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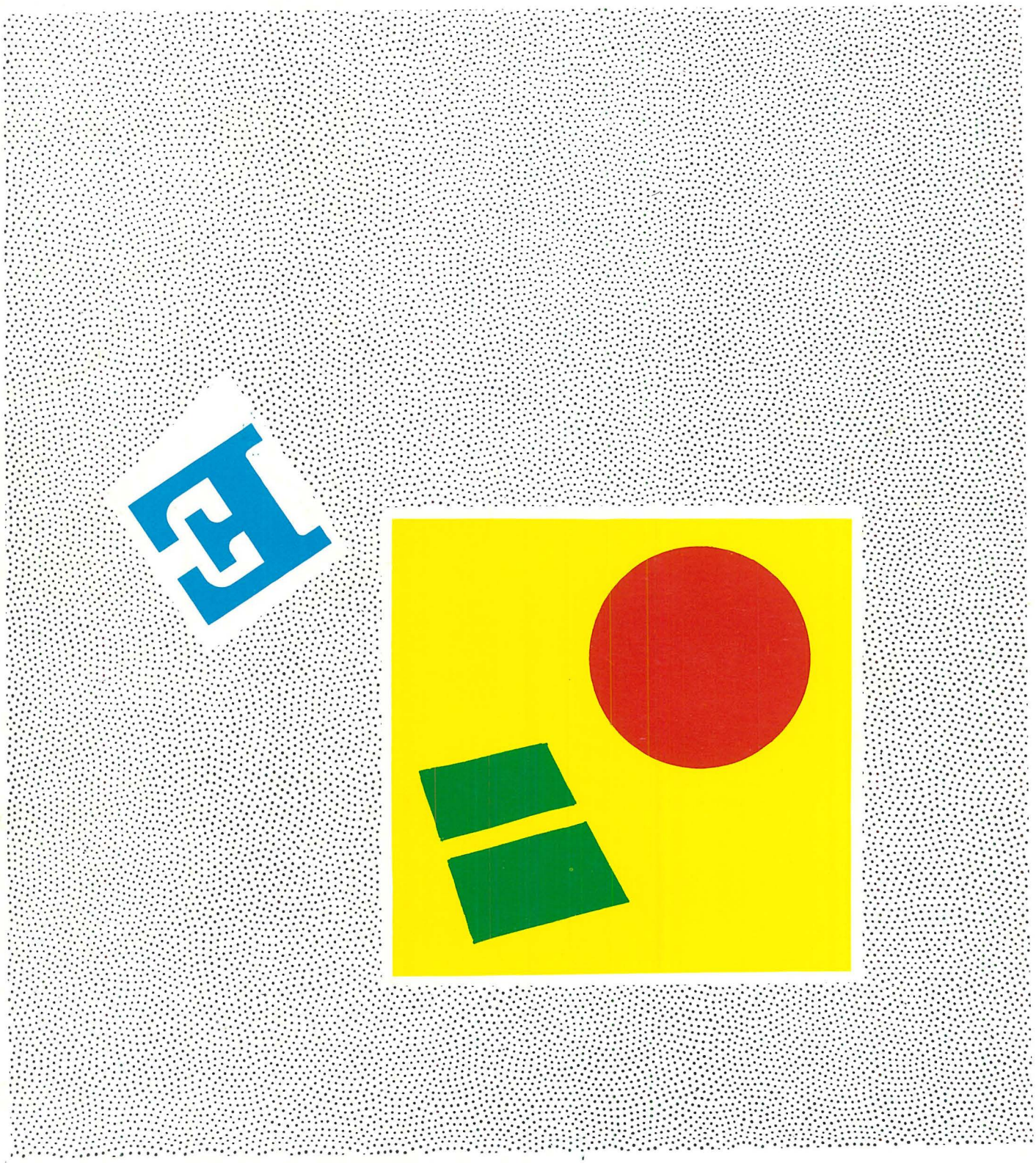
University of Malta



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OPINIONS

Opinions expressed in this journal are those of the authors and need not necessarily reflect those of the Faculty of Education or the Editorial Board.

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Education is published twice yearly as the journal of the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta.

The editorial board welcomes articles that contribute to a broad understanding of educational issues, particularly those related to Malta.

Submitted articles are referred at least once and copies of referees' comments will be sent to the author as appropriate. The editors reserve the right to make editorial changes in all manuscripts to improve clarity and to conform to the style of the journal. Photographs, drawings, cartoons and other illustrations are welcome; however authors are responsible for obtaining written permission and copyright release when required. A manuscript, including all references, charts, figures and tables must not exceed 12 double spaced typed pages. Notes and references must be kept to a minimum and should be placed in single quotation marks but long quotations should from separate, indented and single spaced paragraphs. Notes and references must be numbered and the bibliography at the end should contain the following:

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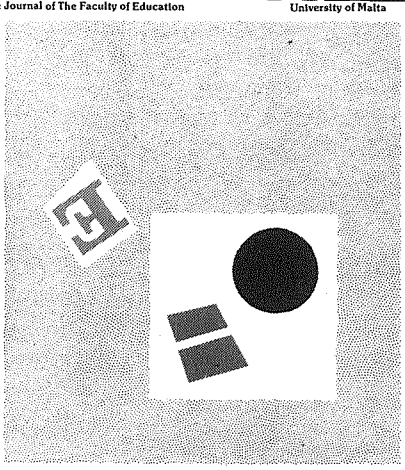

Editorial

The Faculty journal has, from time to time, featured articles addressing special themes such as media and education, work and lifelong education, streaming, critical education, and adult education. The dedication of a whole issue to a specific theme carries with it a number of distinct advantages: it helps researchers, authors and readers focus on particular aspects related to educational theory and practice, and can be instrumental in generating critical insights as well as establishing new agendas for action. In addition, such special issues have the added advantage of offering diverse perspectives - theoretical and ideological - on the same topic. It is for reasons such as these that the editorial board is planning to feature other special issues in the future, and have asked guest editors from the Faculty of Education to co-ordinate journal publications on the following topics: special education, gender and education, environmental education, and historical perspectives on Maltese education. These topics and issues coincide not only with Faculty staff's research interests, but also with some of the more pressing problems and challenges facing education in Malta.

Most of the papers which appear in the special issues are solicited by the editorial board and by the guest editor of that particular issue. The board also receives articles which, while not relevant to a theme for which a special issue is planned, nevertheless have important things to say and make a substantial contribution to the development of further understanding of education. The journal will therefore continue to publish such papers from time to time in an issue which, like the present one, deals with a number of different educational areas.

In this issue we have articles by four Faculty staff members. Joseph Fenech provides a historical context for the development of cultures of teaching in Malta, focusing on the role Canon Pullicino, the Chief Director of Elementary Schools in 19th century Malta, played in promoting change. Professor Kenneth Wain looks closely at the link between knowledge and power in the evaluation of history and social science textbooks. Professor Wain's recent publication, entitled "*The Maltese National Curriculum: A Critical Evaluation*" is reviewed by Ronald Sultana. Frank Ventura examines the educational implications of the language used in the teaching of the science curriculum.

The issue also features papers by two foreign authors. Ingvar Sandling addresses a topic which is increasing in importance in Malta as the idea of mainstreaming students with learning disabilities gains more acceptance. Finally, we are privileged to publish an interview with Professor Michael Apple, who is internationally renowned for his studies on the curriculum.

Laying The Foundations For Cultures Of Teaching

J. Fenech

Introduction

The origins and development of Malta's system of elementary education is a legacy of its colonial past. For many years after it had become a British protectorate in 1800, the civil commissioners were indifferent to the educational needs of the masses and the first attempts at introducing elementary education were made by charitable individuals and groups like the Normal School Society which opened schools in the capital, Valletta, and the three cities in 1819 (Zammit Mangion, 1951). It was only after the recommendations made by the Royal Commission in 1838 (Austen/Lewis, 1839) that the State began to assume responsibility for the education of the masses of the poor.

Before the more determined efforts of Governor O'Ferrall in the late 1840's however, elementary schooling in Malta was still very much disorganized although, in terms of school provision, there had been a marked improvement since the initial steps that had been taken in the 1820's (1). The quality, however, was bad: the schools were organized according to the monitorial system of instruction, which appeared to be very inadequately operated; the teachers were uneducated and untrained; the monitors were unable to cope with the tasks assigned; and, the whole system was very inefficiently administered (Badger, 1838; A Maltese, 1847; Bonavia, 1849; Pullicino, 1850). In 1849, on the recommendations of the Council of Government, shortly after assuming office, O'Ferrall, the British Governor, chose Canon Pullicino, a university educated priest, as Director of the Elementary Schools on the Island. Pullicino was aware of the deficiencies in the rudimentary provision for elementary instruction before he was appointed Chief Director and, on his return from his European tour of elementary schools, he was resolved to make a clean slate before embarking on a reform programme of his own (Pullicino, 1850a, 1850b).

Pullicino presented his evaluation report to Governor O'Ferrall in July 1850 and it was immediately adopted as the basis for the reform of the elementary schools. As a first measure Pullicino kept the schools closed after the summer holidays of 1850. Instead he called all the teachers, including the new recruits, to the University in Valletta in October for a three month course aimed at preparing them adequately for the implementation of the reforms he had planned. This move was intended to convey to the teachers that the month of July did not only mark the end of a scholastic year but the abolition of a system which had fallen into disrepute and which needed to be replaced by a better one.

The time gap between the closing of the schools in July 1850 and their reopening in January 1851 placed the teachers in a mood of anticipation of a new beginning and a total break with the recent past. The monitorial system, which had come under heavy criticism during the 1840s, was abandoned for what was thought to be a more efficient system. New programmes were prescribed, textbooks adopted, a uniform time-table established and pupils organized in homogeneous groups for instruction. Arrangements for annual inspections and examinations were made and a Model School to prepare for and consolidate the innovations envisaged was set up.

Pullicino's acquaintance with the educational systems of Britain, Ireland, and a number of European countries, like France, Bavaria, Switzerland and Italy, as well as his reading in the educational writings of the period, were the source of the many ideas which helped him not only to plan an elementary educational system, but also to begin to articulate a rationale to underpin it. In this article I intend to discuss Pullicino's innovative measures in order to support my argument that they became the origins of cultures of teaching which survived a century and a half. Pullicino's single-handed efforts to set up an educational system place the issue of agency in bringing about changes in social systems to the fore. He was a true believer in the sense captured by Smith's et al. study (1986) of the innovative staff at Kensington's elementary school. Although it cannot be denied that, "individual careers are tied to wider political and economic events" (Goodson and Ball, 1985:11), and, therefore, the historical

context sets parameters for individual actions, a forceful personality like Pullicino, working with a broad remit from the British authorities, had the opportunity to determine to a significant degree the course of events. The innovations he introduced in Malta's fledgling system of education are illustrative of this. Let me start with the introduction of the classroom system first.

Schools into classrooms

As I have already pointed out, up to 1850 the elementary schools in Malta were organized on the monitorial system. It was invented separately by Bell and Lancaster in the last decade of the eighteenth century and was intended to teach efficiently and cheaply large numbers of children (Hamilton 1989). Pullicino gives a succinct description of it as practised in Malta's schools at the time in his "Summary of the Lessons on Method" (Pullicino, 1858:10):

> "The school was divided into small circles under a monitor (a pupil from the next higher class) with the master, who did not teach, directing the movement of the circles. In these schools nothing could be taught but reading, writing and arithmetic; the other branches of instruction were beyond the capabilities of the monitor".

Pullicino was not happy with this teaching arrangement, mainly because he believed that the acquisition of the rudimentary skills of reading, writing and counting would be far worse than no teaching at all. He made this clear in the report of 1850:

> "If the pupils are given only the means of teaching themselves, by teaching them only to read and write, they will be receiving nothing but a weapon which, often times, not knowing how to use, they could do harm to themselves and to others". (Pullicino, 1850a:8).

It was a belief which prompted his peremptory statement to the teachers who had assembled to hear his first lecture on method in October 1850: "If the children are not taught well", he told them, "it will be better not to teach them at all" (Pullicino, 1850b:20). And, for him, teaching them well meant making them learn what was morally and intellectually unobjectionable from a Roman Catholic point of view.

Pullicino's desire to change the quality of teaching in the schools compelled him to turn his back on the monitorial system, even though the alternative he adopted was costlier in terms of finance (Pullicino, 1852) and teaching power (Keenan, 1878). He needed more adequate schools and resources as well as teachers to implement what Hamilton (1977) calls "the classroom system". In this case, however, he waived the principles of administrative convenience (Hargreaves, 1986) in order to introduce an innovation in which he firmly believed. At the end of the second year of its implementation, Pullicino (1852:7) described it in approving terms as follows:

> "According to this new method, every school is divided into two, three or more classes depending on the abilities of the pupils who attend it. The number of pupils in each class is limited to not more than fifty. with the larger classes separated into two or more divisions and entrusting each division to a teacher or his deputy so that it can be taught simultaneously".

This brief description encapsulates a pattern of school organization which was emerging at the time in the Anglo-Saxon world: the graded, multi-class, multi-teacher school (Hamilton, 1989). This system created the need to have permanent groups of children moving through the grades "as a cohort" (Payne and Hustler, 1980; Hamilton, 1989). During the first five years of Pullicino's directorship, although the schools had been organized into classrooms, the promotion of children to the next higher class was rather haphazardly done. In 1855 he visited educational institutions in Italy, Switzerland and Bavaria and was struck by the order with which public instruction was being conducted in those countries. He borrowed that pattern of class organization and prescribed its implementation in a circular sent to the teachers on 2nd January, 1856. Pullicino gave the following reasons for the introduction of this innovation in his annual report on the Education Department for that year:

> "It was customary for the pupils in our elementary schools to be promoted from one class to the next at indeterminate intervals according to level of knowledge they had acquired. However, this rendered the classification of pupils difficult on the one hand, and the period of their education uncertain on the other. I felt it appropriate, therefore, to modify the organization of teaching and establish a fixed period of time for each part". (Pullicino, 1856:7).

The School worked according to a sequenced programme spanning over three or four years (2), tested annually and divided into lessons according to a prescribed time-table.

This system eventually evolved into what Lortie (1975) calls "an egg-crate" design of school-building with which we are so familiar (3): The enclosed space of the classroom with its traditional paraphernalia - desks, cupboards, blackboards, chalk, textbooks and copybooks - has provided for so long the structural context of

teaching. Westbury (1980:90) gives us a faithful description of it which is worth quoting at length:

> "When we look at schools we see, in traditional settings at least, row upon row of classrooms; and when we look inside these classrooms we see desks, a teacher's table up front and a chalkboard on the front wall of the room. Each such room has seating for thirty or so students and only a limited amount of floor space. When school is in session we usually see a teacher standing or sitting in his place up front and students sitting in their desks, listening to the teacher talk, interacting with him during question-answer exchanges and occasional discussions, or else "working", answering questions in workbooks or worksheets or writing laboriously".

Pullicino saw this system in operation in English elementary schools and immediately realised that it was far more advantageous than the monitorial system. The rationale he gave for it is a direct derivation from the writings of Stow, especially his "The Training System" (1836), which featured among the three hundred or so books available at the Model School (4). Stow's notion of simultaneous instruction as one in which "the mind of the child is at all times under the influence of the master" (quoted in Hamilton, 1989:103) is not dissimilar from Pullicino's who defined it in the following terms:

> "Teaching is called simultaneous when the attention of the pupils is focused contemporaneously on what the teacher says or does, as well as on what each one of the pupils says or does. It is a method which has the advantage of making it possible for the teacher to extend instruction and raise its intellectual level". (Pullicino, 1858:11).

Having created an arrangement for simultaneous teaching, Pullicino recommended in his lectures at the University and demonstrated in the Model School a teaching method which he called "the Dialogical Method" and which later came to be called "the recitation" (Rice, 1893). This is how he explained it to the teachers:

> "This is practised by posing questions to the pupils, sometimes individually, at other times to the whole class. In posing questions the teacher has to ensure that this is done in a way that the questions are addressed to the whole class. He must exact the attention of the whole class; otherwise the simultaneity of instruction will be lost" (Pullicino, 1858:26).

Very consciously, therefore, Pullicino selected the teaching method he considered suitable for the elementary classroom, gave demonstrations of it in the Model School, and oversaw its implementation in the schools. In his visits to the schools some twenty-eight years later, Keenan, the Commissioner appointed by the British Government to report on the Maltese educational system, (1878:13) witnessed the extent of Pullicino's success in implementing the recitation pedagogy:

> "Each teacher had the same set of questions, and each put the questions in the same phraseology as every other teacher. The pupils, in their turn, as might be naturally expected, rang out in school after school, a string of almost identical replies. It was all rote; there was no intelligence in it".

Keenan could not refrain from reiterating his disapproval of the practice in this emphatic comment later on in his report:

> "I would say that these lectures and conferences, whatever good they may accomplish, happen in another direction to do a certain amount of harm. As previously stated, the great blot upon the teaching of all the schools is the system of rote, a system which prevails to an enormous extent in the Model School. And the very *ipsissima verba* of the questions as they are delivered, and of the answers as - in a follow-the-leader chorus - they are received in the Model School, are heard in every school on the Island". (Keenan, 1878: 16-17).

Teacher-centred Instruction

Keenan's observations of the teaching in the schools carry the implication that the teacher was at the centre of the educational relationship. The classroom system, together with the recitation method which it generated, required the close and constant vigilance of the teacher. The teacher was the pivot around which all educational activity in the classroom revolved. As Grace (1978: 190) has perceptively observed, "a strongly teacher-directed pedagogy" was a conspicuous characteristic of elementary schools in the nineteenth century. And, as a nineteenth century educator very much aware of educational management and organization in foreign countries, Pullicino established what Cuban (1979) calls "teacher-centred instruction" as an overriding educational principle.

In his first lecture on pedagogy he asserted dogmatically:

> "For the reform of popular education one thing is needed: and that is the teachers. They must be efficient teachers, however, whose teaching skills will make good for any lack of books, equipment and even pupil motivation". (Pullicino, 1850a:25-26).

Placing all the emphasis on the teacher was not only a mechanism for the control of mass schooling, as Grace (1985) argues, but also a solution to the problems posed by insufficient resources. Elementary teachers in Malta became, for this reason, the only resource available for the transmission of knowledge.

Surprisingly, however, teacher-centred instruction adopted as a strategy to achieve pedagogical efficiency in a situation characterized by lack of adequate resources has proved "invulnerable to instructional reform" (Cuban, 1982:26). Cuban's (1982:27) research in the history of pedagogy as well as inside classrooms, is reflected in the description he gives of a teacher-centred environment:

> "... where the teacher generally teaches to the whole group of students in a class, shows high concern for whether students are listening, concentrates mostly on subject-matter and academic skills, and, in general controls what is taught, when, and under what conditions".

Pullicino's endorsement of teacher-centredness went beyond this and led him to be prescriptive about the teacher's position in the classroom. In a circular he sent to the teachers on 22 March 1860, he rebuked all those teachers who were not conforming to his regulation prohibiting them from taking a seated position:

> "Teachers are reminded that they cannot deviate even slightly from the established norm: not to make use of chairs, if not when it is strictly necessary. They should always stick to the practice of giving all lessons in a standing position so that they will be able to imprint more effectively on the pupils' minds those ideas they have to communicate".

Streaming

The organization of pupils for instruction was a problem which educational planners in the nineteenth century began to face with the emergence of the classroom school; the graded curriculum and the recitation method of teaching. Although in the early stages of the introduction of mass schooling criteria for the grouping of pupils in classrooms remained undecided (Hamilton, 1989), by the 1860s, they began to take definite shape. The majority of education systems of countries on both sides of the Atlantic began to adopt homogeneous ability as the criterion for grouping pupils in classrooms. This was necessitated, as Hamilton (1989:128-9) suggested in his fascinating study of the history of schooling, by the "batch processing" model of school organization which assumed that:

> "children were to stay together in their class, were to be taught collectively to the required standard, and thereafter, were to be promoted as a class from grade to grade".

I find this a more plausible explanation than Simon's (1971:201) who argues that the rigid classification of pupils according to standards of attainment "arose directly from the school grant system known as payment-by-results brought in by the Revised Code of Regulations of 1862". This was further exacerbated first by the practice of selecting pupils for entry to the pupil-teacher centres and, subsequently, by the introduction of the scholarship class at the beginning of this century. I consider these were factors which reinforced streaming but were certainly not its direct cause (5).

For Pullicino the classification of pupils by ability formed part of the rationale of simultaneous instruction:

> "A school organized on the simultaneous system of teaching can be divided into as many classes as the different ability of the pupils demand. And there will be as many divisions in each class as the number of pupils requires". (Pullicino, 1858: 10).

A factor which rendered selection more rigid was created by the need to recruit pupil-teachers for the further training in the Model School. And it was in the Model School itself that streaming was rigidly practised. This led to two immediate and deleterious consequences. First was the enormous number of pupils who were compelled to repeat the classes even for five years in succession, especially the first class (6). This led to a pyramidal pattern of school organization marked by a heavily populated first class, taking 66% of the school population, and a sharply reduced fourth class with less than 4% (Keenan, 1878:8). Secondly, it led teachers to focus their attention on the high ability classes to the total neglect of the lower ones. Pullicino was very conscious of this, so much so that he had to warn them through a circular to refrain from focusing their energies solely on the examination class and begin to give equal attention to the repeater classes (Pullicino, 1861:43).

The teachers did not appear to have heeded Pullicino's admonition as Keenan (1878:18) was complaining of the same bad practice eighteen years later. The observation he made about the Model School in his report is telling enough. He put it in the form of an analogy:

> "This is a school in which there are what gardeners understand by the designation "Big gooseberries", to produce which, three fourths of the fruit are sacrificed. The comparatively small upper class are the big gooseberries".

Keenan was evidently impressed by the contrasting curricular experiences of pupils in the elementary schools. The implementation of selection policies entailed an extreme application of the Darwinian theory of "survival of the fittest" which was adopted as a regulating principle of

social affairs in the nineteenth century (Mathews, 1985). The way it was implemented in Malta's elementary schools offended Keenan's sensibilities.

Structuring Teachers' Work

The earlier sections of this chapter have shown that, to a very large extent, Pullicino defined the teachers' situation. He divided the school into separate classrooms, each with a maximum number of pupils to which he assigned a teacher or assistant, selected pupils according to grades obtained in end-of-year examinations he himself conducted, provided the resources, like blackboards, slates and writing materials for the pupils and imposed a teacher-centred pedagogy.

He went further than this, however. His obstinate concern for order led him to stipulate how the teachers' time inside classrooms was to be spent, by providing a uniform time-table to all the schools. Even a cursory glance at it will reveal the curricular structure characterized by fragmentation of time and subjects of instruction.

Time-Table for the Elementary Schools - 1850

8.00	Maltese/Italian Reading
9.00	Writing
10.00	Arithmetic
11.00	Recess
2.00	Maltese/Italian/English Reading
2.45	Arithmetic
3.30	Religious Catechism
4.00	Dismissal

In his analysis of the work context of teachers, Denscombe (1980:285) argues that time, like materials, is a scarce resource and it is organized in such a way as to define to a significant degree the parameters within which teachers work:

> "It defines for teachers the nature of the group of pupils to be taught (age and perhaps ability); it defines what is to be taught (subject) and how much time is available for inculcating the desired knowledge and, although the teachers' working day is not restricted to lesson periods, the time-table does provide powerful parameters for their activity over the larger part of the working day".

Keenan realized the extent to which the elementary teachers were constrained and the educational consequences of Pullicino's strictures. His comment in the report is couched in a language which strikes a familiar note in the educational writings of today:

> "The teacher is a mere automaton. That of which he ought to be the best judge - the distribution of his own time and the judicious employment of the time of his pupils - is entirely determined for him by the Chief Director. He might ere now have left the primary function of organization to the teachers themselves". (Keenan, 1878:7).

Pullicino's stance in this case marked a total lack of trust in the teachers which has continued to characterize the relationship between the Education Department at the centre and the schools at the peripheries.

In addition to structuring the teachers' time in a very rigid manner, Pullicino emphasized the need for the maintenance of discipline inside classrooms. His notion of discipline betrays a concern for what Goodlad (1975:13) called "the regularities of schooling" which he defined as "fixed, recurrent routines by means of which schools conduct their daily business". Regular, uninterrupted activity of both teachers and pupils indicated a well-managed school. In his lectures on Method he expressed himself on this subject clearly enough:

> "Discipline itself demands alacrity and regularity of movements required by the classroom tasks and teaching. It is the creature of habit, acquired through orderly, uninterrupted repetition of the same acts". (Pullicino, 1858:13).

This is not far different from what is understood nowadays by the ideology of "business" (Sharp and Green, 1975) which stipulates that the teacher must ensure that pupils are kept continuously occupied with classroom tasks. With the adoption of the classroom system, of course, it became increasingly incumbent on the individual teacher, isolated as he was in the classroom, to maintain order and control.

But, perhaps, what greatly contributed to Pullicino's definition of the teachers' world were the syllabus and textbooks he prescribed for the schools. Pullicino's periodic renewal of the syllabus written in 1850, together with either the compilation of textbooks or the adoption of foreign ones (7), established a tradition for curriculum development in Malta. This practice, of course, was not idiosyncratic to the local situation but was part of a more universal strategy to systematize mass schooling (Hamilton, 1989). In Malta's case, however, it became a permanent feature of its educational culture. This strategy constituted what Goodlad (1975) called "a meliorist" approach to curriculum renewal which entails the provision of new textbooks, syllabuses, training and advice so that teachers can perform their work better.

Besides the systematization of mass schooling textbook prescription was also the means

to establish uniformity of curricular experience. This was part of Pullicino's conscious design as the following comment in his first report indicates:

> "And for instruction to be determined in such a way as not to vary according to the whims of those who direct it (i.e. the teachers), and, therefore, be different in the various schools on the Island, it will be necessary to compile and prescribe textbooks appropriate to the various classes in the schools. These books, which we call "books for the classes", will contain all the rudiments of knowledge which teachers are expected to communicate to the pupils". (Pullicino, 1850:14).

Furthermore, through the compilation of textbooks, Pullicino exerted a control over subject-matter which he considered morally acceptable for pupils to learn. And, in Malta's case, given the extremely low level of education of the elementary teachers, textbooks were the best available means to assist them in acquiring the necessary knowledge to pass on to the pupils. As a mechanism to ensure that knowledge had, in fact, been effectively passed on, as well as to have some reliable basis for the promotion of pupils from one class to another, Pullicino devised examinations at the national level. His only criteria, therefore, for an evaluation of curricular provision in the schools and teacher effectiveness were the results obtained in the annual examinations as his circular to the teachers in 1856 amply demonstrates:

> "At the end of each scholastic year an examination will assess exactly the learning of the pupils in all the schools. Those who pass will be promoted; the others will repeat the year. The month reserved for examinations will be September". (Pullicino, 1861:23).

Although it was intended for the elementary schools, Pullicino's curriculum followed a European pattern based, as it was, on the traditional academic disciplines. Through it Pullicino laid the groundwork for what Connel (1985:87) called "the competitive academic curriculum". This is a curriculum which is structured around hierarchically arranged, university-based disciplines consisting of bodies of facts and information to be transferred to passive pupils and tested at regular intervals.

Conclusion

This article took a particular, as well as a highly significant, point in Malta's educational development, when, through the efforts of one man, a national educational system was changed.

This involved the abolition of the schoolhouse and mutual instruction and the adoption of a format of schooling characterized by the classroom school and simultaneous instruction. This transition was legitimated by a carefully articulated rationale addressed not only to the elementary schoolteachers, who were expected to make the system work, but also to the Maltese upper class as well as the British authorities represented by the Governor. Undoubtedly, it was the effort of one man, Canon Pullicino, the Chief Director of the Elementary Schools.

"Laying the foundations of cultures of Teaching", the title of this chapter, needs some explanation. First of all, Pullicino, the agent of this revolutionary change in Malta's educational system, succeeded, within his thirty year tenure, in giving rise to structures within which present-day schooling processes are conducted. Secondly, it wants to make the point that attention to the context of education will lead to enhanced understanding of educational practice. Finally, it implies that curriculum and pedagogical practice involve the sharing of beliefs, norms and values among those who engage in it.

Hamilton (1989) points out that for a long stretch in the middle of the nineteenth century, pedagogical practice was marked by stability. This coincided with Pullicino's tenure (1850-80). Besides, for many years, Pullicino had no rivals to contend with and the British authorities had placed their trust in him (8). Furthermore, his appointment occurred at a time of complete consensus at the national level about the need to promote the elementary schooling of the population. Such a favourable situation reduced the constraints within which, Pullicino, the agent of educational change, could operate.

Notes

1. Between 1820 and 1850 the number of elementary schools on the Island increased from three to twenty-eight.
2. Schools in the big towns and suburbs offered a four-year course while the programme of the schools in the villages and rural areas spanned over three years.
3. With the exception of two schools, one in a suburb of Valletta and one in Gozo, there were no purpose-built schools in Pullicino's time. Pullicino's repeated recommendations to the British authorities remained unheeded for many years, until he lost all hope of ever obtaining a favourable response. (Keenan, 1878).
4. According to Keenan (1878) the holdings in the Teachers' Library at the Model School were very suitable. Keenan writes about it in eulogous terms:

   > "There is scarcely a book that a primary school teacher in pursuit of the studies of his profession could desire to consult which is not found on its shelves. Indeed, were there a Training College in the place, this

books, aids and appliances would amply be sufficient for its wants". (p. 21).

5. In America, for instance, W.A. Wells, the superintendent of Chicago public schools in the middle of the nineteenth century, classified children very strictly according to attainment. His ideas on the organization of pupils for teaching are contained in his book "The Graded School: A Graded Course of Instruction for Public Schools", New York, 1862, quoted in Hamilton (1989).

6. Keenan (1878:8) gives the following statistics:

   First Class: 5162
   Second Class: 1592
   Third Class: 799
   Fourth Class: 193

   He refers to the first class as "a formidable deadweight upon the schools".

7. Pullicino in fact adopted the textbooks prepared for the Irish National Schools for the teaching of English, Arithmetic and Geography.

8. Towards the end of the 1870s this trust began to dissolve when the British authorities gave their full support to those who were calling for Pullicino's removal and the replacement of Italian language and culture with that of Britain. Eventually, this came about with the implementation of Keenan's recommendations in the 1880s.

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Evaluating History and Social Studies Textbooks: some non-technical considerations*

Kenneth Wain

Introduction

The search for a set of universal criteria with which to evaluate history and social studies textbooks cannot be an easy one; indeed it seems doomed from the beginning. Criteria can be of many different kinds but even as one tries to enumerate them for these subjects one could find oneself challenged with a very fundamental question which, answered affirmatively, would abort the exercise even before it is begun: should one have textbooks in these subjects at all? As I hope to show later this is far from being an idle question or a red herring. At the same time such textbooks already exist, they are in ready demand from teachers, their number on the market is growing, and they are not likely to be drawn from circulation in the schools and from the market in the foreseeable future no matter what some pedagogists and theorists like myself may say. What may be encouraging, in some countries at least, is that teachers and the public today appear, in general, to be more discerning, more concerned about the quality of the books on offer, and perhaps more discriminating because there are so many text books and schemes around to choose from when they are involved in the choice. In other countries the choice is made for the teachers by a centralised public authority. But whoever chooses and whatever the choice, the existence of a situation where choice is necessary, of itself, creates a demand for guidance on how one should look at the competing textbooks on offer; for criteria of evaluation.

Evaluating Interests

Who, looking into the matter more closely, is likely to be interested in these criteria? Those who are involved in the production of the textbooks would clearly qualify as among those most directly interested, but, at the other end of the spectrum, the general public also since it has a very large stake in the quality of the education of its future members in general, and most particularly in their education as future citizens; an education towards which learning history and social studies, in particular, clearly have the potential to contribute. Again, the partners on the production side itself, who have different roles to play in the preparation and production of a textbook, have different interests. So whose criteria should we be discussing? No doubt each interested party will want to bring his/her own particular interests and priorities to the debate. Thus, for instance, for the publisher, as a business concern, an outstanding consideration in evaluating a book will be its prospective marketability. From the publisher's point of view high financial turnover and good profit will be a crucial criterion in its evaluation. The user, on the other hand, if one has the teacher in mind, will be mostly uninterested in production costs and profits and will primarily evaluate the book as a pedagogical tool.

The criteria that will interest authors will be complex. The author will also, like the publisher, but for different reasons perhaps, be interested in the marketability of the book. Like the teacher s/he will also be concerned with its potential as a pedagogical tool since this is what textbooks are written for, ultimately. But besides the book's methodology which must bridge the gap with the teacher, the author will be concerned with how the content will be evaluated scientifically and epistemologically, with how it will be assessed by fellow specialists. The stake of public authorities in a textbook, on the other hand, obviously varies with the kind of textbook that it is. Public authorities, evidently, have an important responsibility in guaranteeing educational standards for the general public, they will therefore, necessarily, be interested in the educational potential of the textbook. But another responsibility falls within their brief; that of safeguarding the socio-political and cultural

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interests of the community. This casts them in the role of censor, and the responsibility attached to this role is likely to feature very strongly among their concerns when they are evaluating history and social studies textbooks.

If a "good" textbook were simply one that heeds to satisfy the author, the publisher, the educational authorities, the teacher, and possibly the wider public also, the defining general criteria for it may not be such a difficult task; there are certain concerns that are particular to the different interested parties but there are clearly others also that cut across all interests. The matter, however, is not really so simple, particularly with regards to history and social studies books. But before I expand on this statement, I want to refer to one party interested in evaluating textbooks which I have not mentioned so far and which I have left apart precisely because its evaluation is not commonly considered or given weight, albeit that it is, arguably, the most concerned of all. This is the learner or pupil who is the one who is expected to learn from the textbook at the end of the day either directly or through the mediation of the teacher. How much notice is taken of how pupils evaluate the textbooks that they are required to use? This is a different question from the question of how their teachers evaluate them, or the question of how they actually learn from textbooks. Should it be regarded as an important question? The customary paternalistic assumption is that the pupils' opinions on curriculum matters are not significant or important. The choice of what they need to learn and how must be made for them since they are too immature to establish their preferences in a rationally informed way for themselves. I do not myself think that the assumption that teachers, public authorities, and so on are necessarily the best qualified persons to choose on behalf of and in the pupils' best interests is always a well-founded one, either empirically or morally, particularly with the older pupils. It may well be in the choice of textbooks where what is involved is a technical competence which they may not have. But, in any case, research into pupils' preferences from the point of view of their own demands on textbooks should clearly be of crucial importance in evaluating both because the textbooks are ultimately for them and because the matter affects the effectiveness of the textbooks themselves as learning media.

On the other hand the question of who should be considered the best guardian of the pupils' interests, if it is allowed that their lack of technical competence requires it, cannot be left dangling. I have already noted the role public authorities play in guaranteeing educational standards and vetting textbooks in the public interest. There should, in theory, clearly not be any discrepancy between the public interest and the interest of the pupil; the two should coincide. But public authorities may not see, or they may be mistaken about, this coincidence, or they may simply judge badly or have the wrong motives; for instance they may, for selfish reasons of some kind, be prepared to sacrifice the pupil's real interests in the interest of narrower considerations, political or economic. Teachers also may be, and they often are, misguided about the real interests of their pupils. Perhaps the best guardians of their children's interests are their parents. Recent research evidence in Western European countries points to a growing interest among parents in the textbooks used by their children (although it suggests also that this interest is mainly confined to middle class parents). But how informed is that interest, and what are the criteria parents adopt to decide which of their children's textbooks are of good quality and which are not? The reaction this question would seem to provoke is that perhaps the matter of choice is best left to the "expert".

But experts and authors may, and very often do, confuse their technical or specialist interests with the interests of the pupils. When this happens that "gap", described by Dewey, occurs between the subject matter and the child which makes the former inaccessible and uninteresting to the latter. The "gap" appears when textbooks ignore the child and present the material instead from the point of view of the specialist or expert, in terms of the "logic" of the subject itself rather than of the psychology of the learner. The obvious ideal is that textbooks should harmonise the relevant psychological considerations, particularly the learning readiness and the likely motivational factors that interest the targeted pupil, with the internal demands of the subject matter. But this does not always happen in practice; everything depends on the authors who write the textbooks and on their perceptiveness. Dewey's immediate point was that the "gap" could be closed only if the presentation of the subject matter is aligned with the child's actual existential background and interests. But he was making another point also, namely that as much of the material in textbooks as possible should be made directly accessible to the learner and that the need for the teacher's mediation should be the minimal necessary. Both points are important ones and reflect Dewey's own wider progressive pedagogical philosophy which was to enable the maximum amount of

participation possible for the pupil in his/her own learning.

From the point of view of the interests of this article this last reflection brings in an important factor. This is that the criteria of evaluation that will influence teachers and authors in the choice or the writing of textbooks, with regards to the manner in which they will regard textbooks as potential pedagogical tools, will depend on their particular pedagogical philosophy. It is important to point this out because questions about the accessibility of the text to the pupils often tend to be couched in purely technical terms. There are, of course, questions about textbook evaluation that are "purely technical", technical and nothing else. These are questions that concern what may be termed as the physical properties of the book; for example its material durability and safety for the user. But they are few and are not related in any way to the accessibility of the book or its text to the learner. On the other hand, technical questions relating to a book's size and aesthetic appeal, for instance, are. Indeed where textbooks are concerned, size and aesthetic presentation tend to be regarded not mainly *per se* but as a criterion of the particular textbook's accessibility and attraction for the prospective pupil. How important is the aesthetic as a criterion? Attractive books evidently appeal to children while unattractive books do not. So the matter of the book's attractiveness for the pupils who will use it, is a crucial one in designing and preparing it and, ultimately choosing it as a prescribed textbook. But this is because being attractive makes it a more effective learning instrument. Indeed, beyond the limited examples I have just given, technical criteria in general are always criteria of effectiveness of some kind. In the context of the textbook effectiveness is measured in pedagogical terms, in terms of its ability to aid or bring about learning or enable successful teaching.

Effectiveness and Values

But what renders a book "effective", even in the sense just described, cannot arguably be the ultimate criterion for selecting it, for describing it a "good" textbook in an absolute sense. It is of vital importance that the criterion of "effectiveness", though it may be the final technical criterion of choice, should not itself be regarded as purely value-neutral, because it is not. Everyone knows that there are effective, very effective, ways of bringing about learning and of presenting knowledge that are nevertheless unacceptable because they are morally objectionable in some way. There is a whole range of "effective" teaching and learning techniques, like brainwashing, conditioning, indoctrinating, propagandising, for instance, that we would reject if we detected them not because they lack effectiveness or no not work, indeed they usually work too well, but because they are moved by the intention to manipulate the learner morally or politically for the sake of some other interest rather than educate him/her in his/her own interest.

The point I am making brings into play an important distinction between the means and the ends of teaching and learning. Technical criteria, as criteria of effectiveness, are criteria about means that need to be used to bring about certain ends. The ends themselves may appear immediately to be technical too; the learning of some skill or some piece of information. But the knowledge of skills and facts is not valued only with respect to how it is achieved, but also in itself according to how it contributes towards the more general overall end which is that of educating the learner. And it should be an uncontroversial fact that educating is not just, and not even primarily, a technical business. It is fundamentally a normative business. To educate, whether one recognises this fact or not, is always to have assumptions about the sort of person and the sort of society one desires to have, and assumptions of this kind, even when they are undeclared, can be read into the means and techniques of teaching used. At the same time it is clear that the questions: "what sort of society is desirable?", and "what sort of person do we want for it?" are questions about the ends of teaching and learning that call upon the educator to decide which values, virtues and dispositions are desirable and should be cultivated in the learner. These values etc, are, in turn, inevitably of a socio-cultural, political, economic and moral nature. They are, therefore, set and evaluated differently than in terms of effectiveness and must be judged on non-technical effectiveness and non-technical criteria. So the questions immediately arise: what are the conflicts that can occur between the demands of technical effectiveness and these non-technical objectives that textbooks should be designed ultimately to fulfill? How clear are these non-technical objectives themselves, which may be described broadly as cultural and ideological, in the minds of their producers and users? Are they considered at all? Do they give rise to conflicts between the different interested parties I have identified?

Sometimes the intention of the author or of the controlling authority, the public authorities, the state, etc., to indoctrinate is blatant and even

announced in the book or curriculum. But this sort of thing occurs only in totalitarian societies. This does not mean, however, that there is no indoctrination, intended or otherwise, in our democratic societies. Of course, if indoctrination exists it must be in a more subtle form, it must be through the hidden curriculum. One aspect of the hidden curriculum is the presentation of the textbook as a teaching/learning tool because, as I pointed out earlier, this is never value-neutral, it always reveals a particular pedagogical philosophy which is always, in turn, further and more deeply rooted politically and culturally. It therefore becomes important to ask, with regards to different textbooks available, what kind of role in his/her learning they cast the learner. Is the designated learning process focused on the learner with the teacher fulfilling mainly the subsidiary role of facilitator, or is it the teacher who is designated the role of prime actor/actress, the necessary intermediary through which all knowledge is mediated for the learner? If the latter is the case, what is the designated role of the learner; to participate or to suffer the teacher's mediation passively? The answer to these and other pedagogical questions is ultimately also a political one; the way in which one casts the limits of the learner's initiative, discrimination, and power to act and the range of the teacher's authority over the subject matter and the style of learning is ultimately the way in which one projects to the pupil the limits of his/her legitimate personal political initiative and his/her relationship with power and authority as a future citizen. I wonder how conscious publishers and public authorities, and teachers themselves, are of this fact?! Whether many do not choose to ignore it if it embarrasses their other overriding interests, political, economic, or technical?

The Knowledge Issues

Textbooks, also, not only transmit knowledge but inculcate particular attitudes towards that same knowledge and towards knowledge in general in the learner. The overriding purpose of the morally negative manners of transmitting knowledge and inducing learning which I mentioned earlier, indoctrination etc., is achieved by presenting some particular knowledge as dogmatic and by undermining the exercise of a critical understanding of it on the part of the learner. What is wrong with this procedure is both that, to use the well-worn Kantian expression, it treats the learner not as an "end" (which is the true purpose of learning which has educational motives), but as a means, and that it is anti-democratic (since a truly democratic culture casts the individual in the role of a critical chooser). Respect for the learner as a person, as a potentially autonomous, rational agent, in our Western conception of a person, and for the democratic purposes and practices of education, is the most basic criterion that needs to be brought to bear in the analysis of the presentation of knowledge in textbooks in general. But we also know that there are controversial epistemological and cultural issues of a different kind that are related to the particular knowledge content of the different subjects or areas of knowledge in the curriculum.

This is the case with regards to history in particular where not only are there fundamental differences between historians and historiographers on the matter of how history should be represented, of what kind of knowledge historical knowledge should be regarded as being, but also differences between curriculum theorists on what the actual teaching of history should be concerned with. The former differences take metaphysical form and they are the consequence of the assumption that history cannot be satisfactorily presented to the learner as an objective chronology of "facts", of the assumption that "facts" need to be explained, and there are competing theories about how history should be understood. At the same time these theories have their corresponding political implications. Presenting historical knowledge as pragmatic "warranted assertibility" rather than objective fact, for instance, is also presenting it as democratic rather than dogmatic. More directly political questions are those about **what** and **whose** history pupils should learn and from whose angle, about how they should be encouraged to regard the past, the "facts" which they are required to know, and about how they should interpret that knowledge existentially, in their effort to achieve understanding of the contemporary world they live in, and, possibly in their effort to come to terms with the future. All of these questions give rise to controversy which is very real and, in some of its aspects, very political, while the last is what leads directly into metaphysics as one moves from explaining history as knowing "facts" to understanding them within an overall framework of interpretation. Then one is faced by the question of how to read history; whether teleologically, in terms of immanent purposes and unwritten laws waiting to be discovered, for instance, or hermeneutically as an "open" text capable of different interpretations and taking into account not merely the "success" but also the "failures" of the past, constructing different "histories", striving to understand and explain "failed" political and

cultural projects, speculating on what would have happened if certain events had taken a different turn, and so on.

Somewhat different questions (but only in a certain sense) need to be asked about the teaching of social studies which, if anything, is even more controversial than that of history since its potential political relevance is more obvious to people. The first question to be decided here seems to be about the very nature of social studies as a teaching/learning area in its own right since technically speaking social studies does not constitute a "subject", it is a grouping of subjects. The usual practice in social studies is to teach civics, to teach about social institutions and, thereby, to introduce, perhaps, some political science into the picture, and, perhaps also, some economics. The purpose of including social studies in the curriculum is, as its name indicates, to cultivate in pupils an awareness of themselves as social beings and an understanding of what this means. The most recent current suggestion, which I would go along with, is that social studies should be incorporated within a new curriculum area called"Personal and Social Education". In any event, apart from this territorial ambiguity the most controversial aspect of the teaching of social studies, as I have just said, is its alleged political neutrality. It seems obvious to me that it should not be presented or taught in a normatively neutral way. It should be clear that there should be a political framework for it and that this should be democratic in our society. But it is not really considered that way because of the fear that it will be tuned into something terrible; "political education", with the consequence that often results in the teaching of the area being rendered hopelessly vague and alienating instead of what it should be, a stimulating tool to inculcate the qualities of democratic citizenship. Also, the same fear of "political education" often leads teachers to ignore the different social theories that provide competing and conflicting explanations of the different institutions in society and how they interact with the state, and to present knowledge of these institutions in a falsely neutral and ultimately sterile way.

In sum, evaluating history and social studies textbooks must also be a matter of introducing normative, besides the usual technical pedagogical criteria that consider them as effective teaching/learning tools. One wonders how much the teachers themselves who teach these areas, whose task it is to mediate the knowledge in the text books to the pupils are aware of these considerations and these different potential dimensions of their task!? The philosophical point underlying them, these dimensions, is that there is no ideologically neutral stance that can be taken towards the past, or, in the context of social studies towards our social and political institutions of the present either. Thus history and social studies text books must also, I would say must predominantly, be evaluated as potential ideological instruments. I am not, of course, really saying anything original in this. The epistemological points, originating in philosophy of science, have become orthodox today in the social sciences, and sensitivity to them is revealed by the fact that most, if not all, theoretical articles written about the issue of textbook evaluation in history and social studies, as well as actual evaluation projects carried out on them are concerned with the various kinds of underlying anti-democratic, and anti-human person intolerances or biases that they could be intended to promote. The biases that are usually singled out for close scrutiny are sexist, racist or xenophobic, and, though not to the same extent, those that are social-class related. These are, in fact, one would agree, negative biases that should be unambiguously extirpated from textbooks. But which are the positive biases that should be actively promoted instead?

This is a more difficult question to answer, especially when it is posed within the context of democratic, pluralistic, and multi-cultural societies like ours in the West, and when these characteristics are rendered more complex by pan-European ambitions. Epistemology, we have said, rules out the possibility of value neutrality; this is what makes the proposal that one could achieve it by concentrating on "facts only" educationally untenable. One could, technically, present the learner with a start compendium of dates or events, "inert facts" as Dewey called them. But which dates and events? It is difficult to find facts that are truly "inert"! Besides, if the object of learning is becoming educated, as opposed to becoming a mere storehouse of information, then pupils must be taught also to interpret facts and events critically, and the pedagogical task is to present them to the learner in that way, as facts to be interpreted critically. So we are returned to the question, if impartiality is epistemologically and technically impossible, whose biases should textbooks reveal? Who should decide? The experts, working with a knowledge of democratic political theory but aware also that theory is itself for the most part controversial? The public authorities who are, after all, set up as the ultimate guardians of the public interest? The teachers who are those who are most directly responsible for the

education of the pupils? The publishers, who provide the material?

Deciding this kind of question is clearly not a technical matter in any way either, but a political one. It does, in the manner of technical questions, ask how the textbook should be evaluated, but the criteria for deciding the "how" are normative or value criteria not technical ones. It is partly the difficulty involved in establishing a universal consensus on such criteria, even within a mutually accepted framework which includes a commitment to such things as democracy and human rights and, from the other point of view, assumes the epistemological points I made, that makes one despair of the point of having textbooks which I cited at the beginning. That despair is also very strongly associated with the other issue, which I have just referred to, which the question raises; the issue of "**who** should decide?", or, in plainer words, "who is to have ultimate political control?" on the knowledge that is to be made accessible to the pupils. Entering into it with the fullness required would evidently take me beyond the scope of this article. Arguing that there should be no textbooks may be fine provided that its purpose is to escape the possible hegemony and limitations of perspective of single textbooks and is not meant to support a more politically deep-seated proposal that the decision on how history and social studies should be taught should rest exclusively with teachers. This proposal is not what I would subscribe to since, as I have explained elsewhere, it runs contrary to my understanding of democratic control which requires the accountability of teachers to the community.

Conclusions

Finally, it may be a good idea for me to re-capitulate the points I have endeavoured to make in this article. The reader will recall that I started by distinguishing technical criteria of evaluation, but I argued that technical criteria about effective means are themselves subject to moral and political considerations that regard not only the mode of presentation of the knowledge itself, whether it is presented dogmatically and with indoctrinatory or other objectionable purposes or whether it is intended to educate (in the normative sense of the word), but also the pedagogical style which can serve to domesticate the learner by discouraging his/her initiative, or to liberate him/her by raising his/her critical consciousness. This is I suggested, a fruitful issue to consider; how can it be ensured that text books are not merely effective instruments of teaching and learning, but morally and politically desirable instruments also, in the sense that they present knowledge, and encourage dispositions towards it that are liberating to the learner rather than dominating or manipulative? If it is discussed within the framework of history and social study text books account should be taken of the kind of knowledge with which they are, or should be involved. This seems to me to be particularly important since these are subjects which seem particularly vulnerable to the abuse of the indoctrinator. How does one detect such abuse when it occurs? How is one to frame the whole question of whether a text book indoctrinates or not within a state of affairs in which value-neutrality is not possible and in which, at the same time, there are different competing values and cultures coexisting within the same society? Who are the ultimate guardians of the democratic interests of society and of the moral and political interests of the pupils? Should the teachers, for instance, or the publishers, whose interests appear to be narrowest, enter into these considerations that I have been outlining, or should they simply be concerned with "teaching" on the one hand, or marketing on the other? What is the actual state of affairs, and how do these political questions affect the interplay of relationships between the partners in the production of the textbooks and between the different partners and the users? These last ones are further empirical questions that, given their undoubted importance, invite urgent investigation.

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Language And The Science Curriculum

Frank Ventura

Current interest about which language (Maltese or English) is more suitable for teaching certain subjects in the secondary school touches upon important educational issues (1). Language is not simply the medium of exchange of ideas but, once acquired, it becomes the instrument that the learner can then use to bring order into his/her environment (2). In the absence of a prescribed language policy, many teachers opt for the language which in their judgement best helps pupils to understand the subject and to perform well in tests and examinations. In practice this means that they use a mixture of languages depending on the objectives of their lessons. This article focuses on the language used in science teaching and it is based on research carried out in June 1984 as an off-shoot of an evaluation of the science curriculum in the first two years of the Area Secondary schools (3). At that time, excluding pupils attending Junior Lyceums and private schools, the Area Secondary schools catered for 60 percent of all boys and 66.5 percent of all girls at Form 1 and Form 2 level.

The Language of Instruction

During interviews in connection with the evaluation, teachers invariably raised the issue of the language used for explaining science, filling worksheets, writing notes, the text books, and the effect that changing the language of the science examination from English to Maltese could have on the pupils' performance.

Subsequently, a self-administered anonymous postal questionnaire was sent to all Form 1 and Form 2 science teachers in the area secondary schools which, among various aspects of the science curriculum, asked teachers about language.

Seventy percent of the teachers returned the completed questionnaire and according to their responses, the language used for explaining science is as shown in Table 1, while the expected effect of a science examination in Maltese rather than English is as shown in Table 2. The responses are grouped according to the gender and ability of the pupils taught.

From the first table it appears that the vernacular is predominantly used for explaining science, and teachers use more Maltese with the less able classes than with the more able ones and with boys more than with girls. The preference for Maltese is hardly surprising especially when the teacher, consciously or unconsciously, realizes that learning is a collaborative enterprise involving teacher and class in a process of exchange and negotiation of meaning (4).

Table 1: *The language used by teachers for explaining science in more able and less able classes and in boys' (B) and girls' (G) schools.*

		Percentage response			
		more able	less able	B	G
i.	Maltese only	6.4	58.1	40.6	23.3
ii	English only	0	0	0	0
iii	Mostly Maltese + a little English	51.6	35.5	40.6	46.7
iv	Mostly English + a little Maltese	6.4	0	6.3	0
v	An equal mix of Maltese and English	35.5	6.4	12.5	30.0

Table 2: *Teachers' opinions about the expected change in performance of pupils sitting for a science examination in Maltese.*

		Percentage response			
Pupils' results will be:		more able	less able	B	G
i	better	23.3	39.3	19.4	44.4
ii	slightly better	46.7	46.4	58.0	33.3
iii	not different	30.0	14.3	22.6	22.2
iv	slightly worse	0	0	0	0
v	worse	0	0	0	0

The results of the second table show that the majority of teachers in this sample believe that pupils will perform better or slightly better in a science examination in Maltese irrespective of ability, but less able pupils are expected to gain more than the more able ones. Furthermore, the teachers predict that both boys and girls should perform better but the gain by girls is expected to be higher.

The Maltese/English Integrated Science test for Form 1

In view of the teachers' opinion that the language of the examination may be acting as a barrier preventing pupils from showing their full knowledge of science, it was decided to set up an experiment to check the hypothesis. A test consisting of fifty objective type items with four

options each was constructed for Form 1 pupils in a Maltese and an English version (5). Thirty four items were selected after an item analysis of the Form 1 national annual science examination of June 1982. The other sixteen items were written specifically for this test to probe the pupil's understanding more deeply, to introduce some vocabulary and syntax which might influence the pupils' answers, and to balance the number of items per topic. Special attention was given to translation especially in the light of research which showed that just simplifying a single word in multiple choice items (for example by writing "melted" instead of "fused") improved the pupils' performance (6). Great care was also taken to keep the format, length of text, any accompanying diagrams and the printing of both versions as similar as possible.

The test was administered to 284 pupils in thirteen Form 1 classes from three boys' and three girls' area secondary schools in the third week of June 1984 (7).

At that time of the year these classes had covered the science syllabus and were revising it for the national annual examination. The test was presented to them as a mock examination which formed part of their revision. The pupils taking the test had a wide range of abilities as they came from streams ranging from A to F (see Table 3). The table also shows that boys in the sample came from higher ability streams than girls.

Table 3: *Distribution of the sample of pupils taking the Maltese/English Science test for Form 1.*

	No. of	A	B	C	D-F	Total
Girls	classes	1	2	1	2	6
	pupils	20	56	11	43	130
Boys	classes	3	1	2	1	7
	pupils	65	18	52	19	154
Global	classes	4	3	3	3	13
	pupils	85	74	63	62	284

Each class was randomly divided into two approximately equal groups, one of which took the Maltese version and the other the English version of the test. This ensured that the test was taken by pupils of equivalent abilities, background and preparation. One and a quarter hour was allowed for the test which fitted well in a normal double lesson.

Analysis of Results

The global results of both versions are shown in Table 4. The first observation about these results is that there is a definite difference in the average scores in favour of those who sat for the Maltese version of the test. The difference is statistically very highly significant ($t = 7.875$, $p < .001$). Besides this difference, the range of scores of the English version is wider than that of the Maltese version as indicated by the larger standard deviation. An examination of individual scores (not shown here) shows that this happened because while only 22 percent of those taking the Maltese version obtained scores of 40 marks or less, just over 40 percent of those taking the English version fell within this range of marks. There was, however, no such difference between the two versions in the percentages of those obtaining more than 60 marks. The result suggests that as far as the weaker students were concerned, those taking the English version were disadvantaged with respect to their peers taking the English version. On the other hand it appears that in the case of the more able students, those taking the Maltese version did not gain any advantage over those taking the English version. A test of this hypothesis is discussed further on.

Table 4: *Global results obtained in the Maltese and English versions of the Science test for Form 1.*

	Maltese	English
No of students	150	134
Average score	53.42%	47.98%
Standard deviation	14.66	17.92
Standard error of measurement	6.22	6.14
Reliability (K-R 20)	0.82	0.88

A second general observation about the results is that both versions were practically equally reliable as evidenced by the high reliability coefficients, where the maximum value is 1.0, and almost identical standard errors of measurement. The latter characteristic, which is the standard deviation of the distribution of errors in the observed scores, indicates that the raw scores of both versions can be compared directly since they represent the "true" scores of the pupils with the same degree of accuracy.

Other analyses by question and by topic were carried out but the results are not shown here since they refer to the scientific content which is beyond the scope of this article. It should be pointed out, however, that they reflected the same general trend shown by the global marks; that is

the scores in the Maltese version were higher. But two of these results need to be highlighted since they reflect on important test characteristics of the two versions. First, the analysis by topic showed that the order of difficulty of the topics was the same in both versions. Second, the analysis of the students' response to each question showed that the relative strengths of the distractors for each question were practically the same in both languages. Both of these are sure indicators of the concurrent validity of the two versions.

In order to check whether the difference in performance in the two versions is found across different abilities as measured by the test itself, t-tests were performed on samples of the top and bottom scores. Thus the scores of the top 25 percent (N = 38) and of the bottom 25 percent of the students taking the Maltese version of the test were separately compared to the scores of the top 25 percent (N = 34) and the bottom 25 percent of those taking the English version. The results which are given in Table 5 show that there was no significant difference between the scores of the top 25 percent of the pupils. In the case of the bottom 25 percent, although the students did not obtain a pass mark in either version, there was a highly significant difference in the average score in favour of those sitting for the Maltese version. It seems therefore that the performance of the more able in science is independent of the language of the test, but the less able students obtain far better results if they take the test in Maltese, although their performance is still very weak. These conclusions corroborate the hypothesis arising from the discussion of the differences between the standard deviations of the scores of the two tests already mentioned above. Furthermore these conclusions suggest that there is a cut-off point in the effect of language on achievement. Pupils who can cope with the language demand of the questions show their true knowledge of science, others who do not have this minimum grasp of the language perform below their ability.

Table 5: *Differences between the average scores of the top 25% and the bottom 25% of the students taking the Maltese and English versions of the science test.*

		Version		
		Maltese (N = 38)	English (N = 34)	
Top 25%	Average	72.52	71.94	t = 0.332
	S.D.	7.36	7.34	n.s.
Bottom 25%	Average	34.00	26.24	t = 7.516
	S.D.	5.24	4.42	p < .001

Notes: i. S.D. = standard deviation
ii. n.s. = not significant

Since it was known that generally at Form 1 level girls perform better than boys in English, a check was also carried out on whether the effect of language was the same for both sexes. The results confirmed that both boys and girls achieved significantly better results in the Maltese version of the test (see Table 6). Besides, the gain by those sitting for the Maltese version was practically the same for both sexes which means that the effect of language on test performance is independent of gender.

Table 6: *Difference between the average scores of boys and girls taking the Maltese and English version of the science test.*

		Version		
		Maltese	English	
BOYS	Number	80	74	
	Average	55.58	50.16	t = 2.104
	S.D.	14.96	16.80	p < .05
GIRLS	Number	70	60	
	Average	50.94	45.25	t = 1.960
	S.D.	13.90	18.88	p < .05

Thus the teachers' general prediction that the students' performance will be better in a Maltese science examination for Form 1 has been corroborated. On the other hand the prediction of most science teachers that girls will gain more than boys and that the overall gain in score will be independent of ability have been rejected by this study. But it should be noted that 30 percent of the teachers correctly predicted that the performance of the more able pupils will not be different if they sat for the test in Maltese rather than English.

Further Work

This article is a brief account of one type of study that can be done first of all to describe what is happening in the schools regarding the language of instruction and secondly to assess its effect on learning and performance in examinations. Other studies covering different subjects and students of different ages and abilities are needed to describe the situation in the various types of schools in Malta and to identify any language difficulties that are encountered in teaching various subjects of the curriculum. Action research by teachers themselves is clearly indicated for empirical studies of the type described above since the locus of control on the language of instruction definitely lies with the teacher. Firstly, however, other research methods are necessary to shed light on whether there should be an official language policy rather than let the individual schools and teachers to

decide which language is most suited for their students as happens at present. Secondly, it is important to attempt to deduce the likely effects of a policy which establishes either Maltese or English as the language of instruction of all or some of the subjects of the curriculum. Thirdly, effective mechanisms need to be found to implement the policy, monitor its outcomes and to take any additional action to achieve the desired results.

Notes and References

1. The Draft Law on the Maltese language has generated a number of contributions to local newspapers on the language question which refer to the role of Maltese in the school curriculum. It has also been reported that among its comments on the Draft Law, the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages suggested that future-related subjects such as technology, science and environmental studies should be taught in Maltese. All these contributions however are not always clear about which level of education they refer to. An earlier (1968) suggestion, which has been resuscitated recently and clearly given renewed support, is that "especially at the primary and secondary school level the teaching and learning of basic subjects would be improved immensely if teaching were carried in Maltese rather than English" (Boissevan, J et al. (1990) "*Why do Maltese ask so few questions?*", Education, **3**(4), 16-23.

2. Burner, J. (1966) *Toward a Theory of Instruction*, Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press. In chapter 1 Burner makes the point that the nature of language and the functions it serves must be part of any theory of instruction.

3. Ventura, F. (1985) *An evaluation of the science curriculum in the first two years of the Area Secondary School in Malta*". Unpublished M. Phil. thesis, University of Reading, UK.

4. Burner, J. (1986) *Actual minds, possible worlds*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, p. 132

5. The format was identical to that of the national science examination at the end of Form 1.

6. Cassels, J.R.T. and Johnstone, A.H. (1978) "*What's in a word?*", New Scientist, May 18, 1978.

7. In 1984 there were 10 boys' and 18 girls' Area Secondary Schools catering for From 1 and Form 2 students.

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A Preliminary Study of Modifying School Children's Attitudes Toward Students With Specific Learning Disabilities

Ingvar Sandling

Abstract

Classes for children with specific learning disabilities in Sweden have for many years been located in ordinary schools. Nevertheless many studies indicate that there are relatively few contacts between children in regular classes and children in classes for the learning disabled. This study aimed to determine whether children's attitudes toward learning disabled schoolmates could be favourably modified by a program designed to provide specific information about retardation as well as to encourage cooperation between the two groups. A series of structured questions was developed to determine present knowledge and attitudes toward the learning disabled. These questions were presented both at the beginning and end of a school semester (6 months). Interventions attempting to modify children's attitudes about the learning disabled included information sessions, role playing and a joint field trip. The study suggests that children's attitudes can be changed in the direction of greater acceptance of the learning disabled.

Introduction

Since the beginning of the 1960s it has been the official policy in Sweden to normalize education for the learning disabled as much as possible. Thus, for many years, it has not been possible to build either special schools or special buildings on regular school premises for children with specific learning disabilities. In spite of these attempts to provide normalization, radical changes have not developed. Even though all classes for the learning disabled have been located in regular schools for many years, a number of studies indicate that there have been very few and mostly very cursory contacts with regular students (Brygg, 1982; Nyberg, 1983; Söder, 1979; Wadström, 1979). The present study reports an attempt to modify regular school children's attitudes toward learning disabled students and to encourage more positive interactions between the two groups.

Method

Subjects

The present study was carried out during the period extending from January 23 - June 2, 1989, at a small elementary school in Malmö, Sweden. Malmö is a city of 235,000 inhabitants. The school is situated in a high socio-economic area and consists of approximately 170 regular students and 35 learning disabled students. There are six classes for the learning disabled, three of which are for educables and three for trainables. The regular children live in the vicinity of the school but the learning disabled children reside in all areas of the city.

The study involved one class of regular students and one trainable class (TMR). The regular class consisted of 25 third grade students (12 girls and 13 boys). The TMR class consisted of 6 students (2 girls and 4 boys). The TMRs were classified as grades 4 - 5, although all were functioning at a significant lower academic level.

Procedure

In order to establish a baseline of information the normal children had about learning disability, a structured interview was developed. The children were interviewed in two groups; 12 in the first group and 13 in the second group. The interview consisted of the following six questions:

1. What do you know about handicaps?

2. Do you know of any handicapped children at this school, and in which way are they handicapped?

3. Do you ever play with them?

4. Would it be possible for them to be part of your own class? And, if so could they be part of your class for just a few hours a week or the whole week?

5. Would you like to have a "fun hour" with the learning disabled students? (The class is permitted one hour per week of pleasant

unstructured activities, e.g., choosing games to play).

6. Would you invite a child from the learning disabled class to your home?

Following the initial interview the TMR teacher presented basic information about retarded children to the regular class students. At that time it became apparent that these students were using the term, being handicapped, synonymously with being "retarded".

The next step involved presenting information about the project to the parents of the regular students. At the same time, an attempt was made to sensitize the regular students to the problems of the learning disabled through a short series of role playing activities led by a drama teacher. Finally both classes participated in a field trip to an animal farm.

Five months after the project began, the initial interview was repeated to determine if any changes occurred in the perceptions of the regular students toward the learning disabled class.

Results and Discussion

The basis for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the interventions was an assessment of the pre- and post responses to the interview questions. An analysis of changes in responses to each interview question is presented below:

Question 1: *What do you know about handicaps?*

Initial responses indicated a wide variety of ideas about handicapping conditions. Many students presented responses indicating reasonable clarity about the nature of handicaps, while others expressed gross misconceptions. On follow-up interview five months later all children expressed very relevant conceptions of the nature of both physical and mental handicaps. It is fairly apparent that the students' knowledge of handicaps had substantially increased.

Question 2: *Do you know of any handicapped children at this school, and in which way are they handicapped?*

In the initial interview, the regular class children selected several learning disabled children as handicapped and presented their rather negative views of what they considered to be a wide variety of undesirable behaviours. Such behaviours included descriptions such as "drooling on food while eating", etc. On follow-up interview descriptions became more objective. They understood some of the limitations of learning disabled students, but it continued to be difficult for them to totally accept some of the negative behaviours they observed. These comments referred primarily to those learning disabled students who did not participate in the integrated activities. By contrast, the regular students voiced many positive comments aimed at the learning disabled in the project.

Question 3: *Do you ever play with them?*

In the initial interview many of the boys declared that they never played with the learning disabled children. Some of the girls said that they "sometimes" played with them. It was obvious, that there were only a few contacts between the regular students and the learning disabled students. The children gave one explanation that ought to be considered in future planning. They remarked that they did not have all breaks at the same time as the learning disabled students. In follow-up interview it was still obvious that the regular students very seldom played with the learning disabled children. The contacts they had were almost without exception with the retarded students in the project. They made many positive comments about them, indicating that they behaved better and were "smarter" than the rest of the learning disabled in their school.

Question 4: *Would it be possible for them to be part of your own class? And, if so, could they be part of your class for just a few hours a week or the whole week?*

In the initial interview many of the children expressed that it would be too difficult for the learning disabled to spend the whole time in their class. They thought, however, that it could be worth trying if the learning disabled children got plenty of assistance. On the other hand, they thought that learning disabled children could spend one or two hours a week in their class engaging in unstructured activities such as playing and painting. In follow-up interviews all children thought that no learning disabled student in the project could be placed in their class. They were even more convinced than during the initial interview. They still thought that it would be a good idea to have the learning disabled in their class for one or two hours a week.

Question 5: *Would you like to have a "fun hour" with the learning disabled students? Excursions? Sports?*

In the initial interview most children thought that a "fun hour" would be all right. Some of the boys in particular were more reluctant about excursions. They thought that they would have problems with the behaviour of the learning disabled, and that they would "get behind". Most children also thought that it would be difficult for the learning disabled to participate in sports. An exception was one girl who thought that she could learn something from spending time with the learning disabled children. In follow-up interview the children still thought that a "fun hour" would be all right. In addition they now were in favour of going on excursions with the learning disabled. They all remarked that the trip to the animal farm had been very pleasant. Still, most of the children thought that sports would be difficult. This time, however, they discussed ways to arrange such activities in order to suit and cater for the learning disabled children.

Question 6: *Would you invite a child from the learning disabled class to your home?*

Initial responses indicated that most students were very reluctant. Most of the boys gave excuses such as "They live so far from school." Some of the girls remarked that it would have been much easier if the learning disabled children had been part of their class. At the end two girls declared that they would like to try. In follow-up interview, no child volunteered to invite a learning disabled child to their home. Most of them declared that they mostly played with their class mates or with children in the neighbourhood.

Discussion

Even though this is a preliminary study, it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions:

- The information and the time spent together clearly decreased the estrangement and created a sympathetic view of the learning disabled.

- If we strive to attain increased contacts between regular students and learning disabled students the activities, at least for a lengthy period of time, ought to be carefully structured.

- If a learning disabled child is going to be placed in a regular class, it is important to give information to the staff, the students and the parents as soon as possible.

- Increasingly the trend in Sweden is to place greater numbers of learning disabled children in regular classes. It is necessary to actively address the problems involved in this excercise. For too many years we have trusted that attitudes to handicapped children in regular classes will change in a favourable direction without any interventions. This paper has suggested that this is not the case.

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Education, Power and Personal Biography
An Interview with Professor Michael Apple*

MORROW: One of our objectives today is to give a sense of the political culture of education. I think the key thing to understand is that Professor Apple is one of the leading representatives of a new current in educational scholarship in the United States which goes under many different names: radical, critical, etc., but I think one of the key distinctions is to see it in terms of its origins as a critique of American liberalism whereas in Canada we have a very different situation with the preexisting social democratic tradition with liberalism already an object of criticism which goes way back. So I think the first question I would like to address is the origins of Professor Apple's work in education and the phase of development his work entails out of the critique of liberalism and the particular contradictions of American society in relation to education.

APPLE: This has to be in part autobiographical, as you would imagine. I have an odd history. I did my undergraduate work at night while I was working as a union printer and truck driver for a number of years. I came from a family that would have been pleased to be called working class and we were very poor. Because of this, there was a question about whether there was any money for me to go on to higher education. Given the fact that money simply wasn't there, I supported myself. I went to two small state teachers colleges at night while I was working in the print shop in the day until I had to go into the army. While I was not overjoyed about this, to say the least, I went in the army. It seemed wiser to do that than to go to jail at the time. The army made me a teacher. I taught compass reading and first aid. After being discharged, I had one year of college credits. Urban schools in New Jersey were facing a massive teacher shortage, especially in schools serving "minority" children. I had taught in the army and could say "come esta?" which unfortunately was all you needed to be able to say, it seemed, in Paterson, New Jersey to be put in front of the classroom. I began teaching at the age of nineteen as what was called a "floater", a full-time substitute as you would call it. Every morning at 6.45 I was told what school I would be in. I was assigned to schools that were populated by children who were of colour, partly because I was very active in the African-American and Hispanic communities in Paterson. I was one of the founding members of the Paterson chapter of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) and had already done a good deal of activity involving literacy work and desegregation in in the south of the United States. The south had areas where they closed black schools rather than have black children and white children go to the same school. I and others would go down there on buses (some of which were burned) and many of us were jailed. I went down to reopen literacy classes for African-American children. Thus, I was politicized at a time in which you had to act on it, politicized as an educator. I was someone who, even though I was not really trained yet as a teacher, was deeply involved in political, cultural and educational struggles in the south in the U.S. Because of this, I was formed by racial conflicts over the politics of literacy, the politics of access, etc. This is important I think, to understand why I move in certain directions. By situating what I do in these fairly young experiences in political engagements, it's possible to see why the politics and struggles in education have always formed me in significant ways.

MORROW: These events would have been in the early to mid 60's?

APPLE: The late 50's early 60's. I got out of the army in 1962.

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* This interview was held on April 28, 1989 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where Professor Michael Apple lectures in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies. Also in attendance were Dr. Morrow from the Department of Sociology, University of Alberta, and Dr Carlos Torres, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Alberta. We are publishing this interview with Professor Apple's permission.

MORROW: You were really on the ground floor of a whole series of very powerful movements and confrontations.

APPLE: Yes, this was even before the "end the war" movement. While I was teaching in New Jersey, it became quite clear to me that the kinds of struggles I was engaged in the south needed to be broadened. Much of this was because of Paterson itself. Paterson is the third worst-off city of its size in the United States. It now has a large portion of the population on some form of assistance and an 80% "minority" population with almost no right to a decent economic life. I say "minority" because people of colour are the majority in the world, and the word "minority" is definitely an ideological construction.

Again it was politicization that led me to begin teaching in a particular way. I was quite angry about what I was seeing around me. The schools were largely failing. The knowledge was filtered through ideologically laden curricula. And the rich cultures of working class and "minority" life and history were totally absent. Thus, the politics of knowledge and the politics of teaching had to be transformed with my own actions in classrooms. Having to put this stuff into practice every time you walked into the classroom meant that the reading and political work I was doing was translated immediately into what I had to do when I faced the 46 children in my classroom everyday. I was still deeply involved in racial politics and class politics at the level of practice in Paterson and the educational practice inside schools and political practice in the larger community together continued to form me.

From there I got deeply involved in teacher politics. I was president of the teachers' union for a while. Again, I was disheartened by what I saw, and disheartened by the promises that were never kept - all of which I think led me to certain readings as well as actions, especially to a critique of liberal policies. Paterson was a machine city. It was controlled as well by what in the United States was called a "Democratic administration", people who were of the mainstream Kennedy or Johnson liberal type who promised to wage a war on poverty. Yet no matter how much myself and other people in education and political work would kill ourselves trying to make a difference in classrooms and elsewhere, all too many of the children still would wind up in jail, on drugs, with no jobs, in poverty, were discriminated against, and often brutalized by the system.

MORROW: You were sitting on the front lines, while the bureaucrats were sitting in their plush offices thinking of solving the problems?

APPLE: Yes, although in Paterson there weren't a heck of a lot of plush offices. But that is exactly the point. That led to a good deal of anger and partly to the search for my political roots. I am what is called a "red or pink diaper baby" - a joke which in the United States refers to someone with deeply involved leftist parents. This involved finding myself politically, not just as an activist in racial politics, but by situating myself in this long family tradition, which is more important. These autobiographical points are important for social theory as well, since critical theory often has its roots in senses of lived oppression as the feminist and anti-racist movements have so clearly shown. From there I went on to graduate school at Columbia at a time when campuses in the United States were deeply polarized and politicized about the Vietnam War, racism, and so forth. This experience studying at Columbia enabled me to link my own educational and political history with an entire range of radical literature and to ground myself within it intellectually as well.

MORROW: Were you there in 1968?

APPLE: Yes. And then moved from there to Wisconsin - a story that people may enjoy and that again may explain why I am in Madison as opposed to other institutions, especially given my politics and my penchant for not keeping an exclusive interest in writing, but in wanting to do something about it. When I was interviewed for a position here in Madison in 1970, there were literally tanks rolling down the streets in response to the strong anti-war movement on campus. I knew when I was interviewed and during the interviews the building was tear gassed, well I knew that this was the place I wanted to be. So this is a personal story and also a political history. Finally, there are other things I think that contributed to my politicization. Speaking very personally, I am the father of an Afro-American child. This means that not only again must I work at the level of thinking these things through, but must live as someone who faces having the child come home from school every day angry, hurt, or scared because of racial polarizations, utter insensitivity on the part of the school, etc. This

too increases my sense that I have to struggle everyday. The phenomenology of children, and here my **own** children, adds something crucial.

MORROW: Let's shift to the specific content of your research strategy. In some of your retrospective reflections and introductions you've noted certain shifts in perspective, particularly the general movement from correspondence theory through a broader conception of the possibility of resistance. If you could briefly comment on how that has affected the direction of your work.

APPLE: That makes it seem as if these shifts occurred primarily because of a shift in tradition of the theoretical literature. (We are going to have to think about this somewhat more dialectically I think). Of course I was influenced by emerging debates within the various critical traditions. But, political action causes different kinds of thinking. I tend to be fairly materialist about this, circumstances changed for me, and then things changed within me as well. Much of the work that I engaged in originally was something like politicized phenomenology. It tended to blend together some of the traditions of social phenomenology, Habermas and critical theory (before these last two were changed into something safe). Furthermore, the person I had worked with at Columbia (Dwayne Huebner) also taught courses in liberation theology and phenomenology at Union Theological Seminary there. Much of the work that I engaged in originally was an attempt to blend together a non-structuralist Marxist position with phenomenology because those were the two fields I was trying to pull together in some way. As these two traditions merged in my mind (and of course created tensions as well), part of the work that I began to engage in was an attempt to see how that merger could help us understand the politics of class in the actual curriculum, the way we think about class and education, and our own structural position as educators. Now what that meant was that I had to support the anti-liberal positions of people like Bowles and Gintis in **Schooling in Capitalist America** - what has been called correspondence theory. For them, if you understand the hidden curriculum, you understand schooling, and the only way to understand it is to actually compare children by class trajectories. While I was a bit uncomfortable with this because of it unsubtle sense of culture, of the complexities of human experience, I wanted to support it because it seemed to me that it was at least an attempt at Marxifying a tradition and destabilizing a more liberal tradition. On the other hand, I wanted to show and highlight the notion of culture as having some autonomy. The result was **Ideology and Curriculum,** a book, I trust, that helped to establish that culture has materiality, that it was influenced by but wasn't a total reflection of economic structure.

MORROW: So your kind of structuralism was motivated by incorporating culture as a theme whereby you actually became sensitized to it in the practical side of politics.

APPLE: That's right.

TORRES: In looking at the intellectual tradition of Marxism outside the U.S., there are two serious traditions that try in a way to fight against determinism and the authoritarianism of Stalinism: Althusserian structuralism and Gramsci's approach. The structuralist overtones are much more related to the French origins of Althusser than with the reading of Marxism. Althusser's is a particular reading of Gramsci. Whether one agrees or not with the reading is not the question here. The drawing board of Althusser is Gramsci. How would you escape drawing the same conclusions as Althusser did when you were reading Gramsci at that time?

APPLE: I was taken by Althusser's structuralism, in part because of its emphasis on contradictory moments at a number of levels. It was in fact not necessarily only the prison house for many people as it is made out to be. It was in fact a reading of the Marxist tradition that enabled us to think about structure and the specificities of culture, and the specificities of the political. Of course, it is a prison in some ways, as any structural analysis can be; but it enabled us to think about the way culture was partly separate, and how it was relatively autonomous. After all, isn't this what a theory of contradictory levels is all about? So I was very taken with the Althusserian position, but clearly what it didn't do was allow any room for the point you made before, for human agency, for resistance, for struggle, since it was in fact ultimately guided by a logic of reproduction. The next books I wrote began to push at that. **Education and Power** began to look at the contradictory and not necessarily only reproductive relationship between culture,

economy, and the state. It also began to look at gender and race as well as class dynamics. **Ideology and Curriculum** is an analysis by and large of domination and exploitation. It does end on a note of hope - about human agency, the next theme, but it was still primarily in class terms.

After I had written **Ideology and Curriculum** and **Education and Power**, I began to talk about some of the material on deskilling teachers and changes in the class position of teachers that are embodied in them. (Remember, I had been a president of the teachers' union, and had worked very closely with teachers and cinematographers on film work with children and teachers - beautiful, loving material with no necessarily overtly political overtones, but which showed the very possibility of different ways of creating personal and political meaning in schools). This meant I had a good deal of credibility with teachers. I was speaking with a group very similar to the Boston Women Teacher's Group in the United States, to part of the "feminist teacher's alliance" in Madison, and I was laying out the tradition of interpreting teachers' labour that I was attempting to build, and what that means in terms of their deskilling and loss of curricular control. After listening intently to me for quite a while, one teacher said, "Michael, did it ever dawn on you that you are speaking to 30 people who are sexed in particular ways?" And it was like a light bulb going off. It became crystal clear that class analysis itself, even with the focus on resistance and struggle that I had integrated into it, simply could not deal with the major fact that gender was the absent presence in most of our work. It was all too silent on the issue that teaching was an extension by and large of women's unpaid labour in the home. We cannot understand class without understanding gender. I was helped immensely here as well by my wife, Rima, who is an historian of medicine whose focus is on the struggles by women to control their bodies and knowledge.

I began to move from a focus by and large on the intricacies of class relations and non-reproductive forms to the immensely contradictory formations in education and elsewhere of class, race and gender relations in politics, in economics, in culture. That required a radical reconstruction of Althusserian theory. It included a theory of human agency and just as importantly included a theory of over-determination, where class both helps produce gender and contradicts it, and both produce and contradict race.

These are the **dynamics** that make up a social formation. They work their way out in the relatively autonomous spheres of culture, economy, and politics. This is an admittedly complicated theory, I've tried to lay it out clearly in the introductory chapter of **Ideology and Practice in Schooling.**

MORROW: That's much closer to the original Gramsci without the Althusserian epistemology. In many ways your work was not merely reflecting the changes in the literature and the radical education position, so much as reconnecting elements in your own biography and work in developing a more synthetic position.

TORRES: That's right. In a way theory seems to be illuminating practice, which is a principle of a materialist perspective in culture. It is intriguing that a crucial aspect of your writings has not been reading, but by interacting with people and by being able to listen and be challenged.

MORROW: By the time the theory had gotten ahead of your practice, whereas before your practice was ahead of your theory?

APPLE: Partly, but again an example is **Education and Power** which I think is actually a much more fluid book than the more structuralist reproductive readings in **Ideology and Curriculum.** Two political and personal, as well as scholarly, reasons account for this. As I just mentioned I began to work with a dissident women's group; yet, I also began to work with a union group struggling to democratize in a Chevrolet Plant in Wisconsin. One of my students was a Vietnam veteran and a political activist. I'd been to rallies with him and we had done some political work together. He couldn't get a job as a teacher and worked on an assembly line in a Chevrolet plant. He was trying to work with others to form a dissident union group that would challenge the union ideologies and structures that were quite conservative in the Chevrolet plant. They asked me to come and to help them build material for political education. This is part of my training - I was originally educated at Columbia in the curriculum area. My training as a curriculum worker meant that I could offer some assistance in how you create material that

was responsive and, I hoped, powerful. As I began to work with this group, it was quite clear that the stuff I was doing in **Ideology and Curriculum** bore little resemblance to what was happening in the day to day life of these workers on the assembly line. They were dominated in some very interesting ways ideologically - the hegemonic form was visible - but it was also very contradictory and they were struggling with it everyday. So again there was this constant dialectical process between the action I was doing in working with the union and having to rethink, massively, the positions I was taking that said, well, people by and large internalize these things and did so in an unmeditated way. And again, while many of the workers were often sexist and often very racist, their situation actually looked closer to Paul Willis' work with its emphasis on class capacities and cultural production than it did to the more straight-forward reproductive emphasis that I had partly slid into by the end of **Ideology and Curriculum**. So, yes, the theories were more advanced than practice, but the practice was quickly catching up and pushing the theory another way.

MORROW: Could we move up to the present. I think for those of us working in Canada, for example, we're quite impressed by the incredible, remarkable development in critical scholarship in the United States over the past ten to fifteen years. But the other side of that,of course, is the grim reality of American politics. The new Bush Administration continues the longer term of Republican hegemony, and also the public invisibility (perhaps except for Jessie Jackson) of the kind of concerns expressed in your work in the mass media and in the overt political agenda. What is your assessment of the possibilities for long term transformation given the deadlock at this particular moment, and the invisibility of what you represent outside of fringe communities and the academy?

APPLE: That is a very complicated question. By and large it is the case that the left is more marginal in the United States. The United States has a very populist nature, and populism can be transformed in a right wing direction or a left wing direction. Right now, with the fracturing of what I call in recent work "the social democratic accord" - the liberal accord - there is an alliance of the new right, the fraction of the new middle class that gets its own mobility through accountability measures, management techniques and so on, neo-conservative academics, and economic modernizers. This alliance clearly is winning in important ways. I think your analysis of the situation is correct. Part of the tragedy of this at the level of people at universities, in labour unions, etc., has been their participation in making that happen.

MORROW: By the attack on liberalism?

APPLE: Yes, in part. Let me explain the emerging situation. I think there has been a rapprochement with what is called liberal "persons rights" by many people on the left now. Earlier, we tended to see liberalism as simply an attempt by ruling class interests to mystify certain things. More and more, however, it is quite clear that many of what used to be called "bourgeois rights" were the result of struggles. They were not simply ways of coopting dissent. Instead, they were compromises, accords. We began to realise that our attacks on liberalism in education and elsewhere- which were correct in many ways - came at a time when actually it would have been wiser to focus more on the real concerns of people in local communities. We too often forget about how tenuous these "liberal" gains actually are in the long history of the particular kinds of struggles at the present time. Also - and this is where I think many of us created troubling results - I think that much of the discourse that we participated in was truly negative criticism. Negative work is important of course as a form of "bearing witness" to oppression, but often it did not give people a sense of possibility. It also was done at such a theorized level that it was unable to connect to the real life experience of people - and that is tragedy. This partly enabled the creation of a situation in which the right has been able to rebuild its hegemonic forms around peoples' real sense of anger. There are populist sentiments in the United States, for example, that are fundamentally opposed to big business, but somehow the right has been able to recuperate those feelings. The left and populist forces should be able to work with that, but we have been unable to do so because we have been too concerned with our elegant abstractions and have forgotten about the connections we have to make with real life. For too many of us, our only political work is writing for other theorists. I don't want to disparage this; such writing is crucial. But in the process, we have all too often given the political and

educational field over to the right and have let them define the public agenda.

TORRES: What would probably be the reason for that? My experience in the U.S. has been very brief, but while I was at Stanford, I had the sense that there was a kind of break between the Old Left and the New Left in the U.S. which effected the creation of a socialist tradition. Would that be one of the reasons why the focus of attack was misplaced in this new wave of criticism of schooling?

APPLE: I don't think that the focus of criticism was totally misplaced, and I think that I am still largely opposed to the liberal tradition, as a tradition that is isolated from the roots of oppressive conditions. But I do think that there were major gains within it, and they must be repoliticized. Our task, then, is in part to defend and extend these gains in more democratic directions in all of our institutions, both "public" and "private". This is a program of radical democracy. Parts of this program are already there if they can be reconstructed. For instance, the tradition of socialist work in the United States in education is very long. This is not new. For this reason, I object to being called a "reconceptualist". I am not reconceptualizing anything, but building upon and reconstructing a whole history of the relationship between cultural politics and democratic socialism in the United States. There were always alternatives and many of the same kind of claims I am now making, other people were making in 1910 and 1920. If you want to talk about where the blame lies, the socialist tradition and the populist tradition in the United States have been marginalized consciously and placed under attack, for decades. Remember, this is the country of the "Red" scares, the Palmer raids, etc. Thus, while there were serious problems with "old left" approaches, rather than blaming major parts of the critical tradition for its lack of connectedness or for some of its partly misplaced criticisms, we might want to remember the history of its forced marginalization.

MORROW: That was at the end of the first world war when the socialist parties became scapegoats for fears about the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and the socialist parties were destroyed by police professionals.

APPLE: Yes, part of the results are seen in the fact that the union movement in the United States is still among the smallest in terms of the percentage of people in most western industrialized nations. Unions have won major victories and have helped create the social-democratic accord, but they also have been weakened by the state through oppression, marginalizing, etc. So we want to be cautious about blaming the left for fracturing itself, even though the joke about how many Marxists it takes to go fishing is correct. The answer is 100 - one to hold the pole and 99 to argue about the correct line. We have been culpable about that. But again this is also part of a longer story. The United States has always been less able to build a large scale socialist tradition in part because the boats were often just as filled with immigrants going back as they were coming. Many people who were often the most politically active did not stay because either they didn't make it or they went back repeatedly to deal with pressing problems. As well, the vast openness of the nation and the fact that **political** liberties for white males were granted originally at the beginning of nationhood meant that, unlike in, say, England, they did not have to be struggled for as part of a class-based politics as much. It was in England where class politics and political struggles had to be joined. In the United States, there was a very different articulation of that struggle. That means that it is very hard still to organize around an avowedly socialist program in the United States. To make a difference it has to be populist. Although class relations do have a long history in the United States, they are give a peculiar flavour due to the specific political, cultural, and religious history of the country.

MORROW: Can I ask you a related question? From the point of Canadian and European observers, one of the things that is most distinctive about American political culture is the predominance of single issue politics which reflects the absence of this integrated framework which a socialist movement would provide, and which the liberal program did provide for a period of time. Do you see this still as an ongoing problem?

APPLE: Yes, one of the things the right has been markedly successful in doing is forming coalitions of single issue groups around a particular agenda. An agenda in education of standardization, of a false "common culture," of a romanticized past, of guaranteeing a connection between school and paid work, this is the coalition that has been formed. The right

has been able to do this, to provide this hegemonic umbrella. In essence, it says, we will compromise. You want certain things(e.g. populist and middle class forces that want mobility and opportunities). We will give you that provided you from this coalition under the umbrella of economic modernization (to compete with the Japanese, etc). The right has blended together themes of nationalism and patriotism, "pro-family" issues, standards, sexuality, drugs, and so on under its own leadership and has used them for its purpose of taking an economic ideology of "free enterprise" and spreading it into every sector of society. Single issues have been in fact articulated together brilliantly by the right in the U.S. But I think the prospects for that coalition being retained structurally are actually slim. In order for economic modernization to take place in this way, "capital" must be set loose. Now, the ideological forms of capital, and the way capitalism itself operates as an economic mode, means that commodification must subvert sacred traditions and visions of sacred knowledge. Thus, as a paid worker, I must not get meaning on my job. I have to wait until I am walking out of the factory, out of my office, going on my vacation or buying a TV or a VCR or having a camper. Yet, in the process, discipline on the job is subverted. At the same time, to maintain legitimacy and create profits, our economy must act against the romanticized visions of the family, home, and school, of women's place being defined only by the domestic sphere. Thus, the new right populists' ideology cannot combine with the "free market" emphasis on making everything for sale.

MORROW: A Disney view of the world?

APPLE: In part, yes, which is under threat. You cannot have industrialization and unleash these market forces and at the same time defend traditional positions on the family and sacred knowledge of the past. They are mutually exclusive. So my sense is that this coalition must fracture in the long run. All this means is that it gives us the objective possibility of forming coalitions between those of us who favour democratizing the school and the paid and unpaid work place and these other disaffected groups. We can form a different coalition that articulates these people who are now being organized by the right with more democratic positions.

TORRES: Hearing you previously discussing the role of informal education I was very pleased. You are not known as a nonformal educator, but as a school-based researcher. May this assumption that a right-wing coalition cannot hold indefinitely lead you to say, yes , there is a need to develop new forms of resistance in education as the eventual basis of a more "offensive" strategy? Is that a fair reading of your comments?

APPLE: Yes, definitely. The hard part is to try to find out where the appropriate group is. However, this makes it sound too strategic, unfortunately, and less organic than what I mean. I have moved to a position that might be called a position of "decentered unity". I no longer believe that class is the fundamental engine that provides the only organizing force for social change. I articulated in **Teachers and Texts** - my most recent text - a parallelist position where there are multiple agents and multiple struggles. Social movements including and often going well beyond class dynamics are powerful agents here.

MORROW: So you have been influenced by post-structuralist debates but not taken in hook, line and sinker in the way some might accuse, say, Philip Wexler?

APPLE: Definitely. Philip is a dear friend of mine and we have written things together, and as you know his volume on this appeared in the book series, *Critical Social Thought*, that I edit. I think that his intuitions are probably correct. That is, we have to decenter the notion that class is the only place where human agents are available. That is made visible if we look at the issue of gender politics, with men as well as women. Perhaps not so oddly, this is actually a return to my previous politics where I was not only formed in part by working class politics because of the political background of my family - a family union tradition, having been a printer myself, etc. As I mentioned earlier, I was also profoundly formed personally in racial politics. So it's a return to part of my biography. But some of the post-structuralist position worries me and I will be honest about this. I think that we can multiply forms of domination to such an extent that there are no meaningful organizations to combat oppression left. I think the position is often an embodiment of the postmodern condition itself; that is, it mirrors our inability to see and to recognize what

structures exist and how they actually work in relation to domination.

Let me give you an example. I must admit that when I am in Brazil, Thailand and other countries doing educational and political work and walking into the slums to work with groups of people struggling to keep babies alive, to find enough food to eat, to even get a minimum of schooling for their children, when I work with others to build international movements to support these peoples' struggles, because of all that I think the relations that make up what we can call objectively capitalism are much more oppressive than other kinds of relations **in many situations**. In our (largely meritorious, as feminist theory has brilliantly shown) attempts to move beyond class reductionism and recognize how domination in race, class, gender, sexuality, and other relations works, we have at times forgotten the massive structuring forces that do exist. And because of personal experience, perhaps because I grew up poor, I think that we must in fact begin to think through what are the dangers of a position that rests totally on the notion that there are an infinite multiplicity of discourses of power, that is to say, the notion that everything is an equal form of oppression, isn't it? For political reasons, I don't think we can say that. Of course, we must organize with people in their own felt sense of oppression. That's the phenomenological urge, that's cultural politics. However, I must admit that in my heart of hearts I don't think that all oppressions are equal, that I think there are vicious results arising out of the national and international movement to bring all of us the "benefits" of capitalist economies, cultures, and politics. And it is not only an image; these are real objective conditions. Talk about discourses is powerful and freeing indeed; but unless we recognize its limitations and its current over-theorization, we will also be in danger of our own kind of mystification while the world crumbles down around us and the lives and hopes of identifiable people are shattered. It is important though that I not be misunderstood here. I do **not** want to dismiss the utter power of race and gender oppressions. The brutality of the oppression of women in what is called the "domestic sphere" is exactly that - brutal. My point, however, is to have us focus on **material** conditions, something we are forgetting in our rush to see everything in "discursive" terms.

MORROW: Let's change the focus a bit to the world system and particularly the relationship between metropolitan countries and dependent countries.

TORRES: It's clear from this conversation that the three of us are outside the mainstream traditions of (North) American society. But I am a double "outsider" coming from a Third World society. The question I have is the following: how can we discuss the creation of a transformative teacher who is part and parcel of a more comprehensive system of domination and control in a metropolitan society in the context of the World System?

APPLE: I think one has to struggle where one is. I don't want to dismiss the issue of understanding the international context in which we exist at all. All of our actions need to be interpreted relationally. For instance, take the fact that to do this interview we walked into this room and turned on a light. We can interpret this act positivistically as a objective fact. We could simply say that Michael Apple walked into this room in which we were to videotape and I turned on a light. Yet this interpretation is not social enough. It doesn't recognize that not only did I turn on a light, but in the process I had an anonymous social relationship with the miners that have dug the coal and died in the process so that the electricity was produced to enable the light to go on. So I think we want to think about these things in terms of our concrete relations with other people. This obviously requires that we think in international terms; I agree with that. Yet there is also a theoretical and political issue about changing the minds of people in the centre, people who now do not recognize how much their comforts rest on the work of people in poorer nations. To the extent that alterations within the imperialist centre have an impact at the level of people's lives outside that political centre, I think we have no choice but to engage in political education with teachers, children, adults, and others here to make it very clear how their everyday lives are in fact tied up in systems of domination. It is important for us to understand that to make the cultural, political and economic conditions of Third World peoples less oppressive, changes must be made not simply in Mexico, or Nicaragua, or elsewhere, they also must occur in the capitalist centre, the belly of the beast, the U.S.A.

Now, I am constantly reminded of this because many of my students come from nations that have oppressive governments or that are newly democratized. I too spend a good deal of time in those nations myself, and in fact was arrested and ultimately sent home from one repressive nation in Asia because I spoke out against the government's anti-democratic policies in education and politics. This means that we as educators must take a stand against anti-democratic relationships wherever they are found. For whatever power education has, it can in fact make very clear to teachers what the relationships are. I am not saying that this will alter the universe of multiple oppressions on an international scope, but I think, to the extent that I call myself someone who is an educator, I have no choice but to act. Yet "centre/periphery" relations do not exhaust these issues. There is a third world within the first world. I am not only talking about what goes on in Argentina or Chile or Brazil. I must talk about third world peoples in the United States and that's part of the struggle that many people have to understand as well. We're not simply exporting the working class of the United States or Canada to Malaysia or Haiti or elsewhere. We are exploiting third world populations in the United States. We're destroying them at the same time through economic and educational policies and practices that are truly disabling. There are nations inside this nation and again the educational practice that goes on surrounding that issue is critically important. That is the Gramscian part of me. You surround the imperial centre not just outside the nation but inside it as well with alternate cultural and political forms. Thus, our task is also to surround the relations of cultural and economic exploitation at home, and build possibilities as well here. This, of course, involves concrete work at the level of pedagogy and curriculum, to recapture our lost collective memories of successful struggles, and to continue the path that Raymond Williams so cogently called the long revolution.

MORROW: I would like to just suggest one final question without wanting to promote divisiveness within the tradition of radical and critical educational scholarship. How would you respond to the kind of strategy represented by Henry Giroux, in particular his emphasis on the language of possibility, etc., and his attempt to draw upon critical theory in the Frankfurt tradition, as well as his relation to Paulo Freire? How would you view that in relationship to the kinds of strategies that you represent?

APPLE: Henry and I have been good friends for a number of years. I was the first to reestablish the Neo-Marxist cultural tradition in the early 70's in the United States, before Henry and others joined me. Being largely alone in 1970, it was a pleasure to welcome him on stage in the middle of the decade. When Henry first began writing, he in essence apprenticed himself to me. In the process we both taught each other a good deal. He is clearly very smart and has an exceptional ability to integrate work together. We all stand on people's shoulders. For a number of years, Henry stood on mine, and there were times when I stood on his. There have been times when we have or will criticize each other both in print and elsewhere. Yet I think this has to be done in an immensely comradely (or sisterly) manner. There are times that we disagree. For example, there may be a danger with the level of over-abstraction of his work at times. There are times when we must make clear connections with people's lives and sometimes that requires a level of specificity that Henry sometimes doesn't do. While I am less sanguine about the post-structuralist tradition than he is, I am now even less enamoured with the critical theory tradition than he is, in part perhaps because my training was initially Habermasian. I had left that for particular conceptual and political reasons, in part because I think that there are traditions (e.g. the neo-Gramscian and the radical democratic) that say it better and clearer and offer a different and more democratic kind of politics as well. On the other hand I think the work he is doing with Aronowitz on the Bloom-Hirsch debate in the United States is of critical importance to cultural politics. So again, by and large I will do nothing but support his work, though perhaps he, like many of us, could value criticism of our work more. I was chosen by the faculty there to be an outside evaluator in his tenure case at Boston University where he was brutally and unethically dealt with. I supported him as much as I could then.

I think our task is to criticize each other in the best sense of learning from each other, otherwise how will the tradition grow and learn from its mistakes? **Because** we are on the left we must model a kind of openness and democratic behaviour in our own discourse. We must welcome criticism - when it is itself given in

an open and honest fashion - if we are not to recapitulate the relations we are supposed to be fighting against.

TORRES: You have drawn a lot of material from Freire. What would be your main criticism of the Freirean approach? What would be the idea of Freire that impressed you most.

APPLE: There are few people I am willing to sit at the feet of - and Freire is one of them. He is someone I am proud to say I know. But with all people there are times, there are certain things, we must criticize. We have a tendency to create gods. I know this is uncomfortable for Freire. When I was in Brazil, it became quite clear to me that there were many people who are progressive who also disagree with him, and one of the disservices I think we do in creating gods is that we forget that there are debates over their work in their own nation. So the first thing I would suggest that we do is to find out what the debates are over Freire's pedagogical theories where they were developed. In this way, we can make certain we do not import things that could be strengthened by linking to those original multiple and often conflicting traditions. We could then better understand their strengths and weaknesses as opposed to seeing them just as political/pedagogical resources that can be used anywhere, with no necessary reconstructions and no thought given to their contradictions.

While I very much agree with the notion that one begins one's pedagogy in the lived experience of actors and that there are ways of stimulating that- and here Freire is unparalleled in the world - I am in other ways probably more Gramscian in that I think that we have given up too much on the question of content. I am distressed in part by an idea that says that when dealing with people in creating political literacy, which is a slow process, we assume that the knowledge that we too often call "bourgeois" is not essential for engaging that literacy. We assume that the necessary resources are always somehow already there in the community and we do not need to bring it to them. I think that all of this knowledge, even in the traditional disciplines, was built off the labour of these people. And it is theirs and it deserves to be theirs. I would go further - though I think that the pedagogy might be the same - and would take much more seriously the issue of content. I also think that we are in danger of appropriating, and making politically safer, material that was developed in the Third World and in practical kinds of struggle. In this way we contribute to the loss of its critical commitment to liberation. As I said, I don't think it is easy to translate that into our classrooms and I don't think the conditions are necessarily exactly the same. So I think it has to be re-appropriated, rebuilt around the themes, the structures, of the lives of real people in industrialized nations. We need to be very careful not to simply create another bandwagon. I think that in fact what we too often do is we take on Freire as an easy model, as simply a transportable technique, a technique to pull out of our pocket, forgetting that it is built in struggle and it must be reconnected and rebuilt with the people. Thus, there are a variety of dangers that I see. But on the other hand, Freire's approach is such an advance over the normal ways of how we think about nonformal education, about whose knowledge is appropriate, and how we can articulate that in a very critical way, that it would be an act of bad faith not to allow it to influence much of what we do.

Our work is a form of cultural politics. This involves all of us working for what Williams called the "journey of hope" toward "the long revolution." To do less, not to engage in such work, is to ignore the lives of millions of students and teachers throughout the world. Not to act is to let the powerful win. Can we afford to let this happen?

Book Review

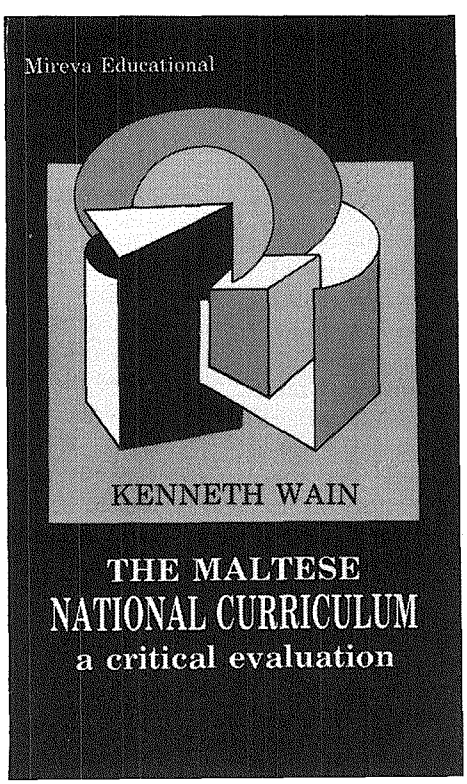
Ronald G. Sultana

Kenneth Wain: *The Maltese National Curriculum: A Critical Evaluation*, Mireva Publications, 1991, Monographs in Education Series, No. 1. xii + 124 pp., Lm2.50

There is hardly an area which falls within the experience of so many people and affects their lives to such an extent as schooling does. Because of this, one would be justified to expect that educational reform and innovations would attract the attention and reaction of an overwhelming majority of people.

And yet in the space of two years we have seen the publication of three National Minimum Curricula, one for the primary, another for the secondary and a third for the tertiary level, without much of a response on the part of teachers, parents, students, or the community generally.

It is this rather disquieting silence over the educational developments of crucial importance that has driven Professor Kenneth Wain to write and publish the monograph under review. It is the first in what promises to be a controversial and timely series of publications, authored by different educational theorists and under Wain's general editorship, aimed at critically appraising the Maltese educational system and pointing towards alternative practice.



Wain makes a number of important points about education and the schooling system in Malta, but it would probably be correct to say that his major concern is over the process of educational innovation and reform (or pseudo-reform) as undertaken by the State, with the National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) being one case in point.

He argues that while in a variety of sites in the State the pre-election promise of dialogue and participation has, to some extent, been kept, it has been reduced to rhetoric in matters concerning education. In the latter case, teachers, parents and students have been treated in the paternalistic manner reminescent of hierarchical colonial government, with curricula and syllabi being handed to the people from above.

This leadership style implies, of course, that the State, through the Ministry and Department of Education, knows the best interests of the different individuals and groups it represents. Indeed, Wain argues that the NMC represents a further intrusion by the State into the private domain.

Despite rhetoric of decentralisation the State bureaucracy has successfully strangled the very possibility of initiative and creative response to individual and community needs in different school communities. The School Councils as set up by the present government are in fact little more than fund-raising bodies, for instance. Moreover, through the publication of the NMC the State has now the legal means to extend its bureaucratic control on private schools.

Wain is of course alert to the practical difficulties associated with participative democracies. He **does** ask those awkward questions that in fact require answers which are not only ethically but also politically articulate. Are teachers to be trusted with the power of developing their own code of ethics, their own syllabi and curricula, their own pedagogical approaches? Does the general public, and do parents and students more specifically, know enough about education to be invited to participate actively in the

decision-making policies of the State?

While there are no easy formula answers to such questions, Wain argues that the solution adopted by the State is certainly not the correct one, and this for a number of reasons. He defends the teachers' and publics' presumed incompetence by arguing that one counters that state by providing the knowledge and skills necessary to develop an active, informed citizenry.

Simply dishing out ready-made answers in a patriarchal "I know what's good for you" fashion merely encourages ignorance, passivity and the reinforcement of a process incompatible with democracy: the construction of citizens as consumers. These consumers, argues Wain, have now even lost the only right they have: the option to go elsewhere if what the State has to offer is unattractive or unacceptable.

But this is only part of the problem. Wain tears into the NMC content to show the problems, contradictions and limitations which plague it. There is, it turns out, no explicit philosophy or rationale to inform the content of the Primary Curriculum.

Despite gimmicky progressive elements, it is not only out of tune with contemporary educational theory and practice, but is riven with contradictions. It claims to have organised learning in a radically different manner, but in fact maintains the hallmarks of an outdated and inadequate primary education, i.e. teacher-centred teaching organised around fragmented subject disciplines directed towards assessment by examinations so that ultimately, the concern is once again not the student, but the certified product.

Education becomes yet again in this tired, uninspired curriculum, a matter of goals to be achieved rather than a process where the focus is on individuals who seek growth and self-actualisation, and where the teacher's complex job is to facilitate that development.

What is even more dangerous is that these pre-determined goals are defined by the State: hence, as in the most totalitarian of States, we find the desire for the subjugation of the individual and the original to the communal and the conventional. What gives Wain some peace of mind is his knowledge that teachers will simply ignore the NMC's ambitions for social engineering, privately resisting what they have publicly failed to contest.

The Secondary Curriculum fares little better under Wain's critical dissection, even though its general rationale is more coherent and less contradictory than the one for the primary level. All in all, however, it suffers from the same lack of inspiration and vision. We find the same teacher-centred, subject-oriented approach to learning, the same utilitarian emphasis (in this context highlighted with a vengeance since students are presumed to be closer to their transition from school to work), and the same politically dangerous insistence on pre-established goals.

Wain does well to question the political aims of a curriculum in a democracy, which in the context of the NMC are identified with the task of creating "an increasingly higher level of consensus". He finds unacceptable the NMC authors' (author's) half-hearted criticism of tripartism which has been condemned as unjust, illegal even, in most if not all Western educational systems.

The issue **is** addressed by the NMC, but any resolution of the tensions which gather around this topic of vital importance is avoided. Having condemned/banned neither streaming nor tripartism in principle, it of course fails to do so in policy. And the new NMC waters itself down to even more of the same, a pseudo-reform which simply gives the impression that the government is doing something.

Wain does not stop at critique, often the privilege of some academics who adopt an oppositional stance to practically anything without coming up with any positive alternatives. Therefore, having developed a critique in Parts I and II of the monograph, Wain provides us with his own version of what educational practice should be like in Malta.

In contrast to the NMC documents, he states his political values clearly and coherently, claiming that education cannot be divorced from the macro-context in which it operates. He argues from what could be called a "liberal progressive" framework, very much in the Deweyian tradition, where the emphasis is on an education for democracy.

In effect, what Wain does in the third part of his monograph is to take the rhetoric of the State and push it to its only logical conclusion by asking "What would education really look like if we had to take the promises of the State seriously?" Then

follows his version of education which places the individual at the centre of schooling, where teachers mobilise their personal and material resources in order to facilitate the growth and self-actualisation of the young.

Learning would be transformed from a boring, joyless grind in a cruel system intent on selection and exclusion into an exciting, holistic and intrinsically motivating series of problem-solving activities. Students would not be involved in an alienating consumption of knowledge which has no relevance to their experiential frameworks but which is momentarily frozen and reproduced in exams. Rather students would actively produce knowledge, drawing in an organic manner on different "subjects" and bringing this to bear on particular issues in order to gain insight and understanding.

As Wain takes pains to point out, this is no utopic dream. Such strategies have a practical relevance for they are the most suitable in preparing our present generation for a future world marked by impermanence. The accelerated change of modernisation requires a vocational and political response. The former refers to an industrial scenario which prefers a flexible and adaptable worker to one who is narrowly schooled and skilled.

Modern industry - if we are truly heading to a "high-tech" market - changes so rapidly that the most important skill would be "learning how to learn". Modernisation brings with it political dilemmas as well - and Wain argues for an education which faces up to these challenges, making a case for political and human rights education as an integral part of the curriculum. For how else could Malta have an active citizenry, knowledgeable and virtuous enough to resist the demon of materialist ego-centrism that modernism trails in its wake? How else could one draw citizens into the communal effort of active participation and self-determination?

Wain's notion of education is, needless to say, infinitely more inspiring than what the State has presented us with. His proposal is coherent, humane, politically informed, and concerned not only with goals and ends but with principles, processes and values. He writes forcefully: indeed his criticism is stinging, as when he argues that nothing new can be expected from bureaucrats whose very raison d'être is the safeguarding of their own vested interests in the maintenance of the status quo. It is as if Wain chooses to write provocatively, anxious lest his document be greeted with the worst insult a community could inflict on a writer: silence.

There are, of course, a number of places where I do not agree with Wain. His liberal politics and emphasis on individual rights tend to obscure the stratification of power in Malta, and the subordinate position in that structure of groups identified by their class and gender. The progressive, child-centred pedagogy he advocates unproblematically needs to be considered in the light of recent evidence which suggests that such practice favours the cultural habitus of the new middle class and is quite alien to that of the manual working classes.

Wain also highlights the positive side of private schools, giving little attention to their role in reinforcing privilege from one generation to the next. I am also, I must admit, much less optimistic than Wain is in his generous appraisal of teachers as workers who care, who keep themselves informed, and who, in the privacy of their classroom if not in public fora, in dialogical or confrontational manner, contest the incompetence of the State.

Many teachers as an occupational group have been co-opted by the State - or more exactly, by the government - whose spurious bestowal of professional status and raising of salaries has ensured the tacit compliance of individual "professionals" and some would argue, of the union which represents them.

But such differences in analysis and interpretations are possible because Wain's text practises what it preaches: it invites response and stimulates reaction. In brief, it achieves that goal so dear to a democracy but so absent from the NMC: it keeps the conversation going. To itself and to its public, the State has a lot to answer for for the betrayal of "dialogue" and "participation".

Notes on Contributors

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