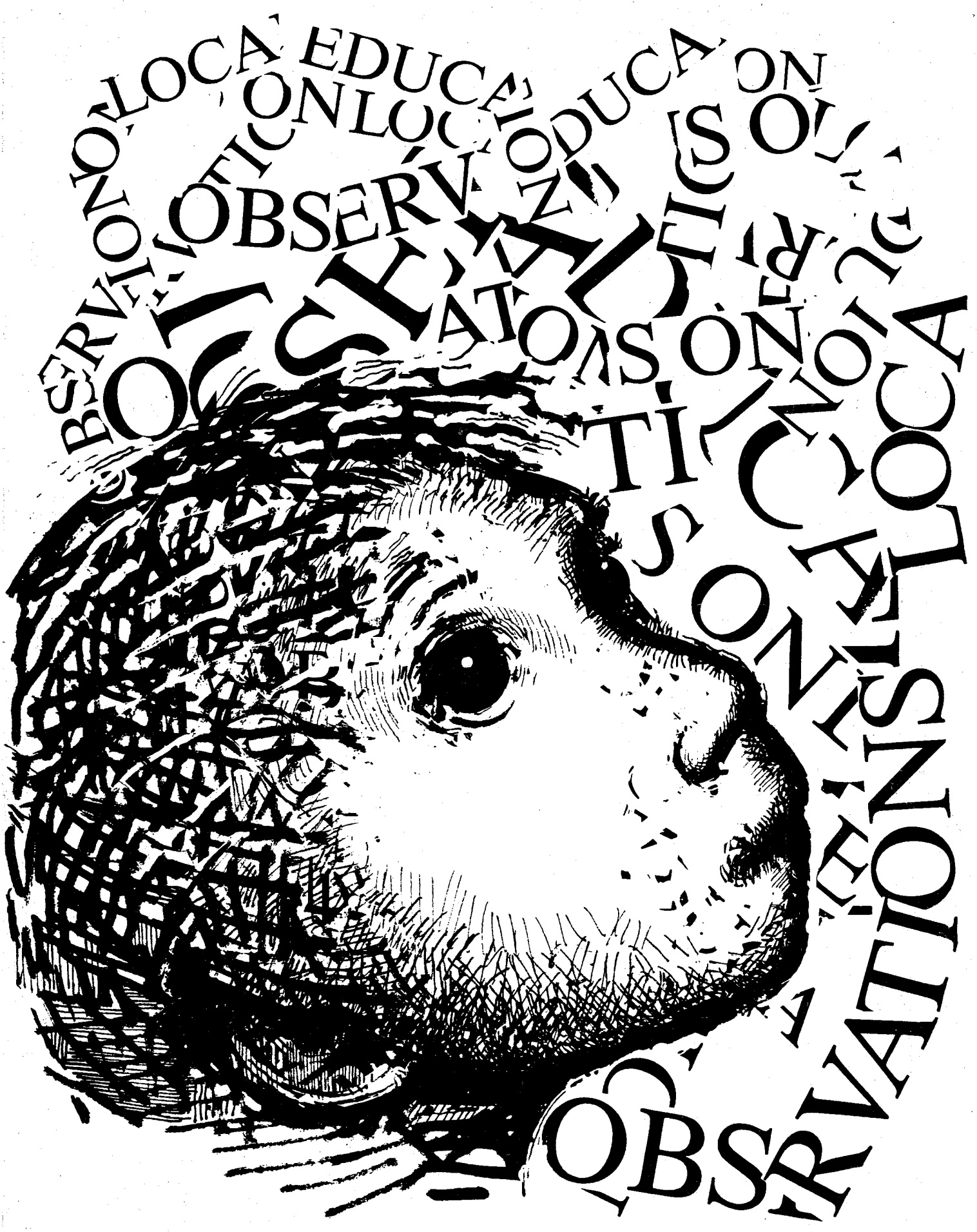

OBSERVATIONS ON LOCAL EDUCATION

COMPILED by R.O.LENKIEWICZ

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VOLUME TWO

Some thoughts on the Education System in Plymouth

Manfred G Kemmner
Headteacher
St Georges C.E. Primary
A.S. School
Stonehouse

To write on the education in Plymouth would be too large a field for me. I confine myself to writing about some of the pressing issues that came up during my career as a teacher, lecturer and headteacher in Plymouth.

When I was appointed in Plymouth almost twenty years ago, the years of expansion in education in this country had reached its zenith. Plymouth saw the building of new estates on the outskirts of the city. New schools were being built, there was growth and there were new opportunities in education. Towards the mid-seventies this expansion ceased and we were entering a period of contraction in the education service. Schools, even fairly new schools, were beginning to have falling rolls and empty classrooms.

Another issue of some consequence for Plymouth was the Local Government Act of 1974. Plymouth had always had its own locally elected Education Committee. This power was gradually transferred to Exeter. It was a great blow to civic pride and local democracy.

However, the subject which unwillingly occupied me every year as teacher and later as headteacher was the unresolved situation of selective versus non-selective education for Plymouth. This battle has now raged for well over twenty years and in the meantime our children and teachers and the educational climate in Plymouth have suffered. As an educator I am simply stunned that no compromise can be worked out that takes account of the wishes of parents to let both systems co-exist. In the end it is the quality of education which a child receives that really matters.

Plymouth offers a wide variety of schools and most of these cater for a distinct geographical area of the city whether it be for Primary or Secondary age children. All parents want the best for their children (though they may not always get it) and would choose the best schools. Even though most parents send their children to the nearest school. I feel this is a good thing. Much motivation for learning comes from working in familiar surroundings and growing up with your friends. A stable background and growing up in a friendly, caring community are the prerequisites for doing well at school. Many schools fulfil this role very adequately and they are also the centre for their local community.

We have affluent and deprived areas in the city , and the schools in these areas reflect all the attributes of their area. It is the schools in the deprived area which bear the brunt of society's culturally and socially disadvantaged. They are schools in areas of high crime, high unemployment, high divorce rates and many more social ills. Education in these parts of Plymouth has quite a different emphasis from the education found in schools in the areas of the well-to-do.

Is our education system doing its job? What is its job? Are we educating our children too much, or not enough? Is our education system geared too much to producing disciplined, efficient robots for the national economy. The greatest change in educational thinking in our times has come through the increasing emphasis on the right of the individual person. Every child, whatever her/his background, ability or circumstances must be given the opportunity to succeed in our education system. If the education system offers these opportunities it is up to the individual to avail himself of these opportunities. It is significant here to quote from a case in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg where a British parent brought complaints against her local education authority: The court confirmed the right of a parent as having final responsibility for her/his child.

How are we doing in Plymouth?

We have quite a few failures, but we hush it up; it's bad publicity! Very often it's they who contribute to the crime rate in the city. Many -the vast majority -pass through our education system almost unnoticed. They make up the bulk of our future citizens. Some do very well and obviously enjoy schooling.

The education system, its successes and failures, the way it operates, the values it inspires, are a reflection of the society which it tries to serve. Few schools can uphold ideals in education when the society they try to serve has lost its vision or has become confused about the real issues in education. Plymouth is no different here but Plymouth has retained some of its own good spirit.

Education in Plymouth

David King
Former Deputy Head,
Montpelier Junior School;
Warden, Plymouth Teachers
Centre

This is a highly personalised, perhaps scandalous, maybe slightly libellous Plymothian's view of education in this area.

I was a pupil of St. George's Primary, then Devonport High and Plympton Grammar School, none of which had a great influence on me apart from the basic rudiments of the three 'R's and the formation of a lifelong liking for smoking cigarettes.

I suppose that almost forty years on, the one teacher that stands out in my mind was a certain Horace Gordon, Physics Master at Plympton Grammar School. I believe Horace had not had a failure in School Certificate Physics for years but his lessons were fun. He had a ready fund of blunt-edged sarcasm and irony which was probably instrumental in persuading a high proportion of our year to become scientific high-fliers. Why Horace Gordon, not Ella Horell, H.A.T. Simmons, H.W. Hayle, George Harris or Reggie Hickman, I ask myself. I suppose it was his sense of humour in delivery and explanations within the laboratory. I certainly felt throughout my thirty years, that if my sense of failure failed then I would have to quit teaching and take up politics.

My twelve months' National Service and my two years at St. Luke's, Exeter, were probably the most formative period of my life. Less because of the curriculum and quality of instruction, much of which was diabolical, but more because of the people involved, from C.S.M. Varley at No. 1 P.R.D. Westmoors, to Joe Stripe, the Head of English at St. Luke's.

Joe was a performer, particularly good with poetry or Shakespeare and it was J. Stripe who led me into a life-long enjoyment and appreciation of poetry in general and T.S. Eliot's poems and Macbeth in particular. He also encouraged me into an appreciation of gin and vermouth as an aperitif.

Personality is an important tool in teaching within the classroom but it is interesting to look at the personalities involved in local education (we should note that the strongest personality in National Politics was once probably the worst Minister of Education we have had, with the possible exception of Florence Horsborough).

Personalities outside the classroom fall into two main categories, politicians and administrators. Almost certainly the person who exerted the biggest influence on the local education scene before reorganisation was Lesley Paul, a privately educated newsagent who was Chairman of Plymouth L.E.A. for practically all the years the Conservatives were in power.

A traditionalist to the nth degree, who by his pro-grammar school and pro-eleven plus fervour and political astuteness kept the borough of Plymouth close to the bottom of the table for L.E.A. spending on education, and more important, close to the bottom for educational advance.

Mr. Paul's co-partner for many years was Andrew Scotland, the Director of Education. Dr. Scotland was well known for his abridged version of the modern classics which were well in evidence in the City schools, but he was not. Trefor Williams, the last Director of Education in the City, was very much an appointee of Mr. Paul. Trefor was an able administrator who was also rarely seen in the schools.

Before the appointment of Mr. T. Williams, Plymouth made one of those mistakes which even the worst authorities sometimes make - a first class appointment. John Chadderton became Director of Education. 'Suddenly it was Spring,' we actually saw the Director in our schools more than once a decade and changes were in the air. Unfortunately, J.C. found the political climate in the City untenable and left after less than two years. Incidentally, another of those interesting mistakes was Dr. Theo Matoff, at the School of Architecture. I am sure there were many politicians who breathed a sigh of relief when he departed for Leicester!

The other two characters of influence on the local education scene are Jos Owen and Ted Pinney. The former, an administrator with a national reputation and the latter, a politician/farmer who always struck me as 'slightly to the right of Attila the Hun', until I was told by a prominent politician that 'Ted is so far left he is almost a Socialist.' It just shows how far wrong a mere teacher can be about his own leaders.

The local education scene has been dominated by the conservatives for so long that one forgets there are other organisations that 'made strait the path' to quick promotion, such as Mutley Conservative Club and some of the Masonic Lodges. It would be interesting to take a head count of the 'apron weavers' in politics, education, the judiciary and the police locally. A gallup survey of the local scene would be more interesting than a pre-election poll.

It is fascinating to look back on thirty years of teaching, especially from the viewpoint of an employer with a staff of fourteen young people in one of the most competitive manufacturing businesses, print. When I list the qualities I need for my staff I come up with enthusiasm, care, consideration, flexibility, willingness to

learn, initiative, politeness (not servility), etc. etc. I never discover until later how many G.C.E.s or C.S.E.s they have.

This is rather shattering when we consider how much time is spent in Secondary schools preparing for examinations. In Plymouth in particular, it even blighted the curriculum of many of our Primary schools. We should not, however, be too sanguine about the demands of industry. For a real piece of out-moded traditionalism, look at the maths papers set for the hopeful entrants to Her Majesty's Dockyard or the Plymouth and South Devon Cooperative Society.

Unfortunately, teachers are great swingers of pendulums and new ideas are often grasped with more enthusiasm than expertise. A prize example of this was the so called NEW MATHEMATICS. The ideas following one of the less scurrilous sayings of Confucius:

'I hear and I forget,
I see and I remember,
I do and I understand.'

and the application of this tenet to primary mathematics led to many excellent ideas but also to many problems such as a lack of numeracy. It has taken the recent efforts of one of the giants of primary education, Arthur Owen, H.M.I., to instil commonsense into the teaching of mathematics in schools. Arthur Owen, alas not now based in Plymouth, has been one of the few bright spots in the local education scene. He is a most approachable member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate and a real crowd-puller for after school teachers' meetings.

The last three years in the profession I spent as Warden of Plymouth Teacher's Centre. The Centre serves in excess of 2,500 teachers and yet as a major provider of in-service training for teachers it struggles on a budget of #7,000 for the purchase of both hardware and software. In-service training is a hairy nettle that has not been grasped by County. I feel it should be a requirement that all teachers attend a minimum number of refresher courses every few years. In Plymouth there are many teachers who attend courses less frequently than once in ten years.

Many Plymouth teachers looked forward to Local Authority reorganisation as the old Devon County track record in enlightened education was so much better than Plymouth's L.E.A.s. Alas, reorganisation has changed a liberal Conservative, somewhat benevolent authority into a hard-line business and professional Conservative dominated authority, largely interested in the manipulation of political power. Now, even school managers are political appointees. Re-organisation has, in my opinion, served the City badly in most areas. It always appears to me as a substantial provider of rates for the County that the City is the poor relation of that other small City 42 miles up the road.

Conclusions are difficult in a short piece such as this, but the summary must contain hope. Hope that teachers are beginning to come to grips with the real world. Hope, too, that employers are looking for the right talents in their young employees - I can do long division and work out square roots (I think), but wwhy should I expect my staff to do without a calculator? Hope also springs eternal that politicians will see the merit of Comprehensive schools like Plymstock, Coombe Dean, Eggbuckland and press for the same facilities for all children. We have four members of staff from one of these schools and they are all first class.

Hope perhaps springs from the fact that now all schools have a micro computer; I hope they are setting problems as well as merely solving them. Hope springs from the fact that the curriculum is so wide that the teacher is no longer the fount of all expertise. I accepted long ago that many of my ten year olds knew more than I did about some subjects and that certainly many of them were brighter than me.

My personal hope is that we can get all our young people to question the rightness of authority. Not just in a rebellious, paint-spraying manner, but constructively and critically with a determination to improve the local and national scene. Oh dear, I sound like a politician and these of all people are the ones we must teach our children to question and harass and vote in or out of office.

Mrs Jean Knott
Cook-in-Charge
Pilgrim Primary School

From a mother's point of view, I think it is a very good idea having all comprehensive schools in the city as long as the whole of the education system is run on these lines not bits and pieces as it is now. There are many children who develop later and many children who waste their time once they have passed for a grammar school, and another child who just missed would work hard had they had the chance to go to a grammar school. They have as good an education at a secondary school but not such a wide selection of subjects to take up to 'O' and 'A' levels, they can also transfer to a grammar if they are recommended after their 'O' levels, I am lucky mine all passed so this is not written with any bitterness, but I have seen some children very upset as parents seem to think it is essential, I always told mine, "Try; that is all you can do."

As the system is now I would not like to have to make a choice of whether they sit the selection or not because they may feel later, "I might have been able to pass if I had been able to sit the selection"; I am speaking from my own thoughts about myself.

I think it is a sad job the teachers are so tied as regards discipline and punishment, I once had a ten year old say to me "I wouldn't have done it if we could still be caned". I know they have to have restrictions on the use of the cane but some form of punishment to deter the children even at primary school would help.

Some of the senior girls help at a primary school one halfday a week; this gives them an insight into the problems of a teacher, also they do some community work with the senior citizens, such as shopping and cleaning for the girls, and gardening for the boys; I expect they also swop around as they seem to with everything now from sewing to carpentry, cooking to metalwork.

I am a Cook-in-charge and have seen a lot of changes in school meals. I started in a senior school and did initial training under one of the original cook supervisors and I am eternally grateful to her, she taught me so much on large scale catering.

School meals have changed a lot, the old jokes about stodgy potatoes, grizzly meat, and floating cabbage, followed by steamed sponge and lumpy custard are outdated, everything is still made on the school premises, or at least in a school kitchen, as some are still transported meals which are not as appetising as they have to stand in containers for quite a while. It is not the cook's or driver's fault, just the system.

We now do a wide selection of things the children like, such as pizzas, hot dogs, pasties, ploughmans, quiche, and such things as beefburgers, fish fingers and sausage. We also do roast meats, sometimes liver and of course fish in batter. I think it is essential that they have what I call a proper meal, e.g. a roast or liver, cottage pie, etc. We do a variety of vegetables and try to make them interesting but they usually go back to baked beans or peas, some do like cabbage though. It is not chips with everything, we have roast or boiled potatoes but no matter how hard we try to persuade them they would rather have none, so it's back to the fryer.

We do wholefoods and vegetarian meals, these are more popular with senior girls. We do a variety of sweets from dough buns to the old favourite, peppermint sauce with steamed chocolate sponge, which is one you often get asked for, another is yoghurt which is popular with all ages. It is very nice when you get requests, we usually try to oblige, even if it is only for two or three children; we do doughnuts and biscuits in all wierd and wonderful shapes and sizes, we also sell milk at break-time and lunch time and I believe the senior schools sell such things as pasties at mid-morning break.

Some schools are now having senior citizens in to lunch at a nominal cost. This serves several purposes: it gets the people out of their homes, gives them a hot meal when some wouldn't bother, and the children have their meals with them, taking it in turns to look after them. This gives them the chance to talk and look to the needs of the senior citizens, a thing that a lot of the children don't have the chance to do, being a service town, so many haven't grandparents in the city.

We have a garden plot in our grounds and have had broad beans, carrots, onions, parsnips and rhubarb from it for the meals; it has only been going for one year so will yield more as time goes on, and the children, with the help of a teacher and parents, get more interested in it. The fruit bushes are growing well, the produce couldn't be fresher as it is picked at eight-thirty and on the hatch at twelve noon.

These are my thoughts as a mother and a cook.

Andrew Larbalestier
Former student,
Devonport High
School for Boys

In this day and age there are, as I see it, two groups into which pupils fit; those who fail to understand why they are really at school, and those who succeed. To start with I shall deal with the former.

- Why do I really go to school? is a question which for so long has been met with the rather uninspiring reply: - You need qualifications for a job! This is so vague and indefinite that it inevitably leads to the attitude: - I'll worry about a job when I come to need one.

This basic failure to realise the necessity of education is in itself typical of the hoi polloi today. Many people in this category flit through the education system emerging without a single qualification to their name. And whose fault is it? Students tend to blame their teachers, who turn on the parents, who blame both. If only they worked together in a parent-student-teacher association the problem would surely be solved in many cases. But as it is, vast numbers of uneducated, and in some cases now ineducable, teenagers pour out of the schools.

Many are clueless as to what vocation they should pursue, and even more fail to realize that throughout the rest of their working lives they are repaying society for an education they never really received.*

So the problem boils down to - what should be taught in the schools and on what subjects, and to what extent should they learn at home?**

So then to the second group of pupils who are less typical of this age in their erudition. How do they 'gain the upper hand' in this system, which is likely to lead to a better standard of living? This advantage must surely begin at home in the very first years of life. But it can easily be wrecked at various points along the route to success by abject teachers, just as those from the former group can be uplifted sufficiently to 'see the light', as it were, and get something worthwhile out of education by the most motivated of teachers.

Therefore those who have the ability to use education to their own advantage understand that, when they work in the future, they pay back society for something they really did receive, and so derived that invaluable insight into life which the former group were deprived of. From this it would seem that there is balance between the parent and teacher inputs towards the output of an 'educated child'.

Of course by no means all teachers are able to act their part in this 'production' of an educated pupil. There are a host of distractions to prevent even the keenest teacher. As class numbers have swollen drastically in the past ten years, so the familiarity of the teacher with the students fades. Therefore a larger proportion of the first group work to a considerably lesser extent than they would have done in a smaller class especially geared to their needs, and similarly for those with flair for any particular subject at the other end of the scale.

Some say that such an isolation of the weak from the strong in mind is unfair to the former; to my mind it is unfair to both parties. So what is this seemingly unfair part in the advancement of the second pupil group that we may see at an early age how and why they could and should use the education system to better prepare themselves for life? Assuming that it can only be called unfair if the advantage is gained from a source open to everyone, at someone else's expense, if the advantage is gained from parents at home in the form of money or extra education or greater stimulation towards learning (as I think it is), then it cannot be classed as unfair.

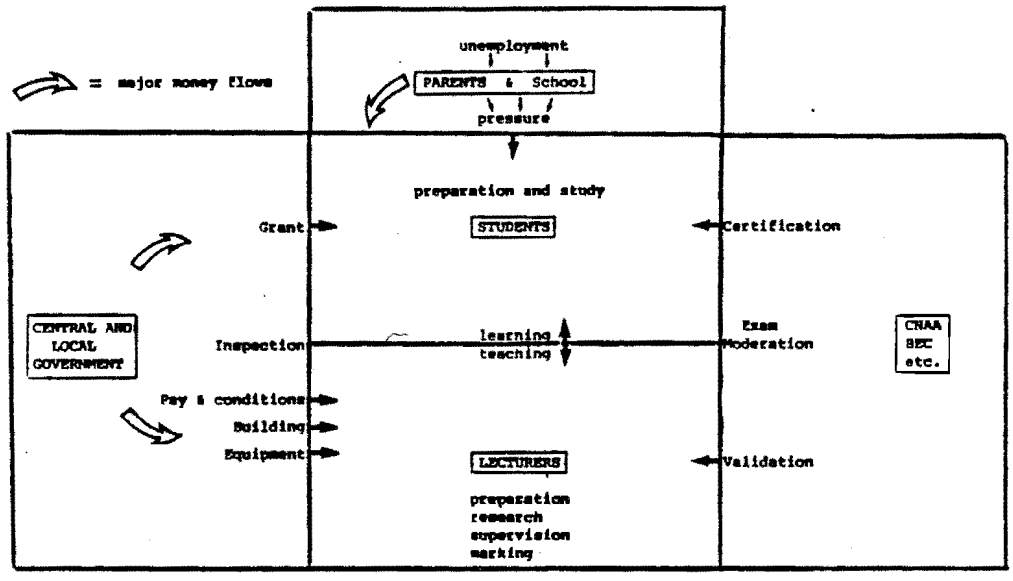
* The fact that they did not want it cannot be blamed on the students, or after all what does a typical student want to learn?

** Many parents obviously believe that some all-encompassing course exists entitled "How to cope with everything you will ever meet in life", which can be taught at the drop of a hat. On the other hand the teachers tend to assume parents have made their children 100% conversant with life, its morals and virtues, etc. and their own job should exclusively be restricted to the instruction of a child in academic work. If Socrates were alive today no doubt he could have helped us to sort out this pressing problem, but he is not, and indeed it seems we shall not.

G. Larbalestier
Senior Lecturer in Genetics
Plymouth Polytechnic

It is my feeling that the overall results of higher education are less satisfactory now than they were ten or twenty years ago. However, any attempt to pinpoint the cause meets with little success. If the cause is not simple and obvious then either the feeling is wrong or the cause is more complex.

Even a simple display of interactions shows a large number of contact points.



SOME FIRST ORDER INTERACTIONS IN POLYTECHNICS

Some First Order Interactions in Polytechnics

Any or all of these may contribute to the decline in overall satisfaction. It would seem that, of the five major areas shown, only that of the Validation Bodies might be thought of as still reasonably satisfied. The other parties - Students, Lecturers, Parents and Government - are far from satisfied.

The students have problems. Their income in the form of grants is reduced and there is increased pressure to become students. In many cases it is the only real alternative to unemployment. Once with us they are faced with larger classes and less individual help as colleges strive to improve the nominal efficiency shown by student-staff ratios. Teaching methods are altered to economise on staff and materials. Thus the students arrive with better A-level results but simply do not perform as well as they used to. This may not altogether be their fault. There is frequent interference with the teaching process.

The biologically inherited component of learning will not have changed over thousands of years. It seems doubtful that students learn in any FUNDAMENTALLY different way than they did - say in ancient Greece. It is no small wonder that if educationalists try new theories on our children the results are in some way inferior. At one time we suffered in higher education from the effects of New Maths. The students may have understood the fundamentals of mathematics but they could not cope with arithmetic, which is what our students in Biology needed for later studies. For some reason the current problem is English. Science students have rarely been great masters of English, but precision and unambiguity should be their aim and students who leave out verbs or misuse the most common words are poor material for advanced courses. Worst of all is the attitude and despondency of many incoming students. They want to be taught rather than to learn and have little regard for excellence. Care and application are not thought particularly important. This attitude is not deliberate and it demonstrates a deep and basic change in their approach. As a result, second best has become their standard and it takes a lot of effort to raise it again.

The problems facing staff are somewhat different. Teaching is a rewarding profession and unlike mechanical tasks is notoriously difficult to quantify. It is best performed by enthusiastic, skilled, and knowledgable lecturers. The rewards normally come not only from adequate salaries but also from the satisfaction of achieving teaching objectives. There is pleasure to be had when students understand the more difficult parts of the subject and acquire technical skills. In some ways teaching has something in common with acting. Good performances are difficult and take a lot of effort. Like actors, many staff are very sensitive about bad notices. The current trend to reduce the standing of the profession in the eye of the public, to label their efforts trivial, and assign a lower value to them than hitherto will result in a considerable loss of confidence, or, even worse, enthusiasm, and that most valuable characteristic is the one thing which can never be forcibly extracted.

Over the years little has changed in the methods of recruitment to higher education. Staff are still appointed as lecturers on their previous experience, for example of industry or as research scientists. As lecturers their main function is teaching, which is rarely a criterion used at appointment. In that sense then higher education is largely staffed by amateurs. Induction courses are a relatively recent feature of staff development and there is little use made of management training. This may well serve to reduce flexibility of approach to fresh problems.

The stress levels of the profession increase as simultaneous pressure is brought to bear from three sides. The Government's reduction of education funding increases workloads and depresses pay, building work, and equipment purchase. Greater student numbers and their attitude requires greater lecturer effort to maintain standards. Validation bodies appear to be in some sort of diabolical conspiracy to maximise trivial administrative paperwork and interference with normal teaching.

However, the most important interaction, and the one which is probably the basic cause of difficulties between the colleges and Government, is the way in which degree and diploma courses are organised and financed. The validation of courses is done by one organisation and the system paid for by another. The courses are validated by chartered universities, the Council for National Academic Awards, or similar bodies, none of which is directly responsible to Government. However, if the colleges accept students onto courses then the Government, through the local authorities, HAVE to pay fees and grants. Thus the Government which actually pays has little say in how the money is to be spent or even to some extent how much.

No doubt Government would like to restrict numbers, both of students and courses, to those it considers useful and efficient. Both useful and efficient would be defined by them. Such direct control of higher education and research would be self defeating in the long run. Colleges consider that academic freedom is of the utmost importance and can only be maintained by remaining independent and free from immediate predation by any central government with a short term aim of cost saving. Unable to effect any selective control over students and courses, this Government has chosen non-selective reduction of all higher education finance. For the most part the colleges affected lack the experience necessary to cope with this approach so that the long term effects will be damage both to essential sectors and to those which might, in times of great need, be temporarily pruned.

The paradox of higher education is that it is the easy-going attitude to method and research effort which has made it so powerful and efficient in the past. The richness of human resource presents as a haphazard and ill directed whole, but higher education depends on the enthusiasm, goodwill, and high morale of the staff to maintain the highest standards. When looked at from outside it might seem inefficient but in practice it is not. Imposing a rigid system or restricting staff to a few 'economic' teaching methods, regardless of subject, will almost certainly impoverish the system.

Jill Larbalestier
Practice Nurse,
health education

Learning is a process which starts from the moment of birth and continues until we draw our last breath. The early years are spent with parents in familiar surroundings, developing co-ordination, awareness, and achieving a sense of self-reliance.

The growing years are spent at school, learning individual capabilities and responsibilities. The ideas which are formulated during childhood are the basis of life-long attitudes, as are the images that children have of themselves. Many of these attitudes do not have to be taught. They are most often due to the observed responses to situations, or the behaviour and interaction with others. During these years acceptance by peer groups demands an allegiance which has a powerful effect on subsequent behaviour and expressed opinions. Much of this is learned in the playground, or outside school from family, friends, or television viewing.

The purpose of the education system is to provide the opportunity for, and to develop basic skills to, a variety of levels of understanding. It should provide children with a relevant balanced course developing both social and vocational skills and resulting in a sense of their own individual worth. Learning requires concentration and the ability to commit to memory facts and ideas. It particularly benefits the more able child and seeks to remedy the situation for the less able.

Teaching requires a fine blend of discipline, encouragement, and the ability to motivate children to learn. Major difficulties arise when pupils cannot recognise the relevance of a subject area and so can easily be distracted. An awareness of the aims of the course and the provision of a sequential curriculum for the whole spectrum of ability ranges would benefit both the teacher and the taught. Aims must be realistic and systems contain a degree of flexibility to match achievement, priorities being given to written English, communication, and adequacy in Arithmetic. Given such differences in aims, abilities and achievement levels, the task of educating appears monumental. The responsibility for teaching lies with the school and its teachers. This is clouded by the lack of respect for which the parents are responsible. The fall in standards which has resulted is the fault of both parties.

My particular interest, coming from a nursing background, is health awareness and the prevention of avoidable illness. Whatever the outcome of the search for employment by school leavers, the overall cost to the country will be less if the population is healthy.

Eating, drinking, smoking and sex are among the things which children see, appearing to give pleasure and reward in adult life. To leave children in a state of ignorance about the dangers of excessive indulgence is a cruel sentence.

The most likely place to learn factual information easily is the classroom whilst choice remains an option and before attitudes develop into prejudice. The opportunity to teach ANYONE WHO CANNOT READ anything relevant about their health and well- being after leaving school is almost ZERO.

Guessing about reproduction and sex is not good enough. Persuading 7, 8, or 9 year old children not to start smoking is easier than trying to help them give it up later. The cost is infinitesimal compared with the cost of treating lung cancer and all the other conditions made so common through smoking. In the same way, the cost of treating hypertension, obesity, and coronary heart disease is equally greater than the cost of the information that the food we all eat can contribute to them.

There is a wide variety of presentation material available for pupils in everyday learning situations - radio, television, video-tape, and the written word. These are especially well received if their appeal extends to pupils from different socio- economic backgrounds. It is, however, not necessarily advantageous to have outsiders presenting instruction material to children without making certain that it is suitable and relevant to their age group and abilities. Their own teachers know the breadths and depths of their understanding and can direct or harness enthusiasm into worthwhile projects.

There are many enemies, not only in the form of sophisticated advertising, vested interests, and Government revenue from taxes on tobacco and alcohol, but also the whole spectrum of parental and environmental stresses keeping attitudes locked in the past. Ideally the children should have the choice. Accepting proper instruction can not only enrich their lives but might reach beyond them into the community. Alternatively, they may be over-influenced by the attitudes of others and adopt the habits of those around them.

Increasing the school leaving age during the last 50 years should have allowed pupils the opportunity to develop their talents in the classroom rather than leaving school at the age of 14 to learn from experience. During this same time successful immunisation programmes have almost eradicated tuberculosis, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, and polio as causes of child mortality. Their place has been tragically taken by heart, lung, and digestive diseases, drug taking, and road traffic accidents. If children were given the choice they might prefer not

to inherit this legacy of avoidable disease.

It is totally irresponsible that these important years are wasted by over-emphasis on purely academic subjects when they could help develop the creativeness of the children and help them develop the ability to reason and think for themselves.

Michael Larbalestier
Student, Business,
Finance and Economics

Input - student; process - lectures; output - employable graduate. As a student of accounting and finance, this is how I have been taught to view the world ... as a collection of systems.

So I can take my small part in the world - the University of East Anglia - and apply a systems approach. Just one thing though: human beings are an incredibly diverse species. Because we can think and act independently, we can foul up the system. What happens when the people don't fit your system? Should you change the people? Or should you change your system?

If students do not go to lectures, they are missing out on the process stage of the system. They cannot go on to become the employable graduates expected as the output of the system.

If students are not going to lectures, there must be a fault in the system. Is there something wrong with the input? If so, the input should be filtered to reject those students causing the fault. Students refusing to attend lectures should be rejected from the system.

But hold on! That fault diagnosis was not very systematic. Only the input stage was considered as a possible fault source. What if the real fault lies in the processing stage of the system: the lectures and lecturers?

Impossible! It HAS to be the input. Just look at these so- called 'students'. They don't know the meaning of the word. They spend 80% of their time in the bars, they skip lectures, they don't bother to read their text books. They don't learn ... they've got far too much free time. They spend too much money ... they're always in debt.

A university lecturer proclaimed to the press that most degree courses could be fitted into 2 years instead of 3. Personally, I'm having enough trouble with my course, as it is. If it were a 2 year course, I don't think I'd have survived the first term. And besides, there's a great deal more to university than the work. It would be virtually impossible to turn round and deny students the right to the social and leisure activities they have now. Shortening the course length would simply reduce the degrees' value, the university's standing, and the graduates' employability. Such a suggestion is ludicrous.

This lecturer also said there were too many 'paid nannies', by which he meant the services available to students. The U.E.A. Counselling Service has a staff of half a dozen to cope with 3000+ students.

If you have a burst pipe you go to a plumber, not an electrician. Surely the best people to look after students' welfare problems are those trained and experienced with students' welfare problems. Doctors, psychiatrists and the clergy all have their places ... but counselling is often more appropriate to a situation.

Most students arrive at university with proven study ability. In order to gain a place on the course, you have to get specified 'A' level grades. So university students CAN study by virtue of their proven abilities as shown by G.C.E. certificates.

Most lecturers have no formal teaching qualifications. Many do not have adequate teaching skills, and therefore many lectures are of a poor standard. Perhaps if lecturers were encouraged to take an interest in developing teaching skills, then students might develop better attendance skills.

The systems view of the university that I applied in the first paragraph is incomplete. It has to be enlarged to encompass all factors that have a bearing on a student's performance at university. This includes such things as surroundings and architecture. After all, who wants to spend three years studying in buildings reminiscent of prisons or mutated multi-storey car parks? Parental influence, political climate, employers' attitudes, the administration, and emotional factors: all these must be taken into consideration.

When you get to the crux of the matter, it all comes down to providing what the student wants. The administrative staff, the academic staff and the domestic staff are all indirectly the employees of the students ... the students are the clients for these peoples' services.

If you went to a butcher's wanting some sausages and were offered the chance of some bacon in 6 weeks' time, you would try elsewhere. Universities could perhaps be a little more helpful in meeting the needs of their clients.

It's a popular joke among lecturers that the university would function far more smoothly without the students. The truth is that without the students the university ceases to be.

Miss Jackie Lavender
Former student
B.A. Social Policy
Plymouth Polytechnic

My Education -> My education hasn't evolved, for me, through the traditional expectations, i.e. through formal lessons, with 1 teacher + 30 young people. Although I learnt some 'facts' that way (e.g. how coffee is produced, what an owl pellet is, what amino acids are) most of my education has taken place outside the classroom, which at worst was an insidious prison, a boredom that stole precious time from me, at best, a place to cite anarchy, to break rule + be a bitch.

Formal State Education:- devalued my experiences
limited my relevance
tried to shut me up/shut me out
wasted my time
was myopic
- control
- order
- stifling
- systems
- lines
- uniform
- assembly
- lines
- uniform
- assembly
- prayers
- lessons
- hymns
- times
- timetables
- routine
- grey
- grey knickers
- lacrosse
- establishment
- To establish
- choke
- claustrophobic
- phobias
- stifle
- regress
- steal - theft -> stole from me -> unquestioned expropriation of my time - my life -> bitterness/revenge
- obeyance -> punishment for disobeyance -> detention/legalised, subtle imprisonment
- boredom
- dull, grey

Good bits of formal Education for me:-
1. Reading Wilfred Owen

Effect on my world view -> shut me up -> opened me out?
-> stunted my growth
-> limited me/expanded me?
|
grey depression
|
suicide attempts ->

RITUALS -> My friend and I,

pathos -> both stifled and very depressed by the girls' grammar school, went through various rituals, centred on selfdestruct. We self-motivated -> with glass, or various clean objects at 1st. Or through taking drugs - we were taken from school to hospital for this once, thought we'd come back heroes, but we were sent to Coventry for letting the school down. Later, the rituals became more complex. We twisted coca-cola cans in half, + stuck the torn edges into the earth - often into the neatly trimmed cricket pitch of the boys' Grammar School. Days later, we'd unearth the torn cans, + slowly, painfully self mutilate - often our arms. Then we would rub dirt, chewed acorns + other things into the torn skin. I remember also that we powdered glass, each took the glass home, made it into cheese sandwiches, + at school, next day, we ate the powdered glass + cheese sandwiches.

Survival mechanisms:- skiving
personalising uniform (not wearing grey knickers, no tie, make-up, high heels,
etc.)
smoking - done often in ritual,
drugs - gathering around a certain tree
drink - in the back of the school
sex - grounds
disruptions
self abuse
self mutilation

A.R. le Fleming
County Music Adviser
for Devon; Freelance
Composer, Conductor
and Pianist

I believe that music can add an extra dimension to peoples' lives and that my primary function as a music adviser is to encourage and provide appropriate means of entry to allcomers. It ought to be among the basic aims of each school to allow pupils extended opportunities of coming to terms with the expressive power of music. A school without a music department has often been described as a school without a soul.

Music education in England is, typically, a mixture of enterprise and pedantry, of convictions and insights diluted by the bureaucratic process and by inadequate funding. On the one hand, this country's widespread youth orchestra movement produces the best up-and-coming instrumentalists in the world; on the other, a recurring short-sightedness with regard to curriculum provision and planning exacerbates the rift in peoples' minds between what happens in and outside the classroom. The charge of elitism festers over our musical activity. Stemming from an unevenness of opportunity arising from inadequate money and resources, its roots may be traced back to the indigenous and historical hesitancy which lies behind this nation's interpretation of the value of the arts, and also in its persistence in perceiving talent in mythological terms.

Thus, parents seeking outside instrumental help unwittingly generate political and class-conscious overtones. Politicians and even professional educators become confused, wearing one hat when formulating policies and another sitting up front at Youth Orchestra concerts.

Disturbing and seemingly unnecessary as this underlying vision of two conflicting musical cultures is, things aren't all bad. The classroom revolution of the sixties which resulted in the universal adoption of a policy of pupil participation in creative as well as recreative pursuits has meant that more or less all children have gained the opportunity to experience active, thoughtful music-making. More recent moves to integrate instrumental and classroom music-making are helping to close the culture gap and extend the influence of the peripatetic music teacher.

The danger in all this is the widening gulf between what I might best describe as real and educational music - a gulf well sustained by quangos and publishers. Aesthetic evaluation and the pursuit of proper standards are too frequently jettisoned in well-meaning but ill-judged attempts to throw everyone into a musical get-together. What we are after, of course, is the right balance between this kind of practice and what happened in the supposedly 'bad old days', when pupils sat passively in rows being advised about the merits of Beethoven, etc.

So forceful was the initial swing away from teaching of this nature that confusion remains about the place of music of the past in curriculum education. Among the trendies are those who speak deprecatingly in terms of "the received tradition" and react scathingly to the idea of reference to the past. Again, it's a question of achieving the balance, of course, but if I start referring to Bach and Mozart in these jargonised terms I shall know it's time to pack it in and go and run a country post-office or whatever.

In my portrait I am holding a score by Mozart, who is the central inspiration in my life. The other work is John Paynter's 'Sound and Silence', which is generally acknowledged to be the key breakthrough in projecting a creative approach to both initial steps in music-making and also towards academic study.

In reply to a question about the art of composition, Elgar once said, "Music is all around us. What I do is to help myself to what I want." This seems a good lead for us to follow and encourage in others, whether as practical musicians or else as listeners. It would be no mean achievement if we were to end up merely providing discriminating listeners. But those wishing for more active participation could well heed another famous Elgar quote about the art of music involving 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration.

Education for Conservation of the Environment

John F. W. Leonard
Head Teacher, Barne
Barton Primary School

The most important aspect of the education of children in the immediate future lies in conservation. The space ship which we call the world carries finite resources necessary for the continued survival of all life.

Until the recent past, education has been seen as the provision of information, enabling children to progress to adulthood being able to communicate, qualify, train and work. The Three 'R's, reading, writing and arithmetic, were given undue emphasis to achieve this end.

Since the end of the Second World War, however, the ever- widening curriculum has enabled children to become more enlightened, more discerning and more able to appreciate their control over their environment and life style.

It is my contention that the time is now ripe to tap this increasing awareness and direct it towards strategy of conservation.

Environmental education should be the main platform of all endeavour, commencing in the primary sector. The natural tendency of primary age children to care for the things around them must be encouraged. At the moment, our worldwide environment is being destroyed because human beings do not recognise that it is in their best interest not to damage it. "Information in all education programmes should provide children with the opportunity to understand the social, political, economic and ecological factors involved in human use of the environment." This is a quote from the U.K. Response to the World Conservation Strategy docu- ment published in 1983. I fear that the recommendations in this response will be ignored at our peril. Devon is one of the few counties which has set up a Conservation Forum on which is represented key organisations and agencies. Its meetings are worthwhile and positive. I attend the meetings as a representative of the National Union of Teachers and report back to the Devon County Teachers' Association Council.

Continued conservation can only be assured if education in, about and for the environment is regarded as the most important aspect of work in our schools. To this end, maximum effort is called for from our politicians and administrators.

Today's children and those yet unborn must be given the opportunity and expertise to ensure that their world remains a pleasant and hospitable place in which to live.

Sue Leonard
Senior Mistress,
Long Cause School

After working with educationally subnormal children for fifteen years and having seen some of my pupils settled and doing well for themselves, I wonder if my pupils over the next fifteen years will be so fortunate. Of course, not every pupil has been able to find a job to his liking; in fact, there are a few who have never worked. Others have never been out of work.

Gone are the days when one was able to stand in front of a group and say, "When you get a job this is what you will have to do ..."; now it is, "If you are fortunate enough to get a job ..."

The obvious question could be, where, as educationalists, do we go from here? How many of my school-leavers this year are going to find full-time employment? So far, the answer to that is, one out of twelve. What about the other eleven, what can be done for them? If time is spent teaching these youngsters about various activities that they can follow after they have left school, we are at fault, in the eyes of the parents, for not spending enough time on the three 'R's. If we teach them about the world of work, respect for employers, how to sort out a pay packet, what is 'clocking in', what to do if you are unable to go to work through illness, how to conduct yourself at work; then we are raising the hopes of a generation who may well never earn a pay packet.

At the present time all youngsters have the opportunity to join the Youth Training Scheme. They can take a course in any area they are interested in, if they can find a course in that area which caters for their needs. The most popular areas for my leavers are catering and care for children. Most of these courses are Mode A courses which includes gaining some qualifications such as City and Guilds, which leaves my group out in the cold. They can join the Pathfinder course, which is at the right intellectual level. I am now eagerly waiting to hear how many of our past pupils have found full-time employment from their Pathfinder course, or if they have become another unemployment statistic with little hope of finding any suitable employment.

Still we remain cheerful, still we hold mock interviews with local businessmen, still we live in hope and try to instil this hope into our pupils. We are told there is work - you just have to find it.

Where also, is education going in these days of little hope? Is it looking forward to the days of enforced, increased leisure? Is it catering for the needs of young people who leave school at sixteen, join a Y.T.S. course until they are seventeen and then join the hordes of people already at home? Is education doing anything for those at work to help them understand the plight of those people not working?

Education?

Paul Adrian Lester
Former Pupil,
Plymouth College

I was educated at Plymouth College which is a public school. The younger teachers there weren't too bad apart from the odd one. But the older ones were far too old-fashioned and set in their ways for this age. They seemed to favour corporal punishment a lot, some more than others. I was beaten with a cane several times at school, once for just having a play fight with a friend. The only time it had any effect on me was when I was beaten in front of the class which humiliated me because I couldn't take it. Most of the time when someone was beaten he was looked upon as a hero by the other students.

Detentions took place on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons which we had off for sport. They were only supposed to be an hour long but as they didn't start until 2 o'clock and school finished at 12.45 I don't think it was fair for people who lived quite a distance away and didn't have time to go home for dinner, and so they were stuck around school for ages.

I didn't appreciate the way the school was geared up for people to leave school after they had taken 'A' levels, and those who left after 'O' levels were given next to no help in finding a career. I was just given a couple of leaflets on farming and that was it, then goodbye and good luck.

I remember a time when a boy was paraded around the classrooms for spitting, with the teacher telling us of his punishment (a caning), so as to put us off. A while later a boy brought an air pistol into school and shot someone in the head. We heard this through the grapevine but he was never taken around the classrooms, and nothing was said about it in assembly. I think he was put in detention, and I'm almost certain he wasn't suspended and definitely not expelled, because I spoke to him a short while later.

It is an all-boys' school apart from a few sixth form girls, which unless we were very outgoing and not at all shy, it made it very difficult to get on with the other sex. I wasn't very shy but I still found it difficult to communicate with girls.

The school was quite military and from the fourth year upwards we had to go into one of the cadet forces: the army, navy or air force. I didn't think this was fair if you didn't believe in fighting.

The actual teaching wasn't too bad apart from a few teachers. There was one particular French teacher whose way of teaching was stupid. He would ask a boy a question, and if he didn't know it he wouldn't pass it on to another boy even if he had his hand up; the teacher would keep asking the boy who didn't know it over and over again. He would also make stupid faces and remarks at him, if by the end of the lesson he still didn't know (no-one else would tell him the answer because the lesson would carry on once he knew), the boy would be made to write the answer out 50 times by the next day.

When I was in the first year we had to wear caps which I found very humiliating as we had to wear them out of school, which made us good targets for having the piss taken. If we were caught not wearing a cap, we were put in detention and eventually caned if we carried on doing so.

I didn't like going to school on Saturdays. We had Wednesday afternoons off, but having Saturday school meant that Sunday was the only full day off.

Lessons never bothered me much because if I didn't like a particular subject I would sit at the back and daydream. It meant getting a rollicking either frequently or infrequently, depending on the teacher, for not listening but that didn't bother me.

I don't like education as a whole because I can't take discipline. Education is supposed to make you independent but how the hell does it make you independent if you're being told what to do all the time? I suppose that's fine if you want to join the army when you leave school, but what about those who want to make it on their own? They look for a job for a while and then give up because they can't put themselves across to the interviewer properly because they weren't taught how to, at school.

Roy Levack
Senior Lecturer in
Mechanical and
Production Engineering,
College of Further
Education

As a Lecturer employed in the field of Further Education, I would say that my views on education are likely to be prejudiced to some extent in that all my teaching has been directed towards and influenced by vocational considerations. I will go further than that, and say that since I am a Mechanical/Production Engineer, I am no doubt influenced in my outlook by my technological background.

I see education as being a provision for life in general; a provision that should enrich and enhance one's enjoyment of life, whilst at the same time providing a framework upon which the need to make a contribution to society at large may be placed. This need to make a contribution to society is crucial, even though the individual may not personally perceive it.

We are, I believe, living through an age when it is becoming increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for a very large section of the population of Great Britain to fulfil this need. The unfortunate section I refer to is the unemployed. Most of the unemployed, but particularly the young, must be smarting under a sense of bitterness and resentment towards our society, which has failed to provide the means by which their need to contribute, and hence feel to really belong, can be met.

Not too many years ago not, one expected, and by one, I mean practically everyone, expected to follow some pattern of life whereby gainful employment in industry, commerce, education, etc. followed a period of education. This period might, or might not, have included a further or higher education element; the expectation of employment following the education period was implicit in the system. There was a truism very often repeated to the young: "Study hard, get your qualifications and you will get a better job." Now, even a degree is no guarantee of a job at all, let alone a better one. It would seem from this that I hold the view that only by having a conventional job can a person achieve the fulfilment to which I feel they should be entitled. This is not the case; many people choose to do their own thing, not as a job in the conventional sense, but for the love of it. Participating in music, dance or other performing arts, using or developing talents in other art forms, such as writing, drawing, painting, sculpting, etc. are examples of where contributions to society can be made and fulfilment achieved without resource to the accepted job pattern.

The important element, as I see it, is really choice. Few of the unemployed have chosen to be so; it has been inflicted upon them and our education system has, as yet, been unable to provide an education that will enable the vast pool of the unemployed to cope adequately with their lack of employment prospects, nor do I see any signs that the situation is likely to change. Very sadly, a large unemployed pool is to be the norm for a long while yet, as it would never suit a government of the present hue to have full employment, for very obvious reasons. The Education Reform Bill will not in any way ease the situation. Amongst its many faults, it suffers from the classic doctrinal philosophy of this present government, in that it will lead to a dual system in which the wealthy will be able to buy a better education for their children, and the children of those parents unemployed or on lower incomes will have to make do with a deteriorating, underfunded local authority system after the "haves" have creamed off the best schools in the system by opting out from the local authority control. Like the National Health Service, the education system will offer an exceptionally good service for those willing and able to pay and a much inferior service for the remainder.

The inadequate funding of education provision by the Local Education Authority has resulted in a lack of resources and a deterioration in the fabric of our colleges; this has been noted in reports from H.M.I. Britain is a manufacturing nation; it requires a strong, flourishing manufacturing industry in order to survive in the very competitive world market place. This industry requires a competent and flexible workforce, able to respond to the rapidly changing nature of modern technology. The provision of adequate, scientific, technological and commercial education to meet the needs of industry and commerce is, I feel, essential, yet this must not preclude the provision for education in the fields of the arts and other areas that make their greatest contribution to society in cultural terms. The system most likely to be able to meet these requirements, is a tertiary system with a single coherent approach, aimed at maximising access and progression. The rationalisation of resources brought about by the adoption of this system would not be the least benefit.

The greatly improved Youth Training Scheme does not, in many cases, provide good "off the job" training nor education, and it is wrong that many young people have to make the choice between a YTS scheme with its financial inducement, or a course in Further Education where only a discretionary grant might apply. A choice based on financial allowances rather than educational considerations is not likely to be the most sound. The City Technology colleges will not provide a solution; they will, in fact, further fragment the educational provision and again tend to be divisive.

Until society provides something of value for all young people to be able to do after their period of full

time education has finished, and this carries suitable remuneration, then I am afraid thatthere will be a pool of young people disillusioned and resentful, feeling that education is a waste of time. This attitude is more likely to be held by those who do not achieve academic success as measured conventionally by examination results. Is their attitude unreasonable? Perhaps we should reeducate the politicians!

Ingres Louisa Libby
Former Student,
Plymouth Polytechnic

June 1985. I await patiently for my 'A' level results. I feel much the same as I did whilst waiting for my 11 plus marks. For seven years I haved revised for exams and tests, some results good - others bad. Each exam has tried my patience, nerves and determination - each time revision has provoked tiredness, moodi- ness and unhappiness.

I have awoken each morning with the radio alarm, "adorned" myself with the school uniform and travelled to the "building" in order to respond to shrill bells throughout the day. The school rules were pumped into me and the drug - homework - was heavy in dose. At an early age I had been conducted to open and close doors for teachers and to stand to attention each time one of them entered the room. Whilst tolerating insults such as "snob" from alien school kids, my grey knee socks, boater and grey tunic flung aside, myself revealed: I found a boyfriend. I rushed my homework and began to hate the education system for stealing so much of my time. At this time I was having lessons on "reproduction" in biology lessons. We drew endless diagrams which we had to learn by heart for tests and whereas reproduction was new and interesting to us in the beginning, it soon became boring to discuss and the topic became stale and flat. However although they had destroyed interest in yet another topic, outside of school I was learning about life for myself.

> "Poor child ... she was as lonely in her trouble as if she had been the only child in the civilised world of that day who had come out of school-life with a soul untrained for inevitable struggles."

Option picking was a mighty hard task - as we could hardly make our own choices. Subjects had been arranged in columns from which we could only pick one - so hard luck if we wanted two subjects in the same column. If there were not enough teachers a child was automatically shifted. I remember countless parents' evenings, each time hearing the same comments. Reports were similar; I knew even before the envelope was opened the exact words of a whole page consisting of either " Pleasing effort" or "Disappointing exam result". Dedicated teachers were easy to find; the writing was small, neat and filled the page - there were not many. Most irritating was a statement which contradicted my own personality. How can teachers ever know a pupil in an environment governed by rules and conformity?

In my fourth year the school became comprehensive and talk about new life - it was more like an increased hell. I understood that this was to be the beginning of a serious term; the change did not help for as well as adapting ourselves to work "steadily", we had to accept new teachers and pupils. I cannot admit that the school improved as we were told it would. Teachers had been obliged to teach subjects in which they were not specialised, hence driving them away from the school.

It is now June, 1986, and once again I find myself waiting for 'A' level results. I left school and for the last year have attended college as a part-time student. Who knows what the slip of paper will reveal this year? I have played the game like everyone else and am determined that I will not be eliminated. Most students have been labelled "failure" at least once:

> "Today I look at him shattered and destroyed wondering which way to turn after being expelled from school during his final year of 'A' levels."

All I can say is that I hate what the education system has done to me. To be myself and to be happy if only ... I have appreciated the chance to participate in this exhibition so that I may be seen as myself. Thank you, Robert Lenkiewicz.

Laurie Libby
Former Head Girl,
Notre Dame Comprehensive

As far as education is concerned, I can only talk from my own experencce in a Grammar/Comprehensive School.

I am Head Girl at Notre Dame Comprehensive School for Girls and also attended the Grammar school for a year before it turned comprehensive.

I have very good memories of school life at a High School. Being on an all girls site we had no pressure on us as far as boys were concerned. There was little bullying and I can remember a friendly atmosphere. The Grammar School system suited us fairly well because we were academic. The atmosphere changed, however, when the school turned comprehensive. From my experience, in a comprehensive school, it is very easy to see that the education system is only profitable for the minority who are academic. There is little enjoyment in school for those who are more practically-minded. They are forced to perform tasks that they simply cannot cope with and are labelled 'failures' when they are unable to succeed like the 'bright sparks'. It makes sense that after a while these pupils give up trying and start quoting the old cliche time and time again, "I hate school, it's boring." They rebel and make life difficult for everybody else. The idea of being taught at a desk in a classroom is a daunting thought and often seems pointless when there is so much to be learnt outside.

It seems to me that too much emphasis is put on examinations. Pupils who are not academically minded do not have much chance to prove their value although we all have talents! We study for two years to sit a ludicrously short examination which has bearing on our career and hence the rest of our lives. To cap it all, subjects studied at school are not worthwhile when faced with the problem of unemployment. Hopefully the new GCSE system will rectify these problems.

Some of the teachers, although very highly qualified, are just not suited to teaching and this is unfair on the pupils. They soon lose interest when a teacher uses highly complex words. Perhaps more time should be spent training the teachers. At the same time, there is a desperate shortage of money. I am studying English 'A' level and I have already been expected to buy some of the books I need for study.

Although Notre Dame is an all-girls' school, recently sixth form boys have been coming up to our site for lessons. The girls, although fairly old, act as if they have never seen boys before, running after them desperately down the corridor. It is a hilarious sight but pitiful at the same time. Something as natural as a boy-girl relationship is turned into a pathetic Mills and Boon Romance.

I personally have gained a fair amount from the present education system, because I have been able to cope with the demands made. However, I have come across many unhappy children in school. The lower school classes are large and little time is given to each individual. There are many improvements which need to be made.

Lydia Libby
Pupil, Notre Dame
Comprehensive School

I personally feel that there are some "fors" and "againsts" the present secondary education. I am quite happy because being near the school there is not any trouble for me to get there, some of my friends travel a very long way. The reason for this is that there might not be enough small schools around the city. It seems to me, that there are too many pupils at my school, there are too many in each class which means that there is less possible contact with the tutor.

I am personally interested in creative work and art. Why can't a system start where you can work and widen your knowledge in the subject you are good at, and spend less time in the subject you are poor at?

As for homework, I definitely do not agree. With it, the reason being is that we do five hours work in school, and when we get home we want to relax. You soon get tired and put off work if you have to sit down only a few hours after you have come home from school, and put your mind to your work again, knowing that you have to start again the next day.

I also do not agree with school uniform. I think that the pupils would work much better and happier if they were wearing clothing in which they could be comfortable.

In my school I am glad to say that we do not have corporal punishment because I think this would only make the pupil rebel against the school.

Education

John C. Light
Former Head, Ford School
Present Head, Hackney
Free and Parochial
Secondary School

I write as Head of Ford Secondary School, a position I am pleased and proud to hold.

Ford School is situated in Auckland Road, off Wolseley Road, and takes pupils from North Prospect, Keyham and Ford. We have approximately 450 on roll and a staff of 24.8.

I became Head at Ford in April, 1982, following a career which started in 1962 and having served in secondary moderns, 1962-67, and comprehensive schools, 1967-82.

My views are based on the role Ford plays in education in Plymouth, not only in the present, but the past and future, and are a personal statement. They are not necessarily the views of the County's Officers or the School Governors.

"I BELIEVE THERE IS NO LIMIT TO THAT WHICH CHILDREN CAN ACHIEVE."

Education should therefore be a process which sets no limits. Children should be encouraged and stimulated to be constantly stretching for and reaching new horizons.

I will not have in my school the attitude "They are only ...". "What can you expect from ...", "There is no point in ..."

(happily I do not get it!)

To this end children should work in as bright and lively surroundings as possible and their tasks should be interesting and the encouragement must be constant.

In addition there must be a wide variety of contexts: social, cultural and sporting, for the pupils to partake. Education is not confined to the classroom and this is all part of widening the pupils' experiences and extending their horizons.

For the above conditions to exist, we need to look at schools themselves, and in Devon I find a contrast. The county area possesses such schools, Tavistock, Ivybridge, Totnes, and in fact all the Devon towns possess lively, evolving comprehensive schools that are to everyone's credit. Plymouth is different.

The system within the City can at best be described as MIXED, for within the City boundaries there are grammar schools, comprehensives and secondary moderns. Certainly the comprehensives being developed in Southway, Estover, Eggbuckland and Lipson are going to be fine schools, and certainly there is a plan before Sir Keith Joseph to reorganise West Plymouth, but it is all too late.

For too long in Plymouth, and in West Plymouth in particular, pupils have been denied the educational opportunities and experiences they could obtain elsewhere in the county.

Small, ill equipped secondary moderns, short of basic facilities and unable to staff a valid curriculum, have been the pattern for too long in much of this City. Valiant efforts by dedicated staff have been unable to overcome these basic handicaps. This means that far too many of our young people have been denied the environment in which to develop and use their abilities to the full.

I remember my interview for Ford. Seven of us appeared - identi-kit candidates from up-country comprehensive schools. Five withdrew on seeing what was a surprise for us all. I stayed, encouraged by the prospect of two extra staff and new Science laboratories, but why did Ford have to wait that long for basic facilities? It was, after all, 1982!

We were able to broaden the curriculum by introducing French, Computer Studies, Physics, Outdoor Pursuits and Sports Science, and have been able to increase the range of our examinations, but all this could have been done before - many years before.

West Plymouth is still without a comprehensive school. Children can gain entry to one by travelling, but not all parents see the wisdom or need for this.

We do our best for our pupils, but are hampered by no on- site playing fields. We did use the ones at Trelawny School - they are now built on. The fields at North Down are uneven, unsuitable for athletes, and have no changing rooms.

Our solitary gymnasium is also the Assembly Hall and Drama area. Falling rolls have meant staff cuts and the struggle to maintain an adequate curriculum is an intense one.

It cannot be stressed too strongly the unfair handicaps that West Plymouth children suffer. For that reason I welcome the plan now awaiting ministry decisions. It will mean that my school, and therefore my job, will vanish, but it will go some way towards alleviating the inequality of opportunity that currently exists.

It is, of course, too late. One hears horror stories of debate and rejection of seventeen other plans. It says little for our city fathers and their professional advisors that the years of debate were so unproductive and

harming to our young people.

The current administrators are to be congratulated for grasping the nettle. I hope the Ministry do not discover flaws in the plan, and am more worried by some school Governors' and Councillors' fears that the scheme is to be done on the cheap. Inequality of opportunity has for too long existed in this city and must be eradicated.

By the end of the decade I would like to think that all Plymouth children have the same opportunities, and the North Prospect, St. Budeaux, Ford, Keyham, Stoke and Devonport areas are not penalized as they are now.

Education is a life enhancing experience, helping us to extend our range and choice of activities, whether they be work or leisure, and it is only fair that the best of chances are available to all.

Perhaps the planned comprehensives at Penlee, Kings Tamerton, Devonport and Burrington can make this possible. It is the duty of all those concerned with education in this city to see that they do.

A Personal Credo in Relation to Education

I BELIEVE ... in individual differences, both as a fact of human existence and as a reason for human existence. Thus, each human being is a unique product of heredity and of both pre-natal and post-natal environment. It follows that:

i) neither social nor genetic engineering in isolation can provide equal educational opportunity.

ii) my apprehension for the future is that recent advances in genetic engineering, coupled with a totalitarian policy of social engineering aimed at rearing children in standardised institutions, could reach an approxim- ation of a klone society. Then indeed there would be equal opportunity but at a level determined by a super klone?

I BELIEVE ... that, within the current UK political system, equal opportunity in education is a "philosopher's stone", avowedly sought after but impractical to achieve.

I BELIEVE ... that we should seek to meet the differing needs of children through differential resources, different curriculum, and different institutional (and non-institutional) contexts for learning.

I BELIEVE ... that educationists (from classroom teachers to Secretaries of State) have put considerable effort over many years into attempts to "improve" the education offered to UK youngsters, and that this has been against a backdrop of an under-resourcing and a low national status for the educational system. Unfortunately the outcomes have not been commensurate with the effort: we witness, for example, a multiplicity of formats for the organisation of education that is related merely to geographical habitat rather than to the individual needs of children, and for a significant proportion of older pupils a curriculum that lacks relevance both to their present and to their future.

I BELIEVE ... that two hurdles in the path of efficient education are:

i) the under-utilisation of parents in the learning process,

ii) the imposition by society on the education system, and on teachers, of responsibilities for a range of social, care and control functions, which might be more effectively discharged in other contexts or by other professionals working within school contexts, and which have certainly not been recognised properly in terms of additional resourcing.

I BELIEVE ... in the resilience of children and young people and that, within broad limits, they will adapt to - and overcome the obstacles imposed by - our perennial well-meaning attempts to provide a "better" way of transmitting our culture, our knowledge, our skills, within a context of developing "individual potential" and "social accountability".

***

It follows from the personal beliefs stated above that:
(select not more than seven of the following propositios and indicate your choice(s) with a cross. Time allowed for this question is a full adult life span.)

1. This man is a right wing reactionary.

2. This man is a left wing radical.

3. He is an angry young man.

4. He is an angry old man.

5. He is a starry eyed optimist.

6. He is clinically depressed.

7. After seventeen years as a pupil/student client of the educational system in England and Scotland, and more than twenty-five years as a practitioner within the system, this man's beliefs on the macro-strategies of education are as blinkered or as clear sighted as the conditioned attitudes of you, the reader, dictate.

In a garden, near Dipylon

Dr Jim Little
Senior lecturer in
Religious Studies,
College of St Mark
and St John

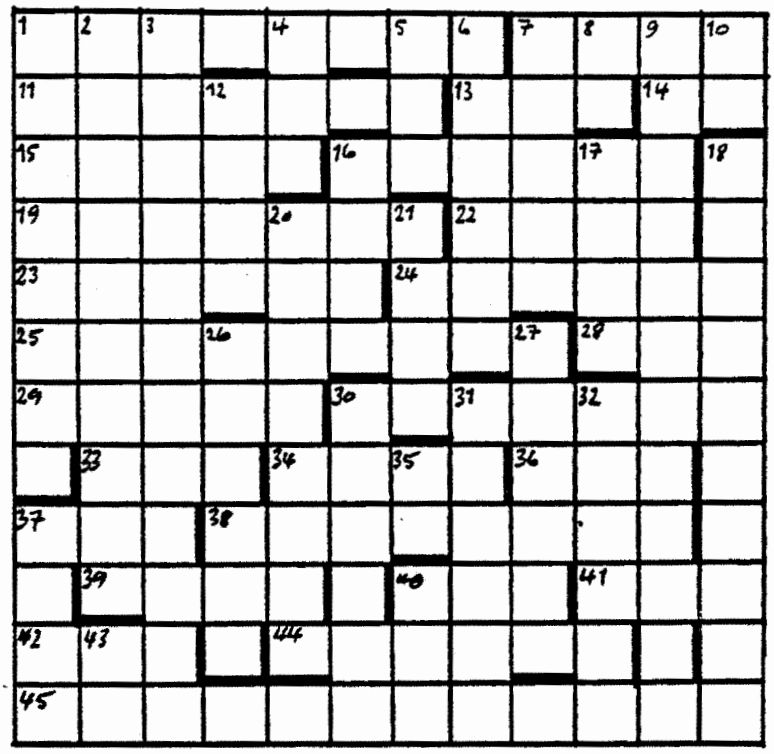
The honeyed words upon the 'phone:
"So sorry to hear you've flu.
A few words please?
On education ...
with reservations, if you wish."

"O God! Not another task!
Not me!
with flu,
or overwork,
or overage ...
It's all been said before ...
probably."

Come, virus, speak, et alii:
"For in much wisdom is much vexation,
and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow ...
And I said to myself that this also is vanity ...
I have seen the business that God has given
to the sons of men to be busy with:
He has made everything beautiful in its time;
also he has put eternity into man's mind,
yet so that he cannot find out
what God has done from the beginning to the end ...
Of making many books there is no end,
and much study is a weariness of the flesh."

But then I hear that voice again:
"a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance ..."

And with Koheleth I too turned and laughed;
I danced with words, and words with me.
And I said to myself that this also is
education ...



Prize: the satisfaction of finding your own solution ...

ACROSS

1. (with 1 down)
At Dotheboys Hall he "learnt that bottiney means a know-plants." (8,8)

7. Milligan, among others, could either do it (2,2) or be it (4)

11. State by units (7)

13. A commanding number? (3)

14. Iron symbol (2)

15. It can float a ship, or be one in a desert (5)

16. Sapphic or Spenserian (6)

19. For colds and tears (7)

22. Sound a Scots binger might make? (4)

23. I'll net this stone over the door (6)

24. A certain estate? (6)

25. Medium substance upsets Tom's place (9)

28. Curved car (3)

29. Italian child (5)

DOWN

1. See 1 across

2. Emphasized - in print l e d g e o f (10)

3. Tough socializers? (6,6)

4. Could be paint or field (3)

5. Briefly, at the age of (3)

6. They could be general or united (6)

7. Almond-topped fruit cake (5)

8. Water is, if running (2)

9. See 32 down.

10. Neon sign? (2)

12. Face to face with hounds? (4)

16. Could be hard or soft (4)

17. Defending Dreyfus, he said, "J'accuse!"(4)

30. I cry to all and get poetic (7)

33. Soviet car (3)

34. Yorkshire child? (4)

36. A brief moment of champagne? (3)

37. This kitten can also appeal (3)

38. Healing agent gets mention with this shirt (8)

39. Animals' studies? (4)

40,42 Sounds like Cockney approval! (3,3)

41. As a horn or a pot it's still inferior (3)

42. See 40 across

44. Thomas Da Quincey considered it one of the "fine arts", but Hamlet's uncle thought it "most foul" (6)

45. Falsely arrest his dapper men? (12)

18. Laundered (3,7)

20. Most pine for relatively-favoured jobs(8)

21. Rontgen found it (1, 3)

26. Almost square (6)

27. No tricks! (6)

30. Could be soldiers or suspects (4,2)

31. Reamed reconstituted! (6)

32,9 Magnetic person!. (6,2,10)

35. A short knight? (2)

37. Check family branch? (4)

40. It's human to do it 3)

43. Type of South American sloth (2)

Education

Simon Robert Lobb
Former pupil,
Public High School
for Boys

Since schools started way back in the past, children have hated it, be it the service military style of Public schools, or the boredom of an ordinary comprehensive system. As for me I've experienced both styles of education.

Firstly, came the Public school. This I did enjoy, although there was an undoubted feeling of discipline in the air, almost a fear, keeping us from misbehaving, it made people become friends with each other more easily, but also very loyal to one another. The teachers were strict, giving out corporal punishment to one after slack work. At no matter what type of school it is, I think this should not be administered. Many a time friends had hoped to receive the 'STRAP' rather than stay behind after the school had closed to write some silly little explanation as to why they were sitting there. The only time physical punishment will work is when used upon a 1st year student. Although the sound of the Public school seems bad, people came out with a good education and a certain arrogance, both of which I think are needed more than ever in today's society.

After three years, and some hard work, my school turned comprehensive. It was a sad time for us all, lost was everything. We left the great old building with its grounds and went to a structural monstrosity. Friends became divided, and a hatred which had always been withint the pupils began to show. Vandalism, fighting and a carefree attitude came about as if to blame the teachers. The teachers weren't unaffected, they became slack and the whole education of many pupils went steadily downhill. I think it's just depressing, although I know there is no real solution. Public schools should hever have been wiped out like they have.

Labelling -
the curse of education

Mr Anthony Loosmore
Headmaster,
Estover School

Education is bedevilled by the use of largely subjective labelling. The following two descriptions, not untypical, illustrate my point.

Child 'A'
A bright, hardworking, enthusiastic academic girl of supportive middle class parents, who has had the benefit of a dedicated, committed, well qualified young staff in a modern, well equipped, traditional, academically orientated rural school.

Child 'B'
A disinterested, lazy, non-academic boy of unsupportive working class parents who has been taught by a group of lax, trendy, unkempt teachers in an old, poorly equipped, inner city school using 'progressive' methods.

With the possible exception of the age of the school, all the other judgements used in these assessments of these pupils, labels, are subjective and reflect the prejudices and personal opinions of the author of the comments. These labels can damage a child - and yet as teachers we are constantly being required to make such subjective judgements. Often subjectiveness of the overall judgement is masked by an apparent element of objectivity, a test of a particular attribute, possibly numeracy or literacy, but what indication can such tests give of inventiveness, practical skills, sympathy, artistic talent? Many young people may be pitch perfect yet show no talent at composition.

Why should we in education be so obsessed with sorting pupils? For many years we had the great divide at the age of eleven on the basis of some fairly crude measures. Youngsters were clearly sorted (labelled) into the sheep and the goats and sent to the apparently appropriate institution. When I taught in a boys' Grammar School in Yorkshire some twenty years ago, Art was not in the curriculum, woodwork/metalwork was available only as a minority subject. This was known locally as a "good school" yet it could offer little in the aesthetic field for the majority of its pupils. This school "produced" young men of high academic standards but with great gaps in their general education. There was little room for individual expression, in fact this attribute was positively discouraged for the sake of the "greater good" of the school. Rugby was the school game: it engendered team spirit. The individualist was thought a little odd.

In general, the educational system has moved towards an apparently more humane process of secondary education with the widespread introduction of Comprehensive Schools. The majority of our young people now move smoothly along an educational pathway from 5 to 16. Primary schools liaise with their Comprehensive neighbours and pupils are not formally assessed and labelled, whole futures do not hang in the balance of a single assessment at eleven. However, overt divisive segregated patterns of education have in many cases been replaced by covert insidious forms of pupil sorting and labelling.

I have visited schools where on the first morning that the secondary age pupils arrive at their new school they are put into a large hall and are given tests in basic numeracy and literacy. At the end of these tests the pupils are sorted into three groups: pupils who will take academic examinations, pupils who will take less academic examinations, and a third group it is deemed, at this first day of their secondary education, will not be suitable for examinations at the age of 16. In other comprehensive schools examinations take place at the end of the young person's first year in the school and a similar form of sorting takes place on the basis of their first year examinations. The great danger is the blanket implied statement that the child is all bright or all dull. I would be the first to agree that children have different levels of ability in different subject areas, and would not argue that there must come a time when these differences of ability must be individually catered for. I would hope that the sorting could be delayed as long as possible, preferably until a child can perceive the differing needs of himself and his peers, and then to provide tuition at the appropriate level on a subject by subject basis. This process of setting by ability and subject takes account of the individual in a way that the old sorting process, still found in some comprehensive schools, cannot do. Streaming or banding by "general ability" within a comprehensive school is a hidden form of selection that perpetuates the old bi-partite system of education.

Some years ago I was involved in research into the reasons for under achievement of pupils in the upper forms of secondary schools. The parameters of the project were pre-determined by my employers, the main factor of concern being the high percentage of pupils leaving school without any recognised paper qualifications. I visited a wide range of schools and there was a clear correlation between disenchantment/lack of qualification and the early labelling of pupis by overt or hidden forms of academic

sorting. Pupils told me they had been informed early in their school careers that they were non-academic, many then spent two, three or even four years in non-examination forms, a label in our qualification-conscious world equivalent to leper. Is it any wonder that these young people were responding by violence, truancy and apathy? Having spent a lot of time talking to these young people I would dearly have loved to have been able to talk to them five years after leaving school, as I am convinced that many would, once clear of the damning labelling at school, have carved out successful careers and be living happy and satisfying lives. For so many, the problem at school was that their personality and abilities did not match the school range of acceptable moulds.

The divisions within education have been perpetuated into the comprehensive era by the all-dominating examination system. For too long this system has been a dual system devised to match the needs of the bi-partite education system that existed before the comprehensive school came into operation: the G.C.E. 'O' level examination for the Grammar Schools and the C.S.E. examinations for the Secondary Modern Schools. The G.C.E. examination was designed for the top 20% of the ability range and the C.S.E. for the next 40%. Recent trends have allowed the C.S.E. examination to encompass a wider spectrum of ability but the duality of the system remains. The implication of this double system was to reinforce labelling within the emerging comprehensive school. At some point a child had to be entered for one or other of the examinations or at worst, neither examination, thus producing the damning labels of academic/average/non exam child. Recent moves to merge the examinations offered high hopes of a removal of these divisions but I fear that the arrangements of the new exam now emerging will in fact perpetuate in a somewhat modified form all the old divisions and labels.

The total abolition of labels within education is a practical impossibility. Life in a school is a microcosm of society but can we not move towards a more positive use of descriptive terms? Child 'B' could well have strong talents in a non-academic field, the apparent lack of support from parents could well be the result of domestic problems and no fault of the pupil. Is "trendy" a disparaging term for teachers using the most modern methods of education? The label "inner city" school is only used in a derogatory way in reference to Secondary Modern Schools and Comprehensive Schools. Many very highly thought of Grammar/Independent Schools are most definitely inner city but are rarely labelled as such.

If one uses the analogy of commercial labelling to illustrate a point, of five tins labelled "pork luncheon meat", the ingredients varied widely and only by looking carefully at the ingredients (declared in small print) could the actual proportion of the meat be established. The variation was from 70-90%. I would suggest that a similar situation exists today in many areas of British education: overt parity of opportunity, but a closer look at the ingredients would reveal cause for real concern. We must look beyond the label and study the ingredients.

Education

Christine Manger
Assistant Teacher/Deputy Head
retired

"The important developments in the educational process come from within the child himself ... affecting the whole personality" (Comenius), but "No man is an island" (Donne). "The world's mine oyster" (Shakespeare) and "Education is atmosphere" (Sir R. Livingstone). For Rousseau, "The crucial age in human life is that between birth and the age of twelve", and "Education is social philosophy in action" (G. Vickers).

These are just a few of the ideas that philosophers and thinkers, poets and educators, have expressed on the subject of education and which have affected my attitude and thinking. During the brief thirteen months' Emergency Training Course I was fortunate enough to take part in after ten years in offices and factories before and during the war of 1939-45, there was time of discuss and develop such ideas.

That experiment in teacher-training, staffed to a large extent by the more adventurous of college lecturers brought into the profession men and women who had not been able to go on from school into higher education as well as others who had missed out because of the war. It ought to have been the opportunity for a radical re-appraisal of the education system. There were brave experiments, of course, and it was in the nursery-infant field that most enlightened practices were introduced. But practical difficulties hampered teachers, keen to give their pupils more opportunity to develop creatively, to explore the possibilities, of science, art, creative skills and - in order to do all these things - to move about more freely in the school environment. How could this be achieved in small, poorly equipped rooms occupied by, more often than not, fifty children? It has been a long haul and campaign by the teachers' unions, educators and those enlightened representatives on Education Committees and in Parliament who cared, to reduce these numbers to a target of even 30 per class. Now we see the ratio rising as grants are cut, economy rules and trained teachers are unemployed.

In the secondary sector the 1944 Act created the appalling situation of five different types of school - prolonging privilege and maintaining the iniquitous 11+ test. This still exists in many areas because schools there are comprehensive in name only. The five types of schooling recommended in the Act were: Grammar, Technical, Modern, Residential (of varying kinds) and Public Schools at which a percentage of free places should be allowed.

Looking at the situation confronting the school leaver we find this inequality continued in the present system of enterprise schemes - one to encourage one-man businesses and the other offering technical and vocational training to 14-18 year olds. Lord Young, Minister Without Portfolio, recently interviewed in the Guardian, was challenged to justify his enterprise schemes and to comment on Mr Wedgwood Benn's remark that all young people should be "educated" and it was wrong to offer only training to some. There were people who said this was Tories being elitist. He replied that if the Tories <u>were</u> elitist they wouldn't have launched the vocational and technical training schemes. 'Tell me," said Lord Young, "do you get educated as a surgeon, or trained? All training means is that you're educated in skills which you apply. It's no good giving people academic education and calling it education, if they're not interested. As soon as you've made a young person realise that they're bright at something, it spills over into all their other activities and they become bright at everything else." Discussing unemployment he added, "There's an enormous opportunity for growth in the service sector." He pointed out that as a nation we still eat out less than in France, than anywhere in Europe or the United States. "There's an enormous shortage of personal services." A nation, not of sheep, but cooks and waiters, I wonder?

In 1931 the Hadow Report denounced as artificial the conventional division of Junior School work into subjects and lessons and advised a curriculum "thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored".

In 1944, discussing the proposed Education Act, and five- tier secondary education, Kenneth Richmond (Education in England, Pelican, 1945) saw the unfairness and difficulty of selection at 11+.

In 1985 much that was opposed in these two Acts is still with us.

What Act, what action, could achieve a more ideal system? While we are bound so closely to the examination routine and a competitive environment with too few opportunities for <u>all</u> young people I cannot see a way out. I feel there has to be a place for imparting knowledge and the basic skills. To be able to read is vital. Books open up a world that is exciting, stimulating, challenging. I do not believe in anarchy. We have to live in the society in which we find ourselves and conform to those rules which preserve that society as a caring and compassionate one. This is not to say that we should accept all that makes it unfair to many, selfish and with priorities that deny part of the population the chances and opportunities of the privileged few.

Education should make young people critical, questioning and prepared to rebel against injustice. Can this be achieved without violence and intolerance? The aim of much eighteenth and nineteenth century

education was to give the working classes just enough of learning but to "keep them in their place". Enlightened law-makers in the educational field have altered that. But there are still "haves" and "have-nots". Individual schools and teachers are working to remedy this but they are hampered and discouraged by lack of resources and pressures from administrators and, often, from parents.

Education is not just the business of schools, colleges and universities. We learn from the home environment, friends, the books we read, the experiences of day to day living. These are the stimuli that enable us to develop our maximum potential. Those who are in contact with young people have a tremendous responsibility. If they are to be assessed for fitness for this position (Sir Keith Joseph et al.) then the standards by which they are judged need to be decided upon with great deliberation by a wide spectrum of people of high integrity. Who would these be? Philosophers, judges, professors and teachers who have achieved respect in their careers? And what of the pupils themselves? Can we draw up a "blue print" for the ideal educator? I doubt it.

Education

Mrs P. McCarthy
Workers Educational
Association Committee
member

You asked me to write some words on education from a personal standpoint. I'll start off by explaining why I have been a keen member of the Workers Education Association for some time, and now a committee member.

There are many, many people in the land similar to my husband and me, both of us had the ability (I hope!) to have gone on to further education and a satisfying career, but both families insisted on us leaving school and going out to work to earn some money. We learnt our 'reading, writing and arithmetic' well, but there were so many facets of education we so sadly lacked, and evening classes have opened up a whole new world for us. In fact my husband got so hooked on them that he has taken a diploma in nature studies and a 'higher tech' in electronics. Hard work, but oh, how he enjoyed himself!

Take a look any autumn at the list of evening classes available, some through the Local Education Authority, some in private institutions such as the Swarthmore, some with the W.E.A. You can take 'O' levels, 'A' levels, you can go to classes where you can just sit back and listen to the lecturer, or go to classes where you can actively participate. For many years my friend and I went to Psychology classes at the W.E.A. We joined in all the discussions and took part in many experiments, and got to know the other students very well. And I think getting to know the other students very well is another great benefit of going to evening classes. If anyone is new to the city, or bereaved, or just find it difficult to make friends, then going to an evening class and actively joining in surely would make quite a difference to your life. Lack of money should not be a bar to joining evening class. The cost per evening is not really very high, and special arrangements are made for those 'unwaged'. Going to evening classes could be the beginning of a new career, channelling your life to something you hadn't dreamed of!

I started going to evening classes many years ago, and am very grateful to the organisers. I have found them much more interesting than sitting home watching T.V. and hopefully have made me a better person to talk to my family.

I would like to finish this piece of writing with something I feel very strongly about: the importance of parents' support when a child is at school. These days a child needs all the education possible to help make a success of life later. If he or she really wants to go into further education, and the school feels they are capable of it, then parents must do all they can to encourage them to go further. Parents have an enormous responsibility once they have produced a child, and ensuring they reach their full potential. Otherwise they can become very bitter and frustrated adults. This is all part of being a parent: it means sacrifice, sometimes of time, sometimes of money. But my husband and I hope that our children have benefited from what happened to us: we encouraged our boys as much as we could. We would never want to push them into trying to achieve something they were not capable of, but we want them to have a more satisfying life than we had. I do not want to sound smug, but it made it all worthwhile when our elder son turned to us just before he went up to Oxford and said, "Thank you for all the encouragement you both gave me."

Mind you, I still get all the dirty washing brought home!

Observations on my Education

Jay McClenaghan
Former pupil, Devonport
High School for Girls

The initial shock of leaving my friendly, warm and safe Primary school, and entering this strange, cold and seemingly endless high school was increased by the knowledge that I was not a "big girl" as I was in Primary school, but I was just a small insignificant first year.

However, after the excitement had worn off, I finally realised exactly what I had lying in store for me for the next five years.

I attended Devonport High School for Girls from 1980 to 1985, and although I had good fun and managed to get a few 'O' levels, it did nothing to prepare me for reality.

I always felt as if the school was designed to make pupils into ideal models. And the ideal model was a girl who was Captain of the Hockey team, organised sponsored walks, always wore the correct uniform and no make-up, no jewellery and sensible hairstyle; she also was incredibly intelligent at every subject available from needlecraft and cookery to physics and computer studies. Her life was mapped out for her: after passing all her 'O' levels, she would stay on for 'A' levels, then obviously to University for 4 years doing a course in something femininely intelligent, maybe have a couple of years working, and then the inevitable marriage, followed closely by two children, a dog, a semi-detached house, in suburbia.

If anybody wanted to try anything different or wasn't academic, the standard response was, "You should have gone elsewhere."

I've never actually wanted to do metalwork or technical drawing or play rugby, but if at the age of 14, I'd decided that my future lay that way, would I have regretted the school I chose at 11?

Another thing about school was the way, simply enough, in which I was taught. For such a good reputation that Devonport High possessed, the staff were overworked, the classes too big and the teachers, in my mind, not well-equipped to deal with us. My 15 year old mind needed a firm, interesting teacher for me to possibly want to learn. At 15 years old, my mind was on other subjects, such as boys, clothes, make-up, discos. I also have a low concentration capacity, my mind easily wanders onto other subjects; but even I noticed that if I was in a lesson with a particularly boring, droning type of teacher my results were poor, and I had no interest in the subject whatsoever. Take another teacher and another subject, a teacher who was switched on, interesting, firm and lively, and the difference was amazing.

I can't really say exactly how I felt at school because when I look back on my school days now, they always seem to have been happy and quite carefree, and yet looking through my private diary which I started to write in the beginning of the fourth year, it is filled with what a horrible day I'd had that day, and how I worried over exams (and yet still couldn't be bothered to revise for them), and the shame of getting low grades. Which just goes to show how distorted my views have become over a relatively short period of two and a half years. I'll always keep my diary to remind me of how I felt in those days, because although the things I wrote in my diary now seem so trivial and petty, I realise that at the time they were huge problems for me. My main regret about the school was the lack of training for outside life. The whole school system was geared to 'A' level students and Universities, etc. A classical example of how unfair the system was is this: work experience was only allowed to those people in the 5th form who were staying on for 'A' levels. If you were leaving, you weren't entitled, there was no guide, no hints, no thing given to us in preparation for outside life and work. We were, literally, thrown on the streets with Y.T.S. forms, something on Supplementary Benefit and a couple of booklets on further education.

I felt that if only for one year in the 5th form, for one hour, once a week, we could have been given a lesson of advice, talks and information, of everything from unscrupulous landlords to drugs, from V.D. to job interviews, it would have made a lot of difference. I believe we did once have a woman come round and discuss the dangers of cigarettes and drugs, but it wasn't very informative, or so I felt.

It was basically just a very old fashioned school with out- of-date equipment.

Susan McCloskey
Parent

My feelings on education are very bitter ones, and I feel very angry about my own education, or the lack of it. I was unfortunate in as much as I came from a poor family and my mother's attitude to education was to "leave it to the teacher," as she had been poorly educated herself.

I went to a country secondary modern school, where class distinction was rife. Because I wasn't dressed in a nice school uniform like the other girls, I was put at the back of the classroom and largely left to my own devices.

I was a shy, withdrawn schoolgirl and lacked self- confidence. Because of this, I think that the teachers thought of me as not very bright, and didn't give me very much attention at all. As a result, I came to think of myself as being dim, and spent most of my time day-dreaming, and hated going to school.

I feel that my school days were wasted due to my parents' and teachers' ignorance. I desperately wanted to learn and to continue at college, but when my school-leaving age arrived, no one gave me any advice on how to go about it. Nowadays when I see young people leaving school and going straight onto the dole, it makes me seethe. I wish that I had been given the advice that is available now, and cannot understand why teachers do not take stronger steps to make children realise how important a good education is. Surely this is a part of their duties, rather than being more concerned about getting to their tea-break on time, like some of the teachers I have known.

Coming back to the present day, I am further disillusioned with the system. Having applied for further education courses, I am advised that if I were "living on the state" I would be fully entitled to completely free courses, but as I am self-sufficient, I have to pay through the nose for the same privilege; having, through no fault of my own, missed out on my original education. I am baffled by a system that appears to offer free opportunities to those who seem not to want it, and at the same time, discourage, by way of expense, those who keenly want to further their horizons.

I can quite understand why those who can afford the fees, choose to send their children to private schools. I don't feel that state schools are really concerned about the quality of eduation offered to children at present, and feel in particular that more time and attention should be spent on those children who may be considered "dim" since, by definition, they are the ones most in need of it. In my own case, if perhaps my own teachers had been a little more attentive, they might have realised something that I did not discover until years later, namely that I am mildly dyslexic. Perhaps had this situation been discovered sooner I might have enjoyed "the best days of my life", instead of feeling, as I do, that it is a period of my life best forgotten.

Holistic Education

Brenda McNicholls
Former Head Teacher,
Crownhill County
Secondary School

The education of the child, the whole development of the body, mind and spirit begins before the separation from the mother and the start of independent growth. The lack of awareness of this fact in the West is reflected in many ways - an extreme example being the birth of a child already addicted to the drugs taken by the mother. In 'Magical Child' (1979, Paladin, Granada, Gt. Britain), Joseph Chilton Pearce discusses the primary perception or primary processes of nature that most children in technological societies lose, either through birth trauma or lack of bonding with the parents. He contrasts this with the well being and stability of children in more primitive societies born without trauma, drugs or fuss.

That a child can develop at an early age facilities for the appreciation of its environment, love of the arts and achieve creative skills is demonstrated in the work and methods of Susuki in the teaching of music and playing the violin. Again, at the base of his technique, is the bonding between mother and child and the realisation that the young child learns best through the parent. Other thinkers have developed ideas for the continual flowering and growth of the child through carefully structured stages, building all the time on that which has gone before and at each stage the parent plays a vital and active role. Montessory and Steiner schools reflect these ideals in the methods of their respective founders. More rarely, the pattern is developed through the secondary stage and the older child is given the opportunity to grow into maturity and independence without the pressures of society bearing down upon him, allowing him to think, to decide for himself and to be, supported and guided but not straitjacketed. The Krishnamurti Foundation at Brockwood Park is an isolated example of this continual development of body, mind and spirit through to maturity and final separation from the parent into independence.

Contrast the system of education developed by our society for the majority, which has reverse motivation in its choice of curriculum. At the end of a long chain of cause and effect which starts at the top - the universities, and academic achievement of an order attainable by only a few of the ablest minds, down through examination boards and societies, through secondary education only recently moving away from the Grammar school syndrome, is a primary education that largely leaves the parent standing at the school gate. Each stage develops its ethos from the next stage above and is dominated by the requirements set down by that higher authority. Attempts to remedy the problems that arise from such a process of events, or to keep up with the demands of a rapidly changing and technologically developing society are for the most part additions that are patched onto the system, often in a crude and haphazard fashion with minimum facilities or flexibilities available for easy and painless assimilation.

There is need for a radical rethinking of the whole educational process placing the child at the centre, surrounded by the family, and allowing for natural growth from the earliest years to a full flowering of potential, this for every child whatever his or her achievements are as an independent member of society. Communication and awareness skills obviously play a part in this process and a properly financed and facilitated curriculum needs to be developed that will allow for the fullest participation of all members of society whatever their role as teacher, parent or pupil.

Society today is a fast moving, ever changing phenomenon directed towards an uncertain future. In spite of the implications I have made that much of what is being done in education today is doing little more than papering the cracks of a system that is top heavy, poorly designed and built on sand, I have an optimism that eventually truth and reality will prevail, that mankind will respond to the challenge and rise above the darkness and suspicion and that this will occur in education as in all other aspects of society. That is why I will continue to help paper the cracks, looking to influence in some slight way, as I know many of my colleagues are also doing, the choice of paper and paste and seek at the same time to improve the foundations on which it is to be placed. My particular choice of paper is that of curriculum reform, free from the restrictive paste of archaic examination processes, and which is suited to the tastes and abilities of the pupils it is intended to serve. The ultimate ideal of an individual curriculum, a room papered to the particular needs of its occupant, with doors and windows opened to the society around it, will come eventually to be accepted as the norm.

In 'The Classroom Society' (1981, Croom Helm, London), Herbert Thelen postulates a cultural archetype for what schools should be like. 'To improve schools,' he says, 'one must find some way to work with rather than against them.' He continues to explain that while the general belief is that a school's purpose is the utilisation of knowledge, little real progress would be made. He suggests that the goal should be one of comprehension and that the curriculum should be the furtherance of comprehension-seeking inquiry. To do this it is also necessary to employ similar kinds of thinking to the humane society within which the educational system functions. Thelen finally points to the dilemma found at all levels of society, the conflict between the

conceptions of the cultural archetype oriented to techniques, rationality, problem solving and impersonal interaction, and the professional archetype revolving around dialectics, emergent principles and humane interaction, the assumed ideal. To redress the balance between the two is surely the goal towards which we ought to be striving in our aim for a holistic education.

At present this is a goal that goes largely unrecognised and misunderstood, yet there are positive signs. Current discussions on examinations, on profiling, on pupils with special needs (all pupils are special and have needs!), are indications that there are changes in thinking and attitudes. A further example: Philosophy, until recent times, has hardly entered the realms of education and never at primary level. Interesting results are beginning to emerge from America and pockets of growth in Wales and Devon are beginning to emerge and create wider circles of awareness and interest. The ability to teach children to think, to love wisdom and knowledge for its own sake, to seek for reality, to appreciate and be aware of what is, and to develop a way of life that takes all this into account every day, is a special one. The role of the parent is crucial, and they, too, need preparation, guidance and support as children prior to this new role.

If there is to be a growth of human potential into a harmonious and peaceful whole (holism), then time, space and energy must be found and allotted to prepare the foundations for this. Only when the foundations are well laid will the superstructure of society also be built in strength, harmony and peace and its human occupants have a true balance of body, mind and spirit.

Reorganisation Revisited
or
That's Another Fine Mess ...

John Mead, M.A.
Former Head Teacher,
Laira Green Secondary
School; Present Advisory
Teacher for History for
Devon County

Comprehensive systems of secondary education have now been introduced by all but a handful of Local Education Authorities, and the passionate debate which once surrounded the issue has largely died away. Arguments on both sides of the debate were often confused, low on educational substance and high on political posturing. There was, however, within the original concept a germ of nobility: if educational resources and educational opportunity could be more equitably distributed and if a socially divisive system, implying success for a minority and failure for the majority, could be replaced by a socially cohesive system then there is surely no doubt on which side the angels must be. Would that life were so simple! Advocates on both sides of the debate have produced statistics which prove conclusively that:

1. academic standards are higher within comprehensive systems than within selective systems;
2. academic standards are no higher within comprehensive systems than within selective systems;
3. we are a less socially divided nation as a result of the introduction of comprehensive schools;
4. we are not a less socially divided nation as a result of the introduction of comprehensive schools.

The comprehensive debate remains as sterile as ever it was. Objective comparisons between extant selective and comprehensive sysems are difficult because the few selective systems still remainng are not necessarily typical, and comparisons within areas between current comprehensive systems and the selective systems which they replaced are invalid since the time context is different. The question to which we might usefully address ourselves is not whether comprehensive schools have delivered the goods but what goods they have delivered and whether we are satisfied with them.

One of the first problems to confront authorities introducing comprehensive schools was the problem of size. The wider the spread of ability entering a school, it is argued, the larger that school needs to be. This is especially the case with the extremes of the ability range, to provide appropriately for whom the total intake must be sufficiently large to ensure adequate numbers in each group. There has, therefore, for apparently sound educational reasons, been a tendency to create larger schools as the country reorganised. There is considerable variety of practice, but an ideal type has emerged consisting of some eight forms of entry and a total roll of over a thousand pupils. These schools, especially those purpose built rather than having been cobbled together from existing premises, often look impressive because of their size and the concentration of resources. Those in the upper and middle management within these institutions talk eloquently, proudly and interminably about their ingenious academic and pastoral care systems and the concern for the individual which these enshrine.

Beneath the superficial gloss applied by those who have made it or hope to make it within the promotion system, however, there is much disquiet and disillusion amongst the other ranks in the staffroom. The current low state of morale in the teaching profession is not solely the product of madhouse economics and the 30% plus devaluation of teachers' salaries since the great and good Lord Houghton established his universally accepted relativities some ten years ago. Neither is it solely the product of a tragic level of youth unemployment although this must inevitably affect us as it affects our pupils. There is also a less clearly perceived and articulated but very real sense that even with these two problems bearing down on us we still could and should do better. The essential failure is a function of the increase in size arising from the increased diversity of intake. Economists may applaud the reduction of unit costs arising from economies of scale, but educationists must question the appropriateness of models based on manufacturing industry. Whilst schools cannot operate in isolation from economic reality, education is too important to be controlled entirely by the dictates of crude political economy.

It is becoming increasingly accepted that education should be concerned more with process than with content. Rather than being concerned with imparting esoteric knowledge about, for example, the calculation of the surface area of improbably shaped objects, teachers are in the business of fostering a wide range of strategies and skills. These strategies and skills complement and reinforce those learned elsewhere and are relevant to the successful adaptation of young people to the overall social situation. To be effective much of this skill-fostering process requires detailed knowledge and close contact over a protracted period of time. This degree of intimacy is a natural function of small size but is rapidly destroyed within the alienating envir- onment of large institutions. We have created, and are continuing to create, schools which are less caring and less efficient than schools should be.

When a school is too large to assemble together in the hall it is too large to foster a corporate identity. When a school is too large for the Head to know each pupil, not just to know their names but to know them as

people, the school is too large to exercise really effective influence and the role of the Head is irreparably diminished. Heads cannot delegate their personal contact, however much complex pastoral care systems in the fashionable horizontal or vertical modes may be promoted as evidence that they can. The current vogue for management training for Headteachers and senior staff tends to see the leadership role as being one of control of staff and resources and programmes. We shall no doubt soon be trained to refer to children as units. The skills of yesteryear, the interpersonal skills of teaching and influencing rather than of managing and manipulating quite properly have no place in the new order; they are becoming inappropriate to current institutions, and education is becoming so much the poorer for it. What we wanted from reorganisation were garden suburbs; what reorganisation has delivered are educational tower blocks. Supercomp has arrived.

The changes in management style brought about by the increasing size and complexity of secondary schools have further contributed to the problems of alienation, frustration and communications failure which are characteristic of our larger schools. The management of Supercomps requires a special type of Head, Deputy Head and Head of Department; ambitious, progressive, dynamic and well versed in the latest curriculum development and management techniques. Enter Superhead, Superdep and Superhod. They come in two basic variants: bearded and clean shaven. Most of the men belong to the former category and most of the women to the latter. They may be recognised by their absolute conviction about and readiness to comment on every imaginable topic and by their further unshakeable conviction that they are God's gift to education. They communicate in a special language: Edjarg. They are programmed to innovate: trendiness rules O.K. Under their bold leadership schools are undergoing a radical change of philosophical emphasis: away from preserving and transmitting a cultural heritage and towards participating and preparing for life in the next century. It is an environment of permanent revolution, a world in which Trotsky would have felt comfortable. It is a world, however, in which increasing numbers of classroom teachers and children find themselves confused, bored and depressed by the drab, grey sadness of all this exhilirating novelty.

The bleak philistinism of the new style school managers, with their systems analysis and flow charts, has been applied with ruthless logic to the educational issue of the moment. Issues come and issues go in education, but current concern in predominantly about curriculum reform. To a modern, high-tech progressive, the way forward is obvious: Britain's industrial output and share of world export markets must increase; we must beat the Japanese. They would regard as naive, bordering on the imbecile, such questions as why we should so concern ourselves about beating the Japanese, or why we need a higher per capita income or gross national product than we now have, and how we individually or nationally would use the additional money, and whether there are not more urgent priorities, such as the development of a compassionate and rational society to ensure that our pupils have a future to inherit.

The curriculum implications of the obsession about higher rates of economic growth are that increased time and resources must be devoted to technical and vocational education. Thus we are witnessing a powerful lurch in this direction, in part financed by a slush fund controlled by the Manpower Services Commission. Since time is finite and resources are under constraint, the expansion of one facet of the curriculum is inevitably at the expense of others, and the major victim of the current exercise is the liberal, humanistic tradition in English education. The reform is being fostered through changes in the political structure of education: there is more specific direction from the Department of Education and Science to Local Education Authorities, more specific direction from L.E.A.s to schools, and more specific direction from schools to pupils. At the latter level there is a worrying incidence of pupils being frustrated by inflexible options systems which force, for example, pupils whose abilities, interests and future careers lie within the artistic, expressionistic fields being required to follow courses in the sciences and technology, in pursuit of what is called balance. It really does appear to be a case of never mind the quality, feel the width.

It is interesting to note, in the light of the national obsession about the Japanese, that their system of secondary education is based on a broad, general course with the vocational element consisting of an additional tertiary layer. Perhaps those fiendish Orientals do have something to teach us.

Physical Education

Cyril Meek
County Adviser for
Physical Education

In an ideal education system every individual would achieve full potential academically and physically. The sadness of all the systems that have been used is that the potential of so many people remains unrealised, leaving large sections of the population with untrained minds and unskilful bodies.

The most successful teaching arouses in the pupil a desire to learn, for the motivated learner acquires far more skill and knowledge than from any one-sided teaching process. Patrick White, a Nobel Prize Winner for Literature, made one of his characters say, "I dunno, I forget what I was taught, I only remember what I learnt."

Built into all of the young of the animal kingdom is the desire to play. There are many educational theories of play but the one I find most appropriate is the Instinct Practice theory which proposes that the young in play are rehearsing the skills they will need as adults. Fifty years ago Dr L.P. Jacks coined the term "skill hunger" and identified the years 9-13 as the skill hungry years, the period when, if given the right learning situations and appropriate guidance and encouragement by parents, teachers and others, young homo sapiens can be transformed into a skilful and knowledgeable young adult.

In physical education we capitalise on the play instinct, placing pupils in learning situations where they can structure their learning. Play may seem a haphazard process to the unenlightened but it goes like this: explore, establish, repeat. The learner explores the nature of a new situation, establishes what is possible and then repeats the useful things discovered until they become personal skills. Of course we can learn from watching others to find what they have discovered and so in our structure of learning there are opportunities to watch others and copy them, including the demonstration of skilful teachers, particularly at the secondary school stage.

The young child needs to be physical in a wide variety of circumstances. Self-confidence comes from being able to overcome problems and situations presented by the environment. There is a need to discover one's body and what it can do. There is a desire to be independent and not have to rely on the skills of others. A child's view of himself is linked to the number of skills in his knapsack. It is the key to social mobility. There is a natural appetite for skill and this appetite can be either satisfied or starved.

At the primary school stage the programme content is now highly appropriate, much better than ever before, but the general level of expertise in the teaching of physical education at primary level gives great cause for concern. Initial training of primary school teachers rarely reaches an acceptable level, with some students receiving no traiing in this aspect of education. Also, because of erosion of advisory staff, in-service training cannot be offered in the depth needed by teachers. In many areas in-service training in primary P.E. is non-existent.

For the secondary school stage pupils will find that all the teachers of the subject are specialists and the facilities for physical education are generally very good. In the absence of a national curriculum, schemes of work can vary from school to school as long as they meet the requirements of the heads, parents, the local authority and H.M.I.

Since P.E. is largely non-examinational, then one might think that teachers would be free to devise the most suitable programme to meet the needs of their pupils but this is rarely the case. P.E. grew from elitist roots. Schools were judged by their academic and sporting achievements and heads pursued visible trophies letting the Devil take the hindmost. Some heads and parents still judge the quality of a school's P.E. by the trophies acquired by teams and individuals with the Devil still taking the hindmost. Maybe one in five pupils fall into the elite category yet all programmes were structured to meet their needs. The remaining pupils were short changed. Individuals still have just one body to carry them through life but there has been so little opportunity of understanding the elements of skill and fitness.

Happily within the past few years the scene has changed for the better. The old values have been questioned and the new generation of heads have been among the first to query traditional practices. Similarly the new age of physical educationists has begun to devise programmes that will meet the needs of the widest spectrum of pupils, from the unskilful to the very gifted.

The effective P.E. programme in the secondary school begins by compensating for what has probably not happened in the primary school, providing for the skill hunger that still remains. In enjoyable learning situations pupils become aware that they too can become skilful and discover the pleasure of moving skilfully. Gymnastics, games, athletics, swimming and dance, still form the core of the work for the first three years but the modern approaches aim to give all pupils a range of useful skills while preparing the ground for health and fitness with real understanding. For senior pupils the programme aims to meet individual tastes, introducing

them to a wider range of optional activities. Sadly the very attractive options programmes of a few years ago have now had to be restricted because of cutback in staffing.

The Age of Leisure had been predicted for a decade or more but no-one expected it to arrive for so many people through massive unemployment. People confronted by leisure need skills to enhance the quality of their lives. Such skills come from a relevant education curriculum, particularly skills in the creative arts, as well as in sports, games or the ability to lead a physically active life-style. Perhaps not everyone can be a capable performer in these areas but everyone is capable of learning how to appreciate the skill of other people.

In spite of the severe economic restrictions of the present time I believe that this is a stimulating period for education, a time when all concerned are intent on making the curriculum highly relevant and I find it satisfying to note the real contribution being made by physical education.

Education

Antonia Melvyn
Former Plymouth Welfare
Information Project
Co-ordinator

If education is one of our great socio-cultural institutions, one of the great bastions of western civilisation, then exactly what is its part in the overall performance? Is its function an essential one in a positive process of development? A process by which ideas, knowledge and skills are increased in such areas as science, art, etc. and according to a diachronic scale measurable by time in days or weeks or centuries? If so, then the results of such a development of knowledge and skills can certainly be identified in the patterns of industrial progress, the development of transportation to the extent of space travel, the example of photography, etc. To be sure, this is all upon a grand scale, and indeed, one could also point to the very grandness of the scale as a reason for the achievements. Development is surely a process, and one which is recognisable upon a broad scale within both space and time. Little isolated pockets of civilisation didn't produce the pyramids. Thus, without becoming diverted by the 'small is beautiful' thesis, I simply want to establish the nature of civilisation as part of the essential, but immensely extended processes of civilisation.

Illich distinguised education from 'schooling', 'learning' being the natural daily process of socialisation, but for my own purposes here, I should like to make the distinction between centralised education and marginalised education, with the former including all the formal aspects of schooling as well as the mainstream of socialisation, whilst the latter encompasses all marginalised aspects, which can include deviant trends in informal school culture as well as any of the results of marginalised socialisation, from counter-culture trends in modern urbanised society to dying traditional customs as could be found in long established or ghetto neighbourhoods or in isolated or even not so isolated rural areas.

What I want to discuss is a paradox, a dichotomy, the contradictory situation that whilst the value of any knowledge, idea or skill often lies in its uniqueness or inaccessibility, yet its development or growth lies at the same time in its very universalisation or transference into a consensualised mechanism. Thus alchemy, with all its ancient associations with secrecy, is not unconnected with G.C.S.E. General Science. It seems that, to survive, things must become generalised, but that very generalisation involves simplification and thus a loss of everything which is not directly relevant; ghettoes either die or vanish or survive and become nations and the consensus-focussing mechanism of education is essential in this process.

If at this point I introduce the concept of community education, in which my own field of welfare rights education is a recognisable component, the dichotomy can again be disclosed. Therefore, as communities become enabled and empowered according to the processes of community development, they move from a marginal situation which could no doubt be identified as alienated from the centralised power, whilst it could also be seen in terms of individual non-centralised clumps of value to be measured according to unique contexts rather than according to a consensus one.

In 1972, in a final attempt to retreat into the Brazilian Amazon jungle, a small band of 'undiscovered' indians known as the 'Kreen Akarore' burned its village which lay close to the route in which a new highway under construction was clearly proceeding. The escape finally failed and in early 1973, with shaven heads and bodies painted black, 30 indians entered the camp of Claudio Villas Boas, the Brazilian ethnologist. Gifts were tentatively exchanged and Claudio sent a radio message of the encounter with the indians to his brother Orlando, away in Sao Paulo: "Immediately, wire cables were monitored throughout the world. 'Civilisation,' as one American newspaper put it, had finally 'greeted' the elusive and hostile Kreen Akarore tribe." (1, pp. 70-71)

Anyone who has seen the recently released film, 'The Mission', will recognise the familiar theme of the little story above: a theme which, for the purposes of this speculation regarding education, I should like to propose as a two-fold one, including the physical destruction of a society/environment, but more importantly relevant to my approach as already developed, the fact of

the very nature of the 'greeting' of the forest tribe by 'civilisation'. Implicit in the concept of the 'civilised' is the uncivilised, just as 'education' implies the 'uneducated'; thus I use the controversial issue of development to epitomise the value-laden and ethnocentric aspects of education, well known through those such as Paolo Friere (2), who present education as an essential mechanism in the social structure of power relationships between oppressors and oppressed. Although the painter for whom I sat as a participant in his visual project upon 'education' holds a dead child centrally in focus, perhaps it is easier for us to recognise destruction from afar, for example, that of South American indian societies, overtly in the name of socio-economic development, covertly in that of the 'rational word', of the 'benefits' of civilisation, of the undisputed value of Western knowledge.

Yet just as Szasz (3) equated the marginal position of the 'mentally ill' with that of criminals or even witches, so Illich presents education as a social institution (4), whilst Karl Marx demonstrated the effect of alienation at every level of the capitalist system. Did these eminent 20th century minds sense the same danger which drove the Kreen Akarore to burn a village rather than be reached by the highway of civilisation? "The burden of the argument," wrote Bryan Wilson in his introduction to the collection entitled 'Rationality', "is that the categories of other cultures are not always translateable into our own."(5) In that case, why do we force our categories upon them? Why not leave the indians in the forest? One may as well ask, "Why not leave the Brazil nuts on the trees?", and every canny young Y.T.S. scheme employee knows very well why it is that they are cheap labour. So the Yoruba had to be taught that it is the round metal circles which they can acquire in exchange for their labour that are truly valuable, rather than the cowrie shells which they used 'mistakenly' to regard as precious? In the same manner, children must learn to value school, just as the baby had to come to terms with life outside the womb. But if the person who hates life sufficiently takes the option of suicide and if the indians die of loss of identity, is it all just a question of survival? And to survive is it that we indeed have to learn that to be small or marginal is to be deviant and to be deviant is to be dangerous because it is a threat to the large and the centralised. After all, "kids that bunk off school'll 'ave the welfare after 'em." Is education simply consensus survival through the imposition of the biggest value system?

Through an anecdote from my own childhood, I would like to introduce a more sinister note to this little discourse. At the age of eleven, I began at a new school, an English-American school in the north of Spain with a very liberal and creative approach to education. Not having begun school until the age of eight, my previous experience was not only sketchy, but also limited to a very strict southern Spanish convent where the main activities were memorising, copying and saying the rosary every afternoon, not to mention mass every morning; but at least this was all quite categorically unpleasant, making education for me an experience which I could confront and challenge as clearly as black contrasts white. What I am now about to relate involves a far more insidious, undermining and deadly aspect of the educational process. What I enjoyed most at my new school was English, since the Irish teacher with the lovely lilting voice absolutely seduced me, not only with the liquid tones with which she read poetry, but with the insistence that each week we should write at least one, if not two (!!) stories. I simply couldn't believe that such an entirely pleasurable activity could possibly be part of the school curriculum, since reading stories had been an addictive obsession with me ever since my mother had taught me to read. I therefore threw myself wholeheartedly and entirely into story writing until very soon I had filled a thick exercise book with richly illustrated tales all by my very own hand. Each was unique in subject, plot and description, in some way expressing an aspect of myself and my world. I suppose that I was also amazed at this new value which I could place on my personal experience in which, as a very shy, verbally inarticulate and solitary child, I cannot remember previously as having recognised any value at all.

The end of term, and time at which all exercise books were handed in, in order that they be awarded merit marks, arrived; my story book went along with all the others. I awaited their return with mounting anticipation in view of the high marks and encouragement which I had received from the English teacher, but my book was not amongst the others when they were handed back. I panicked, to be calmed by the English teacher's promise to get my book for me, but two weeks later there was still no sign of it and she advised me to go to the headmaster myself. I waited outside his office desperately, throughout a whole break-time, afraid to knock, especially since a dull weight in the pit of my stomach which I had not felt since my previous school was definitely present to warn me of the probable result of my enquiry. The headmaster finally emerged to confirm my fears by returning my question with the brusque observation that, since he marked all the books personally, none could possibly ever be lost and that I must definitely not have handed it in. My despair filled me with newly found courage and I opened my mouth to insist, but the headmaster was already receding down the corridor which began to turn and revolve to the rhythm of my thumping desperation. Unable to conceptualise it, I recognised through feeling the extent of my powerlessness and, although time is a great healer, I realise that belief in my own powerlessness is one of the main things which school taught me: that and an instinctive distrust of institutions as well as a possessive and over

protective attitude towards my own work.

I forgot the instance of the exercise book for many years, until the event was vividly recalled to me in my final year at university by an unjust accusation of plagiarism in my finals papers. Again I was swamped by the thumping feeling of powerlessness, of helpless vulnerability. This time, the visiting examiner visibly started as I entered the office to contest the decision and I realised that it was not what I said, but the fact that I was an attractive young woman that won me the case. Somehow the knowledge depressed me deeply, again in that acute manner which characterises the inexpressible. It was not until many years later that I was able to understand feminist or marxist issues in a personal sense.

To return to the main dialogue of my argument, if education is a mechanism of a centralised and consensus power structure, if it clearly encourages power hierarchies and gives power to the mainstream, the generally acceptable, then is education simply a bastion socio-cultural mediocrity? Is it clearly fundamentally a social safety pin, to hold firmly together a system by which so much shit is valued? Dare one ask what has in fact been lost - disregarded - in the name not just of educational standards, but in that 'western civilisation' itself? How much 'irrelevant' knowledge, skill and culture have we lost and, more importantly, of what nature and according to what quality, what values? The reply could be made to my question that, whatever the case, I am only questioning a natural and irrevocable process? Of course the probability of lost knowledge, etc., is regrettable, even unfortunate, as even more so is certainty of such casualties of the trend of socio-economic development as the thousands of decimated indians and the destroyed Amazonian forest, all in the name of progress, all an inevitable result. But a result of what? If it could be said that the situation in the so-called 'Third World' today is a result of western imperialism, which in turn was a result of the western socio-cultural values which prevailed at the time and were essentially contained in the education system of the time, surely it can be concluded that education is a mechanism towards the pervasion of consensus ignorance.

To reduce education to schools, where would it be without the children? Where would western imperialism have been without slaves or the conquistadores without the indians? It is a strange coincidence that many of our imported cash crops are addictive - sugar, coffee, tea, opium, tobacco, cocaine, to name but a few - whilst they also have little or no nutritional value. Wouldn't it make more humane sense to encourage the countries which grow these crops and which, incidentally, are mostly Third World countries, to grow a healthy variety of nutritional crops for their own consumption? Yet however humane sense such a suggestion might make it is as unlikely to make any sense according to the majority of contemporary values as would children not attending school make sense. Western addiction feeds off the loss of others just as the education sysetm consumes the children's sense of freedom and power. My only conclusion can be that the day that education is not basically a power mechanism shall be the day that has seen national and international tribes of schoolchildren and the day when the Third World no longer exists to feed the west. Education today is the process of control.

1 Shelton H. Davies, Victims of the Miracle.

2 Paolo Friere, Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

3 Thomas S. Szasz, The Myth of Mental Illness.

4 Ivan Illich, De-schooling Society.

5 Bryan Wilson (ed.), Rationality.

Rhys Meyrick
First year student
School of Architecture

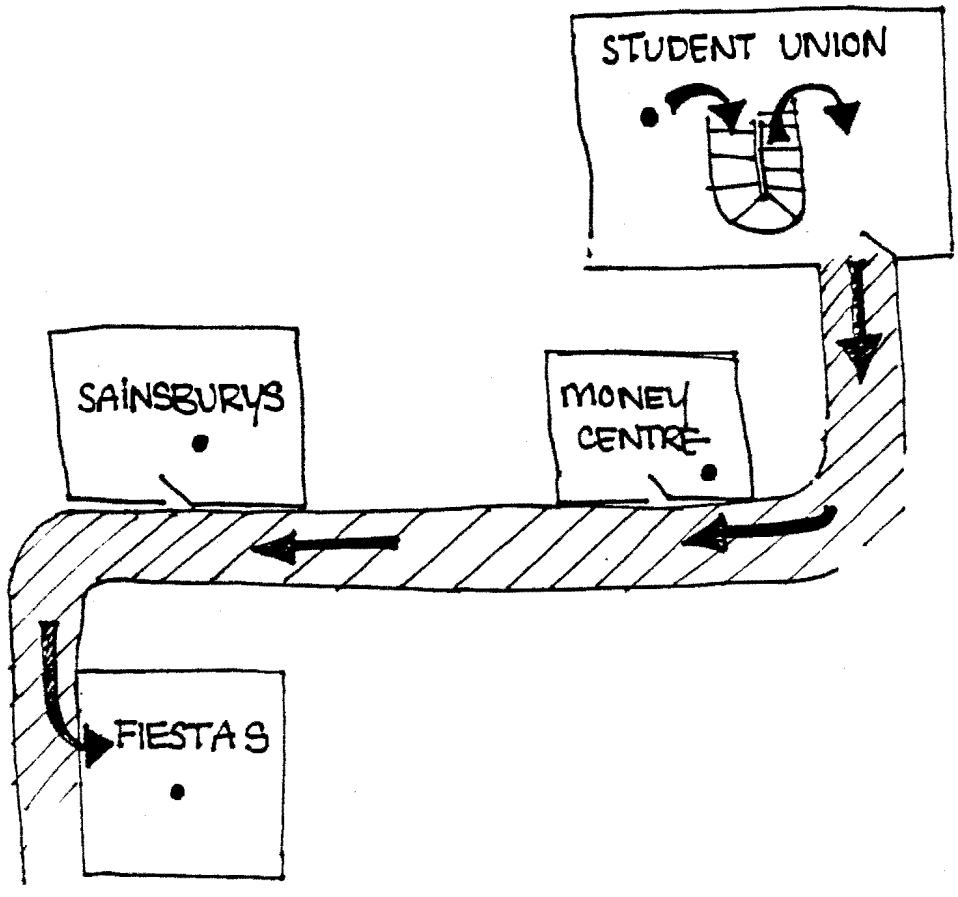
Why?

For a better life? No.

Perhaps the best form of Education is self-education. The things you teach yourself and you pick up through your own experiences. To be put through a formal system and told how things are instead of finding out for yourself is false, it does not touch on reality. Living in such a rarified atmosphere, self- development is stifled and hampered. The person you may have once become, had you taken a different route, and the person you are now after going to college, certainly vary tremendously.

Some tell me I did the right thing. Get out of the work system, go to college, learn, increase and enhance your character, fine and dandy.

No-one ever tells me not to go to college. I find the truth starkly different. The Polytechnic system, especially Plymouth Polytechnic (for it doesn't possess an altogether brilliant reputation for creating scholars and geniuses), seems to be a method of escape, a method of hiding from life and reality. If you haven't developed enough character to stand out on your own before you come to a place like this, then you can despair for your future. Students are much like sheep. On Thursday night, they all shower, put on nice clothes and go to the Union. Some drink snakebite and black, some drink bitter, some drink orange juice because they are concerned for their health and have decided to take up rugby or hockey or windsurfing. Fairly soon all the students start to get drunk. Some sing, some shout, some stand on tables, and some stand in circles with their trousers round their ankles, singing and pouring beer over their heads, because that's what people who play rugby like to do. Then the magic hour arrives - 10-11 o'clock. Soon the Union will close and the student will have to go somewhere else. They leave en masse as one, a huge, sweaty mass of drunken flesh, all lusting for more drink and experiences with the opposite sex. They all gather at the bottom of the Union stairs, tightly packed in a crowd, and when there are enough of them, they suddenly move and rush down the yellow brick road to Fiesta's night club.



Seemingly thousands of them. All with the same thought in their one functioning brain cell. "Got to get to Fiesta's." Sometimes on this golden road, you can almost see a figure in a hat with a feather in it, playing a pipe and leading the children away in a dance, just like he did for the rats.

Once inside, you're safe. The noise is too loud, so you can't talk and reveal how shallow you might be. Alcohol is in abundance and it doesn't matter if you can't dance very well, as the floor is so tightly packed that individual movement is impossible. Eyes are everywhere. Some stare right into yours, some smile and twinkle, then look away and wait for you to do something, some flick over and past you as if you weren't there. Some want love, some want sex, some want to fight, and some wait to be told what they want. Seldom can you provide any of these things. Norman Mailer said, what man thinks about most is getting a nice piece of ass.

That's what the students come to Fiesta's for, to think about it. Once they've done that, they can go home alone and reflect on it, and then fall into a drunken slumber. Next week, they will go out and think about it again.

The only way out of this situation is to try and dominate it. Your education, if properly handled and worked at, can be a tool to get you into contact with more interesting people. It can also get you money, but that is not important.

But it is easy to fall into a trap; you may turn into a stupid, insignificant little person, leave college, go through life and die the same.

God, I despair for you if you do.

Helen Mitchell
Pupil,
Aged 11 years

I like this school very much and I took an exam in this school. I went to Burrator and Buckland Abbet for school trips. Two years ago I went to London for a school trip. I have a best friend who is called Vicki Atwill in Class A. My favourite lessons are Maths and Needlework. I saw Toby Bishop at school to help with his Mother in Class A. Every Tuesday we go to Mount Wise swimming. Our project was about the water. On Tuesday July 15th all the fourth years went swimming at Mount Wise. We can play anything, diving, jumping and the slide. I was so excited about the Mount Wise swimming pool. We had a sports day on Thursday June 26th. I went in the relay and Scotch hand ball. The blue team was first and the green team was second then yellow team was third, red team was last. Last week there was another sports day with Courtland School. Our score was 101, Courtland School was 98. We won the sports day. I went to Lipson Vale School for a netball match. Our score was 7, Lipson was 3. I read about the netball match in Assembly. I like being in the netball team. On Friday I will be sad to leave school but I am looking forward to going to my new school in Berkshire in September.

Education

David Moreschi
Former student
College of Further
Education; present
theatre studies,
London

The education given to people today, especially from the age of eleven to eighteen, revolves around examinations. Most of these examinations consist of a number of two- or three-hour long papers, which must be answered in silence, in large halls by a large number of students, under the watchful eyes of moderators. It is pathetic that this should still be happening, when scientists have proved that people have a concentration span of no more than fifty minutes at a time, and so many people in this country believe it to be wrong, from students to heads of departments. Most of the people I have talked to are against this system of examination; it tests your memory and your ability to work in the stifling atmosphere of an examination hall. What we should be examining is a person's ability to assimilate necessary detail (from whatever sources), and present them in an interesting and coherent way, with enough time, and a more natural working atmosphere, which would be a step closer to the circumstances we must deal with in real life.

Once we are able to do away with the examinations as they are at present, the syllabus, which is taught purely to prepare us for them, could be modified so as to give far more emphasis on subjects and situations, which can prepare us for life. The closest that my school came to this, was an eighty-minute lecture on Sex, given in a very formal manner by the embarrassed Biology teacher, to boys of thirteen, in such a clinically technical way that it went 'over the heads' of the innocent and bored the experienced.

There needs to be a greater emphasis placed upon understanding our world and our place within it, and a more thorough exploration of the different ways people have of coping with it.

Children should be introduced and encouraged to participate in community life, in helping others and learning from their experiences and histories.

Open discussions on varied topics of the many different cultures which children will one day encounter, as well as analysing moral values, politics, etc. of their own.

Tuition in the skills which society requires of you, should be integrated into the curriculum: filling in forms; interview techniques; basic conversationalism.

Children should have more responsibility to prepare them for the future (most prefects in schools are appoints, merely to supervise the trafficking of other students).

A greater use of 'Theatre in Education' is needed to help students deal with the problems and situations which they will encounter one day.

Children should be encouraged to develop their individualism, through debating groups, and less stringent demands on uniform (my headmaster once spent an hour inspecting the colour of his pupils' socks, and awarding punishments to half of us, for wearing the wrong colours).

A lot of the present curriculum is useful, but it should be taught not as facts to be regurgitated for an exam; but, as things which we will one day be able to use, and relate to (I never bothered to learn Hebrew, at 'Chada', until I went to Israel and saw it on signposts and heard it being spoken).

Our education should be a preparation to help us cope with the world outside, not as facts for an examination. What we are taught, and the environment in which it is taught, are too far apart from what is waiting for us when we leave.

A Valley School Revisited

Lyn Morgan
(Big Oak)
Visiting miner

Being on strike has left me no way of dodging parental obligations. For the first time since my two children started school, I found myself, reluctantly, on a wet November afternoon, visiting the "Open Day" at the school.

My wife tries very hard to keep up with the childrens' education. I admit to being happy to let her take the responsibility. I don't mind watching the boy play football occasionally, but visiting the school has always been the wife's job.

Dai Evans, the caretaker, met us at the school gate, with a warning to "watch that top step". He explained that it had been loose and broken for some years. "It's a miracle no-one has broken something," he muttered. "But there, if someone had been hurt, it might have been repaired."

We crossed the fairly large, but uneven playground, accompanied by Dai. On the far side, two bedraggled netball posts stood, half immersed in a pool, which covered most of what seemed to be the court. I looked questioningly at the caretaker.

"It's always been like that," he grunted. "Everytime it rains, the drains can't take the water. I think the pipes under the yard are either too small, or are broken. We've asked the county to look, but they say that would be a major works, so that's out." Dai's tone was of resignation, rather than anger.

The school is a mixture of old and new. The old building is where I went as a child; the new part is a boxlike, flat roofed construction. As the wife and I reached the main entrance, Dai left us. "Needs painting," he said over his shoulder. "But they're not painting schools any more. The county sacked over twenty painters last July. Painting schools is a thing of the past."

The main hall was just as I remembered it, except that it seemed smaller somehow. The old clock was still on the wall. Many's the time I stood under that for wrongdoings. It was spotlessly clean, but there was an air of shabbiness. The furniture was old and many of the chairs and tables seemed in need of urgent repair. Two lines of floor blocks formed a ridge along the top of the hall, like a series of mountain ridges.

"You'd think they would have that seen to," whispered the wife.

"Perhaps there are no carpenters either," I joked.

"Right first time, Mr Morgan," came a voice from behind us. We turned to find the tall, greying figure of Mr Andrews, the headmaster.

"Well, almost right," he smiled wryly. "I think we have four carpenters to cover the whole of the valley, and we have to share them with Social Services. Little things like floorblocks are a very low priority."

"Like your steps," smiled the wife.

"Exactly, Mrs Morgan. When a child or teachers are hurt, then we may get some action. I'm sorry about the buckets."

For the first time, I noticed buckets placed strategically around the hall. "When it rains, these flat roofs are a damned nuisance. Water everywhere. They try to patch it up, but the water simply comes in somewhere else. The local comprehensive cost one and a half million pounds eight years ago. They've just spent #250,000 replacing half the roof and it is still pouring in. They say flat roofed schools are cheaper to build. Doesn't make sense, does it?"

Mr Andrews led us into Miss Frayling's classroom, where our son Michael and daughter Jayne are classmates. Miss Frayling is a middle-aged lady, with a reputation for strong discipline and a belief in rather old fashioned methods. She greeted us politely, but perhaps a little defensively. The wife got down to business immediately, asking pertinent questions about the childrens' progress. My attention began to wander, until Miss Frayling began to describe Michael's lack of progress, especially in reading.

"He is way behind Jayne, and she's almost two years younger," explained Miss Frayling. "Michael really should be in a small class, where he could be given much more individual attention. But our numbers have dropped and we've lost another teacher. That's three in four years. We did have two small classes for children like Michael, but they've had to go. Now I've got a class of 29 children, of a two year age range and of all abilities. It's not fair on the slow ones or on the bright ones, who are being held back, but there's nothing we can do."

I'd never thought before, as to why my kids were in the same class, wit a two year age gap between them. Neither had I really thought about why Michael never seemed to read, while Jayne's head was rarely out of a book.

I said, "Does this mean that Michael will be in a low band in the Comprehensive?"

"I think so, Mr Morgan," murmured Miss Frayling. "But perhaps they'll have smaller classes for the

slower learners. Although there is a rumour, that the Comprehensive has to lose eight teachers next July. Their numbers are falling too, you see."

By this time my interest was aroused completely. "But surely, if the numbers are falling, then there should be fewer children in each class."

"The opposite, I'm afraid," said Mr Andrews grimly, coming into the classroom. "The trouble is that the County, forced by Government cuts, have no choice but to cut teachers' jobs in line with the falling childrens' numbers. I'm afraid it's all down to the 'numbers game'. The Ministry and the Welsh Office are not interested in your boy's problems. He's just a statistic, a number to be added or subtracted. Once a school drops below the magic number, a teacher goes. That is about their only criterion"

The wife muttered something about it "not being like that in the Public Schools." I pointed out that they paid fees.

"So do you, Mr Morgan," interjected Mr Andrews. "I don't think the public at large realise that the Government gives over #80 million to the Independent Sector each year. The schools can register as charities to save tax and the parents claim tax rebates on their fees. Little wonder their pupil-teacher ratio is about 1 to 8."

Anger swelled up inside me at the unfairness of the system, but I turned the conversation to a less serious subject.

"I notice that the books are not in very good condition."

"They will have to be a lot worse before we stop using them," replied Mr Andrews. "A set of maths text books for 30 seven year olds can be as much as #60."

"That's about my requisition allowance for a year," said Miss Frayling quietly. "So what we do is, patch up the old ones and buy a few new ones. Most of the classes share one book between two anyway."

"I'll tell you, Mr Morgan," interrupted the headmaster, "my job used to be dealing with the three 'R's. Now it's the three 'M's - milk, money and maintenance." He chuckled, but his tone was deadly serious. "We count milk bottles, coax parents and friends for money. I'm sorry about it, but without "Sponsored Spellings" and the like, we would have no money for buses, theatres, parties, etc. The rest of my time seems to be spent trying to get carpenters, plumbers and electricians to maintain the school up to the very minimum standards of comfort and safety. I don't blame the workmen; they are in the same boat. Too few of them and not enough money for materials." His voice tailed off, and for a moment we saw the worried, hopeless look of someone whose morale had sunk to rock bottom. Suddenly, he managed a smile. "Never mind, other schools are far worse off than we are. There are at least four schools within six miles who have 3 teachers, including the heads, to teach all the children between 4 and 11 years old. Think about that, Mrs Morgan. Three year age ranges in each class - and of all abilities too. It must be almost impossible to cope. Those kids can't be having anything like the best, or even an adequate education. Especially the ones who are slow learners."

As we thanked Miss Frayling and Mr Andrews, we left the warmth of the classroom and went out into the semi-darkness. It was raining heavily again. "No netball for our Jayne this week," I thought grimly. Nearing the steps, we almost bumped into Dai Evans in the darkness.

"At least you keep it cosy and warm, Dai," smiled the wife.

"Only for a few more days," replied Dai. "The coal runs out at the end of the week. I don't know what we'll do then. Calor gas, I expect. It's nothing like as good. Anyway, for God's sake, watch that step. There should be a light there, but it hasn't worked for five years. Comes under major works, I expect. Goodnight."

Snow, Bacon, and New Information Technology

Ray C. Morgan
Staff Tutor in Technology,
Open University

Our educational system and the attitudes and values upon which much of it has been predicated, has, in my view, for centuries been disjunctive with the real needs of an industrialised society. Yet it is beyond dispute that industrialisation on the whole yields enormous benefits and a much more comfortable standard of living. One has only to look now at Third World nations where semi-starvation, if not total starvation, is the lot of many unfortunate souls, to be reminded of hardships suffered wholesale in pre-industrialised Britain.

Whilst, I suppose, it can be rightly claimed that classical education benefitted those whom we sent abroad to rule the Empire, with considerable success, it is also true, as Snow pointed out, that:

'If our ancestors had invested talent in the industrial revolution instead of the Indian Empire, we might be more soundly based now. But they didn't.'

Twenty five years ago, C.P. Snow wrote his famous essay entitled 'The Two Cultures', in which he described the sharp distinction between arts and science based education as we know it in Britain, and particularly the problems that arise when science and applied science are treated as second rate academic pursuits. Snow's thesis has come to be interpreted as being about our educational system rather than about the 'rich and poor', which was the concluding emphasis that Snow made.

Is it still applicable today?

To retreat much further back in time to the early seventeenth century, Francis Bacon (a great thinker of his time who became Lord Chancellor) wrote about his conception of a technological society; others echoed his views in later years. Bacon, a great philosopher of industrial science, spent much of his life seeking to promote and institutionalise science. However, he thought that Universities, as he knew them, were unsuitable for this purpose because they were strongholds of orthodoxy. Now, in twentieth century Britain, we have excellent technology faculties in our Universities and colleges, and moreover they have sufficient autonomy to decide their own academic curricula.

Now, we have no Empire to worry about, we have a manufacturing industry of the 'smokestack' kind that is declining, an Information Technology/Micro-electronics industry that is growing at an accelerating rate, and an educational system that needs a renaissance.

The future will be characterised by rapid change causing severe social and political problems. Already we have over three million people unemployed and before this transient effect (hopefully it is transient) dies out, more will suffer the same indignity. New industries are beginning to emerge and new work styles will develop as a result of new technology. For example, vast improvements in telecommunications will enable decentralisation since people will be able to work in more dispersed and smaller groups, perhaps from their own homes, on account of effective communications being available. All of this has started to happen. What kind of educational system is appropriate?

In my opinion, Snow's message is even more applicable now than it was 25 years ago, since to meet the needs of a more technologically based society, we need people to be 'literate' in the humanities and the sciences. At junior level the three R's will need to be expanded to include computing/micro-electronics but over-specialisation is the great bogey. This must be avoided by curricula design which includes components from both cultures - a blend of humanities and technology is needed to cross the cultural divide.

Furthermore, education needs to be seen as a life-long process which can be accessed on a number of occasions throughout life, and not as it is now for most students terminated at the age of 16.

All of this implies the need for funding to buy equipment, to retrain staff, to write new learning materials, etc. A number of important initiatives have already been successful in Britain - I shall mention two:

According to the Guardian (18.12.84), Britain's schools now have more than 100,000 computers which amounts to more per head than is found in any other nation. By February '85 more than 97 per cent of primary schools will have at least one microcomputer, and the average numbers per secondary school will have passed 10.

The Government began its micros in schools campaign in April '81, aiming first at secondary schools and eventually extending the scheme to primary schools. Central government provided half the cost and local education authorities or other local sources the rest.

The success of this project indicates positive political will at institutional level, and individual interest in meeting the challenge of new technology. It is consistent with the current rate of home ownership of computers, and incidentally videos, by the British public, which is reported as being greater than for any other nation.

One outstanding example of success in the field of continuing education is the Open University, which in very recent years, having established their undergraduate program, have now offered many one-off courses ranging across the whole academic spectrum from humanities to science and technology. Some of these could be classified as of broad educational interest, whereas others are intended to meet very special particular needs, e.g. professional updating in some area of science or technology. Examples of the latter are two M.Sc. courses (The Industrial Application of Computers, and Manufacturing), both of which were designed and created jointly by the Open University and the Science Engineering Research Council. This is an interesting example of co-operation between two national institutions and is a pointer for the future - we need co-operation and integration at a national level.

What Bacon wanted has to a large extent been achieved - we do have excellent institutions for science and technology, though it must be emphasised that the status accorded to these hitherto in Britain, particularly England, has been inferior, and this is a reflection of the two culture syndrome which still exists today despite many advances.

What Snow wanted has not been achieved and now it is most important that we address the two culture problem.

Liz Morris
Mother first,
closely seconded
by 'teacher'

I hate my school. My husband only dislikes it. That's because he doesn't work there, although he does have to listen as I recall the daily horror stories. Our children don't like it either; they hardly ever see me. If they do, I'm too busy to play because of all the marking. Consequently, they see me as that shouting, nagging mother who is forever screaming, "Be quiet! Play somewhere else. Don't breathe, do not pass go. Do not collect #200!"

I've worked on and off at the Comprehensive for nearly six years. Mostly 'on', I hasten to add, although it was only two terms ago they decided to make me permanent. Five years on 'supply' makes you live on a 'hand to mouth' existence, especially on a Scale I salary! With my husband being a Postman at the time I was on 'supply' we weren't exactly living the life of Riley! My new found permanence, although giving peace of mind (well, nearly) financially, has created so many new problems it's a wonder I have time to exist, let alone live.

Mainly, I suppose, the marking is the most meaningless and thankless occupation. Teaching English for half a timetable when you're really Drama main, is not only time consuming but downright demoralizing. The kids generally only want to know their grades or marks and rarely look back over their mutilated efforts which are usually bleeding red ink by the time I've finished. There's a lot of controversy about marking. We're told that, "the child does not like his carefully prepared work sliced to pieces with the red pen". If you do it in pencil, they rub it out. If you don't mark it at all, you're accused of not paying enough attention to it. You can't win!

We've just introduced or rather re-introduced a prize giving day. I think it's just been discovered how much children respond to rewards. Unfortunately, there isn't such a system for staff. It would appear generally that in our school anyway, that the more you do, especially in the line of pastoral care, the less you are likely to succeed or be rewarded for your efforts. I am not authoritarian in my approach and I do believe I should care for the children and teach them but from looking at many of the recent appointments for various positions of responsibility it would appear that unless you can "read the riot act" every minute of the day, you've basically had it! And by the way, if you think the children should attempt to enjoy themselves, forget it. God forbid that pleasure should be included on the syllabus.

No time to scribble any more, the marking calls.

Yours,
Disillusioned!

C.D. Murphy, M.Sc.
Psychologist

Ist sitting - 25th May

Schools are strange institutions ostensibly there for the benefit of pupils but increasingly to me, are best seen as organisations designed for the benefit of educationalists. Their purpose is to 'give' pupils an education - but this 'gift of education' is the only gift which I can think of, the refusal of which becomes a criminal offence. In this light education becomes a compulsory national service designed for the purposes of the state and no other. Some would argue that even if this is the case education should still be valued and purveyed. I would not wish to enter this argument except to say that from this standpoint the 'refusers' of education are at least afforded a more dignified status.

I am perhaps being a little hypocritical here: after all education has been good to me. I have had lots of it and it has been my chief source of income for 17 years. I am, as all educationalists are, an educational success. But my work, as teacher, youth worker or psychologist, has brought me into regular and committed contact with those pupils who, unlike me and other educationalists, are 'failures'. As teachers are successes they are naturally drawn towards pupils who are similarly inclined. The 'others', the intellectually less able, the socially deprived, the children from educationally non-orientated backgrounds create difficulties for the system. The system itself is caught in a Catch 22 situation - it would function much more adequately without 'them' but has a moral responsibility for 'them' and a philosophical interest in 'them'. These pupils are currently designated as having 'special needs' and <u>some</u> time, resources, and educational thought is put in towards meeting these 'special needs'. However this solution of nomination is merely a palliative and - even worse - unjust. It locates the 'problem' with the child and leaves the system to go on in its own sweet way - and with a clear conscience.

2nd sitting - 27th May

The statement I wish to make is simple. Justice appears to be lacking. The system is so big and our children are small and can be crushed under the weight of it. Particularly those very small children of whatever age who do not share, by inclination or circumstances, the 'correct' qualities which would make their passage through the system relatively safe. It seems so unfair to me that so often these frail ones, whose behaviour (either social or intellectual) casts them at odds with the system are the ones who are expected to make most effort to attain the norms which make <u>us</u> feel more adequate.

And that is the measure of it; educationalists feel more fulfilled when children behave at or above accepted norms. When they don't they are bullied, tricked, coerced in some way and the educators have the excuse that this is all for the pupils' 'own good'.

I would like to create a different scenario (which is not revolutionary - I am even proposing to leave the educational infrastructure intact).

When a child has difficulties it should be incumbent upon the rest, the able, the strong, the intelligent, the adjusted to make appropriate efforts to understand, accommodate and accept. After all, they, by definition almost are in the best position to make such adjustments!

4th sitting - 1st July

I have become increasingly interested in the language that I hear in schools.

"<u>S/he must learn to behave him/herself</u>." Social behaviour is so complicated that most educators have little knowledge of how it develops and only an intuitive idea of how it is operated. But deviance from intuitive norms, is easy to spot, on these ocasions children are often exhorted to 'behave themselves'. The assumption here is (at least!):

a. that the child knows how to 'behave'.
b. that for perverse reasons has decided <u>not</u> to 'behave'

Neither of these assumptions is necessarily true. In many cases children simply do not know how to 'behave'. In those cases a simple command to behave differently, in a mysterious, unexplained way, is obviously inefficient. A sporting analogy will suffice. No coach would simply tell a sportsperson to play better - a step-by-step explanation of 'better' and a series of exercises designed to improve performance would be given. Education is operationally years behind basic coaching. I suggest a new phrase:

"Teachers must learn to behave themselves"
i.e.

a. know what their job is in greater detail in operational terms
b. have the techniques and the resources to do the job
c. stop blaming their pupils for having the inadequacies which were created by educationalists in the first place
d. stop blaming their pupils for having the 'inadequacies' which they must have by nature of their status as learners
e. stop blaming the pupils for having those 'inadequacies' which it is the teacher's job to ameliorate (after all doctors would not blame their patients for being ill).

Reflections on Education

A. Nelson
Workers Educational
Association Committee
Member

The English dictionary defines 'to educate' as 'to rear or bring up a child'. In a conventional sense education is taken to mean the process by which a person learns all the disciplines necessary to gain a fuller appreciation of life and, more narrowly, as a training and preparation for future employment. Education thus includes all activities undertaken at school and later university, college, institute and of course any learning at home, work or associated with religious activity. I see education on a much broader front. Firstly, it must be appreciated that the process is continuous, beginning at birth through childhood into adult life. Second, education is a fundamnetal activity, performed for its own sake, leading to a development of the mind and body. In the general case, therefore, the education method can be described: 1) the acquiring of basic skills and techniques; all disciplines have their own 'language' which must be learnt as a prerequisite for further development. For example, in order to gain a deeper understanding of science, the student must familiarise himself with all the historical laws and basic mathematical groundwork. In the same way, someone interested in French literature must initially learn the French language. Thus, to educate oneself in anything requires an application of the learning process. A child has to learn and practise basic arithmetical manipulation before any more advanced and stimulating mathematics can be followed. The initial stages of learning can be turned into an enriching process by an interest in and an understanding of the 'language' being learnt. Often this interest can be acquired through total immersion and continuous familiarity with the concepts taught. 2) The second stage in the education process is the application of acquired skills. The person becomes free to develop his creative potential. This involves reading, discussion and experiment. The historian researches by reading around the relevant period. He discusses his own ideas and those acquired from reading with his colleagues or associates and experiments by writing his own work on the subsequent synthesis. In the same way, once a child is able to manipulate a paint-brush he can experiment by painting shapes and figures as he sees them. Both these aspects represent the most stimulating part of the education process and reinforce the learning activity described earlier. In this way development proceeds by research, discussion, argument and creation. It is my contention that this stage in the education process is generally the most misunderstood and abused in our present society. In order to develop the mind and knowledge in any activity one needs freedom to stimulate one's creative potential. So often this is killed in our schools by boring routine teaching methods, the examination process, the setting of suppressive rules and artificial competition.

The process of education always involves human relationships. Learning and creation do not take place in a vacuum. As an example, the most important part of a child's schooling is his relationship with the teacher. Likewise, the scientist cannot progress in obtaining a deeper knowledge of nature without constant interaction with and criticism from his peers. Throughout our education these relationships proceed on both a personal and professional level. To be able to teach oneself is a misnomer. One only progresses through constant argument and discussion with fellow beings. What is the purpose of tutorials and seminars but to enhance constant discussion among students and colleagues? Thus the student can always see both sides of the story since it is only from polar discussion that knowledge and understanding is acquired.

Finally on to ability. This is a much misused word and is employed as justification for preference, prejudice and segregation. A good educationalist, teacher, mentor and the like recognises ability in everyone. The maxim of the teacher is the positive attitude. The potential for anyone to progress is his confidence in what he is doing. It is a part of the education relationship previously mentioned to foster that confidence. Thus anyone who learns to draw is able to draw if he is confident of putting pencil to paper. Anything drawn will be an expression and communication from that person and will be a successful attempt. From established methods of teaching we generally consider someone's intelligence or learning to be measured by the amount he knows. I suggest that this is not the case. A person's learning, knowledge and ability is not related to what he knows but on how he performs when he does not know. Of course by attempting anything we eventually become knowledgeable in the most efficient way. As a result, the prime education process is the person who willingly tackles new original concepts, takes risks, is curious, forms strong human relationships and thus can always stand alone.

Education in England:
A Personal View

John Newman
Former Audio Visual
Designer producing
educational programmes
for Cornwall County
Council

You are unique. There are people who are similar to you, but none who are exactly the same. You may crave to be like someone else, maybe a film or music personality, but no-one can be better at being you than you yourself. Isn't it sad, then, to state that probably you do not fully understand who you are or how to realise your maximum potential? The drawing out of what is in a person rather than to impose upon him a preselected view from outside should be both the aim and practice of a process called Education.

What is the real situation? The word 'education' conjures up memories of formal institutes of instruction where a general (headmaster) led his troops (teachers) in an unrelenting campaign to fill empty vessels (students) with fragments of knowledge, each piece precisely categorised under its select subject-heading for administrative convenience. The System rules, but all is not O.K. Did you ever attempt to mix 'Arts' subjects with those classified as 'Science'? Systems deal with absolutes, each item being definitely one thing or definitely another. Conversely, people are varied and variable, and seem to defy attempts to pigeon-hole them within fixed boundaries. Your well-developed skills and natural talents are complemented by your dreadful performance in other activities. Even these abilities or inabilities are subject to change and, indeed, on some days they seem to swop! We are all alike in these respects, and yet each one of us is a unique individual.

It is the failure of managers and operators of systems to recognise fundamental human needs and the essence of individuality which is the root cause of much social unrest. Traditionally, these overlords have dictated laws of behaviour acceptable to them, forcing reluctant square pegs to exist in round holes. 'Know thyself' and 'to thine own self be true' are still two of the best pieces of advice ever expressed. Your personality is as multi-faceted as a ballroom mirror-ball and is continuously growing and subtly changing. That growth needs guidance and encouragement.

Did you leave school with a clear perception of reality; did you know who you were and how you fitted into Space and Time? To put it another way, were you fully aware of all the good, indifferent and bad characteristics of your mind and body; at what point in global history were you living and in what location on the planet? It is probable that you were a mass of confusion. Neither your self nor the world made sense. How had the education system equipped you to deal with your search for identity and a concept of your relationship to the rest of the world? Your mind was filled with lists of Kings and Queens of England, dates of battles, and Parliamentary bickerings of former years. You were able to form the Imperfect tense of foreign verbs or work out a stream of figures using Logarithm Tables. But what did you know about your mind, your body, your personality and how the real day-to-day world of shop, office or factory would react to you?

You had completed academic courses and considered that you knew those subjects. But each of your courses had definite boundaries and preselected texts, which would not have existed if you had either studied on your own or been part of a research organisation, freely selecting your information sources from all those available. Information which is taught tends not to grow. Misconceptions can occur if we fail to realise that information changes, since conclusions may be drawn on inaccurate or obsolete bases. Britain, instigator of the Industrial Revolution, has lost its lead in several manufacturing fields, including heavy engineering and textiles, due in part to not recognising the changes in both demand and competitors' intentions, and implemen- ting procedures to cope with them. Dinosaurs could not adapt and became extinct. There has always been information, and the world's history is that of a dynamic, near-kaleidoscopic, mix of people and places in time. But the rate of change has increased dramatically in recent years, producing a potential tidal wave of information. If we are to avoid drowning we must be able to handle information wisely; we must learn how to learn.

Research work by educational psychologists and others has provided mankind with techniques which can enable people to study more efficiently so as to derive the maximum benefit per unit of time and energy put into it, and to enjoy the whole process of learning. These techniques do not apply only to formal study situations but to many areas of life. Problem-solving and creative thinking are aided by effective study methods in which efficient reading produces a greater quantity of memorised new information since it is integrated with previously known facts and their relationship is understood. But these methods are not taught in our schools.

Modern man has available to him the collective knowledge, techniques, and experience of previous generations from which to learn. The present day application of universal truths (emanating from the minds of observers of differing races, creeds and centuries) would greatly assist us in avoiding the re-occurrence of the majority of errors which lead to frustration, conflicts, and waste of resources. Why are the writings of Emerson, Holmes, Kipling, Maugham, Shaw, Thoreau and the I Ching shunned by the educators? Are the proponents of peaceful living in harmony with the natural order of the Universe considered to be threatening to

a human system whih perpetuates the myth of 'Man, the conqueror of Nature'?

Man can be creative and demonstrate great ingenuity: tremendous achievements can result from people working in unison towards a known objective. Yet a nation capable of engineering return trips to the moon engages in all sorts of military conflict in countries all over the world, is a leading producer of second rate films and television series, and exports vast quantities of a fizzy drink developed from a small town patent medicine. The untapped potential available to individuals and collections of individuals is immense, but their accomplishments are comparatively few.

All systems devised by human beings include significant proportions of waste. The education system is of paramount importance since it shapes the future managers and operators of every one of these systems. It has the opportunity to draw out and encourage human potential and to channel this into constructive endeavour. It dictates merely a set of subjects and methods of competing against other people.

How can this situation be changed? A fundamental re-assessment of attitudes is called for. Our presently accepted 'absolutes' should be challenged. Teaching staff are no longer the high priests of Total Knowledge, dispensing morsels of information to assembled masses of ignorant peasants. They should act as respected messengers and guides to their students, assisting in the development of the individual's problem-solving skills, critical faculties and communications abilities.

The major inhibitors of individual, social, national and international progress (in its truest sense) could be drastically reduced. People make inefficient use of resources available to them. They need advice on how best to use their minds, bodies, time and money. A large proportion of human nervous energy is squandered on worries and anxieties. Confidence needs to be built and strengthened. Powers of observation are inadequate. Inarticulate people feel inferior to those better able to express themselves, their frustration turning to either despair, smouldering resentment or violence. Communications break down, and disagreements transmute through arguments, skirmishes and confrontations to full-scale wars.

What does our education system do to avert or minimise this ridiculous waste of human potential? Why does a system which purports to deal in the dissemination of knowledge force its consumers into making crucially important decisions during two of the most traumatic times of any life, namely, puberty and adolescence? Why should the direction of a human life be determined by the judgement of an official on the frantic scribblings of an anxious youth in a severely restricted time-span? Should a large number of rapidly-writing parrots be required, then change nothing! But if we seek to nurture the growth and development of people who possess self-esteem, self-confidence, genuine concern for others and the ability to get along well with most of them, then changes will have to be made in the methods, attitudes and emphases in our formal system of education.

What is your opinion of yourself? How do you assess your value? If you live with approval, you can learn to like yourself. However, approval is not very forthcoming, or is reserved for a select few, those regarded as winners. Institutes of education at every level, encourage competition between individuals or groups of individuals. We realise that careful participation in sporting activities can bring benefits to the human body. But the healthy aspects of sports have been distorted, the free spirit of games imprisoned, and participants forced into rivalry with one another. Mental abilities, too, are assessed using competitive criteria. Who is best or worst or clinging to some percentage point in between? How is a 'pass' mark chosen? You leave the formal education system with the weight of other people's opinions of, and attitudes towards you, pushing aside your ability to assess yourself. What is success, anyway? Who defines it? Have you ever decided, in your own terms, what you would regard as success?

Schools and homes tend to be factories of unhappiness. If you've been the victim of relentless criticism, you will find it easy to condemn. You will incline towards shyness if you have been consistently ridiculed. An environment dominated by hostility is the breeding ground for those who, eventually, seek to resolve every situation of disagreement by a fight. The education system, the news media, and the managers of many businesses have one characteristic in common: they highlight people's frailties and failures ('Not Good Enough'; 'Miners Lose Fight'; 'Poor Sales Figures'). Philosophers, theologians and thinkers down the ages have emphasised the power of both faith and positive thought. But twentieth-century man has been deceived into believing that he is the highest form of life, that God is an obsolete concept, and that happiness is attainable through the acquisition of material things. We are encouraged, by poorly designed social infrastructure and commercial vested interests, to dodge our responsibilities and avoid any form of effort or work. All of these deceptions lead to recurring disappointments, a general feeling of unhappiness and fundamental insecurity.

Regardless of their outward appearance, human beings are beset by fears and apprehensions. Fear causes worry, which, in turn, makes people tense and nervous, affecting the stomach's nerves and juices, frequently leading to the formation of stomach ulcers in adults. Prevention, of course, is always better than cure. Unfortunately, little attention seems to be paid to the prevention of anxiety states in people. Fears create barriers to a person's development and erode the ability to learn. Initially, a baby probes and evaluates the surrounding world without fear. But the extraordinary capacity for learning and intellectual growth demonstrated by the vast majority of infants in their first three years is either damaged or destroyed by adults who make them afraid. By making children afraid of not doing what other people want, of not pleasing, of making mistakes, of failing, or being wrong, we also force them to fear risk-taking, experimentation, and attempting the difficult and unknown. The degree of ingenuity shown by someone meeting a new situation or problem is an indication of their real intelligence. An intelligent person has a positive attitude which pervades the thought processes over which he has control. The bodily senses provide information which is disseminated and forms the basis of the various reaction options. Decisions are then made, resulting in a course of action. Self-confidence is built by experiencing a series of minor successes, and learning from each failure. But fears can curtail the achievement of self-confidence by crushing an individual's natural curiosity and any desires to

pioneer new ground. Educators should attempt to reduce all such deterrents to the fulfilment of human potential.

Even though fears may be removed from the potential learner, it is inevitable that some subjects will be more appealing than others. Motivation is the most effective key to education. Educators should seek the true interests of each individual student and make subjects relevant, useful and interesting. The nature of the human mind is such that we remember facts only for as long as we need to. Students who are forced to memorise items for a specific examination will be unable to recall a large proportion of them within a relatively short period of time following their sitting. Thus, much of the mass of details taught in schools is made redundant, and, furthermore, the under- lying general concepts may have been obscured by the intricacies. Adults decide what children ought to know, but in a school free of the aforementioned fears and other restrictions, each child can learn what he or she most needs to know. This type of learning results in permanent memorization and a willingness to apply the new body of knowledge. We should encourage curiosity and guide it towards understanding rather than promote the mere retrieval of unconnected facts. We should nurture the ability to think for oneself rather than tell people what to think.

A person's problem-solving ability is considerably assisted by clear thinking, allied to a keen sense of awareness. Since our environment consists of everything that surrounds us other than ourselves, we are only truly aware of our environmental circumstances when each of our senses is heightened, and the brain taught how to extract meaningful information from the many signals it receives.

In the choice of audio-visual aids we must acknowledge that no one communications medium is an educational panacea with the ability to put across with absolute efficiency any message on any subject to any learner. Especially, we must realise that neither video-tape nor the varieties of computer program sources can achieve this ideal. But we should seek to match the learner to subjects and techniques of greatest value to him, as an individual human being, via the most appropriate medium or combination of media. The ever-accelerating rate of flow of incoming information creates problems for a teaching system which involves subject curricula based on obsolete textbooks. Frequently, textbooks are found to present their information in a dull, lifeless style, whereas an enthusiastic teacher will infuse his subject with a dynamic, stimulating quality. He will be a salesman of interesting facts and concepts. A commonly-used sales sequence is to gain the potential client's attention, hold their interest, then persuade them to make a decision and act on it. Salesmen, advertisers, and teachers are in the persuasion business. The truly effective ones realise that stimulation, not coercion, is the key to a locked mind.

What official incentive is there to release children (and adults) from their mental bonds? In the United Kingdom, at the time of writing, apparently very little. Successive governments seem to have been aware that if the population received real education it would soon be quite clear to them that their administrators had been either grossly ignorant or highly negligent (or both). Every government administration is short-sighted. Each one, regardless of political party, staggers from one term of office to another, making eloquent excuses for not implementing election pledges. Meanwhile, our greatest resource continues to be wasted. Our vast national reservoir of human potential has been repressed, distorted and condemned to feebly trickle out as subservient mediocrity.

Feminist Footnote: The words 'man', 'mankind', 'he' as used in this context apply equally to the male and female genders of the human race.

Alison Northcott
Pupil, Public High
School for Girls

To me, the actual theory of educating a being sufficiently to survive and understand the world around him/her is a very good idea, but the practice that this theory materializes as does not match up to itself.

I think that far too much time is spent on enforcing rules, standards and biased views, whereas this precious time could be used to benefit the being in question.

The present day education system in Plymouth is basically a shambles in my point of view, giving the minority of pupils a better chance of education than others, has to be wrong when this chance rests on about one hour out of the being's entire life, e.g. the 11 plus system now mercifully but slowly being phased out.

Everybody should have a completely equal opportunity to develop skills and gain qualifications whether comprehensive or grammar, girl or boy.

Most grammar schools in Plymouth do not offer equal opportunities for both sexes and the school I attend is a perfect example of such sexism. The only subjects that are 'considered as boys' which are taught at my school are physics and control technology. This example just shows the old fashioned and pathetic way that some 'authority people' still think about equal opportunities for school pupils.

When my school closes down I will be extremely relieved to know that no other child could enter in my place into such an unfair system of education and I will be very glad to see Plymouth give up its ancient system (if it ever achieves such a goal that it should be aiming for).

A Very Cursory
and Necessarily Limited View

Sister Marie Nugent
Former Sister Superior
of Notre Dame Convent

Education must necessarily be a developing process. It should concern itself with the whole person - body, mind and spirit. It should be universal, that is, available to all at all times; and it should be suitable for the person at the moment of time he is in and be relevant to his education.

Education is not a pouring in, but is a bringing out and fulfilling process. It begins at birth and continues to the end of life. Unfortunately, education has often been confused with schooling. If a person has gone through the system - primary, secondary, higher - then frequently that person is looked upon as educated. What about those who have never been touched by school? Are they to be termed uneducated?

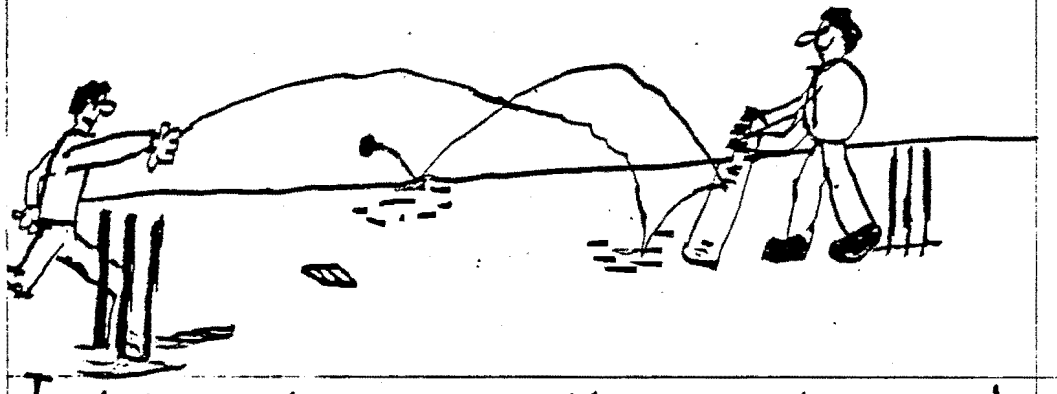
Sadly, education has come to be looked upon in terms of "qualifications". People are so often valued for what they have - mentally, physically, not for what they are in themselves. Education should begin in the family context, and the young should be led along, absorbing from things and people about them, what they can grasp and understand. They should receive what is right for them at each moment of being, and this is what I mean by a just education. The whole person must be seen to be developing and receiving help to develop, physically, mentally, spiritually.

We are all free beings, and education must foster man's inner freedom. True education should lead to a fuller awareness of self, and of others. It should prepare the individual to live a life fully in the society of other individuals.

Ideally, the school situation should help to develop a self- esteem and esteem for others. It is necessary for basic skills to be taught so that each one's life may be enriched. Therefore the one being educated must be the centre of consideration - what are his needs, his gifts, his shortcomings? The school must edu- cate to improve quality of life. Does it merely educate to fit the unfortunate young into our present form of society? Is the school geared to develop freedom, and a sense of responsibility which helps to reveal each person's dignity and each one's rights?

Education should be a continuing process which is helping to build up a worthwhile society, where each man's dignity, each man's pride is respected. Does the school pander to those who seek only academic result and forget that the young need help to develop emotionally and spiritually, to express themselves freely and with joy in many different dimensions? The school that helps the young to live together in love, that creates a caring community where all forms of discrimination are frowned on; where the less able, the less educable, the under privileged feel at home - such a school is surely a preparation for real life where everyone has a right to share as part of the human family, part of the family of God.

What a responsibility, and what power is in the hands of the educators. They must respect and be sensitive to the needs of the pupil. Systems may enslave, but good will, concern and sensitivity can conquer systems. Of the good teacher, God asks only this: "to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah, 6, 8).



I like playing Criket and rounders and football but I don't like doing Decimals very much. I don't mind doing times tables as long as their on the wall.

OLLY

Museums and Education

Ian O'Riordan
Former Assistant
Keeper of Art,
Plymouth City Museum
and Art Gallery

In the public consciousness, museums are irrefutably linked with education, but they must surely be one of the most under-used resources in this country. Their popular image is that of slightly tired and worn out public institutions, faded and crumbling a bit around the edges. With the vast amounts of research available into the processes of learning, museums could offer a range of active and passive teaching experiences to the whole community.
Not only could they teach what is traditionally expected of a museum education service, but they could break new ground by exploring creative ways of experiencing and interpreting the world in which we live.

In this country only about 24% of the population visit museums with any recurring frequency. This 24% tends to be the most affluent, socially mobile and highly educated sector of the community. This bears out the accusation that is often levelled at museums by traditional socialists - that they are elitist institutions, perpetuating the status quo, being created by the wealthy for the wealthy. In contrast, museums in the United States and Canada, which are more materially affluent societies than our own, are visited by up to 50% of the general public. In this country a great many museums, especially those in the provinces and those specialising in the fine and decorative arts, tend to make themselves unapproachable to the majority of people, assuming a level of knowledge and education that is far above the general average.

This manifests itself in a great many art exhibitions. The paintings are hung with a label beside them, on which only the name of the artist and the subject of the painting will be listed. Additionally, a large and dauntingly complex catalogue may be available for sale at a price that the majority of people cannot afford. As likely as not, there will be no information displayed about the artist, the place and society in which s/he lived, the subject of the works, the way in which s/he worked and the relevance of the works to other works of art and art movements. Even though this will have been collated in the production of the catalogue and would only cost a marginal amount in expense and effort compared to the total exhibition budget, it will not be freely available to the visiting public, who are quite likely to have paid an entrance fee to the exhibition.

Moreover, there will be little or no attempt on the part of the curatorial or teaching staff of the museum or art gallery, to explain to interested visitors, school parties or any other groups, why the exhibition was chosen, its special relevance, why they personally enjoy the works, and why a child of six could not have done just as well. The lack of public accountability of both curatorial staff and the artists themselves does give a great deal of freedom of action. At the same time, every attempt should be made to explain works of art in non-financial terms, discouraging a perception of art values that is purely based on a capitalist market system.

The majority of museums were founded during the first Museum Boom of the late 19th century, when money and patronage was available from successful capitalists who could afford to be philanthropic towards the community as a whole. Museums were set up as places where the ordinary working man could improve his knowledge, and so his chance of self improvement, while his wife could gaze enviously at beautiful old china, and the children could gape incredulously at strange wonders from distant cultures. Also the vast paintings of the Victorian period fulfilled a visual and narrative function that was later superceded by cinema and television.

Plymouth was at the tail end of the first Museum Boom, the Municipal Museum and Art Gallery being founded in 1887 and moving to the new building in Tavistock Road in 1910, opening on 24th October that year. The curiosity of the inhabitants was not unnaturally aroused by this new development, and over 54,000 people visited the institution in the two months remaining that year. The museum also had a commendable education policy, in that it expected every Elementary School child to have made a formal visit to it at least three times during their school career. Today the same building is lucky if it receives more than 60,000 visitors a year, has no formal education policy, receives no money from the education authority and is a living example of what many people think of as a 'boring old museum'.

While Plymouth City Council and Devon County Council will hopefully not allow the Plymouth museums to gradually rot into the 21st century, knowledge about the learning processes is revolutionising museums in other parts of the country. The 1980s seem to be witnessing a second Museum Boom, where the whole range of museum functions and roles is being critically examined, both within the museum profession itself and by its critics, social scientists, educationalists, economists, and artists and designers. The changes taking place are well exemplified by the Hall of Human Biology in the British Museum, Natural History. This has been set out so that the casual visitor to the museum can wander in and find out about the processes that make people function as biological machines. It is designed so that the visitor has a part to play in the exhibition, with demonstrations, physical and mental tests - all part of the process that makes interactive learning interesting. The Victorian concept of learning through threat has been abandoned in favour of the idea

that people will only learn what they are interested in, and that there are no specific limits to what people can become interested in if the material is attractively presented.

Another idea that is central to the role of museums is that everyone does, all the time, pick up a lot of casual information, without being particularly aware of it. The old concept that a rigid formalised structure is necessary for learning has been dropped in favour of people learning randomly and spontaneously within a loosely organised framework. Recent research into the seemingly random operation of brain functions, especially when dreaming, tend to affirm this view. In the same way a casual visitor to a museum will learn something just be seeing an object, not formalised facts but a sensation of shape, colour or age that is picked up by the visual senses.

Museums and art galleries have a major responsibility in helping form people's attitudes and awareness towards both the past and art, and consequently life in general, and their own and other societies in particular. While this is the passive side of museum education, the active role of museums in teaching people is also of major importance. The difference between learning history just out of a text book and, for example, being shown a recreation of an 18th century kitchen is immense. While some conceptual framework is necessary to provide an understanding of the past, the use of particular authentic objects from that past, of the type held in museums, gives that sense of tangible reality that history books can only suggest. In this way museums can function as an important resource in the teaching of a variety of subjects and to a whole range of age and ability levels.

Art is a response to life, and has a special validity in that it exists as visible, visual artefacts and not as written language. A painting shows a reality that has existed and as such is a valid document, of one person's response both to the cultural framework of their period as well as a response to a particular scene, time or emotion. But the majority of people in this country today are practically visually illiterate. Just as you would not expect a child who has not been taught to read to be able to understand this page of printed text, why should you expect an adult who has had no training in visual understanding and perception to have a sympathetic attitude towards abstract painting? While we are taught to listen to sounds for pleasure in the form of music, as well as for information in the form of spoken language, we are not taught to use our eyes for visual pleasure but only to gather useful visual information. Everyone is able to recognise a beauty spot when they are out in the countryside, but people are not taught to perceive clearly and without prejudice their immediate surroundings. The art of this century is very much a critical examination of the world we live in. The story of its development is both intellectually exciting and extremely complex. It is unfair on both artists and the general public to put on an exhibition of modern art and expect it to be sympathetically received without any attempt at explanation.

Every school in this country today has its own computer, but no education authority treats art and visual education with the same seriousness. Matisse, on writing about his first experience of painting at the age of twenty, said, "... then I was free, solitary, quiet." Art should provide a special contemplative space in our modern society and should teach the ability to see the world in which we live in clearly and without fear. Children are taught painting both before and at primary school and the creative process is totally forgotten once they have to start thinking about the adult world. But it is the child-like quality of so many of the great 20th century painters that we most cherish. If society is going to develop as more caring, more aware and more supportive, it is through giving an importance to the inner as well as the material life, by giving credence to visual perception as well as spoken language, and by believing in values that are human and emotive as well as financial and logical. Museums and art galleries should be playing a vital role in re- educating people in the post-industrial age.

Education Today

C.S. Ostermeyer
Former Governor,
Southway School

Education must be a constantly evolving requirement as society responds to the pressures of modern day living. Children no longer have the undivided attention of mothers who now work outside the home. Similarly with the advent of modern travel, greater mobility and independence, grandparents are no longer the once steady and regular source of older companions. Although supplemented to some degree by television, home education with parental participation seems to have diminished. There is, as a result, an even greater need for thoughtful tuition by well qualified, caring teachers, who should be retrained regularly so as to be in tune with social change. Very simply, everyone when young should be encouraged to prepare themselves as citizens of the world. Emphasis should be on those subjects which stimulate the mind in such a way that all levels of comprehension are reached. The motivation of young people is vital, if they are to grow up without a sense of frustration. Children have a natural eagerness when encouraged; their inclination to express themselves by drawing and colouring at a very young age, is just one indication of natural ability without any inhibitions. This should not be stifled by discipline or over-emphasis on any particular subject, however worthy in an academic sense. Much subject matter taught in a general way probably has very little impact on a child's future life.

Education at the present time does not appear to be fulfilling society's needs. Teachers, parents, employers must be seen to be working more closely together in the community so that children are more conscious of what is expected of them in return.

All must contribute more meaningfully if children are to respect and appreciate the totality of effort required of them if they are to achieve that sense of satisfaction of resultant success.

Provision should be made to ensure that education is financed in such a way that all understand that this is the most important investment a nation can make in order to ensure the development of a healthy society. The careful selection and training of teachers, adequacy of staff subject to regular appraisals, and, of course, the provision of suitable premises should be pre-requisites of any education system where all-out effort is the goal.

As to curricula, these should be carefully constructed towards the future needs of everyone - not simply directed to academic prowess - and to encourage the widest field of learning in a pupil's formative years.

Is Mathematics Useful?

David Owen
County Advisor for
Primary Mathematics

Throughout history there has been a conflict between mathematics seen as a subject growing out of economic and social necessity and the view that mathematics has a purity which transcends mere practicality. Euclid, when asked by a slave what he would get by learning geometry, offered him a coin of low value so that he could gain from what he learned! More recently, G.H. Hardy, in 'A Mathematician's Apology' (Cambridge, 1948), said, "I have never done anything useful. No discovery of mine has been made, or is likely to make, directly, or indirectly, for good or ill, the least difference to the amenity of the world." A contrary position was taken by Robert Recorde writing in 1540 in which he suggests that:

"If number be lacking it maketh men dumbe
So that to most questions they must answer NUM"

To a certain extent these three great mathematicians miss the point - mathematical knowledge exists within a social and cultural context. Thus, much of Robert Recorde's arithmetical work became less useful with the development of logarithms in the 18th century, and totally redundant with the advent of modern calculating devices. In contrast, Hardy's work does have practical applications in the modern world and may have even more powerful influences in the future.

It is inappropriate in this brief paper to consider the nature of mathematics in any detail - suffice it to say that the subject is made by men and exists only in their minds. The power of the subject, in fact, lies in this abstract nature, which enables structures to be applied in a variety of contexts. Sometimes this application is concerned with exploring and explaining the natural and man-made world. A simple numerical sequence developed by Leonardo of Pisa (Fibonacci) in the 13th century has links with, amongst other things, the Acropolis, the shape of writing paper, snail shells, flower petals, the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci and the architectural work of Le Corbusier! In a more ordinary context, all of us form simple mathematical models to help us deal with everyday happenings. For example, given that I know that $3 \times 2 = 6$, I can use this when I am buying: 3 boxes of chocolates at #2 a box, 20 metres of material at #3 a metre, and 3 metres of material at #20 a metre. I can also estimate the cost of 3 gallons of petrol at #1.87 a gallon and how far I will travel in two hours at approximately 30 m.p.h. Although I would not wish to subscribe to the Pythagorean view of mathematics as magic, the examples given show how the former can intrude into an area normally seen as the province of the latter. They could all be concerned with prediction. In the end, it is only mathematics that can provide us with data that enables us to predict the safety of a suspension bridge. It is only mathematics that can save Venice from a watery grave.

How, then, do these issues relate to the mathematical education of young children? Two major corner stones of modern educational thought are that pupils must understand the work they are tackling and be able to make effective application of their knowledge. This is well expressed in the Cockcroft Report ('Mathematics Counts', HMSO, 1982) as follows:

> "Most important of all is the need to have sufficient confidence to make effective use of whatever skill and understanding is needed - whether this be little or much."

To assist understanding it is now firmly established that mathematics, that most abstract of subjects, must be learned in a practical way, involving the use of first-hand experience relevant to the child. For example, earlier this century Dienes developed an elegant analogy to our system of writing numbers using blocks of wood. These are now widely used in schools to assist children to grasp the complexities of the system.

Other important concerns are to provide pupils with the opportunity to investigate, solve problems and to make discoveries in mathematics. The Association of Teachers of Mathematics argued in 'Notes on Mathematics in Primary Schools' (Cambridge, 1967) that there is no clear distinction between a mathematician inventing new mathematics and a child learning mathematics which is new to him. In this sense, mathematics can only be learnt by being created or re-created.

It is best, perhaps, to finish with two examples which demonstrate these points with the additional thought that mathematics is best learnt in a group setting through interaction with others. The first example is concerned with a possible way of involving a group of children in an activity leading towards the establishment of Euler's Formula. In 1735 Euler proved that for every polyhedron (a solid which is bounded by flat surfaces

only - such as a cube or a pyramid) the sum of the number of faces and vertices is always two more than the number of edges (an edge is the straight line where two faces meet and a vertex is the corner where a number of edges meet). This can be expressed symbolically as:

$$V + F = E + 2$$

This is probably quite boring to most people when given as a piece of straight information. However, enormous excitement can be created in children if:

1. They are allowed to handle a fairly large number of polyhedra (say 20) and discuss them with other children. They may have been involved previously in making some of these polyhedra.

2. They are invited to record in a table the number of vertices, faces and edges for each shape.
3. They are asked to discuss with their friends any patterns in the table.

4. They are asked to forecast (say) the number of edges in a shape given the number of faces and the number of vertices.

In most cases in a class of ten or eleven year olds some pupils will discover Euler's relationship in one form or another. Enormous satisfaction can be obtained through a rediscovery of a mathematical relationship first developed by a master mathematician. Similar approaches could be used to rediscover, for example, the probability theories of Blaise Pascal, the French mathematician who was highly motivated by his desire to win at the card table!

My second example relates to a classroom incident, where a six year old actually invented his own mathematics. I was talking to a group of six year olds who were working in a classroom shop when (for some bizarre reason) it became necessary to subtract six from two. I asked the children, "What do you think 2 - 6 might be?" Almost all of them responded very quickly with, "Four!" and then equally quickly with, "Oh, no, it's not, is it!?" I was just beginning to regret asking such a barmy question when one six year old said, "I think it's 0, 0, 0, 0, 0!" Some might think that a silly question deserves a silly answer, but in fact the boy concerned made a huge intellectual jump. He realised that the numbers that he knew were inadequate in relation to the problem and it was therefore necessary to invent a new system of numbers for answering such questions. He knew that 2 - 2 = 0 and invented his system which would give:

2 - 3 = 0, 0
2 - 4 = 0, 0, 0
2 - 5 = 0, 0, 0, 0
2 - 6 = 0, 0, 0, 0, 0

Joslyn Owen, C.B.E.
Chief Education Officer
Devon

Learning is a process which we cannot avoid. We go through it more consciously, and with a greater sense of purpose, at some periods of our lives than others. To enjoy learning is a realisation which comes slowly - as is the respect for those who help us to learn.

In my own early life the stages came one after another: I had to learn, I came to enjoy it and I respected those who taught me well. After becoming a teacher I felt that keen pleasure which comes from being able to teach some things adequately. More keen still was the pleasure of watching children learn, opening up their minds, digesting everything and making it part of themselves. But after teaching classics to very clever boys - for five or six years - two other realisations emerged: one was that the real excitement would come when these pupils came near to the edge of their capacity. Everything they learned at school was well within that range: the full challenge would be faced later, when they worked for degrees or did research. Second, the business of learning in the classroom began to show itself as being only part of the process. As a tutor and then a house-master I saw that those items of learning which occur in lessons need to be supported: I began to realise that families, friends and other people interested in helping the process of growing up were as important as the teacher - and that opportunities to learn from others, to develop confidence and to understand how to live with each other had to be organised, arranged, and, in a word, administered.

Those are the early parts of my thinking and experience which partly explain the way I now work in education and the way I look at it. Learning is part of living, it needs to be under the hand of good teachers in the classroom and within a context of well-ordered support outside the classroom.

But other realisations grew: I moved away from the idea that learning was easy for everyone and that not to learn quickly or efficiently was in one way or another a matter simply of will. To draw benefit from education was not something which everyone found to be equally easy. That it should be made equally easy seemed impossible - but that the opportunity should be equal for everyone was not out of the question.

Equality of opportunity is an easy slogan. It took time for me to see the difficulty of making it a reality. Who your parents are, where you live, how well motivated you are, how intelligent you are and what is expected from you - all these questions began to take on a solid dimension. They came up time and time again as one looked at the differences between schools and localities, as one realised what money meant in buying good teachers, good books and good premises. And I began then to see that inequalities and the resources that are needed to equalise educational chances between people from different backgrounds and with different attitudes were a matter of political and economic thinking as well as of social concern and pedagogic quality.

This is some way away from the ideas with which I started but the questions to be answered are the same: good learning comes from good teaching and from good support. But by now I know that that support is drawn from any number of sources not all of which can be a matter of organisation and administration. Friendships and families have an immeasurable influence and they in turn are helped or hindered from other directions, not least from the media. What is out of the question is the attempt to channel, to direct and, from the position of an outsider, to shape other people's lives by manipulating the influences which work on them. Almost equally out of the question is the attempt to nullify influences which seem to impede people's development and to destroy their capacity or their enjoyment in learning - almost out of the question, but not quite. Since I believe that the forces which work for people's good can, if they are spotted in time and are well marshalled, do something to cancel out the influences which stop them from developing their ability to live a full life.

This underlines two messages from one who is responsible for any part of education: the positive part of the work must always outweigh those aspects which are defensive, frustrating or are a matter of locking the stable door too late. Hindsight is a poor encourager. Second, there are very many ways of improving education, of making access to it easier, of taking it further and - constantly - of making opportunities for everyone as just and as equitable as one can. There are many ways of doing these things and most of them have not yet been thought of. So, alongside being positive and just and supportive, the educator must give equal importance to good ideas - at the stage when they are still ideas.

To believe in innovation sometimes looks like restlessness or the chasing after fashionable phantoms. But the more acceptable side of it is the readiness to weigh new ideas seriously, to work out how to try them in practice and to give encouragement to people who have ideas - preferably good ones. Unless we believe that those parts of education have not yet been invented which are going to be important to the children of pupils who are in this generation still going through the process of formal schooling, there is little hope. There must be development and there must be growth both in ideas and in good practice.

To be open-minded, to be ready to weigh up the benefits of change, to encourage good teaching and to organise the structure of education in as efficient and uncluttered a way as possible requires the educator himself to remain fresh, open and unprejudiced. This tall order can only partly be met - and even then not from inside the profession of education alone. It is important to try to understand how learning is itself advancing in the spheres of both the academic and the artist. It is important to struggle for the comprehension of what is new. It is important to know about the way society is moving and, as far as possible, not simply to know but to do something about it.

Finally, the world is small. Countries do not differ very much in their philosophies or aims of education. They do differ in their practices. They differ in the amount of energy, political and social importance and money which they devote to education. But nowhere, it seems, can it truly thrive unless learning is treated as something which is part of the whole of one's life, unless it is respected as a continuing and crucial activity and unless it is given all the support, formal or informal, which the educator and his friends can muster.

Hickory Stick Education

Marjorie Kyle Palla
Former U.S. Exchange Student,
Religion and Theology
B.A. Humanities;
present Manager,
antiquarian bookstore,
Washington D.C.

When asked to write a few words on education, a childhood chant came to mind. This chant is actually an American folk song by Will D. Cobb and Gus Edwards.

School days, school days, dear old Golden Rule days,
Reading and writing and 'rithmetic,
Taught to the tune of a hick'ry stick ...

Education starts almost before we are born and as far as we know, may not ever stop. I cannot claim to know what is good for anyone else, therefore it seems inappropriate to comment on what I feel is right or wrong about formal education. There is, however, one point that I would like to make.

From my experiences in many different schools and colleges, I have reached a conclusion that schools and their teachers are geared to teaching in the way that they feel is best for the students. I think that schools should concentrate on helping the child/adolescent/young adult find out what method is best for each of them, and encourage, rather than discourage, each pupil to use that method.

When I started to discover the form of education that suited me the best, it didn't coincide with the 'standard' form of education in my country, and I don't think it would have here either. So, I was told that I was wrong, and, of course, I believed what I was told - at least for a while. I then continued going to classes and daydreaming. I continued studying for exams the night before, passing them, and then forgetting everything. It wasn't until recently - within the past few months - that I really have begun to enjoy education.

History, classical novels, politics and economics have all stopped being a form of punishment and started being enjoyable. I am no longer in a school or college setting, and I am just beginning to learn about all the things that I neglected before because I was being forced to do them. I am learning because I want to, and not because my teachers, parents, employers and peers feel I should.

This form of education is certainly not right for everyone, and may not be right for anyone else. But each person needs to find his/her own way of getting the most out of an education and life. Please let them do it!

The 'hick'ry stick' mentioned earlier was a form of punishment that is now obsolete in most countries. Is it truly obsolete, or just hiding under some disguise?

Councillor Mrs Connie Pascoe
Vice Chairman, Youth &
Community Education Sub-Committee
Devon County Council.;City Council
Representative on Western area
Advisory Committee.;Conservative
Spokesman for Education Matters.

It is my opinion that there has been a larger breakthrough in the concept of Community Education than in any other sphere of education today. The reluctant and somewhat hesitant steps towards the acceptance that the pace of life in this technologial age is every increasing are beginning to be felt. The fact that we are now accepting that it will probably be necessary to retrain the majority of the working population of this country at least twice in their working life means that a great deal more expertise is now needed in Options and Career Guidance than ever before. I find very exciting the move towards accents in life skills. The old concept that the final goal in education is the attainment of a University Degree from the granting of which all job prospect problems are solved, is no longer the answer. Teachers are becoming more and more bound to take an active part in what goes on in commerce and industry than ever before in order to keep themseves and their pupils, of whatever age, up to date in the rapidly changing skills of life today.

Since the advent of higher unemployment more students are staying on at school and this is changing the whole concept of 'Sixth Form' education. Now not only are the usual 'O' and 'A' levels being undertaken but one now finds Vocational Studies are being called for; indeed, some authorities are stressing the need for Vocational Sixth Forms. Students can now be seen studying at school or under the auspices of their school, such aspects as City and Guilds trade work, Youth Training, and Work Experience, frequently travelling from school to school in order to take a specialised subject; a complete 'break away' from the very rigid style of education one tends to associate with 'staying on at school'.

This country has always featured very badly in the youth training field compared with, say, West Germany, for example, but I believe it to be improving fast. I trust that when the current recession is finally over we will not allow ourselves to slip back from what we have achieved.

Apprenticeship training, the well tried system of educating our tradesmen, is being gradually re-structured partly because it has been found to be far too expensive and partly because of the need to be far more flexible. This must surely be a good thing.

The concept of Community Colleges, where the classroom door is seen to be opening to all ages, is another interesting development. One sees more and more examples of adults and children sharing classrooms. With falling school rolls and more and more adults needing to retrain, this is surely a most sensible way to utilise our resources. I have seen many examples of old and young working quite happily together on many subjects. An excellent example of this is in Computer Skills, where the old are learning from the more adaptable young. The social consequences of this are immense. I am convinced that the more the genera- tions are involved together, the greater the understanding, and with that comes more tolerance and recognition of each others' problems.

Colleges of Further Education are another area of education which is rapidly breaking through the traditional barriers. Using the systems of 'Open Tech.', which is geared to the needs and time of the student and accepts skills already acquired as an 'entree' to courses, rather than sticking to the principle of the 'must have 'O' levels before going on' brigade, is changing the whole concept of Further Education. Once we have solved the professional problems in the distinction between instructing and lecturing, the possibilities of this system are endless.

The whole field of Youth Training is giving opportunities to youngsters nowadays who would never have considered, or who could never have been able, to take extra training after school. I have yet to be convinced that it was necessary to hand the whole programme over to the Manpower Services Commission, who, with the best will in the world, appear to be out of their depth when it comes to the monitoring of standards of training. I hope it will be realised that unless these standards are maintained, and what better way of doing so than by using tried and tested bodies like our Colleges of Further Education, we could lose those Colleges. If that happens, standards are bound to fall.

Finally, the whole field of Youth Clubs which operates under the banner of the Local Education Authority has changed. Not so long ago, one associated Youth Clubs with table tennis, drama and discos. Now, activities are on a much broader pattern, with activities ranging from the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme, Outward Bound schools, a comprehensive range of sports, Youth Orchestras, and a growing involvement in community work. The clubs themselves are nearly all now known as Youth and Community Centres, with Community Education Tutors in charge, who are also responsible for the day-to-day running of a

host of other activities such as Mother and Baby Clubs, Old Folk Clubs, Drop In centres for the young unemployed, and for many other aspects of community work.

Some people see education in the future taking place more and more in the home with everything one needs being provided by a computer linked with a national network. I sincerely hope that this will never happen. Education and life skills are about people communicating. The closer one is in a community the more one understands the other's point of view and the more tolerant one becomes. I hope that as we gain more expertise, we will never forget the old values of relationships which are to me what community education is all about.

Ronald Allan Perry
Head Teacher
Woodfield Primary School

One of the questions I frequently ask at an interview for a new teacher is: "What do you feel that you can contribute to the staffroom?" The resultant answers are generally illuminating as to how the interviewee sees the role of the staffroom within the school. Answers range (usually) from very serious responses - "I feel able to contribute towards discussion upon profound educational matters of the day" - to "Well, I am not at all sure." One of the key words I wait for in an answer is "humour", and it is surprising how little I hear it, for teachers are generally (at least at interviews!) a very serious group of people.

Yet the education of young people should be a much more happy happening than it often appears. Gradually, new appointments to a school (at least this one) do shake off the interview image of total seriousness in the application of their job within the school and they become a better educator. Children do respond more positively towards an adult who is able to be more in tune with the real world of the child, rather than the children who are continually confronted by teachers who have (or appear to have) little or no knowledge of the world outside a building called a school. Quite often these teachers are a dual person, that is conveying what they consider to be the "publicly acceptable image" of a teacher while at the school and away from the school a different person.

This ambivalence is important to recognise - for the people at the receiving end of such a person (i.e. the pupils) most surely do. Children are remarkably perceptive in summing up a new teacher and adjusting their responses automatically. But is this picture of the teacher a personally inflicted one or is it the result of something else?

I believe it is quite often something else - namely, the structure of learning within a school. Please don't interpret my thoughts that a school should ideally be a crossbreed between a holiday camp and certain popular T.V. quiz shows. No, but the structure generally should be taking much more note of the real worlds the pupils live in and will go into in the future. If this is not possible, is it because of lack of knowledge by the teachers of such worlds - how many teachers have trod the path of school, further education, teaching post? So is it, then, that such teachers feel "safer" in applying a more traditional role to their everyday work? Or is it because of an external imposition upon the curriculum from other sources - e.g. examinations or parents?

I believe that the curriculum can be more realistic to the needs of children yet still encompass "traditional" elements. Children do need to acquire skills of literacy and numeracy for their world, yet how often are they faced with totally inadequate ways of achieving such skills? The race to become good at the basic skills frequently leads to neglect of skills that children generally already have and are crying out to be deveoped by teachers. Language, artistic and athletic talents are there but frequently pushed underneath the child's surface or relegated to afternoon sessions at school - i.e. "we do the real work in the morning" syndrome. This is immoral, for children's natural talents are of a communicative nature, yet many in education of a supposedly learned quality ignore this fact when designing and implementing a curriculum.

Children should be encouraged to express themselves in a whole variety of ways, yet often are requested to sit still and quiet so as to listen to a delivery about some matter unconnected to the real worlds of the listeners. Is it, then, a surprise that some children "switch off" their capacity for achievement? I do not believe it should come as a surprise to any thinking adult when it does occur. All too often I am saddened when former pupils return to see me shortly after they have left the Primary School to complain of "boredom" and being treated "like a baby" at that new place of learning. What chance for many of them in their remaining years of compulsory education? Their naturalness for learning, hopefully seized upon and developed at the primary stage, is curtailed by many at the secondary stage, but for what reason? Can the examination-dominated curriculum be the reason? But can the objectives be achieved by some other means, perhaps with pupils' co-operation instead of so much apparent antagonism? In many fields of secondary education, the answer is, "Yes, it can".

A school should be a vibrant place that children, teachers and all parties involved in education create together, not a place that is continually under siege from one section or dominated by another. Education is about people, an inter- reaction of minds, with knowledge and experiences to challenge life. Teachers are told to "prepare children for the world they are going into". How much of the present curriculum in schools does that?

A wing and
a prayer in a
cleft of rocks

Education
(A Bourgeois Ideology)

Alan Phillips
Senior Lecturer
School of Architecture
Plymouth Polytechnic

It is the duty of Government to provide an education for its people, that in its structure and curriculum, provides, as far as is possible, an equal opportunity for all. That is, an equal opportunity for each child to express an ambition - no matter how naive - and have that ambition served and nourished with knowledge and skills. Within the status quo of centralised Government, there is too great a temptation to have ignorance sustain power, and to design an educational policy that replaces like with like, whereby a sort of political dynasty can exist. Systems of pre-determined socio-economic selection, based more on political sympathies than on academic excellence prevail at all stages of education to such an extent and across so many persuasions that the idea of education as an existential phenomenon is as abstract and ridiculous as the notion of egalitarianism. But if there is to be cultural development that responds, not to a political climate but a societal zeitgeist, free of pedagogy and dogma, the whole notion of our childrens' minds being "governed" by a biased power system must be abolished in favour of a de- centralised and largely anarchic system. Anarchy does not necessarily lead to confusion and disorder. It is only because we have always been governed, that those jealous of their power try to frighten the public into believing the fictitious consequences of its absence. By de-centalisation, organised through an interregnum of apolitical philosophers, there could be designed a primary, secondary and tertiary process of education that, without prejudice to the a prioris of universalism, could provide a regional perspective, with children free to move from, say, a ruralist to an urbanist group as the nature of the intellect develops certain specificities that could be alien to the place of learning.

At present, education is confused with training. Government looks at education as an investment that, like all investments, reaps a return. So long as this view is self-sustained there is no education - only training. Education has for its object the formation of character. It wants no return. It "is" for its own sake. Education is morality. Training is expediency. There will never be a significant development in our cultural awareness if we continue to allow one to be confused with another. Indeed, for as long as training has primacy over education, the people will always be the property of other men's minds, and yet the process continues almost without complaint. Technology is replacing science, vocational courses are financed in favour of the arts and the abstract. Arithmetic pretends to be Mathematics, the computer replaces the philosopher, and the Library is called a Learning Resources Centre. Polytechnics treat Humanities like unwanted children and Architecture is to do with system building and project management. Primary schools call colours numbers, and from the age of eleven children are seen as marketable products rather than free-selves. Our duty to the spirit of the individual is to provide for a basis of independence - of thought, inquiry, speculation and action - independent, that is, from the coercions of state, authority, union and parent. The young mind must resist dogma and epistemology in favour of receiving the Theories of Ideas, from which can develop an intelligence and intellect free from prescribed ideologies of prejudicial opinion. Only then will there be a type of classlessness where thought replaces traditional values, and action replaces complacency. Accordingly the teacher or educator has to be the most important member of society. It is upon the teacher that the whole responsibility for our cultural development lies. Teachers must not be trained. A teacher is born. A teacher is a maieutic, serving to raise latent ideas into clear consciousness. They must be highly rewarded because, like the monk, they have dedicated their lives for the benefit of others. The teachers will be philosophers, poets, scientists, artists, musicians, and athletes. Then there will be no teachers, just a Gestalt - an organised whole of free subscription in which every person affects every other - the whole - which we could describe as culture and society, ultimately becoming greater than the sum of the parts. That is, the inverse of our current condition where the whole (what we might call "the nation") is certainly less in ethical, moral or intellectual terms than the majority of the parts that it comprises. If this reversal, or inversion, is called a revolution, then we must have a revolution!

> "There is no field of human activity in which talent plays so decisive a role, as in education.
>
> Only the talented educator, that is, a person with a flair for education, will respect and protect in a student the indescribable miracle of his or her humanity.
>
> Respect for the human being is the beginning and end of an education.
>
> Education is a bold venture - particularly in the arts, because it involves the creative spirit of man.
>
> Knowledge of human nature appears to me to be a gift essential to the true educator - who needs to recognise and be able to develop the natural talents and temperaments of those in his charge.

A teacher who communicates nothing but the syllabus laid down by the authorities, using methods he learnt at college, can be compared to a dispenser of pills made up according to prescription, who can never be a true physician."

Education

Professor J.E. Phythian
Staff Tutor, Mathematics,
Open University; First
Professor of Mathematics
at University of the
South Pacific, Fiji
(1984-1987)

As I look out over the blue Pacific ocean from the University of the South Pacific, Laucala Bay, Suva, Fiji Islands, I am thankful that it is 'education' that has enabled me to both make the break from the U.K. and given me the means of being able to support myself whilst over here.

Perhaps this summarises two of the vital results of an education: the curiosity to look further afield both in academic, domestic and geographic areas and also to provide a means of support in a currency which has an international value.

Perhaps you say that this is looking at the higher echelons of education and that as originally conceived, education is a training for living - learning the social, cultural and life- science knowledge of our society. That our society in Western Europe is fast changing means that education is not just a school/college/university experience - either it goes on for life or we opt out at some point short of death with traumatic consequences.

Some people feel so strongly that society is going the wrong way and that the young will be 'polluted' with the education that is on offer that they opt out for Alaska snow wastes or South Pacific primeval island life styles.

Although they make their protest - the rest of us have to live on with our Western culture and indeed we would ruin the 'loner's' solution if we joined them.

We ask if predetermined 'progress' is inevitable via the educational environment! The Minister of Education for the Fiji Islands tells me that he wants to put more micro-computers into Fiji schools and to enhance mathematics teaching therein. This will expand one area of education - will lift up job aspirations and will better fit those educated for a more technical job. But as well it will separate some young people from their traditional village community even more. I noticed this in my own Grammar School education near Ormskirk in Lancashire - most of what I learned was foreign to my yeoman farming parents and to that extent was a possible barrier.

How, then, can education claim to better fit us to go back to our communities to help them when it divides us from them and sometimes makes us foreigners to them and them to us? However, parents still insist on further education for their children because of the job possibilities. My mother put it another way - "You are educated, you will never be bored in life." How can a different form of education help prevent the mindless vandalism and savage youth incidents in our society?

Certainly the Indian idea of giving education to all-comers on the grounds that they will find something useful to do if they are educated has had some success - but it is the culture imbibed with the education that has helped to get this message across.

Certainly in Africa there are more job aspirations and even marriage aspirations for the educated, and until recently the aspirations did materialise. Some education officials in East Africa saw the dangers of widespread secondary education lading to much unemployment, disillusionment and possibly disorder. Certainly many Eastern European countries are very careful to choose those who will go on to further education from amongst the cadres of those committed to the present political regime, thus hoping to minimise any possible 'misuse' of education against the State.

Certainly education leads to freedom and so power, both to understand, to lead and to transform the lives of communities and nations, and a little can go a long way. In Uganda, if Amin had not had the experience of ousting the Kabaka (king) of Uganda in 1968, it is unlikely that he would have been confident enough to overthrow the Obote regime in 1971.

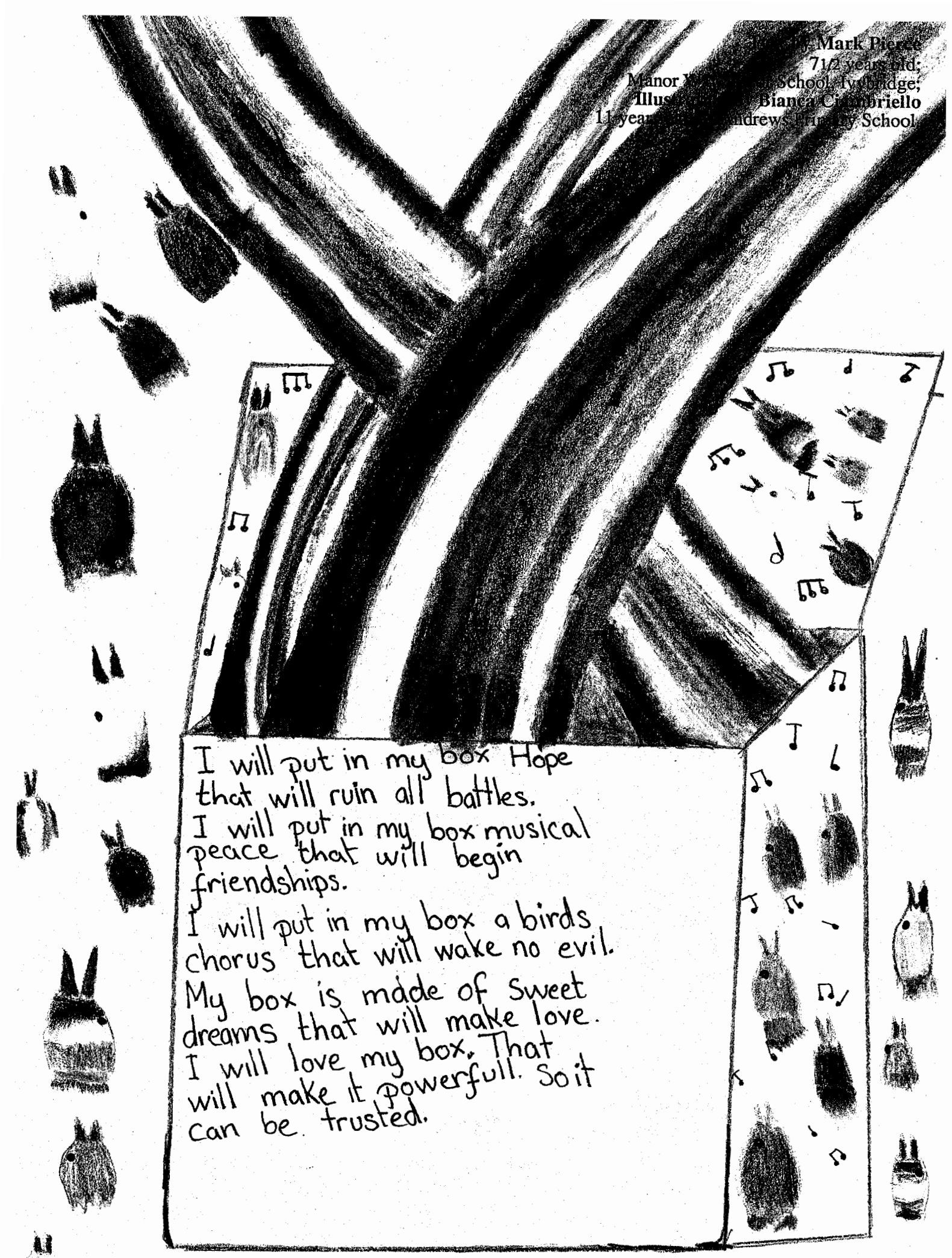
So although our school education is a beginning to prepare us for life in society it should also point out our cultural responsibilities to that society which has nurtured us thus far - perhaps this is where we in the West have fallen down badly. We teach too much academic cold-hearted facts, many of which are good maybe for specialists, but we fail to teach the things about our culture and society which matter most. Whilst no-one can question the value of $\sin 30^{\circ}$ there are moral problems, e.g. hydrogen bombs, racial tension, and care within our society which are left to amateurs, if at all.

Our educational system needs its specialist side, no doubt, but the handing on of our heritage and the attitudes of care and conern for our community are not taught. Indeed, in Western society we are taught to be individuals, to live if possible in an isolated way and develop ourselves in isolation from the community - no wonder that our product is a relatively isolated evo-centred individual.

We should bring back the teaching of many of the ideas of our culture and heritage, moral decisions both personal and in a community and where the power to maintain moral standards comes from - only I believe

from a deeply religious conviction and experience - something which schools have opted out from teaching - perhaps these are the hardest to teach because we are talking about a living example and not just the assimilation of hard facts.

Mark Pierce
7½ years old;
Manor [illegible] School, Ivybridge;
Illus[illegible] Bianca Ciambriello
11 years [illegible]ndrews Primary School



I will put in my box Hope
that will ruin all battles.
I will put in my box musical
peace that will begin
friendships.
I will put in my box a birds
chorus that will wake no evil.
My box is made of sweet
dreams that will make love.
I will love my box. That
will make it powerfull. So it
can be trusted.

A view

Ted Pinney, O.B.E.
Former Chairman of the
Devon Education Committee,
Present leader of the
Conservative Group,
Devon County Council

My own education was one which led me to value the broader opportunity which achievement at school gives to a great number of people. But my own experience was not one in which it was essential to have good education qualifications in order to succeed in life. That was something that came later. Even so, the capacity of those who are well-educated to be fair-minded and balanced in their judgements always impressed me. It is a strength which I would like to see the schools of today emphasizing in everything that they do.

Nowadays the fact that qualifications touch almost every single person before reaching the age of 21/22 puts a good deal of pressure on their families, their teachers and on young people themselves. I am glad that the range of qualifications which are available are becoming steadily wider and I hope that they do not become so confusing as to lose their value. Nothing is worse than that a young person's achievement should not be recognised for what it is.

How much each school can add to these people's achievements is a question which is debated with increasing frequency. The place of the family is given more recognition nowadays than it was in the past and the balance between the effect of the school and the effect of the home is now rather delicately judged. There will never be a substitute for a good home but equally there will never be a substitute for the influence of a good teacher.

The way in which the quality of teachers is judged varies. At the present time I am glad that it is thought to be essential that each teacher should present to the pupil a mixture of high skill and experience, devotion and kindness and care for the future of the individual. These qualities are sometimes overlooked. They do not emerge solely from training colleges, nor are they necessarily qualities which can be enhanced simply by good management. They are very personal, very individual and very different from teacher to teacher.

The homes from which each child comes present an even more confusing array of influences. It must be very difficult nowadays for a school to be able to pick out the strengths and weaknesses which lie in the make-up of each child and I marvel at the skill which enables what is strong to be brought out and what is frail to be made better. But however difficult it is for the school to spot the influences of a home, it will always remain important for parents to help the school to understand their own child.

The days of possessive parents seem more or less to have passed. Parents, however, still remain very proud of their children and I hope that schools will never forget to share the achievements which a pupil reaches inside school with the pleasure that the family experiences in the privacy of their own home.

The contrast between private and public life is something in which everyone who takes part in local politics finds both enjoyable and frustrating. For my own part I have a particular pleasure in trying to match my understanding of what it is that families want for their children from the policies and plans of the large and sometimes distant organisation of the County Council.

The match between private aspiration and public service will never be perfect and the frustration of not getting it will always face anyone who takes responsibility for public affairs. But in the end, frustration is out-balanced by the pleasure of watching children and young people grow into maturity, in the knowledge that parents and their teachers want nothing for them but the best. Education has changed in its outward shape over the many years in which I have taken an interest in it but it is still largely a recognisable and traditional mixture of home and school, with long-established truths and values battling it out with the changing demands of a highly innovative future.

Every child takes pride in achievement. Each has differing abilities and interests. If we care they will respond.

Helen Pointon
Former Pupil, Public
High School for Girls

I have a firm belief that the quality of any life is dependent on the ability to appreciate every moment, every stimulus, no matter how insignificant, and a love of itself no matter how bleak it may seem. I also firmly believe that my life will be greatly improved by controlling all my emotions, reactions and attitudes. Instead of rushing through life, out of control, if I can learn to control my temper, study situations before making decisions and realise the result of my actions I can surely hope to do little I regret. Surely to learn this sort of control would help immeasurably more in life than an 'O' level pass in Disraeli's Foreign Policy. Why on earth then is no attempt whatsoever, in any ordinary school that I have ever heard of, been made to do just this? "Education" as it stands today is a total, complete and criminal waste of time. Eleven years of the most formative years of any person's life are coerced through a mechanism that produces a majority of closed minded, retarded and prejudiced people that far from appreciating life have to battle through, trial and error style. Most have an attitude that says academically cleverer people are superior because they leave school with a collection of useless information, that they are "somebody" because of this and that if they have not fitted the "mould" then they are a failure because of it.

Surely the whole of life is an opportunity to expand and develop your soul or your mind or whatever you call the individual spark that is life. Many, many schools of thought worldwide teach people how to channel their emotions to a constructive fulfillment of themselves and a realization of their own potential in every way, in a sense, mind over matter. Whether they achieve this by meditation or fasting or lying on a bed of nails it leads to a knowledge of yourself that has to be worth more than a set of examination results. I am not suggesting that first lesson Monday morning should be spent on a bed of nails but that some attempt has to be made towards showing that a person's well-being is not dependant on how many cars he or she may have or where they went on holiday. In fact the whole educational system seems to be looking down the wrong end of a telescope, it is very obvious that money does not and cannot create real happiness: the wealthiest people are often the unhappiest and as people glibly say, "you can't take any of it with you". Why then are we taught that the worth in our life depends on our qualifications, leading to a good job, leading to more and more material possessions? But surely the worth in our lives depends on our ability to be happy and interested and lead a truly full life. I am also equally sure that whoever created life did not mean its potential to be only encouraged in the eight subjects we are obliged to take. I am positive that the wonderful machines of our minds have other abilities than reading and writing. If so, why is 99% of the educated world been shunted in such a way? The conclusion could almost be drawn that people are produced this way to provide equally satisfied morons to fill the unfulfilling, supposedly essential jobs in this world.

Another scholastic attitude that leads to much unhappiness is that of productivity, that you can only be happy if you produce something, and what right have you to be happy if you don't? In these times of unemployment this is a crippling attitude to still instil into people.

Why are schools made so unappealing in most cases? From nine until three-thirty we sit on hard chairs staring at dull colours in stifling heat. Neither staff nor pupils like it so why isn't it changed? We are also told to attend school unless we are very ill and yet when we all arrive, bad tempered with colds, no concession at all is made. It is impossible to function normally when we feel depressed, yet the system as it stands allows for no fluctuation of mood. It seems to expect hundreds of highly emotional teenagers and young children to all be of the same frame of mind and placidity, therefore we are made to feel in the wrong for expressing any kind of emotion. Is it any wonder, then, that people grow older with an inability for self-expression?

I feel as I come to the end of my scholastic training that I am getting less and less from school; I am finding the lessons more worthless and tedious than ever before. A drastic change is needed, you can't improve a rotten house by repainting the walls if they are about to fall down. In my opinion, this ancient, out of touch and inept structure should be swept away and started afresh. Not with the same tired old principles, but with what to most restricted view points must seem revolutionary ideas. As far as I am concerned the biggest and oldest crime in the world is committed the day you send your five year old child to school.

Thoughts on Education

Jane Pollard
Parent

Education can be defined in two ways: Firstly, as an intellectual and moral training; and secondly, as a mere provision of schooling. Unfortunately, these definitions are not equivalent, and I would suggest that in our society the practice of concepts embodied in these two notions actually militate against each other. Current events and prevailing attitudes amongst the majority suggest that our idea of "schooling" completely belies the objectives experienced in the wider definition. In my opinion, education of young people should be a continuous and extensive developmental process involving both the parents (or responsible substitutes) and "professional" educators. It should encompass every facet of an individual's personality and should aim for a degree of moral integrity and intellectual awareness. The reasons why these objectives are not being fulfilled are manifold; but I shall confine myself to two readily identifiable areas of criticism the involvement of parents and the direct role of the teaching profession.

Most parents are unable or reluctant to regard their role as one of active participation in their child's education. Whether due to their own inadequate formative experience, or due to uncaring attitudes fostered by our increasingly materialistic society, they regard education as beginning and ending with the school day. Ignoring, or oblivious to the valuable opportunities to enrich their childrens' lives by introducing them to music, art, sports and a multitude of other activities neglected or underemphasized by the average school curriculum, they shift practically the entire responsibility for the child's development to teachers. The school, therefore, provides a very convenient scapegoat and is subsequently deemed responsible for every shortcoming or aberration.

I am not suggesting that parents should replace teachers or even usurp their authority in any way, but that they supplement their child's schooling by encouraging a wide spectrum of intellectual and aesthetic experiences. Children need positive guidance, both moral and intellectual, from adults whom they respect; they do not automatically develop their potential, partly due to the absence of self-discipline, and partly to the incessant pressures inherent in our consumer society to squander one's time in meaningless pursuit of instant gratification. Parents, therefore, have a valuable role in diverting emerging enthusiasms and abilities into constructive channels. If adults use their own time in a creative and constructive manner, then desirable attitudes are likely to be inculcated in their children. It is generally recognised in the United States, for example, that the highest proportion of children of exceptional ability tend to come from Jewish or Oriental backgrounds. Such backgrounds are characterised by strong family ties and a commitment to learning. There is frequently a conflict between intellectual fulfilment and the attainment of pleasure, and the suppression of immediate personal gratification is often essential for the long-term achievement of intellectual goals. This concept, although perhaps simplistic, is usually alien to children. I am not advocating a rigid structuring of a child's environment, but the provision of a stimulating atmosphere which predisposes towards self-awareness and personal enrichment.

In this context, the importance of the natural environment is paramount but often overlooked. I think that part of the signficance of 'nature' as educator is that it is experienced subconsciously by the young child and so is not part of a deliberate thinking process. Later in life, these feelings are rationalised and verbalised to some extent, perhaps adding to their richness, but at the time they are actually experienced, the child's awareness is greatly enhanced by natural outdoor activities, to which he can respond freely and happily. Wordsworth, of course, recognised this subconscious process in the 'Prelude', when he claimed that the sights and sounds of the natural environment sent a voice which "flowed along my dreams". I agree to a large extent with the tenet of the 18th century Romantics, that education in the first instance should be addressed to the emotions rather than to reason. However, it should be remembered that Rousseau's "noble savage", the embodiment of an imagination inspired by, and responding to, every part of the natural environment, was perhaps a rather extreme reaction to the preceding "Age of Reason", in which rational thought, rather than raw, emotional experience, was revered. The ideal surely lies somewhere between the two although imagination and experience are more relevant than rationalisation in a very young child, it is erroneous to disregard rational thought altogether, since ultimately the maturation of the child's intellect will depend upon it. The successful parent or teacher is one who advises the child on how to supplement these valuable experiences with intellectual ability encouraging him to make comparisons, formulate theories, search for reasons. Unfortunately, however, many adults are unable to instigate these processes because they are themselves oblivious to the beauty around them!

Just as Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed that man was corrupted by the evil influences of 18th century civilization, I think that our increasingly sophisticated and decadent society today is detrimental to modern man. The trivial and tawdry, stereotyped stimuli emanating from our high-technological market-place have the effect of anaesthetizing our powers of perception and discernment.

Ubiquitous electronic playthings such as television and video machines, not to mention the incessant drone of "rock" music, and the unsolicited but insidious propaganda of the pedlars of the materialistic dream utopia, all tend to induce a permanent lethargy in young and old alike. Personal ideals and awareness of beauty either do not exist, or take second place to the acquisition of coveted commodities.

Whilst not going so far as to agree with Rousseau that a primitive return to nature is our only antidote to this corruption, I believe that natural, simple living is necessary for the restoration of man's inspiration. A positive effort, on the part of all those who claim to be concerned with the education of children, must be made to resist the subtle but baleful indoctrination around us and to encourage the development of individual judgement.

Rousseau recognised the need to found a general humanity when he opined that the "child should be educated to be a man, not to be a priest, a civil servant or a soldier". Two hundred years later this tenet has never seemed so relevant; and yet instead of implementing ideas on naturalness we still doggedly train people to fulfil specific "ideas" in a society where, ironically, incompetent distribution of resources and accompanying mass unemployment have decimated the number of those roles available to fill! The individual of today must be taught how to cope with 'leisure', by exploring every facet of his personality. Diversification is far more relevant than a narrow channelling of energy towards goals that can no longer be realised. One element of stereotyping which exists in education from early secondary school level, is the rigid division of pupils into arts and sciences. Curricula are arranged so as to produce a polarization of the school - and later the university - population, into two separate and almost alient cultures. There is, on the one hand, the technocrat, almost devoid of aesthetic appreciation and dismissive of mystical experience, interpreting experiences through a diet of graphs and mathematical theories. We have the arts graduate, on the other hand, who is usually extremely limited in his knowledge of scientific phenomena, and whose mode of thinking is confined within the realm of abstract, academic meditation. But surely rational analysis is not incompatible with aesthetic imagination and creativity? These two spheres of human activity must interact for man to fulfil his potential. Although we cannot, in our complex society, reincarnate the "Renaissance Man", we can make sure that different attitudes prevail at a basic level in schools.

In this context, it is disappointing that a recent survey (published in the Sunday Observer Magazine, Autumn 1984) on attitudes to education within society reveals that the greatest resistance to a wider curriculum actually comes from parents who, at the same time, are seeking a greater influence in deciding what is taught in school. It appears that in most cases parental aspirations have not taken account of our changing society. The subjects least preferred by parents (such as craftwork and home economics) were those which would probably be of most value to the unemployed. (It is significant that art was regarded as least important by 35% of those questioned!) In those few cases where schools have attempted to widen the horizons of pupils by teaching the "whole personality", the experiment has usually failed due to parental resistance. It is again patently clear, therefore, that attitudes prevalent in society at large will have to be adjusted before the professional educators can implement any broadening procedures.

Education, however, must be implemented within a realistic framework. Although we should never lose sight of the wider philosophical implications of what we teach our children, there should always be a sound, practical basis for our methods. I personally do not see why a wider curriculum should result in a lowering of standards, but it must be recognised that numeracy and literacy are vitally important, not only when seeking a job, but as essential tools of self-expression. There is a danger that in throwing away the proverbial shackles to allow the child to "find himself" the basic skills will be completely ignored. However laudable the intentions may be, this progressive approach, if taken to extremes, produces just as many misfits, unprepared for the real world, as the old fashioned methods. Young people require a firm foundation of intellectual skills on which to build their own personalities, and in order to take advantage of any wider opportunities on offer. I believe that creative fulfilment and the acquisition of basic skills are not mutually exclusive, but interdependent.

The recognition of individual needs and abilities, so vital to this creative process, is sadly lacking in many institutions. All children need to be extended to reach their full potential but whereas disadvantaged, slow learners are treated sympathetically in the present system, it is still not widely appreciated that very able children also have special educational needs. Many schools impose their own arbitrary "normal" standards, deviation from which is discouraged, or even punished. The phenomenon of the "gifted child" is one which many people, especially teachers, find hard to accept. The very phrase sounds elitist and undemocratic! It is a fact that people are always ready to help those they consider inferior to themselves, but rarely to help those whom they suspect to be superior. Each culture defines its own gifted people, but these "children of God", as Plato referred to them, are distinguished by their outstandingly high intellectual or cultural abilities. These gifts may occur as a result of environment, genetic endowment or (more likely) as a result of interaction between the two; and one can, of course, postulate the existence of such abilities in every individual, implying an immense source of potential waiting to be tapped. But whatever the philosophical considerations, these gifts, when they do manifest themselves, must be fostered, for the benefit of both the child and society as a whole. It is a fact that "geniuses", being so few in number, rarely achieve positions of power within society, but their contribution is often one of influence over people less intelligent but more powerful than themselves. The gifted students of today should, therefore, be encouraged to use their greater insight not only to attempt to solve the vast array of political, social and economic problems which beset us, but also to redefine these problems in a creative way - to seek radical solutions to old dilemmas. This will only come about if the gifted are nurtured in the 'matrix' of the school. Children who are intellectually advanced often find it difficult to relate to their contemporaries, with whom they are unable to communicate because of difference in interests and language ability. Frustration and boredom, caused by routine tasks imposed by un-imaginative teachers, can lead to disruption and aggressive behaviour in some instances, and apathy or withdrawal in others. Teaching materials in schools are not, on the whole, sufficiently challenging. Teachers' expectations and perceptions of all children's abilities must be raised if we

wish potential to be fulfilled. Schools should provide opportunities for children to learn at their own pace in a stimulating environment, where high standards are respected. Too many bright children are stunted by being made to conform to undemanding regimens devised by "trendy- leftist" educationalists to appease their pseudo-egalitarian teaching colleagues, although fortunately many of these outmoded ideas, mainly vestiges of the 'sixties' era, are now being treated with the contempt that they deserve. It is obviously impossible to divorce education from politics, and so sad that it is the children, as guinea-pigs, who suffer from the effects of politically-inspired experimentation.

In conclusion, it is difficult not to be extremely pessimistic about the immediate prospects for education in this society. The concept of education as an integrated development of all aspects of the individual - moral, intellectual and physical - is apparently not enshrined within the walls of our present Department of Education. Clearly, not enough attempts are made to reconcile the educational requirements of the individual with the demands of society; and those very demands are questionable, being more conducive to mass indoctrination than to individual assertiveness. Our society is becoming far too passive, and abilities should be developed through activity, not passivity. Pestalozzi said that education should draw upon the faculties of "self-power" inherent in the human being, and that the teacher's task is "to give a helping hand to the instinctive efforts" of the child. Educators, both parents and teachers alike, would do well to bear this in mind.

Gradualism or Revolution

John Waldron Popplestone
Former Headmaster,
Ernesettle Secondary
School, Plymouth

> "Until ... 1958, I had never questioned the value of extending obligatory schooling to all people ... have come to realise that for most men the right to learn is curtailed by the obligation to attend school."
> (Ivan Illich, 'Deschooling Society", 1971)

> "... power over the English school is so effectively distributed that it can only be effectively changed by consent, between legislature and executive, between teacher and pupil, and between school and community. Each party can frustrate the aspirations of the others, none can unilaterally and successfully impose its will."
> (Barry McDonald, in "Educational Analysis",
> Vol. 1, No. 1, 1979)

Perhaps other "educators", whose portraits were painted by Robert Lenkiewicz for this project, found it as difficult as I did to dissent from many of his assertions about the radical problems apparently inherent in schools, as institutions, as providers, or enablers of education. Too often, his views evoked the unease which has intermittently worried me, during thirty-four years of involvement in secondary schools, about the total effect of those schools on their members: those aspects which Stenhouse[1] saw as "the culture of the school" influencing "the experience of the pupils and teachers who work in it, in unplanned ways", offering "content which may contradict or reinforce the expressed curricular intentions, but which is not publicly acknowledged."

It is not easy to dismiss the notion that institutionalised education may be a contradiction in terms, if our educational purpose is to assist each pupil to achieve his or her unique potential. Jackson[2] identifies "four unpublished features of school life: delay, denial, interruption and social distraction ... produced, in part, by the crowded conditions of the classroom." More recently, Hargreaves[3] suggests that school learning includes adaptation to, or fear, or possibly hatred of the constraints of time and space which are characteristic of schools as institutions.

There is no shortage of recorded identification of phenomena relating to the institutional problems of the school. The following selection from "the literature" will, perhaps, help to establish the point. Gibson[4] stresses that, unlike most professionals, teachers have clients (the pupils) who are "compulsorily bound to come to him" and with whom he is required to have a relatively long term involvement. Stenhouse[1] proposes that this "conscript population" creates problems of "morale and control" distorting or displacing educational goals. MacDonald[5] concedes educationalists' uncertainty as to what causes learning or constitutes a successful learning milieu and observes that "schools in some way cause some learnings and impede others". Bliss[6] highlights some problems arising from the dissonance between the institutional values of the school and those which many of the pupils bring to it. Lister[7] claims that schools "cripple individuality, spontaneity, creativity and collective action."

Most experienced and sensitive educators will be aware of and concerned by these problems, apparently endemic in schools, by virtue of their institutionalised character. For those who have aimed to provide a relatively secure and unthreatening learning environment for their pupils, a more startling proposition of Robert Lenkiewicz's, as I understand it, is that this policy will probably have impeded the educational process that it was intended to serve. His view has much in common with that of Cooper[8], who warns of the inhibition of curiosity and personal growth in most members of society's institutions, as "victims of a surfeit of security that eludes doubt and consequently destroys life in any sense that we feel alive". Lenkiewicz's own argument relates more closely to an esoteric concept of exposure to beauty being linked with experiencing "the edge of terror which we are able to bear". For some of us, perhaps, this seductive notion can be added to the arguably well-established list of impediments to education which tend to (or unavoidably) afflict schools in consequence of their institutional characteristics.

This categorisation as impediments to education, however, depends on one's values. Loosely employing Taylor's[9] analysis of value statements applied to education, it can be crudely generalised that many people whose perspectives are primarily "assessment-oriented", "interest-based" or (depending on their view of society) "societal" would accept that few of these alleged institutional disadvantages as educational impediments. Some stances, too, within "empirical" or "epistemological" value perspectives would limit acceptance of the suggested problems. This article parts company with all of these people at this stage (if it has

not done so already) and addresses itself solely to those for whom "individualist" values play an important role in their view of the purposes of education, and particularly those for whom this is the pre-eminent value implicit in any concept of education.

Given that there are problems arising from schools' institutional characters, two rough categories of identification and consequent proposals for solution to these problems can be distinguished. These may be represented by two writers quoted earlier. Illich detects a deep seated malaise in institutions, which cannot be cured without scrapping them. Jackson speaks for those who, concerned for the anti-educational messages which the school institution unwittingly transmits to pupils, nevertheless believe that solutions can be found within the system.

Illich[10] rejected "superficial solutions" distracted by criticism of "pedagogical, political or technological" issues. These missed the point, he suggested, and the central issue was the replacement of that "hidden curriculum" (which "teaches all children that economically valuable knowledge is the result of professional teaching and that social entitlements depend on the rank achieved in a bureaucratic process" and which is inseperable from the school system), by a situation in which learning would be based on free "access to things, places, processes, events and records". His solution necessitates major social change, encompassing even the introduction of "a mode of post-industrial production" with tools and components produced "that are labour and repair intensive, and whose complexity is strictly limited." Radical, but improbable without a revolution, and almost as improbable in any post-revolutionary society. Illich himself warns of the dangers of the "rash and uncritical disestablishment of school" and lists "important negative functions" which the school performs in holding undesirable alternatives at bay.

Jackson[2] is primarily concerned with the school institution mediated through the classroom (see earlier quotation). Nevertheless his analyses and recommendations are more widely generalisable in the school system. He looks for observation, reflection and development rather than disestablishment and replacement. He stresses the complexity of classroom interactions and learning tasks, and the "limited applicability of learning theory to the teacher's work", primarily because of the controlled, unnatural conditions under which much learning theory tended to be evolved, and partly due to lack of a shared explanatory vocabulary between researcher and teacher. He warns of the folly of attempts (particularly in the United States, where he was writing) to transform teaching "from something crudely resembling an art to something crudely resembling a science". The best chance, he suggests, of reducing the institutional problems which he identifies, is by increasing understanding of what is happening in schools; a phenomenological approach. He hopes for encouragement of the trend (1968) towards researcher "participant observers" and fostering the growth of reflective "observant participators". He anticipates a consequent emergence of a range of shared perspectives and common language which should enable people "to ask questions about the school's operation that they might not otherwise have asked" and facilitate more fruitful teacher/researcher interchanges".

No radical solutions in Jackson's message: impatient reformers might regard it as a mere "tinkering with the works". To mix the trite images, however, there is a reluctance (which I share) to "throw out the baby with the bath water".

Reflection, I believe, on the detail and totality of careful observation of what our schools are doing is the way which will lead to eradication or, at worst, considerable reduction of the type of institutional disadvantage instanced earlier in this article. This reflection should take careful account of such criticisms and employ them as perspectives.

This gradualist approach is based on the assumption that schools are not irrevocably flawed. It also takes account of the balance of power in English education proposed by MacDonald in the quotation at the head of this article, which discourages radical innovation and attempts to impose unilateral solutions, whether radical or not.

The constraints of the brief contribution required for this collection have led to the expression of a personal view seeming to masquerade as a conclusion. It begs more questions than it resolves. It bows out amongst a welter of loose ends. It has oversimplified for the purpose of dismissing or supporting.

If I may atone, at this stage, for one of the more outrageous examples of the last malpractice, may I stress what must already be obvious - that Illich deserves better representation. For a brisk and readable critique of the deschooling solution to the problem of the school as an institution, the reader is referred to Lister[7], then Professor of Education at York, who was one of deschooling's early advocates and, five years later, wrote "both to praise it and to see beyond it."

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Thoughts on Education

Alfie Price
Miner visiting
Plymouth during
strike

My name is Alfie Price, age 52. I live in Trelevis, mid Glamorgan, S. Wales.

I was born December 1932. My parents were both Welsh, my father was a fluent speaker of the Welsh language, born 1878, he was 20 years older than my mother. He left school at the age of 11 years to work at the local colliery in the village of Deri (the Darren Pit).

My mother lived at Tonypandy, left school at the age of 13 years to work in 'service' in the town of Weston Super Mare as a pastry cook.

Part of the system to eradicate the Welsh language was the Welsh knot, to which my father fell victim at school. Any pupil caught speaking Welsh was given a knot which was passed from pupil to pupil. At the end of the school day the child who possessed it would face detention or caning.

I often think that although my parents had a very hard but still happy life with better education they would have had a more enjoyable and fuller life. Both were quite articulate, my father being able to switch from Welsh to English, writing or speaking, quite easily.

I left school at the age of 14 years and went straight to the local colliery, "Taff Merthyr". My school days were happy enough; I was a fairly good pupil, learning to adapt to school work and discipline quite easily. Sat my 11 plus, passing and winning a scholarship on the local grammar school "Lewis School Programme". My father had to finish work when I was 14, with two younger sisters still at school, I had to leave school to help support our family.

After leaving school, I attended night school for 2 years. The N.C.B. then figured in my education, but all the education received was work oriented and to do with making me a better workman for the benefit of the N.C.B.

Looking back in retrospect I missed a golden opportunity to further my education by leaving school at the age of 14 years.

I am a married man, my wife is a product of Bargoid Grammar School, and runs the local newsagent's shop. We have 4 children, 1 daughter and 3 sons. Our daughter is aged 27, educated Lewis Girls' School, Pengam and Nottingham University, is now a teacher at a local school.

Oldest son, aged 24, electrical engineer at a local colliery, still studying at Polytechnic of Wales; educated Lewis School, Pengam.

Other two sons educated at Afon Taff Comprehensive School, not doing so well as other children; personally think that comprehensive school education is inferior to old fashioned grammar school.

What I believe is that if children spend more time at schooling, that is leaving school at a higher age, they will be able to express themselves in a more articulate way, widen their outlook on the world and hopefully help to make it a better world to live in, environment-wise and socially. Not forgetting that further education is a bonus for the arts: music, painting, sculpture, ballet, etc. all reaping a benefit.

I realise that some of the worst tyrants of the world have been "well educated" but still, I think that if they had received a more social oriented type of education they could well have turned out to be different personalities and channelled their motivation or power in a different way.

It would be foolish to assume that education finishes with formal schooling, university or college training, for we continue to learn at all times afterwards.

Having been educated formally it is what we do with our education that is the most important aspect of all. Whether we use it to further our work, profession, leisure or hobbies lies within ourselves.

A Highly Selective Comment on the Government's Cmnd. 9469 Entitled 'Better Schools'

W. R. Pridie
B.Ed. A.C.P. F.Coll.P.
Headmaster
Compton C.of E. Primary School
Higher Compton, Plymouth

"Only those who take leisurely what the people of the world are busy about, can be busy about what the people of the world take leisurely" Chang Ch'ao

What has worried some educationalists since the Labour Prime Minister's speech at Ruskin College is the vague threat of centralising the curriculum through government dictat. Centralised curricula cannot incorporate the needs of local areas or indeed the needs of the individual child. This was demonstrated to me very forcefully, when I joined a party of student teachers on a visit to Czechoslovakia. The school curriculum was so tightly prescribed that each member of staff knew what had to be taught on a particular day. As I visited several different schools around the country, I witnessed a series of English lessons being developed along very similar lines which had been laid down by the Czechoslovakian government. I was informed how efficient this was, for the government knew, or thought it knew, what was being taught and when. The one text book permitted in the classroom was issued by the ministry. By so directing the curriculum, the government thought it knew how efficient its education system was. However it became clear that the standard set was for the average intelligence of the school population and both above and below average children were not being well served.

Centralised curricula have another disadvantage: it is open for governments to influence the future set of voters. In 1983, I had the pleasure of visiting a number of primary schools in Zimbabwe. Whilst there, I came across a new history text book which the Zimbabwean government was introducing into its primary schools. This text book had a whole new slant to Zimbabwe's beginnings and naturally the largest section was the birth of the ZANU PF party and its rise to power.

Universal education in this country was very carefully organised after the war to be devolved to the responsibility of local rather than national government. Devon's Chairman of the Education Committee, Mr Pinney, has said that the raison d'e^tre of local government would no longer remain if a national government should take over the local authorities' power and organisation in education. This devolution of power keeps the education of this country out of a too tighter grasp of national government.

Devolution of education has not given rise to very divergent curricula in our schools. In the primary sector where no prescribed external examinations are set, the government has seen a general broadening of the curriculum (Better Schools, Section 5). The Better Schools document offers very non-presctiptive purposes of learning at school (ibid., Section 44): none of the six purposes listed could be described as dictats open to abuse by any future central government.

Education is too important to be handed over to any one section of the local community. The present [March, 1985] Secretary of State for Education wanted to give parents a majority vote on each school's governing body. Quite rightly, parent organisations and interest groups generally rejected this idea. Most parents have a short-term interest in a school and once their children have left they usually sever their association. Local interests can be damaging for a school. In one village primary school I knew, the local managers, as the primary governors were once so named, wanted the Head to appoint a teacher who could play cricket because although the post did not require this skill, the village team needed an additional member to make up its full quota.

The present governing bodies have a watching brief over their school. While the local authority holds the purse strings, this authority divested in each governing body can only be titular. If the governing body is truly representative of the community and has a balanced group of lay and professional representation then it deserves strengthening.

This government, while wishing to give more authority to the community and in particular the parents on each governing body, takes away the power that governing body has, for example over its class sizes. Each governing body, along with its educational authority, is responsible for the admission of children to its school. The Education Act 1980 requests schools to print the local authority's recommended yearly intake in its school brochure. If the school is deemed full by the local authority and its governors, a parent may make representation to an appeals panel to try and overrule these two bodies. The appeals panel has to consider if the entry of an additional child would be prejudicial to the education of the other children in that year group or class. Even if prejudice is proved, the local panel has been known to order a school to accept an additional child. The appeals panel is free to ignore the regulations of the space required for the education of children set out in the Education Act 1981 which increased the teaching area for pupils aged nine to eleven to permit a wider range of facilities to be offered in each school. With the new representation on schools' governing bodies, this appeals panel should be dissolved.

The accommodation in most schools built over twenty years ago is now quite inadequate for the variety needed in the demands of the new curriculum. The present government document (Better Schools, Section 277) only briefly touches on accommodation. Its key sentence is lost in its second paragraph: "... there are still disparities in quality of accommodation and standards of maintenance which may hinder the implementation of the policies set out in this White Paper." This is quite an understatement. If this government was busy about what it has taken leisurely, then the education in this country would be allowed to be the best.

REQUIREMENT ~ MOST INDUSTRIALISTS HAVE SUFFERED EDUCATION. MUCH RARER IS THE EDUCATIONALIST WHO HAS SUFFERED INDUSTRY. IF IT IS TRUE THAT A KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT IS A TENET OF GOOD TEACHING THEN THERE CAN BE NO SUCCESSFUL EDUCATION FOR INDUSTRY. IS IT NOT STRANGE THEN, THAT WITH EACH PASSING GENERATION, MORE AND MORE TIME IS BEING SPENT BY EDUCATION IN TRYING TO ACHIEVE SOMETHING THAT THEY ARE ILL-EQUIPPED TO DO? WHO HAS CREATED THE ILLUSION THAT SPECIALISATION IN EDUCATION IS THE CORRECT AND BETTER WAY TO MEET THE CAREER DEMANDS OF THOSE WHOSE FUTURE LIES IN INDUSTRY? SPECIALISATION THAT STARTS TWO YEARS BEFORE 'O' LEVEL ~ AT OPTION TIME.

IF THE HISTORY OF INDUSTRY IS EXAMINED, A HISTORY MANY BELIEVE LASTED BARELY 100 YEARS, THE HEYDAY OF SUCCESSFUL INDUSTRY WHICH CREATED OUR INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE WAS IN THE EARLIER YEARS OF THIS CENTURY. THE INNOVATORS, THE CREATORS OF THE HOUSEHOLD NAMES OF BRITISH INDUSTRY APPEAR TO HAVE HAD ONE SINGLE THING IN COMMON ~ THEY HAD ALL SUFFERED A CLASSICAL EDUCATION. SPECIALISATION TOOK PLACE IN LATER YEARS IN THE CLASSROOMS OF THE WIDER WORLD

IN OUR EDUCATION TODAY, DRIVEN BY THE CULT OF CERTIFICATION, THE SPECIALISTS IN EDUCATION MAY ALLOW THE WHOLE OF ONE HOUR EACH WEEK TO THE TEACHING OF A NON-SPECIALIST SUBJECT. THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A CERTIFICATE IS THE BE ALL AND END ALL OF THIS SPECIALIST APPROACH THE END RESULT IS EPITOMISED IN THE AWARD OF FINAL QUALIFICATIONS ~

AN HONOURS DEGREE IN BUSINESS STUDIES (JEWELLERY RETAILING)

OR

AN HONOURS DEGREE IN ENGINEERING (SOIL MECHANICS)

Norman Proctor
Former Managing Director
of a Tecalemit Group Company
Governor, C.F.E. Management Consultant

SHEET 1 OF 3

THE FALLACIES OF SPECIALISATION IN EDUCATION – WITHER THE THREE 'R's'

A BLUEPRINT FOR FAILURE

DRAWN N.H.P
SCALE : 40 YEARS

RESOURCES

SPECIALISATION OF ITSELF PRODUCES THE DICHOTOMY BETWEEN EDUCATION AND TRAINING. NOT SURPRISINGLY EDUCATION IS A FULL TIME CAREER FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE STAFF. DESPITE SOME EFFORT THE RESTRICTIONS ON INTERCHANGE BETWEEN EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY WILL REMAIN UNSURMOUNTABLE. INEVITABLY EACH YEAR AWAY FROM THE REAL OPERATION OF INDUSTRY CREATES A VOID IN THE SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE OF THE TEACHER. A VOID THAT CANNOT BE FILLED BY SHORT COURSE, READING OR DEBATE

EXAMINATION OF THE EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE TO THE TEACHER WILL REINFORCE THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE TOTAL RESOURCE AVAILABLE FOR SPECIALIST TEACHING. FINANCIAL LIMITATIONS ALONE WILL ENSURE THAT EQUIPMENT IS AT BEST FIVE YEARS OUT OF DATE AND ON AVERAGE MUCH LONGER.

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, STRONG ARGUMENTS THAT A HIGH PROPORTION OF ADVANCED RESEARCH IS CARRIED OUT IN THESE SPECIALIST INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION. THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN IN SUCH COLLEGES INEVITABLY FIND THAT, OUTSIDE OF MEDICAL SCHOOL, THERE IS LITTLE SPIN-OFF BETWEEN RESEARCH AND TEACHING. THE COMMERCIAL ASPECTS OF PATENT PROTECTION AND POSSIBLE LICENSING AGREEMENTS ALONE DICTATE THAT THE UTMOST SECRECY SURROUNDS RESEARCH INNOVATION.

THE ACID TEST IS SURELY IN THE EXAMINATION PAPERS REQUIRED BY THIS SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION PROCESS. QUESTIONS CLOTHED WITH DIFFERENT WORDS RE-APPEAR YEAR AFTER YEAR TO TEST THE RETENTIVE SKILLS OF STUDENTS. ORIGINAL THOUGHT, IF PRODUCED IN AN ANSWER, CAN HARDLY BE MARKED FAIRLY IF IT HAS NOT BEEN INCLUDED IN THE EXAMINERS MARKING PLAN.

RESULTS

"FOR THE SAME NUMBER THAT ARE NOW AT WORK, IF THEY WERE DIVIDED INTO THE FEW OCCUPATIONS THAT NATURE REALLY REQUIRES THEN SO MANY OF EACH ITEM WOULD BE PRODUCED THAT THE PRICES WOULD FALL TO A LEVEL TOO LOW FOR THE ARTIFICERS TO MAINTAIN THEIR LIVING"

THE SECOND BOOK OF UTOPIA.

IN OUR VERSION OF UTOPIA INDUSTRY NEEDS TO CREATE DEMANDS FOR THE WIDEST RANGE OF PRODUCTS AND IN CONSEQUENCE ENSURE THE WIDEST RANGE OF OCCUPATIONS. MANY OF THESE SELF GENERATING OCCUPATIONS HAVE THE NARROWEST OF SPECIALISED INTEREST AND ARE CLEARLY INCLUDED IN THE VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE SCHEMES CREATED IN SCHOOLS BY THE CAREER CREATING ENGINE OF INDUSTRY, THESE OCCUPATIONS SET CAREER OBJECTIVES FOR EDUCATION.

THIS INDUSTRY WHICH IS SEEN AS THE ONLY LONG TERM PROVIDER OF EMPLOYMENT, THE CREATOR OF THE WEALTH WHICH PAYS FOR THE SOCIETY AND ITS NEEDS. THE PLACE WHERE CREATIVE WORK CAN SATISFY THE CREATIVE NEEDS OF ITS EMPLOYEES. FOR THE MAJORITY CREATIVE WORK INVOLVES MAKING REPETIVE PARTS TO A DRAWING BY MINDING A MACHINE. PERHAPS RECORDING FIGURES ON A COMPUTER INPUT DOCUMENT OR IN A LEDGER IN ACCORDANCE WITH AN ACCOUNTING PROCEDURE OR REPAIRING SOME EQUIPMENT IN LINE WITH A MAINTAINANCE CHECK-LIST. IN THE INTEREST OF SOME CLEARLY LAID DOWN QUALITY STANDARD ANY NON-CONFORMITY IS ONLY PUNISHED. FOR THIS MAJORITY CREATIVITY LIES OUTSIDE THE WORK PLACE WHICH, IN TRUTH, REQUIRES A CERTIFICATE IN HOW TO DEAL WITH ABJECT MONOTONY. NOT SURPRISINGLY INDUSTRY DEMANDS OF EDUCATION A CONCENTRATION ON THE THREE 'R's'. THERE ARE MANY, WHOSE TIME HAS BEEN SPENT IN THE HALLS OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, WOULD ARGUE THAT ITS CODES OF PRACTICE, DISCIPLINES AND SYSTEMS REALLY DEMAND ~ ROTE, RITUAL AND RULES.

The Fires of Experiences

John Pugh
Former Headmaster
Pilgrim Primary School
Presently enjoying
leisure and travel

There is so much to do and so little time to do it. In a lifetime there can be an experience which dies with the death of the individual. What will have been achieved? How can this experience be passed on? Will the world benefit from that experience? What effect can a headmaster have on an individual that can dramatically raise the presence and character of the pupil? Each pupil should have a fire to make the world a good place. How can a Head get this conception passed on?

Head teachers must inspire. The fire must be lit by challenge, example and kindly effect. The world is a theatre and there should be no more powerful actor than a Head. Their task is to light the fire. The desire for results has to be tempered with a practical skill and common sense.

To light the fire there has to be something that the Head has experienced. It may be the hell of a war - the sight of a carnage of the aftermath of a battle. It might be a visit to prison. It might be the sight of the Dachau concentration camps the day of release, with the gauntness of the paper-pyjama clad human tragedy in its hollow sunken eyes. It might be the despair of some unhappiness. Today these horrors are rare. But this is a world which is too unhappy.

The trigger of love of children can inspire. The animal instincts of man are so triumphant that they beg recompense in the form of love. Many parents, particularly single family mothers, have this quality of achieving a love which brings experiences to their children. This brings towards a fulfilled life for their children. There is much which we know we do not know. Probably the basic qualities of a mother are most important to shine out from the Head teacher.

The fire and ambitions of a Head to give the children experiences that widen their outlook sets a pattern. It should form an attitude of drive and approach by pupils to live life on a higher plane. It should give a more responsible attitude - a loving regard for the worth of objects and persons, and a knowledge of the practical world. We are too apathetic. It is a wonderful world.

We are subject to a moribund and apathetic society. Impractical fashions affect education books and say - Sentence Method - ITA - the play way - what happened to Nuffield French? What good do these fashions do? Does multiple accountability increase efficiency? The boredom of television programmes and a material society enclosed within dull homes shriek out for a fire to be lit for a more happy and scintillating society. Why do we set up so many obstacles? What is wrong with simplicity?

Who unlocks the door to this happier age? Who lights the fire we all should have to be a pilgrim in the world? If the Head teacher or any educationist hasn't lit the fire by the experiences they give the children I think that they have failed despite the obstacles. The mediocre is not good enough. Personality can be taught. Character can be developed. There are large reserves in each of us which are not brought out and which we can develop. Brightness and light can be brought into our lives, and we can affect others if we ourselves crusade. The effect we have on each other can be changed. What a difference the first daffodil in Spring brings! You haven't got to be clever to be happy. You haven't got to be clever to pass that happiness on to others.

It is a need for us to make light of misfortune and become more mature in working towards making other people happy. This is the Christian message - the Moslem message - the Buddhist message. Yet here we are in Devon grinding away at dullness and mediocrity when we have the richest environment in the world, not to mention our heritage. We are rich. What we need in a County Orgy. An orgy of cultural happiness, of responsibility to be aware of our gorgeous countryside and coast, of friendliness to each other and the realisation of the value of our families and friends and strangers we meet, and pursue this aim with a raging fire.

We need to light the fire of friendship, give our children experiences of fun and responsibility. There is so much to do and our spirit can leap at the thought and opportunity to light the fire and go out and do all that we do with pleasure and happiness.

It is the fire we light in other people that lights our fire - and that is the Head teacher's first task. Let's set the world afire.

Testament of Age

Education isn't what it used to be. Education is the same as it was two thousand years ago. Is there a conflict between these two statements?

No-one today is satisfied with our nation's education. We have increasing vandalism, and decreasing standards of responsibility. A lower standard of living than the nations we defeated forty years ago. An industry in which we lead the world twenty years ago - motor cycle manufacture - is totally surrendered to other countries. Our political influence in the last fifty years has so declined that from being the world leaders fifty years ago - we could move anywhere in the world with respect and authority - we have the rest of the world criticising our resistance to a South American country invading British territory. We have recognised faults in our country's working efficiency which we know how to solve but can't agree to act. We have simple solutions to Trade Union problems but no response.

Above all there is a problem in our democratic procedure. Our population as individuals do not understand democracy. We know our rights and freedoms but not the responsibilities. Education has made a freer society but not told the nation its price to pay for that freedom. There is apathy.

After the war Britain had had enough. The war would never have taken place if Britain (England) had been in any state of defence before the start. Hitler took full advantage of England's lack of preparation. This was due to apathy. Vansittant and Churchill preached the message. Politicians were more concerned with power. Baldwin ignored the threat of war and as a politician cultivated appeasement which Chamberlain developed. When the soldiers returned after enduring four years of hell they wanted a quiet life - the ideal was to get away from it all on a Pacific Island. Bother you, Jack, I'm alright!

This affects democracy. Another political mistake is the consistent general appeal of a politician to lower taxes. Before the wars a local councillor called Pillar preached no rise in rates for Plymouth. This forced the opposition, due to its success, to adopt the policy. Therefore there was no progress for Plymouth. In effect although there were two opposing parties - they still had the same policy - and this is not true democracy. The result of apathy is decline.

True democracy exists when an argument is put with equal force with its opposition to reach a mutual and supported agreement on action to the advantage of the group. This essential grass root principle has not been supported by politicians or chiefs of education. It certainly is not set by example in local or national government. This is a key deficiency. What is the answer?

First politicians and any leader must recognise that democracy and responsibility and co-operation must begin with them. There is a wealth of responsibility in the teaching profession despite the undermining of a decade's illusion on the part of major politicians. The Department of Education has failed in its representation of the profession to the national politicians. Chiefs of Education in local government have failed in their efforts to point out to politicians what is wrong. Much of their thinking is based on false evidence. Reports - which are costly - may appear to be correct but are catastrophic in the application of their findings. How many authorities are still not admitting children in the September before their fifth birthday? This is due to bosses not with it. What a mess the present system brings, and how much backwardness in pupils is caused. The cost is minimal. What is the use of teachers working hard when the system is uphill? It is heartbreaking.

Class sizes could be smaller. Any class of twenty is sufficient for general individual attention of a teacher. What do we do about that? It is not the teacher's fault - it is the politician who runs education. This is the major cause of decline. Those educationalists who are at the top do not realise their importance in what is valuable at the coal face. They do not know the infantry man's problems.

The other major cause of decline is in use of the community to educate children in responsibility. This is a continuous deficiency. The school should be given the staffing to organise the youth and adults to continue the educational process in the evenings and at weekends.

Education has not changed - the principle of learning from experience and that we are all learning from these experiences continuously is still the same as the Greeks knew it.

Just as forty, fifty and a hundred years ago popular education has failed in Britain - so it is failing now. The intensity of study needs developing. There is a need for small classes and a continuity into evenings and weekends. This is the message of two thousands of years, or more. The Greeks had small classes - and modern education never has.

Fashions of playway, palatial palaces of schools, false economies of cuts, Nuffield French, the need for new books, etc., look and say, sentence method, and other innovations are not important or valuable. What is important is to give the pupils what the nation needs. Responsibility and higher standards are what are

needed - now. The answer is smaller classes and more work.

Teachers are aware of this. They are not satisfied with their leadership, which swiftly changes direction in sheer ignorance, and is making mistakes galore with peoples' lives. There is an urgent need for more teachers and helpers to get on with the real job - and beat the Japs.

Then we would not have a mediocre education - we deserve better anyway.

The Inner City School

Keith Richardson
Headmaster
Mount Wise Primary School
James St., Devonport

A rough diamond's true value cannot be decided until it has been polished. Education is the polish which has to be applied to the human rough diamond. The true value of many of our city children is hidden by the 'roughness' caused by the numerous problems they have to face in their daily lives. The message to the city school is clearly, "get polishing".

Every school has its problems, many of which are relative to its physical situation. It is an ironical but true fact that the more problems a school has to face up to then the more opportunities are provided to achieve the rewards offered by solving them. Unfortunately all too often the problems are never-ending and no sooner is one solved by the teacher than another presents itself. A city school therefore seems to be offered an unending supply of sources for rewards and so the head and staff must have devotion, patience and perseverance above the levels expected from the average teacher. Situations arise each day which challenge their skills and confidence. The weaker teachers often struggle, achieve less and are more vulnerable than they would be in an average school. The children's special needs seek out their professional weaknesses, the skills required are so demanding. Discipline, lesson planning, classroom technique and determination all require that extra 'something' in the city school. On the other hand the stronger teachers are at their most successful in the city's most deprived areas although they often don't realise their success at the time, because it is not necessarily shown as an academic achievement. The improvement in a child's social behaviour can be the result of a steady 'drip feed' provided by his teacher over many months which has gradually brought about a change in attitude. The work of the teacher in non-academic areas is of vital importance and yet is so often unseen and unrecorded, whereas examination results show themselves so clearly on paper. It should be compulsory for <u>all</u> teachers to have to spend at least one year out of the first five years of their teaching careers, working in a city school. They would all learn the true meaning of 'teaching' and would return to their own schools strengthened for the future.

Challenging situations present themselves nearly every day, created almost always by home or area circumstances. Academic progress is frequently hindered by a lack of the basic knowledge of life, the children arrive at school unprepared to absorb the primary techniques which are the basis for the learning process. This is sometimes caused by a total lack of interest by the parents in education, whilst all too frequently the adults within the family have no self-confidence or ambition because of their own lack of achievement during their school days or later on in employment or unemployment. When they were young they probably had a fear or hatred of school themselves and it takes a great deal of patience and effort on the part of school to build up sufficient trust and confidence to enable them to discuss their children's, or often their own, problems with the head teacher. Bridge building is an essential part of our function. The other environmental pressures on the inner city school are well known and numerous. They must be faced up to and overcome by staff and pupils alike. The distress and hardship caused by poverty is all too obvious. Over three quarters of the children receive free school meals, which is the most reliable indicator of the genuine low income families. We are reassured that at least once a day they can enjoy a good hot meal, but will this continue to be the fact when free meals are no longer provided? I personally doubt it. Some families have an aversion to any form of authority. School can soon overcome this but when the aim of the exercise is to project the fact that an excellent community policeman is a friend to all, much more effort and persuasion is required. Parental control and attitudes to discipline vary considerably and are frequently inconsistent. All too often the child gets its own way at home and expects the same treatment at school, so we have yet another problem facing us. Emotional problems can be traced back to various sources. Domestic flare-ups involving arguments and violence, the pressures and restraints imposed by living in multi-storey blocks of flats, and differences of opinion with their peers whilst out at play in the evening are typical reasons why a child may be upset at school. We must always ask ourselves why is he frightened, withdrawn, aggressive, tearful, etc. and then, when we think we have found the answer, try to find a solution to the cause, in the meantime compensating in whatever ways we can to alleviate the child's distress.

It is fortunate that our rewards are many. An upset child responding with a smile can fill your heart with joy. A light fingered shoplifter "going straight", a fighter losing his aggression, a withdrawn child gaining confidence, a hungry child relishing a school meal, a parent coming to school for the first time to discuss a problem, a child with learning difficulties reading his first words or understanding how to solve a previously insurmountable task are but a few examples of how our difficult job is made worthwhile. Yes, the rewards are there, and they are most welcome.

The cost of polishing our city diamonds is great, for many of them are bruised and damaged, and need much specialist work on them to bring out their value. We need more polishers and extra polish if we are to succeed in our task, but who can provide them? Frustrations abound. Many of the difficulties are deep rooted

and take patience and determination, as well as individual attention, to overcome. No-one can offer us a complete solution but we do need extra help. We receive the same financial allowance as a school in the wealthiest part of the city, where parents can double or treble the capitation total by their own efforts. We cannot raise even an extra quarter of our allowance. The inner city school should be given extra financial help to compensate for this deficiency. The Educational Priority Area schools provision should be reviewed and the cash released distributed to schools in deprived areas as finance for school equipment and not to supplement teachers' salaries. Many E.P.A. school are now in relatively wealthy areas as the environmental conditions which existed when they were established in 1972 have since improved considerably. More teachers are required in order to substantially reduce class sizes in socially deprived areas, for the vast majority of children who experience learning difficulties are to be found amongst our pupils. We do get some extra compensatory staff and their assistance is of immense value and greatly appreciated, but they cannot be used to reduce class sizes.

The city school head has to be an adaptable person. He must be primarily an educationist but he must also expect to be a social worker, marriage guidance counsellor, child guidance officer, psychologist, doctor, hair hygiene nurse, financial juggler, community worker, youth worker and detective, etc. as well, if the situation demands it. He must be prepared to take on difficult, unpleasant or even seemingly impossible tasks. He must continually encourage his team of polishers to persevere with their work, for often they have great difficulty in removing the roughness their diamonds have accumulated within their short lives. However, we must never give up in despair, for every one of our little gems has a value. Our task is to find it, expose it, and then teach the child to use it for his own and the community's benefit.

Rick
Ex-troublemaker

To put it bluntly, I did not like school and school did not agree with me; I thought it was a waste of time and not worth going to. You ask me why I did not like it and there could be many reasons but as I said in the beginning, lessons my ass - I learnt more out of school from my mum and by myself. At Primary School I learnt a bit, but the time I went to Secondary School I forgot most things, and the teachers were completely different. I don't think half of them care whether you do your work or not and some say they care but how can you learn by copying off a blackboard? All you are doing is copying what he is telling you, so that was a waste of time.

Some of the teachers were so lazy they did not even know your name so that is why I went off school. What's the point of it all, you go in the morning and learn fuckall and go home in the afternoon with just as much learnt as when you went in the morning. What was the point of it all? Yeah, I know people say school is a good thing, but you tell me what's the point of it all?

I don't know about other schools but I went to a school in London. It was called Wandsworth; it was more like a prison than a school - rules and regulations, do this do that ... you must wear uniform, you must wear shoes and black socks and a white shirt and so on - what's the point of it all? It don't help you learn nothing by wearing a uniform, and the rules don't help as they say rules are there to be broken and when you are at school everyone does, so that goes to prove what is the use of schools. The only way I learnt things was the hard way, and if anyone asks me if I would ever go back, I would tell them where to get off.

Psychology as a Science

Dr Ludmilla Rickwood
Senior lecturer
Department of Psychology
Plymouth Polytechnic

I find that many non-psychologists don't have a very clear idea of what the study of pscyhology involves. When you say that you are a psychologist, people often seem to assume that you are a psychiatrist, or seem to feel that you are someone who knows the answers to human personal and social problems, or, sometimes, people would, half jokingly, half suspiciously, say, "You are a psychologist? Tell me then what I am thinking about!"

Nothing could be more disconcerting to an ordinary hard- working, conscience-striken psychologist struggling with the problems of the independent and dependent variables in an attempt to assess the complex human behaviour - but then, I suppose, there are some specific professional hazards in any profession. The study of psychology consists of many branches. The names of these branches and what is included in them vary somewhat from country to country because of some specific pathways along which the study of psychology has developed in each, but the main branches of psychology usually are: physiological psychology; cognitive psychology; social psychology; child development; animal learning; cross-cultural psychology; environmental psychology; industrial psychology; psycholinguistics; personality; motivation and emotion; gerontology - in no particular order. Usually a psychologist specializes in one or more of these branches, but may, more often than not, have a knowledge of one or more of the related fields. For instance, a social psychologist may undertake personal research and have a teaching knowledge also in the fields of cross-cultural psychology, or industrial psychology, or environmental psychology, and even child psychology.

There exists also a branch of clinical (or 'medical') psychology which has developed relatively recently and in which the specialization takes a somewhat different route from that in other branches. This is a branch of psychology which is closest to psychiatry and often, but not always, involves the practical aspects such as working with patients. There are some branches of psychology which normally exist outside of the usual teaching institutions - Universities and Polytechnics - such as parapsychology (the study of the ESP), and there are some, for instance, educational psychology, which often 'belong' within an institution, not to the Department of Psychology, but to the Department of Education.

There exist various sub-branches within each branch of psychology. For instance, physiological psychology may include neuropsychology and comparative psychology. Some new branches of psychology are being constantly developes due to the pressure of some local needs, sometimes at different times in different countries - for instance, sports psychology. In the last few decades a new experimental field - the psychology of humour - is being developed with the five International Conferences on this topic to date having taken place but, as yet, with no separate Journal in this particular area. Usually a new branch of psychology is considered established and 'independent' with the establishment of a Journal, published monthly or at some intervals, in thisarea or else, when a major textbook would include a separate chapter with a heading for this area. For instance, a social psychologist, Solomon Asch, had included in his textbook on social psychology a chapter on 'person perception' in 1952, the area in which he was very interested and had done some research. Since then, every textbook in social psychology has included a separate chapter on this area as an independent area of social psychology dealing with the ways (including the possible errors and biases) in which one person perceives and judges the other person in social encounters. Some areas within each branch of psychology may, over time, diminish in prominence due to the lack of interest among the researchers or, more often, due to the empirical and theoretical difficulties hampering the research in that particular field - only to spring back to life later with new vigour and new and promising results. It may so happen then that these newly-developed areas would be included in the textbooks under the separate headings rather than under an old and established one to which they logically belong. For instance, the area of nonverbal behaviour and nonverbal communication dealing with the impact of the nonverbal cues (such as the distinace at which you stand from the other person in a conversation, or the clothes that you wear) on the impressions that we form of the others, or the area of attribution dealing with the causes that we assigned to the observed behaviour of the others ("Is she greedy or simply hungry?") or even to our own ("Am I really nasty or was I provoked?") - both of which have developed vigorously in the last two decades, are normally included in the textbooks under their own headings rather than under the heading of 'person perception'. Such doings are, perhaps, inevitable in a developing science but can be quite confusing at first to a beginner in psychology!

So can a psychologist say what we are thinking about? Does she or he know the answers to our questions and problems? Of course, many branches of psychology deal with the functioning of the human organism, with the functioning of the brain and the nervous system, with the functioning of memory, with the conditions for effective learning and re-learning. But I am a social psychologist and I had better stick to my

own field. I find it, perhaps inevitably, the most fascinating, intriguing, challenging and complex branch of psychology. If I tell you that John is a helpful and warm person, would you assume that John is also kind and honest, and if so, why? If I tell you that Mary is intelligent, truthful, shy, polite and helpful, would you think better of Mary than if I tell you only that Mary is intelligent and truthful? Chris is clever, cold and helpful - what would you make of him? When you are a little frightened by a horror film, would you feel more attracted to a person you came within to see it than if you both saw a boring documentary? Why? Why the comrades in war, or in the expeditions (or in a college!) feel they've made life-lasting friendships? If you see someone in trouble, would you feel more inclined to help when you are alone than when there are other people present - or vice versa? When you say one thing and do the other, would you be troubled by your inconsistency and, therefore, change your initial attitudes - or not? When I organise a public debate, would I let a candidate I am supporting speak last or first - which is better? Can we find out? When I am rude, I say I am provoked; when someone else is rude, I say that person is ill-mannered - or do I? When I visit my friends' house and step on a cat's old saucer, I say it's an accident and think no more of it; when I knock off the table their expensive antique vase, I feel guilty and they blame me - should I? should they? Would saying to a child (or adult!) "you are stupid" make her or him less efficient in the future than saying "you haven't tried hard enough"? If I fail in some task, would my thinking that it is all my fault make me feel more depressed and passive than my thinking it was others' fault? Or wouldn't it? When would be what? Would my asking a person of 80 in a nursing home to look after her own room herself, to specify the times at which her visitors could come and to listen to my troubles make that person's memory and physical health improve, or a decline in old age is inevitable? And, after all, what is emotion, what function does it serve? Would it make me feel better if I express my anger at least in my face than if I assume a 'blank' expression? If the former, would it be the same for everybody or just some of us? Whom? And why do people laugh, why do they like humour? What does it do for them?

Fascinating. I find many of my students, as myself in my time, come to study psychology because they want "to learn about oneself and the other people". Yes, you do learn that, quite a bit. But you learn above all, I find, what you do not know, that is, a caution in jumping to conclusions about yourself or the others. Since about the sixties, the experimental approaches to psychology, including social psychology, have been developing most vigorously. This has produced a verifiable research evidence capable of replication by anyone else, but also created its own fascinating problems of the methods by which complex behaviour could be measured quantitatively rather than be a subject only for a philosophical speculation. And while psychology can not, should not and does not do away with the philosophical and theoretical assessment of its inferences, the experimental approach to psychology allows us now to say to any irresponsible theory-maker: "If you claim that man's aggression is biologically determined; that there is no difference between man and animal apart from the amount of hair; that a child's attachment occurs only to her or his mother and only in the early years of infancy; that the most important years for later life are the first five; that my opinion of myself depends solely on what the others think of me; that human consciousness operates by adding and subtracting some composite elements akin to a computer - show experimentally that your view is right at least with 95% of confidence, and I would agree with you if I and others can repeat your results. Before that, excuse me, it would only be one person's opinion".

Some people, I feel, may sometimes experience something akin to resentment towards psychology, feeling that it attempts to find out the 'truth' about them behind their backs. But no! Psychology is nothing like that. There is no 'truth' behind what psychology finds - perhaps, the concept of truth is too simple a concept for the complex study of the complex human organism and its behaviour. Psychology does help to understand behaviour more, or to find more ways of understanding it, but, perhaps, psychology will never become a 'mature' science if maturity is defined as finding the 'truth'. Whatever psychology is now, I like reminding myself that a man in his totality is, and always will be, a far more complex, far more capable 'truth-finder' than any branch of science he creates in his aid, and, therefore, would always lead a science along the pathways most beneficial for his well-being and should, I believe, always resist any attempts at having it the other way around.

Education

Dr Michael Robbins, C.B.E.
Director
Plymouth Polytechnic

Education is an abstract, a dangerous one. What is it? It is difficult to say. Rather like quality, it defies analysis. Everybody knows what it is. Nobody knows what it is.

> "Quality ... you know what it is, yet you can't know what it is ... But some things are better than others: that is they have more quality. But when you try to say what the quality is ... There is nothing to talk about. But if you can't say what quality is, how do you know what it is, or how do you know that it even exists? If no one knows what it is, then for practical purposes it doesn't exist at all. But for all practical purposes it really does exist ... Why else would people pay fortunes for some things and throw others (away)? Obviously some things are better than others ... but what's the 'betterness'? ... So round and round you go ...
>
> "What the hell is quality? What is it?"
>
> R. M. Pirsig Zen and the Art of Motor Cycle Maintenance

Education is a dangerous abstract in that far too often the idea of the 'educated person' is that of a scholarly individual who has been neither educated nor trained to exercise useful skills; who is able to understand, but not to act. We have to think of both 'education' and 'training' and to get the balance right. Young people in secondary or higher education too often specialise in ways which mean they are taught to practice only the skills of scholarship. They acquire knowledge, but are not equipped to use it in ways which are relevant to the world outside the education system.

This sort of skew is harmful to the individual and to society, certainly the one we have inherited in the late twentieth century. Analysis and the acquisition of knowledge are clearly important, but 'education' should also embrace the exercise of creative skills, the competence to undertake and complete tasks and the ability to cope with the problems of living; and doing all these things in cooperation with other men and women.

The great majority of pupils in schools, students at universities, polytechnics or colleges, or adults still wanting to learn - are destined or should be for a life of action. They are going to want to do things, design things, make things, organise things, and usually in cooperation with other people.

These are the qualities of 'Renaissance Man', perhaps idealised, yet it does seem that educators spend too little time preparing people for a life outside the education system, and that society in Britain over-values the virtues of scholarship, which underlie many of the formal processes of education in this country, and undervalues a culture which does exist and which is concerned with doing, making and organising, and involves creativity (these matters are contained in the education system but are given little prominence and often dismissed as mere aspects of training). It is all a matter of balance!

> "Balliol College
>
> Sir, I have read your letter with interest; and judging from your description of yourself as a working man I venture to think that you will have a much better chance of success in life by remaining in your own sphere and sticking to your trade than by adopting any other course. That, therefore, is what I advise you to do.
>
> Yours faithfully,
> T. Tetuphancy
>
> To Mr. J. Fawley, Stonemason
> Thomas Hardy Jude the Obscure

It shouldn't happen now, of course, but polytechnics have only been going for fifteen years. Give us a chance.

Anne Rochester
Teacher, Hyde Park
Infant School, Committee
Member of the National
Union of Teachers

Starting from a premise that a child is born with an innate curiosity which is part of his survival mechanism, he has to find out about the world around him. I believe that the purpose of education should be to increase these experiences and provide plenty of opportunity for his curiosity to be developed. Ultimately he should be able to make up his own mind and follow his own beliefs.

The main danger in the education process is that the child will be pre-conditioned to fit into a convenient slot in society depending on his ability to carry out certain tasks.

The truth is, it is easier to do this than to help him pursue his own individual outlook.

In the primary school, I believe a certain amount has been achieved to allow the child to experiment with and to have experience of his environment but later on it has to be admitted that success depends on the capacity to pass exams by rote learning. Many students reject this and fail.

The best that can be hoped for is that individual teachers can help a few students to gain some self-awareness and ability to express their feelings and ideas sufficiently to want them to continue to learn and understand more when school is all over.

Education - a personal view

Margaret Rogers
Former Chair-Person,
Devon Education Committee

I believe that education should provide opportunities for people to find out about themselves, others and their environment, and to obtain skills they will need in the world of work, community and leisure. To me, this means they must have a basic experience of a wide range of subject matter and modes of learning; it is not possible to prepare for and adapt to a rapidly changing future without a knowledge and understanding of the past from which they and their world have evolved.

In the mens sana in corpore sano tradition, they should be helped to develop healthy, strong bodies through education in good eating and life habits, and through physical activities like sports, P.E. and dance. To be healthy members of healthy communities, the climate of their schools and colleges should enable them to learn about themselves and other people through Humanities, including English and Drama, Art and Crafts, History, Geography and Social Sciences and R.E. In my view, Religious Education should not only teach about the main religious beliefs of the world, but also the main non-religious beliefs.

I would hope that, through being treated with respect and set standards of personal and interpersonal behaviour by their teachers, they would learn to treat others in the same way; that through scientific studies they would examine the natural world to learn more about, understand and care for their environment - which is the universe.

In all their studies they would, I hope, learn to perceive carefully, to examine materials and evidence critically and at all times to seek for accuracy and honesty so that they are able to judge for themselves whether, for instance, a statement is supported by valid evidence or a newspaper report can be trusted.

Above all, I believe that education is a life-long experience. It should be a continuous process, based in and round the community where people of all ages are able to take part, to learn and to impart their skills and knowledge to and alongside others.

On leaving our schools, I hope our young people will be self-confident, fearlessly honest, creative, independent and responsible members of society, able to make sound judgements, respecting and caring for other people and their environment, and having the capacity and wish to take a full part in a democratic society.

To sum up, I believe that everyone should be able to go through life aware of what is going on, having discovered the joy of learning so that they carry with them to the end of their days the same sense of wonder and excitement that my mother, recently dead at the age of 89, told me she experienced on transferring to a secondary school in 1906. She felt, she told me, like Keats on first reading Chapman's Homer:

'Much I have travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific - and all his men
Look'd at one another with a wild surmise -
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.'

The Rights of Children

Dora Russell
CAMPAIGNER FOR PEACE
Womens' Rights-Authoress
and Traveller.Founder of
Beacon Hill School with
Bertrand Russell.

The years in which we live are full of conflict; conflict between nation and nation, religion and religion, class against class. All over the world are found newly formed groups of small nations, or of professions and skills, banding together to demand what they call their rights. "Human rights" has become a slogan brandished about in the faces of opponents who are held to have departed from the principle of according to every man or woman, or section, the natural rights appertaining to human beings.

The curious fact about all this is that, among humans, the section of society most oppressed and denied those very rights, are the human children themselves. We live on a planet rich in innumerable species, animal, bird and insect life, whose habits, for some centuries now, we have begun to observe. Mammals and birds care for, instinctively nurture and feed their young, and begin to teach them to emulate how by flying, swift walking and leaping, they may prepare as adults to seek the necessary foods, to attack the prey which they need for survival. The parents try to guard their young from danger, carry them, if need be, on their backs. Aggression and killing are not directed, by most species, against their own. The human species alone, once the habit of killing animal life for food began,, has shown itself brutally predatory and destructive against itself. In this the chief sufferers have been the children and the young. So long as women were prepared and able to give birth nothing has been so cheap, as far as the holders of power are concerned, as human life itself.

In 1974 the American psychiatrists asked a number of historians to study the condition and treatment of children in the various periods of history which were the subject of their researches.(1) This 'History of Childhood' covers the centuries from Roman and Greek times almost to the present day. The reports showed that child bodies could be treated with less concern than those of cattle. Unwanted babies were exposed to die on barren hills frequented by wild animals. The young themselves were beaten until broken in to blind obedience. Obviously it was only possible to obtain detailed information about the children of the middle and upper classes. The remarkable revelation emerged that even these more privileged sons and daughters - treated as property to serve the purposes of their elders - were subject regularly to severe beatings and discipline, and were very little valued or cherished for what they were in themselves. Even the grand monarch Louis XIV of France received daily beatings from his tutors.

Tradition demanded that reverence be given to the elders, even to the graves and memories of ancestors. The honour of the tribe or nationa rested upon these memories of any great achievement of the past.

As we look back on history and ask what were these purposes and achievements of mankind, we find - having regard to what we have learned about animal and bird life - that man appears to have departed from instinctive concern for and preservation of human life for survival; that his greatest glory is in wars, the wholesale slaughter of men, women and children and the conquest of their territory and goods.

Here it is vital to consider that in the centuries before the theory of human evolution, men will only have considered their actions in terms of the present and immediate future, or obligations imposed by tradition. Children growing into young men and young women would thus only be considered in short term for the use of territory or state, in the present or immediate future. Beyond that the world of the future lay in the dreams of the human imagination, nor could there be as yet, any vision of the destiny of the human species as a whole. Few would have said - as some do today - that we must nurture and care for our young, because they are our future.

It was a modern poet who wrote,

'Regions Caesar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway'

And we had to reach the twentieth century before any thinking person enquired what went on in the mind of a child. The destiny and purpose of every living species rested on the lifespan on each generation. That this was equally true of human beings still does not explain why mankind devoted that lifespan to glorying in the destruction of fellow human beings in war.

It would seem as though the growth of consciousness of man led him to consider himself superior to the rest of nature. He evolved the notion first of the soul or spirit within him. Man now had something that other animals lacked. Perhaps it came from some god, hence religion. At this point, when he endowed himself with the divine spark, man began to refuse to accept that he is an animal. Henceforth human beings should repress every impulse prompted by the despised animal nature, more especially the sex impulses by means of which, unfortunately, human beings were born.

Education, as traditionally we understand it, which is teaching the young their duty, what is right or wrong, and presently, to an elite of scholars, to read and write, thus came from the monastic men and women dedicated to abstinence and denial of life. From the concept of soul man went on to develop another human faculty - reason, or intellect, which gave birth to mathematics and the sciences. On these so-called higher qualities education was concentrated, not on the whole person, man or woman. When we consider the

extent and enormous equipment of what is established as education today, we are apt to forget that it is still directed by these abstract concepts and traditions.

On the flyleaf of my book, 'The Right to be Happy' (1927), I quoted the Hon. Rev. E. Littleton (ex-Headmaster of Eton) from the Evening Standard, October 14, 1925:

"Children go to school impressed with the belief that they have a right to be happy, that God will give them a good time. This is the perversion of true religious self denial and obedience."

Whence had these children acquired this outrageous new notion of happiness? It came to them from the flood of new ideals on sex, marriage, psychology, liberty, pacifism, that inspired intellectuals in the aftermath of the European 1914-18 war. Many educators, more especially A. S. Neill and also myself, wanted to set the young free of the authoritarian system imposing servile obedience to teachers, a curriculum and time-table of subjects that must be accepted and learned; the humiliation and brutality of physical punishment. We saw young children as in fact they are, young animals full of life and energy, newly come into a world they did not understand, were a little afraid of and anxious to explore. Like young puppies they needed to gambol, run, jump, use their limbs. It amazed me only recently to see an account of some American professor who is teaching parents that their childrens' minds are like bags (his word) into which from the earliest years information can be poured.

The very reverse is the truth. Education starts from the eager and lively curiosity of the young, not from the dogmas and precepts their parents or teachers wish to impose. The function of the adults is first of all to observe the growth of the personalities under their care, to answer their questions, offer them the opportunities for the skills and talents of mind, imagination, the use of hands, and their senses in the experience of their environment which will begin to appear.

Children nurtured and reared in this way are living organisms, born of the substance of our blood and bones, carrying within them the genes of our heredity. In them we can discern the probable truth of human evolution, and cherish the hope that, in its continuance, they hold our future. But because we have long since abandoned the elementary duty of a species to preserve itself, preferring to use our young as cannon fodder, we have denied the young the elementary right to determine destiny either for themselves or for us.

Let alone the rights of children, are there today <u>any</u> human rights? In these times of conflict and recognition of mistakes, perhaps our utter failure to cherish and educate our offspring will at last be remedied by the coming - long delayed - of new ideals. Nearly 60 years ago before the world was sunk in the nuclear imbecility and the worship of science and machines purely as weapons of war, I wrote a parental vision of adventurous youth equipped to embark on a totally different destiny.

> 'To sum up, then, what a modern parent may desire for children. First of all the health which gives the vitality and beauty on which all their functions will be built; next an early training that will call out in them friendliness, courage in thought and action, sensitiveness to love, to beauty, and the happiness of others; and a life which, by providing few but right outlets for fear and its correlative rage, will lead to the easy abandonment of the baser passions. Finally that their minds be filled with the visions of scientific and artistic achievement, inspired and tuned to understanding of human life by literature and poetry. Once their character has taken shape, let them know all that man is capable of, not only his heroisms, but his crimes, hypocrisies, his pitiful follies. Let there be no Achilles' heel of ignorance and repression through which lust for wealth or power or cruelty may enter to poison and corrupt the personality. So equipped, so armed, so adorned, pennants flying, sails swelling, bows lifting in eager pride, they glide to the launching, they the ark of our deliverance, the argosy of our adventure. Breathless in heart and body with the effort of creation, trembling with hope for their achievement and fear of their disaster, we watch, till life and vision fail us, their gallant progress towards the uncharted seas.'(2)

1. <u>History of Childhood</u>, 1976. ed. Lloyd de Mause, Souvenir Press, London.
2. Quoted from <u>The Right to be Happy</u>, 1927. Dora Russell, Harper and Brothers, USA.

The opinion of education today

Mrs Irene Ryan
Mother, part-time museum
attendant, Plymouth City
Museum and Art Gallery

Having a son of twelve years and a daughter of eight years, education is a very important issue in my life, and has been since the first child started school. I know I was not educated enough to teach my children at home, so the responsibility was mine to choose a school which I thought would be the one the child would choose if old enough to decide.

Education has changed since I was at school. My children are spared the eleven-plus, something which I felt made all the non-passes look like doomed failures and were treated as such in secondary schools. I always wondered why grammar school kids were taught to read and play music and I was not. My music lesson consisted of all four verses of 'Cherry-Ripe' and then hymn practice. My son, who is now a first year at a comprehensive school, is learning the violin, so, to me, this is an improvement in education. I like the idea of a pupil who is not very bright at Maths and English proving to the world he is not a complete idiot by positioning himself first at Orchestra in the end of term exams. Girls seem to be getting a better deal now; they are taught metal and woodwork, an area only boys were once considered as suitable pupils. I also seem under the impression that girls are no longer educated along the lines of, "One day you will get married and live happily ever after." I hope I am right; I like the thought of my daughter thinking she can, if she wants, do something else with her life. That decision will be hers! The only two faults I have with the boy's school are, one, they have no cookery lessons, and secondly, the same form of punishment as when I was at school exists - if one pupil 'played up' the whole class stayed in for detention after school. I could never, and still can't see the reason why all the innocent pupils had to suffer and I feel that it can cause frustration and hatred.

When the time comes for selecting subjects for 'O' level examinations, five subjects are compulsory. I think it should only be three: Maths, English and Religious Education, therefore giving more time to the chosen subjects, and getting higher grades. I shall encourage whatever subjects my children select so that whatever they choose to do with their lives will be entirely their choice and I will not, or want anyone at school to try to mould them into something they do not want to be. So many boys in years gone by have been cultivated into getting a job with a pension. He spends his whole life working for this but inwardly regrets he was not able to fulfil his dreams. In educating young people we must be careful not to make them into someone we once wanted to be ourselves or into someone who we can proudly boast about to family and friends.

I would like to conclude by writing a little verse which was something I loved to do as a child but no-one ever encouraged. My ambitions were suppressed.

Your Life

I gave you life, my little ones
And Life, yes, Life is yours,
I have some time to share with you
And all your hopes and dreams.
I will not possess you and your life,
Your freedom you shall have,
I only hope the things I did,
When you were very young,
The choices I made in your lives,
Have been the better ones.

My Reservations on British Education

Tania Seldon
Former pupil,
St Dunstan's Abbey

I have this year completed my 'O' levels at a small private school for girls, and have recently begun my 'A' level studies at a slightly larger private school for boys, both in Plymouth. I have had, so far, few reservations about my own private education and could have hoped for no better.

One of my few reservations about the English education system is the much debated subject of the private and comprehensive educational systems. I think all people should have the same opportunities in education, whether rich or poor. Why should it be only the rich few, who can afford expensive school fees, who are able to have a choice of schooling for their children?

I personally believe private schools give a better education than many comprehensives, as seen by exam results, and whatever people may say, good 'A' level results bring better opportunities for finding the few jobs available to school leavers, nowadays. I shall therefore want to send my children to be privately educated, as my parents did, while the choice exists. But I believe this choice should not exist, and therefore, ideally, I would like to see private education phased out and the government putting more money towards the education of its young which, after all, are the basis of any country's economy - no brains, no future.

More state schools should be built, instead of closing down the 'unfilled' schools which the present government seems to want to do, so making the schools smaller. This is because I believe the main problem of state education is that pupils are taught in larger numbers. All people are different, and these differences should be catered for, especially during their childhood, when at their most vulnerable and impressionable stage. This is not possible if classes/schools are too large and the children attending them are in danger of becoming just another statistical figure passing through the education system. The smaller the class/school, the more time teachers are able to spend on the individual needs of each pupil.

I also think better streaming systems should be introduced, i.e. having separate classes according to the speed at which pupils can work, so preventing the less intelligent being left behind, and the brighter ones getting bored. This would give more pupils a chance to understand the work being set.

Perhaps, when the state education has been reformed, and private education phased out, people may be able to have a fairer and better education, also helping prevent class distinctions in our society.

The other main reservation I have concerning British education, is the way in which schools and teachers treat dyslexia. I myself have been found to suffer from this common, but much scorned, 'disease'. My first primary school refused to believe such a thing existed. I and other people in the same situation were considered 'lazy' or 'careless', but never dyslexic. Throughout my school life the spelling list at the end of an essay would be nearly as long as the essay itself! I consequently got very teased, not only by my fellow pupils, but by the teachers too, some of whom made fun of my spelling list and made the class laugh at me. They all continually got at me about my spelling and carelessness.

It was not until the year before my 'O' levels that my biology teacher decided I should be assessed for dyslexia, as she realised that unless something was done, I would fail my biology and other exams due to bad spelling, when in fact I was capable of relatively good exam results.

Thanks to her, I was later assessed for dyslexia and found to suffer from it. Although it is not severe, it was bad enough to need help when it came to the exams, so the examining boards were informed, and my bad spellings and general 'carelessness' were taken into account for the final grade. I was therefore lucky, and I was able to obtain good grades, unlike many other dyslexic sufferers who went unnoticed. The worst of these people were probably cast aside as stupid, never given a chance to prove themselves - it has been proven that dyslexic people generally have high IQs. People who do suffer from dyslexia should be given the same opportunities as others, but due to the ignorance of some teachers, have been prevented from doing so. This must change, and teachers and schools should be made aware of dyslexia, and taught how to cope with sufferers.

Perhaps out of all my reservations on schooling, the one that worries me most, other than the revolting school dinners which I eat anyway because I eat anything placed in front of me, is the early mornings, made extra early by travel time. Now I have to go to school on Saturday mornings, the only decent lie-in I get is Sundays, the rest of the week I get two or three hours cut from my sleep. I am sure with these couple of hours given back to me I could enjoy my schooling to a better extent, not being bleary-eyed for most of the morning! Perhaps I would not dread the beginning of each term so much if I knew I would not have to get up early, but still, life and schooling must go on, and I suspect the early mornings will, too!

Bringing the Cosmos to the Classroom

Dr P. A. H. Seymour
Principal Lecturer in Astronomy, Director, William Day Planetarium Plymouth Polytechnic

Space science and Astronomy have received fairly extensive treatment over the last ten years, as indicated by the Times Index, and the U.K. continues to make important contributions in all aspects of these subjects. Yet, during this same period there has been less than one article per year listed on Astronomy in U.K. schools. This reflects the sad fact that astronomy is not yet considered a part of the curriculum and many pupils leave school with little or no knowledge of the subject.

In 1973, to mark the 500th anniversary of the birth of Copernicus, T.E.S. carried an article by John Ebdon, Director of the London Planetarium, in which he argued a convincing case for including astronomy in the curriculum. In 1978 T.E.S. carried a report on a survey of students entering colleges of education, to find out how well they were being prepared and educated for life. This survey was based on an earlier one conducted by the Association for Education in Citizenship in 1950. Both surveys showed that 92% of students received no instruction in astronomy. The reasons given for including astronomy in the questionnaire were that, "A valid contemporary outlook is not possible without a general understanding of the cosmos in which we are living, and there can be few better antidotes to blase materialism, ... than an appreciation of the vastness and wonder of the universe as revealed by astronomy.

How did such a situation arise? Why has astronomy in schools not developed over the last few years? Are there valid contemporary educational reasons for including astronomy in any revision of the secondary science curriculum?

Astronomy teaching started in the 19th century in the major public schools, but soon became part of teaching in elementary schools, various public educational institutions, and teacher training colleges. From 1870 onwards there was a rapid decline in astronomy teaching in schools. Biology, chemistry and physics were being incorporated into the curriculum - a historian suggests these subjects were considered relevant to the needs of medicine, agriculture and industry - and the code of practice for teacher training was revised, leaving out astronomy. The aspects of astronomy that were relevant to navigation were confined to nautical schools and colleges. The subject was, however, still taught in some schools by dedicated teachers with an enthusiastic interest.

The real revival of interest in astrology occurred with the coming of the Space Age. The establishment of a number of planetaria in various parts of the country in the 'sixties and 'seventies did much to promote interest in the subject among school children and their teachers. Astronomy was also included in several physics, general and environmental science syllabi that were developed at this time. Planetaria had a great influence on astronomy teaching in primary schools, but all the factors mentioned above had much less effect on secondary education.

In 1979 representatives from the D.E.S. and several astronomical societies met to discuss astronomy teaching in schools and these discussions led to the setting up of an ad hoc Working Party on the subject. As a result, partly of the activities of this Working Party, but more directly through the initiative of three planetarium directors and a C.F.E. lecturer, the Association for Astronomy Education (A.A.E.) was set up at a meeting at the Merseyside County Museum on 16 May, 1981. Mr D. J. Gold agreed to become its first President, and Professor F. G. Smith,, now Astronomer Royal, agreed to be its first Patron. The general aim of the A.A.E. is to promote astronomy teaching at all levels of the education system, but an important specific aim is to promote the inclusion of astronomy in the curriculum.

A great deal of interest has recently been focussed on the curriculum in general and the science curriculum in particular. Much of this has followed from publications by the D.E.S., the Association for Science Education and the Royal Society, and the setting up of the Secondary Science Curriculum Review (S.S.C.R.). The opportunity now exists to include astronomy in any revised models of the curriculum. A recent issue of T.E.S. reported that staff of the S.S.C.R. felt that such subjects as "astronomy and geology" ought to be included in the revision of the curriculum, and on behalf of the A.A.E. the author initiated discussions with Dr R. West, Director of the S.S.C.R., in this respect.

There are compelling reasons for including astronomy in any school curriculum.

Western culture bases its overall view of the structure, evolution and origin of the universe on astronomical observations interpreted in terms of the known laws of physics. This standpoint influences our social and cultural values. Thomas Kuhn, in 'The Copernican Revolution', says, "Every civilization and culture of which we have records has had an answer for the question: 'What is the structure of the universe?'. But only the Western civilizations which descend from Hellenic Greece have paid much attention to the appearance of the heavens in arriving at that answer. Yet our view of the universe has affected our religious belief, our philosophy,

our art and our literature." In his book, 'Civilization', Sir Kenneth Clarke drew attention to the relationship between cosmology and art: "... Artists, who have been very little influenced by social systems, have always responded instinctively to latent assumptions about the shape of the universe." The influence of astronomical thought on literature is evident in the works of Chaucer, Donne and Thomas Hardy. The trial of Galileo illustrates the effect of cosmological theories on religious belief.

Another very important reason for including astronomy in the curriculum is that the external universe does affect our terrestrial environment in several ways. It is, of course, well known that radiation from the Sun, modulated by the movements of the Earth, is responsible for day and night and the seasons. The tides are caused by the combined gravitational pull of the Sun and Moon on the oceans. The Earth is also continually bombarded by sub-atomic articles from the Sun; from the Galaxy; and from violent events in distant galaxies. These particles in turn are affected by magnetic storms on the Sun and magnetic fields between the stars. Since an important part of science is concerned with the physical factors that affect Earth, it is important to include a study of the forces, fields, radiation and particles that link the geophysical environment to the extra-terrestrial environment.

Physics is fundamental to all science and technology, but no physics course is complete without some discussion of astronomy. Physical discoveries made in an astronomical context have influenced the history of the subject. Furthermore, the universe provides an extension of our terrestrial laboratories which allows physicists to investigate the behaviour of matter and the laws of physics under conditions that cannot obtain on Earth. Astronomy also allows physicists to test the spatial and temporal validity of physical law. To limit the teaching of physics to terrestrial situations is to reduce the universal grandeur of physical concepts to a parochial set of rules.

Astronomy also makes vital contributions to other sciences. Time plays an important part in all science, and astronomy has made fundamental contributions to an understanding of this subject. The short period cycles of day and night, the seasons and the tides are important to Earth sciences and biology. The age and evolution of the universe and the Solar System provide the setting for any discussion of the origin and evolution of the chemical elements; the formation of Earth; and life in the biosphere. The scope of the terrestrial science is being further extended as space probes gather information from the other planets, and studies of these environments are leading to a better understanding of our own planet.

The document published by the Association for Science Education entitled, 'Alternatives for Science Education', states that one of the aims of a science education should be, "To gain a perspective or way of looking at the world that complements and contrasts with other perspectives or methods of organising knowledge and inquiry, and without which the individual cannot achieve a balanced general education". Such an aim clearly implies a need for astronomical content in a science curriculum. Astronomy develops students' appreciation of space and time; it deepens their understanding of the character of scientific laws; and it enhances their knowledge of the unity and scope of science. Surely this important aspect of our children's education should not be left to Mr Spock, E.T. or the Jedi?

M. J. Sheppard
Former Parent Governor
Southway School

My personal views on today's education system are fairly mixed, especially in the areas of quality, effective use of resources, discipline and the management structure. Whilst there is a great deal of good basic work being done in many schools, some of the essentials are being neglected in others.

By 'essentials', I mean the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. Without an appreciation of these it is extremely difficult for students to integrate themselves into modern society, as they form an essential part of a student's presentation to would-be employers. There appears to have been a reduction in the amount of time and effort devoted to writing and spelling. I can appreciate the arguments in favour of allowing children to express themselves with the emphasis on content rather than presentation. However, to ignore presentation entirely, as seems to be the case at times, defeats the theory, especially when the finished product is practically unintelligible. This trend is neither desirable nor acceptable and contrasts with the objective of preparing students to take their place in modern society.

The comprehensive system attempts to provide each student with an education appropriate to his (or her) needs and abilities. This has been achieved in main-stream subjects by grouping the children in 'sets' according to their abilities. This approach is beneficial to teachers, in that they are dealing with a group with roughly similar ability in a particular subject, and children, for whom the rate of progress can be adjusted to match their development. This arrangement is preferable to the old system of 'streaming', but there is a trend towards full-ability range groups which I believe leads to a standard of mediocrity as teachers have to cater for a much wider range of abilities. This approach creates further problems for both talented children and those requiring remedial support, in that they do not receive the attention they deserve or are entitled to expect.

My third concern is with discipline, and whilst many of our educational establishments endeavour to achieve acceptable standards, there is a serious trend towards the unacceptable in this aspect. The problem is not solely affecting schools, but manifests itself in every-day life, with increases in violence on the streets and in a host of other places. The increase in the number of instances where teachers are assaulted by both parents and pupils is unacceptable and must not go unchecked. The re-establishment of an acceptable code of conduct is important and I believe that the school has a vital part to play in this process. Some responsibility for the present situation must be taken by those adults who carry out a campaign of undermining authority in everyday life. Another group which must bear some responsibility are those adopting the 'progressive' approach, which, from the outside, appears to offer plenty of freedom with little guidance being given on standards of behaviour. Children rely on parents and teachers to 'set an example', and it is difficult for them to establish a style of behaviour when they see and hear the widely different attitudes in today's society. If everyone can be persuaded to acknowledge the problem, that may help to achieve some improvement, although a more radical approach may be required to overcome the efforts of those intent on anarchy.

I acknowledge that there are other problems with our educational system, but feel I must emphasise an earlier comment that much good work is being done. Despite the financial 'cuts' which appear to get more severe as time goes on, many schools still endeavour to provide a wide range of subjects and good quality tuition. In addition to 'cuts', the system is faced with the need to change, to keep pace with advances in technology. This involves teaching staff in keeping abreast of developments in their own particular field and those of a more general impact on everyday life. It is important that this aspect is not overlooked when resources (both staff and financial) are being considered.

I am also concerned about the limited funds being made available for maintenance of school buildings. Children's attitudes are affected by their environment, and when they see buildings being neglected, they in turn tend to lose respect for that establishment.

My final point of concern is with the existing structure of governing bodies. Despite changes in 1981, and further changes due in 1985/6, the position of parents has not improved. Parents (and teachers) are elected, by the people they represent, for 4 years. However, they can only hold the position as long as they have a child in the school, which means that few parents can be certain of providing the level of continuity which the position requires. There are no provisions for Parent-Governors to communicate with the people they represent as the use of school facilities are normally not available, and with the large numbers involved the problems of disseminating information are ruled out on a cost basis.

Finally, I should say that these are my own personal views and reflect my attitude to our education system in general, and do not represent a criticism of any educational establishment with which I have been involved.

Education

Amanda Simpson
Age 16
Plymouth High School

At the end of May I 'officially' left school (only I didn't). I still have the big 'O' level exams to look forward to and then I'll have left school (but I won't). I have made the decision to return in September and subject myself to another two years of books, learning and bitchiness. To many people who claim to hate school this would seem like madness, but when I really think about it, what other options are there for me?

I suppose I could leave school and join the other school- leavers looking for jobs, but they are so rare these days the chances are incredibly rare that I'll find one. Would I be exploited because of my age or discriminated against because of my sex? Those worries are two hassles which I feel I'll be less likely to worry about in two years time after my 'A' levels. Working in a job isn't that easy either. You have to budget yourself, fill out loads of forms and pay all the appropriate taxes (something really quickly thrown at us a few weeks before the end of May, just so that we would all know what a P.45 form looks like in case we flunked the exams). Now at least I know what a P.45 looks like but I need a copy of the Oxford Dictionary to fill the stupid thing out.

Another option which I could consider is the well publicised Youth Training Scheme, but I really don't fancy that at all. My dislike for the scheme came about after a trip to see a Y.T.S. exhibition in the Guildhall with the other 60 or so members of the Fifth Year (bear in mind that 99% of us had already decided it was pretty dodgy before we went, but we got dragged along even though we told the teachers we didn't want to do it). There were several stands strewn around the place with work 'men' building a wall (and then knocking it down again), and even the opportunity to try out one of those price-tag things (something the girls were encouraged to do while the 'men' did the 'real work'). For these people who are bound to become the dreary sales people of tomorrow, there's even the possibility of proper work and promotion to till using (is it any wonder I don't want to do this???). Then again, I suppose it beats sticky labels! Well, I'm glad to see that the youth of today are being taught such meaningful and important tasks. Do the adults who dream up such schemes think that the youth of today are a bunch of idiots? Without meaning to sound rude I think that a one-eyed budgie with a squint would be just as capable of doing such a job. Is this what slogging over a desk has achieved, since we first began at the tender age of five? I appreciate that it costs a lot of money to run such schemes but I'm sure that the money would be much better spent training people to become more than dreary shop assistants with blank expressions on their faces. Perhaps my decision to do 'A' levels is a better one than those few (and I stress few) people I know who have chosen the big wide world or the Y.T.S.

When I first became a member of P.H.S., I was really proud to be a part of the school. (I still am, but I have learnt a lot since those first few weeks as a first year.) I even wore my regulation uniform with pride (I now realise my mistake as did the rest of them a few months into the first term). Off came the blazer with the starched lapels and shoulder pads (or else the collar was turned up a bit). Off came the 'A' line skirts which re-emerged shorter and tighter. Off came the 'kipper-like' ties, which returned tied up at the thin end with some of the white stripes 'tastefully' removed with a compass. I don't suppose you can blame us for doing this as it was very difficult to look anything but stupid in your uniform (although the navy and white was very smart) and even more difficult to attract the opposite sex. Ah yes - BOYS. I wondered when they were going to get a mention. Boys have been the cause of many break-ups between friends, much bitchiness (usually about the girl if her boyfriend is particularly good looking) and several near fights. I go to a GIRL'S SCHOOL for God's sake! I really resented being grilled about my boyfriends; and when they didn't get the answers they were looking for, they had a good bitch about me anyway. I'm glad I don't go to a mixed school because there would probably have been several murders over the past few years (and that's not a good thing to have on your report card when you apply for a Y.T.S. is it?)

I have had lots of fun at P.H.S. since September 1982, with the most memorable times being the ones when we went completely mad (i.e. 'The Shaving Foam' fight, the now famous episode with Miss P's tyres, when we used to pull people back in through the windows after they had sneaked out to meet boyfriends probably doing the same, numerous water fights, ice cream throwing and the most ridiculous of the lot 'The-pick-someone-up-and-throw-themin-a-puddle-because-it's-the-last-day-of-term' game) - all of which have been frowned on by the staff. I always respected the fifth years when I started P.H.S. (which probably had something to do with the fact that their uniforms always looked far trendier than ours, and they could always hit the ball really well and really low when they were playing tennis!) and I longed to be in a form with a five in front of its staff's initial. So now I am. I've gone from 1B (Mrs Budden, who thankfully didn't get too angry when we messed up her schedule on a school trip) to 2O (Pr Owens who always won the 'prettiest teacher' prize), 3P (Miss Monk - there were two M's that year so we had to use first-name terms, i.e. P for 'Pat'), 4C (Mr Clarke

who is still trying to teach my friends the life and times of Monsieur et Madame Marsaud) and 5G (Mr Griffiths fondly known as Biffo, because of his resemblance to the cartoon character). Although now as a fifth year I can kick people off the courts (unofficially of course), I'm sorry to report that my forehand has not improved much and the lower school show us 'oldies' little respect.

I can really have sympathy for the kids lower down the school because I see them doing similar things to us. I see the skirts get shorter and the sun tan lotion coming out in the summer term (I also see the dinner ladies screaming 'indecency!' at them!). I can see the weary faces of the first years after doing the 1500 m. first thing in the morning (and I am pleased to leave that joy well behind me). I personally hope that in the 6th form I will not be talked down to as I have in the past and I'll accept the responsibilities I will be given. However I shall still feel sorry for the 4th years as they get told off for wearing too much make-up but at the same time feel angry with the enforcers of school rules for not noticing hoards of schoolgirls (and young ones at that) sneaking out to role a ciggy on the sly. Where do the priorities lie?

The actual school work hasn't been too bad (although some Physics and Chemistry has been a bit difficult to grasp) and lessons have actually been fun (some of the time). I think the 'them and us' attitude is really a myth. There are a few teachers I can really confide in and they are only human after all. I don't envy the task of teaching us knowing the things we put them through. For all the nice teachers there are also the bad ones. The ones who you feel always single you out and really hate you (or so you think). However there are those who would argue that it is pointless doing work which is purely academical and that will bear little relevance to their future lives (potential shop assistants perhaps?). There are those who have dreaded coming to school because they do not know who was going to be bitchy about them. There are those who are pitifully lonely because of bullying and those who seem to thrive on being the bully. We are all of an age where the patronising of the adults becomes a bit too nauseating for our liking. Rebelling against the system of ridiculous school rules is only a cry for attention, but this cry is seen as 'very immature' by staff. From those people's point of view it probably is very pointless doing subjects which you will probably never use in life, and struggling to complete work on time and put up with arguments can be difficult.

The education system is lacking in many ways but money is a big problem. The school attempts to raise money for its own funds and for other charities and events are often poorly supported (usually due to the fact that original suggestions of what to do cannot be agreed on and people suggest 'unsuitable' methods of making money). Too many people these days want something for nothing, so it's usually the faithful 'blazer-brigade' of the First Year who spend all their dinner money on watching Miss Untrendy, Come Dancing (?) and the ever present Top of the Pops (where 2nd and 3rd years make complete idiots of themselves pretending to be famous pop personalities and getting resounding 'nil' points making it second to none other than the television song contest!). I suppose that academically I have learnt a lot, but whether this will benefit me in the future, I'm not sure. School-life has its ups and downs (more 'downs' than 'ups' normally) and a lot of us still have a lot to learn about friendships and things like that, but now as we get older we are getting trusted a bit more so it is up to us to prove ourselves.

I shall look back over the past few years with mixed feelings. Even the simple task of shirt signing (traditional madness whch eliminates the hassle of autograph books) couldn't be done with real feeling. It's really hard writing kind, sincere messages of 'Best wishes' and 'Good luck' to people you really wish would go and find a cliff to jump off. But, girls being girls, it's all forgotten in one long mascara running, stomach churning tearful farewell. I won't forget the bitchy remarks in a hurry, I can tell you.

Yet I still feel that the best times have been spent out of school on the trips to such exotic locations as Exeter Cathedral, Hereford Cathedral (where we messed up Mrs Budden's schedule by being half an hour late for the coach back. Hereford is in Wales, so I can understand her worry!), the donkey sanctuary, Cricket St Thomas Wildlife Park (where a banana lies mysteriously placed under an unsuspecting coat upon which an unsuspecting behind sat down) and Austria (when we went to Eumau and everyone fell in 'line' with their skiing instructor and duvets and underpants were thrown over balconies, and schoolgirls were kept under the watchful eye of staff who made sure 'none of that' went on). However, after previous 'raunchy' exploits, new rules have been set down for the forthcoming Newquay trip (exotic, eh?) and fortunately for us it's only natural for people to go a bit mad once in a while and it does relieve the sometimes boring days, but I don't think the lecture about our singing was necessary. The 5th year as a rule NEVER sing in assembly, so on the last 'official' day we made an effort to sing really well and LOUDLY. We couldn't help the fact that the rest of the school found it amusing!

Come on all you adults - give us a break (and some credit some of the time). In your youth you probably had the lecture about 'the youth of today' but that's no reason to give it to us. I'm not denying the fact that I've hated coming to school several times in the last 5 years. Your school days are (supposedly) the best days of your life. Give me the freedom and trust to live my life a bit and then we'll see.

Who is Listening?

Susan Skinner
Head of Music
The Ridgeway School

'Listen!' How many times does a music teacher hear that word? How many times does it fall on deaf ears? The answer to both questions is, 'Many'. But what should be of prime concern are those 'deaf ears' which belong to politicians and administrators, who by their very position in society wield the power to determine, ultimately determine, what shall be the main thrust of a child's education.

Education is now very much part of the political game, a game in which the teacher does not know the rules, or rather, is not being allowed to become acquainted with the rules and strategies employed. Whoever plays the game and whatever the rules are, the fact remains that the 'creative' and the 'political' must co-exist. But to what extent are they compatible?

Man has always been creative and we are now in a period of civilization when high technology is one of his major creations. High technology has entered the political arena. Computers - every school must have a computer. The cost is immaterial for the present generation must be taught how to handle high technology. They must be taught how to react to what appears on the screen, how to react at the push of a button. Employment of high technology will ensure that this generation knows how to react. It might not know how to think, nor know how to reason.

Since man stood on his own two feet he has been creative and in every corner of the world his culture is interwoven with music. Man has proved that in society he needs music and within the smaller society of a school one is able to involve that society's population in music.

By ensuring that music in school is creative one is enabling children to be continually involved in performance, composition and critical analysis. By so doing, they are receiving an education in the widest sense of the word for the socializing factor intrinsic in music is not to be underestimated. Inside and outside the classroom music draws together the disparate threads of the social life of the school and in today's fragmented society this is possibly one of its most positive contributions.

The individual can develop, become part of a group, class or school performance and taste the absolute satisfaction, indeed elation, that comes from intimate involvement in the creation or re-creation of an art form. But at the same time, we each have a desire to preserve our own individuality and music allows our minds, imaginations and feelings to find private, personal expression.

However, there are still educationists and administrators who feel that music on the timetable represents a threat to basic numeracy and literacy. After all the examination framework accepted by society dictates that at the end of the education system one should be able to categorize each person. The categories are based on the premise that education is a matter of empty vessels being filled. Filled with what - the ability to react at a given time? And what about the individual who one cannot categorize or mark in percentage terms; it is not possible to feed him through the system again. Yet, who is going to admit that we have failed that individual because we have allowed the examination system to dictate the curriculum?

In 1967 the Plowden Report voiced what many felt that the time, a feeling which is still prevalent, that the place of music in the curriculum has to be justified. The need to justify the role of music education underestimates the importance of divergent thinking in the intellectual development of children. Music is an essential ingredient in a complete education. There has to be a re-think regarding the education of the whole person which is felt to be a hypothesis regarded as a backward glance to the Renaissance concept of education. There must be a positive move against the belief held by many that the curriculum must be constructed upon a hierarchical framework: (a) English, Mathematics, Sciences; (b) Humanities; (c) Arts and Crafts.

We would all accept that man is born with many faculties and it is the basis of education to develop these behaviours of intelligence. In acknowledging this premise we then have to recognise that music education needs to commence in the same period of a child's development when the other faculties are being advanced. The realization of a child's musical potential will be curtailed if at certain periods of his school life the subject has a vague position in the school curriculum or even ceases entirely to be taught.

It is the stimulation and awakening of the senses which enables the child to live in a musical world of thought and feeling and thereby come to understand the language of music. The concept of organised sound and silence can best be understood by cultivating a discerning ear through creativity. Music needs to involve movement, manipulative skills, memory, aural and symbolic perception as well as intellectual and emotional discernment. Bennett Reimer, in his 'A Philosophy of Music Education', defines the crux of the argument as "... the 'heart of the matter' in music is the expressiveness of sound, and the 'heart of the matter' in music education is to help every child experience the expressiveness of sound as fully as he is capable of doing so."

It must be our intention, therefore, to interpret music education as aesthetic education and concern

ourselves with children throughout their school life. To achieve that aim it is essential that bridges are built across the tiered structure of our education system and it is imperative that we develop teaching strategies enabling us to reach our goal - an education for life, not examinations.

Music education is the right of every child, not just the specially gifted. The Plowden Report commented, " ... we are clear that it is the musical education of the generality of children that most needs critical examination and reform". How far have we progressed since 1967? Not very far, for society still demands that the greater portion of school time is given over to numeracy and literacy. In the present climate, it is with a determined effort hat the music teacher endeavours not to become disillusioned.

In his autobiography, Stravinsky wrote, "For one can listen without hearing just as one can look without seeing". So, who is really listening?

Music in Education

R. K. T. Smith
Director of Music
Plymouth College
Preparatory School

What is the attitude to music and musicians in the educational departments of the country; are they strange alien beings from another planet? or are they non-productive sexless persons? (In this day and age we are not allowed to discriminate between the sexes. Men and women are equal only some are more equal than others.) In this materialist age, everybody is being given a number and is being placed in some category that suites the social planners and pen pushers of the state.

The state has monopoly of thought; we are to tie ourselves in red tape and in education we are to follow the self-appointed tin gods of educational theory. To question these experts is considered blasphemy. The phrase, "LET THEM EXPRESS THEMSELVES" used by some teachers as a reason for totally negating any form of discipline, is the product of Piaget and Gagne, misinterpreted, misunderstood, and forced down the throats of us who have to work on the floor at grass roots level. Everything else must be abolished, say the free thinking! enlightened! socialists.

A school is as good as the staff that are in it. How can a factory full of thousands of children be conducive to good relationships between staff and pupils, surely the most important factor in education. We live in the age where the pursuit of excellence is considered to be a crime in some circles. The pursuit of mediocrity is elevated to a high plane where nobody must excel for fear of offending someone of less ability.

What has this to do with music? you might say. We are living in an intellecturally dangerous age; the arts are under attack, they are misunderstood and in some areas ignored. Music provides a means of self-expression, for awakening and developing the imagination and for emotional and spiritual development; the fact that the aesthetic subjects begin to make a special appeal to children during their adolescent years makes it all the more deplorable that music should so often cease to be represented on the time-table after the second or third form. It is less generally recognised that music can hold its own with any other subject in the curriculum as an intellectual discipline as well as an aesthetic one; it has been stated that all arguments for the inclusion of language and literature in our ordinary scheme of education may be used with equal force in the case of music. In fact some Head teachers underestimate the value of music as an intellectual discipline; indeed, some of them mistakenly believe that music makes a stronger appeal to the academically less able child. Frequently this is disproved by the members of the school orchestras/choirs, etc. being called away for games fixtures or chess competitions and other activities requiring a sharp mind and physical fitness.

The social value of music is immense. It is a constructive and unifying force; it goes beyond the spoken language of any one nation. This can be seen in the final chorus of Bach's St Matthew Passion: "In tears of grief" - the power of the gospel story, the love of God for mankind expressed in the mighty act of sacrifice at Calgary. The awe and wonder of the people present at the crucifixion watching Jesus being put to death. Is it nothing to you, the power of the cross, the redemption it promises, the eternal life it gives? Music stirs the soul and leads people to be spiritually born again. From the power of choral music to the painting of impressionist musicians - the subtle satire of Erik Satie. The mischievous humour of Joseph Haydn, poking fun at the nobility with their airs and graces.

The Arts Council grants are being cut and audiences are dropping in our cities. All of it indicative of the materialist age we live in. What is the view from young people about going to concerts in Plymouth? They are the audiences of the future. What do the young know about the fun of performing in concerts, listening to concerts, or taking part in choral work? Words are inadequate to describe the depth of experience that can be felt when taking part.

In backward parts of Britain music is considered to be a pastime of the upper class - what prejudice!! If music is not considered seriously by the planners of our day and not systematically supported throughout our educational system, one of our most important heritages will be lost forever and our civilization? will be robbed and left devoid of culture.

The Christian Brothers in England: Their Contribution to Education - 1825-1985

Rev Br. C. J. Sreenan
Former Headmaster,
St Boniface School

When Edmund Rice, a business man from Waterford in Southern Ireland, founded the Christian Brothers in 1802, he started something which was to have a profound effect on education, not only in Ireland, but in the English speaking world. In 1825 he was already beginning to look to England when he founded his first school in Preston, Lancashire. When he died twenty years later, there were 22 flourishing Christian Brother Schools in England:

6 in London - Soho, Wapping, Spanish Place, Holborn, Chelsea and Summerstown;
6 in Liverpool - St Patrick's, St Vincent's, St Peter's, St Mary's, St Nicholas' and St Anthony's;
3 in Preston - St Wilfrid's, St Ignatius' and St Augustine's;
2 in Manchester - St Patrick's and St Mary's;
1 in Salford - St John's;
1 in Bolton - Ss Peter and Paul's;
1 in Leeds - St Anne's;
1 in Birmingham - St Chad's;
1 in Sunderland - St Mary's.

One might ask what drove this man to found a Religious Community of Brothers and to dedicate his wealth and his efforts, as well as those of his Religious Brothers, to the education of Catholic children. It was because he saw a desparate need in the growing industrial cities of England. He felt compelled to do something to alleviate the lot of those who were a despised minority who were labouring under the double burden of being Catholic and poor at the same time. He was determined to provide them with the opportunity of achieving a realisation of their dignity as human persons and being educated to the highest standards at the same time.

The Brothers pioneered Catholic Elementary Education in England in conditions we would find intolerable at the present time. They taught, without salary, classes of between 120 and 150 boys between 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. and they then returned in the evenings between 7.00 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. to teach adults. Their sole remuneration was an annual Charity sermon preached in the Parish Church for their upkeep. They were poor living among the poor.

The Brothers were just responding in the same way as Religious Orders of Monks had done throughout the centuries to the need for education. The Catholic Church has always seen education not simply as a vocational preparation, but as a means of developing in the young, their dignity as human persons. The Church realised also that, as a good parent, it had the obligation of handing on the Christian Faith to its children and helping them to be true to that faith even when circumstances made it difficult or unpopular.

The Education Act of 1870 made elementary education more available to Catholic children but there it tended to stop: Catholic secondary education was almost non-existant. By 1900 the Roman Catholic Hierarchy were beginning to realise that unless the Church provided secondary schools, thus enabling Catholic boys and girls to go to university and teacher training colleges, then the Church would never have an educated laity. So at this time we find the Brothers gradually withdrawing from elementary schools and entering the arena of secondary education. Our first secondary school in England was St Brendan's College, Bristol, to be followed soon after by the Catholic Institute, Liverpool. Our mandate from the Hierarchy was to provide an educated Catholic laity with sufficient men and women of high calibre to become trained as teachers, and in the other professions.

The Brothers arrived in Plymouth in 1931 to develop St Boniface's College from a small school in Wyndham Square into a successful secondary school. That this was achieved is proved by the fact that the school was given Direct Grant status after the Education Act of 1945 and is now an established boys' comprehensive school for nearly 800 pupils. Many of our ex- pupils are teaching in a variety of schools in the area and throughout the country.

Today's Outlook

The efforts of the Christian Brothers in the time of Edmund Rice were directed towards a deprived Catholic population who were poor and illiterate. The Brothers' mission or vocation changed as Catholics began to take their rightful place in society and became a largely highly motivated and literate middle class. The state has made it unnecessary too for Catholic schools to be run by unpaid Religious teachers - either Brothers or Nuns. Voluntary aided schools promoted by church bodies have now been given 85% grant towards the

cost of building new schools and extending or repairing old ones.

For the last fifteen years there has also been a decline in the number of young men and women coming forward to offer their services to the church as Religious Priests, Brothers or Sisters. We have experienced during that time Religious Orders withdrawing from schools because of a shortage of suitably qualified personnel to continue to administer such schools. This trend is still continuing.

It is significant that in the case of the Christian Brothers during this period the Congregation has become more involved in areas of the Third World - Peru, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Liberia, Zambia, and Papua New Guinea. It seems that, despite our contracting resources, we have 'thrown our bread on the water' and gone where we are most needed.

Yet I believe that in England too, we have a role to play. More than ever before there is a need for Christian witness and for a Christian presence in our schools. For over a century, people have been valued in the West for what job they did. Professional men were more highly regarded than craftsmen who in their turn were more highly valued than manual or unskilled workers. As a result, Britain in the Eighties, at a time of high unemployment, is experiencing the disillusionment and alienation of the young. It is looking to the Social Sciences for answers to riots, violence and an increasing drug problem. When the very basis of one's value in the community is taken away - namely, one's ability to perform a useful job - it is not surprising that people lose their self-respect and resort to violence. Perhaps the West should ask itself how people in the Third World, despite poverty, hunger and apparent hopelessness, have managed to preserve a dignity and self respect, because of their belief that this importance derives from their being Sons of God and Brothers of Christ.

David Stanbury, M.A.
Chairman, West Devon
Area Education Advisory
Committee; Social
and Democratic Party
Education Spokesman

Unanimity of view about education does not exist. This will surprise no-one. The same can be said about most if not all areas of interest and concern. We cannot even agree on what we mean by education, let alone on its effects.

There are those who talk of having graduated from the University of Life - by implication decrying the benefits of formal instruction. Perhaps nothing teaches as effectively as personal experience, but progress will be fitful and uncertain if it depends on this only.

The Latin root is 'educere' - to lead or draw from; but how much time is spent on instilling information into rather than encouraging the development of innate abilities and skills? Indeed, how could it be otherwise? We cannot keep inventing the wheel. "No man is entire of himself - we are all part of the main". We cannot and should not operate in a vacuum regardless of the work of others.

There is no implicit contradiction in providing a basis of received information, of learning tables by rote, on which the pupil can build, which provides the essential nutrients on which he can thrive and develop. This is in no way to diminish the valuable role of interesting and relevant practical work.

We have rightly a healthy scepticism of the expert; but at the frontiers of knowledge we need the specialist, dedicated to his limited field.

That concerns the margin. For the majority there still exists the conflict between the romantic and utilitarian views. One is broad, even grandiose; the other specific, perhaps even mundane.

H. G. Wells saw human history as "more and more a race between education and catastrophe". Lord Brougham, on a less melancholy note, saw education as making a people "easy to govern, but impossible to enslave". I suspect few will disagree with the second part of Brougham's proposition even if there are reservations about the first.

History abounds with examples where increased standards of education have led to increased levels of dissatisfaction and strife. Intellectuals are perhaps prone to exaggerate the revolutionary role of philosophers, political theorists, students and others with intellectual pretensions. In practice, any broad-based education enhances the capacity to question, whether or not it is given the rationale of a particular credo.

Awakening consciousness may be thought of as the bright side - although the results may be unpredictable.

The dark side is indoctrination whether by selective omission or positive propaganda. The Jesuits were supposed to have said, "Give me the boy until he is 7. I will give you the man." By the age of 7 the process (of indoctrination) was complete. Dryden neatly put it:

> "By education most have been misled;
> So they believe, because they so were bred.
> The priest continues what the nurse began,
> And then the child imposes on the man."

Many, probably most, parents see education less in terms of shaping the world than in children acquiring the necessary qualifications for a 'good' job. Understandable enough, particularly when unemployment is so high. Their views are reinforced by employers lamenting the quality of school leavers and advocating greater emphasis on vocational training.

The needs of the working world cannot be ignored. The decline in the status of engineers since Victorian days is misguided. Yet - quite apart from the enforced leisure of unemployment - the average person's free time has increased. Quality of life is not easily measured. It is not just about home and working conditions and holidays abroad. For all but the destitute and starving, it has as much to do with spiritual or mental matters as with physical. The unplift which can come from a moving musical, literary or theatrical experience adds much to the quality of life, even if much sand has to be sifted to find the gold. Education which does not at least open the door to an appreciation of such delights is incomplete.

Parental influence in our schools is increasing. Will that influence be conservative, in favour of the traditional rather than the novel? Will it lead to a more vocational regime?

First signs are that, far from being obstructive, parent governors are well-meaning, but unsure of their position and generally ineffective.

I have no fear for the outcome. It must be right to involve parents. That will not stop initiatives, but will require the professionals to persuade rather than decide.

Dean Stanbury
Former Pupil, Barne
Barton Secondary
School

This school is positive because everyone works as a team. It is like a machine which is dependent on every other part. It has also been seen as a family, with Mr Stratton at top as father. In many schools the higher up the hierarchy one goes the further apart they drift from the pupils. They almost pride themselves on it. They use pupils just as bottles to be filled, churning them out with exam results, discarding the non-achievers. Pupils aren't seen as humans, just objects to often be used as stepping stones to climb the ladder.

John J.H. Stevens
Former Pupil
Plymouth College

The function of my school is to provide universities and polytechnics with well qualified, polite, well-dressed, punctual young gentlemen and ladies, with a variety of interesting hobbies. It serves its purpose very well. It has a good reputation throughout the southwest and is inexpensive.

From my first day there until the last day in the 5th year I was forced to pay rapt attention to at least 6 subjects in which I had nothing but passing interest. I was forced into working by means such as threat of the cane, detentions and lines, 'O' level results, thus job chances and end of term reports. I was forced to involve myself in sports, and school clubs (with U.C.C.A. in mind).

Within a few weeks of my first term at school I came to hate it cordially. I regarded education as something that was forced upon me by unfortunate circumstances, and thus that I did not want. Everyone took this view; it was actively encouraged by teachers who frequently gave us the "none of us are here by choice, but as we are we may as well make the most of it" speech. Even pupils who had a definite career in mind, or who had to endure massive family arguments when they got a bad report, did as little work as possible.

As what we learnt at school seemed to have such small relevance in real life, that even if I was taught a useful skill at school, such as how to read well and write well, we did not use these skills in everyday reading or writing.

Good teaching within this restrictive system was difficult simply because I can think of one good teacher that I had for French in the 4th year. His lessons were divided into two roughly equal halves - the first half he would speak, and we would speak nothing but French. He would correct us on our pronuncia- tion, but without the barrage of scathing remarks that most teachers use. During the second half we would discuss our problems with the language (in English) and tap his knowledge at our own rates. He encouraged an interest in the subject and gave us a grounding in practical, spoken French. After a year with him our exam results went up and up. Everyone respected him, but other teachers were a matter of personal preference.

Due to the nature of the school, although exam results were unimpressive, pupils who went on to further education were often left behind by the fierce competition from willing workers all over the country. So although the school fulfils its function, it does not prepare pupils for the next stage in their education. In fact, it does not prepare its pupils for real life at all. When one spends the first 12 years of their life being told what to do - even what to wear - and has to have their hair cut, making decisions for the first time comes as a shock.

We are taught for the first five years, exclusively for exams, and in the 6th form, some attempts were made to compensate for this by the so-called "block lessons," in which a teacher gave us some background information on some interesting topic, such as abortion, nuclear arms, or alcoholism, and this should be followed by a lively, mature discussion. In fact, it is followed by rowdy, immature arguing. This is because the subjects are not new and arouse no interest in us, and because the teacher is not capable, generally, of treating us as adults, just as we cannot regard them as equals. We have had the teacher vs. pupil ideal bred into us. Few pupils take "block" lessons seriously because "took no interest" and "messed around" translate as "argued with maturity and eccentricity."

Out of class, conversation is usually, to say the least, dull, as the school does not encourage the same attitudes regards families, school, women, sex, etc. and are thus limited to what they did/are going to do this/next weekend, how they hate Mr So and So and fancy Miss So and So.

No-one likes a "different" person amongst the school ranks, and I was called "hippy," "slovenly lout," "queer," etc. just for growing my hair beyond collar length. This of course is typical public school behaviour.

In my view education should be regarded as a process done for oneself by oneself. Theoretical work should be studied at the pupil's leisure at his own rate - not rammed into his head at a rate which bores the most intelligent of us and leaves the least intelligent behind. Independent research by the pupil should be encouraged so he can link the subjects together and so that he can specialised when he is ready to. Teachers should be consultants who direct and help the pupil. If skills need to be practiced they should be practiced under the direction of the teacher, not at home where mistakes can be learned and repeated. If pupils wish to involve themselves in sport they should be allowed to, not forced to.

Pupils should be examined by continuous assessment. Exam results depend largely on mood, standard of teaching, whether they ask the right questions, and ability to remember a mass of information which is seldom useful outside the classroom in their heads. They do not depend on intelligence, keenness, ability to work hard, or interest in the subject.

But I cannot see the system ever changing. Schools provide workers, not people. If they did not function as they do they would not exist.

P.S. I hate school.

Education

G.A. Stevenson
Governor
Southway School

As a School Governor, I am not part of the real core of the educational system. However, four or five times a year I attend Governors' meetings and, for a short while, a window opens onto another world. It is a fascinating, perplexing world in which two problems seem to stand out.

The first is that of language. Simplicity and conciseness of the written and spoken word appears to have been replaced by complexity and length. It is accepted that every profession uses its own jargon to speed up communication and to ensure better understanding within the group. But should such licence be given to the educationalists? They must teach the young, talk to each other and to the outside world. In my view, they should talk to these three groups in the same language. A language that is simple, clear, concise, devoid of jargon and generally understood by all. A language that is the basis of all our communications and the base upon which other groups may or may not add their own embellishments. What is disturbing is that complexity and bulk seem to be aims in themselves.

The second problem is one of direction. I see vigorous streams of ideas driving in various directions. One mainstream harbours the doubt that our educational system is becoming a "free for all" where discipline and respect for adults and traditions is a thing of the past. Mediocrity reigns. Another stream takes the view that we impose rigid out of date concepts on the rising generation so that their natural creativity is stifled. Their lives remain unfulfilled and they provide nothing to the community other than fodder for the "establishment", whatever that may be. Between these extremes lie a multitude of different opinions, twisted one way or another by political thought and dogma. These viewpoints fight for recognition through letters and articles, discussions and debates and even paintings and exhibitions. Who is right? Is there a "right" way? How can we recognise it? Is there an underlying reality or is reality merely an uncontrollable continuous movement of ideas and dreams and ambitions providing a sense of fulfilment to those caught up in the streams?

Reality there is and it must start at the national level. Britain is no longer a world leader. It is one of many nations competing for limited world resources. In constantly changing economic and technological environments, there can be no single pathway forward. Survival and the ability to meet the aspirations of individuals can only be achieved by generations having flexibility of thought and the willingness of adapt and compete. The educational system must provide these generations and obviously it must itself be continuously responsive to change. How is this to be achieved if we cannot first define the path forward?

In most professions there are a few who have a special vocation for that particular type of work. Teaching is such a profession. Many in teaching claim such a vocation but few really have it in its truest sense. Of the few, some are not even in the profession because it cannot provide, to their satisfaction, other needs such as financial security, happiness and freedom of action in their work.

The national challenge must be to structure the rewards in the profession so that everyone who has a real vocation for teaching or administration within the system is attracted to it. Rewards for the great mass of teachers must be equated to what is the rough average for the total workforce and within the capability of the nation to pay these rewards. However, the limited number of top and influential jobs in teaching and its administration must be linked to very high financial rewards and freedom of action. By the same token, incumbents of these positions must accept the right of the state to quickly remove them if a high level of dedication is not evident and good results not achieved. This qualification will provide no barrier to the truly dedicated.

To me, the reality is clear. The nation must fight for its survival in an ever-changing world. Flexibility of thought and the willingness to adapt and compete are the characteristics required by successive generations. These can only be provided by the educational system which must be of the same mould. It has no such characteristic at the moment. What needs to be done cannot be predicted. The most likely solution is to get the "right" people into the top and influential jobs within the system. These jobs must be highly attractive and clearly accountable. If they are they will automatically attract the "right" individuals, namely, those with a true vocation. We must leave the future in their hands but who else can better handle the situation?

I have met enough really dedicated teachers to know that, given an assurance that the top jobs in their profession are well rewarded and have considerable freedom of action, they will accept accountability and the need to first progress through the lower less well rewarded echelons before reaching their goal. They will provide the "direction" needed.

Rowing Against the Tide

Roy Stickland
Former Headmaster
Charles C. of E.
Secondary School

Recently a Headteacher colleague asked me why I was lamenting the demise of small secondary schools. He knew of my fairly varied experience. At present I am Head of a small town centre school; before that I was First Deputy Head of a medium/large comprehensive school; before that Headmaster of a small town centre boys' school; before that Head of Administration at a medium/large comprehensive school ... and so on. I have, by the way, deliberately tried to vary my experience, taking in, for example, four years as Head of Department in a girls' secondary school and five years as Head of Department in a College of Further Education. There is a tendency for teachers to stay on course in one mainstream - this being the most sensible route to preferment: I am sure they are right in this. However, this experience does give me a rare opportunity to compare and contrast.

Plymouth is a city with a tradition of small 2/3 form entry secondary schools which have, over many generations, served well the sons and daughters of the city. Over a period of twenty years (from 1968 to 1988) over twenty small schools would have been closed - this is a truly remarkably large number. Falling rolls, substandard accommodation, technological change and a political climate sweeping in a particular direction have combined to kill off these schools. Small is no longer beautiful - it is just not viable - and yet the advantages of the smaller school are undeniable. This is particularly true in the sphere of social education (in its widest sense) - a sphere which is usually ignored in the all-consuming pursuit of external examination passes - so often the criterion of the 'good school'.

The very simple and probably obvious point I wish to highlight in this brief commentary is that as priorities in education begin to change and a greater emphasis is placed on social education and the development of social and life skills, the smaller schools will be missed because they would have been better able to achieve these aims.

Several obvious points present themselves. Most small schools (especially those in Plymouth) have well established community traditions: these have influenced the development of parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. The newer larger schools lack this cohesive link with community spirit. The two small schools of which I have been Head have shared about 350 years of proud achievement. There is no doubt that the development and sustenance of a readily understood and credible ethos is much easier in a small school than in a large one.

From the point of view of pupils there is no geographical vastness to get used to after the small family atmosphere of the primary school: they have the security which comes from readily comprehended bounds instead of the vague vastness of large (often multi-sited) schools. Pupils know every member of staff and most of the other pupils; they know they will be recognised if they offend and missed if they abscond. Parents know the Head and every member of staff; they are not apprehensive of visiting the school and discussing problems (including own family problems). They are not overwhelmed by numbers when they attend parents' evenings. Several long-standing members of staff can relate particularly well to many parents whom they taught.

Relationships are different in the smaller school: they are more intimate and more genuine. Education in relationships in all its aspects, formal and informal, will undoubtedly feature far more in the curriculum of the future.

The movement towards general (i.e. non-specialist, non- vocational) courses up to the age of 16 and the emphasis being placed on the development of social and life skills make the smaller 11-16 school by far the most suitable unit size.

If I may be anecdotal, I have found that criticisms that the smaller unit could not compete with larger schools in academic subjects and sport not proven. In one 2 form entry secondary school of which I was Head (filled with so-called 11+ and 12+ 'failures') I always found it helpful to enter over a quarter of the school for 3 or 4 'O' level subjects in the December of the 5th Year ("getting these out of the way") and then entering them for a further 3 or 4 'O' levels in the Summer. At least a quarter of the school went on to get 'A' levels, degrees, in some cases Ph.D.s and at least 1 D.Sc. that I know of. Academic success was not inhibited in any way because of the smallness of the school. In the sphere of sport, that very small school regularly triumphed over larger competitors, especially in soccer, basketball and swimming. As an example in this latter sport, hardly an international side was announced without old boys being included, and indeed two old boys gained Olympic Gold Medals.

The needs of the nineties and the next century may well be very different indeed from those of the middle of this century. The uncertainties of employment, the greater need of mobility, the greater amount of non-working time (enforced or voluntary) give rise to pupil needs which are so different from those of the fifties

and sixties. In that era of relatively full employment and a different, happier, more secure attitude towards life, it might be thought that larger institutions churning out pupils who had successfully completed courses (and had certificates to prove it) were a phenomenon which seemed acceptable. They did not exist before that era and the point being made is that they were possibly suitable only for that period and that the optimum size for future needs is much, much smaller.

Large schools are, then, the peculiar offspring of the third quarter of this century, with its special climate not previously existing nor continuing into the last quarter. Although experience might shout that the smaller unit is the optimum size, one realises that in this one is merely rowing against the tide.

School

Joanne Stidwill
Former pupil,
Public High School
for Girls

If the question was put to me, "If you had a choice would you leave school now or later?", my immediate answer would be, "Now, I wouldn't stay here a minute longer than I had to", but after a few moments my opinion would probably change, because if there wasn't any school, where would we all be? Nearly the whole of the population of the world would be unable to read, write, or add up a simple sum of 2 + 3 and although we can't think so at this moment, we are all benefiting from it.

I find school very boring half the time, but on the other hand I can find it equally as interesting.

School is very strenuous at times and as a 4th year, I know that in a few months' time, I'm going to be taking mock 'O' levels and C.S.E.s and to achieve the satisfaction of passing them, I am, as many other girls are, willing to spend time doing thorough revision. This is where the teachers of my school help, most pupils of other schools, and probably my school too, think that the teachers have nothing else to do but make sure we know everything about English, physics, and French, etc., but in fact, they are as worried and anxious as us about the 'O' levels and C.S.E.s, and it probably gives them a satisfaction of knowing that that pupil has benefited because of her/him.

My maths teacher, Mrs Higman, spends a great deal of her time in our lessons drumming facts about 'the outside world' and how to handle it, for example, if she came into the classroom to hear us talking about anything but maths, she would stand with her hands on her hips and say: "Oh, so you'd all rather talk than pass your exams, eh!"

At that point everyone would shut-up, knowing we were all heading for a lecture on our life's prospects and it would be "Oh, here we go again!", but afterwards, I bet each individual would probably, like me, think, "Well, she's right, you know!"

It's difficult to say that my schooling has been an utter flop because although it could be unbearably hard, there was always a way of understanding, even if everyone was puzzled by the way that you had personally figured it out. At one time of my school life, it seemed that I couldn't do anything, it was like a maze, knowing you could never get out, but as I grew older I got over that and I had the ability to figure things out for myself and also knowing that if I put my mind to it, I could do it.

The fact that our school is closing in 1985 meant that many of our previous teachers would be leaving and substitute teachers coming in for the last few months with us. This is quite hard on us, because although we understand that they must find other jobs, we have to put up with chopping and changing with teachers, e.g. I have had 4 different French teachers since the first year, and just as we settled down to our French C.S.E. coursework, the teacher we had just got used to left for another school leaving us with another teacher, she is very highly educated and a good teacher, so I wouldn't want to degrade her in that way, but we are finding it quite hard to get used to her because she teaches so differently. This has happened quite a few times but there is nothing we can really do about it.

The rules of our school, I reckon, are a bit pathetic because we are restricted to the playground for the whole 1 hour and ten minutes of our lunch break, when the boys have permission to go out. Another thing I totally disagree with is rules about our hair, we should be able to do anything we like with it, but no, even a blonde fringe is questioned for no reason at all. When we have questioned the teachers about why we can't do this and why we can't do that, the reply is, "The school has had these rules for a long time, so you can't expect the board to change them now!" but why shouldn't they; the world was a different place 30, 40 years ago.

In my opinion school will always be important to me because it prepares us for the rest of our lives.

Some Notes on Education

Dr Philip Stokes
Senior Lecturer
Department of
Visual Education,
Trent Polytechnic

It strikes me that this is the first time I'll have written about education without an ulterior motive, that's to say, either in furtherance of my own academic ends, or else as explanation or exhortation to students and even colleagues, certain of whom aren't exactly habituated to theoretical thought. So, I'm inclined just to write, and see what will evolve.

Although photography is a strange beast in the way it works, this strangeness is masked by its apparent transparency, and although a full education in and through photography may be as subtle and complex as any other form of education, the commonest perception of the medium is that you need only the most concrete training to become a fully competent practitioner.

Indeed, this is true enough, provided that the traditional premises of photographic professionalism are accepted. If by and large the photographer has always accepted the place of journeyman, it is because of the mechanical nature of the medium. Apparatus and materials nowadays tend to give closely predictable results, so replacing intuitive craftsmanship with a crude, technicist determinism that effectively amounts to deskilling. Provided we're thinking of ordinary levels of general photography, excluding specialist aspects which may demand extensive knowledge of physics and chemistry, it is possible to train an operative to acquire a basic set of skills in a remarkably short time. I guess this is an area susceptible to very blunt teaching implements, such as programmed learning, or any other devices of crude behaviourism.

To the Thatcherite, trying hard to produce a compliant and (I wonder why?) immobile labour force, such an end for the educational process is a conclusion devoutly to be wished. So far as I'm concerned, a similar level of skill, but seen as less than finite, and more subtle than a bag of building blocks, is a necessary and welcome stage in any genuine education (as distinct from training) in photography.

The premise underlying this more sophisticated educational experience is that photography is a fully articulable medium of communication. I would go so far as to say that photography qualifies, albeit in a special sense, for consideration as a language. However, many authorities disagree with me, and the arguments are yet to be opposed in public. Even if what might be called my strong view of photography doesn't prevail, the softer concept of the medium is still elaborate and powerful enough to show the journeyman photographer standing in relation to his medium much as the scribe stood in relation to literature; an unsatisfactory situation for anyone with the mind to communicate in accordance with their own desires and conscience, and not merely to act as agent in another's transaction.

I hope I don't oversimplify too far when I say that I see photographic education as spinning out two threads in addition to the technical line. The first deals with the social and cultural position of the medium, attending specially to the interactions of photography with the plastic arts, literature and even music. One has to notice that, unlike painting, which is bound into a certain context by the fact of its existence, photography is inherently context free, and is located (and transformed) strictly in accordance with the situation in which it's perceived.

This requires the second thread, which leads from the basic ability to visualise images at all, through the photographer's expression of a personal view, to the ability to communicate with others by means of imagery and context generated as a coherent unit.

The first thread picks up on technical determinants mostly in a historical sense, and would consider questions of process as response to, and influence on aesthetic criteria in work already produced. In the second thread, of conception and communication, historical understanding and immediate experience interact with a technical discipline which comprehends the infinite variability of process, and the means by which this knowledge may be employed to generate meaning. I believe that one of the uniquenesses of photography is in the intimate bond between the artistic/experiential applications of image making with precise, technological applications of physics and chemistry. Success demands a fine balance between these aspects. Tip to one side, and drift away into entropic indulgence. On the other lies the arid technicism of the amateur and ordinary commercial worlds.

So the integration of all these intellectual and craft activities is an intense and demanding business, and students who attend to it thoroughly ought, it seems to me, to be able to move out and operate over a wide range of media activities, or indeed within any area dependent upon articulate cultural awareness. This seems to be becoming the case, although a large proportion of students do retain a direct connection with photography. It's gratifying to note that the range of work at Trent embraces just about everything from fashion and advertising to fine art photography, or the various forms of documentation.

I suppose, if the lower levels of education provide Thatcherite cannon-fodder, we might expect to be equated with the Liberal/SDP Alliance and points left. But while it does of course gratify me to think that I might contribute something towards people's acquisition of a useful and more or less liberal profession, the really deep reward comes when I feel that I've helped in the growth of a personal autonomy, based on an unsatisfied mind, and above all, a sense of curiosity and wonder at the world. This is not the most comfortable of states to exist in, nor is it one to please politicians of any colour - which latter is surely in itself a pleasure to the rest of us!

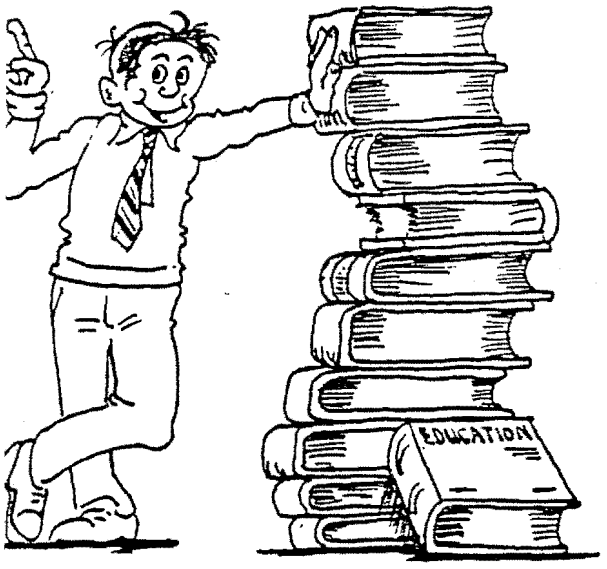
The nicest thing anyone's said about my teaching, was when a student thanked me for helping her to have three completely class-free years.

All these remarks beg the question as to what, generally, education should be about, and the answers in common circulation seem to polarise between notions that education is the process by which the young are initiated into the established values of society, or else that it is the means by which necessary social changes are understood and brought about. I'm always surprised, though by now I shouldn't be, to find these views treated as a binary opposition, with whichever is the opposing pole vehemently rejected.

When I was a student of education, R.S. Peters provided the dominant, official voice of our curriculum, and as you might expect, he's an initiation man. If you want a more detailed critique of that view, try 'The Philosophy of Education, or the Wisdom and Wit of R.S. Peters', by David Adelstein, in Counter Course, Trevor Pateman (ed.), Harmondsworth, 1972, p. 115, ff. Or of course, Illich in a number of his manifestations, but especially Deschooling Society.

There is good reason, I think, to consider these views inclusively, certainly seeing them opposed, but across the diameter of a circle, with the educted members of society moving around its circumference, instead of irrevocably clustered about either end of an axis. My remaining reservation is a nagging doubt about the word 'initiation', for deep down it has a flavour for me of acquiescence with what is revealed, suggesting complicity or incorporation more than it does impartial revelation. Maybe 'revelation' would be a good word not to bear this load. Maybe also, I split hairs.

Jeff Stratton
Head Teacher
Barne Barton Secondary School



Dear Robert,

This statement will tend to be personal and biographical as my feelings and beliefs about education are a function of my experience and are inseparable from my personality. I had a very strict Christian upbringing and although I rejected this faith in adolescence I have been left with a strong belief in Christian philosophy and principles but without any religious convictions. These values have always influenced my educational practice which I have tried to base on an ethic of love and humanity. Intellectual education is not enough. Emotions and feelings are within my educational territory. I am an idealist and an optimist. I believe in striving for an ideal goal but I am prepared to compromise and be pragmatic.

I can remember, quite clearly, as a young teacher, fresh out of college, looking at my Headmaster, his balding grey head, his gown and his stick. I thought "I never want to be a Headteacher" and yet here I am, twenty five years later, in that very position. I do not think that I have "sold my soul" as my fundamental concerns about authority have remained and I still feel as though I am swimming against the tide. My values and beliefs still determine

my actions.

This brings me to my choice of literature for my portrait ~

THE BEANO BOOK

~ in simple terms school education is for and about children and should be fun. One of the main concerns I have about much educational practice is the great distance which so often exists between educational management and the children they serve. They sometimes each appear as if from different worlds, with different cultural values, different emotions, feelings and desires. Each puts on a facade of behaviours to impress or influence the other; the educators to impose and control and the children to perform to expectations. The whole institution can become a pretence, an ediface of dramaturgy, denying the real world.

I believe that the process of schooling for children should be honest, a mutual experience, a pleasure shared, an empathetic understanding of each others' problems.

Paper mountains of policies, reports and systems are created by educationalists to explain schools' philosophies and practice; these often

bear little resemblance with practice in the classroom and reveal little of what actually happens between teachers and pupils. Few teachers can afford the tidy luxury of running classrooms which comply with theory or ideology. Teaching must be pragmatic. The only people who really know what happens in schools, who can really tell a good teacher from a poor one, who can really recognise good practice, are the pupils, and they are usually the least consulted.

The way in which the curriculum is delivered must always be a fundamental concern. I was taught at school to hate maths. I was taught maths on the "terror" principle. I gained an "O" level in maths but have avoided the subject like the plague ever since. All the gaps and weaknesses which exist in my own education are in those areas where I was taught to hate, fear or be bored by a subject by a bullying, sarcastic or insensitive teacher. Those subjects I was taught to enjoy, by enthusiastic and inspiring teachers have been the dominating and central experiences of my

life. It has always seemed to me to be pointless, if not negative to teach by fear. Fear can only create hostility and breed failure. Too many pupils in our schools are taught to reject their education because it is presented to them as an unpleasant chore, imposed by an authority who treats them as second-class citizens who can only achieve status by exam results. Ironically those who so reject their education are often those with the greatest need. Education should be presented as a fundamental pleasure, a lifelong activity to be enjoyed for its own sake by those who choose to participate. Too often it is offered like nasty medicine which will do children good, like a cure for which the disease has not yet been discovered. Any child involved in an activity and enjoying himself is learning. Those qualities of a person's learning which can be carefully measured are not necessarily the most important, the final test of education is what a person is, not what he knows.

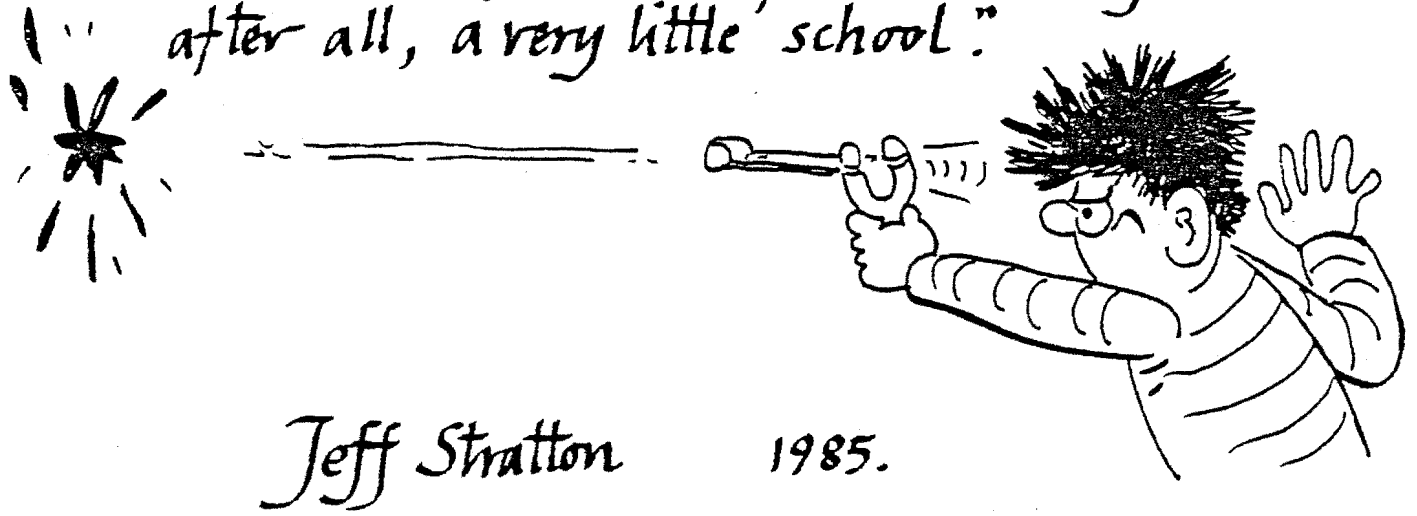
Finally, I think I am expected to express an opinion about corporal punishment. When I was appointed as a deputy head in a large, tough all boys secondary school in 1974,

responsible for discipline, I soon discovered that corporal punishment was not educationally viable. It had been used mainly to support inadequate teachers (ie. punishing children for teachers' failures). In classrooms in which the teachers knew their jobs it was never required. It still surprises me that sensible and intellectual educators still wish to retain it. The whole concept of controlling behaviour by fear and pain in an educational setting is anathema to me. Children should be taught concepts of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, right and wrong, morality, - by example, by debate, by experience, by advice and by negotiation with each other, with teachers and with their parents. Corporal punishment is always negative in its effect as it only superficially modifies behaviour and imparts the message that "good behaviour" (as defined by authority) can only be imposed by fear. When authority embraces painful punishments it confers respectability on them and renders physical cruelty legitimate. No exemplary authority ought to be identified in young minds with the power to inflict pain. Even if children could be "tamed" by the fear of hurt the ends would not justify the means. Surely the practice of a school should attempt to emulate an ideal society, rather than one dependent on repression. Corporal punishment can only be of use in a school which aims

to keep the enemy in place while they are on the premises. In all other circumstances it is counter productive. It makes anti-heroes out of troublesome children. It promotes resentment, anger and fear. It is like painting over rust, disguising symptoms without tackling the cause. It tends to inflict further punishment on those children who are already victims of circumstances beyond their control.

As an idealist I have tried to pursue the goal of a school without any punishment. As a pragmatist I have achieved a well ordered school without corporal punishment and, in fact, with very little punishment at all.

Ah well" the sceptics will say "it is after all, a very little school."



Jeff Stratton 1985.

Mary Stratton
Parent, Former Parent Governor,
P.T.A. Member, Ancillary Worker
in a Comprehensive, married to
a Head-teacher

Over the past fifteen years I have worn many educational hats. I have served on school P.T.A. committees in many offices, including that of Chairman, in both the primary and secondary sectors. Five years ago I was one of the first elected Parent Governors to represent parents' views in the management of a school. At the same time I began working as an ancillary in another school in the city. As I was already married to a Head-teacher I was now in the unique position of having a very clear overall view of education.

Now, although my thoughts on education have been influenced by all these roles, the views and observations I wish to express in this paper are primarily those of a parent.

I have always held a fundamental belief that parents should be fully involved in their children's education and that schools should welcome and encourage this partnership and should not just pay lip-service to it. This philosophy grew out of the excellent relationships that flourished in the primary schools where my three children began their education. The relationship that I built up with those schools made it easy for me to help, firstly with reading and cookery, then with taking small groups for needlework and eventually with making costumes for full scale music and drama productions. I never got the impression that I was interfering when I approached a primary teacher; the three way partnership worked so much better because of the relationship with the single class teacher.

I have often wondered what happens to the eager, helpful, caring parents and pupils during the six weeks summer holidays between primary and secondary school. Is it that the inflated importance of the secondary hierarchy baffles and perplexes many parents? I have found that in far too many cases although parents are told how and who to contact in the huge bastion of secondary education it is still too complicated to attempt an exchange of communication. Old feelings of oppression and fear often perpetuates through the years of their children's education. These fears will never be alleviated whilst arrogant verbal bullying still goes on, keeping pupils in their place and making parents defensive. Teachers will never generate goodwill and build bridges if they abuse and patronize the very people with whom they should be working. The spiral of fear and superiority must be broken, for other fields of education have moved on in leaps and bounds whilst this important facet has remained in the realms of divided Victorian society and is anachronistic within the concept of modern community education.

It is so good to see a genuine, caring teacher working in the classroom who has a creative relationship with the pupils. Discipline problems do not arise and this engenders a fertile learning environment. Pupils can always tell the difference between poor and effective teaching, and should really be consulted in any future schemes for teacher appraisal.

When I became a Parent Governor over four years ago, I was naive enough to believe that the governors actually governed the school I soon found out that the only person with any influence was the Chairperson and even that was limited by the power of the Head-teacher. The specialist knowledge and educational jargon gives the Head-teacher an advantage and renders most governors "toothless tigers". The educational verbosity of the Head-teacher in full flow can leave a Chairperson and governors in the position of the blind leading the blind.

The fixed agenda of all meetings limits the discussion so that it is difficult for anything that spontaneously arises to be explored in any depth. Sometimes questions cannot be answered until the next meeting, which can be up to four months away. Thus, difficult questions can be side-stepped by the Head-teacher, never to be answered.

I felt at the beginning of my term of office that the Parent Governor could be the most useful and hard-working asset to a school if they were allowed to flourish and feel part of a useful team. They have their ears to the ground in the community and could alert and assist a Head as to parental opinions and worries. If, on the other hand, they felt that they were not valued or that they were ignored they could become cynical and even alienate themselves and stop acting as a link between management and those who elected them. I regret to say that subsequently the latter became my experience.

I have seen an example of a good working relationship between Parent Governors and Head-teacher which has been to the benefit of all concerned. But this has been due to the development of confidence, open and accepted criticism and willingness to learn on both sides, and a genuine respect for one another.

If that model was transferable I would be more optimistic for the future of parental involvement in education.

A sense of deep wonder, as Aristotle knew, is the beginning of the philosophical quest, the quest for Wisdom. "For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize; they wondered originally at the obvious difficulties, then advanced little by little and stated difficulties about the greater matters, e.g. about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun and of the stars and about the genesis of the Universe. And a man who is puzzled and wonders, thinks himself ignorant (whence even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of wisdom, for the myth is composed of wonders)." We have our whole academic heritage to learn from and utilise. And I hope the quest is neverending, joyful, blasting a way through hypocrisy, deception and bigotry to give the word Education its true meaning.

Education?

Janet Eve Stroud
Parent

"Thank God I never was sent to school
To be flogged into following the style of a fool" William Blake

"My concept? You can't do anything with anybody's body to make it dirty to me - you can do only one thing to make it dirty: Kill it. Hiroshima was dirty." Lenny Bruce

"... for that which has been most stringently forbidden is, without exception, Truth"
Nietzsche

During a conversation with my son he asked the question whether it is of more value to read a book or go out and experience life oneself. George Steiner asks regarding the study or teaching of Literature, whether knowledge of the best that has been taught and said does broaden and refine the resources of the spirit or do we become more absorbed in the literary sorrow than the actual circumstances. Years after leaving school, I am with a companion looking at a photograph of the author. In two words my companion sums up and defines the photograph as 'very Ruskinian'. I can enjoy and share the comment because I understand the symbolism in the photograph, but without knowledge of the authors and their work and without the knowledge needed to appreciate the symbolism my life would be far less rich.

Erasmus tells of how he bent down in a muddy lane ecstaticaly when his eye lit upon a scrap of paper so new was the miracle of the printed page. That is how I think of a child's mind when first attending school. The child, whilst being the observer and experimenter, collects data from the teacher. For the majority of students/stewdents the restrictive curriculum has to be adhered to faithfully, and by imposing this censorship education becomes the opposite of the miracle it should be, causing loss of respect and interest. The educational/eduoccasional system can make the student's awareness selective and limited, making them conform to a style of stereotyped education which allows only the 'correct' interpretation and answers whilst 'learning', and during exams. The frightening prospect of the 'all important' exam can be a harrowing experience for some young students, causing anguish during the final school years. I once had the opportunity of being able to sleep in a small room whose walls were completely covered by shelves of books. To lie down, my face inches away from those books, surrounded by them throughout the night gave me a feeling of peace, strength and beauty. Would I get the same result whilst forced to search frantically through reference libraries for books needed for research for exams? What happens to the joy of learning as we anxiously struggle towards that dreaded final exam? Thought and scholarship are a lonely, often self-consuming exercise of the spirit when it is at full painful stretch.

To teach is surely to guide, to develop with encouragement the full potential of the pupil so that he can examine the facts provided, extend and improve on what he has learnt and progress with enthusiastic new ideas. Patricia Hynes writes: "Intellectual passion is the mind on fire; a fire whose metaphysical energy furiously gathers and creates ideas; a fire whose vital flames light the eyes, a fire whose heat warms the mind and expands the self." Minds trained only in superficial thinking lead to acceptance of facts without deliberation, to misconception and distortion. Education should reveal what is intimate and ultimate, depth and transcendence, the original whole. As Kierkegaard said: "It is not worth remembering that past which cannot become a present." A child is aware of the beauty in nature, colours, the fun and joy in life. We must guard against stifling and smothering, undermining, violating or destroying their spontaneous questioning, guard against having their speech curtailed by manners and lethal custom into polite shallow verbiage and strive to create an atmosphere in which further creativity may flourish. E. Schachtel writes: "The more original the mind and personality of the perceiver is, the greater is the likelihood that what he perceives sometimes will transcend reality as known in the everyday currency of his culture." We should be acutely aware of what goes on around us and able to respond intensely to the events of our time. Stunted and apathetic education may lead to the same attitude to life instead of the adventure of discovery and of significant experience. When he was twenty, Kafka wrote in a letter: "If the book we are reading does not wake us, as with a fist hammering on our skull, why then do we read it? So that it makes us happy? Good God, we would also be happy if we had no books, and such books as make us happy we could, if need be, write ourselves. A book must be an ice-axe to break the sea frozen inside us."

Stephen Suddick
21 years
Former student

I have mixed feelings about the subject of education. On one hand I feel education is important, but on the other hand, going on my own experience of a modern comprehensive, I feel that the educational system as it stands is a total farce; for instance, I spent five years of my life beicg subjected to abuse dished out by stupid incompetent figures of authority who seemed to spend their time in the classroom boosting their own egos by intimidating the pupils.

If a pupil got the slightest thing wrong they were a 'cretin' or a 'moron' and I remember one teacher who used to do things like make you stand at an angle with your nose up against the blackboard and every so often hit the back of your head.

Surely the educational system is designed to teach those that need to learn, not some sort of institution hell-bent on breaking the will of the pupils, or to provide an outlet for the teacher's own frustrations. I must admit not ALL the teachers were egomaniacal nazis - the ones that weren't were the ones with a TOTAL lack of the ability to cope with a class, as a result the pupils would take advantage of it and we'd have an hour long lesson in chaos. Towards the end of years there it turned into fighting, with chairs thrown about and one teacher was threatened with a knife, being told that if he turned up the next day he would have an extra hole somewhere. Incidentally, he didn't come back.

Skin heads used to sniff glue in the class, and do things like walking around with a stanley knife in their hand, or something. Another time a skin head walked up to someone who was just minding his own business, and just started smashing his head against a brick wall, the boy had to be taken to hospital with concussion - thing is though, there was four teachers there but they didn't do a thing.

All these were daily occurences, and it led to the school employing security guards, but that just made things worse because it increased tension. Also it was the system that made things worse, because the teachers who liked to intimidate the pupils provided the initial resentment and the teachers who couldn't control a wet bag provided the outlet by providing the opportunity to fight back and this increased and spread like cancer. Slowly the system broke and there was hardly any teaching going on towards the end, just teachers trying to control the class. It was a farce which they only had themselves to blame for, for trying to cope with a situation in the wrong way.

But having said all that I do feel education is important. It wasn't education itself that was wrong in that school, it was the system. It's true that the majority of schools do not have the funds to provide better conditions and facilities, but the end result of it all is more often than not what you have just read. Instead of cutting money spent on education the government (seeing as we are stuck with a governmental system) should increase expenditure on making the facilities available to schools greater and making the working environment better for both teachers and pupils. But also there should be tighter rules on what the teachers can or cannot do as regards the pupil, as it stands the ONLY reason a teacher can be reprimanded in any way, is on questionable moral grounds. That leaves him free to publicly intimidate (and that's what it is if someone is dragged up in front of 30 or so other pupils and made to do things designed to embarrass you) the pupils or to take out any inner frustrations on the pupils. This is wrong and it has to change.

You might be stupid enough to say well how do you control a class without that, but what the teachers do is one the key factors in the system breaking down. On the risk of running into another moral issue on education, we are at the moment slipping slowly back into another Victorian age of the haves and the have nots, the majority of the populace being the 'have nots'. It is already happening and one of the major factors of this is the extremely serious problem we have with the educational system as it stands. Education is the most important factor in the living standards of the working class no matter how the economical situation of the country is. The average working class person cannot rely on daddy's company to provide a good position and a good wage to live on, or they can't simply rely on daddy's large bank account to help them when they need it, they have to go on what qualifications they managed to attain under terrible learning conditions to get them money, so education is the backbone of the working class and something has to be done to improve it because the working class person's future is at stake. And if there is any of you ignorant enough not to see this, then just go to the east end of London or Manchester or Birmingham, and just look around, it's happening now.

Syd
Presently in prison

This book is wrighten about me from the age of 14 yrs old its about my life in care and my life after i came out of care. The way it afected me and the way i changed me. i feel it was an important part of my life. If you should read it please dont feel sorry for me but understand it cos im glad i had all of the following experiences.
Syd

Chapter 1

The year was 1979, i was 14 year old my parant had just moved to a town called Colchester it was pritty normal as towns go. I was a quiat boy at this stage in my life, very ordernery. We had moved to Colchester becaus my dad was a civil servant and he had moved down here to start a new job. i wasn't to happy about the move because i had left all my friends behind but i had no say in the matter.

I was to start at a new school called St Hellena's secondary modern school. At this new school i found i hard to make friends i felt so alone i felt lick an alien from another planet. This is when my hatred of the Education system started and i decided not to go to school. i began to hang around in cafe's.

Soon i got to know a few people who were also bunking school. Around this time my crimanel carrer began. The person that introduced me to crim was a boy called Mark Parkin. He was about the same age as me, about 5 ft 5 tall with short brown hair. We used to go into town and do some shop lifting we would steal anything just becaue we got a kick out of it.

About tow or three months lattr i was arrested for the first time. Because it was my first time i was given a casion and let go. This is when the trouble started at home. my parant begain to give me a hard time. Thay began to moan about my friends saying things like "Thay arn't real friends, thay are just useing you." This used to get me very angry and we would have big argument.

Thing started to get on top of me and i began to get very angry. The only way i could get any peace was to run away from home. Unfortunately this only added to the problems. About six month latter i was arrested for stealing some moter bickes and also breaking and entering. I was taken to court for these offences. The courts decided that my parent couldn't controle me, So i was put into care of Essex County Concile. I was shiped off to a place called Chafford Park School for young offenders.

Chapter 2

This is when my life realy began to change i was sent to Chafford on a 28 day care order. The place in itself wasn't to bad, you had decent food, a nice bed, and the member's of staff were very plesen people. One person at Chafford was to play a very imortant role in my life. His name was Steven Babbage he was soon to become me best friends.

I managed to get through the 28 days without much trouble and was allowed to go back home to my parents. but the old trouble soon flared up again. i was taken back to Court for running away from home and put back in Care.

I was once again sent to Chafford wher i was to spend Three years of my life. At Chafford i was introduced to the joys of glue sniffing by Steven Babbage. He tolled me all about it and from there on the rest is history. The first sniff i ever had was in a park in Colchester. I had brought a tub of glue and a Crisp bag, put the glue in the bag and inhaled it. Soon i began to sniff glue every day spending all my money on it. Although i didn't know it i was addicted to the stuff. Many times i was arrested for glue sniffing Stev and me used to spend all day in a daze just wandering around town stoned. He was one of the most exsiting people i've ever meet.

When i came out of care my parents had decided to move to plymouth and i allso decided to move down with them. Plymouth was to be my new start in life.

Chapter 3

life in plymouth for the first six months was much the same as Colchester. I would spend all day up the

end of union street sniffing glue. I then became frineds with a boy called Kev Gell. I met him when my parents decided to have Central heating instaled. I asked him if he had ever sniffed glue and he said "yes". So we used to go out at weekends to sniff we had alot of fun. A few months later Kev lost his job so we began to do it every day.

One of my favaret places to sniff was in fredom fields park. A gang of about 15 to 20 people would go up there. Half would be sniffing and half would be drinking it became are meeting place. Tom Vosper who was later to become my best friend was one of the many sniffers hooked on glue.

After about a year are small gang of friends began to drift apart some moved away some got bord. I am very sad that this happend because we had such fun casing chaos.

Tom and me began to hang around together we would go off on sniffing trips all over the place. Are favorit place to sniff became Saltram woods because it was so peaceful. Life became very quiet and Tom found himself a girl friend and we stoped glue sniffing. At this stage i began smoking TEA (Dope) i would buy #8 worth for the week.

Not long after this some one asked me if i would lik some Acid (LSD) and being the person i am i said yes why not. Since that day life has become one big trip.

After many year of up and downs i've found trie happy-ness. i feel so alive within my self.

Im glad i decided to rebel against the system because i would probably be marrid with 2.4 kids a morgage and feeling very deprest. Im not a zombie for the people in power to push around co's i've got a free mind.

Forgoten Corpse

glue sniffer, glue sniffer, sitting the park, not bothering any one, just sniffing your bag, getting stoned out of your head, your mind runs wild, your on a differant planet, just to get away from reality.

some one calls the pigs, they take you away, your mates shoute and hollar, laugh and look away, you spend hours in a cell, till you come down, then they let you out, and it back up town,

the very next day, your back on the glue, sniffing away lick you always do, you've got the habit, but you don't care, your clothes are a mess, you've got green hair, waking along with your bag, will people stare,

one day you'll be dead, and at your funarle people will morne, news papper reporters will wright, about your sorrow full death, but you'll soon be forgoten, just another rotting corps!

by Syd.
.pa

Glue

[sitting in my bed site stoned out of my mide i felt licke wrighting this silly song]

Red hair green shoes lether jacket
Blue jeans walk down the street
Sumbles past stranger who stare
and shake there heads and
say thay care but soon as you
go thayll forget

Dreaming in a grave yard lieing
in the grass the hot sumour sun
beating down of your face the wold
starts spinning strang thing happen
in your head but you dont care
co's you'll soon be dead

Your crase get worse your soon sniffing
every day selling all you own to buy
the glue your friends have died but
still carry on becaus your bored, to
get away from reality

lieing in the hospital all siples and
dead the look on your face is just
a blank stare your brain is dead
your lick a large cabbige
unable to do any thing on your
own.

Education

Taff
Former Student .
College St Mark & St John.

"Went to school, and there no one knew me, come on teacher tell me whats my lesson, look right through me look right through me. (popular song.) Teachers, we are the few who never escaped the system, the butt of the school bully's jokes come to seek revenge on ourselves. Now we have the right to inflict the rules on others. We have no choice, no say, no thought. The rote still rules. Theres sufty in the staffroom telling tales on the kid of our choice, sneaking on them to the others, revenge is sweet, we allways have the last laugh. Play the system is the name of the game, yet the grade, the department, never forget the worse the teacher the more chance of promotion. We dont like you, but we are the ones who stand to gain, dont tip the balance, dont rock the boat, keep your opinions to yourself, above all dont knock the rules, its the politics of obsequiousness but theres always the classroom to relive frustrations.

In my limited experience of teachers and education one aspect has always remained constant and thats the overwhelming sterility of the whole system, like a continuous diet of cold porridge, its result is revulsion.

In a teacher training college the nails are hammered down, and usually out. The "new" ideas of education are thouroughly examined, enthused over and ignored completely after the book has shut. The system sits back and laughs as any new ideas are nailed to cross to be worshiped, but not followed.

The method of recruiting new teachers is as follows: advertise for those straight from school, no experience necessary, only low grades required, Then eliminate anyone with any peculiarities, honesty (I want to teach for the money, holidays!!) handicaps (deaf, disabled physically, sorry) or social deviants (not in a suit, no places left sorry) and what you have left is the perfect teacher. After the enlightenment of four more years education, you've been in the education system for 18 years solid, so you should slot back in nicely, dont forget theres no need to wear a school uniform, apart, that is, from the regulation collar and tie, and suit, and dont you think your hair's a little long, we've got to set an example you know.

Is this an education for life? What life and who's life? Teachers are the bastion of the aspiring middle classes, and their background may fit perfectly well with those kids of similar origin, but what of the others? How many teachers live in the catchment areas of their schools, precious few. How many teachers know what why and who they are teaching?

Teaching has long been seen as an indoctrination, but what can be done about it? Community schooling has long been seen as an antidote but has never been fully implimented on a large scale, there are many pro's and cons on this issue, and I have very strong leanings towards it, but thats another story.

The Education system is a well established beast and there is no St George going to beat it single handedly, to beat the system it needs fighting from within, and with its staff supporting recruitment system, it's got good armour, also most teachers are politically conservative, they will not oppose this government unless it attacks their cosy world or their pockets (Grant Cuts issue.) So what have the other parties to offer, dont ask me, ask them.

The education system is a dead horse being unmercifully flogged, and doing quite nicely out of it, thank you.

What needs doing is a total restructuring of the whole thing top to bottom. Get rid of the inflexible 9.30 to 3.15, 5 day week for the first twelve fun years routine. Education should be encouraged for all not forced down the throats of the few, to be regurgitated when required ad nauseum. Learning should be for those who want it or need it, it should be an enjoyment not a chore and should be relatable to everyday life.

Why are kids with nothing more in common than chronological age lumped into groups of thirty to be herded from class to class when their needs are totaly different? Why do we have such artificial limits put at the end of the specified years 16, "O" levels, out with the failures into manual work, 18, "A" levels, failed tough luck into middle management, got them on to college, son. 22, Degree and the worlds your monopoly board, no experience, not neccessary. The whole things a load of bollocks, it stinks.

Education should be available to anyone of any age, it should be free. Scrap the Private sector it perpetuates inequality and class hate. Scrap the exam system, continuous assessment or nothing, prefferably nothing. If you can justify being given education at any level then you should have it. Anarchy, Chaos, and the country in ruins, thank fuck for that. Start again.

This essay is a revolt against the purile essay form which dominates higher education it is unacademic, illiterate,, unjustified and immature and I love it.

It will not be marked by a lecturer, that strange beast found only in Ivory towers, removed from reality, which only emerges to masturbate its ego in front of so called intelligent people.

I make no apologies for any generalisations as generalisations are useful when dealing with a mass. And now a few cliches to finish.

Those who can, do.
Those who cant, teach.
Those who cant teach, teach others.
Those who cant teach others, lecture.
Teachers are men among'st kids, but kids amon'st men.

Taff
xxx
PS. All this crap from a 23 year old who is still in education.

Education - Where is it now?

Liz Tarr
Headteacher, Thornbury
County Primary School

E Education was to be enduring - that was the hope - but now it is endeavouring to retain its glory as it becomes lost in an abyss of sterile productivity.

D Denuded of its richness as it struggles to conform to the demands of the uniformed.

U Uninspired - without joy, creativity and exploration it travels a narrower road, finding little to encourage a rage to learn.

C Crucified by apathy - the precious opportunity to mould and form and shape - lost to the cause of the politician.

A Ambivalence gives rise to a struggle for supremacy between altruism and accountancy, which are poor bedfellows.

T Trust degraded, bureaucracy imposed - Education stands waiting.

I Inspiration, ingenuity, innovation shaped by integrity, are the seeds of hope.

O Opportunity is the key to the Kingdom. Truth is where the learning is, and together they should be

N Nurtured by a spirit of confidence as we move forward into "The Nineties".

Presidential Address 1976

Ivor Temple-Smith
Former Governor, Southway School; President of the National Association of Head Teachers and Council Member for Devon and Cornwall

I think it a fair assumption that the majority see the family tree of the Education Service with the Department of Education and Science as the topmost branches, the major Education Authorities a little lower, the divisional offices within climbing distance, the actual schools just head high and the children within those schools as the sap which nourishes the whole. If one cuts off the sap the tree withers and dies but, apart from a very brief excursion in this direction in Athens in the fifth century B.C., we have always had a steady supply of our professional lifeblood. Unequivocally each child within our schools is as precious as the blood within our own bodies and equally precious to my analogous Educational Tree.

First let us look at today's children. Let us view them not through eyes biased by media misrepresentation but as fathers and mothers (either actual or in loco parentis), as adults responsible for their education within our schools whether they be few in number or a multitude. Physically these children are superior and more mature than the children I remember from the pre-1940 era. Where there are physical defects the facilities for a full and worth-while education are even more advanced than many of us envisaged. In this particular area technology to assist the teacher has made unprecedented strides. That it is not yet matched by adequate recognition for the teachers involved is a matter for very real regret but this in no way detracts from the enormity of the task in all our Special Schools and the dedication of those who serve in them.

Although there is a marked improvement in the physical field one could not expect today's child to be born with any degree of difference in his mental ability. The "mix" is as it always was, the largest percentage attracting the label "average", a smaller percentage above this norm and a number below it. It is in the development of this basic inheritance that one sees a very marked change. I am, perhaps, impinging a little upon the contents of Bullock but I believe that the initial fault, if fault there be, with today's child is committed by the parents, not deliberately, but because their minds are continually conditioned by external influences and they quite literally do not realise what a disservice they are committing to the child. The family discussion, the family excursion, the family expressing certain standards of behaviour, speech and bearing have been abrogated to an alarming degree. They have been replaced by worship of material possessions and division of the family, as a unit, to this end. Except possibly in the fast disappearing truly rural areas the pre-school child has a decreasing knowledge of the actual natural world, the sights, the sounds and the feel of God's creatures and God's creation. He is assailed from early childhood with the electronic substitute version of our heritage and his senses are expected to grow to fruition on this ersatz cultural diet. Parents have forgotten how to talk to their children, to read to their children or to guide their children's first steps along the path of literacy. All too often even the difference between what is right and what is wrong is left for somebody else to deal with at a later stage of the child's life. He is weaned on daily doses of the most awful cacophony which today so often passes for music but which bears little resemblance to the art of that name. The sound of silence is something almost unknown to him.

I live on the very edge of the Dartmoor National Park - a vast wilderness where one can, if one wishes, become isolated from all the wonders of the twentieth century. On many journeys onto the Moor I frequently meet groups of youngsters striding along intent upon conquering this or that Tor, enjoying the wonderful unpolluted air but, so indicative of the age, usually with a transistor radio held to their ear or carried in their hand. The silence of the Moor is so foreign to their nature that the sounds which they might hear are lost in the din which has become almost part of their lives.

It is not my intention to say that this is so for all children or for all families. I merely report on what I see as a disturbing trend in the relationship between parents and children, a relationship which throws an increasing burden on those responsible for the next stage of the child's development, our special kingdom - the School.

It seems that everyone who ever attended school does, at some time or other, become a self-designated "expert" on education. In like manner the Police Force is hag-ridden by people who are ever ready to pontificate on how best to preserve law and order in this country. The man or woman who commences with "As a ratepayer" seems to forget that we also pay and are therefore equally keen to obtain value for money. What is more we are in a far better position to see that value is obtained, and, even more important, our entire training and experience is guided towards that end.

Teaching methods have come a long way from the era of "chalk and talk". During their journey they have collected some wonderful new phraseology. Is "Phonic attack" virtually the same as teaching a child to read? Are "Open-ended timetables" so open that everything of value has fallen out? Is "Family grouping" another name for a smaller edition of what used to happen in village schools? "School experience" now

replaces teaching practice - we all know what the latter meant but perhaps its definition was too exact.

I have quoted a very few examples but of one thing I am positive - whichever method is used, our prime duty is to promote as high a standard of literacy and numeracy as is humanly possible in whichever of the stages of education we are employed. These are the basics without which there can be no complete fulfilment in any other subject discipline. You may think this is too well known to bear repetition but all too often do these fundamentals founder under pressure of gimmickry and commercial exploitation or a sickening attitude of indifference. Inherent under the blanket cover of teaching method is naturally school discipline. Discipline does not come naturally to children, it has to be taught. Not only does it have to be taught but it must be an understood system with which each child, each teacher and each parent is fully conversant. All relationships, indeed the child's very future as an adult is governed by a measure of discipline both self-imposed and that which normal society expects. If we abdicate our responsibilities in these directions then we are simply failing to carry out one of the major roles incumbent upon us as Head Teachers.

Society, as a whole, expects the Education Service to work miracles. No matter what calibre of child starts at one end of the system from the other end should emerge a well orientated, well educated future citizen of this country. Education itself has taken on this challenge - we are teachers and proud to be so known - but by the same token when the end product fails to measure up to our own and Society's standards we are naturally open to criticism. When one thinks of the explosion of curriculum content in conjunction with our efforts to produce the worthwhile citizen perhaps we have overreached ourselves and overlooked the very disciplines upon which all learning must be based. This is a cautionary observation, an appeal for a return to values which so many consider outmoded but whose absence will be regretted by our children and regretted even more by their children. Today's child is tomorrow's parent; that is why those of you here of my vintage can now look at children whose parents who also saw earlier in your career and you can, and must, evaluate what you see in terms of your own beliefs and in terms of what the country expects from you as a member of an honourable profession. It is a daunting task which, until reently, had scant material reward but which, nevertheless, gives that intangible satisfaction which can only be experienced by dedicated teachers.

Let us now look briefly at our third arboreal limb - the Educational Administration. I believe it was that great golfer Gary Player who once observed that tall trees catch the wind. We are now far enough up our own tree to realise the truth of this observation. It is at this level that major policy decisions are taken which directly affect us as Heads and equally the children for whom we are responsible. Very often these are decisions which the trained Educational Administrator finds abhorrent but they are forced upon him by committees totally committed to perpetuating a doctrinal line irrespective of educational value or educational viability. Your Educational Administrators have a continual running battle on their hands - not only are they fighting for their educational budget but they then have to try to reconcile their ideas of priority with those of our friend the ratepayer now wearing his County Council or Metropolitan District Council hat. In the majority of authorities it is at this stage that there is real consultation with teacher representatives which is as it should be. The present financial stringency, however, coupled with measures which are politically rather than educationally motivated, makes this reconciliation an unenviable task. In real terms the present financial budget does not even allow authorities to mark time, a growth rate of nil per cent measured against the present rate of inflation must surely qualify those responsible for permanent residence in Cloud Cuckoo Land.

This is for this year alone. My thoughts for the future are not culled from any little red book - they are determined by the recent proposals to cut #1,033 million from the educational budget in the period 1976-79. In simple terms this will mean a further worsening of the pupil/teacher ratio, a lowering of the per capita grant, a lack of nursery school provision, virtually no replacement of outmoded and outdated buildings, minimal repairs and renovations of those already in existence and the training of fewer teachers, many of whom will join those already qualified for whom there is no hope of employment within our schools. My friends, we are living on borrowed money but for our children you cannot borrow time. Steel can be stockpiled to await the upturn in the economy but decreased educational opportunity can never be regained. To believe otherwise is not logic but lunacy. British education has always been considered the yardstick by which other countries measured their own service. If these standards are diminished, then, by the same degree, is the future prosperity of this country. My plea, therefore, is for the fullest co-operation between the Education Officers and ourselves. The attitude of "them" and "us" in this present context has no place in my philosophy. Each needs the fullest support and understanding of the other, if we are to make the best use of the very limited resources available.

Finally, let us cast our eyes to the very top of our tree, the place where, incidentally, one looks for the first signs of Dutch Elm disease or any other indigenous illness. It is here that children become statistics, not only when they are born but even before this event takes place. There are times when we have an abundance of our raw materials known, rather descriptively, as the bulge years, but the statisticians now predict a diminishing birth-rate running into the 1980s. I do not know all the factors which contribute to these forecasts but we can rest assured that, should they be wrong, then firstly it will come as no great surprise and secondly there will be another set of statistics published which will consolidate the initial error. Statistics alone are but one part of the work in these topmost echelons.

Our tree then, despite its need for a little judicious pruning, will survive. I say judicious because so far those who prune seem incapable of reaching the branches above our own particular level. They chop away at the very area least able to sustain such mutilation. I repeat that pupil/teacher ratios especially and capitation allowances are but two instances which directly affect the quality of the service to the children, although it is these same children who sustain the whole tree.

I have always felt what a great pity it is that Education should be a party political issue in this country and I have no doubt at all, in my mind, that Education has suffered, is suffering and will continue to suffer while this situation exists. I do not believe that the Education Service as a whole should be set apart from the stringencies inherent in the present financial dilemma in which this country finds itself but neither do I believe

that this is the time to impose political dogma in the name of education when there is an abundant and self-evident need for every pound of our due in areas which are truly educational. Finance is the inescapable problem for all sectors of the public service - let our service have its just share to spend in the fields where we, as Heads, and our immediate administrators know that it is most urgently needed.

Education is primarily concerned with CHILDREN. Children who represent the future prosperity or decline of this nation. Let the day soon come when this basic truth becomes the guiding principle for those who control our destiny because I see, and I am sure you see, far too many signs that a multitude of mini- empires are being created which are based on the numbers of children in our schools but from which the children themselves derive precious little benefit.

It remains for us to emulate the greatest Teacher of them all who exhorted that the little children should come to Him. In 1976 we, as Head Teachers, must see that this faith is never betrayed.

Education and the Concept of a Person

Doctor Adrian Thatcher
Head of Religious Studies
and Philosophy, College
of St Mark and St John

I

I hold that to become educated is to learn to be a person (1). Unfortunately, the case made out by the principal exponent of this particular view of education, Glenn Langford, suffers from some serious weaknesses and, if his main contention is to stand, a more convincing case in support of it must be supplied. This paper is written in the belief that Langford's account of what education is is right, but that it has to be sustained by other means and given specific content. I first describe Langford's contention that to become educated is to learn to be a person. In the next section I discuss several important difficulties arising out of Langford's claim. In the final section I outline my own proposals for defending and developing it.

II

Here are six features of Langford's contention that to become educated is to learn to be a person.

First, that education is helping human beings to learn to become persons is intended as an answer to the general question 'What is education?'(2) Langford intends his recent book Teaching as a Profession to be "to some extent a reaction against" contemporary philosophy of education, and his answer to the question 'What is education?' can be seen as a reaction to some contemporary answers given by philosophers of education, for example that education is "concerned with the development of mind", or that it is "the initiation of people into a worthwhile form of life"(3).

Secondly, the answer that education is learning to be a person is arrived at by the pursuit of a distinctive philosophical method. Langford takes issue with the approach of the conceptual analysts to the philosophy of education, chiefly for the reason that he does "not consider the traditional empiricist metaphysic of atomism adequate for an understanding of the nature of social phenomena"(4). His predominant method (at least in Teaching as a Profession) is "better described as descriptive or phenomonological [sic] rather than analytic"(5). The choice of method represents a considerable shift of emphasis in the philosophy of education and, I would think, is one that most students and not a few teachers in the subject would welcome. So the answer to the question 'What is education?' is arrived at by carefully describing, as neutrally and suppositionlessly as one can, the sort of things that go on in the social tradition of teaching. This is a different kind of task from that of expounding 'the logic of "education"'.

Thirdly, the answer to the question 'What is education?' is descriptive. This partly follows from the use of the phenomenological method. Langford holds that the question is both descriptive and prescriptive (6), but that only the descriptive form of the question is intelligible. I shall assume that a descriptive answer is an answer in terms of what is assumed to be the case, and a prescriptive answer is an answer in terms of what ought to be the case.

Langford's insistence that his answer to the question is descriptive but not prescriptive is of great importance for understanding his concept of education. In accordance with the descriptive, phenomenological method, one must search the whole of the social tradition where education is going on, a very wide- ranging and general, empirical exercise. What one finds there is that formal, as opposed to informal education (7), helps individuals to become persons.

The reason Langford gives for his insistence that 'learning to become a person' is to be understood descriptively, is his contention that a descriptive answer is already sufficient, and that it is not clear how a prescriptive answer could be understood. I shall argue later that this constitutes a grave weakness in his position, for several reasons. "It is doubtful," he writes, "whether much sense could be made of the suggestion that human societies should be made up of some kind of entity other than persons" (8). Individuals become persons by learning to do so, and they learn by being educated. So:

> There is no question of persons becoming persons other than by a process of learning, for example, of their being manufactured or born as complete, fully functioning adults ... It is doubtful whether any alternative to education could be intelligibly conceived; and in the absence of alternatives there is no scope for prescription. (9)

But, as I shall urge below, there is no scope for using the concept of a person without prescription, since as Langford elsewhere acknowledges (10), the concept of a person contains many hidden, implicit values. It does not follow from the statement that 'There is no question of persons becoming persons other than by a

process of learning', that there is no question of what sort of persons they learn to become.

Sometimes the answer, learning to become persons, is not arrived at on the basis of a description of what those engaged in education understand themselves to be doing. It sometimes has the ring of a necessary truth about it, namely that children necessarily grow up, and persons are what they necessarily learn to grow up into. Langford writes

> The new-born baby is no more than a young specimen of the biological species homo sapiens. It has to learn to become a person after birth. No one is born a typical American boy or a Merseyside docker. These are things which they have to learn to become; though, of course, which they learn to become depends on the social context into which they are born. (11)

Learning to become persons, then, is what children eventually do and what education necessarily brings about. But as an answer to the question 'What is education?', learning to become persons can be defended either as a description of what those engaged in education actually try to bring about, or as a logical inference from the obvious fact that children grow up. These, as we shall see, are very different procedures.

Fourthly, Langford sets out fairly specifically the principal features of personhood. Persons are conscious and capable of thought. They have a more developed awareness than animals of their environments, an awareness which is 'conceptually structured' (12). Persons have a conception of the physical world "as we experience it, and which forms a possible object of knowledge for us" (13), and of the social world, in which, to become a person, the child"must distinguish part of its environment as consisting of persons" (14). A developed awareness of the world is impossible without 'the possession of language'. On the basis of their awareness of the world persons come to hold beliefs and "to form a conception of themselves as the subject of those experiences" (15). Persons "are agents and as such capable of rational choice" (16). They can bring about "one state of affairs rather than another because they have a reason for doing so" (17). Persons can bring about their own intentions. In exercising choice they shape their own lives (18). Causal laws do not apply to such choices (19).

Fifthly, the values implicit in the concept of a person are socially relative.

> The concept of education has a reference to values built-in because the concept of a person (or a human being) has values built-in. What those values are will depend on the particular society; there need not be any choices which are the right choices to make in any absolute sense. (20)

Sixthly, it will already be apparent that Langford's concept of a person is highly specialised. We have already seen that children are not persons, but have to become these by a process of education. It follows then, in a strict sense that one cannot speak of an 'uneducated person' or use this concept of a person, of a child.

III

There are some serious weaknesses in this account of education. One of them becomes apparent by asking whose question is the question 'What is education?', and whether the answer 'learning to become a person' can count as a genuine answer to it. Langford says the question is asked by

> Teachers who keep an educational tradition alive through their professional activities [and] may reflect upon and try to see more clearly the nature of their own activities ... It is not an abstract question about the meaning of a word but an empirical question about the activities of a particular group of people. It can be answered, therefore, only by reference to the activities of those people. (21)

But an obvious problem with the location of the question and the answer in the professional activities of teachers is that it involves teachers asking questions to which they know the answers already. If the answer to the question is to be located solely in the social tradition of teaching, then teachers have a conspicuous absence of a reason for asking it. If the question is an empirical, descriptive one, then 'What is education?' cannot express a genuine desire to discover something about the nature of education, for educating is what teachers are doing all the time, and they are unlikely to want to call in philosophers of education to articulate philosophically on their behalf what they are doing already. If, however, the question becomes prescriptive, then it can legitimately be taken as a request for the answerer's informed and professionally competent judgement about the matter which involves reference to philosophical choices, ideals and values as well as empirical descriptions of what goes on in a social tradition or profession. Thankfully teachers often do ask what they ought to be doing.

The prescriptive character of the question 'What is education?' is unavoidable, and for reasons other than the one just given, namely that those who are engaged in education do not required a descriptive answer and are in any case the only people who could provide it. If the question remains descriptive it is hard to resist the further conclusion that Langford's answer amounts to a broad, uninformative generality which could hardly be of assistance to teachers who 'may reflect upon and try to see more clearly the nature of their own activities'. So the answer would be as pointless as the question. I have already suggested that Langford's answer, descriptively understood, can be arrived at without a phonomenological look at the teaching profession at all. 'Infants learn to become persons by education' is just a conflation of two generalisations, both of which Langford thinks are self-evident and need no further support, namely 'infants learn to become persons'; and 'education brings about

learning'. But I cannot think Langford would be happy with this procedure for arriving at his conclusion, for

presumably the phenomenological description of what the teaching profession does might be expected to yield further gains. In any case, underlying the claim that learning to be a person is a purely descriptive answer is the false assumption that 'person' is capable of being used purely descriptively (22).

The claim that 'What is education?' cannot be answered prescriptively is supported indirectly by the choice of the phenomenological method. Langford nowhere expounds the principles of such a method (23), but it is reasonable to expect that a method of philosophy which is 'descriptive or phenomenological'(24) will work well in the task of stating what is going on in the social practice of teaching, but less well in the task of evaluating or developing alternatives to what one has carefully described. In his brief conclusion to Teaching as a Profession he states that he has regarded education "as a practical social activity" and that "it is a consequence of this approach that philosophy of education is thought of as the philosophy of the social practice of education and its primary task as that of understanding the practice" (25). A critical discussion of the values underlying the social practice of education, particularly as they impinge upon possible types of personhood that the teaching profession is busily engaged in bringing about, is not offered. The phenomenological method of doing philosophy is not the best method for examining values, for they are not easily describable. As Langford rightly says, "There is an almost irresistible temptation to speak of values as though they were part of the furniture of the world, in the sense of existing independently of the people who hold them" (26).

But here we come to the fundamental weakness of much modern philosophy of education of both the conceptual-analytical and descriptive-phenomenological kinds, that it does not penetrate to the hidden value-assumptions, the implicit ideological commitments, the 'models of man', the Weltanschauungen, or whatever word or phrase is used, which instantiate to differing degrees the social practice of teaching. These issues undoubtedly involve us in metaphysics, or at least meta-ethics, whose current unfashionability is no guide to the degree to which they are urgently needed (27). Commitment to certain guiding principles, shared values, overriding goals is either explicit or implicit, but whether explicit or implicit it is ever present and it needs to be unearthed. The method of philosophical analysis, applied to the social practice of education and not just to the key concepts involved in the cerebral discussion of education can help to do this. Once these entrenched value-assumptions are dug out, much more philosophical work of the meta-ethical or transcendental kind is needed to provide an adequate justification of them, or perhaps a drastic refashioning of them, a comparison between them, a curricular application of them, and so on.

Langford's philosophical method is just such an example of the sort of commitments which anyone working in education necessarily takes on board. Evidently and justifiably the phenomenological method is, he believes, a better method than conceptual analysis or philosophical idealism or existenialism for the job in hand. But this is itself a matter of choice. The choice of a descriptive method of philosophy is certainly not purely descriptive, for the descriptive method contains many assumptions which need independent support. Langford's treatment of values shows that he does not have a stance, a particular attitude toward them which bespeaks a certain philosophical commitment. He writes, "All values, however, have their foundation in the wants and needs of individuals. Talk about values is a convenient shorthand for talk about the people who hold them and their behaviour" (28). But this looks obviously utilitarian and there are good reasons (which I would certainly want to advance) why this account of values should not be accepted (29). Again, Langford makes it sound like a purely contingent matter, irrespective of any truth-claims being entertained, that

> A Western European may be expected to come to share John Stuart Mill's preference for "the pleasures of the intellect, of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments" to which he attached "a much higher value as pleasures than to those of mere sensation".(30)

But this already presupposes an agreement to cash out values in terms of pleasure, and there are a host of good reasons for not doing so. My point here is not to argue with Langford about values; only to show that what he says about values already expresses his implicit philosophical commitments. But education, from nursery school to university, contains many such implicit commitments.

Another philosophical commitment of Langford's (this surely cannot be just plain descriptive?) is his account of what a person is. This does not seem to be derived from the social practice of education but to come instead at least partly from the independent discipline of western philosophy. The possession of language, self-awareness, conceptions of the physical and social worlds, freedom, intention and agency, all characterise modern philosophical discussion about what a person is. However, a serious problem for Langford is that there is no obvious connexion between the description of a person which he has set out, and the persons which educationists are engaged in teaching children and students to become. It is not at all clear to me that teachers are in the main acquainted with what a person is in recent Western philosophy, and if they were to be made aware of it, one wonders what difference it would make to the practice of their teaching. Indeed the theory of education, which presumably serves the teaching profession in an indirect way, contains powerful elements which actually conflict with an essential feature of personhood, for the different forms of sociological and psychological determinism can, in important respects, be incompatible with the moral autonomy of individuals. There are two related problems for Langford here: the first is that his account of what a person is is prescriptive because it is an account of what he thinks individuals minimally ought to become if they are to achieve the status of persons: the second is that the concept of a person which he offers is not obviously one which operates in the teaching profession and cannot therefore be the consequence of a purely phenomenological approach. The philosophical concept of a person, and the concept of a person which operates in the descriptive answer to the question 'What is education?' are different concepts.

Unfortunately there are further perplexities in Langford's concept, or concepts of a person. The first

concerns his assumption that the content for becoming a person which individuals encounter in their education is derived from the social contexts in which the education is given. "... The concept of a person (or a human being) has values built-in. What those values are will depend on the particular society ..."(31) "... Although the members of other societies are persons like ourselves, the kind of person they are will depend on the social traditions of the society to which they belong and to which they were introduced by a process of learning" (32).

If Langford is drawing attention to the fact that what is taught by educators in any given society is bound to be influenced by the social traditions of that society, then he is drawing attention to an important, albeit fairly obvious, state of affairs. However it appears that Langford is actually assuming a mild form of social determinism, in which educators are not free to respond selectively and critically to whatever has been transmitted to them in a social tradition, and at the same time enrich that same tradition by developing their own initiatives and innovations. But the more important issue here, which reference to the social tradition of education obscures, is that a social tradition such as that to which teachers in the 1980s are the unwitting heirs, has no uniform set of values, no single dominant concept of a person. An educator does not just imbibe 'built-in' values, neither does he just look around, so to speak, to see what understandings of personhood are de facto operative implicitly in the social practice of teaching. He will want to contribute his own experience and insight to the issue, for these will in any case be regulative for him in his own teaching practice.

What a person is is a matter of fierce and healthy debate involving philosophers, social scientists, psychologists, biologists, theologians as well as educationists (33). We have already seen that there is no obvious connexion between the philosophical description of a person which Langford gives and the concept of a person which operates in the social practice of education. What must now be said is that there is no orthodox or consensus view of what a person is in education. That is why some theory of human nature, or explicit theology of some sort is essential to a discussion of this kind, so that one can at least take sides over the issue. Langford thinks that educators are the ones who must already know what persons are because they teach individuals to arrive at a particular state which is equivalent to being a person. But this is an almost perfect circular argument. Because teaching necessarily brings about learning to be a person, teachers necessarily know what being a person amounts to.

Furthermore, Langford cannot claim the support of ordinary language usage for his concept of a person, for, as we have seen, children are excluded from personhood. Clearly Langford would not wish to exclude children from the wider moral community of persons. To do so would bring about the kind of result where, say, the murder of a child was treated as a breach of the peace, or hospital beds were denied to children on the ground that they were needed by persons. Nonetheless I think there is overwhelming agreement that children are universally regarded as already persons who, by virtue of their membership of the species homo sapiens are endowed with certain moral and legal rights from birth. This obvious consideration shows that Langford is adopting a highly specialised use of the concept 'person' which merits more justification than it receives. Sometimes the two concepts, the moral and the educational, are rather oddly juxtaposed, as when Langford says "There is no question of persons becoming persons other than by a process of learning ..." (34).

Let us make a move which I think Langford would find unacceptable, and substitute for the educational concept of person the concept 'adult'. To become educated would then be to learn to be an adult, and those who would undergo the process of learning to be adults would already be persons, as befits their moral status. Children would then be included within the designation 'person'. The descriptive answer to the question 'What is education?' would then be 'Education is the process whereby children learn to become adults'. Such an answer would, of course, amount only to a trite and uninformative generality, but I do not see how a purely descriptive answer to the question 'What is education?' can avoid being an answer of just this unsatisfactory kind. The alternative is to spell out what sort of personhood education is supposed to bring about. This has to be done if Langford's account of education is to be saved.

Finally Langford's concept of a person is in any case unrealisable, being a matter of degree (35). This would not matter if the concept were prescriptive, but as it is not, it gives rise to further problems, for example that no-one ever becomes fully a person, for then he would have no further need for education. In the absence of any prescription of what it is to become a person, an individual who had attained this state would not know that he had attained it. Alternatively, if the concept remains descriptive, one could argue that everyone becomes a person provided, of course, he undergoes a process of education. But this entails the obviously unsatisfactory conclusion that the 'uneducated' become the single exception to the class of human beings designated persons.

These fundamental difficulties require that the concept of person be spelled out in a positive regulative way. The degree- concept of person in Langford's account of education, being apparently underived from any specific theory or ideology and produced as a very general term to cover the final goal of the learning that education is supposed to bring about, is so open- ended as to be vacuous. To become a person is whatever an individual becomes who has undergone a process of formal education. But people undergo different types of education, for different lengths of time, at different levels, for different purposes. The precise point to be grasped is that the particular concept of education which operates in Langford's descriptive answer appears to be a teleological concept, because it specifies some end-state, namely what the learning is intended to bring about. "Formal education", he writes, "is the name of an activity distinguished from other activities by its overall purpose, and that purpose is that someone should become educated" (36). But if a concept is to be understood by reference to its telos or end which it specifies, then it should at least specify informatively some possible or desirable state of affairs. In the absence of specification, no-one would know what has to be learned, nor whether the required teaching had successfully brought it about.

Here then, to summarise, are some reasons why Langford's answer to the question 'What is

education?' needs further expansion and justification:

a) the location of the answer to the question in the social practice of education ensures that those who ask the question already know the answer and do not need to ask it;
b) as a purely descriptive answer 'learning to be a person' amounts only to an uninformative generality;
c) the task of stating what values instantiate the concept of person, which hover beneath the surface of educational practice, is evaded;
d) the phenomenological character of the answer encourages such evasion;
e) implicitly or explicitly, particular philosophical commitments are inevitable in education, a fact that becomes clear in Longford's own writings;
f) no obvious connexion exists between the philosophical description of a person which Langford provides and the concept of a person which operates in the social practice of teaching;
g) no normative explicit understanding of what a person is can be found within that social practice, or in the wider social context in which that tradition belongs;
h) the exclusion of children from the class of individual designated by the concept 'person' indicates a highly specialised use of it;
i) as a teleological concept it requires some specification of the telos or end-state it refers to.

IV

Can Langford's account of education be repaired? Despite the number of weaknesses in it I think it can, although there is no concealing that an alternative account of 'learning to be a person' fundamentally alters Langford's proposal.

Let us first specify two distinct concepts of a person. Let us call the first a status concept, and agree, following ordinary usage, to confer the status of person upon all individuals who are members of the species homo sapiens, including children, the aged, the handicapped. The second concept is an ideal concept. (The terms 'moral concept', 'value concept' or 'teleological concept' would do equally well.) As such it specifies an end- state, an exemplification of what a person ought to become. This amounts to a model or models of personhood. In speaking of an ideal concept of person, I concur with the view of Professor T.F. Davey that moral commitments are inevitable in any discussion of the nature or purpose of education (37). His "main thesis", he says, is that

> when we speak of education, there is presupposed either an ideal of a person to which the education is leading; or alternatively an ideal of a society for which the education fits the individual member. But in any case - and this is the important part - lying behind the concept of education is the notion of a norm or set of norms which gives the education its purpose. (38)

How might this ideal concept of a person be arrived at?

Having maintained that philosophical commitments are inevitable in the discussion of educational problems, I must now make my own, although I will do so very briefly. Such an exercise is not intended as an embarrassing confession of faith, but rather as an example of an activity which anyone working in the field of education ought from time to time to do. Rather gingerly I shall first lay down some criteria for the construction of an ideal concept of a person, draw attention to the influence of some rival concepts, and then briefly consider its possible contents.

a) It is likely to be constructed from influential ideas and insights contained in Western philosophical, religious and educational traditions;
b) each feature of it must be coherent and rationally supportable;
c) the resulting concept must itself be coherent, i.e. its component parts must integrate into a meaningful whole;
d) it must be consistent, as far as possible, with empirical work going on in the human sciences;
e) it must apply some concrete specification of the end-state to be aimed at;
f) it will express its architect's own commitments which will themselves have arisen from a study of possible sources and, preferably, long engagement with educational practice and reflection upon that practice;
g) the resulting concept must be seen to be more in accordance with these criteria than its detailed rivals.

There is nothing sacrosanct about these criteria. They are intended to signify only that if one begins with an ideal concept of something and works backward from the concept to its influence on practice, one need not be engaging in unstructured or hopelessly subjective thinking.

What then might the content of an ideal concept of a person be? First, implicit in current educational practice are deeply entrenched philosophical norms which need to be rooted out. Here, for example, are three assumptions about persons, all of which, despite their orthodoxy, are misleading and damaging.

When Descartes decided he was a res cogitans or 'thinking thing', he initiated a modern tradition of philosophical dualism which had far-reaching educational implications. Once the unity of the person had become split into separate substances, mind and body, the way became open for educationists to regard education as concerned primarily or even exclusively with the mind. This sort of dualism, albeit in implicit form, is alive and well in the philosophy of education. Liberal education, says Hirst, is exclusively concerned with "the development of the mind that results from the pursuit of knowledge" (40). But on this view of persons the body and its activities are relegated to secondary importance as they are in ancient gnosticism. Knowledge is regarded as primarily an intellectual matter, educational success is all too easily understood as the passive assimilation and subsequent regurgitation of facts and ideas. Bodily skills such as dancing,

pole-vaulting, tending plants, climbing rock-faces, making bookcases, moulding clay models, cooking lasagne, painting landscapes and repairing motor cycles stand right at the bottom of the curriculum hierarchy, usually of interest only to those who have already failed to acquire, or more likely shown no interest in, the high-status mentalistic knowledge that 'A' levels are all about. Recently, Ryle's distinction between 'knowing-how' and 'knowing-that' has been applied to curricular issues (42), and it is slowly becoming clearer that such practical activities as canoeing or playing the viola have a different although equally valid epistemological status from knowing what canoes and violas are made of. But what one initially takes a person to be drastically affects the sort of education that is planned for children to receive, and Cartesian dualism lies at the root of the cerebral, mentalistic approach to the curriculum.

Some other views of person have an equally baleful influence on educational practice. Two obvious candidates are those of 'programmable machine' and 'self-reliant individual', both of which have a fairly specific, traceable philosophical history. The mechanistic concept of a person widely affects curriculum planning and the discussion of teaching methods, and the idea of a person as a self-reliant individual reinforces an aggressive competitiveness in education, introduces economic values into it, and tends to destroy a person's essential belonging with other persons in a community. All this of course needs further justification which cannot be provided now. I have merely drawn attention to the fact that learners are often regarded as thinking beings, programmable machines and isolated individuals, and these attitudes derive from ideological assumptions which are no less powerful for being implicit, but which already shape much educational practice and society's expectations of that practice. There are good reasons why the full rigour of analytic philosophy should be turned upon them.

Other sources for an ideal concept of a person exist which accommodate and more adequately draw out the immense range of potentialities available to human beings, and at the same time provide a refreshing contrast to those theories of personhood which see a person as primarily a rarified mind or a bodiless intellect. Instead of the Cartesian res cogitans, an older and more characteristically Christian concept of person is that of homo creator. In one of the Genesis creation myths, God the creator, having busied himself for five days with making the world, on the sixth day creates personkind - and personkind is made in God's image (43) with the task of acquiring dominion over the earth and everything in it (44). The importance of the theological doctrine of the creation of persons in God's image is that they are made after the likeness of a creator and told to get on with the creative work of having dominion over the earth. The profound anthropological self-understanding contained in this myth is that persons are primarily creators, being made in the image of the creator-God. Here then, is a Judaeo-Christian concept of a person which, despite the advent of Western secularisation, already provides a model of personhood that is of more than passing interest to curriculum theorists. For to see the individual person as essentially a creator (rather than, say, the possessor of an immaterial mind) immediately sets a premium on those learning activities which help to bring about self- expression, bodily skills, and active participation in those things one comes to know. In the arts a new emphasis is given to the learner's creativity by the homo creator model, in writing literature as opposed to merely reading and 'appreciating' it; composition and playing music as opposed to merely dissecting or listening to it; producing, as opposed to simply contemplating, works of art; philosophising for oneself as opposed only to assimilating the philosophy of others; forging out one's moral and aesthetic preference from the inheritance of past experience, wisdom and genius bequeathed to one, as opposed to the assimilation of selected parts of it. The application of the homo creator model requires much more detailed elaboration and exposition than I can give now. I have only just begun to indicate its possibilities.

Instead of the dualistic split of the individual person into an immaterial mind and a material body, other accounts of personhood are available in the philosophy of mind which provide a timely alternative to Cartesianism on the one hand and outright materialism or physicalism on the other (45). These theories emphasise the overall unity of the person, and locate the dualism of body and mind in the logically distinct languages or series of concepts that are used about human beings. The precise formulation of the unity of the human person and the diversity of possible descriptions about this unity is a complicated question, although I certainly want to claim that one of the main achievements of twentieth century Western philosophy is that it has progressed beyond seventeenth century dualism and nineteenth century materialism to a variety of monistic theories about persons which successfully preserve personal unity.

The application of monistic person theories to certain educational problems is a high priority for philosophers of education. Their importance is that they preserve the essential integratedness of mind and body. They have a holistic character. Emotions, feelings and imaginings, do not have to be assigned to one side or the other of the body/mind divide (and become epistemologically devalued if the distinctive sort of knowledge and experience they provide cannot qualify as intellectual). For imagination, feeling and emotion belong with intellect and reason to the psychosomatic unity that is a person, and outside this unity, any one of these capacities is an abstraction from a totality. What has happened in educationally regulative concepts of a person is that 'reason' (46) or 'intellect' has become abstracted from the person's overall unity, with the result that the educational process has become less concerned with persons as wholes and more concerned with persons as possessors of rational minds. It follows from an integrated monistic theory of persons that discovering Mozart or learning to care for the elderly is perhaps a more significant stride into personhood than a thousand examples of examinable 'knowings-that'.

The model of personal unity or person monism, together with the model of a person as homo creator, begins to provide an exciting basis for the ideal concept of a person which was earlier sought. The role of the intellect, and the need for much acquisition of objective knowledge is not denied, although it is qualified, for those who are being educated are, on this view, learning to become persons, and not just developed minds, and

'persons' is a decidedly non-neutral term. That education is 'of the whole man' is not just 'a conceptual truth', as R.S. Peters avers (47), because it points to a developed theory of human nature which has

all kinds of educational implications. He who learns to become a person will do so by being expressive as well as receptive, and some of the things he will come to know will lead to a widening of the epistemological limitations marking out what knowledge is.

To the understanding of persons as creative (in their activity) and holistic (in their nature), I should want also to insist on the recovery of subjectivity and community, in order to provide a hefty counterbalance to the massive biases in favour of objectivity and individuality in teaching, in curriculum design and assessment. To some extent subjectivity has already been included, but I am anxious to include in the ideal concept of a person a radical freedom to exercise one's own authentic possibilities within the 'facility' of all the 'givens' that constitute one's existence, those features of it that one is unable to choose for one's self. From Christian theism to atheistic existentialism such a concept is to be found. That personhood is a radically social

phenomenon which requires the apprehension of other persons, not as representing the limits of our own freedom, but as co-creators in a common, corporate human enterprise is a further essential feature of what personhood is.

The concept of a person as essentially creative, as an integrated totality of subjective and objective experiences and possibilities, as radically free yet belonging to a wider moral community, is the sort of ideal concept which I am prepared to defend. The final composition of the content, the terminological arrangement of it, the complex justifications for it, and the possible curricular applications of it all require much further work. An account such as the one I have tried to outline is needed because the question 'What is education?' is a legitimate question that requires a satisfactory, compelling answer, and contra Langford, such an answer must be prescriptive. But despite my criticisms of Langford I think his answer is the right one, although for different reasons. Although I agree with his answer I do not expect he would countenance my adoption of it in the present context.

If I have been influenced by idealism, existentialism and religious thought in writing this paper it is because, like Langford, "In writing it I have not felt obliged to adhere to any one philosophical method" (48). Philosophy of education has been too long dominated by one particular type of philosophising. A more catholic taste in philosophy may help to provide a more varied menu.

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45 I have in mind the version of the double-aspect theory held by Strawson, P.F. (1957) in Individuals, chapter 3 (London, Methuen), sometimes called 'the person theory'; Harris, E.E. (1966) The neural-identity theory and the person, International Philosophical Quarterly, p. vi; (1960); Hirst, R.J. Mind and brain: the identity hypothesis, in: The Human Agent, Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures, Vol. 1, 1966- 67 (London, Macmillan); the theory of 'anomalous monism' advanced by Davidson, D. (1976) Psychology as philosophy, in: Glover, J. (ed.) The Philosophy of Mind (Oxford University Press); Bernard Williams' similar theory in Descartes: the Project of Pure Inquiry, chapter 10, Mind and its place in nature (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1978); and R. Abelson's theory of conceptual dualism outlined in Person (London, Macmillan, 1977).
46 In classical theology and philosophy, 'reason' or logos had a much wider function, so that the modern words 'reason' and 'rational' do not capture the breadth of meaning of the earlier term. As late as the nineteenth century, reason was for Samuel Taylor Coleridge a unitary principle which included the exercise of imagination and judgement, the intuition of 'Truths above sense' and the source of the spiritual life. Coleridge, along with Shelley and Carlyle, all fought against the narrower view of reason, the acceptance of which they saw as the modern mind's infection with "the contagion of its mechanic philosophy". See Reardon, B.R.G. (1971) From Coleridge to Gore, p. 63f. (London, Longman). But Mill and the mechanists won the day, and educational thought still in the main follows Mill.
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Learning to Become Persons: A Theological Approach to Educational Aims

I

Christian theology, because of its concern with 'all things' is sometimes able to provide salvific insights into academic areas far removed from theological syllabuses. In this article I take one such example and show how theology can make a rich contribution to the understanding of another discipline. The example is education.

Theologians who keep an eye on developments in British education know that much attention has lately been given to its overall aims (1). Perhaps all disciplines are paying attention to their aims in the present accountability-conscious period. One influential statement of the aim of education is that to become educated is to learn to become a person (2). If, as I think, this statement is best understood as a practical, informative one, helpful to educators, then the sort of person that education is to help individuals to become has to be prescriptively spelt out (3). A prescriptive or ideal concept of person, squarely based on acknowledged beliefs and values, is what this approach to the aims of education needs, and Christian theology is able to provide it.

Christian faith and theology have specific things to say about what persons can become. What theology says in an educational context must be judged on its practical usefulness in that context, a single criterion which in the present case can be easily met. In this article I shall first state what I believe to be the outstanding contribution which Christian theology can make to a discussion about personhood, especially in an educational context; second, some remarks about the status of theological beliefs within educational theory will be made, followed thirdly by some brief comments about the educational application of theological ideas. What follows, though, is only a sketch, rather than a completed picture, both of Christian theology's view of the Person of Christ, and of some of the ways in which such a conception may have application in discussion of the aims of education.

II

The only adequate theological answer to the questions 'What is meant by personhood?', and 'Where is the authentic statement of what is human being can become?', is: Jesus Christ.

There is more to this answer than a naive imitatio Christi. Christians confess unanimously that Jesus Christ is the decisive revelation of God while being at the same time the decisive revelation of man. Whereas different interpretations of these beliefs may be given within Christian theology, there is almost total unanimity about what needs interpretation. That Jesus Christ is the decisive revelation of man, a basic datum of Christian theology, is a matter of particular interest in the context of the discussion of concepts of personhood, 'models of man', and so on. Its significance is pointed up when the question is asked, 'What is meant by "man"? when it is claimed "Jesus Christ is the decisive relation of man"?'.

The Latin fathers of the early church sometimes spoke of Christ's divinity and humanity by means of the formula vera deus et vero homo, 'truly God and truly man'. In unpacking the phrase 'truly man' it is necessary to substitute the modern word 'person' for man'. 'Man', of course, is no reference to Christ's maleness but a reference to his belonging to humankind. The ancient word persona, the theological use of which probably originated with Tertullian, could not at that time have been used to express the solidarity of Jesus with humankind (4), and all beginners in historical theology are warned never to confuse the modern philosophical concepts of person with the ancient trinitarian one (5). So in translating vero homo as 'truly a person' one is only connecting up with modern usage, not confusing the modern 'person' with its classical homonymous counterpart. 'Person' has the further advantage of not being associated specifically with the male gender. This has become an increasingly sensitive point when speaking of Jesus as 'truly man'.

But to say Jesus is 'truly a person' is to say different things. First, it rules out the early heresy of docetism which denied the real humanity of Jesus, preferring to see him instead as a God who only appeared to be a human person. Here the simple point of the affirmation that Jesus truly is a person is the denial that Jesus only appeared to be a person. But another reason for saying that Jesus is truly a person is to affirm the belief that Jesus was more truly a person than anyone else. And now something more than full membership of the human species is being asserted. What is being asserted now is that in Jesus Christ Christians claim to see what true humanness is, what true personhood means.

In the famous Chalcedonian definition of 451, Jesus is confessed as 'one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man ... of one substance with us as touching the manhood, like us in all things apart from sin ...'(6) Now 'perfect' (teleios) means 'complete', and

'perfect in manhood' (teleion en anthropoteti) may be fairly translated 'completely a person', or 'complete in regard to his humanity'. The phrase 'perfect man' or 'perfect in manhood' is often misleadingly allowed to suggest that Jesus was scarcely a man at all, but a God-Man with little or no connecting links with the rest of us. What the phrase instead conveys is that Jesus was completely a human being and that as a human being he was more completely or fully a person than anyone else. Unlike us, though, he is sinless. But he is a person, and because of his perfection as a person he is the revelation of personhood. He is 'the norm of what a truly human existence should be'(7). In referring to patristic theology I have wished only to draw attention to what is already well known and to introduce it in a modern secular context where a prescriptive account of a person is badly needed. Christians have long held that Jesus Christ is what it is to be truly a person. What it might be like to be completely a person has, as its concrete non-speculative answer: Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the definitive pattern of personalness for Christians. They believe that 'God in and through Jesus has afforded us a new interpretation of personalness, a new definition ... of what it ... might be, to be human, of the end God purposes for man' (8). Such an estimate of Jesus Christ is common enough in modern theology nowadays, and as far as it goes is scarcely controversial.

There are of course several internal theological difficulties in the way of accepting Jesus Christ as a definitive pattern or paradigm of true personalness, before this belief is offered in a secular discussion of these matters. Two of these concern our historical ignorance of the life of Jesus and the cultural relativism of our judgements about him. Claims that Jesus was unique, perfect, sinless, God, the Incarnate Word, and so on, cannot be shown historically to be true even if they are. 'It is impossible to justify any such claim on purely historical grounds' (9). This is widely enough agreed today, even though it still results in occasional shock to say so. What is worse, when the attempt is made to penetrate to the 'Jesus behind the gospels' from the 'Jesus in the gospels', we find a figure 'whose understanding of moral priorities and motives was sometimes very much of his time and rather different from ours. If the rich man, for example, was to sell all his goods and give the proceeds to the poor, that was for the good of his soul, not the good of the poor' (10). Worse still, it is said to be impossibly difficult to extract from the gospels in any objective way a picture of what Jesus was 'really like'. Even when we find elements of Christ's life that we may wish to heed or emulate, worship or copy, the nagging problem remains that in emphasising some elements rather than others we may be unwittingly constructing a Jesus in our own image as other generations of Christians can be fairly accused of doing. 'An immense variety of ideals of character have been ostensibly based upon the example of Jesus; an historical man who lived only one life has been made the exemplar of a great range of different forms of life. Jesus has been declared to be a model for hermits, peasants, gentlemen, revolutionaries, pacifists, feudal lords, soldiers and others' (11). 'It seems there are as many images of Christ as there are minds' (12).

These problems are being written about extensively in theology at the present time. But perhaps a great danger for some modern theology is that it has become so preoccupied with its internal problems that the external application of its insights and ideas to other areas of life and study is frequently overlooked. This is a great pity. The historical and relativist problems are severe enough, but there are equally severe problems in almost every other applied discipline of study (especially in those social sciences that contribute to the theory of education), yet these problems are never allowed to veto the continuous attempts being made to apply theory to practice. Perhaps theologians have something to learn from the sheer temerity of the social scientists in their application of theory to social life. However the main defence in theology against historical scepticism is that when a Christian does consciously accept Jesus as inter alia the model of personhood he or she does not express this acceptance only by trying to emulate the Jesus of the gospels or by trying to discover behind the gospels the 'historical Jesus' so that there is someone or some pattern to imitate or follow. The centre of Christian faith and experience is, theologically put, the risen Christ in whose risen life all Christians share. 'Participation, not historical argument, guarantees the reality of the event upon which Christianity is based' (13). The dominance of empirical methods of investigation in the sciences must not be allowed to influence the Christian understanding of Jesus to the degree that our knowledge of the mind of Christ becomes confined to what historians think Jesus reliably said and did. This issue is a particularly contentious internal one for theology. Without minimising the importance of history in the origin and development of Christianity I simply wish to insert, by way of support for the view that Jesus Christ is the authoritative model of personhood, the reminder that for Christians the Christ is the anticipation and embodiment of a new humanity, a new sort of personalness, known not simply by the application of historical methods to historical sources but in the present experience of the church, very broadly understood.

These kinds of claims frequently generate misunderstanding. They are said to be pretentious, or falsified by the actual record of the churches in their historic past. But there is no need for Christians to claim a monopoly of love, trust, forgiveness and the like. As sinners they should know just how far short of these things they themselves continually fall. Their claim is something different. Rather wherever and in whomsoever there is forgiveness, love, openness, trust, acceptance and the like, there is the spirit of Christ irrespective of the formal allegiances of the persons involved. And when the Christian speaks of the risen Christ, he or she is speaking of a form of life that seems to be 'non-natural-, that is a state of being which fragmentarily occurs when men and women live together and relate to each other understandingly and lovingly, and when their inherent condition of sinfulness, i.e. their natural inclination to refuse to live in love, is replaced by contrary attitudes. Only the terminology is exclusive. One does not need a label to concur with the judgement that the values exemplified in the life of Christ as it is commended in the gospels provide a blueprint of developed personhood, or that the form of social life in which people are committed to each other in love and trust is preferable to one dominated by hatred and suspicion. Whether or not one calls this 'life in Christ' is partly a linguistic, rather than an experiential matter. Christians have no monopoly on what they call 'life in Christ' or 'life in the Spirit'; they have a monopoly only on the theological terms which are pressed into use to articulate truly human values and patterns of living.

Christians belong historically to the community of people (the church) which produced the gospels. They were written with the purpose of commending belief in Jesus Christ as God's way for humankind. What Christians will find compelling in the tradition about Jesus may vary from place to place and from time to time. And there are things about Jesus which general readers of the gospels find compelling before they are even aware of scholarly historical study. Thus, the teaching of Jesus about the need for unconditional love of one's neighbour, say, or his forgiveness of his executioners, his intolerance of hypocrisy and cant, his remarkable understanding of and acceptance of other people (Zacchaeus, the woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery) and his passion for social justice, even his death as a self- enacted parable of vulnerability and openness; these are some of the brush strokes which paint the picture of Jesus as the revelation of true personalness.

III

What possible status can theological assertions have, derived as they are from theological premises, in non-theological areas like education? More colloquially put, Christians can believe what they like, but when it comes to matters of educational policy and the like are we not dealing with secular matters? Do we not need a very different kind of expertise to help us here?

Theologians can make several replies to this question. The formative influence of the Christian churches on our modern educational system is well known, and as a matter of historical record the belief that Jesus is vere deus, vero homo has always been a central one. There is a sad irony about the fact that when distinctive Christian insights are brought nowadays into the arena of education theory (and it happens seldom enough) there is likely to be incomprehension and even embarrassment. But considerable sympathy with Christian ideals and values still remains among the largely non-church-going population of Britain and other western countries, and the cliche that 'we live in a secular society', together with the assumption that religion has lost any social influence it may have had, is misleading, question-begging and sometimes downright false. The 'secularisation thesis' is being increasingly modified, and one writer has claimed, 'There is no reason to think that agnosticism, atheism, skepticism and irreverence are any more common today than they were in other societies, and equally no reason to think that faith, devotion, religious commitment and sanctity were any more common in the past than they are today' (14).

But the theologian has higher cards to play. First, however tedious it sounds, he or she can observe that education considered as a branch of intellectual study which exists to serve educators engaged in practical activities, has been formed by drawing upon other, more established disciplines whose concerns include matters affecting education (and these, as everyone knows, are mainly philosophy, psychology, sociology and history). The single point to be established here is that, in the field of education, the only criterion which an issue, a technique, a body of knowledge, an idea and so on, has to meet in order to be regarded as rightly belonging to the study of education, is that it can be directly related to the practice of educators. In education theory there is ample precedent for heeding and assimilating contributions from whatever source provided they throw some light in some way on educational practice. To say this is to begin to justify on educational grounds a whole range of issues in the theology of education. Theology, too, has its own distinctive insights, waiting to be applied.

A second card up the theologian's sleeve is a methodological one. It may be objected that every article of faith in Christian theology, because it is an article of faith, falls short of demonstration and so cannot be classed as knowledge. Whether the content of faith is to be regarded as knowledge is much discussed in the philosophy of religion (15). But here the much-maligned 'forms of knowledge thesis' is helpful to the theologian. There are different kinds of knowledge and different ways of demonstrating something, so Christians concede nothing when they insist that their assertions about Christ exhibit a different logical character from say, assertions about what is empirically probable. The theologian's answer to those who say to him or her, 'What you say about Jesus is only a matter of faith', is twofold: first, that Christians do have distinctive presuppositions about the significance of Jesus Christ; but second, other contributing disciplines to education theory also have pre-suppositions which, while different, are as contentious as any the theologian can be fairly accused of entertaining. A detailed justification of this second point requires a further essay, but in the space of a single paragraph here is how such a justification might look.

All subjects whatsoever have presuppositions. Sometimes these presuppositions are unacknowledged and tacit. Theology too has presuppositions but these are usually acknowledged and explicit. All subjects have 'framework principles' which are not questioned, but within which everything else is questioned. Wittgenstein used the term 'system' to indicate the unquestioned framework or frameworks within which a subject operates. 'All testing, all confirmation and disconfirmation of a hypothesis takes place already within a system. And this system is not a more or less arbitrary and doubtful point of departure for all our arguments: no, it belongs to the nature of what we call an argument. The system is not so much the point of departure, as the element in which arguments have their life' (16). Now, for the record, presuppositions have been made in education theory on the basis of which practices have been prescribed and policies formulated. It is easy to see how, for example, radical empiricism, or utilitarian attitudes, or the various forms of determinism have merely been assumed, not examined. But we are now paying dearly for these assumptions. Radical empiricism, a narrow development of a noble tradition in philosophy, readily brings about an implicit identification of the real and the worthwhile with the purely observable, and collapses into materialism. It produces a theory of knowledge which is atomistic and objective; it divorces the knower from what is known, and in positivism it explicitly relegates theology and ethics to the status of 'non-sense'. The widespread acceptance of utilitarianism as a secular theory of ethics has done untold damage to the human moral consciousness because it reduces all values to what can be cashed in terms of happiness. In the various versions of determinism, a distinguishing feature of personalness, viz. responsible freedom, is explicitly denied. It ill behoves educationists to attack the freedom principles of theologians when some of their own framework principles turn out not always to have served them well. The main framework

principle of Christian theology, belief in Jesus Christ as truly God and truly a person, does not rest on the eclipse of reason. If theological assertions have a partly autonomous character, no conclusions can be drawn from this about their lack of intellectual power or truth-conveying status. A theologian might also observe that ideal concepts of personhood are already embedded in the practice of education. So, for example, when education is regarded primarily as the training of the mind or intellect, the individual so educated is already regarded primarily as a Cartesian res cogitans, a mind which can conveniently be abstracted both from the physical body and the total person whose mind it is. The child who learns at school to be an aggressive and successful competitor in the examination and employment stakes has already been influenced by the ideal of a person as a self-reliant autonomous individual, which has more to do with Victorian capitalism than anything else. And such is the baleful influence of behaviouristic learning theories on a whole generation of educators, that they can be forgiven for assuming that learners are no more than programmable machines (17). But the practice of education needs to be informed by other concepts of person, and one of these is provided by Jesus Christ who has been believed by countless millions of people to embody as the full revelation of personalness that set of social attitudes the traditional names for which are love, justice, trust, forgiveness, openness, gentleness, and the like.

IV

Suppose it were to be agreed that to become educated was to learn to become a person, and that the figure of Jesus was significant for stating practically what sort of a person an individual might be educated to become. What actual difference would this make? How would the teaching of, say, science, literature and physical education (three subjects randomly chosen for their lack of obvious connexions with theology) be affected by the 'intrusion' of an unwanted religious model? These questions are raised deliberately because of their awkwardness. They test whether, after all the theorising has been done, theological insights have any widespread practical application. And they assume that the contribution of theology to education is far more significant than talking about what to do in R.E. and what to do about church schools (18).

Links between these three subjects and the model of personhood which is the gift of Christian theology may be made by inter alia looking at some of the aims of their teachers. It has been calculated that 50% of all employed science graduates end up with jobs in the design, production and maintenance of weaponry, or in industries serving the machinery of war. Is this why schools bother with science education, or are there better reasons? But a study of science may also invoke a profound sensitivity in the face of the 'fundamental mystery of reality', a sense of wonder in the face of both 'the quantity of the unknown' and 'the quality of the known' (19). How unlikely that there should be a world! How improbable that there should be a 'panorama of emergence' for science to study (20), culminating unpredictably in personkind! Science can, and happily often does, instil in its students a deep sense of the mystery of existence, of 'reverence for life', a sense of wonder akin to religious awe that there is a world at all. It can and often does emphasise that humankind, in whom the history of evolution on our planet comes to its culmination, is now wholly responsible for its social evolution and its continuing existence. The attitudes which Christians believe Jesus Christ perfectly exemplified have never been more needed to help to bring the natural and human worlds to their completion and integration, by means of the love which transforms personal, social and global relationships, whose religious name is 'God' (21).

The aims of teaching literature might well include helping students to write their own poetry and so to acquire skills of imaginativeness and expressiveness which the mere memorising and criticism of the poems of others, usually for the sole purpose of assessment, can never generate. Does not delight in poetry help to produce an inner sense of tranquillity? Is this not important if education is about learning to become a person? In 1821 Shelley claimed 'the cultivation of those sciences which have enlarged the limits of the empire of man over the external world has, for want of the poetical faculty, proportionally circumscribed those of the internal world; and man, having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave ... The cultivation of poetry is never more to be desired than at periods when, from an excess of the selfish and calculating principle, the accumulation of the materials of external life exceed the quantity of the power of assimilating them to the internal laws of nature' (22). Literature and poetry open up subjectivity; they are the manifestations of human imagination and feeling: they raise value-questions. They are not means to ends; but they certainly can be means of self-expression and self-knowledge. Through them one can confront one's own inwardness and understand other people more readily and deeply. For Shelley poetry helps to produce and is produced by 'the most delicate sensibility and the most enlarged imagination; and the state of mind produced by them is at war with every base desire' (23). Christian faith is also deeply concerned with the promotion of such attitudes and states of mind.

The contribution which physical education can make to the development of persons is consistently undervalued. A teenager who has learned to be unselfish on the football field, or who can survive a night on Dartmoor in the winter has acquired knowledge which, while not primarily of the intellectual kind, is nonetheless knowledge, and it may well aid his self-confidence and self-expression more than any other kind of knowledge. The delight which is to be had in self-affirmation through one's body is among the highest that human existence has to offer, and teenagers who can affirm themselves in sport may be less likely to want to affirm themselves in less socially approved ways. If one understands a person in a more philosophical sense as being an unbreakable unity of body-and-mind (24) and education as having to do with learning to become persons, then education must be concerned with mind and body together, and physical education has an indispensable part to play in the general curriculum (25). Links between the characterically Christian concept of personhood and the aims of teachers of physical education can quite easily be forged, however improbable they appear at first sight. P.E. stresses the importance of the 'whole person'. It can contribute to the overall health of persons, and 'health' is the root meaning of the term from which the Christian idea of salvation is derived. (26). It can encourage co-operation in team games. It can encourage delight in the body. It can be an aid to self- expression and to

pride in personal achievement.

These examples show that Christian theology can contribute helpfully to education. It is part of the purpose of a modern theology of education to develop at greater length and sophistication the sort of links that in this article have scarcely even been sketched. A school leaver may, one hopes, be able to read and write and be initiated into a cultural tradition. But if he or she does not know what love is, and does not know how to give or receive it, or perhaps even to recognise it, that child is not educated according to the sense developed here of 'learning to become a person'. The semantic slipperiness and frequent misuse of the word 'love' should not prevent us from continuing to use it. The sort of love which it is appropriate to speak of in this context is the love which, for example, sees war as a sickness, nuclear weapons as unspeakable blasphemy, poverty as a crime, involuntary unemployment as a betrayal, and purely material values as the bankruptcy of spirit. With 'A' levels to pass, jobs to find, and University interviewers to impress, it still remains true that 'Man cannot live on bread alone'.

NOTES

1 See e.g. R.F. Dearden, P. Hirst, R.S. Peters (eds), A Critique of Educational Aims, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Boston, 1972.

2 The best known exponent of this view is Glenn Langford. See e.g. his Philosophy and Education, Macmillan, London, 1968, p. 60; 'The Concept of Education' in G. Langford and D.J. O'Connor (eds), New Essays in the Philosophy of Education, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1973, p. 3; Teaching as a Profession, Manchester University Press, Manchester, p. 4.

3 See my 'Education and the concept of a person', Journal of Philosophy of Education, xiv, no. 1, 1980, p. 123. I develop here Langford's basic position that 'learning to become a person' expresses a conceptual truth about what education is. I want to make the concept of a person a prescriptive one which provides practical guidance for educators, and Langford welcomes this as a 'different but complementary task' to the one he has set himself in his writings. See Glenn Langford, 'Reply to Adrian Thatcher', Journal of Philosophy of Education, xiv, no. 1, 1980, p. 129.

4 In Roman law a persona was a party to a contract. In the Roman theatre a persona was the role of an actor throughout a drama and this use is preserved in the phrase dramatis personae which is still to be found at the head of cast lists in modern theatre programmes. It was also used of the mask worn by actors.

5 When Augustine used the formula 'one substance and three persons' he warned that '"three persons" ... is understood only in a mystery ... in order that there might be something to say when it was asked what the three are which true faith pronounces to be three'. (De Trinitate, 4.7)

6 Text in e.g. J. Stevenson (ed.), Creeds, Councils and Controversies, S.P.C.K., London, 1966, p. 337.

7 J.A.T. Robinson, The Human Face of God, S.C.M., London, 1973, p. 67.

8 A.R. Peacocks, Creation and the World of Science, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1979, p. 245.

9 Dennis Nineham, 'Epilogue', in John Hick (ed.), The Myth of God Incarnate, S.C.M., London, 1977, p. 195.

10 Dennis Nineham, 'Jesus in the Gospels', in Norman Pittinger (ed.), Christ for Us Today, S.C.M., London, p. 61.

11 Don Cupitt, 'One Jesus, Many Christs', in S. Sykes and J.P. Clayton (eds), Christ, Faith and History, Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 137.

12 Hans Kung, On Being a Christian, Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1978, p. 129.

13 Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Volume Two, J. Nisbet, Digswell Place, 1957, p. 131. In following Tillich here I am not trying to evade the historical problem in Christology as Tillich was often accused of doing: I only emphasize that for Christians being 'in Christ' is very much more than 'following Christ'.

14 Andrew Greeley, The Persistence of Religion, S.C.M., London, 1973, p. 241.

15 See the recent re-issue of John Hick's Faith and Knowledge, Collins, Fontana, 1974 (1st edition 1957).

16 L. Wittgenstein, On Certainty (eds G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright), Oxford, Blackwell, 1974, para. 105.

17 See my 'Education and the Concept of a Person', art. cit., pp. 124-6.

18 I sharply disagree with Leslie Francis who seems content with this truncated view. See his 'Theology and Education: a Research Perspective', Scottish Journal of Theology, xxxii, no. 1, 1979, p. 62.

19 H.J.K. Schilling, The New Consciousness in Science and Religion, S.C.M., London, 1973, p. 30. The phrases are borrowed from the theologian Jaroslav Pelikan.

20 Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958 (1969 edn.), p. 358.

21 See A.R. Peacocke, op. cit., especially parts 6-8. The writings of Teilhard de Chardin are obviously relevant here.

22 P.B. Shelley, In Defence of Poetry,, in A. Clayre (ed.), Nature and Industrialisation, Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 213.

23 op. cit., p. 214.

24 Here I follow P.F. Strawson, Individuals, Methuen, London, 1957, ch. 3.

25 'Education and the Concept of a Person', art. cit., pp. 124- 6.

26 The Greek verb sozein can mean 'to heal' or 'to save'. The modern term 'salve', meaning a 'healing ointment', preserves the Latin salvus, 'healed'.

Some Views on Education

Dr A. Thomas
Staff Tutor for the
School of Education,
The Open University

It seems to me that before attempting to articulate my view I should first give an account of my personal educational background and professional experience. Since we are all to some extent prisoners of experience and it must be a function of education to liberate and broaden our views, it follows that the degree of freedom I have attained can only be judged and my views evaluated by first accounting my own background.

I belonged to a lower middle-class family, living in the 1930's in a South Wales erstwhile heavy industrial town. My family owned and ran a public house in a district which now would be described as greatly deprived. Thus, the pub was an island in a sea of working class unemployed and extremely poor people. Both my parents had been brought up in the town in more prosperous late Victorian/Edwardian times and we as a family had roots and an accepted, respected reputation in it. Life in the pub was socially rich and pleasant and we lived happily with our neighbours, despite any economic differences in our situations. I played well and happily with my poor companions. By the time I reached ten, three were dead - two from diphtheria and one from tuberculosis. At 4 I had overcome diphtheria myself.

My formal education was that of the state system: from age 2 - 7 an infants' school, then from 7 - 11 a boys' elementary school in the same large collection of buildings. Passing 11+, I attended a state grammar school from 11 - 18 and a scholarship enabled me to go on to university. I graduated as a biologist and trained as a teacher. After two years' teaching on national service in the army, I myself became a grammar school teacher and for eight years served in three schools - two Welsh and one English.

At this point, although I greatly enjoyed teaching, I felt that an educational career might have even more to offer and so I moved to a large college of education which specialised in training science teachers. Then, after six years there, to a university division of education where I was involved in teaching for the initial teacher training course and in courses for inservice education. Finally, about twelve years ago, having served for three years on a part-time basis, I joined the fulltime regional academic staff of the Open University, with a deep commitment to the importance of education for all.

Looking back on this experience, I least enjoyed and found most restrictive my four years as a lecturer at a traditional university. I managed to do some interesting things, e.g. run a full-time advanced diploma course for serving teachers and contribute to several other courses while completing a research project in some schools. However, the detachment from reality in the schools of the section of the institution to which I belonged left me very unappy. Had I not joined the O.U., I should surely have left education as a profession.

At the other pole, the experience I have most enjoyed has been teaching itself, whether at school, college or in the O.U. Teaching is an extremely demanding profession; it draws on whatever talents or energy one possesses to the utmost. It follows that if to some extent one succeeds and communicates the joy and interest of learning to pupils or students, the outcome is greatly rewarding to a teacher.

When I am asked which books have most influenced me in the identification and adoption of an educational philosophy, just like most other educationists I think of Plato, Aristotle and of other profound educational thinkers who provided so much of what has become accepted wisdom and tradition. However, having accorded these their due place, I consider J.J. Rousseau's educational philosophy described in his book 'Emile' as central to a modern view of education. Rousseau advocates the study of the child to discover his/her disposition and inclination, thereby supporting the basic need for education for the needs of the individual. He depicts in the New Heloise children ideally growing up in the well-regulated liberty of an ideal household with the family standing mid-way between society and the child's nature. While family life can so often be troublesome and of nightmarish difficulty and isolation at times, perhaps it is still, when good, the best and most ideally supportive but nonrestrictive environment for bringing up children.

Returning to 'Emile', Rousseau identified four age periods in child development and related educational experience, including the importance of play to those ages. As well, he recognised the later profound importance of adolescent changes to education. Most importantly of all, through Rousseau's writings can be seen the fundamental part education must play in the reform of society.

Education for me is thus an individual process of enlightenment and enrichment which identifies and develops the interests and talents of each person to their own happiness and society's advantage. Education should not be afflicted with social limitations so that a child is only permitted to learn what controlling interests in society wish him to, merely for the benefit of the state and the preservation of advantage to some of its members. I believe there should only be one highly effective state educational system which provides for the needs of all. Most children would live with their families and attend nonresidential schools. However, boarding facilities would exist at some state schools where needed for parents who are forced, through government or

commercial/industrial service, for periods to live abroad, or in other special cases where children cannot live with their parents.

In any educational system, the essential pillars by which standards are established and maintained are the teachers. Candidates for teaching should be carefully selected for their abilities, personality and commitment to the value of the work. Teachers have in their care, the minds of children who will form society in the future. Attitudes developed at school will often persist throughout life, and success or failure during the school years greatly influences people's lives afterwards for good or ill. In the past, it is true, adversity in childhood has often been overcome, but this can hardly be used to justify adversity and it must sometimes, sadly, have been a decisive limiting factor. The responsibility borne by teachers, like parents, is enormous. The control of standards in the initial qualification and continuing inservice training of teachers should be largely vested in the most able teachers themselves through a General Teachers' Council with, of course, lay and governmental representation. It should be unacceptable that teacher training be led by those who often have either never taught at all, at least in state schools, or at best spent a very short time in them very early in their long careers.

The reform of school curricula is a constant theme of educational discussion and, of course, much needs to be done. In the forty years since the end of the Second World War much has been tried. At first practical 'activity' methods were introduced into infant classes, then progressed upwards into junior school classes at least to some extent. The integrated day displaced a rigid subject timetable in some primary schools and open-plan school design replaced separate classrooms. Tables sometimes replaced desks arranged in neat rows. Experiment also led to trials of vertical grouping by age instead of classes of a single year group, though in small rural schools such arrangements were more traditional than experimental. However, how much there has been a real improvement in childrens' achievement is a subject more for debate than general agreement. Moreover, many curriculum development schemes have died a quiet, inactive death or been exported, for example, the repeatedly unsuccessful efforts to introduce physical science into the primary curriculum.

One gains the impression that in primary schools much old- fashioned, dull, boring rote learning has been replaced with pleasant, time-filling activity which, in the hands of skilled, committed teachers, can be educationally valuable, but, under the direction of many others, who have less insight and who are less skilled, achieves very little for young children. Out of this, of course, has come the present consciousness of the need to asses teachers each year and greater awareness of the improvements necessary in the initial and inservice education of teachers. One hopes only that this awareness leads to sincere concern which, supported by adequate funds, is effective. Education is too important to be left to inadequately selected, often poorly-trained, teachers locked in the narrow confines of a busy classroom for their entire professional lives. Moreover, the loss of the 11+ examination with comprehensivisation left no yardstick whatsoever by which to judge educational achievement, limited though the 11+ tests were.

At secondary level, too, there have been many attempts at curricular reform. Various Nuffield and other sponsored projects have developed materials in a variety of subject areas, e.g. Humanities, Mathematics, Sciences (separate, integrated and combined 'O' and 'A' level). Some of these have had a profound and lasting effect. It is probably also true that secondary schools have always received a little more public attention than primary, if only because parents, like governments, realise that children are getting closer to job selection, or unemployment. However, external examinations, viz. G.C.E. and C.S.E., have long strongly influenced, if not controlled, teaching in secondary schools, assuring public concern and providing, albeit very vaguely and inadequately, an indication of educational success or failure.

At secondary level also, much remains to be done to improve the selection and training of head teachers and teachers. The new common examination system, G.C.S.E., may well give a much better indication of teacher performance as well as individual pupil achievement if it is kept faithful to its different psychometric basis of criterion referenced testing.

Teaching in the long term must gain in public esteem, which now it clearly lacks, and commensurate with the more careful, purposeful and thorough processes of selection and deeper professional commitment teachers should achieve the financial rewards due to the true leaders of society. Inevitably, the concen and commitment of parents to the real value and importance of education is essential in all this. However, it would be unrealistic to pretend that such developments can occur in any but the long term.

Schooling, clearly, is one of the most important influences in our lives. Through the increased priority accorded to it the lives of all could be enormously enriched. Man's ideal of equal opportunity for all can only be achieved through the establishment of a proper and effective educational system. Whatever inequalities and differences exist between people, and it is foolish to deny or ignore these, education should be instrumental in enabling the full expression of talents and abilities so that the world gains most from the existence of each one of us. The process is partly a matter of the individual discovering and being helped to discover his/her own interests, talents, capacities: partly a matter of enhancing and developing these in full variety in relation to the environment. Above all, education should not be afflicted by social or political limitations. Nor can severe economic criteria be applied, for who in the present state of things can know what is cost- effective in the education of a child?

Graham Thomas
Former Co-ordinator for
Personal and Social
Education, Southway
Comprehensive; present
Senior Teacher, Estover
School

I make no apology in stating that my perception of education as outlined here represents an ideal model. Such a model is of course susceptible to human failing, whether caused by personality factors or inconsistencies in human behaviour. Nevertheless one has to operate from a theoretical and philosophical base whilst accepting that in reality the execution will inevitably contain certain imperfections.

My primary tenet is that education is one of the dimensions of human existence. It is a growth process as innate as the suckling response in a human infant. In this respect it is self driven and the educator's function is to sponsor and nourish it. It is also an ongoing process commencing at birth, if not before, and terminating at death. Consequently it is misguided to believe or to work from a belief that education is what occurs in school and in subsequent forms of formal education. This is however a view that persists; mention 'education' and the immediate illicited association is 'school'. So to educate is not the preserve of the teacher, it is the function of all life's experiences. What school does provide is the environment in which the process of education can be focused and formalised at a time in human development where the individual is receptive at a high level. It should be so structured as to draw upon the past, present and future experiences of those it seeks to serve.

It follows from this that the teacher should be both the enabler and the partner in the educative process and the process is one of drawing out. The teacher should be drawing upon and promoting the self motivation of the young person. He should be encouraging natural curiosity and enquiry, and responding to it.

Natural curiosity will motivate the child to endeavour to acquire an understanding of the multifarious aspects about himself and the society within which he is developing. A hitherto neglected area in this respect is broadly covered by the term 'personal and social education'. Covering a wide spectrum including health, careers and political education, personal development, personal relationships and social and life skills education much of the education in this field was contained within the so- called 'hidden curriculum'. This relates to the general ambience and ethos of the school as exemplified by the behaviour patterns and nature of interpersonal relationships existing, accepted or sponsored by the organisation. Relatively recently the hidden curriculum has been examined and explored as an open and declared part of the school's curriculum function for all children.

As a partner in this personal and social development the teacher's function is to enable the child to explore his world and his ways of operating within it. In performing this function the teacher should not take on the role of social engineer dedicated to the task of moulding young minds according to what he (the teacher) considers to be the correct model. Young people demand a clear framework to operate within and we as teachers owe it to them to provide such a framework of behavioural expectations according to societal norms. A delicate balance needs to be maintained between reflecting societal trends and leading new developents; schools must be neither behind in reflecting societal changes nor too far in advance of them. It is vital that within the framework we offer the young people should have presented to them alternative ways of being in respect of life styles, interpersonal behaviour and ways of viewing the society in which we live. In addition we should encourage them to develop their own personal resourcefulness for making choices and decisions to enable young people to leave their period of formal education as autonomous and confident individuals, able to enter into society and to contribute to it. Schools should aim to turn out young adults rather than old children.

Tessa Thomas
Committee Member,
Workers Educational
Association

The concept of education, as a pure idea, is neither good nor bad. It just is! Its application is what is in question. Since this application, of necessity, involves human beings, it must incorporate the human error factor. "Education" is such an enormous thing, how can we discuss it? We must either think on the broader meaning, or concentrate on specifics. Broadly speaking, it is obviously beneficial to the people of the poorer countries that they be trained in modern techniques of food production, so that we may avoid a recurrence of the terrible tragedy which is occurring in Africa at this very moment. It is also easy to see the benefits of teaching someone to read, thereby giving them the key to vast worlds which would otherwise be denied them. It is also beneficial, in my opinion, that the skills of good behaviour be taught at home. This must be done, not in a repressive, overbearing or superior way, but with love and kindness. There are times when we all need to be "acceptable to others". However, here I am only speaking of the basic good manners. We must be wary not to manipulate our children, not to make them what we would like them to be. They must remain free. They are not our belongings, just given to us at birth to look after physically. They can be ours physically, but their souls must remain theirs.

It is easy to be cynical of the obvious abuses of education. It is even fashionable to do so! Anything which is so widespread as "education" must cover the whole spectrum, from very good right through to bloody awful, so if we are to discuss it, then we must generalise. Of course, we would like to see each child's schooling tailored to his specific needs, but, for obvious reasons, especially in this negative political climate in this country, it is simply not possible. What we can say is that the education system here has shortcomings, but the alternative - no education at all - is far worse. If anyone feels strongly about the negative things, in anything, not just education, then he or she should do something about it, and not bellyache or pontificate. I'm a believer in get up, or shut up!

Some Thoughts on Educating the Young

Marianne Tierney
Former Assistant Teacher,
Department of English,
Southway Comprehensive
School; current deputy
manager for long term
unemployed

The main aim of a teacher, who is after all in loco parentis, is based on the responsibility for personal and social education of the young people who pass through their hands.

This aim is achieved in a greater or lesser degree by following a carefully laid down programme, produced by the authorities, with the teacher's own characteristic style and personality added. This inevitably influences the impressionable minds of the young people involved.

My main involvement in education has been in developing a close working relationship with many youngsters who were already labelled as 'failures'. Failures academically, failures socially, yet among these so-called failures were some of the most endearing young people I have ever met. They seemed to need and appreciate the extra individual attention given to them to help them respond to an educational system that did not seem to fit their personal needs. Certain elements of the teaching and learning of each pupil were on an individual basis and an element of diagnosis was made to cater for the needs required.

I think it is always important to question the value of what one is doing in education. To ask, "What have I done for this pupil?" or "What has this pupil done for himself?", "Is there any feeling of satisfaction in the achievement of a skill?"

I am sure one of the successful ways of 'getting through' to a seemingly unmotivated pupil is to find out what does motivate him, and somehow relate this to the subject being taught. To try to cultivate a relaxed, happy and productive atmosphere in the classroom is difficult but a goal to aim at always.

One of the basic hurdles to overcome is finding the happy medium between authority and familiarity, to engender respect and not ridicule. Children, especially teenagers, are probably the most critical of all creatures.

Sadly, I suppose, there will always be stony ground where the seed will not flourish, but one can always try, each success being treasured like a priceless jewel.

Some useful quotations:

"Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave."
Lord Brougham

"Education is the process of driving a set of prejudices down your throat."
Martin H. Fischer

"You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him to find it within himself."
Galileo

"Certainly the prolonged education indispensable to the progress of society is not natural to mankind."
from "My Early Life", W.S. Churchill

"The aim of education is the knowledge not of fact but of value."
W.R. Inge, Dean of St Paul's

"For every person wishing to teach there are thirty not wishing to be taught."
"1066 and All That", Sellars and Yeatman

Rachel Tierney
Former pupil,Southway
School;present Chief
Assistant at Hooper's Turf
Accountant's Head Office

1.
Q. What are the best things that you remember about?

A. Dinner-time, because we could get out school for an hour and a half and go down town or sometimes to my gran's, where she made us all coffee.

School trips: because you could wear what you liked, have fun with your mates, and also meet other people. My best trip was when I went to Holland. This was because we visited interesting places and because we were at the age of 15 we ad a lot of fun at the teacher's expense, like drinking and smoking.

2.
Q. What do you think of mixed schools?

A. I like this idea because there is more variety in subjects like girls and boys can both do metalwork, wood-work, etc.

3.
Q. What things didn't you like about school?

A. I hated having to conform with their ways like having to wear a certain uniform, not allowed to wear earrings (drop ones) which was known to be dangerous, but I have never had an accident. Having to have natural colour hair, just in case every-one else decided to do this, but to me the colour of hair doesn't affect the way you work.

On my final leaver's report it said 'I was higher than average intelligence, but was finding life difficult because I was trying to be an individual. I don't see why I should be a clock-work robot just to suit all those people who want me to.

4.
Q. What do you think of the education you have had?

A. A lot of the lessons I have had have been quite enjoyable, but a lot of them are a bit of a waste of time. On the whole, what I learnt at school, is what I could have learnt at home, from books, television and mixing with adults who have wide interests.

Roger Tilbury
Former Joint Headmaster
Dartington Hall School

There is, I suppose, a sort of confessional in having your portrait painted. You heightened it, of course, by making us go through the gruelling business of selecting a book or an object to express ourselves. I chose Thomas Mann's 'Tonio Kroger', partly out of desperation, but, as Mann says, once you have an idea you see it expressed everywhere. There are certainly parallels to be drawn with Tonio's visit to the studio of Lisaweta Iwanowna.

The twentieth century is hell to live in, Tonio Kroger might have said. We have moved from a time when there was a personal meaning, often a transcendental meaning, to peoples' lives, and a defined role, into what? Man alone. Every man his own genius. Nothing has meaning. Instead of the individualism of the great Renaissance scholars we have the narcissism of the twentieth century: self actualisation through ever-expanding horizons. As for the transcendental: man is alone facing the void. Run for cover in some pseudo-science, mysticism or freaky religion!

And what do we make of education in such a situation? By education, I mean the introduction of children to the world, not that small bit encapsulated in institutions. Look around. Education is in crisis, certainly in the western world. What have we taught the young I see around me on holiday in Europe? One thing is clear: we have taught the British least.

For many it appears that the meaning of leisure is the opportunity for vandalism and personal destruction. They have been taught competition of the crudest sort: my self, my team, my nation can win by status, aggression, violence, and destruction. Knowledge is what can be measured by examinations which give us no credit for what we know, only take marks off for what we don't know. And then what? If you're young you join the unemployed sooner or later. If you're old you're thrown away on the scrap- heap of redundancy; never mind your skills and your flexibility as a human being. Life becomes a meaningless system, a system which values growth over sufficiency, novelty over value, a system which values people the nearer they can become to machines: be an ice-dancer, a gymnast or a synchronised swimmer! Or flee into drugs and alcohol.

But I am not a nihilist, so what am I to do?

There is an alternative, which is not a dogma, but one which is practised by so few, and understood by fewer. Turn the world on its head, away from systems, and start from people. Not the naive assumption that everyone is naturally good: we have moved on since Rousseau. But the assumption that, given reasonable circumstances, most people wish to be reasonable. Oppose the fragmentation of knowledge, of people, of societies with wholeness. Instead of uniformity in education let us evolve coherent views. Instead of the democracy of the right and left, which says that if I can muster one more vote than you I win all the rights, let us practice participation by people who are prepared to associate freely and co-operate to promote positive personal growth in a social context. Let us come to accept the 'otherness' of other people and seek the good in them.

But all this assumes a personal involvement and a smallness of scale which runs counter to the prevailing orthodoxy. Having spent more than 20 years in an independent school which has tried to practice this belief in promoting the integrity and self- sufficiency of human beings, I am saddened by our lack of impact on the larger world of education. Our freedoms were not those of the 1960s permissives, but we have been so confused with them that we are now branded as living in the past, when in fact we are pointing to possibly the only hope for the future. But attempts to carry this message into the wider world have come to nothing: we remain a minority to be destroyed at will by the cynical, sensational press. It is Yeats' vision:

> "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold,
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity."

And so I come back to Tonio Kroger: that longing to be part of life and yet seeing it for what it is and knowing that there is something better.

> "I stand between two worlds. I am at home in neither and I suffer in consequence. You artists call me a bourgeois and the bourgeois try to arrest me ... I don't know which makes me feel worse."

You painted me looking sceptical and pained. You were right.

Education

Philip Tilden
Former Pupil,
Plymouth College;
13 years old

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'education' as training a child mentally and morally, presumably in a way in which modern society defines what is meant by 'mental' and 'moral'.

Education is the building block of society. It is possible to say that without education life would not exist. Everything that is known to us has been taught to us. The Greeks, one of the earliest known civilisations, regarded education as of moral importance. Plato, anxiously determined to protect the children of his imagined elite from contact with false doctrine, and Socrates smoothly claimed to be the true philosopher and moralist. They both professed intention to provide examples for the encouragement of virtue and to deter the young from vice.

Rhetoric for the Greeks was an essential part of their lives. It must be remembered that the Greek age was far removed from the age of today. The age of today is one not only of miraculous scientific discovery, but also society today commits much that is said and done to paper. Although the telephone has erad- icated much of that, more exists in words than in the Greek world. It is with this in mind that we can approach Greek education. A man when speaking in public, whether to a meeting or a law court, would not be surrounded by circulated documents, no backcloth of daily journalism to make his own or others' views familiar to his hearers. Like an actor, he had to know his lines, but more than that, he had to be versed in the art of persuasion. Up to a point that was teachable. The Sophists claimed to teach their pupils how to succeed in public life; rhetoric was a large part of what they meant, though not the whole. The contests of Attic tragedy show all the tricks of the trade as well as the art of the poets. A man had to depend on this rhetorical skill and his memory' nothing or very little was committed to writing and the demands and the requirements were much different from the same demands today.

The obvious drawback of such a system, and such a charge was indeed levied at the Sophists that they 'made the voice appear the better cause' (see Aristophanes' Clouds). A skilful speaker, whether his case be good or bad, will always win against he who cannot argue, however sound his case may be. Juries were familiar with style, but in an age without lawyers and barristers, it was worth the litigant getting his speech written for him by an expert.

Such was the emphasis in the Roman world. Public speaking was closely linked with the government of the republic. Cato was an arch-exponent of this, exploiting this medium to survive 50 political persecutions. This art was the mainspring of Roman public life and education, and as in his historical authorship, Cato was not entirely immune from Greek influence, the rhetorical 'art of persuasion' and the technicalities which it imparted. These influences, combined with the urgent practical exigencies of speaking in the Assembly, the Senate and lawcourts to create that most formidable of instruments, Latin oratory, of which Cato was a pioneer exponent.

Nowadays, however, emphasis is placed on the pupil writing down his thoughts in essays or in comprehensions. But the learning of poetry in English has been forgotten, and there is also very little oral work in French. Some teachers are absolutely convinced that their subjects are much more superior to others. A lot of teachers also believe themselves to be the greatest gift to teaching since writing.

Some teachers are sometimes absent for times of up to 2-3 days. When this happens, we usually get a project. This means that we learn nothing. Shouldn't we get a refund? However, most teachers are usually at school and able to teach.

Val Tindall
Former Head of First Year, Burleigh Secondary School; Committee Member of the National Union of Teachers; Present Deputy Head, Burleigh Secondary School

What an incredibly difficult task! To describe my job and give my views on education without sounding pompous, cynical, sanctimonious, idealistic, or disillusioned. Not just difficult - impossible! However, I will do my best to express some of my feelings and ideas as clearly as I can.

I teach children who have failed to acquire the first tools of the academic trade: basic literacy and/or numeracy, by the age of eleven, the age they transfer to my secondary school. My pupils are described as 'children with learning difficulties' - a blanket term covering those whose progress and achievement have fallen behind those of their peer group (other children of the same age), to a significant degree. Their 'failure' may be due to retarded intellectual development, limited ability, emotional disturbance, home background, illness, absenteeism, physical disability, sensory handicap, change(s) of school, clash with a teacher during some essential learning process. I have not included dyslexia, the condition affecting children of above average intelligence who suffer a word-blindness which prevents them from learning to read and write. I am sure that this condition does exist but although I have helped otherwise academically able children to learn the techniques by which they may overcome spelling or handwriting difficulties, I have not, as yet, taught a dyslexic pupil.

My first task is to discover the reason, or reasons, why a child is experiencing problems, then to analyse the precise nature of these difficulties, identify the educational gaps and finally to design an individual learning programme. However, that is only the beginning of my work. At eleven years of age children have often become accustomed to failure, they have lost confidence in their own ability to learn and as a result they may have become withdrawn, disruptive, restless, over-helpful, excessively talkative, painfully timid or aggressive. The most important part of my work is establishing relationships and building a learning environment in which children want to, and can, succeed but can also accept failure, on occasion, without fear or giving up.

In my job I have to be a detective, social worker, counsellor, mother-substitute, psychologist, prison-warder, actor, as well as teacher. I find my work stimulating and satisfying most of the time, but it can also be frustrating and infuriating. I get too involved in that I forget that my small, rather weedy 'trees' will never form a very significant part of the academic 'wood'. I tend to overestimate their achievements, so important to them - and to me - I feel enraged when colleagues dismiss my children as 'thick' because of their lack of ability to assimilate knowledge at the same rate as their peers, instead of looking at ways in which they can make their own teaching more effective to help pupils overcome their learning problems. I resent the fact that examination results are too often correlated with personal worth as far as teachers, parents and society at large are concerned. On a personal level I get irate when some people assume that those who teach children with learning difficulties are somehow lower in the academic echelons than those taking the 'O' level groups. I hold a good degree as well as a teaching qualification, I have taught examination groups (and achieved extremely satisfactory results), I enjoyed my teaching then as now, but it was no more intellectually rigorous, in fact in many ways it was less so, than my present work.

I feel I'm getting pompous, so I will stop. I hope I have been able to provide some insight into the work carried out by the teachers in the remedial and compensatory departments of secondary schools in supporting children who need extra help. Methods, materials and systems vary from school to school but there is always one underlying concept, to identify the needs and try to fill them.

Joshua Tuohy
Aged 16
Unemployed

Education, apart from reading and writing, sets about to dampen a child's inquisitive, individual mind to that of a mass-produced product of the current education system.

Schools and colleges are no more than elaborate factories receiving the raw material of a young mind and then gradually attempting to mould them into exact copies of each other. You are filled with the ideas of others and conditioned into accepting blindly without question. We are taught to trust people of authority and to believe in their ideas not your own.

Before you leave school the school will inevitably tell you to commit the next 40 years of your life to a set career is right. Anyone who doesn't is in danger of becoming a reject of society. I believe to be a so-called 'reject' is better than being a sheep in a corrupt, greedy and violent society.

Religion is rammed down your throat at school from an early age. By the time you start to learn about others you already think Christianity is by far more superior than any others.

A pupil who is slightly individual spends most of its time being picked on my ego-trip teachers, who by their sly jokes and comments soon get quite a following of pupils.

Everybody should have a right to be educated, to be able to talk and communicate, to respect new ideas, and to learn and respect arts in all forms. The system denies us all this in their schools.

Headmasters are generally more concerned with the reputation of the school than getting to know its pupils, they make the surface seem clean and fresh, but the deeper you get the shittier and more stagnant it becomes.

People are taught to read and write. Very few read real literature and write down their feelings. Most people read pornography and write on walls. Something is wrong!!!

Thoughts of Education,
Past and Present

Cecil Vaughan
Miner

I will start my project by just going back in my own mind and try and base it on what I feel, and have experienced over the last 47 years.

My Grandfather was a miner and moved from North Wales to South Wales just to work and try and keep a tidy home for his family. Education would have been of benefit to him, but unless you were a kind of supermind in those days, you had no chance of getting on, as school days ended when you were old enough to work in the mines and earn a few shillings for food and survival, but he managed to do this and had thought of his sons who when they became men would have had a better chance in life. Schooling became more of a standard thing and people wanted to learn, and they did, but not so much as they should have in South Wales, so once again you were either exam level or forgotten, and there was nothing, only the mines, for my uncles.

By now it was my time for school and I must say things were a hell of a lot better. Although my father was a miner we had equality with the upper class and from infant school to junior school every effort of the teachers was to educate every child to get to 11-Plus exam level. If you passed you would go to grammar school, even if you didn't pass you were still not left out, you went to junior school and worked hard there to achieve your goal, but my ambition was sport which I got on well in.

I tried many different jobs: factories, building, etc., but I must have had the mines in my blood, as that is what I felt I could be best at and by now the money was good.

I later on got married and had four children. By now education had speeded up and my own children were full out to learn and get on in school. Only two of my children had to take their 11-Plus; one passed and went to grammar school. They all got on well and are able to stand up in life and understand banking, buying property, family planning, income tax, holidays in the sun, etc. What an advantage education gave them!

My youngest daughter is now at a comprehensive school (another achievement, or so they say in these modern days). There is plenty to offer her as far as education is concerned, but to me sciences are very important in school these days. They really stress this to each pupil - why, I don't know - it doesn't seem to be helping the world we live in today.

So I conclude by saying that I hope my daughter will be a fine musician and bring happiness into this computer educated world.

How long at the crossroads?

Mark Vaughan
Founder of Centre for
Studies on Integration
into Education (CSIE);
Former worker, Advisory
Centre for Education (ACE);
Former Deputy News Editor,
Times Education Supplement

> "We are anti-life and pro-death if we are pawns or politicians, merchants or exploiters. We are pawns because we were trained to seek life negatively, humbly fitting ourselves into an authoritative society, and ready to die for the ideals of our masters."

A.S. Neill, educational thinker and philosopher, and headteacher of the most renowned of all free schools, Summerhill, until his death at the age of 89 in 1973. His philosophy on education can be summed up in three words: "Follow the child". His condemnation of humanity was that it was always "anti-life", and always had been. We have to ask the question "Why haven't educational institutions in this country been able to follow the child? Why has the child followed the school?"

Neill adds: "Pro-life equals fun, games, love, interesting work, hobbies, laughter, music, dance, consideration for others, and faith in men. Anti-life equals duty, obedience, profit and power. Throughout history, anti-life has won, and will continue to win as long as youth is trained to fit into present-day adult conceptions."

Summerhill began as an experimental school in 1921 and, according to Neill, grew into a demonstration school, since it showed beyond all doubt that "freedom works". It continues today as an independent school, in the small town of Leiston, in Suffolk and has been run by his wife Ena since his death. He summarized the Summerhill philosophy as a school that produces "healthy, free children whose lives are unspoiled by fear and hate". He saw children's natural enthusiasm to learn and to live as the school's greatest asset, and the school exploited it. It is in the primary field of mainstream education that his views on schooling have had the greatest influence; however the degree to which Summerhill and Neill would ever be a major influence on the state system of education can be gauged by his description of his early days at the school:

> "We set out to make a school in which we would allow children freedom to be themselves. In order to do this, we had to renounce all discipline, all direction, all suggestion, all moral training, all religious instruction. We have been called brave, but it did not require courage. All it required was what we had - a complete belief in the child as a good, not an evil, being. For over forty years, this belief in the goodness of the child has never wavered; rather it has become a final faith."

In an interview later, Neill said that the next evolutionary step for the state sector of education, was to bring the same atmosphere into a comprehensive school that was already in a good primary school - "the freedom of choice and the freedom to move about".

Neill was never a libertine, advocating selfish indulgences for all who craved them; he always saw the development of the "free child" in the context of his or her community, and argued that if that child's actions were not actually harmful to anyone else, then they were acceptable. He did, of course, enjoy the luxury of living out his maxim, "follow the child", in an environment that was completely controlled, to a greater or lesser degree, by himself and the school staff, something that allowed him and his work colleagues to state from the beginning that the central aim of Summerhill School was "to make the school fit the child, instead of making the child fit the school".

So, to what degree can society's educators today fully exploit the too often hidden creative force inside a child, a life-force that wants to express imagination, explore new ideas, ask questions, to learn and to seek a direction for itself? Does society and its demands on what schools should be producing as an "educational experience" end up having an anti-educational effect on schools? Neill told Her Majesty's Inspectorate when they visited Summerhill: "Look here, you can inspect the teaching of English, or French or history, but you cannot inspect sincerity, freedom, charity or happiness."

Children have a finely tuned sense of justice which they develop out of the many injustices they see around them, or from those acted out on them. Neill wrote that a child is "innately wise and realistic". It seems to me that a child's sense of justice soon tells them what is on offer each day as they go into the classroom. The optimism and colour that surrounds the educational and social activities in most primary schools, contrasts starkly with the fundamental aims and objectives of all secondary-level schools - that is, the degree to which each child is going to be groomed for, and tested by, outside examination bodies, which are geared to higher education and the seeking of 'rewards' in society's workplace beyond.

On a scale of ten, measurement by examination success, I would suggest, is worth one; the other

aspects that go to make up a young person - personality, beliefs, aims, imagination, kindness, aggression - are worth the remaining nine. It seems that young people increasingly know - consciously or sub-consciously - their own "scale of ten".

As agencies of society, the universities, colleges and other institutions of further and higher education receive their small intakes on a basis that is selective, elitist, immoral, dubious and - for the young person - often psychologically damaging in later life. At the point of leaving secondary-level education a young person begins to realise that these 'higher' institutions have dominated the fundamental ethos of the school they have spent the previous five or seven years in, schools which in turn, base their own evaluation on competitive grades and examinations. The point is, that the vast majority of young people are told in no uncertain terms that most of what they understand to be their own strengths and weaknesses, their own make-up, their personality and character, is all worth very little in the whole scheme of things. Contrary to some beliefs, schools are a powerful force in a young person's life.

Surely the paradox facing all educators today is whether this local social service to which they often give their lives, is either "Education for society" or "Education for life". So far, it seems to me, schools have often been successful in educating children and young people 'for society' - but we have to ask, what kind of society? It takes little effort to see the inequalities and unfairness, the prejudices and discrimination, the absence in schools of any philosophically-based appraisal of life and society's priorities, and a general promotion for the individual to "seek all and get all". "Education for life" doesn't seem to carry much clout.

Which way will schools develop? One of the questions asked as we wait at the crossroads is whether or not we want schools to turn out independent free-thinking people with an awareness of themselves in the context of their community. Surely the aim is for young people to finish their experience of school and college, more interested in the responsibility of working towards a fairer and more equitable society, but fundamentally, that they have something to express, something to offer and, hopefully, who will strive to be happy.

Education's - and later society's - rewards may well include 'success' in material things and perhaps a higher standard of living, but all too often that seems to be as far as it goes. As Neill said, the economic solution alone will never free the world from its hate and misery, crime, scandal or neuroses and diseases. Meanwhile those who see the problem, and are concerned, are searching for proof of - and agreement on - the fundamental elements that are needed to give young people the ability to grow, and contribute and flourish.

It seems to me that the major task facing schools and educators today is how to extract themselves from the vice-like grip made up of two quite disparate forces in society today; on the one hand the education service is under extreme pressure to provide a local social service that is a salvation to society's ills - and it is being asked to do this while suffering from remorseless cuts in real expenditure inflicted by a Central Government committed to policies that imply a continued reduction in the quality and availability (not to mention importance) of local government funded services such as education, health, social services and housing. On the other hand, there is considerable disagreement as to what schools are actually for; there is a crisis of authority in many schools and more and more challenges to their legitimacy. In some areas, teachers have lost considerable confidence, but not because 'schooling' has become democratised and left teachers out in the cold - it has not. The elitist concepts of years gone by are still with us; comprehensive reorganisation of secondary-level schools was never given a running chance in this country, something which, in years to come, will be seen as the massive educational failure of the second half of the 20th century, in part a casualty of this country's obsessive adherance to past educational structures with their benefits (for the few) and disadvantages (for the many) that this has always entailed. In thinking of missed chances, it was, of course, a Labour-controlled Government that abysmally failed 20 years ago to really grasp the nettle of selection in education.

Perhaps the saddest part is that there are - and always have been - radical alternatives, which if looked at, listened to, and implemented, could help stop the 'comprehensive' education school system become obsolete before it is fully implemented. Some of the first moves might include obtaining teachers who have no fear, who give no fear, who have no dignity, who have no 'authority', and then for those schools to try some initial steps towards self-government. This could be followed by community, and particularly parental, involvement in the running and use of schools, along with their democratisation both internally and externally (including the provision of real choice and freedom for learners; parental control - or significant say - in the operation of school budgets and extending to a logical conclusion, the concept of local, community-based comprehensive schooling which reduces completely the selection of small minorities of children out of their local areas, for whatever reason that selection might be). Making instruction less formal and putting importance on the incidental and informal learning process is another step.

Neill and Summerhill have had their influence on the state system, and in some senses, they may have had their day; it is 12 years since his death and while his books are essential reading for thousands of young teachers coming through colleges the world over, his influence seems to have 'peaked' in this country some years ago now. A generation later, we wait for a new wisdom, a new awareness, a new sensitivity in the pedagogue, that will begin to carve out a more creative approach to tapping the natural and largely unused talents of young people in current educational settings. At the crossroads, where is that inspiration?

January, 1985

Postscript

What are schools for? A ray of hope ...

To end on an optimistic note ... There is a new piece of education legislation which only came into force in April 1983 - the 1981 Education Act - which has already been the catalyst in many primary and comprehensive

schools in this country to begin answering the question: "What are schools for?"

The irony is that this new law, which covers the education of children with special educational needs, was only designed to affect a very small minority of children. They are loosely known as the two per cent, or those children with clearly identifiable learning difficulties (such as blindness, mental impairment, physical disability), and a further 18 or 20 per cent with less severe learning difficulties.

The 1981 Education Act states for the first time ever in English education law that all such children shall now be educated in ordinary schools, and not continue to be placed in segregated special schools, which have always grouped children according to disability and then catered for them separately from the mainstream.

The process of educating children with and without special educational needs together in ordinary schools (whether it is for some or all of the time), is called integration. And the times when it has been most effective and appropriate for all concerned, are when ordinary schools choose to re-evaluate the whole educational and social 'package' on offer to all children and young people in the mainstream of education, and begin to develop a 'whole school approach' to their curriculum and social activities.

The optimistic note, then, is that studies of integration in practice across England and Wales, as well as North America, Scandinavia, Italy and Australia, show it to be the much needed catalyst to get ordinary schools to look at themselves in a broad sense. There are many positive and encouraging changes among ordinary school staff (and a few special school staff), among parents of 'ordinary' children and among the children themselves, to prove that integration can strengthen and enhance mainstream schools - not weaken or overload them, as many people believe to be the case.

Integration in education is inevitable in our society, and there are no logical lines to be drawn that would exclude children because of category, or severity of disability. It has now been clearly shown that there are two-way benefits for all concerned, and everyone ends up with a more realistic picture of the range of people that actually make up our society. In the end, integration has to be seen as a basic rights issue - that is, disabled children, like disabled adults, have the same fundamental right to opportunities for self-fulfilment as are enjoyed by others.

Integration is an uphill struggle in this country at present, primarily because of past attitudes that have lead to the systems and institutions that we have today. We have always segregated children who were 'different' and catered for them separately, choosing to argue that a concentration of resources (like staff and equipment), together with a concentration of children with apparently the same disability (like blindness), makes good educational sense.

The 1981 Education Act has banned the labelling of children like 'Educationally Sub-Normal (Severe)', 'physically handicapped', 'blind', etc. Instead children now have a 'learning difficulty'. The very concept of a separate special school for a minority of children is now questioned by this new law. And, of course, it follows that the traditional role of all ordinary schools is similarly questioned, since they will, increasingly, be taking in a client group hitherto excluded; excluded because of an attribute that was beyond their control.

Being 'educationally sub-normal', like the colour of our skin or having red hair, is not something that we can control. To be categorised, segregated and treated differently, and with fewer opportunities, is a denial of basic human rights.

My optimism for the education service is that the challenge is an exciting and positive one, and there is nothing else around to force a debate of the major issues, and the subsequent clarification of the principles on which to go forward, as integration.

The very small numbers of schools that have begun integration, are showing that the more frequently that non- disabled children and adults meet and relate to their disabled peers in ordinary settings, the greater chance there is of society accepting the normality of disability.

September 1986

My Thoughts of Education **Sally Anne Vaughan**

I will start by saying that I am 15 years old and I will tell you about the first school I went to. It was an infants' school and in this school I learned to read and write, and to do other things.

I started this school when I was 3 years old, so things have changed since the older days. I then left this school when I was 7 years old.

When I left the infants' school I went straight on to a junior school, and they taught us some more subjects that we would have to know when we went to a comprehensive school.

At the moment I am still in the comprehensive school and next year I will be doing my 'O' levels and C.S.E. This is another thing which has changed. A new exam is now called the C.S. Common Syllabus, which is almost the same as a C.S.E. I am hoping to get an 'O' level in music, as later on I want to become a music and piano teacher. Already I have passed my second piano exam and I am doing my third exam in July 1985.

I think that education gives us a chance in life to do what we want to do and not just the same job that most people do.

I hope that I will become a music teacher when I leave school and that my children will have a chance for the jobs they will want to take when they leave school.

Conservation and Education

Roy Vicary
Chairman
Plymouth & District Branch
Conservation Society

In any reference to mass education, we sometimes forget how recently it was made compulsory in this country. In some parts of Europe school attendance is still voluntary.

This is worth remembering when reading many of the pretentious books by professional educationalists.

In England it was very convenient for the Government that Dr Arnold's influence in the discredited Public Schools came at the time of Imperial expansion.

Imbued with his ideas of service and natural leadership, these schools provided the officers and administrators for the growing Colonial Empire.

As industry expanded schooling was extended to all classes of society.

The Elementary Schools with their whistles, bells, rigid timetables, drill, and respect for authority, mirrored the factory system for which their pupils were being trained.

It is an interesting aside that before the Industrial Era and one of its products, the mass produced pocket watch, we were not so obsessed with moments of time as now, but more with its rhythms.

Well into the present century communications were poor, travel slow and not always leisurely; writers could still speak of boundless oceans and impenetrable forests.

Except among the disciples of Dr Malthus, John Stuart Mill and others, few questioned the belief that the onward march of science, technology, and education, the expansion of trade, would lead to the continuous growth of wealth for all, universal peace and justice. Such convictions accounted largely for the social stability of those days.

This air of confidence explains too the nostalgic fascination in which Victorian and Edwardian England is held by more doubting generations. Most of us recall the phenomenal impact made throughout Europe by the television serial 'The Forsythe Saga'.

Sadly most of those illusions have been shattered by events and we face an uncertain future with mounting anxiety.

In the era of the microchip, laser beams, genetic engineering, etc., the concept of natural leadership based on a particular educational system is not tenable.

One wonders how much longer our present school system will remain relatively unaffected by these new technologies. Will perhaps some of the large impersonal comprehensives become as outdated as their contemporaries, the high-rise flats?

Will senior pupils attend mainly for tutorials, sport, and art, relying on the new data media for their studies?

Turning to industry it seems incredible that the value of this country's exports alone, average a colossal six billion pounds per month, in what we are told is a recession. What level of production would be needed, at what rate must we dissipate energy and materials to secure full employment?

According to the Institute of Technology at Massachusetts, many of the raw materials essential to modern society may soon be in short supply. One questions the wisdom of exploiting them so wastefully to try to ensure full employment in our consumer-based society.

As one American tycoon observed, "A corporation's efficiency is indicated by the number of men it can release from a job, not by the number of men hired."

On such an industrial treadmill the ecological consequences of full employment could be far more disastrous than the social effects of high unemployment.

These issues are aggravated by world population trends. It took 3,000,000 years to reach the first billion people and another century to reach two billion, thirty more years the third, and a mere fifteen the fourth billion, with the prospect of eight billion by the middle of next century, all expecting to be fed, clothed and housed, and hoping for a higher living standard.

Or put another way, the increase of 70,000,000 per annum is about equal to the combined populations of the U.K. and the Netherlands.

World population is growing exponentially, but the Earth is not.

Numbers, in conjunction with technology of population, are overloading the natural powers of environmental regeneration. Man in fact has become the most destructive element in the total environment.

Jacques Cousteau, David Bellamy, Sir Richard Attenborough and others have made us all too familiar with the melancholy catalogue of our mismanagement - extermination of species, loss of forests, advance of deserts, increased global pollution. They warn us of worse to come. Yet despite a growing awareness it seems

that 'business as usual' remains the slogan.

It is against this sombre background that teachers find it increasingly difficult to give meaning, purpose and hope to young people, many of whom are sceptical about conventional values which they regard as a cavalcade of nonsense, signifying nothing and directed nowhere.

Perhaps 'cable tele' is the modern equivalent of 'bread and circuses' which marked the decline of Rome.

In brief, the problems seemed endless and incapable of solution by conventional thinking.

However, during the sixties ideas developed that perhaps the problems had a common cause, namely the fallacy that continuous growth is both possible and beneficial in a finite environment with limited resources.

The theme of conservation became popular. Books such as 'Small is Beautiful', 'Limits to Growth', 'Silent Spring' and many others sounded the alarm bells and called for a fundamental change of attitude towards our unique planetary home, from that of crude exploitation to care and conservation.

In a speech a few weeks before his death Adlai Stevenson popularised the notion of 'Spaceship Earth', hurtling through the immensity of space, its delicate biosphere sustained by its natural life support systems now under threat from man.

Returning astronauts spoke with awe of the fragile beauty of Earth when viewed from space.

Many organisations, including the Conservation Society, developed the concept of a sustainable society; one which can continue indefinitely and secure for us a way of life which will satisfy our needs and aspirations.

This involves, among other essentials:

The stabilisation and probable reduction of population.

The conservation of all resources, animal, vegetable and mineral.

Respect for the integrity of the natural world, on which we depend, and of which we are part.

Shift of emphasis from material to human values.

A world wide strategy involving Governments.

Any prospect of serious consideration of these proposals was shattered by the 1973 Middle East oil crisis, and the aftermath of inflation, unemployment, recession.

Governments could now maintain that their prime objective was 'to restore the economy', that matters such as conservation were of secondary importance, and would have to await the return of more prosperous times.

While governmental horizons are often limited to the next election, the unchecked growth of world population, industrialisation, and pollution makes the environmental crisis more acute with every year's neglect.

Our own Plymouth Polytechnic has published the warning, 'During the next decade, man must modify his science and technology, his attitudes and values, so that he lives in balance with his environment, instead of overtaxing, eroding and exploiting it in an attempt to meet the demands of a human population far in excess of ecological balance. Failure to do so will mean the end of civilisation, as we know it, possibly even the end of man.'

This is the stark reality, not as some would have us believe, merely the melodramatic opinion of an uninformed minority of cranks.

This warning is repeated by eminent people throughout the world, and is one we ignore at our peril.

Teachers and all concerned with the education of young people are faced with a great responsibility and an equally great opportunity.

They should be persuaded to recognise that Environmental Education is a major priority if present global trends are to be averted.

Suggestions as to how this could be put into practice are given in the attached notes.

For myself I can think of no more 'remarkable and beautiful statement on the environment' than that of Red Indian Chief Seattle in 1854. He probably never went to school.

> 'Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the Earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons of the Earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves. This we know, the Earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the Earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites a family.
>
> 'Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web he does to himself'.

> 'I hope for the sake of posterity that population and wealth will be content to be stationery long before necessity compels them to be.'
> John Stuart Mill, 1857

> 'We travel together, passengers on a little spaceship, dependant on its vulnerable supplies of air and soil; all committed for our safety to its security and peace, preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work, and I will say, the love we give our fragile craft.'
> Adlai Stevenson, U.S. U.N. Representative
> at U.N. Economic and Social Council
> in Geneva, 1965

> 'Your Society, I understand, is one of the pioneers of the concept that conservation means much more than the protection - vital though that is - of endangered bird and animal species, or the avoidance of the more spectacular malpractices of environmental pollution. You can rightly claim some of the credit for the growing awareness, within Britain and internationally, that

man, the chief source of pollution and environmental damage, is himself on the way to becoming an endangered species; that we cannot sensibly talk about conservation and at the same time promote a way of life that consists in the ever more accelerated stripping of the earth of the very materials needed to sustain life.

'Those of us who believe that we have an overriding responsibility, as George Kennan once put it, 'to leave the planet earth in a condition at least no less capable of supporting life, than that in which we found it', have no reasons for believing that mankind is discharging that responsibility to future generations. There is an accumulating body of evidence which reveals that the predominant forms of industry and agriculture in the industrialised world are non-sustainable. We would be deluding ourselves if we believed that a technology based on an abundant supply of cheap fossil fuel can long continue, and it is even more unrealistic to expect it to spread throughout the Third World. Neither the resource base, nor the environment, could stand it.

'The idea of conservation as the creation of sustainable life-support systems can be seen as the most necessary, and also the most challenging of all ideas. What it means in terms of changes in policies towards our own industry and agriculture, and towards aid and development in the Third World, are the kind of questions to which an organisation such as yours should now be addressing itself. We need new types of technological innovation, that take us out of the battle with Nature - for, as E.F. Schumacher once observed, if we win that battle, we are on the losing side. Can we use our vast knowledge of the natural sciences to adapt or recreate technology so that we minimise the use of nonrenewable resources? Can we increase efficiency, maintain and improve our living standards, by substituting human skill and creativity for capital and fossil fuels? Above all, can we organise our productive activities in ways that give people satisfaction in their work and some meaning in their lives?

'In conclusion, I believe that organisations such as the Conservation Society, which have done so much to diagnose some of the drawbacks of conventional industrialisation, should start to move into action to remedy them. I am glad to see that you have involved the Intermediate Technology Development Group in your deliberations over this weekend. It is one of the 'action groups' that has built up an international reputation by demonstrating, not from theory but from practical experience, that technologies which conserve capital and are inexpensive and small enough to be available to practically everyone, can open up new opportunities for people in our own country, as well as in the Third World. I commend to you the favourite dictum of the founder of that Group, that "an ounce of practice is worth a ton of theory".'

Letter from Prince Charles to the Conference
of the Conservation Society at Cheltenham, 1982

'I would define a civilised man as one who can be happily occupied for a lifetime even if he has to need to work for a living.'
Arthur C. Clarke
'Peoples of the Future'

'These are the days when men of all social disciplines and all political faiths seek the comfortable and the accepted, where the man of controversy is looked upon as a disturbing influence, when originality is taken to be a mark of instability.'
J.K. Galbraith
'The Affluent Society'
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THE CONSERVATION TRUST

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

What is Environmental Education?

This has been variously defined and interpreted - from simple nature studies in the primary school, to post-graduate courses in Environmental Engineering. The most widely accepted definition is that put forward by the I.U.C.N. in 1971 -

'Environmental Education is the process of recognising values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the inter-relation between man, his culture, and his biophysical surroundings. Environmental education also entails practice in decision-making and formulation of a code of behaviour about issues concerning environmental quality.'

This definition is rather heavy going, but it is important to distinguish between education through, about and for the environment.

Education through the environment (i.e. using the environment as a teaching aid; e.g. measuring the size of the classroom helps teach simple maths, making a nature table helps teach about the seasons, etc.) This is a

frequently used technique in primary schools.
Education about the environment (i.e. seeking explanations and relationships of environmental phenomena - meteorology, astronomy, biology, geography, etc.) This is the basis of most teaching from the middle school years and upwards.
Education for the environment (i.e. creating a concern for the environment, an awareness of the problems threatening it, and an appreciation of the possible solutions to these problems - ecology, conservation) This is the approach to Environmental Education for which the Conservation Trust was founded in 1970 and that the Conservation Society advocated when it identified the following five educational priorities in Education for our Future (1973) -

1. To make sure that our people and especially our young people have an appreciation of man's place in time and particularly of the critical nature of his present phase.
2. To promote the study of ecology both for its own sake and as a help in understanding the nature of man's present predicament and to base it on adequate fieldwork.
3. To give all our people and especially our young people information in the three interrelated areas of population, resources and environment upon which informed conclusions must be based.
4. To maintain a debate on the social conditions required to effect a smooth transition to a sustainable society and to consider what such a society might be like.
5. To encourage schools, colleges and universities to become more closely involved with the life of the community they serve in order to be able to carry out the tasks enumerated above more effectively.

A valuable document describing different concepts of environmental education, current practice and likely future developments has recently been published by the Dept. of Education and Science (Environmental Education - A Review, H.M.S.O., 1981, #1.95).

What Needs to be Done

1. The Department of Education and Science lays down basic guide lines and policy, and needs to be encouraged to accept Environmental Education as an essential part of 'core curriculum' and individual Members of Parliament should be lobbied to press for this.
2. Local Education Authorities have direct financial control over the staffing of schools, provision of facilities, etc. They need to be approached directly, and through local councillors to ensure that environmental education receives a fair and realistic share of such resources that are available.
3. Individual schools and teachers have the final say over what is actually taught in the classroom. It is therefore only by pressure through them that Environmental Education can finally find its way into the classroom.
4. Traditional or new approach. The argument over whether Environmental Education should be achieved through existing subjects (e.g. Biology, Geography) through new specialist courses (e.g. Environmental Studies), or through some form of integration of subjects (e.g. Humanities) is largely irrelevant here. What matters is that, regardless of the approach, a greater environmental awareness is achieved (see National Surveys into Environmental Education, 1973 and 1978).

I'm Not a Number

Tommy Vosper
Former Pupil,
Devonport High
School for Boys

My name is just a number
I'd like to thank my school
They said that I should call them sir
And they would call me fool.

They called it education
By using petty threats
To discipline the nation
They help the teachers' pets.

It's just a stupid system
The rich that make the rules
They use their jurisdiction
They went to public schools.

When unemployment rises
They cut back all the same
You're not an individual
'Cos they've forgot your name.

When school started getting hard
They said to stick at it
Study well and you'll go far
But they were talking shit.

So called training on a scheme
To cover your mistake
Of wasted youths you can't redeem
I saw it was a fake.

A generation on the heap
You say it is a shame
And in the ashes as we weep
To you it's just a game.

You hypocrites, you stay employed
You ought to pay attention
But will I still be unemployed
When I draw my pension?

My name is just a number.
My name is just a number.
My name is just a number.
My name is just a number.

Observations

1. School is like a spoonful of sugar.
At 5 you get the sweets.
And at 15 it's the cane.

2. They suppress one's individuality and discourage the develop-ment of one's individual talents by telling the pupils that they cannot possibly succeed in the field that they want to pursue.

3. Too much emphasis is channelled into enhancing the reputation of the school. e.g. School uniform: "Uniform" Latin meaning of one form. Every human being though needs to express individuality, but schools in general discourage this.

The Way Ahead

Gordon Wallace
Former Deputy Headmaster
Tavistock School

What is the outlook for education in the United Kingdom? Is it to be an increasingly uneasy truce between a demoralised teaching force and a disillusioned generation of young people living in an increasingly divided Britain?

It would require a rare optimist to argue that will not be the reality of the next few years. What, then, can teachers do to improve the situation, or indeed how can they continue to operate and retain their sanity when their actions are scrutinised and criticised from all sides?

At present, the employers are seeking to link increases in pay with clearly defined contractual obligations. To attempt to clarify this hazy, ambiguous and contentious subject seems to me, and I am sure to most parents and to the electorate, an eminently sensible thing to do. At a time when the miners look like losing their battle with the government, it seems absurd for the teachers' leaders to imagine that they can do better.

The miners will lose because they have failed to convince all their own members and other workers that what they are fighting for is sensible, or desirable. People who have seen colleagues and competitors lose their jobs when the things they produce cannot be sold are unlikely to agree to their taxes being used to dig coal that can only be sold at a loss.

Teachers are very suspicious of efforts to clear up their conditions of service. Their leaders' reluctance to negotiate on this will be seen by the rest of society as foolish and unrealistic. Whatever the merits of their case for extra pay teachers cannot expect public sympathy and support unless they negotiate realistically on this issue.

Instead of adopting a hostile posture to the clarification of terms of service, teachers and their leaders should welcome this opportunity to examine and discuss the role of the teachers and with the help of the media to involve the whole of society in a way not previously possible.

The miners' strike has caused huge financial losses, but it is an event from which progress in many areas may follow. Every day for nearly a year the arguments of both sides have been subjected to intense public scrutiny. Education is a subject of great public interest; a public debate on it is assured of similar scrutiny. I think that strike action by teachers is likely to have as little effect as that achieved by other groups of workers. The money that is lost by striking teachers would be better spent engaging Saatchi and Saatchi and other media manipulators to present the teachers' case to the public and to seek a rational solution to the basic problem. That problem is simple but all-embracing - what does society want from its educational system, and what is the role of the teachers?

The position of the teacher in the U.K. is different from that in all other countries and many of the differences are attributable to influences from that uniquely English institution - the Public School. The social prestige enjoyed by these schools has led to many aspects of their organisation and curriculum being imitated or transferred to other schools. When parents pay a school large sums to look after, care for and educate their offspring there is some measure of congruence of expectations and obligations. This is much less so, especially in large secondary schools.

What happens when a pupil fails to produce 'work' set by the teacher? In some schools the teacher knows that the parents not only expect the 'work' to be set, but expect the school to ensure that the 'work' is done and to as high as standard as possible. An implicit part of the teacher's job, then, is to encourage, but if necessary to impel, pupils to do good work. The teacher can invoke a variety of sanctions, including physical punishment, to enforce compliance to his wishes. In doing so, he knows he is performing the role accepted by him, his pupil, the parents and the school.

When a teacher is operating in a school where this clear acceptance of shared values, objectives, and the means to pursue them is not valid, there is conflict, 'indiscipline', and stress. That, unfortunately, is the situation most teachers find themselves in today.

This situation has existed for some time, it is getting worse and the rate is increasing. In the past, teachers could blame the Headteacher for being too weak or too remote or too something else, but at least the scapegoat was identifiable and visible. It is generally recognised that Headteachers are no longer the powerful players in the educational drama they used to be. Indeed their position is even less enviable in many ways than the teachers in 'their' schools.

As the power of the Headteacher has declined, governors and parents have been encouraged to take a greater interest in what is going on in schools and to exercise more influence in their running. The effective removal of the Headteacher as a buffer between teachers, parents and the L.E.A. has resulted in a growing feeling of isolation and vulnerability in teachers. It is hardly surprising that teachers feel that their efforts are

not understood or sufficiently valued by society.

The low morale of teachers has more to do with self-doubt, lack of public esteem, frustration and stress than low pay.

No progress can be made to improve the present situation unless there is a thorough-going debate involving all interested parties in education. If it does take place with full exposure by the media, the debate is certain to be a lengthy one.

There are two questions which are particularly important. The first involves the content of the school curriculum. Can the educational establishment accept that the present one is totally inappropriate for young people today and tackle in a realistic way the problem of replacing it with one which has more relevance at a time when a quarter of school leavers do not find any employment opportunities?

The second involves the role of the teacher and especially his relationship with his pupils. Is the teacher to be perceived by his pupils as part of an authority structure which prepares him to accept his allotted place in society, or is the relationship to be one which encourages questioning even that of his own motives, ideas and actions?

Education

Catherine Walsh
Former pupil,
Plymouth High School
for Girls; 16 years old

My dislike of school and everything about it was recently intensified when last year I failed my English Literature 'O' level. Perhaps I could have tried harder and perhaps we could have been supplied with a teacher who was capable of teaching.

Our teacher, let me call her Miss P., who thought a fun lesson consisted of nail-biting decisions as to which stars of 'Eastenders' could be potential 'Macbeths' or 'Macduffs'. However, not one question did the Oxford Delegates set on the suitability of Dot Cotton to play one of the Three Witches.

In my mind, Miss P. was the reason for my failure so, in an attempt to rebel against her and the educational system itself, two friends and I happily let her tyres down and hoped like hell that she would crash. She did not. But I retoook my examination with renewed determination. I shunned any help from other members of staff. I wanted to show them that I did not need them and could do it alone. Afterwards, I felt a sense of superiority and satisfaction when I passed.

There have been many other times at school when I have felt the urge to be inconsistent and to fight back. When I was younger and impressionable I felt secure within a methodical, setpatterned atmosphere. Nothing went wrong and no-one stepped out of line. But as I began to grow, I formed my own opinions and refused to become a quiet, model pupil who would prove to be a trouble-free and steady worker.

I detested the way that four hundred young ladies had to file, in silence, into assembly, all clad in navy blue and white, in skirts with the right degree of flareness and jumpers with the correctly shaped collars. In my opinion, uniform is an institution that restricts a pupil's imagination and creativity. If a set uniform has to be worn, then in my experience, great pains will be taken to make that uniform as different as possible.

However, even if strict rules did prevail at my school, my friends and I staged many attempts to fight back at the rules. We picked the white stripes out of our ties with compasses, we tied our shoe-laces backwards, we stuck pieces of plastic on our noses with glue to look like imitation nose-studs and on one memorable occasion, the whole fifth year put infant-like pony- tails in their hair. We revelled in the attention we so desperately desired.

After all of the successful rebellions, staff told us that if we wanted to be treated like adults, then we must behave like them. What a hypocritical statement, thought I! How can we fulfil their requests when they speak at us all day, when we are made to sit on the floor in the hall, when the heights of shoeheels are carefully monitored and when the lemonade shandy in the canteen was banned for fear of pupils becoming intoxicated! Fellow classmates recorded the alcohol content and to our horror, and later our amusement, it was 0.2% (or some other figure equally as miniscule) per can.

The school motto is 'Non scholae sed vitae discimus' which, translated, means 'For life, not school, we learn'. Well, I thought that a school motto had to be clearly practised within a school. Certainly, teaching methods that I have grown accustomed to in the last five years, have not adhered to the motto. In my opinion, teachers tell us what they think we should and not what we, the pupils, want to know.

On a lighter note, the supposed 'happiest days of one's life' recently came to a dramatic close for the Fifth Year at Plymouth High School. It was a day that no-one really wanted to see but it descended upon us and made our five years of friendship, fun and the occasional argument seem so hastily spent. We chose to go out with a bang, causing the headmistress to stop the chosen Assembly hymn ('All things bright and beautiful') and to tell us "This is not the sort of behaviour I expect from members of the Senior School." As a rule, the Fifth Form never sing so we all thought it quite fitting if we participated in our Last Assembly together albeit far too loud!

The staff anticipated chaos, so we gave it to them. Instructions were given to everyone - one squeezy washing-up bottle to be brought, alongside autograph books and cameras. Make way for the Fifth Year Grand Water Fight! Herds of damp girls roamed around the school building, filling up any available containers with water, ready to fire! A trifle juvenile, perhaps, but meanwhile, inside the 'matured' ones were pursuing alcoholic tendencies. The evidence (i.e. the empty bottles) was disposed of in the First Year's rubbish bin!

The day came to a close, emotions were high and tearful farewells took place. Those that departed were part of many rebellions held to establish our position in school. I will truly miss all of them and I feel as if we have been deliberately dispersed to enable us to settle down sensibly and to disregard any more thoughts of fighting back. After all, it's just not the done thing for potential Sixth Formers!

When it is my turn to leave, to walk through those school gates for the final time, I'll be sorry to be leaving my fellow classmates who have kept me going when the academic 'chips' were down, but on the other hand I'll be overjoyed to be rid of the environment that has so far caused me to say nothing but bad things about it.

The Poor Relation

Norman Watts
Head Teacher,
Montpelier Junior School

Every family with young children has a poor relation, one that needs help, needs caring for and, of course, needs financial support. No, I don't mean the white-haired granny or aged aunt; I mean their local school. In fact, the more I look at my own establishment, the more I realise just how dependent I am on the families of the children in the school. Not a situation peculiar to my school, but a country-wide dependency, and one that seems to deepen as each term goes by.

Let's take that familiar organisation, the Parent Teachers' Association, formed to foster good relations between teachers and parents and to raise money, with the odd event, for those luxury items needed in school. That role has changed dramatically, on the fiscal side. Now the school is actually dependent on the fund-raising activities of the P.T.A. and the amount raised, in our case, actually equals the money provided by the Authority as general allowance. The use of the money has changed too. No longer the luxury item: the extra computers, the swimming pool heating bills; now the money has to be used for books, to subsidise lessons in the curriculum areas such as creative art which need resourcing, and even to the purchase of gloss paint.

Why should children need to be bought gloss paint, one might ask? The answer is, the paint is for the parents to use to redecorate classrooms that in our case hadn't had a lick of paint for nearly twenty years. It actually took 66 parents and teachers the half-term weekend to re-decorate the school. Hence, the dependent relative needing to be cared for. Why do it? Is this really the parents' responsibility, some might ask? But parents care about the environment that their children have to work in, so they are willing to give their time and efforts. The children appreciate the end results greatly; cleaner, brighter and more colourful classrooms bring about a more positive attitude to schooling and certainly improve the school atmosphere. Perhaps painting and decorating ought now to be a compulsory course at Colleges of Education, and teacher certificates appendaged to paint rollers!

Parent effort doesn't just stop at the occasional painting "party". Each day the parents help with the running of the school. An excellent idea to involve them in the schooling of their children. Beyond question, this enhances the education partnership. It's the degree of dependency that one might question. To return to our granny analogy, one might enjoy helping with the difficult hedge clipping job a few times during the year, but taking over the maintenance of the whole garden is perhaps going too far. Parents help to sort the library, mend books, help with administration, with duplicating, in making items of furniture, help in the classroom, help on trips, etc. etc. etc. Take this parent support away from our schools and the quality and range of educational opportunities suffer dramatically. Clearly these skills are needed, but how much greater might they be if they were professionally provided and financed to give proper backing to our talented volunteers?

Undoubtedly, parents want the best for their children: some are able to give time; some, financial support; others, for no fault of their own, neither. Could this cause a wide discrepancy in schools? Certainly the amounts raised by P.T.A.s varies widely, as does the availability of parent help in school. Will there be a need for compensating action to be taken to equalise the situation if trends continue?

As a headteacher, I have become something of an expert scrounger, sending out "begging" letters to parents, asking for sponsorship from local firms, planning all sorts of fund-raising activities, or asking for help from local organisations. I'm always surprised that people continue to give, and at the amounts raised. Considering the continual demands made upon them, parents' generosity never fails to amaze me. The only sort of complaint I have ever received was with a ten-pound cheque, and it came in the form of a postcard which merely said, "Wouldn't it be nice if the airforce had to hold a jumble sale for a new bomber and schools had all they needed?" Not a comment from a raving pacifist, just someone who wanted education moved to a position of far higher priority.

I think that parents' support is tremendous. They realise the value of education and know it is an investment in the future; a future that is to be our children's. They realise that the best investment must therefore be in people, as it is these that actually make a country. Education therefore needs proper support, both financially and in esteem, so as to stop its slide toward the biggest charity in the country. So to end, I feel I must say to all parents, yet another, heartfelt, "thank you".

Equality of Opportunity? Some thoughts on music education in the City of Plymouth

Ian Weston
Former Music Teacher
Devonport Secondary School
Present Music Teacher
Mount Tamar Special School

One of the wonderful things, if we believe what we hear on T.V., read in the educational press, and see for ourselves at public performances, is that music is alive and well in our nation's schools.

Indeed, if one looks carefully, one can see some of the finest musicians in the country performing a very high standard of music and if the listener did not know better, he could be forgiven for thinking that he was listening to a professional band or orchestra of more advanced years.

This is good. Nobody can argue to the contrary.

If one digs a little deeper, one can see, however, that the children in these bands come, in the main, from families where a great deal of support is given. When I use the word "support", I use it in its widest sense. From driving the child to lessons, practices and shows, to providing the best environment in the home for the child to study in, and, of course, the money to pay for the best instrument and the most highly qualified teachers.

As a music teacher in Plymouth, I get very frustrated when I see the other side of this story. The children who come from homes where practical music lessons are a non-starter, for the most obvious of reasons. Money.

In homes where the next question is often, who is going to pay the electric bill? or even, when is the electricity going to be cut off? it stands to reason that the high cost of private music lessons is way down the list of the parent's priorities.

This is where the schools should come in. The fact is, though, that they cannot. At least, in the less fashionable schools, they cannot. A single music teacher, teaching in a small inner city secondary school, simply does not have the resources at his disposal to fund much more than a small recorder group or a choir, let alone a large band with instruments costing hundreds of pounds each.

There are ways around this. The county can provide specialist instrumental teachers that will visit schools and give children who have shown that they have some ability and a lot of interest, the chance to find out if they can become good musicians. In some schools, music lessons can be heard going on almost daily with a wide variety of orchestral sounds.

The plain truth is, that the county cannot afford to pay for this service to go into every school. The result of this is that the county music advisors have to decide where to place the money. If you like, they have to play God. Whatever they decide, they cannot win. If they say that School X is to get two hours a week of violin lessons, then somewhere else in the county, School Y is going to "dip out."

If your school happens to have a lot of children whose parents can afford to buy expensive instruments and make certain that the children practice at home, then the chances of your school having the services of a visiting specialist teacher are high.

If, on the other hand, your school is, as my present school is, in an area where money is short, home conditions are not conducive to serious and regular practice, and very often the emphasis is on living from day to day rather than studying an instrument for both enjoyment and perhaps a future in music, then the chances of getting any extra help for willing students is very slim indeed.

One of the ways around this, is that children who do come from less affluent and supportive families can attend a county- funded music centre during the evenings. This is a good plan until one looks a little closer.

Very often, the children who attend the music centres receive their music input from additional places, e.g. private music teachers. Perhaps on another instrument, but even this gives their chances of success a huge boost and proves to be a major sources of frustration to children who receive little or no real tuition other than that given by their school music teacher for an ever-decreasing amount of time per week.

If we were really intent on giving all children an equal opportunity for a serious musical experience, then should we be diverting the limited resources the county has to offer to those children who cannot afford to pay?

One can never win this argument. What would you do if you had to direct the county budget? Would you put all your funds into the basket that was going to give you a high return, i.e. the school where the children of the highly supportive parents go, and in so doing create "baby professionals;" or should you put your hard-fought-for funds into the basket that is going to give children who would never get the chance to "have a go" the opportunity to see if they could "do it"? After all, in theory the results should be the same. The danger is, of course, that these children have a very high drop-out rate because of their home circumstances. Neighbours in tiny flats complain, large families with several younger sisters and brothers complain, and there are a lot of other distractions that many people who have never had to live in poorer areas of large cities would

never understand.

I would not like to have to make the choice. Can you imagine the fuss if the county music adviser decreed that all the resources were to be redirected into the less well-off areas?

One of the best ways to keep youngsters out of trouble in inner cities is to keep them busy. Surely an increase in money from the government would be well invested if they were to support the county directors of various activities, including music. Let us hope that the future holds happier news. Until then, I would not want to be a music adviser.

In Praise of Variety

Colin Whitby
School Governor
Southway Comprehensive

England's inhabitants and visitors to its shores enjoy an unrivalled diversity of experience. There is an immense variety of geography, food customs, cultural activities, flora, fauna, etc. Any journey or visit, however short, reveals this richness and breadth of national life. This kaleidoscope persists despite the overwhelming dominance of a government and media industry centred in one small part of our nation.

However, in that sector of national life known as education, we seem to have opted for almost a complete lack of variety. From a relatively uninformed consumer point of view we seem to have at primary level a choice of two: viz. classrooms and chalk or open plan and talk. At tertiary level the choice narrow to polytechnics trying to become universities and universities trying to behave like polytechnics. Alas - at secondary level, we have no choice! Here we have a system that, as a philosophical cornerstone, admits of no other system. Unless, of course, you are deaf, naughty, or able to perform a few ballet steps.

Perhaps all is not lost. A wise and generous government has recently decreed that I don't have to send my children to the nearest school. Provided of course that I can afford the cost of transport, I may send my offspring to schools that I think are appropriate to their needs and that reflect my preference as a parent and a consumer.

So perhaps Shaun could go to that single sex school for boys that regards excellence in rugby as the highest attainment in life and has a long, established, and practised tradition of corporal punishment. Sally, whose progress with the violin continues to surprise us and amaze her teacher, would clearly benefit from attending the single sex school for girls across town that has a large and strong music department (admittedly it only has two language labs and has to get by on an IBM 4300, but I realise that you can't have everything!).

Finally, there's Kevin. Now here we have a bit of a problem. Our Kev's a bit of a slow learner. Yes, I know that he mastered that computer that we gave him for Christmas, and can write really complicated programs in three different languages. Yes, I know he earned more than a thousand pounds last month selling computer games that he had written. But when you put some real work in front of him (like they do at school), he just can't cope.

What Kevin needs is a small and friendly boarding school. Yes, you've guessed it. A single sex school, where no-one ever mentions exams and where he will have ample opportunity to acquire some self-esteem and confidence.

So there, my duty as a parent is done; parental responsibility has been exercised and consumer choice acted upon.

It's a nice dream, isn't it? Three children going to three different schools that are as different as they are. The reality is cruelly different. This educational system that insists that we belong to it, and know no other, seems to have the same menu on display in each school. Try to imagine an England in which all the restaurants, cafes and snack bars were part of a state monopoly that always served the same food. We wouldn't put up with that - or would we?

If the words above seem critical they are none the less kindly meant. What I am trying to say to the world of educators is this: Stop trying to be all things to all people. There are very few subjects that are so important that they must be included in every curriculum. Why not exploit your strengths and cut your weaknesses? If there is a ready supply of teachers of English and a shortage of historians or geographers, then why not cut the latter from the curriculum and enlarge the former? If there is a lack of playing fields, then why not eliminate outdoor games from school and replace them by fellwalking or snooker?

I can't avoid the feeling that educational resources of time, talent and money could with advantage be focussed more sharply rather than everybody having the same apparently inadequate ration. Then we would see that diversity and variety that is so characteristic of our national life style.

My Views on Education

J. O. Whitnall
Head Teacher,
Leigham County
Infants School

At the present time educationalists are experiencing a tremendous conflict within themselves. The moral fabric of our society is being undermined, with the result that constant demands and pressures are brought upon teachers who are blamed for all the world's ills.

The children in school now will be looking for work in the twenty-first century. How can we tell what the working world will be like then? The nature of job opportunities will be vastly different, with a shift towards more technical and skillful jobs. This change continues to accelerate and we will have to learn to live in a rapidly changing society dominated by microtechnology. The pattern of work will shift; there will be a well organised leisure industry staffed by people who will need very special social skills, devising pursuits and relating to people, many of whom will require motivation.

Why is it that one child in six leaves school unqualified, engendering a major social problem? Unqualified for what? - Learning by rote is not the answer. Teacher roles are changing. I see teachers as transmitters of knowledge, providing a wide curriculum, but more than that, I see them helping children to acquire a core of skills, skills necessary for enquiry-based teaching. I feel it is imperative to equip children with special skills - to be articulate, curious, able to judge, to discriminate, to respect others and their property, to aspire to goals which seem beyond their reach and strive to attain them. Unfortunately, I find children's language skills sadly lacking. If they are linguistically deprived for five years before entering school, how can we hope to build into their learning higher skills of reading: how to read quickly, slowly, how to skim, precis and decode, how to foster functional reading for a purpose, as in maths and science? Reading is the most overt sign of language achievement, but it is only one of the modes. A very small percentage acquire language and ideas without adult intervention.

Society has a certain store of values, conventions, skills and knowledge, which it will expect teachers to pass on to children. Teachers, in their turn, have to reconcile these demands from society with what is humanly possible in today's situation. Adequate provision of materials can no longer be maintained, the fabric of buildings is deteriorating, pupil- teacher ratios are increasing. We have to break down traditional barriers and prevent isolation in learning and make our teaching more relevant to children's needs. Morale is low; there is a lack of promotion, dissatisfaction with pay structure and a need to feel valued. I realise there has to be a yardstick by which parents measure their child's ability, but how can we measure caring, concern and empathy? We cannot set exams on all these important attributes so ... we must involve parents more and more. Thus they will appreciate our difficulties and witness our dedication. We must not be afraid of assessment if we have the courage of our own convictions. The greatest majority of teachers are dedicated and solicitous of children's needs, but we have to explain our individual approach. Our education system is second to none, in that in our schools teachers are free to choose their apparatus, approach and method of evaluation. This is so important to produce endless variety, stimulation and infectious enthusiasm.

Teachers are trained to recognise children's needs, intellectual and social, also physical, and to initiate activities to satisfy these needs, giving support, guidance and instruction. Alas, too much time is wasted on non-professional tasks because parents must be held to account for their failure in preparing children for school. In some European countries, I understand, children have to complete an aptitude test before being admitted to school. This might not be a bad idea. If entry depended on children acquiring certain skills, parents might be better disposed to help in their acquisition.

Equality in education is an impossible dream. We can provide equal opportunities but socio-economic considerations make for stratas in our society and we must be careful that, in striving for this equality, there is not a general lowering of standards. The present system of intake is unequal in that even different parts of our city differ in the time children are admitted. The upheaval in secondary provision is ample proof of this inequality. I personally approve of grammar schools, because I consider that there are some children who will benefit from this more academic approach. I am also convinced that what happened in Sheffield will happen here - that the comprehensive schools provided in certain areas of the city will become first and second class, because ambitious parents will be prepared to move out of areas in order that their child shall attend the more prestigious schools. These schools will have the monopoly of able children and supportive parents, and will achieve results which, in turn, will attract more parents to seek entry for their children. Other schools will lose the cream, not achieve results, and a vicious downward spiral results.

I have always aimed to make every single task I present to the children worthwhile and relevant. Much time can be spent on aimless activities from which no real sense of achievement can result. I also consider it to be of the utmost importance to find a way of making a child succeed. Every child has something worthwhile to

offer even if he/she is not academically bright - nothing succeeds like success. If I can instil in the children a love of God's creation and a thirst for knowledge of the world in which we live and may come to live, then I consider I have done my duty. Praise and support along the way will enable each child to reach his full potential and whilst I know smaller classes would be a great help, the quality of the teacher is the one overriding factor for success. The secure surroundings, the stilumi we provide, the stable relationships we establish within the community are our trademarks.

I will end by expressing the fervent hope that the latest trend in teaching training will mean an improvement for the profession. The students will spend far more time in school working alongside experienced teachers. It always seemed ridiculous to me that teachers, among all the trades and professions, were the only ones who were not involved with the experienced people, thus preventing them from becoming familiar with the tools of their trade. The student/school adoption scheme is a huge step in the right direction.

Education

Kevin Wiles
Former pupil,
The Ridgeway School;
presently working
musician and song-
writer

Today's feelings surrounding the education system are becoming firm in the idea that it is a load of rubbish. Qualifications such as C.S.E.'s are no longer valuable. Employers today know that school leavers with 'O' level passes are bound to apply for the same job as school leavers with C.S.E. grade passes. The outcome is obvious. Because jobs are few and far between, many people are turning to higher education. I myself chose the sixth form at my school, which has turned out to be a very big mistake, not just for me but many others who did the same. Admittedly it is the first year of our sixth form and many teachers do not really know how to treat sixth formers. One half of the teachers treat you much the same as the rest of the school, which does not go down too well with the sixth form. Others tend to treat you well, but still like to enforce certain rules which we feel undermind our status and age. Many students on two year courses have decided to leave after the first year. This is the price my particular school must pay for not getting it right first time.

Discipline in schools is very flimsy. I am not in favour of corporal punishment, but today's modern way of teaching tends to put the emphasis on a nice friendly atmosphere in schools - one big happy family. This occurs especially in primary schools. Surely if children are able to sit and talk during a lesson, they will not concentrate. I am not sure what my views are on this subject, but surely the whole point of school is to learn, and prepare you for the world outside, and not to be good friends with the teacher. In my experience I have learnt more from teachers who taught in the old fashioned way, where talking was forbidden and desks were set one behind each other.

The structure of schools today tends to border between academic lessons combined with social and moral subjects. I think one day school could be run by child psychologists just as well. I don't think this is entirely wrong but the ideas of some teachers do influence younger children immensely, and surely that is the job of the parent. I don't agree with teachers becoming secondary parents to pupils, which I think is happening.

The curriculum in schools is not bad. The big problem is that more money is spent on certain subjects rather than others. Music, for instance, in most schools is pathetic. I realise that musical instruments are expensive, but in my opinion music is a very important subject for everyone to experience. Cuts in education are causing both teachers and pupils to suffer. It seems to me that the government prefer to spend money on their defence policy rather than on the most important thing: the education of the new generation.

The pupils of today know that the prospect of a job once their education is over is very slim. This also seems to affect the attitudes of the teachers. Politics in schools is not generally allowed, but recently the idea of the pupils coming first above everything has rightly been put aside with the teachers' hope for better pay. Maybe once people outside of school can realise that the education system cannot be taken advantage of anymore, things may get much better, possibly at the expense of many children. But it would be worthwhile.

Education

D.V.G. Williams
Former Teacher,
Design and Technology,
Metalwork and
Tech-drawing

Education is a subject which causes paranoic discussion, similar in intensity at times to politics or religion.

What started as an idealistic idea by the church and philanthropists for the benefit of the lower classes has developed, for the want of a better term, to the hotch-potch of modern times.

Money and privilege has always enabled people to get a good start in life. But to enjoy a real life of success and enjoyment, knowledge and common sense are enduring factors to be sought, coupled with a will to succeed and the determination of the individual throughout life.

One does not need to be an ascetic to believe in principles and virtues which have appeared to have become unnecessary or outmoded by modern-day attitudes in life or educational methods. People and pupils have benefitted by self-discipline which has been instilled by teachers and their likes in the past.

Unfortunately, at the present time, we have succumbed to the political aspirations or egotistical mania by many in the educational system, who put their idealisms above those who matter - the pupils.

Discipline, respect for other people, property, knowledge and the basics in education for the majority are decried by the 'Whizz' kids, who have now created a system in which traditional ways of the past, which stood the test of time (in peace or war) have led to a breakdown of family life, lack of respect to elders and superiors, and a breakdown of law and order in our society.

Teaching as a career has suffered immensely from the manipulations of their political masters, D.E.S. down to Heads of schools. The various unions have never amalgamated to fight their cause, with the exception this year on salaries (Headmasters backed out). Progressively the position of the teacher's career structure has deteriorated rapidly in my teaching experience.

The career structure of teachers and lecturers has declined because of promotion prospects. Promotion from one scale to another alone appeared to depend on whether one forfeited one's principles, accepted begging bowls and worked far beyond one's time and pecking order. One sure method to obtain promotion was to move to wherever there was a need as usually no-one locally would accept the position. This is now an accepted part of one's career. Teachers who remain in their own locality because of their pupils and school are frowned upon as old-fashioned and not worthy of consideration, irrespective of the degree of success in that sphere, although the social happiness of the pupils may be ensured. The continuing exodus of teaching staff through drop- outs, continued shifting from one area to another, etc., never has ensured stability and understanding. This has a detrimental effect on pupils during their school career.

The stripping away of teachers' authority has brought about a terrible deterioration of disciplinary standards, which has resulted in verbal and physical abuse, not only on other pupils but also on staff. Much of this is hidden by request of the Headmasters, etc. for the benefit of the school's name or in simulating a position of grandeur. All pupils respect discipline as long as it is seen to be fair and justifiable. The social concept of the school is all-important in their upbringing.

Distinctions can be drawn between motivation, stimulus and inspiration. Motivation is a general influence. Inspiration is more like a blinding revelation arising out of the contemplation of a special circumstance, concept or objective, making use of one's senses, mentally or physically.

Pupils can be motivated, yet produce little work as they lack sufficient application. Motivation must be supported by positive energy, e.g. constant study. This depends not only on the individual but also on the environment in which they work, such as their school and their homes.

My experience has been mainly in practical subjects, where it is possible to teach basic techniques and impart information, providing one has the experience which the pupils respect. The more subtle processes of the development of sensibility, sensitivity, individual traits, likes and dislikes, which decide how the pupil deploys his or her technical skills, cannot be taught. They must be absorbed and developed through experience by the pupil, for themselves.

Schools in themselves vary greatly, for example, intake according to ability, the number of pupils, the size of the school and facilities, sports fields, swimming bath, etc.; last, but not least the type of school and the environmental area from where they get their intake. Even after this, financial backing and help can vary immensely between various educational areas. Devon has a poor record in this respect.

The curriculum timetable often offers numerous subjects, many of them modern trendy movements, irrespective of the abilities of the pupil intake. Headmasters or such compete with one another, irrespective of staff and facilities available and financial limitations. Therefore pupils can be forced into subjects in which they have neither the intellectual, practical ability or desire, because numbers and space availability vary immensely between various subject departments.

Certain subjects have had the advantage of finance and equipment, to the detriment of others because of modern trends, but is this advantageous to the pupils?

The Secretary of State for Education, I understand, is now beginning to realise the futility in the belief that all pupils are alike and have the capacity to compete in the world outside. Besides having a basic education, i.e. to be able to read and write, pupils should be able to use their observations of everyday life in their own environment, working life or among friends. If pupils are not given adequate education to meet their needs, many will feel insecure, anxious and improperly prepared to face their future. Inadequacy for the majority, success for the minority, has always prevailed, and I cannot see the educational systems of the present time altering that fact.

Mr and Mrs Williams
Parents

Dear Robert,

You asked for our honest views on State education for you to include in your latest exhibition you hope to put on in Plymouth in September. You will appreciate that I could describe the State education system in one colourful paragraph, but will endeavour to instil a little more detail in order that you might at least be given an insight into what appears to be an ongoing saga of pure frustration on my wife and myself as parents and also on my son Justin. My wife has also included her own profile on Justin's education to date, so our "collective views" are summarised in the following paragraphs:

1. It would appear to us that it is the intention of State education to reduce people to "clones" ignoring completely the less able but "creaming off" the very best.

2. It would also appear to us that whilst the new Education Act states that it is the right of every parent to choose which school their children will attend, and to expect all available resources to be made available to meet their children's needs, in fact the reverse is true.

3. Parents, it is said, can contest the decision of the Authorities who are refusing a child admittance to a particular school. This is fine if you've unlimited money to spend and a competent solicitor. First try doing it without! My wife did and had to suffer appearing at a tribunal where she was made to feel like a criminal.

4. State Education is said to prepare children for life, enabling them to contribute to society and to get on with people.

   Our impression is that State Education will ensure that children's expectations are curtailed, ambitions discouraged, any flame of interest extinguished and to expect no help for any children with various learning difficulties.

5. State Education is supposed to instil discipline, self respect and courtesy into its pupils - what a joke!, just stand outside any comprehensive school at leaving time and try to identify any of the above qualities; it's more like a cattle stampede.

6. The fallacy that large comprehensives have better facilities which can be made available to more children, may be, but what's the point of better facilities with less teachers and in some cases less able teachers or teachers who are more interested in what they can make out of teaching instead of what they can put in.

7. If you can afford it, you can put your child into a school that has classes half the size of the State schools, choose the style of teaching and behaviour, whether you want "free expression" or strict discipline. No matter which style is in fashion or politically desirable at the time, what the State has to remember is it is OUR child.

Kind regards,
K. M. Williams

Thoughts on Education

Mrs Williams
Parent

It has long been an established principle within this country of Great Britain that each individual has two fundamental rights:

1. To be educated.
2. To have access to free medical care.

The original concept was indeed a magnificent idea; however, over the years both services have become more and more bureaucratic, and politically motivated to attract the electorate's vote.

Class boundings have always been relevant within Society's structure, but none more so than in the area of education. People who have money will always expect the right to choose to what school to send their offspring and indeed have a vote on what appears within the school curriculum. The majority, however, do not have this facility and must take their chances within the often confused system of state education which is continually changing, according to the Government of the day.

Bright children will always rise to the top whether they attend comprehensive schools or secondary modern, and will demand the opportunities which their parents feel they deserve. However, the average child, or the child who is below average, or has learning difficulties, will have to fight hard to be heard, and will invariably not attract the interest and time of the teachers concerned. This assumes, of course, that the child attends the school of his parents' choosing if the parents are lucky enough to survive the methods of allocating places. This method is used in an effort to avoid overcrowding of the better schools, and depletion of the inferior ones. To my mind, teachers should be paid by results, and should justify their positions within the education system; this would then ensure that all state schools were of a consistently high standard.

Education prepares our children for adult life, and in many instances has a substantial bearing on certain aspects of their personalities and beliefs; therefore, great care should be exercised in the content of the subjects which appear on the curriculum. Children need to be taught not only the ability to cope with academic subjects, but also on how to communicate effectively, and given the ability to get on with others.

Fortunately, as a parent I have been blessed with the opportunity to send my child to an extremely good primary school where the teachers do care, are highly motivated, and are quick to recognise problem areas within the children's abilities, and provide superb remedial facilities if they feel they are needed.

Parents are encouraged to visit the school and to speak freely about their child's educational needs. Therefore, if my son's secondary education is as satisfactory, then I will consider myself to be one of the more fortunate parents.

Shirli Margaret Williams
(Greenie)
Former Pupil
Present Lover of Birds
Particularly - Lame Ducks

I, like the majority of people have been brought up to believe that the education system would pare my way into the future with gold, and give me for companions both knowledge and respect, sadly however this was not to be the case.

One of my first memories of school was the ritualistic gathering of a uniform, for which my elder sisters wardrobe was robbed of its maroon and grey heirloom to be passed ceremonially down to me, I received it with a humble smile, and wondered of its fate.

Its fate was short lived, for in the third year of shcool it was abolished and neglected once again to the depths of yet another wardrobe. I personally thought this a good move. In my experience the years between the ages of eleven and sixteen proved to be years of experimentation, I felt a need to express myself more, both in appearance and attitude, I wanted to form my own opinions from the facts I was given, so I found uniforms limited expression and forced me to identify unnaturally with a large organisation.

It was also at this time when I became aware that a lot of the practical work I did in various lessons went unacknowledged, this worried me for I couldn't understand how my work could be accurately assessed if it wasn't read, I also noticed, more frequently in english, that questions aimed at creative description were limited to descriptions that the teacher considered creative, I failed my mock english exam because my interpretation of a prism didn't conform to the examiners imagination. This made me conscious of a difference between the priorities of the school and myself, and I some how linked this difference with inferiority, prehaps because I felt intimidated by my minority status within the school. I felt as if I was being educated more as a means to an end, when I had previously thought education was a foundation on which to build and develop ones own character and abilities.

I was disillusioned with the lack of time and conversation with the teachers, I would have liked to have felt genuine respect as opposed to obligitary response born from discipline, I felt a sympathy for the plight of the teacher, to remain true to the cause whilst still inevitably functioning beneath the blanket of conformity under which they originally studied. Fortunately I had one or two teachers deserving of my respect and admiration, the difference the level of communication, I learn't a lot more from conversation that I did from dictation. Of these teachers I still think fondly. When at last unavoidably I found myself staring blankly at the clock on the classroom wall I realised I was faced with convincing the examination board of my intelligence within the confines of an exam paper and two hours.....

The results of my exams were average, not unlike my education and my certificates, lost forever in the dust of some filing cabinet. (not regretfully.....)

SUMMARY

I personally feel the schooling system would benefit from a greater degree of awareness of the individual needs of the pupil, to stereo-type a young mind over a long period of time must surely hinder his or her natural growth or progression.

And finally, with regard to the examination system, improvements must be made to enable a wider range of abilities and talents to be intergrated within the examination curriculum. It is no longer realistic to mass produce a hopeful working class who have no grounding for creative outlet in the disappointing event of unemployment.

"School is all well and good, as
long as I dont let it interfere with
my education"
Mark Twain

Some Reflections on Education in Britain

Dr Vernon Williams
B.A.(Ed.)B.Sc.;Ph.D.;F.R.G.S.
Deputy Principal,
College of St Mark
and St John
Former Chairman West Devon
Education Advisory Committee

British Education has seen many significant developments over recent years, with much critical assessment of curriculum provision within schools, particularly with regard to the monitoring and maintenance of standards and the need to offer cost effective education. While it cannot be denied that the Central Government Policy of financial constraints on Local Authorities has required a closer analysis and review of educational priorities and consequently a more effective use of resources, it is essential to recognise that it is the quality of the educational provision within our schools and colleges that is of paramount importance and where emphasis must be placed.

Educationalists have indicated that education at all levels must be broad based with specialisation being built on a meaningful general education which is geared to the production of a balanced member of society, who is able to cope with contributing and participating in the increasing and changeable pattern of community life. This requires a greater appreciation of the distinctiveness of each individual as a significant and creative being who needs nurturing and training in skills, enabling the progressive growth of the personality of each individual, resulting in an enrichment to society. Education has concentrated almost exclusively on the pupils at risk, requiring strong support in the form of remedial or compensatory education, so often for social and political reasons, rather than ensuring that the educational opportunities must be available for all pupils if the fulfilment of potential ability and enrichment of life is to be achieved. Each individual is of equal worth and therefore has the same right for their personal interests and needs to be developed within the education system. While a broad based curriculum is to be encouraged at all levels of schooling, this should not be to the detriment of individual skills, interests and talents. The curriculum should widen educational horizons and not be seen as a constraining factor on the personal wish to develop an individual capacity, as is so often the case. Educationalists should not be allowed to continue determining and restricting personal development in the context of an egalitarian campaign which attempts, however unsuccessfully, to ensure that each child reaches only a basic level of development.

Education in the classroom situation is in need of radical and fundamental change, with a more realistic appraisal and understanding of students. More emphasis should be placed on producing an exciting, stimulating and variety of environment. The time has long since passed when children should be herded into groups of thirty or so as a closed captive audience. Clearly the provision of pleasant classroom surroundings with adequate up to date facilities is an important aspect of the educational programme, but there is need to extend these to include the whole spectrum of community facilities. All schools must be seen as the core resource for a programme of ongoing adult and continuous education, in other words, education for life. School activities should be less school based and closer links with the broader society and community fostered, together with more learning in practical situations with greater emphasis on field work. The time-table should not be allowed to contain and prevent the development of interest seeking group work and individual research projects. Homework assignments should be geared to a more creative and purposeful extension of personal interest with a variety of options offered.

A more stimulating and challenging range of activities should be made available, integrating areas of the curriculum in a more meaningful way, with the practical life processes and experiences not being presented as examples of theoretical models, but as the core approach of teaching method with models and theory being explained from practical analyses. Stress should be placed on the real world situations and linkages between traditional subject areas being presented in a coneptual context so that the child is geared to an understanding of the local community, society at large, worldwide cultures and the meaning of life.

All children should be required to make a contribution to their community and hopefully an ongoing one, in a voluntary capacity. There is need of a change in emphasis in education so that more time is spent directly relating the system of training to the needs of the "world of work and leisure" of the individual, with appropriately selected industrial and commercial personnel being brought into schools and colleges on a part-time teaching basis and providing direct inputs both in schools and also in short term placements in industry.

The Manpower Services Commission has been established by Central Government due primarily, to the very slow progress made within the traditional and existing educational system, particularly schools, in adjusting to the needs of education within the present period of technological revolution. It is not, I believe, a failure of the Education Authority to respond to changing needs, but largely that of the grass roots practitioner in the form of the classroom teacher so often being bound by examination structures and syllabus requirements, and, at times, a disturbing lack of vision.

Whilst greater emphasis on a quality education and individual worth would be an encouraging development and it cannot be denied that one of the disappointing features of education in recent years has been the frequent evidence of student under-achievement and limited expectation of many students and teachers, efforts should be made to pursue a policy which should ensure the development of the whole child with the so called 'hidden curriculum' becoming accepted as a central issue in the school learning situation.

The personal, social and moral education of the child within the school and community is of the greatest significance and has only too often been overlooked or promoted by zealot social engineers who have destroyed, not enlarged, the educational opportunities of young people in their care. Great stress must be placed on the development of personal attitudes; the exercise of personal initiative, creativity and trust; the cultivating of tolerance and the ability to appreciate equally strongly held and often conflicting views of others; the nurturing of freedom of speech, together with the acceptance of fairness and justice, as these are all essential requisites within society.

Associated with the development of personal attitudes, beliefs and values, is the need for the consideration of the religious perspective in life. The education of the whole child must of itself ensure that the tripartite person is recognised and developed. There is much emphasis placed on the physical person through positive developments in the curriculum, with the broadening of Physical Educational opportunities, the progressive expansion of recreation and leisure pursuits, Outward Bound Courses, and the establishment of Sports Halls and community facilities generally. In the physical areas it is for those suffering from disability that action to increase opportunities is urgently necessary. Similarly the stress placed on the broadening of the mind and intellect of man has prospered and been nurtured, as it has been appreciated that the analysis of life situations in the real world and the importance of philosophy and ideas in the extending of the feelings and sensitivities of a whole person are important. What has rarely been understood and in some quarters not even recognised, is that the greatest need of all in the education of the whole person is the development of the 'spiritual man'. This is far more than the provision of an ethical and moral code of life as it is centred on the spiritual needs of every person, irrespective of physical or mental capacity. The spiritual qualities are present, if latent, in every being and their failure to develop, results in impoverishment, stress, unrest, and so often a vacuum and feeling of hopelessness, inadequacy and inability to cope, as against those who have developed a spiritual faith, belief and hope within themselves, thus accomplishing a fulfilment and a meaningfulness in life. In this area, education within the school system has lost its focus, and far too much emphasis is placed on the material and transient, leaving young people ignorant of the basis and meaning of life. Religious Education, required by the 1944 Education Act, but not fully offered by most schools, has been simplified and debased, leaving young people without a sense of peace, happiness, or purpose in life. The failures of society and of young people to cope with the requirements of life, are less the result of the schools' limitations in the education of the body and mind, than to the inability to provide for a real or personal commitment embracing the spiritual dimension.

In summary, Education needs to firm up on its objectives so that its goals are clear and purposeful, seeking always to enhance and enrich individual attainment and enjoyment and promote creativity and expertise, within a framework of a broad based education, offering a range of skills. Education needs to ensure a greater awareness of the needs of the community, society and the 'world of work and leisure'. The 'hidden curriculum' must be considered extremely important, as it concentrates on the development of personal, social, moral education and seeks to promote the education of the whole person. The physical and mind-extending processes within the field of education are being actively pursued, but there are profound limitations in developing the more crucial 'spiritual' capacity within young people proceeding through the system, with consequential disturbing effect on the child, the community and society at large.

Barry Wilson

Graeme Petersfield was an uneducated but genial man who, during the 1920s, worked as a toilet attendant in the then town of Leicester. He had been doing the job very well for a number of years and was asked one day by a superior if he minded painting the toilet, which, although not part of his official job, he agreed to do.

The paint, etc., was delivered and he duly went on to do the job very well indeed. On the final day, while tidying up the toilet, a man walked in and accidentally brushed against the wet paint. Angrily he tore a strip off poor Graeme and asked why he hadn't put up a sign saying 'WET PAINT', to which Graeme replied that he couldn't read or write and therefore was unable to do so.

Now the angry gent turned out to be a local councillor with considerable influence in the town. Consequently, Graeme was duly sacked from his job.

On walking home on the night he finally finished his job, he called in a newsagent's shop for his usual packet of Woodbines and was asked by the proprietor just why he was looking so downcast. After explaining his plight, the proprietor said he required a man to sell the local paper on Leicester Railway Station. The job didn't seem briliant and paid commission only, but was obviously better than being out of work and so Graeme accepted.

During the next few years he worked long and unusual hours but found business getting better week by week. In the late 1930s, in response to demand, he started selling other papers and magazines, and then opened a kiosk outside the station, which I am sure was still there some twenty years ago.

Apart from being a hard worker and good business man, he was also a religious man. One day, after a discussion with the local vicar about starting a boys' club, Graeme agreed to finance the venture to the tune of #300.

Now the vicar, not wanting to miss the opportunity for a little publicity, suggested they get the local newspaper to do a short story with a picture of Graeme handing over a cheque. This idea pleased Graeme immensely, but the only snag was that although being fairly well off, he had never thought of having a bank account. This was soon remedied by the vicar, who talked Graeme into seeing his own bank manager.

On discovering just how much money Graeme had made over the years, despite his total lack of education, the bank manager exclaimed: 'Good God, Mr Petersfield, whatever would you have been had you been able to read and write?' Graeme thought for a while and then replied: 'A Toilet Attendant, I suppose.'

Comments on Education

Colin Wilson
Writer

One of the most interesting comments on education was made by Gurdjieff's disciple, Ouspensky. Gurdjieff, of course, taught that ordinary human consciousness is a form of 'sleep', and that our problem is to galvanise ourselves into some form of 'wakefulness'. Ouspensky observed that when he taught Gurdjieff's ideas to his own pupils, it had the effect of making him more deeply conscious of what they meant. In other words, in educating them, he was educating himself. Ouspensky had stumbled on the basic insight that all real education is self-education.

I was struck by the same observation when I was in America lecturing in the 1960s. I would arrive in some strange town, and would be met by a car which would drive me to my hotel, then to the university. I would always try to observe the route taken by the driver in case I had to walk it on some subsequent occasion. But I soon noticed that the best method of learning the way from my hotel to the university was simply to walk it once. I learned more that way than being driven along the same route a dozen times. It also gave me a completely different 'feel' for the place. Until I'd actually walked around, it was somehow anonymous, like a dozen other towns. The moment I'd seen it on foot, it took on its own identity, like a person ...

It was interesting to observe that, no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't really get to 'know' the place while I was looking at it through the window of a car. Somehow, the detachment produced by being driven prevented me from giving it the kind of absorbed attention that came naturally when I was walking around.

Socrates made the same point in the Meno. He got hold of an intelligent slave who knew nothing about geometry, and by asking him the right questions, got him to reason out a number of Euclidean propositions. This, according to Plato, proves that human beings possess all 'knowledge' inside them, and the main problem is to get it out. In other words, the teacher is simply a kind of midwife.

This seems to me to be an important step in the right direction. What it fails to recognise is that the best of all midwives is the student himself. Knowledge that comes from other sources is usually mere information. In order to change that information into real knowledge, it needs to be backed up by that subconscious element of 'absorption', concern.

Tom Sawyer, you may recall, made the same discover when his aunt Polly ordered him to paint a fence. By whistling vigorously and looking as if he was thoroughly enjoying it, he conned half a dozen of his friends into offering him various bribes to allow them to use the paintbrush. Mark Twain remarked: 'Work is that which we are obliged to do. Play is that which we are not obliged to do.' We might paraphrase that and say: 'Bad education is a form of work. Good education is a form of play.'

Rabelais touched on the same idea in the first book of Gargantua. Gargantua displays his brilliant intelligence at the age of five in a discourse on the different methods of wiping his bum (he concludes, 'There is no arse wiper like a well-downed goose if you hold her neck between your legs.'), whereupon his father makes the mistake of having the boy educated by a typical pedant, Master Jobelin. The result, according to Rabelais, is that the boy becomes stupid, dreamy and doltish. So his father sacks Master Jobelin, and hires Ponocrates, whose idea of education is to get his pupils to do things that really interest them, which has the effect of making it stick.

So as long ago as 1540, Rabelais had already put his finger on the basic principle of education - to arouse the student's unconscious desire to educate himself. This principle is so universal that it applies not just to human beings but even to creatures without brains. In the 1960s, a couple of American zoologists called Rubinstein and Best performed an interesting experiment using planarion worms, a creature so simple that it has no brain or stomach or nervous system. The odd thing about planaria is that in spite of this, they appear to be able to learn. One of the odder things about planaria is that if you teach one flat worm (which is what they are) to avoid an electrified wire, then you chop it up and feed it to other flat worms, the other flat worms will now also avoid the electric wire - demonstrating that in this case, the learning somehow spreads throughout the whole body. This, it seems to me, is a good metaphor for the educational process.

But Rubinstein and Best learned something even more interesting and significant about flat worms. They performed an experiment which involved puting the flat worms in a plastic tube full of water. A tap at the bottom of the tube allowed them to drain off all the water. When this happened, the flat worms rushed off down the tube in great alarm - because they need water to live. Soon they would encounter a fork, one arm of which was lighted and the other of which wasn't. The water was down the lighted alley-way. In no time at all, the planaria had learned to move off down the tube when the water was drained away and make their way down the lighted alley-way, whether it was to the right or to the left.

Then a puzzling thing happened. The planaria began choosing the wrong alley-way. Then they did

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'.

John William Wood
Workers Education
Association Committee
Member and Electronic
Engineer

We are all familiar with current newspaper headlines - Educational Standards falling - Illiteracy on the increase - Teaching skills declining. The list is endless. So what exactly is education? What is an educated person? Why is there so much public concern? After all, schools and colleges have only been in existence for a relatively short time in terms of the history of mankind, and it should be possible for an individual to exist without a formal (conforming?) education. This has been so in the past but maybe times have changed. Maybe an individual does now need to be taught how to survive in society.

There exists a preoccupation on the part of potential employers that only individuals with 'proof of education' can be suitable for the job on offer. It is deemed essential now to have at least four educational pass certificates, to be even considered for the most mundane of jobs. Anyone who does not reach this basic standard of conformity is rapidly becoming unemployable and debarred from earning a living wage - vitally important if he wishes to be accepted by modern society. The government is playing this game now. Young people are, or will be, financially penalised if they don't, or are unable to take up places on government 'training' schemes. Training for what? It appears that we may be heading towards an 'elitist' society, what a disaster that would be.

I see 'education' in a different way. I do not accept that the formal educational certificates are proof of ability. I do not subscribe to that dogma. I should say at this stage that I have been through an established educational process. I have achieved 'O' level passes, I have served an engineering apprenticeship, and I have a nationally recognised qualification. All this has enabled me to take on my present job - which I enjoy immensely. However I am not so smug as to say that nobody else could do the job as well as myself.

My feeling is that to be educated means to be able to communicate, communication being a two-way process. It is one thing to be able to express one's point of view, even impose it on other people; there are many well-known individuals whose names spring to mind as being representative of this kind of person; but to be able to express one's own point of view and yet to be willing to hear and possibly accept the opinions of others requires the very special qualities of tolerance and understanding.

To achieve the kind of education that brings tolerance and understanding would require a complete review of the existing system. Recalling my own studies at school, I remember the very narrow and restricted curriculum that existed. For example, in English Literature I was expected to study 'set' books and plays, and to remember them so that I could answer questions in the examination at the end of the term. At no stage was I asked what I wanted to read. The net result of this is that I wasted most of my early formative years avoiding great literary works like the plague. It certainly did nothing to broaden my outlook.

It was quite a revelation to discover 'Adult Education' when I left school. Now here was the opportunity I needed. I was free to pick and choose the subjects I wanted to study - to think about topics in the way that I wanted to, ask questions if I needed to and disagree if I felt like it. What freedom! For once in my life, I felt I was being educated and at the same time so well aware of all the things I didn't know. I developed a particular yearning to learn other peoples' attitudes, the way other civilisations deal with their social problems, and so on. Comparative studies of any kind seemed to be the ones to follow. With this came a humility, an acceptance that I didn't know everything, and I feel I am wiser as a result.

Great Britain is one of the few countries in the world where an individual is still allowed to follow his own nose with regard to education. This freedom could come to an end if we don't fight for it. The strength of organisations like the W.E.A. must be reinforced if we are not to become a nation of blind followers and bigots. We must become communicators.

Anne D. Woodcock
Former Senior District
Health Education
Officer, Plymouth;
presently Scarborough

I have been avoiding writing this paper for six months because I did not want to 'knock' education in any way and yet I find after that period of time I have very little to say that is positive.

The current militant action concerns me, in that like many strikes its effects on the innocent victims are probably much greater than the results gained by the strikers. It also has the effect of making the teaching profession appear less caring in the eyes of many parents and their children.

Talking to one of my teacher colleagues a couple of weeks ago, she told me about a month spent in the wilds of Mexico where the children queued to touch her hand and to speak to her because she was that magical being, 'a teacher'. In western society teachers are no longer valued in this way; a headmaster complained to me that he tries to avoid giving his profession in social gatherings, because inevitably it attracts moans and groans, or in extreme cases, verbal abuse. I don't know if this is a normal response across the country but these sorts of comments from teachers are becoming increasingly more common as I visit schools and run in-service courses.

In the eight years since I left teaching this change in teacher morale and parental and pupil values about education seems to be getting lower and lower.

Young people don't see much point in getting educated since it doesn't guarantee them a job, but is that really what it's all about? Is education not valid for its own sake; is a bright, enquiring mind and an enthusiasm for knowledge no longer worth having? Where do we lose this feeling of joy in learning? Most infants and juniors seem to have such enthusiasm, so is it the system that deadens the joy - exam pressures, peer group pressures or just the tedium of routine?

My role in health education is much more joyful - for my 'pupils' are adults, mostly professionals and generally there from choice, but I still have a duty to lighten the tedium, create some fun and function as an enabler rather than a dictator. It's not easy, as most of our audiences come with expectations built on past experience, i.e. they expect to be lectured at, and some resent having to think or to react for themselves.

Funnily enough, trying to translate my methods back into secondary classrooms is proving tough as the young people are filled with so much antagonism towards adults and authority figures, they seem unable to relate at all, even when given some choice. I think it's the Masai who send their teenage boys off into the desert for a year or two to get rid of their aggression - perhaps our 'kids' need a break too!

It's amazing, the number of sixteen year olds who later say they wish they had worked in school, and yet how can they know what they need without any experience? Like 'Doubting Thomas', they need to see to believe, for why should they believe parents and teachers; so many of us have not achieved total satisfaction in our own lives. How many of us are stuck in jobs we dislike, or have little enthusiasm for, and how many have no job at all in spite of a reasonable standard of education?

I wish I could feel happier about the future of education in England, but with resources cut to the bone, low teacher morale, very little parental support for schools and children who do not want to learn, I'm not sure what the answers are. I do feel for my ex-colleagues, teaching is not a lot of fun these days, and I do feel for those parents and children who do care - there's not much for them to look forward to, unless we all stop fighting amongst ourselves and start fighting together to create a fairer system for all. But most of all, I wish we could rekindle that joy in learning for its own sake.

John Dixson Woodfield
Former Headmaster
Carbeile County Primary
School, Torpoint, Cornwall

"I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand." I first heard this more than twenty years ago and have not forgotten, which just goes to suggest that those who take educational statements too literally may be apt to get it wrong. Of course it has stuck in my mind because it is largely true. But as a practical educational philosophy in a state school with between thirty and forty pupils to a teacher, and of mixes ages and abilities more often than not, taken literally it is a non-starter. Much of what children learn in school has to be learned by listening, if only because by no stretch of the imagination is it possible for them to learn everything by doing. It follows immediately that the fundamental background requirement for any classroom for at least a significant part of the day is a quietly ordered but stimulating environment in which individuals can both work comfortably, and, when necessary, hear the teacher. How frequently these days is this gentle norm rudely shattered. It is not surprising. Society generally has lost or abandoned much of its order. It would be remarkable indeed if this were not reflected in the behaviour of children in school. Even reasonable sanctions are now frequently regarded by some as 'harassment', the most gentle of reproving slaps a 'beating'. Schools are being urged constantly to re-examine what they teach and how they teach it - reasonable enough in so far as from time to time in a changing world such an exercise is necessary. But one hopes that this mania for self-examination, urged on teachers more often than not by those not engaged in classroom teaching, will not lead eventually to a national core curriculum using only 'approved' methods. The great strength of the English state system, for so long the envy of the world, was that it brought immense variety, both of curriculum content and method. Learning is a very personal business and so too is teaching. If the system is to continue to flourish both these fundamental truths must be fully realised by teachers and administrators alike, and sufficient freedom given to the practitioners at the 'sharp end' fully to use their unique and personal gifts in their own unique and personal way - always granted, of course, that the children are learning profitably and happy in the process.

It is a personal view, but I would argue that it is not so much what is learnt at the primary stage, always provided it is wholesome, but the attitudes to learning that are picked up on the way. Ideally the Junior child should leave his school eager to learn more, secure in the knowledge that he has the fundamental skills necessary to do so.

The task of the schools has not been made easier in recent years, either by the cuts in expenditure or by the frequent and in many cases unjustifiable assaults on the competence and suitability of those chosen and trained to teach. It is a thick- skinned teacher who is not nowadays constantly looking over his shoulder to see where the next attack is coming from. If the past few years are anything to go by, he will be pretty certain it will be from the Government, who by edict, interference and punitive penny pinching has done so much to lower the morale of those in state schools in recent times. Of course Local Government has been under attack as well, and this too has had a detrimental spin-off in the schools. Authorities where hitherto education officers and teachers had worked hand in hand making the best use of reasonable resources now find the two partners increasingly at loggerheads. When officers are being hounded by cost conscious County Councillors and ordered about by politicians in Whitehall, they clearly feel they can no longer afford the same degree of consultation with their colleagues in the schools. It is a grave mistake - the need to work together was never more vital than in these difficult times.

Today's children will not be children tomorrow. Their chance is now. They cannot wait for better times, for a more favourable G.N.P., for an upturn in the economy. It is bitter irony that those on whom we shall all depend in years to come are being deprived of the necessary resources so vital to their education and welfare. How can one teacher adequately cope with the educational needs of 39 children in a class of mixed ages and abilities? Such iniquitous conditions are still to be found in spite of the recommendations of H.M.I. years ago that classes containing children of mixed ages should not number more than 24.

We who have been privileged to serve in state schools in the post war years and who have witnessed and helped to bring to fruition the great vision of R.A. Butler's 1944 Education Act can now only hope that in years to come the new young generation of teachers will not have to witness the system's continuing decline. The ones I have met have impressed me greatly. Children are still chidren, as ever. Their parents want the best for them. In a democratic society it is the parents who have the power to change the attitudes of Governments. Is it therefore unreasonable yet to hope for better things?

Colin Woodman
Teacher of History,
Notre Dame
Comprehensive

When asked to select a book that had influenced me I chose T.S. Eliot's selection from Rudyard Kipling's verse, letting this volume represent his works in general. I chose Kipling because of the way he expresses a regard for the individual value and responsibility of men and women going about their daily tasks, for the virtues which he praises and for his sense of the past pervading the present.

It is easy to parody "You're a better man than I am Gunga Din", or to see the triteness of "The Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under the skin", but these are the uncomfortable themes of human value that run through his work. The mutual respect of the 2 scholars, one a mendicant Tibetan lama and the other the European curator, meeting in the Wonder House at Lahore, is a theme repeated again and again. An individual's worth is not measured by race, social status or wealth, but by what he does. "Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made by singing 'Oh, how beautiful!' and sitting in the shade, while better men than we go out and start their working lives at grubbing weeds from gravel paths with broken dinner knives." Tomlinson, living in Berkeley Square, is condemned because he has done nothing positively good and even his evil is another's responsibility, but he must learn that "the sin they do by two and two they must pay for one by one." "If" succinctly gives a code of conduct for the individual who is to live on his own terms, doing what he perceives as right and not what everyone else is doing, "being lied about, don't deal in lies, or being hated don't give way to hating; ... meet with Triumph and Disaster and treat those two impostors just the same." In the wider context of the British Empire he does not preach white superiority. He does indeed assume the existence of that superiority and preaches the responsibility that goes with that fact. "Take up the white man's burden" - it is a duty because the white man has the technical ability to "go, bid the famine cease", to check pestilence and provide the basis for civilised government. And what are the rewards to be expected from this? Not gratitude but "the blame of those ye better, the hate of those ye guard". Certainly not earthly glory. "The tumult and the shouting dies: The captains and the kings depart: Still stands thine ancient sacrifice, An humble and a contrite heart. Lord God of Hosts be with us yet, Lest we forget - lest we forget!"

What has all this to do with education? Simply that Kipling expresses some of the ideas about human conduct that I believe are valuable. Does this mean that I see the teacher's role as that of an indoctrinator? I think not. My aims are humbler. I am in the position of someone who has something of value and would like to share it. There is no fundamental difference from the dinghy-sailer (or the hill-walker or the cyclist) who encourages others to try his activity because of the enhanced enjoyment of life that he believes it may bring to the participant. The enthusiast cannot demand or enforce participation and he cannot guarantee success or enjoyment but he is still eager to offer the chance.

The teacher, however, can demand (and can try to enforce) participation in the formal subject that he claims to teach. In my case, this is History. It would be possible to produce a high flown statement on the philosophy of History, but I find that this breaks down before what I call the "Hooper factor". (See the Prologue to Evelyn Waugh's "Brideshead Revisited".) Don't just refer to 'children' or 'students', but think of a particular name. It may be that Tracy is a potential Professor of History but there is also Mary Anne, who is going to assemble TV sets and raise a happy family. For both, I would say that a knowledge of the past is a requisite for the understanding of the present, that it is a necessary part of self awareness and that is an object of education. I would hope also that both would be aware that the past can be used to prove anything or nothing; that the selection of evidence can be as bad as the falsification of it; that - for example - arms races, appeasement, alliance systems and non-alignment can all be shown to have led to or to have prevented war; that there are no easy answers.

To return to the idea of the teacher as an enthusiast who wishes to share. In the contemporary world of supply and demand economics, it is here that he becomes his own enemy. He wants to teach. If he is ill-paid, it is hard to "work to rule", since that prevents him teaching as effectively as possible; if a parsimonious employer will not provide adequate resources, he improvises or even provides them out of his own pocket; and he continues to do all this while a society lacking in parental responsibility makes his task increasingly difficult. It is no wonder that fears are expressed that the teachers' enthusiasm is going to be lost and that education will suffer irreparable loss. I hope it will not, and I believe it will not. There will be a continuing cost in nervous breakdowns (in my personal experience they seem to be running at 2% a year), and in defensive cynicism, but we will survive because we believe in ourselves. Perhaps those lines are an appropriate conclusion:

"If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,

And stoop and build them up with worn out tools."
If we can do that, perhaps we can survive Sir Keith Joseph and all he stands for.

Thoughts on Education

H.W. Worrall
Headmaster,
Devonport County
Secondary School

"If wishes were horses beggars would ride." This seems an appropriate slogan when considering the present state of education. Schools are expected to find a cure for many current social problems or, conversely, if considered to be showing some forms of liberal approach, are accused of being the cause of such things as delinquency, permissiveness, vandalism and the general lowering of standards.

I suppose because everyone has had some experience of school, usually as a pupil, it is not surprising that often teachers are subjected to a whole variety of directives and guidance. How many other professions receive the degree of advice and criticism as that handed to the teaching profession? Of course the work of the schools should be monitored and parents given the maximum encouragement to be involved in their children's education, but in the final analysis, the responsibility must rest on the professional decisions of the staff of the school. Obviously they may not be always right, but in my experience decisions are made with the welfare of the pupils as the main consideration and this is the dominant factor affecting the actions of virtually all teachers.

There also seems to be much wishful thinking behind many suggestions made about what we should be teaching. These include such things as information technology, computer studies, world studies, political studies and many others. Without doubt all are worthwhile, but such suggestions are rarely backed by positive action to supply the necessary resources, particularly in expensive hardware, and the teachers who have either the knowledge or commitment. Of course, the easy answer often given is that the new subject should be related to or supplement existing courses. This is a ploy which is rarely successful. Perhaps a more pertinent question is, what do we leave out? It is easy to suggest additions to a curriculum but, if something is added to a timetable, inevitably something must be dropped. On one hand we are often harangued for the poor standard of numeracy and literacy and demands for greater emphasis in these areas yet, at the same time, we are told how essential it is to widen the curriculum.

What can be dropped? Virtually all the work in the secondary sector, whether we like it or not, is influenced by the demands of external examinations. Professionally we may wish for a wider curriculum but as far as the general public is concerned, too often the prime yardstick for measuring a school's success is the results of its external examinations. This is what I regard as schools being in the market place.

Of course parents should want to know what examinations are available and what results are achieved, but surely five years' education in the secondary sector should be more than the sum total of examination results.

Unfortunately far too often the progress of remedial pupils, the surprising achievements of pupils of average or lower ability is not given the credit it deserves. Originally the Certificate of Secondary Education was introduced to cater for the average and lower pupils and a grade four pass was to be the optimum level for this group of youngsters. What in fact has happened is that in an attempt to give it status it has become yet another external examintion striving for parity with the 'O' level.

Many of the original ideas of the C.S.E. have been lost in this scramble for status.

Of course it is essential that every child is encouraged to achieve their maximum potential, but I sometimes wonder how much is lost in overall education achievement when youngsters are subjected to the pressures of examination syllabus and the best they can expect to obtain is the lower grades of 4 or 5.

Many of these pupils are splendid, hard working youngsters but are simply limited in academic ability. By the criteria of examinations, it is easy to regard them as failures. Fortunately there is an increasing tendency for employers to look further than solely examination results and often ask searching questions about such things as character, determination, loyalty, honesty and reliability. In this situation, many average and below average youngsters come out very well indeed. The concept of overall assessment is becoming more widely accepted and it now seems likely that there will be some form of standard method of recording personal achievement.

Of course, it will be necessary for this system to be accepted by all employers, otherwise it becomes yet another way of identifying a youngster who may be considered a failure because of the lack of success in academic work.

I believe in the principle of equal value. Providing a youngster is working to the maximum of his ability then he has to be given credit for this achievement. The old cliche in school reports, "Could do better," is sometimes unfair to a youngster who has really worked hard and it can cause unnecessary concern to him or his parents.

On the whole, the able child is well catered for and we are very conscious of the needs of remedial pupils, yet in the middle lies the vast majority of the school's population and they, sometimes, seem to be

ignored. We acknowledge the gifted youngster and we are aware of the trouble maker, yet again it is so easy to miss or ignore the conscientious, average pupils.

It is to this group that such things as continuous assessment will be of greatest value. We must also be able to view these youngsters in a wider concept than pure academic work, for example in areas such as Art and Music. In the inner city areas, there must be many youngsters who have a great deal of innate ability in such subjects, but it will never be developed. Whereas the child from the middle class home is very likely to receive private tuition and additional help, many inner city children, by the very nature of their environment, are denied such opportunties. If we genuinely believe in the equal value of all children, then it is in these sort of areas we should be giving additional help. It is very pleasant to send peripatetic teachers into schools where pupils already receive private tuition, but it is in the less fortunate areas that these resources should be concentrated. Who knows what gifted youngster may be produced?

This may seem to be stating the obvious, but it is well to remember that it was not so very long ago that there was a marked difference in the capitation allowance made to grammar schools and those in the non-selective area. This, of course, could never be equated with the concept of equal value, but, unfortunately, if pure academic ability and achievement is to be the yardstick of success, such anomalies could quite easily appear again.

Professor E.C.Wragg
B.A.;M.Ed.;Ph.D.
Director of School
of Education,
Exeter University

There is a recurring daydream that I suspect most of us enjoy from time to time. We suddenly find ourselves put in complete charge of education with absolute power over what is taught. Alarmed at all those newsreel shots of demonstrators hurling rotten eggs and squashed tomatoes at politicians and missing by a mile, I find my favourite fantasy is to make cricket and rounders compulsory. It is the only way of improving the nation's aim.

However, what always makes me press the ejector seat on this particular Walter Mitty indulgence, and return to teaching my group, chairing the meeting, or whichever other reality I have temporarily escaped from, is the sheer responsibility of being such a one person El Supremo. Moreover, the tradition in education in this country is that no single individual should be alllowed to exercise such awesome power.

Some of the most interesting discussions about control over the curriculum took place during parliamentary debates of the 1944 Education Act. Several MPs had very clear ideas about what they would prescribe for children given half a chance. One demanded something a lot more lethal than squashed tomatoes: "Is it to be obligatory to give teaching and training to young people on the composition and duties of the Armed Forces of the Crown ... will this instruction also include training on a miniature rifle range?"

Fortunately, the architect of the remarkable 1944 Act was R.A. Butler, and his reply to some of these wilder demands for compulsory this and that was a wise counsel against any would-be Crazy Horse, whether a minister or a local director, being allowed to impose his will.

His words are worth noting, for they have acted for nearly 40 years as an unseen guideline to those in power: "It has been felt that, in certain areas, there is a danger that the Secretary, or director of education, may fancy himself in certain subjects, or in some branch of study, and by an obiter dictum, try to direct the secular instruction of that school more, as he would say, according to the wishes of the authority. That sort of interference with the individual life of the school is undesirable."

Indeed Churchill too recognised the dangers, and Butler tells in his engaging autobiography The Art of the Possible of a conversation between the two of them when Churchill asked him to introduce more patriotism into schools: "'Tell the children that Wolfe won Quebec', I said that I would like to influence what was taught in schools but that this was always frowned upon. Here he looked very earnest and commented, 'of course not by instruction or order but by suggestion'."

All of which makes very sinister indeed the ham-fisted attempts of Sir Monty Python (65), a Westminster pensioner, and one or two of his ministerial buddies to control the nation's thoughts by proscription. The culling of advisory bodies has also served to funnel more personal power to national political leaders. Examples of direct interference are mounting up ever more rapidly, and have been well-documented in The TES during the last two years.

Recently we have seen Sir Monty's forbidding of questions on the social consequences of science, such as pollution or nuclear power, in 16-plus exam syllabuses. He has also invaded teacher training, tried to prescribe single subject specialism for primary and secondary teachers, and stop graduates in certain subjects from training at all.

The Manpower Services Commission has blocked social and politial education which might touch on themes like unemployment, and indeed drama proposals to the MSC have been subjected to similar scrutiny. That imaginative curriculum developer Norman Tebbit, would-be proprietor of the Norm Academies, interfered in a school's role play exercise which was exploring cultural differences, and Rhodes Boyson has held back sex education proposals first at the DES and subsequently at the DHSS. Opponents of sex education seem afraid that pupils may go out and practise what they have learned, but since school lessons often have the exact opposite effect, sex education classes may turn out to be the best form of birth control since the dawn of the human race.

What on earth, one speculates, would a ministerial-inspired curriculum look like? A new series of primary school readers Monty, Rhodes and Norm find Treasure or, for older pupils, Monty, Rhodes and Norm meet Dracula (Dracula lost in extra time) might have humorous appeal. Or what about the BBC scrapping the long- running radio programme Singing Together in favour of SingalongaMonty? Indeed, now that some schools radio broadcasts are put out at night why not a series of his speeches under the title Monty's Greatest Hits? Since some two million insomniacs are said to eavesdrop on night-time transmissions, the BBC has a real chance not merely to entertain and educate them, but to cure them.

Through much of this century we have developed an unenviable tradition of localism, whereby schools are encouraged to work out their curriculum, cooperatively under the supervision of their local authority and with occasional guidance and advice from the DES. It is bizarre that the first individual threat to this precious

freedom should come not from a brilliantly inspired curriculum developer, nor from some greatly experienced and esteemed educator, but rather from the potty out-of-touch fantasies of a powerful patrician pensioner.

If there is one topic which animates everyone, professional or lay person, it is the issue of what to do about bad teachers. Every parent whose child has been the recipient of inept teaching knows what it is like to long for the end of the year, and the possibility of a fresh start with someone else.

You can recognise heads with a bad teacher on the staff, because their knees are worn flat through perpetual prayer for a lucky pools win or a highly selective outbreak of bubonic plague. Furthermore, incompetents embarrass fellow teachers who have to share flak aimed at the school even if they themselves are innocent.

Each year I ask my group of graduates training to be teachers why they chose the subject they studied at university. Within seconds, they are talking not about the subject but about one or more gifted teachers they had when they were at school. I then ask them which subjects they disliked and, obversely, the stories of a poor teacher begin to flow. Even the talented are repelled by incompetence, and average and below average children do not stand a chance.

I was glad, therefore, to hear that no less a person than Oliver Letwin, the Prime Minister's 27-year-old ex-Etonian apprentice expert adviser on education, was interested in the subject. During one visit to a teacher training institution young Olly asked why they offered courses for really bad teachers, and I think the lad has a point. So much so that I propose to found a new institution specially for hopeless teachers which, in honour of the source of this inspiration, will be called Olly's Academy.

We shall offer workshops on how to hold the chalk, lectures on the psychology, sociology and philosophy of completing school registers, and teachers who, by the end of the course, have become even worse will receive an MEd in Unspeakably Bad Teaching. Those willing to spend three years becoming incompetent in an original way might even be given a PhD.

Selection for the academy must be rigorous, so we have devised an entrance exam known as the Olly Academy Multiphasic Incompetence Inventory. Score ten points every time you tick answer A, five points for each B, and no points for item C ...

*Would you describe your clothing and appearance when you arrive at school as resembling:
A Prince Charles/Princess Diana
B Magnus Pyke/Shirley Williams
C Cro-Magnon Man/woman

*The head asks to look at your lesson plans for next week. Do you reply:
A "Certainly, your Highness, you will find them written in neat italic script on pages 62-93 of my leather-bound volume of lesson plans."
B "I have prepared them, but I'm afraid the dog chewed them up last night."
C "If I wanted to be a window-dresser, I'd be working in Debenhams."

*The deputy head asks you to cover the class of a colleague who is away on a course. Is your response:
A "Most certainly, I will do all I can to help the school and the professional development of a conscientious colleague."
B "Unfortunately, I am about to join any action currently taking industrial action over cover for absent teachers."
C "If you got off your rear-end for once and took the class yourself, sunbeam, it might cure your bed-sores."

*Would you describe your spelling on the blackboard as:
A Generally excellent.
B Prone to error.
C Pritty acurate on most ocassions.

*The school gives a concert and prize-giving. Do you:
A Give your total attention throughout the proceedings.
B Yawn from time to time and glance at your watch.
C Sit on the platform breaking wind and calling out "Rhubarb" during the head's report.

*During registration each morning you:
A Mark those present neatly in blue and absences in red.
B Mark as present those you like and absent those you dislike.
C Have lost your register.

*At the end of afternoon school do you:
A Volunteer to take a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
B Slump into a chair in the staff room.
C Break your own British All-comers sprint record down the drive.

*For your personal and professional development during vacations would you prefer to:
A Listen to Mahler and read Proust.
B Attend an in-service course.

C Take a job as a bookie's runner.

*After school one day a wealthy father tries to bribe you to give his son a high mark in the end of year exams, do you reply:

A "How dare you sir. I shall have to report this incident to the chairman of governors."
B "I'm not sure whether the Burnham Committee allows this."
C "Make it a ton in used fivers in a brown sealed envelope and you've got yourself a deal, squire."

*During a parents' evening a mother tells you that she is worried about her daughter's slow progress. Is your response:

A "Never fear Mrs Gribley, I shall give your Maureen as much personal help as I can".
B "Luckily she's only as far behind as the rest of my class, but I'm thinking of early retirement."
C "If you want to know why your daughter is as thick as a marshmallow, madam, try looking in the nearest mirror."

Scores

75-100: You are too good to be true. You must spend a week at Olly's Academy.
25-70: You need a term at Olly's Academy to iron out your defects.
5-20: You are so bad you must spend the rest of the decade at Olly's Academy.
0: Congratulations. It takes one to know one, so you are hereby appointed the first principal of Olly's Academy at a group 14 salary.

Education - A Fantasy

John Wright, M.A.
Area Education Officer
West Devon

To a boy of enquiring mind it is a puzzle to grow up around the Wash. From the clay ridges the land has been drained, inland to the fen and seaward to the marsh, and as the peat has shrunk so the drains are left to stand over the fields. There is a smell of guano and decaying brassica, and an overwhelming illusion of water flowing upwards towards the sea.

It was, in short, a land in which it was natural for a boy to ask his mother to tell him what is the shape of the earth and understandable for his mother to reply simply that she supposed that the earth was, well, earth-shaped.

Now the village schools of that time were in some ways remarkably, if unknowingly, progressive. When Teacher marched Standard IV to inspect the crater left in a neighbouring field by a Zeppelin's bomb and duly recorded the object lessons as gravity and patriotism, she could not have known that her successors would squeak enthusiastically of the environment and relevance. She could, however, recall the traditions of rigorous inspection, the catechism and payment by results and knew that no good might come from elliptical, but nonconformist, answers.

It was, therefore, with the aid of an ebony ruler that the boy learned that the earth was round.

A scholarship boy from a humble family could not, of course, understand completely the changing world of the grammar school as masters who had been temporary gentlemen exchanged the mess for the common room and their dedication to the classics for an appreciation of that science of which she had recently had such a prolonged and emphatic demonstration. He could, however, understand the universal basis of the grammar school curriculum, namely the conviction that all previously acquired knowledge was not merely defective but a positive hindrance to the proper understanding and love of learning.

It was, therefore, almost unnecessary to reinforce with the tightly-knotted corner of a gown the evident truth that the earth was a sphere.

All printed references to the Headmaster were followed by the parenthesis "(Sometime Scholar of ...)" and the panelled walls of the school contained the names only of the scholar, the exhibitioner and the head - with only the first being the occasion of a half-holiday. Aspirations are conditioned by environment and reproduction is for the schoolmaster a social as well as a biological requirement. And so the boy came to the third year of the sixth form and, like those who went before and came after, heard the three cheerful examples with which the Headmaster illustrated that a gentleman was a man who used words correctly. He learned how it was unforgiveable to be a homosexual, but not to pronounce the word as if it had a Latin rather than a Greek root and how a gentleman might urge a girl to expect matrimony but not to anticipate it.

He also learned that the earth was an oblate spheroid.

And so to Cambridge, where he read Geography, wrote long essays, the first and last paragraphs of which were sometimes read by the more diligent tutors, was protected from Apostles by his sense of the moral and from politics by his sense of the absurd. He was also told, privately, secretly and by three separate dons, of the fundamental work with which each had preempted their rivals' exposure of the theory of the oblate geoid.

The principal qualifications for a First and a career as an Education Officer being a good memory and a simple faith in current doctrines, the boy duly achieved both. He became a distinguished representative of a distinguished generation - a man who understood both the opportunities of the Act and its careful balance of powers; became a change of kind and whose genial contempt for small-town solicitors created a happy immunity from the excesses of corporate management. Like most busy men he was, however, more concerned with the practice than the philosophy of his profession and it was many years later, in checking whether he was entirely accurate in describing Circular 10/65 as gibberish, that he chanced on a page of the office dictionary which perhaps revealed the nature of education to him as truly as it defined the word "geoid" for others.

For there he read:

"Geoid - earth shaped."