

# Curriculum and the Teacher

35 years of the *Cambridge Journal of Education*

*Edited by*  
**Nigel Norris**

# Curriculum and the Teacher

Even though the curriculum can be tightly specified and controlled by strong accountability mechanisms, it is teachers who decisively shape the educational experiences of children and young people at school.

Bringing together seminal papers from the *Cambridge Journal of Education* around the theme of curriculum and the teacher, this book explores the changing conceptions of curriculum and teaching and the changing role of the teacher in curriculum development and delivery.

This book is organised around three major themes:

- Taking its lead from Lawrence Stenhouse, Part I looks at ‘defining the curriculum problem’ from a variety of perspectives and includes papers from some of the most influential curriculum theorists over the last thirty years.
- Part II explores the framing of new orders of educational experience. It has papers from leading educational thinkers who have contributed to debates about how to make education more inclusive, humane, liberating, creative and educational.
- Part III is focused on teachers and teaching. It offers a selection of papers from significant scholars in the field reflecting on the experience of teaching and how it is personally as well as socially constructed and theorised.

The papers are drawn from important and eventful periods of educational history spanning the curriculum reform movement of the 1960s and 1970s to the present age of surveillance, accountability and control. A specially written Introduction contextualises the papers.

Part of the Routledge Education Heritage series, *Curriculum and the Teacher* presents landmark texts from the *Cambridge Journal of Education*, offering a wealth of material for students and researchers in education.

**Nigel Norris** is Professor of Education at the Centre for Applied Research in Education, University of East Anglia, Norwich. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the *Cambridge Journal of Education*.

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## Preface and acknowledgements

In making the selection for this collection from the *Cambridge Journal of Education* I tried to follow three selection criteria. First, papers should be of enduring interest and relevance to national and international audiences. Second, papers should reflect the development, character and strengths of the journal over the years. Third, to provide some measure of coherence to the book, I thought the papers should cluster around specific themes. There are, of course, other thematic collections that could be published from the volumes of the *Cambridge Journal of Education* and other stories that could be told about education. The theme that emerged while I was sifting and sorting through the back issues was *curriculum and the teacher*. Editors past and present helped to direct my attention to particular papers that warranted inclusion in what rapidly became an overcrowded long-list from which I made the final cut. I am especially grateful to Les Tickle, Mary Jane Drummond, David Bridges, John Elliott, Terry Haydn and Anne Chippindale. I am also immensely grateful to my wife, Jill Robinson, for her support and advice. Most probably I have missed important papers that merited a place and inevitably there are a large number of papers that could have been included but didn't make it for one reason or another – the fault is all mine. I have very much enjoyed assembling this collection and doing the background research for the introductory chapter. In conclusion I would like to thank my fellow editors from the Journal for giving me the chance to bring together this collection and learn so much from doing so.

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June 2007

# Introduction

## Curriculum and the teacher

*Nigel Norris*

### **Beginnings and preoccupations**

In what follows I have tried to give a flavour of the times and the social and intellectual context in which the papers presented in this collection were written. In doing so I have drawn on the papers themselves, other papers from the Journal and other contemporary texts and historical commentaries. There are many educational topics and controversies that have fuelled the *Cambridge Journal of Education* over the past thirty-five years, but three related and recurring themes seem to have predominated: the curriculum, the teacher and change. In the first article to be published in the Journal Alex Evans noted that 'we live in an age in which change, not stability is the norm'.<sup>1</sup> Unsurprisingly this was a theme that was to reverberate across the volumes of the Journal since its inception.

The original ambition of the Journal was

to become the medium for a serious and developing discussion on questions of general educational interest, on problems more specifically to do with the professional education of teachers, and on issues arising out of the concerns of those working in this field in the Cambridge area.<sup>2</sup>

As it transpired two groups were influential in shaping the early years of the Journal. The first was a group of philosophers of education, working at the Cambridge Institute of Education and Homerton College who were influenced by Richard Peters at the Institute of Education, London University. They included David Bridges, who was the editor,<sup>3</sup> Hugh Sockett, Charles Bailey, Peter Scrimshaw, John Elliott and Richard Pring. The second group were the Humanities Curriculum Project (HCP) team, who were originally based at Phillippa Fawcett College, London, but had moved to the University of East Anglia in 1970 to form the Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE). This group comprised Lawrence Stenhouse who was the director of HCP and CARE, Barry MacDonald, Jean Rudduck and also John Elliott, who was a member of both groups. Although it has had special issues focused on particular topics and themes, the Journal has retained its generalist character, making it a rich repository of educational history and record of continuity and change.

In his 1978 Wood Memorial Lecture at Hughes Hall, Cambridge, Sir Toby

Weaver, formerly Deputy Secretary at the Department of Education and Science, divided the previous forty years of educational history into four identifiable stages: the age of stagnation and disruption lasting roughly from 1936 to 1946; the age of make do and mend, lasting from 1946 to 1956; the age of expansion, from 1956 to 1972; followed by the age of uncertainty.<sup>4</sup> The first issue of the *Cambridge Journal of Education* was published in the Lent term of 1971. It was a child of the age of expansion, significantly shaped by those times.

By 1971 curriculum reform was sufficiently well established to be called a movement. The pressure for curriculum reform stemmed from renewed concerns about curriculum obsolescence, especially in those subjects that were thought to be crucial to the scientific and technological development needed to sustain economic growth and national security. There were also concerns about the relevance of the curriculum for all children, especially those who would have to stay on at school until the age of sixteen.<sup>5</sup> Another spur to change was a growing awareness that schooling largely reproduced the social order, coupled with a growing conviction that education could be a potent force against poverty and cycles of deprivation. There was too something forward looking, optimistic, experimental and exciting about the times that gave licence and impetus to break with educational tradition. Modernisation was a powerful political rhetoric.

In *The Future of Socialism* (1956) Crosland had written about the divisive, unjust, unequal and wasteful nature of schooling in Britain, arguing that it denied even limited equal opportunities.<sup>6</sup> Crosland took up office at the Department of Education and Science (DES) in January 1965, at a time when education was seen as a political backwater or worse a graveyard. Christopher Price, his Parliamentary Private Secretary, recalled how Crosland arrived at the job by accident.<sup>7</sup> A reshuffle caused by Patrick Gordon Walker's failure to win the Leyton by-election and get back into Parliament led to a vacancy in Education. The post was first offered to Roy Jenkins, but he turned it down.<sup>8</sup> The waste that Crosland had written about was well documented in a 1954 report from the Central Advisory Council for Education on *Early Leaving*.<sup>9</sup> It was also a subject of attention in the growing field of the sociology of education. In their analysis of secondary schools and the supply of labour, Jean Floud and Chelly Halsey, for example, described the complex interactions between family background and educational opportunities and outcomes. They argued that selection at 11+ and segregation into separate schools was educationally and vocationally undesirable.<sup>10</sup> Crosland was a supporter of comprehensive education and a vehement opponent of grammar schools.<sup>11</sup> Halsey became one of his personal advisors.

In primary education progressive theory and practice found endorsement in the publication of *Children and their Primary Schools*. This was the last report from the Central Advisory Council for Education<sup>12</sup> which was reconstituted in October 1963 and chaired by Bridget Plowden. She reported to Tony Crosland in November 1966, the report being published in January 1967. Brian Simon noted that the report 'received a warm welcome right across the board – in the newspapers, the educational press and on television'.<sup>13</sup> Maurice Kogan, who was Secretary to the Plowden Committee, says the report assumed that:

education best began by generating pupil motivation within an informal but firm relationship established by the teachers and by eschewing a teacher dominated curriculum. This view was well nourished by the practitioner evidence reaching the Committee but also fell in well with the developmental theories contained in the second chapter of the Report.<sup>14</sup>

The Plowden Report became a major point of reference in primary education and set the tenor for thinking about the education and care of young children. Interestingly, given the contemporary emphasis on integrated services for children and young people, Plowden considered the health and social services provision for children and recommended closer co-operation between family doctors, school and public health services and hospitals as well as closer collaboration between social workers and health professionals. Among other things the Plowden Report proposed a national policy of positive discrimination favouring schools in neighbourhoods where children were most 'severely handicapped by home conditions'. It recommended that the Department of Education formally designate those schools and areas in most need as 'educational priority areas' and that research should be started to discover which of the developments in these areas had the most constructive effects.<sup>15</sup> Commenting on the Plowden Report, Halsey wrote that it seemed at the time to be 'a welcome push in the direction of solving the central problem of educational inequality through its concern with the mainstream of state-provided schools for the vast majority'.<sup>16</sup> He recalled that Crosland was sceptically enthusiastic about the idea of action research in Educational Priority Areas.<sup>17</sup>

In secondary education two organisations were especially influential in shaping curriculum reform: the Nuffield Foundation and the Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations. It was the Nuffield Foundation's Science Teaching Project that created the template for curriculum change. The project was set up in 1962 and was to be designed 'for teachers by teachers'.<sup>18</sup> According to Mary Waring the model for curriculum development was akin to action research,

The new approach, defined and exemplified in draft materials by the central team, would be tested in schools, following careful briefing of teachers to ensure understanding of the ethos. Feedback from trials could then be used to modify, replace and generally improve the materials before publication. Trials would also make possible the use of materials in a variety of classrooms with teachers of varying degrees of experience and expertise, and so provide further information as to the overall feasibility of the materials as a set of resources 'on offer' to teachers. They would also mean that a large number of teachers other than team members would be involved from a very early stage.<sup>19</sup>

The Schools Council was established in October 1964, in the heyday of the 'swinging sixties'. It was the brain-child of Derek Morrell and recommended by the Lockwood report. It was closed in 1984 by Sir Keith Joseph,<sup>20</sup> heralding a step closer to the central control of education suggested by the Orwellian year of the Council's demise.<sup>21</sup>

In a report on its first year's work the Council acknowledged the lead that had been given to curriculum development by the Nuffield Foundation in science, mathematics and foreign languages.<sup>22</sup> The Council's *Working Paper No. 2* published in 1965 outlined the beginning of a five year programme of research, enquiry and development in anticipation of the raising of the school leaving age to sixteen.<sup>23</sup> *Working Paper No. 11* published in 1967 in collaboration with the Nuffield Foundation focused on society and the young school leaver and considered a humanities programme in preparation for raising the school leaving age. *Working Paper No. 11* was the result of an inquiry commissioned by the Nuffield Foundation and directed by Michael Schofield, a sociologist who had recently completed a survey on the sexual behaviour of young people. Schofield's inquiry began in the autumn of 1965 and explored the achievements and needs of schools in teaching humanities and social studies. In his report Schofield suggested that local development groups should be established to discuss and try out ideas for improving teaching in the humanities. He also argued that a central team, of the kind made familiar by the Nuffield projects, would be vital to support local development groups, not least by preparing and disseminating teaching and learning materials.<sup>24</sup> *Working Papers No. 2* and *No. 11* provided the background and justification for setting up the Humanities Curriculum Project. *Working Paper No. 2* defined the problem of the humanities as giving all young people some access to a complex cultural inheritance, some hold on their personal life and on relationships with the various communities to which they belonged and some extension of their understanding of, and sensitivity towards, other people. The aim was to forward understanding, discrimination and judgement in the human field (para. 60).

### Defining the curriculum problem

From his appointment as Director of the Humanities Curriculum Project<sup>25</sup> to his tragically premature death in 1982, Lawrence Stenhouse was one of the most influential and at times controversial curriculum theorists. There were five features that made the Humanities Curriculum Project especially significant and influential. First the HCP team produced an innovative definition of the humanities curriculum and the educational issues it posed for the teacher. They defined humanities as the study of important human issues and the aim of the humanities in the secondary school as the development of understanding of human acts, of social situations, and of the problems of values which arise from them. The curriculum problem in the humanities was how the teacher should handle controversial value issues in the classroom. Second, the project developed an approach to teaching and learning humanities that was based on discussion and the consideration of evidence. To support discussion-based learning the project team produced eight packs of exemplary multi-media materials. Third, the project conceptualised the role of the humanities teacher in a way that was unusually principled and immediately shocking and contentious. They said that in handling controversial issues in the classroom the teacher's role should be premised on neutrality. The teacher was chair of the discussion and had responsibility for quality and learning standards. The teacher was in authority, but was not an authority in the controversial matters

under consideration. Fourth, Stenhouse's strategy for curriculum development saw the project team as a research group and the participating teachers as researchers in their own classrooms, putting the ideas of the project to the test of practice. A notable outcome of the Humanities Curriculum Project was the growth of the teacher-researcher and classroom action research movements. Finally, the project had a full-time independent evaluation team led by Barry MacDonald that pioneered the use of case study and developed one of the first examples of what is now known as mixed-method approaches to evaluation.

What marked out Stenhouse's contribution to the field of curriculum was his understanding of the implications of the relationship between education and autonomy and his distinctive conceptualisation of the relationship between curriculum and practice. In a paper on values and curriculum, Stenhouse argued for an approach to 'education for innovation in values' that neither chained the future to the past by conservatism nor chained it to the present by indoctrination, but instead was guided by free inquiry and discussion.<sup>26</sup> He thought that education enhances freedom by inducting people into the knowledge of culture as a thinking system.<sup>27</sup> 'The most important characteristic of the knowledge mode', wrote Stenhouse, 'is that one can think with it'.<sup>28</sup> It was his evaluative standard for the success of education that was strikingly unusual. Stenhouse thought that education as induction into knowledge was successful to the extent that it made 'the behavioural outcomes of the students unpredictable'.<sup>29</sup> This idea was in sharp contrast to the prevailing beliefs about curriculum and evaluation which emphasised the importance of behavioural objectives and measuring the extent to which they had been achieved by the students. In contrast to the objectives model, Stenhouse advocated a 'process model' for curriculum design and development based on establishing principles for selecting content, developing an appropriate teaching strategy and evaluating student and teacher progress. Stenhouse defined curriculum as 'the means by which the experience of attempting to put an educational proposal into practice is made publicly available'.<sup>30</sup> Curriculum development was, for Stenhouse, quintessentially an experiment and curricula were hypotheses to be tested by teachers in classrooms.<sup>31</sup>

One preoccupation of curriculum theorists in the late 1960s and 1970s was the role of objectives and specifically behavioural objectives in curriculum development and planning. Hugh Sockett and Richard Pring mounted compelling philosophical critiques of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives and the model of rational (means/end) curriculum planning 'in which the curriculum planner pre-specifies the behaviours he wants the student to learn and then chooses the means (the learning experiences) by which these objectives might be reached'.<sup>32</sup> This approach to curriculum planning owed much to Ralph Tyler and his work on the famous Eight Year Study. Tyler regarded evaluation as an integral part of curriculum and instruction. For Tyler educational objectives gave clear purpose and direction to learning: they were the essential building blocks of the curriculum and provided the means by which it was possible to evaluate success.<sup>33</sup> The dominance of an objectives approach to curriculum and its evaluation occasioned a small invitational conference at Churchill College, Cambridge, funded by the Nuffield Foundation. Convened by Barry MacDonald and Malcolm Parlett, it was the first in a

long line of 'Cambridge evaluation conferences' that have been reported in the Journal.<sup>34</sup> The conference brought together evaluators and policy makers from Britain, the USA, Sweden as well as representatives from the OECD to explore alternatives to the traditional 'objectives model' of curriculum evaluation.

In *Curriculum criticism: misconceived theory, ill-conceived practice* Rex Gibson took issue with what he saw as a worrying trend in curriculum studies: 'the view that the curriculum can be regarded as an art object, a literary object' and 'that the concepts and methods of artistic and literary criticism can yield deeper understanding of curriculum processes'. A leading figure in 'curriculum criticism' was Elliot Eisner, an early critic of behavioural objectives and advocate of what he called 'connoisseurship' in curriculum evaluation. Others in the curriculum criticism camp included David Jenkins, William Pinar, Madeleine Grumet and Edward Milner.

In his paper *The idea of a pastoral curriculum* Terence McLaughlin was concerned with the development of autonomy, the development of rationally autonomous individuals as he put it. He unpacked the portmanteau concept of a pastoral curriculum to establish what was meant by the term, the principles for determining its character and content and whether the school should be concerned with the pastoral curriculum. In *Pastoral Care*, Michael Marland – the influential headmaster of Woodberry Down School, London said that the disadvantage of the book's title was that it could be interpreted as dividing school life into two sides, the pastoral and the academic. Marland saw a central purpose of education as helping the individual pupil to find him- or herself and find meaning in their studies and in life.<sup>35</sup> Like Marland, McLaughlin argued that the 'pastoral curriculum' needs to be linked with the rest of the curriculum and he identified this as a major challenge and task of great complexity.

Compulsion in curricular matters is largely taken for granted: children at school should learn things that political authorities think are good for them. For much of the post-1945 period Britain was unusual, at least by European standards, in having a decentralised curriculum. While Secretary to the Curriculum Study Group at the Ministry of Education, Derek Morrell wrote the constitution for the Schools Council. Morrell, who was to become the first joint secretary to the Schools Council in October 1964, reaffirmed the:

importance of the principle that the schools should have the fullest possible measure of responsibility for their own work, including responsibility for their own curricula and teaching methods, which should be evolved by their own staff to meet the needs of their own pupils.<sup>36</sup>

In the case of elementary schools the Board of Education had effectively deregulated the curriculum in May 1926, although secondary schools were bound by a prescribed curriculum until 1945.<sup>37</sup> The formal autonomy accorded teachers and schools over the curriculum had been enshrined in the 1944 Education Act and was well established by the 1960s. Although there were many limitations (examinations, resources, tradition and wider expectations) on the freedom of schools to devise their own curriculum, just as there were constraints on individual teacher



autonomy, nonetheless there was space for teachers to exercise their professional judgement over a wide variety of educational decisions. The debate between Michael Bonnett and John White about a compulsory curriculum occurred eleven years before Kenneth Baker, then Secretary of State for Education, announced his intention to introduce a national curriculum. John White, like the authors and supporters of the national curriculum, argued that a certain curriculum should be insisted on if children are to gain the knowledge and understanding that autonomy depends on. At the core of Bonnett's case against a compulsory curriculum was the argument that compulsion was likely to be antithetical to the promotion of personal autonomy. When the 'Great Education Reform Bill', as it was conceitedly called at the time, gained Royal assent in July 1988, out went the last vestiges of teacher and local autonomy and in came the national curriculum with its associated attainment targets, programmes of study and national testing. And once governments got a taste for interfering in education their appetite for intervention and prescription was difficult to contain. Prompted by Kenneth Baker's Education Act, in *Curriculum Reform and Curriculum Theory: a case of historical amnesia* Ivor Goodson looked at the dismantling of curriculum reform efforts in the 1960s and the re-constitution of traditional subjects as the mainstay of schooling. The 1988 Education Act provided the Secretary of State for Education with extensive powers over many aspects of schooling, including curriculum and assessment. But Morrell's convictions about autonomy of schools over curriculum matters had been under attack since the mid 1970s.

The speech on 18 October 1976 by James Callaghan at Ruskin College has come to signify a tipping point in educational atmosphere and direction. Whereas in the lead up to the 1964 general election Harold Wilson spoke of the scientific age of expansion and the excitement of discarding an Edwardian establishment mentality and building a modern Britain, by 1976 Callaghan, who had succeeded him as Prime Minister, was telling the Labour Party that the nation could not spend its way out of recession, signalling an end to the Keynesian post-war economic consensus. In education Callaghan called for changes in curriculum, assessment, teacher training and the relationship between school and working life.<sup>38</sup> Maurice Kogan once wrote that 'prime ministers don't usually give a damn about education ... and hardly ever intervene in it'.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps it was no coincidence that education became the subject of a 'great debate', precisely at a time of 'stagflation' and enormous pressure on public finances. Some saw Callaghan as stealing the thunder of the right wing and their 'Black Paper' colleagues.<sup>40</sup> Regardless of how opportunistic the decision to intervene in education might have been, it also reflected Callaghan's interest in education and his conviction that signs of public discontent and professional anxiety were warranted.<sup>41</sup> The 'great debate' that Callaghan asked for was a stage-managed affair offering little of the moral deliberation that William Reid later argued was at the core of curriculum planning.<sup>42</sup> Although Callaghan never used the term accountability in his Ruskin speech, he did talk about opening up education to greater public scrutiny and the need for teachers to satisfy the requirements of parents and industry. According to Stuart Maclure the then editor of the *Times Educational Supplement*, the 'threats were veiled but unmistakeable'.<sup>43</sup> The spectre of falling standards was on parade



mustering recruits for centralisation and control. A year before the Ruskin speech, a prescient Ernest House drew attention to some of the pernicious effects of accountability in the USA, arguing that educational testing and teacher and school evaluation had considerable potential to standardise and dehumanise schooling.<sup>44</sup>

### New orders of experience

What are the conditions needed for children and young people to participate more actively in the construction of their own education? Historically pupils and students have had little say over the content and processes of schooling and their voices are seldom heard in discussions about the purposes of education or its governance and accountability. The autonomy that Michael Bonnett was reaching for in education – not so much ‘something to be eventually achieved by pupils’ but rather ‘something to be respected and maintained in pupils’ – is rarely a guiding principle of the school curriculum.<sup>45</sup> Mostly around the globe it is the state authorities who think they know best what it is that children are in need of knowing and doing. This is what Nel Noddings calls ‘inferred needs’ and in ‘trying to meet inferred needs’ she argues, ‘we often neglect the expressed needs of our students’.<sup>46</sup>

The first three papers in this section draw directly from the Humanities Curriculum Project (HCP). The concept of the neutral teacher was controversial in the 1960s and remains so today. In *Teaching through small group discussion: formality, rules and authority*, Lawrence Stenhouse set out why he believed that teaching through discussion, a central feature of HCP, needs to be governed by explicit rules, conventions and roles. His concern was to find ways to develop the autonomy of students by lessening the attitude of dependence that students can have in the face of the traditional authority of the teacher. John Elliott’s paper on the *Concept of the neutral teacher* and Charles Bailey’s response to it seek to clarify the idea of neutrality in teaching.

Social stratification and differentiation both within and between schools has been an enduring issue in education. By 1967, as Tessa Blackstone observed, the central role of education in determining life chances was an accepted tenet,<sup>47</sup> and various reports of the Central Advisory Council for Education<sup>48</sup> had reinforced and further disseminated knowledge about the relationship between social class and educational outcomes as well as drawn attention to the disadvantages suffered by many children. The impact of school organisation on the educational attainments of children of different social backgrounds was perhaps less well understood. In his classic study of ability and attainment in the primary school, J.W.B. Douglas found streaming by ability reinforced the process of social selection and that children who came from

well-kept homes and who are themselves clean, well clothed and shod, stand a greater chance of being put in the upper streams than their measured ability would seem to justify. Once there they are likely to stay and to improve in performance in succeeding years. This is in striking contrast to the deterioration noticed in those children of similar measured ability who were placed in the lower streams.<sup>49</sup>

The effects of streaming were also apparent in secondary schooling where those in low-ability groups were found to do worse, while those in high-ability groups tended to improve their performance. In a study of the effects of ability grouping in British secondary schools, Kerckhoff found that the 'losses by students in low ability groups, combined with the gains by students in high ability groups, make the overall effect of ability grouping very striking'.<sup>50</sup> In his 1976 article, *The social organisation of the classroom and the philosophy of mixed ability teaching*, David Bridges cast a philosopher's eye on the issue and explored the ways in which differences about mixed ability teaching were rooted in different social philosophies and principles.

In 1998 – eight years after Nelson Mandela was released from prison and four years after South Africa's first democratic election took place – Penny Enslin and Shirley Pendlebury from the University of Witwatersrand compiled a special issue of the *Journal on transforming education in South Africa*. In their introduction to the collection of papers they wrote:

As we write the introduction to this special issue of the *Cambridge Journal of Education*, South Africans are pondering the dismal 1997 matriculation results. The pass rate improved in only one of the nine provinces. In the North Western Province it dropped from 66 to 50% and in our own Gauteng province, which has the biggest share of the population, barely half the candidates passed. These grim results suggest that many of the characteristics of the old system persist. Despite the hard won struggle against apartheid education, public examination results continue to be influenced by race, poor resources, incompetent teaching, dysfunctional schools and inefficient procedures. Overcoming the past is going to take a long time. In the wake of apartheid, South Africa's most urgent and difficult project is to reconstruct and develop all spheres of public life so as to establish enabling conditions for a flourishing democracy. Under apartheid, education was a site of contestation. Now it is supposed to be a site of transformation, not only for its own sake but also because it is crucial to transforming other spheres. A primary goal of the ANC's policy framework is to transform the institutions of society in the interests of all and so enable social, cultural, economic and political empowerment of all citizens. Many South Africans see educational transformation as the key to transforming society at large. If we cannot transform education, what chance do we have of transforming anything? People's hopes for improved employability, democratic citizenship and a better life are pinned on education. Insistence on transformation rather than reform may be due to a deep suspicion of reform as a strategy. The previous government used reform to contain opposition, maintain the status quo and evade critical issues of inequality and oppression. So much was rotten in the old system that only radical, thorough-going and systemic change could overcome its authoritarian, unequal, wasteful and demoralising practices.

Nazir Carrim's article, *Anti-racism and the 'new' South African educational order*, traces the desegregation of South African schools, and considers the mission of the

complete transformation of every aspect of the education system. A system that since 1948 when the Nationalist Government came to power was built on enforced segregation and predicated on racism. Carrim explored problems with 'assimilationism' and multiculturalism and argued for a critical anti-racism to ensure a 'de-essentialised' sense of people's identities.

In 2001 Lani Florian and Martyn Rouse edited an edition of the Journal on special education. Their own paper, *'Inclusive practice in English secondary schools: lessons learned'* explored how teachers respond to the tension between 'equity' and 'excellence' as defined by policy makers and school effectiveness researchers. The edition arose from a programme of comparative research that began in 1994 and explored 'how different national and local jurisdictions have approached the reform of special education policies, practices and provision in the context of larger educational reforms'.<sup>51</sup> Florian and Rouse wrote that special education 'has become a proxy for wider concerns about education and social policy'.<sup>52</sup> Key debates have revolved around issues of inclusion and exclusion and the preservation of separate systems of special education versus creation of a fully inclusive general education system. There is an apparent tension between the goals of inclusive education and the perception that having a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in a school lowers standards.<sup>53</sup> New market-based forms of public management in education have put enormous pressure on schools to meet and preferably exceed pupil performance targets and do well in published league tables. It is against this backdrop that schools and teachers have to find ways of developing inclusive practice. The economic rationale that underpins these market-based reforms reinforces the existing stratification of schools and learners. It is socially conservative and divisive.

Environmental education has been a recurrent theme for the Journal since the 1990s.<sup>54</sup> In 1999 Michael Bonnett and John Elliott edited a special issue of the Journal on environmental education, sustainability and the transformation of schooling. In the editorial they of course stressed the great importance of the relationship between humankind the environment, but they went on to argue that environmental education properly conceived may require a radical transformation of the nature of teaching and schooling. The special issue grew out of an environmental education initiative (ENSI) sponsored by the OECD. The Environment and Schools Initiative was launched in 1986. According to Peter Posch the idea emerged from a Conference of Ministers of Education of OECD Member countries held in Paris in 1984, when Minister Herbert Moritz of Austria underlined that environmental education was one of the most important priorities for the future development of education.<sup>55</sup> Following this the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation decided to include environmental education in its Innovation and Exchange Programme and invited member countries to participate. The initiative involved a commitment to develop dynamic qualities in students through their involvement with environmental problems and solutions, inter-disciplinary learning and research, and reflective action to improve environmental conditions. Peter Posch was a leading figure in the Initiative and with John Elliott and Kathleen Lane was responsible for articulating its educational values and principles. In *The ecologisation of schools and its implications for educational policy*,

Posch describes a project exemplifying the principles established in the Environment and Schools Initiative.

Shirley Brice Heath is renowned for her work on language and literacy exemplified by her ethnography of two communities in the Piedmont Carolinas of the Southern USA.<sup>56</sup> Her paper formed part of a millennium special issue of the *Journal* edited by Morag Styles and John Beck that looked to the curriculum of the future. In *Seeing our way into learning*, Brice Heath argues for a much broader conception of literacy and a radical shift towards visual arts as well as print literacies and oral communication. She sees that a central curricular issue is how schools can provide ample authentic practice opportunities for students who have highly varied approaches to learning and knowledge representation.

For many years Jean Rudduck's research focused on issues to do with promoting more participative forms of learning and engagement with school, the space for pupil voice and the difference it can make to school improvement.<sup>57</sup> Her collaboration with Julia Flutter began around 1994 with a longitudinal study of pupils' perspectives on schooling. Their paper *Pupil participation and pupil perspective: 'carving a new order of experience'* explores what teachers and schools can learn from their students if they could only find ways of listening. Listening to young people is a signal theme in *Identifying and responding to needs in education*, by Nel Noddings.<sup>58</sup> Her work stands in sharp contrast to the metrics of accountability that dominate education. She reminds us that many children come to school with overwhelming needs (homelessness, poverty, poor health, sick or missing parents, emotional damage) that must be addressed in some way if they are to benefit from education. She argues that significant time in school should be given over to the development of care and trust and 'the search for connections among interests and aims, the identification of learning objectives (that may vary from student to student), and free gifts of intellectual material that students may pick up and use to satisfy their own needs'.<sup>59</sup> In *A curriculum for the future*, Gunter Kress contrasts education for periods of relative stability with education for periods of instability and rapid social and economic change. The old organisational, temporal, social and knowledge 'frames' that encompass and structure education, he believes, are loosening their grip and alternative frameworks for education are beginning to emerge – for example new forms of representation and communication are redefining the meaning and scope of literacy. Kress sees curriculum as a design for the future and design as a central category of the school curriculum. He argues that 'putting design at the centre of the curriculum and of its purposes is to redefine the goal of education as the making of individual dispositions oriented towards innovation, creativity, transformation and change'.<sup>60</sup>

## Teachers and teaching

The experience of teaching, often in contrast to the experience of being taught, can be a remarkably solitary and professionally lonely experience. That teaching is emotionally demanding work is mostly absent from much of the academic and official literature on education. In a special volume of the *Journal* devoted to teaching and the emotions Mary Jane Drummond and Marilyn Osborn were invited to

prepare review essays of books that had made a valuable contribution to our knowledge of emotions in teaching. The books they chose were:

- Willard Waller (1932) *The Sociology of Teaching*, New York: Wiley;
- Arthur T. Jersild (1955) *When Teachers Face Themselves*, New York: Teachers College Press;
- John Gabriel (1957) *An Analysis of the Emotional Problems of the Teacher in the Classroom*, London: Angus & Robertson;
- Philip Jackson (1968) *Life in Classrooms*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston;
- Dan Lortie (1975) *Schoolteacher: a sociological study*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press;
- Isca Salzberger-Wittenberg, Gianna Henry & Elsie Osborne (1983) *The Emotional Experience of Learning and Teaching*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul;
- Jennifer Nias (1989) *Primary Teachers Talking: a study of teaching and work*, London: Routledge.

Willard Waller was a sociologist with a wide range of interests which included studies of the family, divorce and readjustment, First World War veterans and teaching. His sociology of teaching was similarly wide ranging. He was associate professor of sociology at Bernard College, Columbia University.<sup>61</sup> *The Sociology of Teaching* was first published 1932 three years in to the Great Depression. In the preface Waller explained the purpose of the book in the following way:

What this book tells is what every teacher knows, that the world of school is a social world. Those human beings who live together in the school, though deeply severed in one sense, nevertheless spin a tangled web of relationships; that web and the people in it make up the social world of the school. It is not a wide world, but, for those who know it, it is a world compact with meaning. It is a unique world. It is the purpose of this book to explore it.<sup>62</sup>

Waller trained to be a teacher and worked in a high school, Morgan Park Military Academy, teaching French and Latin for six years. It was this experience that informed his sociological analysis of teaching,<sup>63</sup> and for Waller 'teaching makes the teacher'.<sup>64</sup>

John Gabriel says that the seeds of his study were sown when he read E.K. Wickman's *Children's Behavior and Teachers' Attitudes* (New York: Commonwealth Fund, 1928). Wickman's monograph was a report of a study on the reactions of teachers to behavioural problems in the classroom. Gabriel's research was conducted between 1948 and 1950 during a period of continued austerity, rationing and reconstruction. It was based on two surveys of teachers in England, the first comprising 162 responses and the second 736 responses.<sup>65</sup> By 'emotional problems', Gabriel meant problems which give rise to 'negative feelings of worry or strain, annoyance or concern'.<sup>66</sup> Among other things Gabriel concluded that the implications of his surveys seem to 'confirm Wickman's original findings, and we may say, as did Wickman, that this concern arises, in part, from their desire to carry out

their academic teaching duties and to maintain a position of authority within the school and classroom, and, in part, from their severe attitudes towards violations of the social and moral codes of the community'.<sup>67</sup>

Arthur Jersild was Professor of Education at Teachers College Columbia. The research for *When Teachers Face Themselves* was done under the auspices of the Horace Mann–Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation. The research involved:

a survey of reactions to the idea of self understanding as a basic aim of education; a series of personal conferences; a survey of personal problems as revealed by written responses to an inventory; and ratings and evaluations of lectures and discussions dealing with various aspects of self-understanding.<sup>68</sup>

The themes of the book, anxiety, loneliness, the search for meaning, sex, hostility and compassion, don't seem unique to teaching but certainly seem an important part of education. The research for Philip Jackson's *Life in Classrooms* was, by contrast, based not on surveys but on detailed long-term observation and interviews. Jackson says his aim was to 'arouse the reader's interest and possibly awaken his concern over aspects of school life that seem to be receiving less attention than they deserve'.<sup>69</sup> The book had its origins in Jackson's dissatisfaction with psychometric research and a one-year Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Palo Alto, California in 1962, during which time he observed a small number of elementary school classrooms, 'moving up close to the realities of school life' as he put it. When he returned to Chicago in 1963 he embarked on two further years of systematic observation of four classrooms in the Lower School of the University of Chicago Laboratory School. For Jackson the distinctive flavour of classroom life is characterised by crowds, praise and power which form a 'hidden curriculum' which students and teachers must master if they are to cope with school. In addition to classroom observation Jackson interviewed fifty teachers about classroom life.<sup>70</sup> Jackson concludes his chapter on the teachers' views by considering what he calls the 'fundamental ambiguity in the teacher's role'. He describes the teacher 'as working for the school and against it', because he has a dual allegiance to the institutional order and to the well-being of the students. It is the 'double concern and the teacher's way of dealing with it', says Jackson, that imbues teaching 'with a special quality'.<sup>71</sup>

Dan Lortie's *Schoolteacher: a sociological study*, is concerned with the nature and content of the ethos of teaching. The research which resulted in the book was based on 'historical review, national and local surveys, findings from observational studies and a content analysis of intensive interviews'. Ninety-four interviews were completed with 'elementary and senior high school teachers from upper income communities, junior high school teachers from middle range and elementary and senior high school teachers from lower income settings'.<sup>72</sup> Most of interviews were conducted in 1963. Lortie noted 'that relationships with other adults do not stand at the heart of the teacher's psychological world' which is shaped more by 'deeper commitments to students'<sup>73</sup> and found that the significant components in the ethos

of the American classroom teacher were 'conservatism, individualism and presentism'.<sup>74</sup>

*The Emotional Experience of Learning and Teaching* was based on work that the authors did with teachers on a course called 'Aspects of Counselling' at the Tavistock Clinic, London. Isca Salzberger-Wittenberg and her colleagues worked within the psychoanalytic tradition and were influenced by Wilfred Bion and Melanie Klein. Jennifer Nias was Tutor in Curriculum Studies at the Cambridge Institute of Education. Her book *Primary Teachers Talking* was based on the personal accounts of teachers who trained in one-year Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses for work in infant, junior and middle schools.<sup>75</sup> Between 1975 and 1977 she interviewed ninety-nine teachers, thirty men and sixty-nine women. Nias had been the course tutor to many of them. Twenty-two of the sample also kept diaries for one day a week for one term. The first set of interviews were followed up ten years later with a further fifty interviews in 1985.<sup>76</sup> *Primary Teachers Talking* was published at the end of a period in which primary teachers had a large degree of formal autonomy in matters of curriculum and pedagogy which had framed the professional identity of many teachers.

*Teaching and the Self* by Jennifer Nias is drawn from the same body of work as *Primary Teachers Talking*. In this paper Nias argues that in primary school teaching it is the teacher as a person that has been most important rather than the teacher as a subject specialist. For the primary school teacher it is the self that is the crucial element in the way they construe the nature of their job. Continuing the theme of the emotions in teaching, in her study of teachers' participation in large-scale reform Judith Warren Little observed that emotions lie very near the surface of schools caught up in systemic change. Her paper explored the sources of long-term optimism and fatalism in teachers' encounters with reform movements. Ernest House once said that the burden of innovation was shouldered by the teacher.<sup>77</sup> Warren draws our attention to the possible impact of educational change on learners, noting that reform draws emotional energy away from teacher-student relationships and instead invests it in the relationships with colleagues needed to make reform work.

In recent years there has been a growing interest in and rediscovery of the power of narrative to illuminate the world of education. Narrative offers a way of understanding education from the perspectives of its participants. Teachers' stories and stories about teachers as well as students' stories and stories about students<sup>78</sup> are ways of personalising education, making it more humane. Three papers in this collection focus on the importance of narrative for understanding education. Madeleine Grumet writes about finding authentic feminist voices for educational studies: voices that have three parts; situation, narrative and interpretation; voices that are collaborative but not drowned out by coercive consensus. Since her book with William Pinar, *Toward a Poor Curriculum*, and her later influential book *Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching* (University of Massachusetts Press 1988), Grumet has been writing about women's voices and challenging the hegemonic discourse of educational politics, management and administration. Mary Louise Holly, whose work on the professional development of university teachers has been much acclaimed, writes about journal writing as a powerful means for teachers to explore



and reflect on practice. She says 'writing works because it enables us to come to know ourselves through the multiple voices our experiences take'.<sup>79</sup> Following on from this, Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly explore the role of narrative in teacher development and curriculum, drawing on Dewey's distinction between the laboratory and apprenticeship in teacher education and using a case study of a teacher in her first year of teaching to illustrate their thinking.

The aim of improving teaching has at various times been thought to be susceptible to technocratic solutions, systematisation and standardisation. For those who see teaching as largely or solely a technical accomplishment, honing the technology of teaching is a way of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of education. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century there were advocates of a science of education based on psychological principles, mental testing and scientific management and administration. Some in the curriculum reform movement of the 1950s and 1960s saw 'teacher proof' curricula as offering a way to reform the practice of education. More recently the proponents of evidence-based practice, for example, have commended the virtues of good experimental designs and systematic reviews as a basis for informing policy and shaping practice. The basic idea is that the careful accumulation of knowledge about education and its application to policy and practice is necessary to inform political or professional judgement and ensure a reasoned basis for educational decision-making. Few would probably quibble with such a view. But what this does, can and should mean in practice is far from settled business. Questions about the relationship of research or theory to practice are also bound up with issues of professional identity and status. Research and teaching could be seen as different realms of professional action, with different rationales, taking place in different contexts and different emotional space. For many years action research has been advanced as a methodology for systematic improvement by relating research to the problems of action. Action research has featured strongly in issues of the *Journal* since the mid 1970s.<sup>80</sup> Kurt Lewin is often thought of as the person who articulated action research as a systematic approach to achieving greater organisational effectiveness through democratic participation.<sup>81</sup> Since the 1960s there has been a revival of interest in action research and a growing variety of theory, practice and fields of application. In Britain in the 1970s and 1980s educational action research was perhaps best represented by the work of John Elliott in his early leadership of the Classroom Action Research Network and the many teachers and teacher educators who got involved in action research through the Cambridge Institute of Education. *Becoming Critical: knowing through Action Research*, by Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis<sup>82</sup> (1983) was seen by many as a key text in the evolution and dissemination of action research. Carr and Kemmis related action research to critical theory, in particular to the work of Habermas, and to the project of emancipation. Their book was reviewed by Rex Gibson in an acerbic essay entitled *Critical Times for Action Research*, where he likened the action research movement to the Salvation Army.<sup>83</sup> Others saw it as inspirational.<sup>84</sup>

One way of describing the social relations of research and teaching is that theory is produced by researchers to be taught or applied by teachers. In *Educational theory and the professional learning of teachers* and elsewhere<sup>85</sup> John Elliott



offers a vision of the relationships between theory and practice, research and teaching, that is about the development of practical wisdom. For Elliott the practice of teachers should be informed by their own research and it is the critical reflective theorising of teachers that holds the most promise to improve classroom practice. Teaching is thus disciplined by the teacher as a researcher. This is a line of thought that takes us back to the work of Lawrence Stenhouse and to the idea of research as the basis of teaching.<sup>86</sup> What brings alive the autonomy of the teacher is the capacity to critically reflect on practice and to develop it through one's own research. Christine O'Hanlon's paper *Alienation within the profession – special needs or watered down teachers? Insights into the tension between the ideal and the real through action research*, provides an example of a programme of professional development for special educational needs teachers based on action research. The context for the professional development programme was the introduction in Northern Ireland of legislation paralleling the 1981 Education Act in England and Wales. This Act gave effect to recommendations of the Warnock Committee on provision for children with special educational needs.<sup>87</sup>

In the foreword to *Excellence and Enjoyment: a strategy for primary schools*, Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education and Skills at the time, said that what makes a good primary education 'is the fusion of excellence and enjoyment', and he went on to blend high standards in literacy and numeracy with enjoyment, which he described as the birthright of every child.<sup>88</sup> Excellence is, of course a euphemism for high test scores. The reference to enjoyment calls to mind a time when the motivations and interests of the child were seen as a key to successful learning. It is testament to the utilitarian view of schooling that any government feels it has to issue a policy statement about 'enjoyment' in education. Perhaps it signalled growing concerns about the narrowing of the primary curriculum and the damage to children's well-being from the relentless pressure to perform well on tests. The final paper in this edited collection is Robin Alexander's *Still no pedagogy? Principle, pragmatism and compliance in primary education*. It is a scathing critique of primary education policy, in particular *Excellence and Enjoyment*. The title of Alexander's paper refers back to a paper by Brian Simon: *Why no pedagogy in England?*<sup>89</sup> Among other things Simon was critical of the child-centred theories of Friedrich Froebel and his followers and what he called the 'pedagogic romanticism' of the Plowden Report. Simon argued:

that to start from the standpoint of individual differences is to start from the wrong position. To develop effective pedagogic means involves starting from the opposite standpoint, from what children have in common as members of the human species; to establish the general principles of teaching and, in the light of these, to determine what modifications of practice are necessary to meet specific individual needs.<sup>90</sup>

Alexander defines pedagogy as 'the act of teaching together with its attendant discourse', and says that 'curriculum is just one of its domains, albeit an important one.'<sup>91</sup> He offers an account of pedagogy that encompasses a wide range of educational practice and discourse; including an understanding of children, learning, teaching, curriculum, schools and policy as well as an understanding of the broader

cultural and historical context of education. His criticism of the Primary Strategy is sharp and to the point. He writes that it 'is badly written, poorly argued and deeply patronising in its assumptions that teachers will be seduced by Ladybird language, pretty pictures, offers of freedom and enjoyment, and populist appeals to their common sense'.<sup>92</sup>

## Postscript

I began this introduction with a depiction of the periods of post-war educational history by Sir Toby Weaver. He concluded his 1978 Wood Memorial Lecture with some remarks about the threats to the spirit of partnership and trust that he thought characterised the education system of the time.

This spirit, and with it the freedom of action and sense of fellowship it confers on the partners, is under severe test. How far it can survive the impact of exacerbated political partisanship, central and local; the clumsy application of corporate management; the centripetal pressures towards uniformity; the growing replacement of reason and persuasion by force as an acceptable method of resolving differences; the corrosion of what were thought to be professional imperatives by the acids of militancy; the frustrations of financial retrenchment: all this hangs in the balance.<sup>93</sup>

Within a few years of the Journal becoming established recession and retrenchment changed the climate for education irrevocably. The age of uncertainty as Weaver called it gradually gave way to the age of accountability and control. From the vantage point of 2007 it would be hard not to conclude that the spirit of partnership and trust that Weaver thought so important to education has been severely undermined. What is striking, however, is not the continued importance of the relationship between the economy and education, but the widespread application of market ideology and micro-economic thinking to schools and educational institutions more generally. It is this that has had such a deleterious effect on thinking about the purpose and process of education and its role in promoting well-being and sustainable futures. Over the years the *Cambridge Journal of Education* has provided space for advocates of richer, more humane, responsive and socially responsible forms of education. Its original purpose was to be a medium for serious and developing discussion on matters of general educational interest. I hope the papers presented here capture that aspiration.

## Notes

- 1 Alex Evans had been Secretary of the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education. His article was entitled 'Colleges of Education – the next phase' *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 1 (1): 4–15.
- 2 The Journal was originally envisaged as a regional journal with contributors and readers from the Cambridge Institute of Education and its partner colleges through its role as the Area Training Organisation, the Cambridge Department of Education and other bodies in the East Anglia area.

- 3 In addition to David Bridges, the Journal had an Editorial Panel consisting of John Child (Chair) and Hugh Sockett from the Cambridge Institute of Education, G.D. Booker, Balls Park College; R.P. McKechnie, Saffron Walden College; and Raymond O'Malley, University of Cambridge, Department of Education.
- 4 See Sir Toby Weaver (1979) 'Education: retrospect and prospect: an administrator's testimony' *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 9 (1): 2–17.
- 5 The plan was to raise the school leaving age in 1970–71; however the leaving age was not raised to sixteen until September 1972.
- 6 Crosland, A. (2006) *The Future of Socialism*, London: Constable & Robinson (first published in 1956 by Jonathan Cape).
- 7 Price, C. (1999) 'Education Secretary', in D. Leonard (ed.) *Crosland and New Labour*, London: Macmillan.
- 8 Pimlott, B. (1992) *Harold Wilson*, London: HarperCollins.
- 9 Under the chairmanship of S. Gurney-Dixon, the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) looked at the factors which influenced the age at which boys and girls left secondary schools. Their report, entitled *Early Leaving*, was published in 1954.
- 10 Floud, J. and Halsey, A.H. (1956) 'English Secondary Schools and the Supply of Labour', *The Yearbook of Education* 1956, London: Evans Brothers.
- 11 He told his wife Susan that he wanted to destroy every grammar school in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 12 Central Advisory Councils for Education, one for England and one for Wales, were established by the 1944 Education Act. For an account of the Councils see Kogan, M. and Packwood, T. (1974) *Advisory Councils and Committees in Education*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- 13 Simon, B. (1991) *Education and the Social Order*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 363.
- 14 Kogan, M. (1987) 'The Plowden Report Twenty Years On' *Oxford Review of Education*, 13 (1): 13–20.
- 15 Central Advisory Council for Education (1967) *Children and their Primary Schools*, London: HMSO.
- 16 Halsey, A. H. and Sylva, K. (1987) 'Plowden: history and prospect', *Oxford Review of Education*, 13 (1): 3–11.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Waring, M. (1979) *Social Pressures and Curriculum Innovation – A study of the Nuffield Foundation Science Teaching Project*, London: Methuen, p. 2.
- 19 Ibid., p. 91.
- 20 Sir Keith Joseph was Secretary of State for Education and Science in Margaret Thatcher's administration from 1981 to 1986.
- 21 When Sir David Eccles set up the Curriculum Studies Group he did so partly to increase the role of the Ministry of Education in the process of schooling. This seemingly mild intervention by the Ministry was seen in some quarters as the thin end of a centralist or worse totalitarian wedge. See Jennings, A. (1985) 'Out of the Secret Garden', in Plaskow, M. (ed.) *Life and Death of the Schools Council*, London: Falmer Press, pp. 15–39.
- 22 Schools Council (1965) *Change and Response – The first year's work: October 1964–September 1965*, London: HMSO.
- 23 After 1922 the school leaving age was fourteen. A leaving age of fifteen was written in to the 1944 Education Act. Its implementation, delayed until April 1947, had to be pushed through Attlee's post-war Cabinet by Ellen Wilkinson, Minister of Education, in the face of significant opposition from the Treasury – see Beckett, F. (2000) *Clem Attlee*, London: Politico. Following recommendations from both Crowther and Newsom, in 1964 Sir Edward Boyle, Minister of Education, announced the raising of the leaving age to sixteen from 1970: implementation was delayed until September 1972.
- 24 Schools Council (1967) *Working Paper No. 11 – Society and the Young School Leaver*, London: HMSO.
- 25 The Humanities Curriculum Project was set up in September 1967. It was sponsored by the Schools Council and the Nuffield Foundation. The main project team consisted of

- Lawrence Stenhouse (Director), Gillian Box (1967–70), Ann Cook, (1967–68), John Elliott (1967–72), Patricia Haikin (1968–70), Jim Hillier (1968–69), John Hipkin (1968–72), Andrew McTaggart (1969–70), Maurice Plaskow (1967–70), Jean Rudduck (1968–72), Diana Vignali (1968–69). In addition the HCP evaluation team included: Barry MacDonald (Director), Stephen Humble (from 1969) and Gajendra Verma (from 1970).
- 26 Stenhouse, L. 'Values Curriculum' Humanities Curriculum Project, 3 October 1967: HCP Archive CARE, University of East Anglia, Norwich.
  - 27 See Stenhouse, L. (1975) *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*, London: Heinemann.
  - 28 Ibid., p. 82.
  - 29 Ibid.
  - 30 Ibid., p. 5.
  - 31 Some years later, reviewing the lessons to be learnt from a century of public school reform in the USA, David Tyack and Larry Cuban were to make a similar point about policies. They suggested that the educational goals and plans of policy makers might profitably be construed as hypotheses. Tyack, D. and Cuban, L. (1995) *Tinkering Toward Utopia*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
  - 32 Pring, R. (1971) 'Bloom's Taxonomy: A Philosophical Critique (2)', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 1 (2): 83–91.
  - 33 See Madaus, G. and Sufflebeam, D. (eds) (1989) *Educational Evaluation: Classic Works of Ralph W. Tyler*, London: Kluwer.
  - 34 Adelman, C., Jenkins, D. and Kemmis, S. (1976) 'Re-thinking Case Study: notes from the second Cambridge Conference', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 6 (3); Jenkins, D., Simons, H. and Walker, R. (1981) 'Thou Art my Goodness: naturalistic inquiry in educational evaluation', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 11 (3); Bridges, D., Elliott, J. and Klass, C. (1986) 'Performance Appraisal as Naturalistic Inquiry: a report from the fourth Cambridge conference', *Cambridge Journal of Education* 16 (3); Stronach, I. and Torrance, H. (1995) 'The Future of Evaluation: a retrospective', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 25 (3).
  - 35 Marland, M. (1974) *Pastoral Care*, London: Heinemann.
  - 36 Jennings, A. (1985) 'Out of the Secret Garden', in Plaskow, M. (ed.) *Life and Death of the Schools Council*, London: Falmer Press p. 20.
  - 37 The removal of any reference to subjects (with exception of Practical Instruction) in the 1926 Code from the Board of Education meant that the teaching of particular subjects was not a condition of grant. See White, J. (1975) 'The End of the Compulsory Curriculum' University of London, Institute of Education; *The Curriculum – The Doris Lee Lectures 1975*, London: University of London, Institute of Education.
  - 38 See Simon, B. (1991) *Educational and the Social Order*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, especially chapter nine.
  - 39 Kogan, M. (1980) 'Policies for the School Curriculum in their Political Context', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 10 (3): 122–133.
  - 40 Simon, B. (1991) *Educational and the Social Order*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 451.
  - 41 See Judge, H. (1984) 'A Generation of Schooling', Oxford: Oxford University Press, especially Chapter 11. Callaghan's biographer Kenneth Morgan indicates that education was a long-standing concern to Callaghan. See: *Callaghan A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). Callaghan's commitment to and interest in education is also commented on by Roy Hattersley in his memoirs. He says that when the 1967 devaluation of the pound forced Callaghan to resign from the Treasury, 'his first choice of alternative ministry was the Department of Education and Science'. See: *Fifty Years On – A Prejudiced History of Britain Since the War*, (London: Little, Brown, 1997, p. 241).
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Part I

# Defining the curriculum problem



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# 1 Defining the curriculum problem

Lawrence Stenhouse\*<sup>†</sup>

On my desk before me is a book of 350 pages. It is called *Mønsterplan for Grunnskolen*.<sup>1</sup> I bought it in a bookshop in Oslo. It is the curriculum of the Norwegian comprehensive school. Beside it is an Open University coursebook, *Thinking about the Curriculum*. On page 91 I read:

What we shall do here is to offer a definition which can serve temporarily both as a starting point for our discussion and as a comfort for those who like to have precise statements as a guideline for their thinking. However, as you will find, we qualify this definition constantly as we develop our ideas in the units that follow. It is no “catch-all” definition by any means, and should never be regarded as such. Here it is:

A curriculum is the offering of socially valued knowledge, skills and attitudes made available to students through a variety of arrangements during the time they are at school, college or university.<sup>2</sup>

Is the *mønsterplan* a curriculum? Or is the curriculum what happens in Norwegian schools?

If the latter, I shall never know it. I cannot get five years' leave of absence to attempt to describe all the diverse things that happen in Norwegian schools. And five years is not enough.

I asked a Norwegian curriculum research worker if the *mønsterplan* was followed in the schools. He said that it was widely followed, but that many older teachers resisted it and did not follow it, particularly in methods. There was, however, little reformist departure from it. Only tradition seemed strong enough to resist it. Tradition in a sense kept alive the old curriculum of the unreformed school.

How far does the curriculum tie the teacher down? (I asked). If I observe him in the classroom, how much of what I see is determined by the *mønsterplan*?

I was told that the teacher always had the *mønsterplan* in mind, but that it left him a fair degree of individual freedom. It defined a minimum coverage of subject matter and the outline of a method.

It sounded like a child's colouring book, I thought.

I find the definitions of curriculum I have come across unsatisfactory, because the problems of curriculum I have encountered in practice as a curriculum research worker slip through them. Perhaps, then, it would be better to attempt to define "the curriculum problem".

The curriculum problem most simply and directly stated is that of relating ideas to realities, the curriculum in the mind or on paper to the curriculum in the classroom.

The curriculum problem lies in the relationship of the *mønsterplan* to the practice of the Norwegian school.

Notionally the essence of curriculum might be located in the relation of my own ideas as a teacher to the reality of my classroom: "the true blueprint is in the minds and hearts of the teachers".<sup>3</sup> But the plural here is important. Except for empirical micro-studies of the classroom, the private curriculum of the individual teacher is not of central interest. What is of practical importance in curriculum work is the public curriculum or curricula, that is, curricula that can be held to be in some sense and to some extent publicly accessible to "the minds and hearts" of many teachers.

Thus, a curriculum may be said to be an attempt to define the common ground shared by those teachers who follow it. Although it may sometimes be useful to think of it as the offering to pupils, we must always bear in mind that any similarity between the offering in one classroom and another, in one school and another, must begin in the like-mindedness of teachers.

Most commonly this like-mindedness is a matter of tradition. Induction into the profession includes induction into the curriculum. The formulation of the curriculum tradition may be partly a matter of paper syllabuses, even government reports or Handbooks of Suggestions to Teachers, but it is largely an oral process. And it is often largely oblique, the indirect communication of assumptions and premises through discourse which rests on them rather than states them.

This curriculum tradition is potent. Some mastery of it is required of the new teacher before he be accepted as a "professional"; so the teacher learns to define himself by it. In so far as it is not formally stated, analysed and defended, the traditional curriculum is not easily subjected to criticism. In so far as it is institutionalised in the school system, the school, textbooks and the classroom, the traditional curriculum, however critical I may be of it, is not easy to escape. And as the observation of my Norwegian acquaintance suggests, the traditional curriculum is a force strong enough to resist all the pressures of a centralised educational system where, as is the case in Norway, policies are based on a remarkable degree of social consensus.

Philosophers are likely to be impatient of the traditional curriculum because it is so badly formulated, and its position is so strong that its adherents can afford to neglect justification of their position. Social reformers who, unable to create a new society through political action, hope to do so through the schools are also impatient of the traditional curriculum. It holds the old order in place.

But it is not necessary to question the school either philosophically or socially to want to change the curriculum. Even in its own terms the traditional curriculum is unsuccessful. The greater part of any population is not in the traditional sense either educated or accomplished.

This is not because teachers and educational administrators are uncommonly

stupid or lazy or inefficient. It is just that schools are, like factories or shops or football teams, ordinary and imperfect human institutions. We sometimes appear to forget that this much will always be inevitable. Perhaps the school's commitment to educational ideals and high principles fosters optimism.

Curriculum change is necessary and, if it is of real significance, difficult. It is bound to be partial and piecemeal even in centralised systems where educational edicts by no means always command those to whom they are addressed. It always has to fight the comfort of tradition. "Habits are comfortable, easy and anxiety-free".<sup>4</sup> For a teacher, taking up a new curriculum is as difficult as going on to a rigorous diet.

In short, it is difficult to relate new ideas to realities.

The problem is to produce a specification to which teachers can work in the classroom, and thus to provide the basis for a new tradition. That specification needs to catch the implication of ideas for practice.

A curriculum is a specification which can be worked to in practice.

A new curriculum will never be secure until it accumulates around it a tradition. The strain of a uniformly self-conscious and thoughtful approach to curriculum is in the long run intolerable. No doubt self-critical analysis is always desirable, but not analysis of everything. New curricula, too, however much the idealist may regret it, must develop comfortable, easy and anxiety-free habits – though not be captured by them.

A new curriculum expresses ideas in terms of practice and disciplines practice by ideas. It is, I would maintain, the best way of dealing in educational ideas. In curriculum the educationist's feet are kept on the earth by the continual need to submit his proposals to the critical scrutiny of teachers working with them in practice. And because they are related to practice, ideas become the possession of the teacher.

The ideas of a curriculum must be understood, and understood in their relation to practice. The practice of a curriculum must be subject to review in the light of understanding of ideas, but much of it must be learnable as skills and habits. All action cannot be reflective and deliberate.

If curriculum change depends on the writing of specifications of ideas in terms of practice, how are we to do this? There appear to be some working in the curriculum field who believe we can do this by taking thought. I believe that we can only do so by observing classrooms. If a curriculum specification is to inform practice, it must be founded on practice.

The central problem of curriculum is in curriculum change and consists in the task of relating ideas to practice by producing – in whatever form – a specification which shall express an idea or set of ideas in terms of practice with sufficient detail and complexity for the ideas to be submitted to the criticism of practice and modified by practice with due regard to coherence and consistency as well as piecemeal "effectiveness".

Such specifications can only be written from the study of classrooms.

It follows that a new curriculum must be implemented in practice before it is defined. A group of people, usually including curriculum workers and teachers, must work together and in dialogue on defined problems and tasks until they begin

to develop a new tradition which is a response to those problems and tasks. This tradition must then be translated into a specification which transmits the experience captured by the experimental teachers to their colleagues at large.

Exploration must precede survey, survey must precede charting.

This is the basic justification for curriculum experiment.

## Notes and references

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- † Originally published in: *Cambridge Journal of Education* 5: 2, 104–108.
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## 2 Bloom's taxonomy

### A philosophical critique (1)

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The Curriculum Reform Movement in this country has not so far developed any distinctive theoretical foundations in what American scholars call the field of Curriculum. No doubt historians of Education will be able to provide a coherent explanation of this, not unrelated perhaps to the fact that the prime mover in English Curriculum Reform, the Schools Council, has seen its central task to be the production of materials for use in schools: financial considerations have allowed some Project Directors no more than a quick glance at their theoretical foundations. The practical results of this policy will have to be evaluated in due course. However, the fact is that Curriculum Developers and Planners in this country have inevitably looked to American Curriculum Theory to provide a rationale or a theoretical foundation for their problems of curriculum construction and evaluation.

The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives<sup>1</sup> is one of the major works in the field of Curriculum, to be ranked alongside a slimmer but equally influential work, Preparing Instructional Objectives, by R. F. Mager. In this country the influence of the Taxonomy grows apace. The North West Regional Curriculum Development Group,<sup>2</sup> perhaps the most systematic attempt on a large scale to tackle the problems of raising the school leaving age, sees it as a 'model for pupil growth'. Wiseman and Pidgeon in their missionary monograph Curriculum Evaluation<sup>3</sup> see it, with Scriven's amendments, as a crucial contribution to planning and evaluation. In articles on Craft Education,<sup>4</sup> and Further Education<sup>5</sup> and again in a recent book on Environmental Studies,<sup>6</sup> the Taxonomy is used as theoretical underpinning.

If empirical validation of the Taxonomy has so far been relatively scarce, philosophical criticism has been positively scanty.<sup>7</sup> It seems appropriate therefore to devote some attention to the philosophical issues the Taxonomy raises, particularly as they occur in the first volume: the Cognitive Domain. If the proffered criticisms are valid, Projects which depend on the Taxonomy must be theoretically suspect. The overriding criticism is that the Taxonomy operates with a naive theory of knowledge which cannot be ignored however classificatory and neutral its intentions: this will be developed in this paper and in a subsequent article by Richard Pring.