boys. Then after all this, put into the big, wide world, or rather dumped with no thought perhaps that the boy may have to sew and cook for himself, and that the girl may have to do a bit of metalwork, perhaps fix the odd car at sometime. If at anytime of going through this 'invaluable process', you should show yourself to be a little different (shock), a bit individual (horror), if you're a boy with a desire to sew, design, and make garmets for woman (must be bent), you're automatically outcasted, it seems.

"You should be doing the proper things, boy" a teacher once bellowed at me when I announced that I'd rather dance the part of a rat than pull one apart for 'scientific reasons'. Of course if I was about to join the school of the Royal Ballet, that would have been different, then my individuality wouldn't have been so 'misplaced' in the school curriculum, but why do you have to go so far to prove something that is so natural a feeling - as natural as whatever that rat had in its guts.

It is funny how education in general seems to me to frown upon individuality so much, when so much earlier in a person's life it breeds it. I'm talking about our wonderful '11 plus' system. Of course we couldn't all pass our '11 plus', think of all the chaos that would bring. There wouldn't be enough space in all the 'pass' schools, would there now? So even if you did make enough points to go to the 'pass' school you may not ever get there. So early in a young, and at this moment fragile transformation of a young person's life friendships are lost. Your best friend goes to a 'pass' school, while you go to a second(ary) school. Automatically one is stupid while the other gets a new bike for doing so well. Of course you may well deserve a new bike, you may have in fact had the points, but "sorry, sorry, not enough desks". In one end, ('pass' or failed) and out the other. No time to be creative, individual, "sorry haven't got the time for that, or money, or books, so stop being so bloody much of a problem, and just do your maths, your english, your biography, your science, your metalwork, your woodwork, and no you can't make what you want, you'll build a box like everyone else, and stop being so bloody different!"

The system kills any creativity a young person has emerging or is trying to find, when in fact I believe it should be all about making that person as different and as independent as possible: helping them to learn more about themselves.

Drama, for instance, is a subject that is always so rare on a pupil's programme of studies, something that is given way so often to other subjects. It is a subject that always seems to help those young shy pupils, helping them to be more strong and independent. It has also proved to be calming to those who are a little 'over the top', over active, helping them to question themselves and divert their energies more constructively.

If a boy was to experience soccer hooliganism, a girl, early pregnancy in the comfort of a drama class under professional tutorship so it can be seen, acted and talked about properly, then perhaps there would be a lot of young people thinking much more about what they are about to do on that football terrace, or in that bed.

It seems to me obvious that they are going to turn to violence and sex to let off all that energy after being cooped up with their heads in a book, a biro in their hand, being made to SIT and STUDY on order. How can you get creativity out of someone so young in such circumstances? Of course they want to move, feel new experiences. Do everything that they have not been explained about or shown all day long.

If they were perhaps given the chance to move, to express, to voice their independent views, a balance of learning, studying, I think could be found. Two lessons of netball or football do not get rid of all that energy.

There are some teachers who do not want to move on from where they have arrived. They just, it seems, teach what is there with no interest as to what else there could be learnt about their, or any other, subject.

The pupil is almost scared into thinking that he or she must have those exams, so therefore has no time to be creative and different. No time, just mainstream maths, mainstream english, mainstream biography, mainstream science, mainstream woodwork, mainstream metalwork, etc., etc., etc.

And that, my girl, if you have not had time to express or experiment your individuality, will get you as far as Woollies. If the pupil was allowed in perhaps a drama class to act out, to experience, leaving school with or without exams, with or without the choice of individual thinking, then perhaps they would understand and believe more in what the tutor is trying to practice with them. Instead, they, as many I believe do, feel that they are just being driven, sucked and plopped out the other end, with no real care or attention being given to them at all.

Education is more learning than teaching.

Inside My Head

Zelda Hill
Former pupil, Devonport
County Secondary School;
Wells Cathedral School;
Devonport High School
for Girls.
Dartington College.
Present accepted Exhibition Scholar
undergraduate Royal Academy
of Music.Aged Sixteen.

Inside my head I enjoy thinking about music, it refreshes my mind to other subjects.

Sometimes the troubles of the unfortunate people of the third world, being hungry most of the time and wars to cope with (such a waste of life): I pray for them.

I also think the money wasted on nuclear weapons could be spent on something worthwhile, and if everybody took an interest in the Arts and not wars, the world would be a lot better place.

I think of all the Russian artists who are involved with the west without conflict.

My dream is of a world orchestra with the Lord God as its conductor.

Some Thoughts on Primary and Secondary Education

Councillor Prudence Hocken
Chairman, Museum Sub-Committee
Chairman, Dunstone Primary
School Vice-Chairman,
Plymstock Comprehensive School; Member,
West Devon Area Advisory
Committee for Education;
Member, Plymouth Adult
Community Education Team

The dual role of education should be to capitalise on the gifts the Good Lord gave us and to equip us to live as full a life as possible, not just for ourselves but also for our fellow men.

Since we are such diverse beings, education must seek to cater for each and every one of us from the very bright to the severely retarded, always seeking to raise the level to the highest plane, thereby stretching our capabilities. Both state and private sector schooling should play a part.

With the advent of the third industrial revolution - the microchip - which can replace so many human work functions, educators must remember that leisure time will be extended and the nation as a whole has not been accustomed to this concept. Therefore every type and concept of tuition is vitally necessary to fulfil this dual role if we are to take our rightful place as a first class nation in the 21st century.

PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY education are the most important years of our lives when our attitudes and interests, our capabilities and fortitude are all waiting to be moulded, either successfully or adversely. What a tremendous responsibility the primary school teacher is asked to shoulder: one which teacher training colleges should recognise more stringently, both in the vetting of the applicants and in training and retraining. Thank goodness the system is returning to a more disciplined class atmosphere with the teaching of the three R's in their rightful place at the top of the curriculum. The earlier in life we can learn to communicate one with another, the more exciting will be the rest of our lives. The trendy laissez-faire classroom teaching where anything goes - and usually did - was an awful failure and the sooner it works itself out of the system from teacher training downwards the better it will be. It is encouraging to note that despite the lack of an academic council, co-operation between primary and secondary schools over the curriculum is on the upward trend. Having moulded and set our primary school children on the right road with an interest for learning and communication, it is important that no hiccup occurs during this transition period when the sheer size and newness of the 'big school' can overwhelm a first year secondary pupil causing loss of concentration or lack of interest, especially in schools where discipline has been allowed to lapse. Children always thrive better when they know exactly what is wanted of them - so do parents.

SECONDARY EDUCATION, locally, is in the midst of a bitter debate. An enormous pity, as the only major area of pre-comprehensive eduction that gave cause for concern was the secondary modern school. Had it been greatly enhanced with determination to stretch it to its maximum capability and hence to avoid the stig- ma of a second-class learning establishment, the resultant trials and traumas which are blighting the educational expectations of the children and causing their parents great concern would have been avoided. As it is, with a mix of comprehensive and grammar schools, the proposed total abolition of the selective system is disastrous. The abolition of the remaining grammar schools, some of which are single-sex, is ludicrous, especially at a time when a very telling report from Northern Ireland on the 'O' level passes in grades A to C knocks the rest of the United Kingdom for six. The province has only grammar schools and the ratio for success is N. Ireland 63%, England 57% and Wales 51%. The concept of comprehensive education as a neighbourhood facility with the community using the same facilities both academically and leisurewise, keeping an identity all of its own, had very many advocates. With the falling school rolls, neighbhourhood schools may no longer be able to retain this one-identity advantage having to admit comparatively large numbers of pupils from other areas to maintain viable numbers, especially if they have a sixth form. The local schooling no longer has a corporate identity but is diffused perhaps with pupils who do not value the opportunities which are on offer.

The argument that children at the tender age of eleven are harmed by the competitive nature of the selective system is ridiculous. How can a standard be set and achieved without a test? Most of life is to do with achievement, and competition is tantamount to achievement. Children need to understand this facet of life from an early age, and competitive sports are an ideal way of accomplishing this. Separate tertiary schooling is not ideal for this reason. Quality teaching, facilities and identity are best achieved in a school with an integrated sixth form.

Much has been written on the role of commerce and industry in education and the necessity for equipping pupils with the knowledge which industry requires. Whilst co-operation is moving apace, it would be most beneficial for science teachers to spend time at local concerns and conversely for employers' professional staff to spend time in schools. The acute shortage of senior maths and science teachers could be supplemented from industry and the armed forces if the will was there. So much talent goes to waste.

PARENTS AND GOVERNORS play an important part in a school. With the advent of latchkey children, one-parent families and the permissive society, it becomes increasingly difficult for schools to combat crime. Crime, which has spread alarmingly from disobedience, truancy and petty theft to major vandalism, intimidation, organised crime and drugs. It is a frightening blot on our society especially as the age of the culprits appears to become progressively younger. Head teachers, unfortunately, no longer have the deterrent of the cane. Parents must be made responsible for their children's behaviour through the courts and the soft side of social service provision must be tightened up whilst still retaining a caring service. Private boarding schools have a great advantage in this respect. Governors are expected to reflect the aims of the school, be aware of the curriculum, sit on teachers' selection boards for hiring, but very seldom firing staff, watch over the discipline and generally involve themselves in all aspects of school life. An awesome task. Is the present system of political nominees and selected parents the best way to fill a governing body? The short answer must be "NO".

A RECIPE FOR CHANGE should reflect value for money and copy all the better points of the private system. Education should be funded nationally, with a voucher system offered to parents to spend at the school of their choice. A board of governors should be responsible both academically and financially for all aspects of the school. Governors should be selected from local professions and industry with a professional bursar cum manager to advise them. A school would stand or fall by its competitive success.

Councillor Stephen Hole
Devon County Councillor
Member of Education Committee
and associated committees

The alterations that have taken place in further education over the last few years is quite staggering.

In engineering the normal form of training was a "time served" apprenticeship and yet over the space of five years the colleges have had to cope with a new form of training, Y.T.S., as well as the ever changing requirements of firms sending apprentices to college.

An apprentice served four years in his company under the supervision of skilled men and attended the college for a city and guilds certificate in either Technical engineering or in Craft Engineering and this would last him for life and he was well able to apply for promotion or stay at his tools.

An apprentice or skilled man now will have to retrain during his time in industry. The form of technical qualifications have also changed to Technical Educational Council Certificates instead of the city & guilds technicians but the craft remains the same.

To qualify for technical training you now have to have set 'O' levels as opposed to a good standard of Education.

In all this change our staff at the colleges have had to cope and give as good a service. It is to their credit that they have coped with the change and can even provide specialist training in technological fields to an employer provided that he can supply enough students to make the course viable.

There has been a steady increase in Flexi Study Education courses and I think that this trend will continue. The reason for this is that not everyone is able to attend the College during the day or at the set times given and this course covers their needs.

Because the C.F.E. now runs these courses subjects such as 'A' Level Physics are now available. These subjects need laboratory work and by arrangement with the courses tutor, a time convenient to both the student and the tutor can be arranged in order that the person can complete the requirements for the qualification.

The only set back with this course is that the Tutor is not there to teach you. A set programme of course notes and tests is sent out when you enrol and the work is sent to the tutor for marking. He will advise you but if you find considerable difficulties with the course then you may have no choice but to enter the full or part time course.

With the increase in spare time caused for whatever reason the emphasis of Cradle to Grave Education has increased. All sorts of courses are being provided by both the Further Education colleges and by schools, community centres and private individuals teaching in church halls, etc.

Everything goes from Keep Fit to pottery, Car Maintenance, Do it Yourself Canoe building is or has been taught at some time in the city of Plymouth and I am certain that this goes on throughout the country where interest is shown. It is a fact that people will have more time on their hands and so the popularity of these courses will continue to grow and it is the policy of the County Council's Community Education Committee to encourage this.

In order to allow community groups to set up they must have available a building from which to work. We encourage all our schools to allow the dual use of some or all of the buildings and sports facilities. A small charge is made depending on the use that the building is to be put to so that groups can afford to hire the rooms required and the school can also profit.

This can again only be done with the cooperation of Headmasters and caretaking staff but in the main, most of our schools cooperate in some form and all new schools before they are built are looked at to see if community use is required for after school activities and they are designed with this requirement in mind. The largest of these form Community Colleges and we have several in the County.

With more technological advances being made and industry requiring more highly trained personnel and an increase in leisure time, the demands upon Further and Community Education in all its forms will certainly increase.

My Own Thoughts on Education

Mrs Jean Ann Holsen
Infant Helper
Pilgrim School Primary

Today in schools there is a great need for more teachers in the classrooms. There are far too many pupils in a classroom for one teacher.

Teachers should be left to teach and not be social workers as well as teachers.

There is a lack of finance to buy equipment which is needed in schools today.

There is also a great need for nursery units for pre-school children.

Parents should be backups to the teacher.

Teachers on the whole do a wonderful job with the equipment they have to work with and the every day pressure that comes with being a teacher in today's times.

Education

Maurice Holt, M.A., M.Ed.,Ph.D.
Writer and lecturer on
education, College of
St Mark and St John

It was George Orwell who said that by the age of fifty, people have the faces they deserve. This is a project about faces in education, and Robert Lenkiewicz's portraits will show you what hopes people bring to education, and what deserts they end up with.

Hope, after all, is what keeps education going. Parents hope schools will do good for their children; children hope schools will be fun, and in some way worthwhile. Teachers, and those who fund and support them, hope that the children they educate will make the world a better place. Even the most hard- bitten administrator, must have some hope that at the end of the day his efforts will bear fruit. Education is an industry fuelled by optimism.

So much, then, is held in common by pupils, parents, teachers, officers and the elected agents of the public. But, of course, all will have different hopes; all will have different ideas about the kind of good that education exists to do. Moreover, their hopes will be tempered by the world we live in: some will be confident that schools can change everything, while others will reckon that schools can only change very little. Some may even wish that, far from promoting change, schools themselves revert to an earlier era, and they will campaign for the restoration of grammar schools, or corporal punishment, or straw boaters, or whatever emblem they choose of a golden age.

So the aims of people in education are not as clear-cut as it at first seems. For one thing, entertaining hopes about education means making value judgements about what we see as important, and this is something on which, in our pluralist society, we find it difficult to agree. Hence the battles betwen rival politicians about the structure of secondary education, and even about what should be taught in schools. Plymouth is a part of the country which reflects these conflicts in a sharp form. It is one of the few places which retain a divided secondary school system, and there are plans to continue with selective grammar schools alongside comprehensives even into the next century. Yet the popularity of the comprehensive schools established a few years ago on the edge of the city by the Devon local authority is not in question. What are the real views of people on issues of this kind? The polarise nature of present- day politics makes it hard to be sure.

And for another thing, there is the relationship between education and society. A headmaster, for example, who believed that the examination system should be abolished because it actually had a harmful effect on school learning would get short shrift from his governors, and from pupils themselves as well as parents. As it happens, Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools concluded, in their 1979 report on secondary schools, that examinations did, indeed, have a harmful effect on learning: but we can all recognise that, in present society, if the government abolished examinations someone else would soon re-invent them. So our hopes about education have to come to terms with the world as it is, and not as we might like it to be. Like politics, educational change is the art of the possible.

But what sort of change do we want? We are led back once again to the business of value judgements. And notice that they are moral judgements, because they concern not our <u>own</u> good, but the good of <u>others</u>: the good, in particular, of pupils. It's worth remembering that schools don't exist to promote the careers of politicians and administrators, nor - when it comes down to it - the personal wishes of either teachers or parents. All these people are <u>responsible</u> for deciding what finally goes on in schools, but their own prejudices must be subordinate to considering what is best <u>for pupils</u>.

This, of course, is not an easy thing to do. If, for instance, we happen to believe that our own schooldays benefited from rote learning, then we might want to use our influence as a governor or a teacher to insist on this, even though the 1982 Cockcroft report on teaching mathematics concluded that memorising without understanding was unhelpful to pupils. The idea of weighing evidence and reaching a balanced conclusion ought to be the mark of an advanced society, you might think: but if you look at the way newspapers and politicians handle value issues you will see that mostly they aim to present them as a reflection of their own policies and prejudices. And if you look at the minutes of council meetings, you will again find that there is little, if any, reasoned discussion: mainly it is a matter of the ruling group of politicians deciding their attitudes in advance, and then manipulating the meeting to achieve their ends. This is particularly unfortunate in educational matters, where it is not easy to discover the best course of action, and careful deliberation is of the essence.

There is, therefore, a sharp contrast between the way in which society takes decisions about its schools, and the way schools themselves try to get pupils to take decisions. For most teachers recognise that there are at least two sides to every issue, and want pupils to see that the quality of life depends on how we handle controversial issues. It is sometimes held that schools should be discouraged from discussion of

controversial issues. This, I would argue, is to misunderstand the very nature of education.

Another example of our failure to look closely at educational intentions is the current enthusiasm for any kind of scheme which links schools with industry. Most people have allowed themselves to believe, in a quite uncritical way, that the more the work of schools is relevant to what goes on in factories and offices, the better it will be for everyone. The government, for example, is diverting large sums of money into a small number of schools so that, from the age of fourteen, a proportion of pupils in these schools can follow courses which, until the age of fourteen, place an increasing emphasis on technical and vocational studies. And local authorities have been falling over themselves in bidding for this bounty. Councillors with reservations about the wisdom of allowing the government to influence their schools in this direct way, or who doubt the value of making schools in the image of industrial life, get short shrift in the rush for cash. It is as if the language of the counting house is all that is heard. And after all, it can be argued, if jobs are short, surely we must prepare pupils for jobs, and also help along the economy at the same time?

But this is muddled thinking. We all know that unemployment is here to stay: we can see that the successful firms are those which replace people with computers. So what is the point of training a small number of pupils to compete with their friends for the same few jobs? It does nothing to solve the real problem, which is to create new forms of jobs and activities and help youngsters lead a fulfilled life in which work and leisure can certainly be different from what they are now.

In any case, such schemes simply train youngsters for today's jobs. But the one thing that is certain about the future is that it is uncertain: tomorrow's jobs will be different. British industry has a depressing record of failing to look ahead: and in supporting these vocational schemes both industry and the trade unions are showing the same old lack of vision, the same belief that tomorrow will be like yesterday. Well, it won't: it will need people with the enterprise and imagination to visualise new ways of making things, new kinds of services, new forms of organisation both in commercial life and in personal life. These government and Manpower Services Commission programmes are all based on the belief that you can train youngsters with transferable skills: but the high-level thinking which is needed for tomorrow's world comes from real education into the disciplines of our culture, not from teaching skills, which are in any case non-transferable because they depend on context. I argued this on a recent BBC2 television programme, and I argue it here again. Hence my belief in genuine discussion: unless we think about the ends of education as well as the means, we shall do ourselves - and our children - no good and possible much harm.

So, inevitably in an activity which depends on values, I end up telling you where I stand myself. It is for you to decide whether you agree or not. But how do you decide? Is it really the case that in a pluralist society, there are no answers better than any other? Is it the case that all schools can do for pupils is to say, there is this point of view, and there is that: we are neutral; you must decide? Is there no way of resolving these moral issues - on which education must always depend - so that somehow we can be sure we are right? Or have we nothing, when it comes down to it, but our own prejudices to depend on?

If you are a Christian, or a communist, or a member of the ecology party, you will say that your decisions are based not on prejudice but on faith or conviction. But you may still have trouble reaching a decision on a particular case: communists in the French government of President Mitterand, for example, will have different views from those outside that coalition. And the Christian interpretation of a Roman Catholic will generally be different from that of a Jehovah's Witness.

It seems to me there is a vacuum here in modern society which is easily filled by unsatisfactory principles. All too often, in the absence of any better way, it is the principle of effectiveness which is used to settle issues; this usually means choosing whatever seems most useful or profitable in the short term. Hence our current worship of management, and the uncritical way in which we believe effective management is an absolute good. Perhaps we should remind ourselves that Belsen and Auschwitz were very effectively managed.

So is there a better way of making value judgements? If there is, it would have important implications for education: for how it is run, for how schools decide and implement a curriculum, and for how the curriculum is changed. We would no longer allow politicians to bounce us into a more centralised system of control, or to bribe us into vocational schemes which serve vested interests.

I believe the ideal of a liberal education, as it was set out by Aristotle in classical Greece and subsequently elaborated in the middle ages, represents a much more promising point of departure than our current obsession with individual rights on the one hand or the corporate rights of organisations on the other. And a liberal education rests on the idea that questions of fact and questions of value cannot be separated: to teach 'the facts' of science, as much as teaching 'the facts' of history, is to disclose values, to reveal particular theories about how things are the way they are. Furthermore, a liberal education draws a distinction between the speculations of science as one thing, and the pursuit of the true good of man as quite another. So, on this view, we cannot use the methods of science to tell us how to order our lives, to decide what is a good action, or to make a moral judgement. All we can do is encourage the virtues which make our lives good: and these virtues are not to be found in the rules of religions or the policies of parties, but in the qualities we bring to our activities. Doing something well - whether it is farming the land or bringing up our children - is the result of practical reasoning about the choices which face us and the consequences they have for all those involved. Our final judgement will claim not to be right, but defensibly better than others and therefore good. It is not the triumph of one opinion over others, but a synthesis which both draws on individual judgement and yet transcends it.

It follows that education should try to offer all our children access to a programme of studies which brings them on the inside of the world they will inherit. School must offer them an understanding of all the different ways in which our culture takes shape: as art, drama, science, mathematics, history and so on. This is a general education, but it is more than that: it is a liberal education, which goes beyond coverage of a wide range of topics to examine how thought must be linked with action. The aim must be to provide all our pupils

with the capacities to act in ways which are informed by the arts of practical reasoning. They will not all acquire these capacities to the same extent; a common curriculum does not imply common outcomes. But it does imply common access, in a variety of ways, to the experiences which make up a liberal education.

For these reasons I believe in comprehensive schooling, and I despise systems which purport to select types of children, whether in grammar schools, or in separate streams inside comprehensive schools. I was able to put these ideas into practice as head of a comprehensive school in Hertfordshire, and I wrote about them in the book you see in my hand. I hold these beliefs with passion but, I hope, with reason as well. And it is fitting that I end, as I begin - with hope.

My Thoughts on School

Robin Holwill
Former pupil,
Pilgrim Primary
School

I like school very much. Sometimes its good sometimes its not so good. The good things are how the teachers teach you to read and write. The bad things are having tests when I'd just as soon be playing.

The thing I like is sport mostly football but sometimes because I am captain, the team blame me if we lost against a team we've beaten before. Other sports I like are hurdles and long jump, my best athletic sport is high jump as I can jump over one metre. The sports I don't like are rounders I always get hit by the ball, and cricket because it is boring, my worst sport is running and sprinting because I am a lazy runner.

The race that I do like is the obstacle course, sometimes I come second or third on sports day near the end We usually shout for a teachers race but for the last two years they haven't run.

Our school has just been opened, it took two years to build. I like the school very much.

With our teachers we started a project about habitat, this is where we plant grass and trees, to encourage wildlife to settle in a busy and noisy town. The teacher is very good when it comes to projects on farming, wildlife and famous people. We have a rabbit and guinea pig, the class feeds them everyday, with lettuce and cabbage, I love them very much. Our teacher has tried very hard to help with our work on wildlife but the thing that upsets me are vandals Our teacher made a rabbit hutch for the rabbit and stupid maineachs break up the hutch which took him a long time to make and a lot of money.

The work I like is maths, adding, taking away, dividing and multipliceation. I think the maths books at the school are to easy for me, except when it comes to fractions and disomal points, because I don't now what to do.

English is my worst subject because I am untidy writer unless I write it out again I always hold my pencil very tight but if I write very slowly I can keep it tidy but it takes a long time. Another subject I like is story writing and writing letters to children in different 'countries'. The books I like to read are adventure stories, our teacher read some lovely stories to us about cave rescue and escapes.

I don't like tests only maths tests, but when it comes to hundred word spelling test I'm not so keen. I don't like it when the teacher reads us a story and we have to write it out in our own words with inverted commas and full stops, I don't think I'd like having to write lines, I've never had to write lines since I've been at school which I think is quite good seeing I've been here for seven years.

Some of the teachers are nice and some aren't so nice I like my teacher for the help he gave me in my last year at primary school. A couple of the teachers always seem to shout quite a lot, so I'm not very keen on them.

I like our head master he is very kind and has helped with the childrens work, he retired at the end of the summer haldays and I will never forget him.

I am now leaving my junior school, and going to the comprehensive at Plymstock, I am very scared after being at junior school for seven years I have to start all over again being the youngest of a big school. I hope to do well in the years to come and make lots of new friends.

An Extract from the Art
& Design Handbook, Tavistock
School

Bob Hooper, B.A., A.T.D.
Head of Art and Design,
Tavistock School

This philosophy informs all of our work.

Policy Statement

The Art and Design Department fulfils an important role within the aims of the School and Community College. The work of the department centres on the development of each pupil's and student's aesthetic awareness, emotional growth, intellect and ability to solve problems. We are also concerned that our work helps students to work together co-operatively, to be rational in discussion, to be critically aware and informed of their cultural, social and natural environment.

Through the department's organisation, its scheme of work and method of delivery, it aspires to:

(a) develop respect for self and others, whatever sex, race, religion or way of life.

(b) help pupils and students understand the vital role that Art and Design - including graphic design, textiles, photography, film, TV, architecture and crafts - play in the formation of the economic and cultural structure of society and in its values and morality.

(c) teach pupils and students about the individual contribution that they and others can make in shaping the society we live in, through Art and Design activities.

(d) promote personal qualities of confidence and responsibility for their actions.

(e) encourage all pupils, regardless of social, physical and environmental disadvantages.

At all times, the content and manner of teaching in the department will enable purposeful learning to take place, with due regard to the age and ability of pupils and students.

We promote enjoyment and satisfaction in undertaking tasks and successfully completing them.

We endeavour to promote a relationship of trust between teacher and taught, so that both can achieve their aims and so that pupils can grow emotionally in a stable environment.

The department promotes continuity in its work. Members of staff take particular care to consider what pupils and students have previously experienced, and what they can expect in future work. Concern is also made to ensure that other curriculum areas are complemented and reinforced through the work of the department.

The Contribution of Art and Design

The purpose of art and design activities in schools is widely misunderstood. It is not merely to train skilful painters, printers, potters, graphic designers, industrial designers or knowledgeable historians of art and design; these are important by-products for the more able and motivated, and have vocational relevance, but cannot be our central concern for the majority of pupils.

What marks the particular contribution of Art and Design in the secondary curriculum is that it emphasises the skills and understandings rooted in the senses of sight and touch. The department provides pupils with the tools: practical, sensory and intellectual tools, by which they can become more of a person and make more of their experience. These tools are those of perception, effective discourse, knowledge, and above all of artistic and aesthetic sensibilities and the personal values attached to them.

Pupils vary in their ability to acquire, develop and use these "tools" - and Art teachers must be sensitive and skilful enough to use different approaches to meet all pupils' abilities, attitudes and needs. While we are all proud of the artefacts of high quality that are produced through our work, we are also concerned that the process by which they are produced has educational value.

Few activities are as concentrated or fruitful as Art and Design in inculcating a sense of quality and style, or a realisation of personal satisfaction and achievement. We fully recognise this in our work and do all

we can to promote it.

Therefore, the Art and Design Department fully realises the importance of good teaching methods and styles. There is a balance between theoretical study and practical activity, and appropriate use of negotiated curriculum. It is important to provide pupils and students with a sense of personal achievement, often through tangible end products. There must be good social and personal education, recognising the power and significance of co-operation and team work.

The Art and Design Department also lays great stress on the education of pupils in the knowledge of work about artists and designers, both past and present, and in the ability to be articulate in the judgements they make about them. We encourage pupils to be critical of the visual qualities of television and film, as well as other mass media, and to understand the meanings implicit in them. We relate developing sensibilities to the world outside the Art room, both by visits to galleries and other locations, and by ensuring that relevant connections are made in our teaching.

We are therefore concerned that the work of the department reinforces and complements the work of other departments. The curriculum as a whole must be actively sought and made. Links should exist between Art and Design, and English, with CDT, with Home Economics (especially Textiles), with Religious Education (the spiritual side of art), with History and Geography, and with personal, social and moral education. There are positive benefits in links with the sciences, and with those subjects, such as music, drama, poetry and dance, that form the other expressive arts in the curriculum.

Art and Design education involves pupils in the analysis of problems of function and the way in which solutions to these will be found. It stresses and illuminates the inter-relationship of the visual and functional aspects of artefacts, and pupils will be engaged in making graphic designs, videos, product designs such as packaging, and in communication exercises. These activities and other similar ones are the element that draws together the social, economic, technical and aesthetic factors in understanding contemporary society and its values as expressed in the arts.

Robin Horan, B.Sc, M.Phil.
Senior Lecturer, Department of
Mathematics and Statistics,
Plymouth Polytechnic

Any personal view of education must obviously be influenced by an individual's own experience of education, so I would like to begin by describing my own. I grew up in what was then, in the fifties and early sixties, a mining valley in South Wales which had a strong tradition of, and belief in education, particularly as a means of self advancement and as a route out of the mines and into a better job. This was a narrow and utilitarian view of education but it was certainly the view held by most of the people that I knew. From quite an early age I can remember my father urging me to "stick in at school and get yourself a better job" and this stayed with me for a long time and provided much initial motivation.

I was fortunate enough, in those optimistic post-war years, to pass the 11-plus and go to a grammar school which had some good teachers. In those days and especially amongst people with my background, teachers were respected for their academic achievements. They had "been to college" and had an authority conferred upon them by their formal education which was unquestioned by most people. Thanks to some of my teachers I began to realise that education was far more than a simple process of learning a trade or passing a few exams but was a kind of voyage of discovery, perhaps even of self discovery. I remember also that the influence of individual teachers had almost as much to do with their personality as with the subject which they taught.

I happened to be good at Mathematics but my interest in the subject was stimulated by my teacher in the sixth form who clearly enjoyed the subject himself, and was always delighted to see others share his enthusiasm. He also treated us like individuals, talked to us rather than at us, and was the opposite of the pedantic, autocratic teacher. His informal, friendly approach to learning made a profound and lasting impression on me.

I remember also, with great affection, my English teacher who seemed to me to be the epitome of wisdom with common sense. Coming from a home in which there were virtually no books, literature consisted of a few comics and the Daily Mirror. Anything more than that - poetry, music, Shakespeare - was thought useless and even "sissy". A man was interested in sport and "manly" things so it was with a sense of amazement that I heard my English teacher say, one day, "If you like football, then that's fine, but if you like football and Shakespeare, then that is even better". This was an unthinkable connection in the culture that I knew and grew up with. The two were worlds apart, and yet here was this teacher, with all the force of her authority, joining the two together. It was a very powerful statement to make to someone of my background and I have never forgotten it.

She changed my attitude to many things, made me realise how important it was for me to read and discover things for myself. She showed me that education is important as an end in itself, that it is an enrichment and an exciting experience and that life lived without these discoveries is dull and empty. I find this particularly true in mathematics. It has never ceased to fascinate me and when I read some new mathematics I am always filled with a sense of wonder. This, above all else, is my lasting gain from education.

For me then, education is a continuing journey of discovery and the best that educators can do is to use their own experiences and interest to help guide those who wish to learn. Unfortunately there seem to be some students that I meet that do not wish to learn or are at least reluctant to do so. Some even give the impression that they have been drafted into higher education. I do not blame these people, they are the product of the world as it is today. Many of them are hoping desperately that at the end of 3 years they will more easily get a job or improve their prospects, some are in higher education because they cannot find a job and some because it is the next step after school. These reasons are rarely sufficient to produce the enthusiasm which I, as an educator, would like to foster and it is sad to see so many young people who feel compelled to study a subject for which they have so little love.

The philistine, utilitarian attitude to education which preaches that only that is good which provides technicians for the economy is a view which has been vigorously promoted in recent years. It has distorted the views of education and has shifted the focus to "practical", "technical", "scientific", "vocational" training and away from the broadening, enriching experience which it should be. There is nothing more ridiculous than the spectacle of government ministers most of whom are arts graduates, preaching the virtues of science, nothing more absurd than the scientifically illiterate administering science policy.

It has also been unnerving to see the reaction of some members of the educational establishment to this raucous onslaught. Instead of a spirited defence of liberal, humanitarian values there has been muted agreement of the failure of education, failure in this case being equated with the erosion and decline of Britain's industrial base. There have even been some that have profited and advanced their careers by selling out to these

ideals. I cannot understand, nor can I even respect, any teacher or academic who does not believe in the primacy of academic ideals, the pursuit of knowledge, all the things I learned to respect as an adolescent. To be brought up to respect education, and especially the educated, is a burden when one eventually discovers that many of them are no better and no worse than the most ordinary of ordinary people.

Personal View on Education

Susan Horwood
Parent,
Volunteer, Arts Centre

As this exhibition is entitled 'Education', I probably appear under false pretences as my last attempt at formal education was to drop out of a full-time 'A'-level course - when I was twenty- nine. Having since decided that I suffer from exam phobia (it seems kinder to myself than to admit that I might have failed!), I can view the system from the perspective of being married to someone who had all the advantages a high powered grammar school had to offer, and two children who have surmounted the obstacles and are through to university; however, it is an unfair system for most children.

The comprehensive ideal was based on equality of opportunity and parity of esteem, which can never be achieved until the private sector is absorbed into the system. The private sector has a pupil/teacher ratio of 1 to 7 compared to 1 to 30 in the public sector. Is it right that in a so-called democratic society, that the freedom to buy privilege and increased life chances should be at the expense of the right of all our children to benefit from the kind of education that would create a less divisive and a more sensitive, creative and compassionate society?

My reservations about the present system are that my children very rarely come home from school having enjoyed being there. Certainly that was no fault of the teachers, but of the competitive, exam orientated system required by an industrial nation which implements a series of obstacles in the form of examinations. (Japanese children are committing suicide by the score because they are afraid of failing.) As we contemplate a future where fifth generation computers will be capable of controlling production of all the material goods we could possibly need, we will have to re-assess our attitude towards education in general.

We need a more fluid, flexible system where each child is valued as an individual, not compelled to wear a uniform, where free expression and non-conformity is encouraged, and essential instruction presented in such a way that it would be interesting, stimulating and fun. Peace studies would be a fundamental elem- ent, as would be the knowledge that we inhabit a planet which is being desecrated by human beings in the name of profit. The demands of freedom and discipline could be reconciled by teachers who are not pressurized to produce 'results' as such - the natural academics would automatically flourish and if necessary be monitored by continual assessment. Literature, music and art ought to be presented in an imaginative, colourful framework where ideas and concepts can be explored to their limits. The metaphysical and ethical aspects of politics ought to be discussed along with the various major religions and their consequences on humanity. Personally, I believe that one phrase encompasses all that human beings should adhere to - "Love thy neighbour as thyself", but in order to do that we have to love and value ourselves.

We have inculcated in us from a very early age that worth equals wealth - that we are valued more as an individual if we own a larger metal box on wheels than the next person. We are also subjected to a Manichean view of the world which is distorted and dangerous, and I would quote Gunter Grass, who is wither- ing on the governing intellectual 'educated' elite of the Eighties:

> "Whether they are concerned with nuclear science, electronics, bio-chemistry or genetic research, or involved in the security system of first'strike nuclear weapons, they live far removed from the actual problems of our planet. It is not hunger and drought, but the presumed or actual advantage of the enemy during an ever shorter warning period which concerns them. They are not expected to meet the challenge of the growing misery of mankind, its social and nutritional problems, but to deal with the problem of controlling those suffering masses. Their intellectual attention is not claimed by the denuded and dying forests, not by the polluted seas and rivers, but by immense cable projects, genetic engineering, by territorial conquest and the question whether a nuclear war in spite of the calculated losses might not be winnable after all."

Future generations must be taught to be more aware of our symbiotic existence, to make choices as to priorities and to participate in life rather than becoming a spectator.

Education

Davina Hosking
Law graduate,
Present lawyer

I have been studying for years, so my overview of education is inevitably the traditional one - that of school, University and now, The College of Law.
My bookshelves are a testimony to years of English Literature and History, French and Music, and several weighty Law volumes. However, it was Herbert Spencer who said, "Education has for its object the formation of character."
If this is so, education in its traditional form is merely a tool in the process of learning.

As educated 'characters' preoccupied with being an elite minority, we ofen overlook the education of life itself, which provides 'simpler' people with a common sense and native wisdom that I find enviable.
It is from amongst the uneducated that so much original thought derives. My socio-anthropological studies in Jurisprudence revealed this - with Eskimo and Red Indian peoples learning via generations of practical skills and having an affinity with nature. Now, I understand the reasoning behind Disraeli's words, "The greatest misfortune that ever befell man was the invention of printing. Printing has destroyed education ... The essence of education is the education of the body ... This is not a complete education but it is the higher education since the Greek."
I am a product of the 'Yuppie' generation, and often fear that the pace of my education and lifestyle is unnatural. I do not wish to live and breathe Law spending every available hour in the City; I do want to look beyond for I know there is still so much more I need to learn. There is a danger in letting an orthodox education take over my true self. The History of Art, International Affairs, Economics, Politics, Drama - all these things I long to know more about, and feel that though I am a lawyer I am not wholly equipped for life.

My education began at home, particularly with my mother's strong influence who, being a naturally clever woman, encouraged me to be competitive, with the words, "It's better to be a poor first, than a good second"!
So education began early with parents, Sunday School and music catching hold of me before I was five.
Being a shy and reserved child, I endured the malice of other children in the playground and found solace in the classroom where I fell upon work with a feverish appetite. I excelled at English and History - where my imagination could run wild, intrigued by lonely and mysterious characters like Emily Bronte and Mary, Queen of Scots.
During this period I developed an independence and distrust of many aspects of human nature.
My education in people had also begun.

Just as schoolwork gave me an opportunity to beat the crowd rather than join them, music and the piano provided an escape. Music has always been therapeutic for me - and in my original choice of books for the exhibition, I included some music, for music as much as anything has had the greatest influence in my life, with Grieg's haunting melodies bringing out the loner in me.
I have included a Law textbook for obvious reasons, and because the Law of Real Property has been a favourite topic of study. Although I cannot "learn men from books", a legal training has made me somewhat guarded, knowing how resourceful and cunning people can be.
As mentioned before, the Bronte family and Emily in particular have intrigued me with their lonely and intense life at Haworth. "Wuthering Heights" was an 'A' level book. Its dark, powerful melodrama and macabre imagery fascinated me. I read Mrs Gaskell and Margaret Lane's commentaries, secretly thrilled that three Victorian women with such a repressed lifestyle could find an escape in words.
Emile Zola also writes with fierce and dark feeling. "Germinal" was one of the most effective and disturbing books I read, for it is a strong sociological commentary on the working class poor in nineteenth-century industrial France. It helped me to view the present Third World situation reasonably. When people are poverty-stricken and helpless, the only enjoyment in life is what comes free. And with sex come children, and so the whole vicious pattern continues.
I continue to read Zola with his portrayals of the darker side to human nature.
I wanted to include an historical work. Twentieth century European history is enormously interesting, particularly the demise of the last royal courts. I share a love of history with my mother, and I bought "The Last Courts of Europe" for her. The isolated splendour of the Russian royal court in particular, and the last days of Nicholas and Alexandra are perhaps the most moving, together with photographs taken amidst chaotic pre- Revolution times.

The central 'book' in the portrait is "Vogue".
Perhaps my greatest passion is fashion, and fickle though this may sound, I relish the world of fashion where styles come and go so fast that one wonders how much further designers can go in their quest for the original. Appearance matters, and clothes have a language of their own. My preference lies in suits and classic styles, with quality rather than quantity being a decisive factor.
Perhaps one day I might achieve my wildest ambition - to be a Director, or perhaps even Editor of "Vogue"!
But I could not comtemplate this ambition without an education.
So, in the meantime I will continue learning.

Dr Stephen Huggett
Senior Lecturer in Mathematics
Plymouth Polytechnic

To me, education is a process by which an individual is encouraged to grow. Does the education system in our society achieve this? I believe not. In fact, I believe that in most cases the individual is stunted by our system.

The principal reason, which I shall develop in some detail, is that for many people (including, I suspect, many educators) education is a process by which an individual is fitted into society. Of course there is not necessarily a contradiction between these two definitions - if society were such as to encourage its component individuals to grow then the two viewpoints would mesh nicely together. Does our society encourage us to grow? No. We are told to conform and consume, and the decision not to obey requires courage and determination.

So the conflict is this. Do we design an education system which encourages each individual to develop in her own way, in the full knowledge that her subsequent life will be that of an outsider, or do we instead train people to be conformist consumers? Again, it may be that there is no difficulty here, and that the overwhelming majority of people only have the potential to turn into automata. This thought is so depressing that I shall assume otherwise.

To talk of "designing" an education system is, of course, to dream. Our system was never designed, it evolved in response to a variety of pressures. But what does it actually do, then? How does it manage its astonishing success in antisocialisation? How do you teach people not to rock the boat, or, even better, not to even think of rocking the boat? Which techniques most effectively deprive people of all their self-confidence and critical ability, so that they apathetically accept their lot and automatically consume whatever the television tells them to?

Well, it is all quite clever, really. Young people are herded together in large authoritarian institutions, put into uniforms, told to compete, and then assessed and graded like eggs. If they object in any way the message is clear: "the system is far too powerful for you to change, and besides you are not mature enough to have worthwhile opinions yet". There are many other, equally nasty, messages. I will cite three:

(1) "if you toe the line we will give you privileges and coopt you into the system as a non-commissioned officer",

(2) "learning needs teaching", and

(3) "if you succeed here you will get a job".

This last one is exquisitely ironic in a time of mass unemployment. The whole school environment (commuting, punctuality, breaks, supervised work, authority, and promotion) is that of a factory. To pretend that school can prepare people for the dole is therefore a cruel deception. Is it any wonder that those on the dole get depressed and feel that their lives are wasted? (In fact, of course, the very reverse is true - few jobs offer anything more than a planned way in which to waste your life.)

If you want to train people for the dole you need to give them confidence in themselves. No system which demands competition (and therefore failures) and insists that learning needs teaching (and therefore teachers) will ever produce people who can find meaning in everyday life unaided. On the other hand a system whose definition of education is closer to the one with which I started this essay has a far better chance of producing people who know themselves well enough to be able to live a happy life without being defined by a job.

But how is this definition of education to be put into practice? First of all it is essential to realise that a teacher cannot also be a policeman. Only if there is no element of coercion in the teacher/taught relationship can the two people negotiate a reasonable contract together. What do I mean by a contract? I mean that the pupil decides what she wants to study, and the teacher decides what she can teach, and the two of them try to match their respective aspirations and abilities. What does it mean to "teach", though? So far I have glossed over this point, only referring to the dreadful way in which people are given the impression that learning needs teaching.

To me a teacher is somebody who listens very carefully to the pupils, widens the pupil's horizons by suggesting new avenues of research and encourages the pupil in her struggles. The pupil is helped to grasp the essentials of the subject under consideration by provocative questioning from the teacher. In this way the teacher will gradually be able to render herself unnecessary, which is one of the objects of the exercise.

Only teachers of this sort, working in a non-authoritarian system, will be able to encourage people to

achieve their potential. This new sort of "school" would help people

(1) to realise that a job is not their only goal (particularly if it is a mindless job in a destructive industry),

(2) to have the self-confidence to challenge authority and develop autonomously, and

(3) to appreciate that education is for life, and life is to be lived, not tamed.

Councillor M. G. Hughes
Former Plymouth Councillor
on the Education Committee
and Community Education
Committee; present Chairman
of East Plymouth Community
Education Team Management
Committee

Education is a lifelong activity. It begins at birth and ends with death, it embraces all things and we are never able to claim to be its master.

Education has many subjects apart from the academic content. Babies are educated from birth, to talk, walk, recognise, memorise, feed themselves and become potty clean. The average youngster learns at an amazing rate, probably more rapidly during the first five years than at any other time.

Unfortunately for many the word 'education' confuses many memories of school, some happy, most not so happy. In fact, education is directly associated with school days and subsequently people seem to consider upon leaving school that education ceases. Yet the acquisition of knowledge should be the most important ambition. Why then do we have illiteracy? is it an illness or due to some deficiency in a person, or is it that we have failed to communicate, failed to ignite the thirst for knowledge in that person who for some reason is not receptive to the established methods. Or do we install into some individuals at an early age the idea of being a failure? Why is it children do not want to go to school, why do some rebel against school life and why is it that most people consider their education to be completed upon leaving school?

Educationalists never consider the existing methods to be perfect, some are reluctant to change, others feel it best to resort to past methods and some are constantly moving forward to more exciting avenues of learning. Education must be informative, enlightening, interesting and exciting, but mostly it must be fun. Children must want to learn and if that is to be the case then the whole structure of teaching has to be constantly reviewed.

Not enough is being achieved in the field of nursery schools. If it is accepted that the first five years is the most receptive, then let's make it possible to teach children by making available the necessary equipment and personnel.

Primary Schools are much more creative now than ever before. Some of the marvellous work being produced by the children is remarkable and I am convinced that modern methods are responsible for the tremendous improvements, however we still have a long way to go with classes of up to 40 children per teacher and outdated books, individual attainment is bound to be affected.

Secondary Education is generally an emphasis of the establishment view and it is here that many people are lost. Pressures are great on young people today and one is more likely to experience the fear of failure.

Unfortunately streamlining tends to produce what the establishment requires. Young academics are programmed to be professional people, other youngsters to the trades. After leaving school it becomes difficult to alter course unless there is considerable resolve, and a place in a higher educational establishment is remote, without firm qualifying examination results.

Modern technology increases the pressure on the young, as the employment they are groomed to adapt to, shrinks, leaving many of them feeling surplus to requirements and useless in society. With the advances in modern technology we shall hopefully proceed to a method of work sharing, which will result in an increase of leisure time. Now, more than ever before, leisure use must form part of the curriculum content.

The Comprehensive system of Secondary Education offers a balanced, varied, creative and wide ranging programme which incorporates subjecs other than pure academics. However, it is still very establishment orientated and is in need of constant review to ensure that there are changes to satisfy modern needs. There is a strong argument here for greater parent and lay involvement within the management structure of school, to ensure also that these changes are reviewed and policies implemented in the best interest of the pupils and community.

Higher and Further Education

There should be no age limit to the accessibility to higher or further educational establishments, and to enhance the quality of life and to cater for the inevitable demand for retraining, either for updating highly technological professions, or for new and alternative employment, as old methods become redundant, it will be necessary to increase provisions. It is also reasonable to assume that people will have more leisure time and will subsequently wish to make use of the Colleges to learn trades other than their usual professional interests. There is a danger that this freedom may be discouraged because of financial considerations, and alternative methods introduced, funded by industrial organisations, which would narrow the curriculum and result in a funnelled approach to any subject. To widen the educational horizons and improve the quality of life, educating people should be firmly retained in the hands of the professional educationalists, and adequate funds and equipment must be made available to ensure constant updating of methods and machinery.

Community Education

Probably one of the most important yet terribly underfunded spheres of the educational programme.

It incorporates all age groups, youth work, unemployed people, adult literacy, senior citizens, and also offers numerous courses on a great number of subjects of an academic nature as well as the opportunity to learn skills and crafts.

Community education caters for a great deal of social work, its aim is to prevent social problems rather than to cure them although it has performed that service on many occasions.

The education of officers in the community field is tremendous, and the surprising numbers of dedicated voluntary people never ceases to amaze and fill me with admiration. If there is a cause which justifies increased expenditure then community work is it.

Pedagogy versus Assessment.
A dilemma for educators

Michael E. Hyland, Ph.D.
Psychologist

Educators find themselves in a dilemma: the teaching of a subject and its assessment are two processes which are to a large extent incompatible.

Pedagogy is at its most successful when students are interested in the subject matter for its own sake. That is, successful education, in general, requires the student to be intrinsically motived: they must like what they are doing. However, educators, employers and, indeed, the general public require some assessment of a student's academic performance. This very assessment (whether it is by examination or continuous assessment) introduces an extrinsic motivating factor.

Research shows that both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can improve work output on a structured task. However, these different motivational factors have different effects on creativity. Specifically, extrinsic motivation tends to reduce creativity in unstructured tasks.

Educators experience this phenomenon at an intuitive level. Early on in the year, when exams seem a long way away, students will discuss material which is of general academic interest but which may not be examined. However, as exams approach, attention focusses on acquiring only those aspects of learning which are relevant to examinations. The general interest in the subject matter drops to be replaced by frenetic attention to the details of the examination.

The effect of exam-oriented attention differs between students but is most marked amongst those who are high in anxiety. It is recognisable in exam scripts as a uniformity in presentation. In particular, it appears as a 'playing safe' strategy in which new and critical ideas are avoided in preference for known, derived information.

In vain does one exhort students to try to be creative with ideas. The effect of exam fever almost always (there are some exceptions) degrades the quality of performance at the higher levels.

There is, of course, no easy solution to the dilemma of pedagogy versus assessment. However, it does seem a valuable objective of all higher education to try to instil a love for the subject matter for its own sake, thereby trying to counter the negative pedagogic effects of assessment.

Eileen Hynd
Former pupil,
Tavistock School;
17 years old

British law requires a minimum of eleven years to be spent in education. Initially to me it appears as a kind of 'sentence' especially when the words 'compulsory education' are added. Then I asked myself, how do I interpret education; academic; practical or a knowledge of the life I live and the satellites around it. Some people say, 'too much knowledge is a dangerous thing', yet too much is sometimes never enough. I find the present education system does not fulfil many of my expectations or questions, and in doing so can appear irrelevant which can destroy incentive and confidence in my appliance to learning.

I feel that public examinations should be 'nationalised', i.e. everyone studying the same syllabus in each subject and grades being divided into pass with credit, pass and then fail. Education should also try to be made appealing to everyone. Many of my ex-school mates would label learning as stupid, snobbish or useless for a variety of reasons - some due to laziness, boredom, inability to comprehend, outside 'pressures', etc. Initially I found that teachers 'forcing' Shakespeare and the like a cause for resentment and the word 'classics' became a metaphor for 'Boring! I am not interested'. It is embarrassing to admit that as later I found the same material fascinating, especially when I explored it of my own free will and could form my own opinions. I feel that sadly, for the majority the best things of past generations that remain relevant and uneroded by time are just not being communicated in a clear, interesting or relevant manner.

The school environment is said to create a sense of belonging to a facet of society, a preparation ground for later life and an environment in which a personal identity can be formed. Personally, it did none of these for me. In fact I feel my thirteen years of school were in some ways totally unproductive and useless. Since leaving school I have tried to 'compensate' for lost time and have found that college is helping me in this. How does a school instigate a sense of belonging if one has to be a uniformed, 'carbon copy' pupil, if you work and achieve too much one's peers label you 'creep', if you do the opposite you are a rebel: to me the adulation received in being a rebel is false - ultimately you are stranded in a trap of your own making. Subconsciously whether one admits it or not, the friends you associate with exert the greatest influence. The family also influences, but are not, in my experience, as involved with education as some believe. I am not certain as to school 'preparing for life' as often I have felt teachers wishing to typecast me or conveniently assign me to a familiar expectation pattern. Also, having spent three years at an 'all-girls' school, I experienced the 'Look, it's wearing trousers!' syndrome where us girls had obsessions with anything male. This seems as sexist as 'boys don't do needlework and girls don't do metalwork' and I feel that this 'segregation' of the sexes can result in conflicts. (In retrospect single sex schools may hold less distraction - I am unsure as to expressing a definite view on either.)

I found that full potential is hard to attain if opinions are repressed and not open to discussion. I also think that I look back on my school years as that of being placed in an institution preaching conformity and trying to produce conventional people for a conformist lifestyle.

In the case of authority I believe the college to have reached a 'happy medium', whereas in my experience of school I was conditioned into accepting a reiterated set of others' morals, etc. I remember being harassed for my appearance which seemed trivial; okay, I was meant to be a pupil in school society, but wasn't my work more important? I also found authority too restricting or totally non-existent. Anarchy in the classroom led me to become totally disillusioned and start 'missing' school. Ironically I was told if I carried on with my erratic attendance I would be suspended - exactly what I wanted! I feel as though I am presenting a very anti-education stance but I would like to stress that I now crave to expand my knowledge, especially as I feel I have evolved out of the flippant attitudes I once possessed.

I also find trying to progress frustrating; before I left school one teacher told me I had potential, another that I was designated for the Y.T.S. scrap heap or early retirement at sixteen! If "I think therefore I am" how many of my thoughts are truly my own and how long before I can establish my own beliefs - if ever!

Maybe due to my erratic schooling I digress! Education seems to cover so many things and my experience is not yet sufficient to articulate in the style I would like to. What really maddens me is the indoctrination of it all. Many aspects seem to be forced upon one from four to sixteen years. Religion is often heavily accentuated; how does a Moslem or a Buddhist react to Christianity being the accepted doctrine? Surely in this multi- racial society if religion is to be taught, a child must be aware of the variety of denominations around him/her? Another source of irritation is the "do well, get a career, earn money". I feel that fulfilment and satisfaction are somewhat overlooked.

State education has the advantage of being free - all very well - but I feel that a decline in standards is becoming evident. Certainly a lack of interest in the pupils - for example the controversial teaching strikes. Yes, teachers deserve a wage and recognition but I feel in the case of some studednts the priorities were

misjudged. There is something appealing in the public schools' methods - personal conduct is often stressed yet I wonder as to how much bigotry these systems produce; this is accentuated when one encounters that "I am holier than thou" attitude (that is a personal prejudice!).

Personally, I also think that the functions of education are portrayed as something that is useful in later life for jobs, coping with domestic finances and understanding one's role in society, whereas I also view education as a medium for increasing self awareness and exploring further into the world around you. The majority of my teachers at school dismissed this as fairly unimportant and more inclined towards further education, whereas I feel that education should be presented to pupils in its widest context.

Generally, although I have doubts concerning the communication of education I feel that everyone has the right to the opporunity of learning as much as they are able to and want. At present the education system seems to me to be chaotic, unfair in some cases and lacking in the resources to do as well as possible. If we are to nurture any knowledge, thought and development in our pupils surely we should start by giving them a love or thirst for knowledge. For some pupils this is a natural instinct whereas for others their fear, resentment or apathy can dull their potential.

As I see it, public schools, grammar, comprehensive, and secondary schools should weigh up their own advantages and disadvantages and discuss methods so that a stronger approach to education could be developed.

Some Views on Education

E. C. James
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'Education should be a partnership between pupil and teacher' - it is a long time since this idea was first suggested, yet, tragically, it is still not happening. I believe that it is vital, since motivation to learn - or lack of it - is one of the things that most influences how much is learnt. "You can take a horse to water but you can't make him drink", as the saying goes. Sadly, this is a very fair description of the atmosphere in many secondary school classrooms, where harassed teachers attempt to teach children who "just don't want to know". I have seen many classes of 14 and 15 year olds, sullen and morose, bored stiff with anything the teacher has to offer, keen on nothing except that which will offer a little diversion, whether it be teacherbaiting, talking to a neighbour, or just daydreaming.

Yet in contrast, only a small minority of children seem to feel this way in the primary school. In schools in which I have taught I have found classes of 7, 8 or 9 year olds bubbling over with enthusiasm, full of zest for anything, with an eagerness which a good teacher has no difficulty in harnessing, so that they are keen to learn. So what goes wrong? Where has this enthusiasm gone? More important still, how do we get it back? for without motivation to learn, education is bound to fail.

Is it purely a maturational change, inevitable as children grow older? I think not, for enthusiasm is certainly not an emotion confined to childhood, though obviously the light-hearted gaiety of young children is bound to diminish somewhat as they develop cares and responsibilities. It is, however, important to ensure that this change does not come about too suddenly and stressfully, as I think it does at present, at the change from primary to secondary school. The children are suddenly propelled from a cosy family atmosphere in class (where they spend a large proportion of their time with one teacher in one room) into a frightening early adulthood, where responsibility is thrust upon them. They must learn a timetable, change class every lesson and find their way round a vast new school, bigger than anything they have ever seen (far too big, in my opinion!). They must know where they should be at all times, be responsible for a set of books, belongings, money, pens, food, etc. (the loss of any of which may get them into trouble). The atmosphere is impersonal and unfriendly; they know hardly anybody - and there may be more teachers in their new school than pupils at their old. No wonder the 11 year olds are lost and uncertain. They have to grow up fast - too fast - in order to cope, and in doing so they lose a lot of their freshness and zest for life. Some never learn to cope, and have mounting problems throughout secondary education.

How can we prevent this happening? Basically, we need to tackle, and reduce, each problem in turn. There needs to be more contact between primary and secondary schools so that the children are already familiar with the new school when they join it. Perhaps some of the secondary staff could visit feeder primaries to teach the occasional specialist subject; perhaps 4th year primary children could visit the secondary school regularly to make use of specialist equipment; and so on.

The second improvement I would like to see is for the atmosphere and arrangements in the 1st year secondary to be more like the primary school. I would suggest that these first year children need a more effective "home base" in the school and should be all housed together in one area of the school. They should remain in their base class for as many as possible of their lessons, only moving out for lessons such as science, games, etc. In this way they would gradually learn the responsibilities needed, so that by the time they start their second year they are ready to branch out and can do so with confidence.

The next point I want to make to help improve the pupils' attitude to school concerns the syllabus. When secondary modern and technical schools were first created, the aim was to provide an alternative to the grammar school, a different and more suitable education for the less academic child. Unfortunately, this aim was lost and what resulted was a toned down version of an academic education. To a large extent, this is still true, even in the comprehensive schools, and it is still wrong. It is tragic that children have been deluded into feeling inferior because they fail to get into grammar school. In fact, an academic education is a long hard grind, needing a great deal of hard work often in uninteresting subjects, to prepare children for further education in an academic or professional field. For the vast number of children for whom this is both unsuitable and unwanted, a far more practical and directly useful education is needed, which would be both more valuable and more interesting to the children. As mentioned earlier, motivation towards learnig is quite vital if children are to learn; since this motivation often does not come naturally, the teacher must create it. The quality of teaching is of immense importance here and all teachers should spend their lives aiming to improve this. But of equal importance is the choice of subject matter to be taught. I think that no subject (or topic within a subject) should be taught unless those who are teaching it can clearly and rationally justify its inclusion in the syllabus, not only to themselves, but also to those children to whom it is being taught (or in some cases

inflicted!). Most teachers would thus have to expend considerable thought on this matter and, I hope, a dramatic improvement in the syllabus would result. Academic subjects are all very well for those children who wish to follow advanced academic education but detailed study of such subjects is of little relevance to the average child who will forget irrelevant subjects as soon as possible. Obviously a general knowledge of history, geography, science, arithmetic, etc. is necessary, and an improvement of literacy skills is vital, but there are so many other subjects of vital importance to young people that are hardly touched on in many schools - those subjects that will be of direct relevance to them in their future lives (life skills they could be called).

Life skills can be divided up into a number of areas. One area is that of training for future employment. This is touched on by schools in the study of typing, technical drawing, wood/metal work and use of tools, etc., but I feel the scope of this area should be widened considerably. Another area is training for future leisure - vitally important in the modern age or we will see, for example, young people on the dole turning to crime, alcohol, vandalism, etc. through sheer frustration and boredom. Music and craft subjects could be included here, as well as many others. Then there is the vast area of homecraft, covered in many schools merely by including cookery and woodwork in the timetable. Yet there is so much else of tremendous importance and interest - diet, food values and the growing and storing of food, as well as cooking it, sewing and mending, making clothes, curtains, toys, etc.; house and car maintenance, decorating, dealing with electricity and gas (reading meters, changing fuses, etc.); tax, pensions, social security, budgeting and financial planning; etc. etc. Another area is Family Care - this could be subdivided into Child Care (family planning, pregnancy and birth, child development, the needs of babies, looking after children, etc.); Health Care (hygiene, first aid, accident prevention, pests and diseases, etc.) and Family Care itself (family relationships, living together in harmony, looking after the elderly, etc.).

What I would like to see would be for the curriculum to cover both academic and life skills. It could perhaps be divided up into a set of broad areas such as: 1) Maths and Science, 2) Literacy and Languages, 3) Humanities, 4) Physical Education, 5) Home Craft, 6) Family Care, 7) Employment Skills and 8) Leisure Skills. In the first year or two of secondary education the children could be given a basic grounding in each of these eight areas. At the end of that time, they would be in a position to choose (with the help of the staff and their parents) perhaps three of the areas which they wished to study in greater depth - for example, a bright, academically-minded child might choose science, language and humanities. A girl whose ambition is to get married and have a family might choose home craft, family care and leisure skills; etc. In the 3rd, 4th and 5th years then, the children would be able to spend a lot of their time studying their chosen areas thoroughly (either making a broad study of all the subjects within those areas, or specialising even more and studying a few subjects in depth. They might go on to take exams in their chosen subjects). But at the same time, to keep their education on a broad base, they would continue to study the other five areas of the curriculum but to a much lesser extent and at a more superficial level. Skilled teaching would be needed here to keep their interest awake, since these will be the subjects they find either difficult or boring. Great efforts would have to be made to make the study interesting and relevant to them and their lives. But I am convinced that if the major part of their curriculum comprised subjects of direct interest and value to the children, their teachers would be rewarded by a far greater interest and motivation in their pupils, and, by implication, they would find far fewer disciplinary problems.

However, in addition to having an interesting curriculum, and interestingly taught lessons, many other things are necessary for learning to take place successfully. One of these is a good past learning experience on the part of the pupils. The saying "success breeds success" is completely true here, because success breeds confidence in oneself and increases one's motivation to repeat the pleasurable activity, whereas failure leads to confusion and guilt and a loss of self-esteem. Continued failure in spite of trying, punishes the act of trying so much that the child will try no longer but will give up, it being less painful not to try at all than it is to try and fail. Frequent failure therefore gives us a child who does not have the self-confidence needed to make a success of anything, and who has reacted by avoiding the punishing situation in any number of different ways - truancy, refusal to work, rudeness and defiance, etc. or just plain unhappiness. So it is vitally important for the teachers, while stimulating the child's mind and abilities, to ensure that he can and does achieve success in his work most of the time. This means a great deal of hard work and sensitivity on the part of the teacher. He must ensure that every one of the children has all the necessary sub-skills for the work in hand; that he has prepared the ground for them adequately and given them everything they need (both information, equipment and support) in order to complete the work satisfactorily. He must be ready and willing to help any child with a problem at any time (even though he may feel that the child only needs help because he didn't listen earlier!). He must ensure that he has not set work which is off-putting, because it <u>looks</u> either too difficult or too easy. He must check that the work will not be of overlong duration, so that the children get fed up half way through - especially children with a short attention span.

One could obviously write whole books on improving the quality of teaching, but this is not what I am attempting to do here. What I hope I have shown, however, is that some of the problems of children's attitudes to school nowadays, can be tackled directly by altering the organisation and atmosphere within the schools. Many schools, of course, are already doing just this, but there are still many improvements needed. If it can be done, however, I am convinced that the benefits would be enormous.

A Woman's Eye View

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Given the length of this paper (approximately 1000 words), what follows can only be perceived as a cursory account of my views on education. I will begin by giving a brief background of my life's experience, which will reflect these views.

I was born and brought up in a third world country. Due to the economic climate I was deprived of a secondary education. On my arrival in England, at the age of 15 years, I was accepted at a Convent School to study for one year. At the end of this period, I left school with 'O' levels (2), RSA's and typing certificates. I subsequently gained one more 'O' level as a day release student.

I entered nursing school at age 18 years (S.R.N. training) and was forced to abandon my training when I decided to marry and have children. In those days, nursing was a 'vocation' demanding almost total dedication. A transfer to another Health Authority needed special dispensation, and was very rare. After 5 years I returned to nursing, completed a one-year practical and became a State Enrolled Nurse. I then worked as a 'night nurse' for several years. For most of this time I was given the responsibility of being in charge of the ward allocated to me. Nevertheless, State Enrolled Nursing is a second rate training with no future prospects.

I am now a single parent with two teenage children. This seemed the appropriate time to restructure my life. I approached the Director of Nurse Education, informally, with a view to undertaking a conversion course offered to S.E.N.'s who wanted to further their careers. The S.R.N. qualification was the first stage in this process. I was refused this opportunity as I did not have sufficient "certificated knowledge" which could be turned into a viable commodity. The fact that I had the skills, proven ability and necessary experience was beside the point. I was so angered by this attitude that I kicked against the system and went into higher education. My decision to take the BASPA/- DCW course was a positive move, as I have no doubt it will enable me to continue to work with people in a constructive way.

Because of my personal experience, I see the problems with the education system as sexist, racist, class orientated and sadly lacking in community co-operation. Within this bureaucratic process, children are taught to conform and how to be competitive. However, on leaving school some children are unable to cope with life as they have not been prepared for the harsh reality of unemployment.

Whether we like it or not, formal schooling is here to stay. It lays the foundation for future learning resources, without which it would be difficult to grasp the complexity of the technical age we have moved into.

Although I accept that most of our learning is done outside of the classroom, I disagree with writers such as Ivan Illich, who advocate de-schooling. The notion that individuals should be responsible for their own de-schooling, i.e. to be able to choose their own time for learning, is far from an egalitarian system. The beneficiaries would be the middle and upper classes. Most working class people in our society would not have the same opportunities. Due to economic pressures they are forced into the labour market at a very early age. If they are fortunate enough to get employment it is usually unskilled and more often than not part-time. The de-schooled utopia would never come, not least because the idea has arisen from and is dependent upon those who have emerged from the formal education system. It reinforces the loyalty of teachers of the existing school system and in many respects can be seen as counter-productive.

In reconstructing the education system, I feel that positive discrimination in the employment of women and blacks in higher salaried posts and the employment of non stereotyped staff in all departments would constitute role models of enormous significance. Despite the Sexual Discrimination Act, women are still being discriminated against. In education, the scales system operates against them if they leave work to have children, or work part-time, thus preventing female teachers from rising to the highest administrative positions. The provision of creche facilities would help to overcome this problem. At present, the majority of teachers in primary schools are women, which reinforces gender stereotypes, that it is a woman's role to care for young children, whilst headmasters take on managerial positions. Even in secondary education, with the exception of single-sex schools, women teachers tend to do traditionally female subjects such as home economics and art subjects whilst men predominantly male subjects, e.g. maths, physics and technical drawing.

I feel that equal opportunities in schools will not only benefit the teachers but will also help in the overall development of the boys and girls they teach.

In the inner cities, children of West Indian origin are seen as under-achievers. A number of Saturday schools and self-help projects were set up to provide supplementary education, with more black teachers in what has been termed Education Priority areas, e.g. Lewisham, London; Saturdays could be used for extra

curricular activities. Black children are as capable of learning as white children. Even in Plymouth, for example, my son (the only black child in his school) was unable to read at age eight and a half. I approached the acting head to discuss the matter. He told me, rather flippantly, "Some kids are born with it and some aren't." (This may not have been a racist remark; however, I felt that it reflected certain attitudes directed at certain children.) I subsequently taught my son to read in six weeks, much to the school's astonishment. He has recently sat 7 'O' levels and is staying on to take 'A' levels.

There is a need for community development work, not only for ethnic minorities in the inner cities, but any area of social deprivation. Schools have a number of resources which could be utilised to provide community education, e.g. adult literacy, evening classes - recreational or otherwise - and play schemes for the under 11's.

On placement recently, in conversation with a Primary School headmaster, I asked his views on community work. He replied that his job is a type of community work, that is, preparing the children for a place in the community at a later date. I was rather perturbed by this remark as he had repeatedly refused the use of "his" school for summer playschemes. The aim of the playscheme is to enable local people to help themselves by organising and running activities for their children collectively. Surely a headmaster who is sympathetic to community needs would be more effective in his work. A little co-operation on his part could only enhance the relationship between parents, teachers and pupils. Schools are very resourceful and should not be seen as a separate entity. In the broadest sense they should be seen as part of the community as a whole, offering formal education, playschemes, Saturday school, self-help projects, etc.

> "At the highest level of generality we must consider the ultimate consequences of educational processes for the quality of individual life and aid for the whole nature of the society of which the school is part." (1)

Conclusion

At present I feel that the inadequacies of the education system could be improved by encouraging equal opportunities for teachers and pupils alike.

Learning is a continuous process and although I believe in the formal education system I feel that education should be openended. Individuals who have "missed out" on education at an earlier age should have the opportunity to "catch up" if they so choose. I consider myself very fortunate to have entered higher education when I did, for with continual cuts in education, places for mature students will inevitably decline.

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Where does one start? There is so much wrong with schools and education that it is difficult to know where to begin. Staff are unhappy and underpaid; schools are prisons where trapped staff and kids manoeuvre and work against each other, each one making the other miserable. Yes, there are the better and the happier moments - but they are few and far between. I got one letter from a girl in Oxford thanking me for opening her eyes to English Literature. That was one in 24 years. A lot of kids regarded me with disdain. I was there to get them through examinations. That was my job. Their parents told them so. And me. The be- all and end-all of education was the 'O' level and the 'A' level. This with over four million unemployed, including 36,000 qualified teachers. And classes of over 40 in the Primary sector and over 30 in the Secondary sector. But in the Private sector the classes are less than half the numbers, and education which has to be an interaction between teacher and children has got to be that much richer and more satisfying for all concerned. So the State system staggers on with teachers coming in as graduates and paid less than Junior N.C.O.s. I know how insulting that is because I was a Sergeant at 20 and left the teaching service 40 years later paid a lot less than a Sergeant. What price the values of our society when it values a senior graduate master less than a senior N.C.O.?

Or let us look at the medieval patronage that exists in schools today. The Headmaster is God. He or she has bobbed and weaved and crawled to every interview, made the right remarks, read up on the right books, come out with the right philosophies of education, in order to reach this pinnacle from which very little can unseat them for the rest of their non-teaching careers. They are in charge. They control the living standards and destinies of thousands of children and hundreds of Staff. They have been creeps and yes-men and they expect their Staff to be the same. The system recreates itself. It cannot stand those who are different or who think differently. So the creeps and yes-men are promoted. The Head holds the power of patronage. Promotion is handed out to those who toe the line. The system cannot brook those who are different. The good teacher will get nowhere unless he or she curries favour with the Head. The quality of work in the classroom goes unregarded. The Head has little contact with the children or the classroom. That is why he/she became a Head. Administration is better paid and more highly regarded. Only the failures stay in the classroom. Success in teaching is all about getting away from the kids into the offices and adviserships where one may escape from the chalk-face and the realities of coping with bored, abusive and non-motivated children who see little future in what is imposed upon them. So the system creaks on and I see little change possible unless there is an explosion in education. And teachers are not made of the stuff of revolution. Most were creeps when they were at school. They are pliable and docile material. They feel secure in their creeping. They have the same standards as their head- teachers. They even like the system. And it's not the bitterness of 24 years in secondary education that drives my thinking. I joined as a Scale 1 teacher (and that's the bottom of the range) and I left as a Scale 1 teacher after nearly a quarter of a century. But I had some happy moments. I liked the children. Felt sorry for them. Helped a few to enjoy literature - even to pass examinations and launch out on full and satisfying careers. But knew that many never saw any sense in it. The girl who replied to my pleas to read as widely as possible, to share great minds, with the laconic, "So where did it get you? You're only a crummy teacher!" still sticks uncomfortably in my mind. Can one respect a so-called profession that gets less than a Junior N.C.O. or a new policeman? Why are teachers expected to give up their time and their services without pay? Have you ever expected a solicitor to give up three or four hours in an evening without pay? So why expect free overtime from a teacher?

As an ex-Lieutenant Commander I have always felt unhappy with teachers. They are too humble and too mean. They creep unashamedly for promotion. They do not, a large proportion of them, even like children. I happen to like kids. They remain happy and cheerful even in school. But we have not succeeded in education in harnessing that bubbling enthusiasm, that youthful optimism for anything but the limited heights of examination passes. And that is increasingly less and less important. So where do we go?

I know what I would like to see. Voluntary schooling for everyone. No more compulsory education. Schools to attract children in with what they have to offer. Children consulted individually about what they wish to learn. Each one treated as an individual. The term worked out in advance for each pupil. Lots of spare time for games and creative work. No examinations. Continuous assessment all the way. Classes of anything from six to a dozen. Games and hobbies and outside pursuits like swimming and car-maintenance and driving to be part of the curriculum. House repairs and maintenance of cars to be taught to girls as well as boys. Visits to local industry and commerce and local government to be part of every pupil's education. Care of the environment and gardening and the growing of flowers and vegetables to be part of every pupil's learning. Politics to be taught so that children see why society is as it is and how to improve it. Teachers to be paid double their present

miserable rates. Promotion to be a thing of the past. The highest job is dealing with young children's minds. Those in administration to be on a lower scale than those who teach. Head teachers to be elected by their Staff every 3 years and to be paid less than classroom teachers, who are the coal-face workers. Advisers to be put back into the classroom or offered retirement as most are not worth their salt let alone their salaries. Schools to be part of the community so that their facilities be shared each evening with the neighbourhood. Education to be broadened so that schools become the seed-beds of change and not the cemeteries of tradition. But I know I ask too much and too soon. But one day ... one day ...

Education

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To my way of thinking, and in my understanding, education is the gaining and in some ways the regaining of knowledge through life's experiences. "Yes," some may say, "but what is knowledge?" This throughout the centuries has been a difficult word to define, and so one must be content by saying that it is, the capability to understand oneself and what one is doing and why one is doing it, to the satisfaction of one's state of mind. This of course is only my humble attempt at defining the noun 'knowledge', which I find very difficult to say what it is yet discover many things to say on the point of what it is not.

Knowledge is not the three 'R's - reading writing and arithmetic, or the suffering of little mortals under the sentence of eleven years' hard thinking and pencil sharpening. How can a mortal gain education under these quite horrendous limitations that it must survive so as to enter into that 'big, bad jungle' or the 'rat race', as so many of us who have survived the system remember our guides through the system constantly reminded us. Once we have undergone our sentence, we can then enter into the real system of education - the World. We learn how to live, to survive, how to act on certain occasions, how to dress, how to talk and even, in some societies, how to think.

If this opinion is true, then, this country and other countries' systems of education are totally wrong. To make it compulsory for a child, when it reaches its sixth year of life, to enter into an eleven year sentence of learning the accepted doctrines that that specific country believes in. Some may argue yes, but compulsory education was brought in so that this nation's children, who were in the majority illiterate, would become literate, and so bettering their conditions which previous to the 1870 Forster's Education Act, were being exploited by the less honourable members of that society, by using them as cheap labour and so restricting their childhood days. - but I would argue that society has now changed, employers no longer find it necessary to employ young children due to the many adults who have been 'educated' into the view that all they need is a job with money for survival and so lose all ambition of rising in social status and so are willing to take these rather miserable jobs. As is described by Karl Marx, education is an agency of social control, by which the bourgeoisie is able to control the working classes by teaching them their rung, a lower rung, might one note, of society's ladder.

Although it would be utterly naive of me to suggest that education is not necessary in some form; prior to the basic form of education that we now know, people survived only by muddling through life, a very difficult form of living. If the example of the cavemen may be looked at, they lacked education of any sort, as far as the historians know, they did not acquire the knowledge of things through being taught but only by learning through experience and so due to lack of understanding there were fights and squabbles between different sects. Through the advent of education man was able to gain the knowledge of language and so is able to communicate via language with these other sects and so theoretically can end the dispute through talking to each other. Naturally language cannot solve all problems, yet it does solve many, as in the case of domestic rows or family rows. Looking forward into the next century, one may see a positive outlook for education due to the advent of computers and cheaper microprocessors.

With computing the knowledge that was previously transmitted from the teacher's brain to the pupil's brain which is obviously subjective, it now may become objective. All the facts that are necessary to pass these examinations, that so many societies find necessary for a child to enter the world as an intelligent adult, may be put onto a computer system and so the child may learn the facts and only the facts, not the opinions of other humans, so enabling it to become an adult. This proposition may sound quite horrific to many but in fact if looked at logically it is not really, as we are just replacing one computer (the human) with another computer (the micro-processor). Of course this system is not infallible, facts may be altered so giving a biased picture of that particular subject, but it is rather safer than that of human teaching human if a parent wants its child to have an unbiased view before it actually has time to make up its own mind, which cannot be realised in the situation as it is now, with one human's interpretations of the facts being transmitted to another human.

As humans, we will never be satisfied with our lot, there will always be grumblings about something or other. Maybe the education that we are now getting is not perfect; of course it needs change, as the teachers of the nation are now complaining, work must now begin on a reconstruction of this quite out of date system, which came into being in the last century, and so we will go on fighting for better than we've got and the government will carry on resisting change, but one question we all must ask ourselves is, "Do we actually understand ourselves enough to know what we want on the education front?" If we answer, "yes", we are liars; if we answer, "no", we are fools.

Some Thoughts on Education

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Education to me is not a building, nor a structure, nor a "core curriculum", but an attitude of mind. An attitude of mind that is swiftly and surely becoming eroded and crowded into a mess of paperwork, financial obligations and petty intrusions which have nothing to do with the spirit of the child.

Children are an essence, undiluted as yet and waiting for someone to spread them around a little, or a lot, according to their potency. They are not a line of rebels waiting for facts and figures to be pushed into the right binary codes and programmed to react to society's correct stimulus.

But that is exactly what is beginning to happen to our computer-based and oriented child of today. They are being programmed - programmed for work when there are no jobs, programmed for the 'now' society instead of being programmed for tomorrow's world of science and space fact. We are guilty of not allowing our children to look, to any purpose, much further than their noses and handing them the man-given right of falling over their own feet, instead of handing them a pair of spectacles. Nobody is asking for rose coloured glasses - but teachers do ask for the child to be given the chance to, at least, blush upon the desert air. I uphold wholeheartedly the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy, everybody needs these basic tools to live a competent life. But, there is more to life than competency. I recognise that a person can get along with just being competent - but where does music, art, sport and sheer enjoyment of drawing breath on a Spring day come within the bounds of just competency? Education means more than just basic requirements. The basic requirements of a house are good foundations, but foundations will not keep you warm and dry, shelter your family, house your pictures or comfort you in your music. Foundations are necessary as the start of something good.

This "something good", this essence, this attitude is being pushed under and kept down as a matter of policy. Teachers are being regarded as renegades of society, people of no worth and little moral fibre. Their cries for the children are responded to as cries of selfish need and not as reasoned regard for the lives of young people. Maybe that is our fault. Maybe in the past we have been too ready to please all facets of society. Maybe we have been seen as willing to split society into factions of grammar, public and secondary modern schools. Maybe our chickens have come home to rest. Whatever the reason for the demise of the teacher, it has caused a confusion in the minds of our adult population who now do not know what to think or have never been taught to think to any logical conclusion.

Most schools have good teachers, not excellent and not poor, mostly good. They work hard and under considerable strain with young and demanding personalities and society demands from these people something akin to a minor miracle. Under a teacher's control society expects a child to become numerate, literate, moral, physically well developed, articulate, socially acceptable, mannered, well tempered, individually cherished, aware of its surroundings, conscious of its neighbour, instructed in religion, excited by science, healthy in mind and limb, musical, appreciative of art, experienced in handling a variety of materials and even being able to cross the road with an added conviction that they must never talk to strangers. All this and more from one primary school class teacher or from a host of widely varying senior school teachers.

Society as a whole expects all that; however, the average parent expects the child to become disciplined, able to do sums, able to read, make itself understood and be happy, and who, they ask, can grumble at that? So, we have society made up of parents looking for Utopia and the individual parent making up that society hoping for far less and fundamentally wanting to trust the teacher.

Society does not trust the teacher, that is obvious; look at the press, listen to the Government, hear the voices raised against the long holidays and the lack of tables taught in schools.

What a muddle; teachers, parents, society, all wanting the best for the child as they see it and pulling hard for their point and belief. No wonder Education is in very real danger of lying in ruins around our feet.

What to do? I don't know. If I did I would mount my charger, and foray off into battle. I do try to fight for my ideals. I have to work within the tight limits of financial restraint, lack of staffing and resources, and I am forced to follow the line of withdrawing my goodwill and alienating the very people that I need to talk to and have sympathetic dealings with. I feel I cannot win, nor do I choose to retreat.

The wheel seems to be going full circle. It was the poor intelligent member of the good family once who became the tutor or governess. If we do not do something soon of a practical nature for our education service, we will find that once more only an elite few can afford to be part of the teaching profession and once more the cries of dedication and professionalism will be taken up. Dedication and professionalism are fine concepts, but not ones that a beggar can afford. Gloom and despondency seem to be the drift of my arguments. I look forward to a term of work which I no longer completely enjoy, pressures that I find difficult to cope with and demands that I will not be able to meet. My triple job of part time class teacher, part time secretary, and full

time head teacher leaves a lot of work undone, or not done to a high enough standard to give me satisfaction. Nothing but the best you can offer should ever be placed before a child, and the best that the education service is being constrained to offer at the moment is not good enough, but not yet bad enough to alert the parents, parents who themselves have constraints and difficulties and to whom education is just a part of living and who do not see things through a teacher's eye.

I am not so jaundiced that I cannot see a time when education will not become a full and rounded entity once more and society will value again the beauty of learning and appreciate its value. I just hope that we have not much farther to swing down before the wheel takes a swing up for the better.

Education - A Personal View

Jack Jones
Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, Plymouth City Council; Deputy Head, Plym View Primary School; Plymouth City Councillor, West Devon Education Committee; Governor, Southway School, Tamerton Vale Primary, Langley Infant School and Langley Junior School

In one way or another education has played a significant part in my life - as a practitioner, an administrator, and, perhaps most importantly, as a parent. My three children have all progressed through the education system in Plymouth, with varying degrees of academic success, and are now leading full lives as young adults. As a practitioner I am the Deputy Head of a Primary School in one of the post war housing estates in Plymouth. I was a late entrant to the teaching profession, having previously been an officer in the Merchant Navy, and I like to think that that experience has added to my professional expertise as a classroom teacher and as part of a school management team. As an administrator I am a member of the West Devon Education Advisory Committee - which advises the Devon County Council Education Committee - and I am also a Governor of several schools.

However, it is perhaps because I am a Socialist that my thinking about education, and its aim in Britain and particularly in Plymouth, has polarised. Education should be about the quality of opportunity for each and every child, and it should be about the removal of privilege from our society; so that whatever the background of any individual he or she should be given the opportunity to lead full active and creative lives without any constraints whatsoever.

There is a lot to be proud about in the British educational system, but there is also a lot to be concerned about. We suffer from various inequalities up and down the country and as a society we should be striving to make certain changes to eliminate those inequalities. For example, there is the difference between Public Schools - or private education - and the state system. Whilst one can argue that in a free society individuals should have the right to opt out of the state system and pay for private education, one should also be aware that the full cost of private education is not carried by these individuals, and that taxpayers' money, in one form or another, aids these schools. It is still a fact that certain of our major universities reserve 50% of their places to Public Schools. These inequalities should not be part of our society nor part of our education system.

There are, of course, further inequalities within our state system nationally. These occur mainly because different local authorities have differing priorities regarding expenditure on education; and although it is often said that a good teacher will teach well in a barn without any equipment, it is, in general, vital that our children are provided with decent buildings, up to date equipment, the latest books, and, of course, sufficient well paid professional teachers. Without trying to make any political points it is interesting to analyse the league tables of expenditure of different authorities and compare them with the political allegiances of those authorities. Our very own Council of Devon, with a vast Conservative majority, is consistently near the bottom of the league in educational spending - in the provision of new schools, in the supply of books and equipment, and in the pupil-teacher ratios. Clearly an inequality of opportunity for the children of Devon.

Coming closer to home and looking at the particular provision of education for secondary age children in Plymouth, we find very clear inequalities of opportunity. Historically this is because Plymouth has maintained a selective system in an age when most of the country - and most of the rest of Devon - has changed to neighbourhood comprehensive schools with either sixth form provision at those schools, or sixth form provision centrally at a college.

In Plymouth the selective system has been diversified to include comprehensive schools on the periphery of the city, with an opportunity for parents to choose which type of system they prefer (providing they meet any transport costs); and now there are plans to reorganise so that there will be neighbourhood comprehensives available in all areas, whilst retaining a system of selection at 11-plus. It is probably the only city in England with such a hotch potch of educational provision.

In my view - and in the view of most thinking educationalists - it is not possible to have two systems working side by side. Either the Education Committee should choose to retain a system of selection - a creaming off of children at 11 who are capable of obtaining university degrees ten years later - or they should choose a system of neighbourhood comprehensive schools capable of providing the best possible curriculum for every child in every sphere of the curriculum.

As a practising teacher of 11 year old children, and having seen the basis of selection over several years, I can state categorically that it is not possible to assess children at that age with any degree of certainty for their future academic potential. We all know of children who were "failures" at 11 who have gone on to do great things, and we all know of children who were successful in their 11 plus examination who became 'O' level "dropouts", despite their grammar school education.

The proposed reorganisational changes in Plymouth will only exacerbate the inequalities of the selective system, because they plan neighbourhood comprehensives available for all whilst retaining the grammar schools; all that will happen is that the creaming off process will continue, and so the comprehensive schools will

inevitably end up as better class secondary modern schools. They will be schools deprived of many of their future sixth formers by the 11 plus selection examination, having to compete with the grammar schools. Unfortunately too many people will only see the end product of such a system and compare 'results'. Such results are almost always based on academic success in examination results and take very little notice of any of the real - but intangible - results of looking at the end product of a well rounded person able to face future life in a mature and creative way. In general the whole basis of educational ethos is much more likely to succeed in a comprehensive school environment than in a system that unfairly selects out certain individuals at an early age in their educational careers.

Therefore it is most important that administrators, practitioners, and particularly parents continue to fight to remove the inequalities of opportunity that remain in our school system locally and nationally, and continue to work for a system that will give each and every child all of those opportunities that they are entitled to and that they deserve. There are an awful lot of dedicated men and women at the chalk face of education who are doing a grand job, and there is a lot to be proud of in the British system; but we still have a long way to go before we reach that goal of real equality of opportunity.

Education

Chris Kelly
16 years old
Former pupil, Devonport
High School for Boys;
Present student,
Polytechnic, Central
London: Film, Video
and Photographic Arts
B.A.; reading a lot
and enjoying good sex

Everybody needs some kind of organised educational system to learn to a sufficient depth about things that happen in everyday life; and so that we can hopefully earn enough money to support ourselves, and be happy without having to live off the state. But at the moment the education industry is a way in which some people are able to make lots of money out of innocent children without really caring what happens.

Teachers are human beings, the same as everybody else. The main problem is that they've got an unpopular job. However, most of the hostility created towards some teachers is because they make out that they should be worshipped like some kind of God - maybe because they are afraid of something.

This leads to the question "Should teachers' psychological fantasies affect our education?" For example, I was talking to a biology teacher about sexuality, and he was saying that when giving sex education he would like to say that, contrary to victorian ideas, masturbation is a good thing, but he is afraid that the parents may get irate about him "perverting their little Johnny!" So he is more concerned about what parents believe than the fact that kids could grow up with warped ideas about sexual behaviour.

Maybe if some teachers were more informal and friendly without losing control of a class, it would result in a better teacher-pupil relationship, and we would have a better understanding of the subjects. In my experience the most popular and 'best' teachers are the ones who it is easy to talk to, and do not take the slightest excuse to start an argument.

At the moment D.H.S. has about 600 boys. Because of this relatively small number a very good "atmosphere" could be created if some of the stiffer teachers would accept a bit of give and take, but after the other schools in Plymouth close and our numbers double, it will be more like a factory production line producing 'O' and 'A' levels as the finished product, ready for the employers' market. A larger school may result in alienation of teachers, and the education won't be as good. When this amalgamation takes place, Devonport High School may not be as HIGH as its name suggests.

But the name of a school really isn't important. Surely somebody with 5 A-grade 'O' levels from one school is as good as somebody with the same grades from another school. After all at the end of the day that's what employers and the rat-race are looking for.

The idea of taking these exams at the end of 5 years' intensive secondary education is O.K., I suppose, but the thought that the rest of your life depends on that one day, when you have to regurgitate as much information as possible is slightly frightening and off-putting. But what repulses me is the way that in school this competitiveness is encouraged to a ruthless extreme, making some people feel inferior due to the false labelling of superiority given to others, which only serves to discourage the less able ones.

I think that the grammar education tries hard to take away any individuality and creativity, practical subjects are disfavoured, and there is an opinion that everybody should think that engineering and banking are the best things since sliced bread. To take an extreme point of view they are turning out lots of butt-fucking zombies.

If there is to be education, everybody should be given a balanced view of everything and then allowed to decide for themselves. Teachers are always trying to entice us into banking, with amazing thoughts of cheap mortgages, etc. but there is never a mention of graphic design or television work. The ultimate choice is to be happy and interested in a job, not how much money it pays. Very few people would say that drilling the holes in toothbrushes all day, or counting out one pound notes is their idea of an interesting job.

I get the impression that many of the teachers in my school are afraid to believe that art is in fact more demanding than, say, physics, because you have to think for yourself, you can't just rely on learning a formula and stuffing a few numbers into it to get an answer.

There is no reason why you shouldn't be proud of your school no matter whether it's grammar or comprehensive but why go to the extreme of boasting about it, and disguising its downcomings - after all, it's only reality. For example, why create a false impression of a school by printing big glossy photographs of nicely painted rooms with expensive equipment like computers in them when 80% of the school is dark, cold (the heating is knackered) and paint is peeling off the wall because more money is spent on sport than renovating very old buildings. It only creates a false impression to prospective parents. Surely the truth is better; the ultimate reality!

Education is good, but it should not be disguised like it is at the moment. This may be why some people are afraid of it.

At last there is a faint glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel. Not only was I nearing the end of 'O' levels, but as the summer term drew to a close there were signs of human life around the school buildings. An army of builders (or should I call them Architectural Engineers!) had been brought in to modernise many of the old classrooms and laboratories.

As the other Grammar Schools in Plymouth are closing, preparation was being made to accommodate their pupils at Devonport. I am sure that in the future the sciences will benefit from their new, high-tech facilities, but there is a darker side to this reorganisation.

Two small Port-a-cabins have been built, each housing 3 classrooms. The rooms are hardly big enough for 5 people, let alone a whole class. They are built right next to a low fence and are constructed from a material that resembles cardboard. It doesn't need to be said that these rabbit hutches are hardly vandalproof!

As for the teachers? Well, there are going to be new members of staff to handle the larger number of children and a few new subjects, but it appears that the Government's money will not run to giving the existing ones a deserved pay-rise or even an oil change and dust off!

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"Thoughts whilst doing a mock 'O' level"

I have got the impression that once I have taken these 'O' levels in June, I will not have to spend as much time with education, both at school and with homework, but instead I will be able to use a lot more time to work on MY ideas with photography and video.

I was sat in the hall in January trying to do a mock English Literature exam, which I ended up writing a load of bullshit for the answers, and I started thinking that in June, the last 5 years of my life will have been spent on these exams. I was frightened when I thought that my mind could have been "moulded" so much that I would end up "stuck in a rut" that I was unable to walk out of!