CIDREE

Consortium of Institutions
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Turning the perspective

New outlooks for education

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Netherlands institute for
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Turning the perspective

New outlooks for education

Turning the perspective

New outlooks for education

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Foreword

In the ten years of its existence CIDREE gradually developed into a professional network of development and research in education in Europe. The know-how of the twenty member institutions is increasingly employed and exchanged. CIDREE unites institutions closely related to governments, which considerably elevates the relevance and reliability of the exchanged information. At the same time the organisation keeps up with ICT developments, resulting in extension of the electronic routes, including the more and more familiar website. In doing so CIDREE not only raises the quality of work in the member institutes, but also becomes a European forum for exchange of ideas and perfection of staff.

This broadened framework also covers this first publication, in which various institutes bring important contributions together, to make them accessible to a broader public interested in development and research in education. Dr Jos Letschert of SLO edited 'Turning the Perspective', which is an engaging collection of ideas and concepts that would otherwise not have the distribution they deserve.

This study is another step in an even stronger functioning of CIDREE and calls for a sequel.

Dr Roger Standaert
Chairman Executive Committee CIDREE

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Introduction

This compilation of papers deals in general with the role, the meaning, the content and the quality of education. These themes are attracting increasing interest from the public. For a long time, the position and the quality of education were subjects that society took for granted. But these days, they are regularly front-page news in newspapers and other media. The school has lost its monopoly position in relation to learning and development. Learning and developing are life-long affairs for learning communities in different settings, within or outside the formal schools structure.

The school tasks are permanently under pressure from criticism in connection with expected or observed quality decrease. There is concern about the effect of education for specific groups and learning areas, for example language acquisition by non-native pupils. The level of arithmetic and mathematics teaching is a continuous item of discussion. Social issues, such as street violence, the increasing use of drugs, and the alleged deterioration of norms and values, prompt the question of who has the main responsibility for the pedagogical task of education.

In spite of the discussions about the ranges of the responsibilities and who should be the first to be held accountable, more and stricter quality requirements are being imposed on education. If necessary, parents and guardians sue for these requirements in court. Ministers of education are monitored more carefully than ever by delegates in parliaments. The expenses for education increase, as do the expectations and questions about the results.

Teachers have become rare commodities, almost needles in a haystack. Being a teacher is not the most attractive of jobs, it seems. Teachers often feel they are blamed for everything. And children? Yes, children are what it is all about. And that makes teaching the most important job there is.

In this compilation of essays fifteen authors look at how opinions about learning and teaching, school development and institutionalised education manifests themselves in modern societies with a Western orientation, and ask whether these manifestations are still adequate.

We look at education from a reversed perspective, focusing on the position of and the significance for the children. Education and development are about children.

Systems, subject matter, teaching resources and evaluation instruments are subordinate to the development of children. In our society these attributes have gained such a dominant position that they almost seem to govern the development of the child. When we talk about turning the perspective, we are talking about restoring the central position and responsibility of children in learning and development processes.

In this compilation the authors take as their frame of reference the child, and how children develop and learn, rather than the system and associated issues. This does not mean that we dislike looking at systems at work or under construction. We will certainly do so in this collection, but again, we will be looking from the point of view of the benefits involved for the learner.

The choice of the authors for this compilation was not made at random. They were selected because they had proved to have profound, unconventional, often critical and always constructive opinions on the development of society and the role education plays in this. They have a thorough knowledge of education and they have a deep respect for the efforts of teachers. The opinions of the authors on education development and quality control are certainly not free of influences. They put forward their own opinions from a perspective that is coloured by a personal 'veil of values', as the Dutch Professor In 't Veld expressed it in 1996 in his vision on the future of the primary education policy (In 't Veld, et al., 1996). In fact you can say that the connecting thread in the essays is the evident pedagogical approach or vision of all the authors involved.

The collection of essays is organised into five coherent sections or parts.

The first section is about ways of learning, about learning environments and about the important role of imagination in processes of learning. Imagination is the key to making education meaningful for children.

The second section deals with pedagogical notions in education, as we like to define them. Within this section several issues will be touched on relating to a climate for learning and teaching. We will focus in this part on the school climate as a driving force in the development of children, and the importance of a sense of belonging. We also focus in this section on one of the most persistent issues in education for the coming decades: how to deal with differences between children.
Perhaps this last issue is more than an issue.

We believe that it is in fact a paradigmatic shift in thinking about the arrangement of education in society, with fundamental consequences for its structure, the organisation and the approaches of learning, teaching and teaching equipment.

The third section of this collection is about aspects of school development. What are the driving forces that influence the ongoing development of schools? How autonomous are schools in processes of quality improvement? What are the mechanisms that stimulate or hold back that development? What is the influence of ethos? What role is played by the acknowledgement of a moral competence?

The fourth section is about assessment. We wish to challenge the contemporary boom in the belief of figures, measurement and testing. Quality is an interactive process between people, constructing meaning together in an inviting atmosphere. The way you want to evaluate and use the results of evaluation and assessment depends strongly on the subject of evaluation and assessment: the child, the teachers, the school, or the system. It also depends on your level of aspiration. What are the purposes of your activities? Do you want to compare children with a standardised norm, or are you interested in the progress of an individual child? Do you desire to compare schools with each other for a nation-wide review, or do you prefer self-evaluation as an instrument for internal school improvement.

The fifth and final section is about change and change processes at the level of the system. We focus on change processes in an emergent democracy such as the republic of South Africa, but also in seemingly stable systems such as primary education in The Netherlands and education in Austria. In this section we talk about principles of education, rigidities and prosperities. We also discuss emergent or advisable systemic transformations.

These, therefore, are the five sections:
- Learning, learning environments and imagination;
- A sense of belonging and adaptivity;
- School development;
- Assessment and testing;
- Systemic reform.

Let us now take a somewhat closer look

The first section introduces us into the different ways people learn.

Dutch psychologist Hans Lodewijks states that learning is vitally important for people and that the quality of what people learn determines the way they operate to a great extent. Learning enables you to influence your environment. It makes you more independent, flexible and skilful. That is not only important from a pedagogical perspective, but also from political and economic perspectives.

Traditional ways of learning and teaching, as still seen regularly in our schools, do not work if you aim at durable knowledge of high quality. Learning processes should be connected to identifiable contexts to make them tangible and meaningful for learners. Lodewijks distinguishes several types of learning and thinking activities and ways of learning. They are connected to levels of learning and internal outlook. Learning is stimulated by powerful learning environments. Lodewijks provides us with six basic principles of powerful learning environments.

In this first section, Canadian educationalist Kieran Egan enlarges on an important aspect in the way people learn. It is an aspect we rarely come across in the recent debates about quality and effectiveness of education on the front pages of our newspapers. Nevertheless, it can be considered a core aspect in meaningful and effective education. Egan introduces us in the necessity of imagination in processes of learning and teaching. He states that imagination tends to be almost entirely ignored in research on teaching effectiveness. Nevertheless, imagination lies at a kind of intersection where perception, memory, idea generation, emotion, metaphor, and no doubt other labelled features of our lives, meet and interact. In the process of making knowledge meaningful imagination is perhaps the most vital factor to focus on.

While there seems to be general agreement that the development of imagination is important in education, it is not clear that this is routinely translated into practice. Part of the problem seems to lie in the vagueness of the general conception of imagination commonly held in education, and its association almost exclusively with the 'the arts'. Egan's essay argues for the acceptance of a richer conception of imagination, which sees it not as some particular intellectual function largely distinct from rationality, but rather as a flexibility, energy, and vividness of mind that imbues rational activity with life and richer meaning.

The essay explores some implications of taking this richer conception of imagination seriously in education, focusing on its role in learning, in resisting conventional, stereotypical thinking, on its relationship with memory and memorizing, on its connection with narrative and metaphor, on its role in the development of social virtues such as tolerance, on its contribution to a sense of mental freedom, on its support of the idea of, and pursuit of, 'objective' knowledge, on its connection with our emotional development, and on its relationship with visualization, originality, and creativity.

The second section is about ethos as a sense of belonging and adaptivity as a new spirit of thinking about development of children.

The first contribution in this section is from the Scottish educators Margaret McGhie and Ian Barr, respectively director of Learning & Teaching Scotland and educational consultant. They go into the ethos issue, which they consider mainly concern a sense of belonging.
They state that ethos is a matter of vision and emotional articulacy as opposed to management. In their view, ethos is a question of dispositional. In their contribution they pay attention to ethos as a characteristic spirit, a character or disposition of a community, institution or system, from the Greek meaning character or disposition. Ethos is a word that means atmosphere. They focus on the importance of a particular kind of ethos, an ethos of opportunity that promotes ‘effective’ learning and the development of an effective learning community. It helps us to be emotionally as well as intellectually articulate.
An ethos of opportunity is central to the fundamental purposes of education, which are about the flourishing of the whole person. It also develops aspirational aspects, hopes, dreams and commitment to future learning. Ethos has however become yet another aspect of management along with endless unconnected policies on this, that and the other. But ethos is a leadership issue, not a management one. It depends on leaders themselves being emotionally articulate and recognising that leadership occurs throughout the learning community, in staff, students and others. It is therefore not a management issue but a matter of all those engaged in the enterprise operating via a set of principles into which they all buy. It is based on a community vision based on the principles. But the vision is not fixed; it is not a promised land, but rather an expression of how things would be if we based our thinking on what we considered the real purposes of education; and since these are aspirational and

speculative and yet to come, not yet conceived, then the vision is constantly in the process of re-evaluation.

What are fixed are the principles that underpin the developing vision.

If the principles are secure, robust and genuinely shared by the members of the community, there will be no need for a proliferation of policies on different aspects of practice such as anti-bullying, gender, anti-racism etc. There should be an umbrella policy that reflects the principles and is interpreted similarly depending on the particular issue.

The key words in this representation of ethos are ‘genuineness’ and ‘authenticity’. An ethos of opportunity is premised on being ‘genuine’ and having a sense of belonging. It is about caring for, caring about and caring along with others. It is founded on a commitment to the whole, for the whole is reciprocally caring about the individual.

Central to a sense of belonging is a sense of sharing responsibility.

Finally, in this second part of the collection, Dutch educationalist Theo Boland focuses on the issue of how education can make the differences in pupil population manageable and useful in a positive sense. Boland asks himself and his readers the question why differences between pupils are felt to be more problematic now than in the past. He elaborates the question by presenting a number of dilemmas. He then discusses what 'managing differences' really entails. He defines the associated notion 'adaptive education' gives a model conceptualisation of the notion and describes possibilities for use in school practice.

Boland's style reflects his awareness that everything is relative. Practical management of differences is probably the most relentless, but at the same time the most challenging task of education in the coming decades.

The third section of this book is about school development. The power of development at the school level and the responsibility of teachers for qualitative education seem to be rediscovered. Increasing autonomy and responsibility at the intermediate level of the education system is a popular political issue at the moment in most countries.

The section on school development starts with a contribution by Dutch pedagogue Luc Stevens. Stevens addresses the essence of the pedagogical climate in the school. He sets the scene in this section on school development by stating that the basis of education lies with the children. If our aim is to create equal chances for children, we need to challenge them to do what they are able to do. This can only be achieved on the basis of good motivation.

For education this means that motivating comes before teaching.
The object of education is the development potential of the children. In the development of children differences will occur, partly determined by education. These differences are associated with the social and cultural environment children grow up in, with their motivation and interest, with their intellectual and physical capacities and with the involvement and capabilities of their parents and guardians. The routes children follow in education will have to be adapted accordingly and we will have to accept that they will lead to different results.
Stevens claims that adaptations to the system are no longer sufficient. He advocates a fundamental discussion on values. In his opinion the key notion of the discussion is the 'school ethos', which is the basis of teacher activities and takes due account of the personal responsibility of the pupil for his development.

German educationalist Uwe Hameyer introduces us in the world of motives, social and other context factors that influence the development of schools. He considers school development as a process of problem solving based on research and empirical knowledge. This process requires agreed rules of interaction in order to reach an understanding about motives, points of view, methods and conflict solving between all those involved. Communication about the dissent is an integral part of the process. Hameyer describes two connected levels on which communication takes place: reflection and construction. His main issue is the question how schools can use suitable knowledge, can evaluate such knowledge in their own context, can remodel the knowledge and can gain new knowledge from their own experience. Hameyer gives us several illuminating points of view for looking at the implications of his core question.

German educationalist Heinz Schirp introduces us in the moral aspects of school development. He elaborates on a conceptual and organisational starting point for the development of a democratic and social learning culture. Schirp puts the quality discussion and the increasing autonomy of schools in this respect into the perspective of ethos and values orientation. He gives his own elucidating of the necessity of communication and mutual understanding, as worked out in the previous essay of Hameyer.

The key variable for a good school is the manner in which teachers co-operate with each other and the way they manage to find an educational consensus as a basis for a basic value-oriented school and class climate beneficial to learning and achievement. Schirp points out that a systematic moral education increasingly deserves our attention, and not only in view of quality development. The new demands on the socialisation of children and adolescents, arising from developments in society and their consequences, suggest thinking about new and extended concepts concerning an educational focus on democratic participation, encouragement of the competence to judge and intercultural understanding. He works out his views in a set of development tendencies and prognosis. He also maps the models of value-oriented schools for us and he clarifies the concept of learning communities and the different approaches within that concept.

SLO curriculum specialists Hans Hooghoff and Jeroen Bron will sketch how the focus on moral competence in education can be seen as a pendulum. At the moment this pendulum is in favour of the moral task of education. Hooghoff and Bron describe how in the Dutch context, efforts are being made to give this task a more structural place in the schools. They present an approach to introducing a new learning area called Social Emotional Orientation in upper secondary education as a cross-curricular theme (CCT). From there the authors discuss the problem of implementation: how to convert lofty ideas to classroom practice. They argue that a successful implementation strategy includes a meticulously designed core curriculum program and a network of teachers to develop teaching and learning materials in combination with offering them a program for teacher training.

In the fourth section of the book, Flemish eductionalist Roger Standaert deals with the issue of educational results. He puts into perspective the desirability of measuring the results achieved by schools, mutual comparison of these results and the publication of the results in public media, such as newspapers. He strongly questions the frequent assumption that activities of this sort have positive effects on the quality of education.
He also states that there are few methods of convincing people that are so often abused as figures and statistics.
In his contribution Standaert distinguishes two approaches to quality thinking: an economic-technical approach and a pedagogic-didactic approach.

He gives a detailed illustration of the historical development of the choice that was made in England for what he calls 'an extreme technical-economical approach'. This even led to the appointment of a special Secretary of State for 'standards'.
He then discusses a number of reservations regarding this kind of approach. These reservations concern:

- the relativity of what is measurable;
- the comparison of schools with businesses;
- the statistical corrections applied in comparing schools;
- the additional negative effects of the economical-technical approach.

Standaert is not a priori against the quantification of certain aspects and indicators in the quality policy. But he indicates that in complex processes, such as education undeniably is, this should not be used too lightly and simplistically. In his opinion the core of the assessment of the school quality should be the internal evaluation, supplemented by a differentiated system of external evaluation. The emphasis should be on the pedagogic-didactic quality control with the teachers and management of the local school. According to Standaert, other choices will lead to losing touch with the development of the pupil and in extreme case to education being an explicit preparation for the test.

In the final section of this collection, we look at the systemic developments from three perspectives, seemingly chosen at random.

The first contribution is from the South African educators Van As Jordaan and Nicol Faasen. South Africa is in the initiation phase of a totally new concept of education that will meet the needs of the young democracy. However, it is still confronted with the legacy of the past and by tremendous problems to be solved in the immediate future. The assignment for the immediate future is to invent education again, or at least to reshape it fundamentally. But while the 'shop' is being reconstructed, business has to continue as usual.

Austrian educator Helmut Bachmann guides us through the features of Austrian education. At a first glance, the foundations appear more stable than in the African context at this moment. However, Bachmann shows us the relativity of this assumption. In Austria there is a vivacious debate on citizenship, morality, values and policies, and this debate influences education at a great extent. Bachmann introduces us to the historical and current context of school development in Austria.

As in other countries 'quality' is the buzzword in the public and political debate. Bachmann goes into the aspect of school-political communication. He explains the educational partnership as a model for regulating educational-political conflicts. In particular, he focuses on the rhetoric of reform rather than controversy and on the role of media and school development. Bachmann proposes a public debate on educational reform and describes strategies for change and the elements for a new system. He gives us a full list of new beginnings.

The final contribution is from Dutch educator Jos Letschert. Letschert confronts the contemporary state of education with the demands of a new age. He states that education is faced with a number of fundamental choices if it is to meet the requirements imposed by society in the 21st century. The concept on which current primary education is built shows too many characteristics of a time long gone, he claims. For this reason alone, it is no wonder that at the present moment, more and more worn patches are showing up. Education is on the move and we cannot stop it. Patching up the worn areas is not an adequate solution. Letschert holds a plea for a paradigmatic shift of thinking. The main issue in education is not standardised subject matter but the development and growth of each individual child, according to its potential. Learning and teaching are no longer processes of the transmission of knowledge. In fact it is impossible to transmit knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge is a personal matter. You have to go through a process of experiences by yourself, and the school has to provide an inspiring and challenging learning environment for this. The teacher is the guide, the facilitator and the mentor. Learning is in essence the responsibility of the child, even the very young child. With his contribution, Letschert brings the reader who followed us to the end of this journey back to the challenging perspective on learning Lodewijks started with.

I. Learning, learning environments and imagination

There has not been any teaching, unless there is learning

Hans Lodewijks

… At different points in history, scholars have worried that formal educational environments have been better at selecting talent than developing it …
(Bloom, 1964)

The task of education experts includes being professionally occupied with questions about the organisation and development of effective types of education and training. Our contribution is based on the idea that in this respect there is every reason to drastically change the course in a number of aspects. I advocate a change of culture in two parts. Firstly, more than is generally the case now, education experts should aim their efforts explicitly, or perhaps even exclusively, at the organisation and support of learning processes, instead of education and training processes. Secondly, in our focussing on learning as the centre around which everything concerning education and training should evolve, the accent in our view should be placed on the advancement of so-called 'new learning processes' (Simons & Lodewijks, 1999). Simply speaking, basic reproductive ways of learning are replaced by more high-quality ways, aimed at the acquisition of insight and the fostering of deeper understanding.

Modern learning psychology now provides abundant, substantial and practically feasible findings about human learning that may serve as stepping-stones to realise the desired changes of perspective: "… One of the hallmarks of the new science of learning is its emphasis on learning with understanding. Intuitively, understanding is good, but it has been difficult to study from a scientific perspective. At the same time, students often have limited opportunities to understand or make sense of topics because many curricula have emphasised memory rather than understanding. Textbooks are filled with facts that students are expected to memorise, and most tests assess students' abilities to remember the facts … " (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999).

Learning as a problem?

Our contribution therefore is about individual human learning, rather than about training or schooling people. We look at this subject from the point of view that learning is of vital importance for individuals. We believe that the quality of what people learn, at or outside school, highly determines the way in which they are able to endure and participate in a world that is in a continuous process of change. Learning is necessary, not only to take part in the world of work and adults, but also to be able to have a constructive individual impact, to be able exert personal influence on the world of work and of everyday life. In the world of education and labour an increasing appeal is made to qualifications such as independence, accuracy, learning ability, willingness to learn, flexibility, problem solving skills, initiative skills, information processing skills and communicative skills. These qualifications are not only considered desirable from an educational point of view. Also from a political-economic perspective the importance of "developing people's ability to learn" (Nyhan, 1991) is indicated. Important questions include to what extent, how and where individuals can acquire these qualifications?

Research has shown that various problems present themselves in the area of human learning. It can be observed that there are quite some people who have insufficient knowledge, skills and attitudes. This observation is not new. Almost 25 years ago it was raised as a rhetorical question by one of the most famous American educational psychologists: “If we set aside, for the moment, our concerns with the questions of how people learn and look simply at the outcomes of schooling, what do we see? Are students acquiring enough knowledge, or the right kind of 'knowledge'? Or, in a more nearly ultimate sense, are they becoming more competent, more able to adjust to and cope with living in our complex society, more capable of practical problem solving, increasingly able to find a satisfying quality to their lives?” (Gagné, 1977, p. 411).

Modern learning and instruction psychology has repeatedly shown that the traditional didactical approaches - the way they unfortunately still dominate in many of our schools - do not work well. At least this is the case when it concerns directing learners to high-quality and sustainable knowledge and understanding of and insight into subject matter. This makes them see and experience the use and potential practical value of what has been learned, as well as bringing about the awareness of, and experience of the fact that what can be learned at school adds to one's individual possibilities in thinking and acting. In our opinion there is currently enough knowledge of the way in which people learn. We should therefore look systematically for alternative ways to train people. As a result of the accumulation of new kinds of information about human learning, views of how effective learning proceeds have shifted from the benefits of diligent drill and practice to focus on students' understanding and application of knowledge (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999).

It would be a good start if in formal education and training situations we would stop trying to achieve insight in and understanding of a certain discipline or subject area by means of passive and reproduction-based instruction. In this respect it is especially important that learning takes place at school without being separated from the context in which what has been learned will have to function later on. Learning processes should be systematically connected with the practical context.

Learning as an everyday phenomenon

Learning is actually a 'general and everyday phenomenon', part of the common, however most important human characteristics. Learning can take place at any time and in all circumstances in which individuals make experiences, as long as these experiences contribute to the possibilities of the individual to think and/or act in certain ways. Human individuals possess a 'natural' potential to learn from experiences (common or not), this means that they are able to match their behaviour and thinking with the (level and nature of the) experiences they make in their lives. Everyday learning processes can occur more or less by coincidence, because they strongly depend on the type and quality of the experiences that individuals make and they can differ strongly per individual.

This is because the contexts within which people have learning experiences differ objectively or because people in the same context have different experiences depending on the different way they interpret or approach the context (subjectively). Learning processes can also be fragmentised, incomplete or inadequate, for example because people tend to change their experience context on a regular basis, or because they do not always want to or are not always able to absorb everything of an experience or because not every context is equally instructive. An instructive context is a situation that offers the opportunity to learn, because it provides individuals with possibilities to act on experiences that may lead to learning.

In this respect another important distinction should be made, which is the distinction between learning as a - more or less accidental - side-product, resulting from the experiences the individual makes incidentally, and learning as the result of the experiences intentionally looked for by the individual.

Learning via school

In our society we do not (only) want people's learning to depend on the coincidence of experiences individuals encounter in day-to-day life. We do not consider it desirable either that learning still is of an incomplete and fragmentised character in certain areas. Very probably particularly because we want to prevent that the individual will not learn or insufficiently learn what we consider to be necessary for him, to be able to acquire a 'qualified' position in the society he is part of.

For this reason we have established schools, with the responsibility to ensure that learning in a number of described areas is guaranteed to a certain level. Schools are specially equipped to let people make experiences and to encourage them to perform activities that result in learning. This is carried out in areas that we consider to be necessary from the point of view of general individual development, adoption of the adult society and culture and/or the preparation and qualification for a profession. Learning in schools is therefore institutionalised and people's learning is intentionally conducted into certain directions and confined to certain norms (of completeness and level). The advantage of a school is that learning is no longer left to chance; the disadvantage is that the experience contexts are usually of an artificial character and are more or less 'separated from everyday life'.

At school the individual learns to put thoughts and actions into terms and symbols that have been agreed upon within the culture and certain disciplines and subject areas. All being well he also learns how and under which circumstances he can or has to deal with these notions and which operations he can and is allowed to perform with various symbols. Gardner (1991) for example, points out that learning results that are achieved via schools, sometimes only consist of memorised, ritualised and conventional forms of understanding. Slightly exaggerated: what you learn at school does not go much further than the skill to give the right answers, by using the symbol language that was taught at school. The 'expert' behaviour achieved by the school means that one can demonstrate that facts, problems, notions and skills that belong to one subject matter or subject area can be reproduced in exactly the same way they were taught. Although this obviously does not apply always and everywhere, it is justified to doubt whether learning at school always leads to forms of real understanding or to, as we call it, high-quality learning.

The fact that the school does not always succeed in helping to achieve high-quality learning processes and results in the pupils, is often similarly explained in literature on education psychology (see for example: Biggs, 1991; Costa, 1991; Gardner, 1991; Perkins, 1987 and 1992; Säljö, 1987): the way in which pupils are supposed to learn in school, the environment in which this takes place, as well as the way in which we assess learning success, often fails in essential aspects to achieve high-quality learning in pupils, which provides them with insight.

Against this background numerous proposals have recently been made to make the in-school learning environment more suitable for aiming at achieving high-quality learning in people. These initiatives are generally aimed at making the learning environment 'smarter', as the American colleagues say (for example Perkins, 1992). This implies that the scholastic learning environment should be reorganised in a way that
(a) pupils learn to deal with the subject matter in a flexible, goal-oriented and adaptable manner (Perkins & Salomon, 1987; Simons, 1990), (b) pupils learn to think about and use the knowledge and skills that are taught (Brown & Campione, 1990; Duffy et al. 1993), (c) pupils learn to learn (Maclure & Davies, 1991), (d) pupils learn to increase their learning ability (Shuell, 1988; Simons, 1990 and 1993). In short, the learning environment of the school should change in such a way that pupils arrive at high-quality learning, for example by explicitly giving them the opportunity to do so. The school should at least activate or stimulate these individual learning processes systematically, instead of leaving learning to the school or placing the full responsibility for learning on the school or training institute (Vermunt, 1992).
Fortunately, there is not 'sorrow and misery' always and everywhere, not even on average in our schools, about the possibilities for high-quality learning. In this respect many changes are taking place in many areas, which can certainly be qualified as promising.

Learning psychology in a nutshell

Learning we define as a process, in which the learner develops (usually not directly observable) activities, aimed at working out and processing certain subject matter. This is done in such a way that the learner gradually starts to behave in a more 'expert' manner with respect to the subject matter (or that kind of subject matter). The individual 'expertise' can be increased and/or elaborated by learning. Learning leads to changes in behaviour changes in behavioural possibilities and changes in the way people think.
The essence of learning is performing activities (or the development of processes in the learner) that lead to changes in the behavioural possibilities, the thoughts and actions, of the individual. The activities and processes presenting themselves with respect to learning, we indicate as learning and thinking activities (or processes) and the results they bring about (i.e. the changes in the behaviour or behavioural dispositions) we

indicate as learning results. Whether somebody has learned something can be established (or measured) by means of his increased or more detailed expertise in the domain of the subject matter concerned. At school these measurements are usually conducted by means of tests, which - all being well - consist of topics and assignments that together make up a (representative) sample of the area in which the learner can or should prove his increased competence. A test result is therefore a more or less successful assessment of the increased or changed behavioural potential of a learner, in other words, of his learning results.

A learning process is successful if the learner has achieved the intended learning results (in a goal-oriented way or not), by performing the, in this case relevant, learning activities on the subject matter. The learning activity therefore consists of performing the learning and thinking activities that are particularly necessary to learn something or to become good or better at something.

Learning and thinking activities can be functionally divided (for example by Vermunt, 1992) in two main groups:

a) Cognitive processing activities.

   These are learning and thinking activities in a limited sense. Their function is to process the contents of what can be learned. Therefore they are subject matter oriented: this concerns collecting, working out and processing the information that is part of the subject matter. Cognitive processing activities can have a role with respect to knowledge increase, integration of knowledge and skills (this means establishing relationships between different parts of the subject matter and relationships between recently acquired knowledge and already existing knowledge) with respect to the use and application of the acquired knowledge, insights and skills.

   Learning consists of the application of cognitive processing activities on the contents of what can be learned (the subject matter), in such a way that learning results are produced that can take the form of understanding, knowledge, insight, attitudes or skills. Cognitive processing activities are aimed at elements of the subject matter, such as facts (for example that the American singer Perry Como died early in May, 2001), procedures (for example which strategies should be followed to solve an equation with two unknowns), concepts (for example 'acid rain' or 'invertebrates' and principles (Ohm's law). By performing cognitive processing activities (i.e. application) on elements of the subject matter, a learning process develops. For example because the pupil makes his/her own example or thinks of an application (concretising) of Ohm's law or makes an hierarchic classification of the 'animal kingdom' (structuring) based on what can be found in the biology textbook.

b) Regulation activities.
This concerns activities the learner performs to line up cognitive processing activities, to direct them at the goal to be achieved and to guide them. Therefore they are not aimed at the subject matter itself, but at the way in which the learner deals with the subject matter. This also covers all the learning activities that keep the learner in an optimal frame of mind. Hence, regulation of learning concerns steering activities that are not directly aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and skills as such, but indirectly at steering and regulating activities necessary for processing. Cognitive regulation activities are of a different order than the processing activities. Despite this, the two types of learning activities are inseparable. Regulation activities can be of a cognitive and affective motivational nature. The cognitive regulation activities steer and control the cognitive and affective learning activities. They determine as to where, when or for which tasks the processing activities are used, what the learning process looks like as a whole and when it can be decided that sufficient has been learned. It is important to mention that cognitive regulation activities are thinking processes that are not directly perceivable. As a regulation activity 'planning' for example comprises that the learner 'thinks about' the learning activities he will perform, the order in which they will be performed and in which ways he will approach learning. This is something completely different to the perceivable behaviour of a pupil, who writes something down in his agenda. Similarly, the cognitive regulation activity 'assessing', during which the learner assesses whether he understands something sufficiently, cannot be considered to be equal to answering test questions etc.
Examples of (cognitive) regulation activities include:
- in the context of *preparation* for learning: orientation on learning, planning of thinking and learning activities, choosing and establishing objectives, formulation of criteria;
- in the context of *monitoring and assessment* of progress and results of the learning process: monitoring the (curriculum) plan, monitoring the learning process, assessment and control of learning, diagnosing (looking for causes of obstruction in the progress of learning), adjusting the approach and objectives in the light of the experienced problems during learning, etc.;
- in the context of *evaluation* of the learning process: all the activities aimed at the assessment of the quality of what was learned (in connection with the established objectives) and all the

activities aimed at the assessment of the suitability of thinking and learning activities that were performed during learning.

Finally, during learning affective regulation activities also play an important part. They can occur before, during as well as after the conclusion of a learning process. Affective motivational regulation concerns all the activities that are aimed at maintaining the motivation to learn and promoting a concentrated approach to learning. This includes the 'affective processing activities', which are activities performed to regulate feelings during learning, for example to master feelings of tension and reduce them to an optimal level.

Types of learning

In the previous section learning was described as 'a normal human characteristic', which can manifest itself in different moments and in many circumstances. Learning takes place in all cases and at all moments when an individual creates new or better behavioural possibilities for himself or reaches better understanding of or insight into certain facts. To achieve learning it is necessary for an individual to deal actively with what can be learned, this means performing learning and thinking activities and integrating the experiences in the total of the mental and behavioural possibilities. To achieve this the learner should have an optimal regulation of his processing activities, in a cognitive as well as affective-motivational sense.

With the observation that learning takes place always and everywhere, it can be considered as a particular characteristic people have. However, it should not be ignored that human learning processes can be of varying contents and level. In terms of the necessary learning and thinking activities, it makes a considerable conceptual difference whether we learn to operate a video recorder or learn to skate, or learn how to solve certain physics problems, or learn to deal more adequately with criticism of other people, or learn word processing, or learn how to manage a company, or learn to understand how international violence can be explained in terms of nationalistic tendencies, etc. It is also the case that whatever kind of learning content it is we are thinking of, the quality of what we learn and the level at which we learn it, can vary considerably. Below we will first give a more detailed description of a number of general types of learning and then we will pay attention to qualitative differences in (the level of) learning.

Qualities of learning

Recent education psychological studies (for example Vermunt, 1992; Lodewijks, 1993; Lodewijks & Van der Sanden, 1999; Simons & Lodewijks, 1999) show that human learning activities and processes can not only differ as to type and content or in quantitative respect (extent), but can also vary considerably in qualitative respect (nature and level). Directly associated with this is the fact that the nature and quality of the produced learning results can also vary considerably. These findings elucidate that the type and quality of learning and thinking activities the learner performed during the learning process, are of direct influence on the (type and level of the) achieved learning results. If somebody's knowledge, insight and skills in the context of a certain learning process are only increased marginally or superficially, then this should be explained by the type of learning and thinking activities the learner performed during this process (or was able to perform, which unfortunately regularly occurs in institutional settings such as a school). Obviously, the opposite also applies: if somebody's learning results have remarkably and substantially increased, this can be explained from the type of learning and thinking activities that have occurred (or could occur) during learning.

It has been emphasised a number of times before that the type and quality of learning and thinking activities the learner performs or can perform during learning are essential in the learning process. Learning activities can be considered as the tools to work out and process the learning content. The way in which the learner handles the tools will initially and lastly determine the level at which learning takes place and the quality of the learning result.

The different ways learners handle their 'tools' can be illustrated by means of the research study by Vermunt (1992) into 'learning styles' of students in university education. He found that with students four different learning styles can be distinguished: (a) the meaning directed, (b) the reproduction directed, (c) the application directed and (d) the undirected (unstructured) learning style. For our analysis it is sufficient to reflect briefly on the first two learning styles.

Students with a meaning directed learning style arrange their learning themselves as much as possible. Their learning is based on a perspective of personal interest and they aim at performing learning and thinking activities that lead to a deeper insight in the matter and to personally integrated knowledge constructions. Their opinion about learning is that the information that should be learned is to be integrated into the personal knowledge.

If we translate this description into characteristic cognitive processing activities related to this, it can be concluded that the learning of these students is characterised by the application of processing activities particularly of a relating and criticising nature. This means that during learning they are especially directed at (a) finding relationships between the different parts of the subject matter, between the parts and the total, the main features of the matter and between new information and own previously acquired knowledge or preconceptions and (b) to think along the lines of the authors, teachers and fellow students, to reason out a personal opinion and to use this as the basis to 'change something about the information'.
This means that the subject matter is not taken literally, but related to the personal thinking and personal opinions. Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobson, & Coulson (1991) characterised the learning process of these students as “going beyond the information given”.

Students with a reproduction directed learning style learn especially with a view to the test they have to take on their learning, or with a view to the perspective of a diploma. Their learning and thinking activities are particularly aimed at structuring and working out the subject matter in a way that makes it easier to absorb and remember. Their idea of learning consists of the absorption of knowledge in a condensed and memorised form, as near as possible to the form it is provided in. If we describe this 'type' of student in terms of characteristic cognitive processing activities, we can conclude that the learning of these students can be described as the application of mainly memorising and structuring processing activities. Their learning is dominated by activities such as (a) imprinting separate parts of information in their minds by for example repeating them a number of times for themselves and by repetition of the subject matter and also
(b) dividing the subject matter into parts it is made up of and finding out step by step (usually linearly) how many and which different aspects can be distinguished in a problem, line of thinking or theory.

The learning of a meaning directed student, as described by Vermunt, clearly differs strongly in nature and level from the reproduction directed student. The most striking difference being that students who study in a meaning directed way, perform significantly more integrating and more constructive learning activities than reproductive directed students. The latter concerns all the learning activities during which the students tries to construct the meaning of what was learned on the basis of educational resources. This is accomplished by more or less continuous interaction with the resources, by systematically relating their contents with what he knows already, his personal conception of it, what he would be able to do with the knowledge, in which cases, his personal idea about that knowledge, etc. In addition to this, recent studies (for example Spiro et al., 1991) show that learning processes that are characterised by the (inter-)active construction and integration of information and knowledge, lead to deeper and more flexible insights and therefore to higher quality learning results.

Levels of learning

Against the background of the above described general analysis of learning, in terms of learning and thinking activities, we distinguish three quality levels: (1) subject matter directed learning, (2) concrete or application directed learning, and (3) meaning directed or high-quality learning.

The core of *subject matter directed learning* consists of learning and thinking activities that are aimed at structuring the subject matter and working it out, in such a way that it is easier to absorb and, for example when a question is asked in a test, it is easy to recall and to be reproduced later on. Subject matter directed learning leads to learning results of definitely less quality than the two other types of learning. The transfer value of this type of learning is generally low. The sustainability of the acquired knowledge is relatively limited and the applicability and usefulness of the knowledge and skills do not often exceed the original learning situation. This is mainly caused by the fact that new knowledge, insights and skills are not integrated in the personal knowledge and skills repertoire of the learner. Therefore they maintain an isolated and 'sleeping' existence. The quality of the knowledge that is acquired through subject directed learning is characterised by imprinted facts, practices and conventions that are valid in a certain (subject matter) domain. In the most positive case this type of knowledge also includes the insight into how and in which circumstances one should make use of these facts, practices and conventions. However, usually the span is restricted to the limits of the concrete subject matter covered. Often the increased 'expertise' as a result of learning does not consist of much more than the skill to be able to reconstruct or reproduce the facts, problems, notions and skills that are part of the subject matter or subject area, in exactly the same way they were learned.

The results of *concrete or application directed learning* are usually of a somewhat higher level. These results are the fruit of learning and thinking activities that were mainly directed at making abstract, conceptual and/or theoretical information given in the subject matter more concrete and also at actively trying to find the utility, applicability and usefulness of the knowledge and skills to be learned. The learning and thinking activities with this type of learning mainly consist of 'making concrete' and 'application', i.e. trying to make a concrete picture of abstract information, derived from facts already known (for example by looking for suitable examples) and practising the use and application of the subject matter. Concrete or application directed learning is of a higher level than subject matter directed learning, because the acquired knowledge and skills are more strongly integrated with the person and are connected with certain contexts in which they can function (i.e. can be used or applied). Therefore the sustainability value and transfer value of what was learned are higher, because they extend to situations and circumstances outside the immediate reach of the test and learning situation.

Finally, contrary to the earlier described types of learning *meaning directed or high-quality learning* is definitely more than only working out the subject matter or making it concrete. In essence meaning directed learning consists of varied interactions between the pupil and the subject matter. These interactions concern processing and integrating the subject matter in such a way that it becomes an integral part of the knowledge the pupil has. The knowledge does not just have a function when asked for in for example a test, but can also be applied in various other situations in school and outside school. Meaning directed or high-quality learning leads to 'multifunctional' learning results, which can also be used outside the school and learning situation, because the power of the learning outcomes also extends to situations outside the one in which the learning results were achieved (Lodewijks, 1993).
A second characteristic of this type of learning is closely related to this, because high-quality learning leads to 'expert behaviour' that can be demonstrated in varying situations: within the subject domain and outside the learning situation. This implies that high-quality learning concerns learning processes that lead to an increase of the possibilities of the individual to behave adequately in a variety of situations. This applies in any case to situations within the domain at which the learning was directed as well as to situations outside the initial learning situation. High-quality learning is therefore learning that leads to a high level of insight into the matter that is taught and leads to results with maximum versatility and a high transfer value (Simons, 1990). An important condition for high-quality learning is that, as part of the initial learning

process, the learner already learns how and in which circumstances he will later be able to make use of his knowledge and skills in order to operate adeptly and proficiently.

Meaning directed or high-quality learning can only be realised if during the learning process the pupil is prepared, ready and allowed to perform learning activities, not only aimed at structuring and working out the subject matter to be learned, but also at processing and integrating what has been learned into the personal knowledge and skills. They are connected with a learning process the nature of which is called constructive, because the learning activities are not (only) aimed at structuring the subject matter, but particularly at the active construction of knowledge, skills and insights. The goal of these construction activities is either the gradual build up of knowledge and insights that are able to function for a longer period of time, because they are integrated in the pupil's personal knowledge, or the build up of practical or cognitive skills that can also be applied outside the actual learning situation.

Essential internal conditions for learning

We will now go into the question about which conditions the learning environment should meet for pupils/students to arrive at meaning directed and high-quality types of learning. This requires, however, contemplation of a different matter. This concerns the question on which internal factors of the pupil it depends as to whether he is prepared, and if so, whether he is able to perform the learning and thinking activities required for (high-quality) learning. In this respect we talk about 'essential internal conditions for learning'.

As we described earlier, students with a meaning directed learning style organise their learning themselves as much as possible, their learning is based on a perspective of personal interest and they are directed at performing learning and thinking activities that lead to a more thorough insight into the matter and to personally integrated knowledge constructions. Their opinion on learning is that the information that is to be learned should become integrated with their personal knowledge. Compared to this, students with for example a reproduction directed learning style learn especially with a view to tests they have to take on what they have learned or with the perspective of a diploma. Their learning and thinking activities are mainly aimed at structuring the subject matter and working it out in a way that makes it easier to absorb. Their idea of learning consists of integrating knowledge in a condensed and memorised form, corresponding with the form and structure in which it is provided.

Based on these findings we should at least assume the following essential conditions to be present or to be achieved in the learner, if we want to realise high-quality (i.e. meaning directed) learning:

- *The learner should be able to structure, conceptualise and direct his learning.*
  Ultimately this condition means that the learner should be able to structure and conceptualise relevant learning and thinking activities as well as the associated regulation activities, fully independently. This means that he should be able to attach meaning and value to learning as such, that he should be able to monitor his own learning process and that he knows how and when the learning progress should be assessed and evaluated. It goes without saying that this condition is not absolute and cannot always or in every situation be asserted to be applicable. However, it is good to realise that these things are also learned by experience and therefore they are the fruit of a learning process as well.
- *The learner should want to be able to learn something, from a point of view of personal interest or benefit.*
  Where learning at school is concerned, this condition faces us with the difficult question of learning motivation. Adults bring young people together in schools for hours and years on end, with the intention to teach them something as well as possible, although they have not usually chosen to do this themselves. By means of education we try to help pupils, or sometimes gently push pupils to learn, so that they will be good at something. Unfortunately, we frequently find that this is very hard to accomplish, is only partly achieved or not at all. There are very few pupils that are caught up by what the school has to offer right from the very beginning or that personally consider the school to be a good and attractive environment to learn something that represents a personal interest.

Despite this, high-quality learning only takes place if the conditions concerning an optimal level of learning motivation are complied with. Somebody who buys a video recorder and is not interested in the possibilities of the equipment will make little effort to learn to operate the recorder. A good starting position of the 'learner' is completely absent.

An adequate learning motivation is not only, and probably not initially, dependent on the simple preparedness of a pupil to make efforts that lead to learning, but also appears to be highly dependent on the following, interrelated factors:

a) The personal beliefs of the learner on the necessity to perform relevant and constructive learning activities in a certain learning situation. It frequently happens that pupils are not convinced of this necessity or have no idea of it. This can be the result of the fact that this necessity did not often show in a normal school career; usually one can also make reasonable progress in education with reproduction directed types of learning. It may also be the result of personal consideration processes of the learner, weighing up the assets and liabilities as if it were an economic decision. In this case the 'maximising issue' can be described as follows: realisation of a maximum personally acceptable result, at minimum costs in terms of the efforts required.

b) The possibilities the learner considers to be present in themselves to learn in the desired or required way. Sometimes learners are convinced that something has to be learned in a certain way, but they do not consider themselves able to perform the necessary learning and thinking activities or they have little experience with them. If these choices present themselves, a solution is easily made: choose the approach you know best, that will give satisfying results, in short: choose the 'safety-first' strategy.

c) The beliefs of the pupil on the personal value learning represents. If this value is not considered to be high (see the video recorder example described above), no motivation can be derived from considerations about later circumstances: the test, the diploma, the job, etc. In many situations in education this value is indeed hard to detect. In our opinion the pupils are often left uninformed of for example the role and meaning of a certain learning task in the general context, why you need it, which useful personal things you can do after learning something. In our opinion these are problems typically related to learning in school. However, in everyday practice you do not need to explain to somebody buying a video recorder what the value is of knowing how it works. You do not have to explain either that the only way to learn how to operate the equipment and learn how to use its functions is by performing (inter-)active and constructive learning and thinking activities. He or she will soon find out that learning the operating manual by heart will lead to very few useful learning results.

d) The learner should be adept at performing (inter-) active, constructive and integrating learning and thinking activities. This skill, which can obviously be learned too, is sometimes referred to as the learning ability of a learner (Simons, 1990). Pupils, who have a high learning ability, are not necessarily cleverer than others who have a

> lower ability in this area. The most important difference is that they were the first to learn how they should learn. It is clear that pupils should basically be capable of adequate performance of learning and thinking activities that are part of high-quality learning. When they gain experiences with these activities, they will find out that these make learning better and more interesting. Schools often try to work on the learning ability of pupils by providing separate study skills lessons or study skills courses. Practice and study results show however that these lessons have little effect. Pupils do not apply the study skills they learned in the subject specific lessons. Often subject teachers are not informed about the contents of the study skills lessons and do not refer to them. Study skills teachers therefore doubt the use of separate study skills lessons and rightly so in our opinion (for example Van der Sanden, 1993).

Only after paying enough attention to the internal conditions of the learner as described above, can external conditions be addressed: which characteristics should the learning environment have if high-quality learning is to be achieved ('instructive environments')?

Arranging powerful learning environments: some basics

Characteristics of instructive environments

An instructive environment is a learning situation arranged such that there is a maximum chance that the learner can realise high-quality learning, provided that the above-described internal conditions for learning are complied with to a reasonable extent. This type of environment is also referred to as a powerful learning environment (Lodewijks, 1993, 1994 & 1995), because this kind of environment makes a powerful appeal to the learner to learn in an (inter-) active and constructive way.

Powerful learning environments: six general, yet manageable principles

We conclude our analysis of learning with a description of six general, but we think practically manageable principles. These principles indicate which essential conditions have to be complied with in the learning environment, if the aim is to achieve high-quality learning results. These principles can be used when stepping-stones are looked for to improve education at schools and also when alternatives are sought after for an instructive in-school learning environment.

The six principles are aimed at creating powerful learning environments. This means the definition of learning situations that:

- offer a maximum chance to learn in a high-quality or meaning directed way;
- include all the ingredients that appeal to or incite (inter-) active and constructive learning and that ensure that the learning process is maintained until a certain norm of knowledge and skills has been reached;
- systematically allow the learner to see and assess his learning progress in terms of the personally performed learning and thinking activities. This increases the commitment of the learner to learning, it increases the personal responsibility and it allows growth in the motivation to learn.

The six basic principles for the organisation of powerful learning environments are:

1. Learning environments should be *functional.* Functionality of a learning environment means that a learning situation should correspond as closely as possible with situations and circumstances, in which what is learned is to be used or applied (later on). This seems obvious, but too often this kind of functionality is lacking in education or the functionality of a learning situation is not perceived by the learner. It may seem a little exaggerated, but we dare to say that in all the cases where theory and practice are separated in a learning situation, or in which artificial boundaries have been created (between for example learning facts, acquisition of insight and skills), the principle of functionality is under threat. In this respect we think it would be good to consider not only how subjects and knowledge domain can be integrated in education, but also how the acquisition of theoretical knowledge can be related to its application and use.
2. Learning environments should *entice activity.* Learning only takes place if the learner does something with the subject matter. A learning environment should incite to the learner to approach the subject matter in an interactive and integration directed way: instead

of subject matter directed learning, the situation should offer possibilities and incentives for meaning directed learning. A learning environment can be challenging in many different ways and arouse activity in a learner.

3. Learning environments should be *lifelike or at least refer to something*. In a powerful learning environment the learner should continuously experience what the learned knowledge can or cannot be used for, in which situations the learned skills can be used and in which way. In this respect sometimes the condition is made that learning should take place in realistic situations (for example Lave & Wenger, 1991; Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1991). The realistic quality of the learning environment aims at putting the learner in a situation he can imagine. However, practice shows that there is also subject matter that one can hardly, or even not at all, learn in a lifelike situation. In these cases the ideal situation will have to substituted by a practically feasible situation, by learning the subject matter in an environment that refers to, is comparable with or approaches the situations in which the intended knowledge and skills are to function in an adequate way later on.
4. Learning environments should *contain models and provide coaching*. In a powerful learning environment it is necessary that 'the teacher' functions in at least two ways: as a coach and as a subject expert (model). The teacher is the model for directing pupils towards relevant learning and thinking activities that should be performed during the learning process. In addition to this the teacher is required as a subject expert model to show the pupils at a concrete level what competent handling of the knowledge and skills to be learned (finally) consists of (for example Collins, 1991). If the pupil needs this, the coach is necessary to assist with selecting the required thinking and learning activities and, also if needed, to give possible directions to arrive at the desired learning results. Moreover, as a coach the teacher plays an important role in the advancement of an optimum 'frame of mind' of the pupil.
5. Learning environments have to *put the pupil gradually in the driver's seat.* A basic characteristic of a powerful learning environment is that it teaches the pupil how to learn. This means that the pupil, when his learning progresses, is increasingly more able to organise, conceptualise and direct his own learning. At the same time he should become less dependent on the structure of the environment and he should be increasingly able to navigate within the learning environment. A powerful environment is structured in such a way

that the responsibility for learning gradually shifts to the pupil's environment.

6. Learning environments should systematically *develop the awareness of the increasing personal skill.* High-quality learning leads to a better (functioning) understanding of the subject matter and improved usefulness of what has been learned. However, sometimes it is the case that the learning results in certain learning situation can be brought to at a higher level, but that this does not apply to the fun and motivation of the pupils. In this respect it is of major importance to systematically incorporate the opportunity for a pupil to measure his own progress in the learning environment, which is best done against personally determined norms. Now it is often the case that pupils can measure their progress only by the mark of a test and/or by comparison with other pupils. In these cases the pupil receives little information on his individual growth or his increased competence. A powerful learning environment should include instruments to enable pupils to survey their increased individual competence. This is best realised by comparison of the current achievements with earlier indications of the individual achievement level within a certain subject matter area. By comparing achievements with (individual) norms, the pupils can establish how successful their own learning activities have been and how much better they have learned to manage the subject matter. By learning to systematically relate the increased competence to the personal efforts (learning activity) a growing awareness of the personal ability develops. This is necessary to support and maintain the learning process. The observation that one's competence has noticeably increased in certain subject matter domains, as a result of personal efforts, leads to strongly positive affective sensations. These 'thrills of skill' do not only keep the learning process going and keep the level up, but also provide an increasing commitment to continue.

In short, powerful learning environments advance learning processes and results to a higher level and make pupils continue the development of their learning ability. And perhaps most important of all: they ensure that pupils pick things up and learn to do things at school, that will later on improve their progress outside school.

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Why is imagination important to education?

Kieran Egan

Introduction

This essay's title might seem to pose an odd question. The answer, or answers, might seem obvious. Everyone is generally in favour of imagination, considering it important, as a quality that any educated person should display. Even so, it is worth trying to spell out reasons why imagination is important to education - why educators should take imagination seriously. First, spelling out such reasons can help us design practices and environments that will more likely stimulate students' imaginations. Second, spelling them out can uncover perhaps surprising educational implications of our concept of imagination. Third, it is clear that our concept of imagination is complex and pervasive, and equally clear that people often mean somewhat different things by it, and so spelling out reasons for taking it seriously in education will help to clarify the range of implications it has. Fourth, the general and rather vague support for developing imagination in education is most commonly restricted to dealing with self-expression in the arts and with a rather anaemic sense of novelty in other areas of the curriculum; spelling out reasons why it is important to education might clarify its role throughout the curriculum. And, fifth, it must be said that the typical structures and practices of current schooling, as detailed in a wealth of reports, are designed according to principles that clearly do not consider imagination important to education.

If imagination is so generally approved of in education, why should the various reports of recent years document so little attention to it? Also, it is very common when discussing excellent teaching to hear teachers commended as 'imaginative', yet imagination tends to be almost entirely ignored in research on teaching effectiveness. (In a review of such research, O'Neill (1988) identifies twenty 'research factors', but 'imagination' is not among them. Similarly, Porter and Brophy's (1988) review and synthesis of research on 'good teaching' also ignores imagination.) This neglect is no doubt in part due to the difficulty dominant research methods have ion coming to grips with imagination, but it is also in part due, I think, to the ambiguous response authorities, including those in charge of educational institutions, have always had to imagination.

'Imagination' is not so clear and precise a concept that one can launch into an essay assuming that all readers agree about what it means. And yet we all use the word fairly confidently; confidently, that is, about more or less what we mean and that what we mean will be understood by others as what they more or less mean by the word. I think this confidence is not entirely misplaced. That is, we use 'imagination' to refer to a range of capacities we share. There is, I suspect, a fair amount of intuitive agreement about what this range involves. Once we try to excavate it, and categorize it, and label the parts, however, we seem to create disagreements or, at least, dissatisfaction with the characterizations. The problem seems to lie in the complex and protean nature of imagination, and in the fact that imagination lies at the crux of those aspects of our lives that are least well understood.

We have in common a capacity to hold images of what may not be present or even exist in our minds and to allow these images to effect us as though they were present and real. The nature of these images is very hard for us to describe, as they are unlike any other kinds of images we are familiar with in the 'external' world. It seems, also, that people might experience these images quite differently - some having clear access to vivid quasi-pictorial images, some having such hazy experiences that the word 'image' seems not really the right one. And the same person may be familiar with this range of what seem like different kinds or degrees of 'images'. It "is one of those problems where everything is up for grabs, including precisely what the problem is" (Block, 1981, p. 5). Imagination lies at a kind of crux where perception, memory, idea generation, emotion, metaphor, and no doubt other labelled features of our lives, intersect and interact. Some of the images we experience seem 'echoes' of what we have perceived, though we can change them, combine them, manipulate them to become like nothing we have ever perceived. Our memory seems to be able to transform perceptions and store their 'echoes' in ways that do not always or perhaps very often require quasi-pictorial 'images', (as in the cases of sounds and smells, say). Novelty in ideas has nearly always been connected with the powers of imagination to 'see' solutions to problems. Our emotions seem tied to these mental images; when we imagine something we feel as though it is real or present, such that it seems our 'coding' and 'access' to images is tied in with our emotions. The logic of imagination seems to conform more readily to that of metaphor than to any scheme of rationality we can be explicit about.

Each one of these topics is problematic, if not downright mysterious. Fortunately one does not have to solve them all before we can say something useful about imagination in education - as many people have already demonstrated. I will rely on the general and common sense of imagination through this essay, leading, I hope, to some refinement of it in the conclusion.

Imagination and conventional thinking

When we look at typical educational practice, we would be justified in assuming that the main purpose of education was to ensure that students accumulate knowledge, skills, and attitudes appropriate for the lives they are likely to lead. But when we look at the writings of the greatest educational thinkers we find that their main concern is rather different from this. If we consider Plato, Rousseau, and Dewey, for example, it is clear that the accumulation of knowledge and skills in the sense that seems to exercise our schools almost exclusively is only a small part of what concerns them. What seems to be central to becoming educated in their view is not being bound by the conventional ideas and beliefs which people commonly grow up to accept. Education, they passionately assert, is about something that we typically attend very little to in our schools. Instilling knowledge is obviously not irrelevant to them, but their concerns with it are determined by the much more important question of how one enables a student to become an autonomous thinker, able to see conventional ideas for what they are. Education, to put it a bit tendentiously, is a process that awakens individuals to a kind of thought that enables them to imagine conditions other than those that exist or that have existed.

The programs that these great educationalists proposed in order to carry young children to educated adulthood differ each from each other's. Plato proposed a tightly regimented curriculum taking fifty years to ensure freeing his best students' minds from the constrictions of doxa or conventional opinion. Rousseau proposed manipulating his student's every thought, and preventing him from learning to read until about twelve years old, so that he would not be infected by all the second-hand ideas of ordinary social discourse and of books. Dewey proposed methods of instruction designed to encourage students to adopt a scientific, inquiring and sceptical attitude.

Everyone recognizes that one function of schools is to socialize children, to have them understand, be familiar with, and value the conventional ideas and beliefs of the society of which they are becoming a part.

Imagination without such a basis is mere wildness, and is unlikely to be fruitful to the individual or to the society. This is a common sentiment: "We want the child not just to be imaginative, but also to be, in some sense, conventional, to learn and to some extent to participate in our shared thoughts, our shared form of life." (Hanson, 1988, p. 137).

Metaphors that are commonly used about educating beyond conventional socializing include 'awakening' or 'freeing' or 'releasing'. Mental life that is made up very largely of the conventional ideas and opinions of one's time and place is considered a kind of sleep or servitude. (Those who are most victims of this sleep or servitude are, of course, unconscious of their condition.) Plato talks of awakening the soul, or of freeing prisoners whose experience is of only shadows of reality. Such language constantly recurs in education to catch at that dimension of experience that education is crucially concerned with: "To be able to imagine is to be able to be free of conventional appearances" (Sutton-Smith, 1988, pp. 10-11). Not 'must be free' or 'free of all conventions all the time', but 'able to be free'. That is, education is the process that enables us, empowers us, to be not dominated by conventional appearances, ideas, beliefs, and practices. It provides the frame of mind in which we can perceive their utility and accept them as conditions of social life going forward, but in which we can also see their limits, their arbitrariness, and can imagine changing them should we deem it better.

This means, of course, that there is a constant tension in education between teaching the conventions whereby students will have to live and encouraging the capacities that enable them to gain some kind of mental freedom from those conventions - making them tools rather than constraints. This tension is prominent in the writings of the great educational thinkers, but unfortunately rather less prominent in many schools. The former part of the job, the socializing or inducting students into current conventions, seems to predominate. And this observation is not intended to underestimate how difficult it is to do even this job properly. The power to be free of these conventions tends to be cultivated much less, for many reasons: It is hard; we have no clear curriculum guidelines for achieving it; it clashes with what already takes up so much energy; and of course the school's bureaucratic needs for order and various kinds of regimentation exert subtle but powerful pressures against it.

Well, this is not intended to be a philosophical or sociological treatise, and I am perhaps wandering further than I need to emphasize the point that most of the great educational thinkers have seen the main enemy of education, not as ignorance, but as conventional thinking. Indeed, conventional minds may be encyclopaedically well informed and perform superbly on scholastic achievement tests and have stratospherically elevated I.Q.'s, and so on. A.N. Whitehead has referred to such people as the greatest bores on God's earth. What they lack, I am suggesting, is imagination, and this is a crucial educational deficit.

Imagination is not opposed to conventional thinking, but it provides a kind of context or further dimension within which conventional thinking is controlled, and from which it can be transcended. It is not opposed to rationality, but is that which can give rational thinking life, energy, and enriched meaning. As Bowra puts it "by exercising (one's) imagination (one) creates life and adds to the sum of living experience. (One) wishes to be not a passive observer but an active agent." (1949, p. 292).

So, a focus on the imagination reminds us that the forms of thought in which it is most lacking are also the forms of thought that have been the targets of the greatest educational thinkers. Their programs of education have not been proposed to prevent students being socialized and growing into the conventions of their time and place but have struggled to find ways of making sure that this process is accompanied by one which makes those conventions intellectual servants and not masters. And I am suggesting that today we can best further this aim by stimulating and developing students' imaginations.

Imagination in learning

Since the invention of writing, we have developed elaborate means of storing information. One feature of these systems of storage and recall, whether on wax-tablets, parchment, in books, or in computers is that what you put in is what you get out. Human learning is in significant ways different from such storage and retrieval. But unfortunately our technologies influence the ways we think about ourselves. Certainly if you think about learning a fact - say, that water boils at 100 degrees Celsius at sea level - and then repeating that fact later, what you have done looks very like what happens if the fact is recorded somewhere in symbols and then later retrieved. It just so happens that in this case the storage device is your brain and the retrieval mechanism is your memory.

If we allow our technologies to determine how we think about our intellectual processes then one effect, which has I think been pervasive and very damaging to education, is to think of learning as a process analogous to recording symbols in the mind for later retrieval. The first thing we might note is that the human mind seems to be really very inefficient at this kind of recording and faithful preservation over time. A sheet of paper or a computer disk is much more reliable. Learning in this technology-analogous sense can be measured by how faithfully the records have been preserved when retrieved on a later test. This kind of testing goes on all the time in schools, and the results are taken very straightforwardly as evidence of learning. This has been going on so long and so ubiquitously in schools that the meaning of learning that is most common is this kind of mechanical storage and retrieval.

And what's wrong with that? Well, a number of things. Most generally what's wrong is that it ignores what is distinctive about human learning. In particular it leads to people forgetting that the human mind learns quite unlike the way a computer 'learns', and that our memories are quite unlike computer 'memories'.

The human mind does not simply store facts discretely when it learns. Perhaps it can do this, and we might occasionally use this capacity to remember a phone number or a shopping list in the absence of a piece of paper. More typically when we learn even the simplest fact - that Vasco da Gama set off from Lisbon to sail around in Africa in 1497, arriving in India the following year, or that spiders have eight legs - we do not simply lodge these as discrete data in our brains. As they are learned they mix in with the complex of shifting emotions, memories, intentions, and so on that constitute our mental lives. Facts about spiders will gain an affective colouring connected with our feelings about insects in general and about spiders in particular. Vasco da Gama's voyages may trigger images of ships off alien coasts and the sense of adventure. Whether and how we learn and retain these particular facts is affected by the complex of meaning-structures we already have in place, which in turn are affected by our emotions, intentions, and so on.

The human memory is not an orderly place with slots or shelves for each item to remain inertly until called for. It is more like a shifting turmoil stirred by those emotions and intentions that are a part of us. Virtually nothing emerges from the human memory in the same form it was initially learned. All kinds of associations curl around each new fact, there is endless blending and coalescing, and connections are made, broken, and remade. And no small part of this activity involves the imagination.

It is becoming clear that human learning does not involve simply mirroring what is outside the mind, but crucially involves constructing or composing (Bruner, 1986). Each mind is different and is a different perspective on the world. In the process of learning, the student has to fit whatever is to be learned into his or her unique complex of meaning-structures that are already in place. This requires restructuring, composition, and reassessment of meanings. And it is in this ascribing of meaning that Warnock (1976) identifies one of the fundamental activities of imagination.

So taking imagination seriously and then considering learning in light of our developing conception of imagination we are focused onto those aspects of learning that emphasize meaning. Meaning does not reside in the facts themselves, or in the skills or whatever it is we learn, but in the interaction between what is learnt and our minds. And our minds are not simple depositories for facts, but centres of constant activity in which emotions, intentions, memories all intermingle with what is newly learnt to give it meaning.

This might seem to make the casual concept of learning so hopelessly tangled that the simplistic concept common in education today seems preferable, despite the educational cost. If we can't teach that a spider has eight legs without involving emotions, intentions, meaning-structures (whatever they are) and imagination then we might prefer to throw in the towel. I think the problem is not so bad; we don't somehow have to juggle all these sets of complex mental elements just to talk about learning. Rather we just have to remember that human learning is something quite different from storing information - and bearing this in mind is not at all difficult. The difficult part, I think, is in taking seriously its implications. And this is where taking imagination seriously begins to play havoc with some of the familiar established elements of the current educational scene. All those procedures of teaching, testing, and curriculum that see education as a process of accumulating knowledge and skills uninvolved with emotions, intentions, human meaning, and imagination, will tend to be inadequate to do more than create conventional thinkers and not educated people.

Imagination and memory

From the writings of Aristotle on, there has been in western culture a long connection between memory and imagination. This connection is not merely an historical curiosity but remains crucially important for education today. There is a tendency that has grown out of the rhetoric of progressivism to consider that 'rote-learning', or learning in the conventional sense discussed above, is educationally useless. The valuable insight in this, about the pointlessness of treating students like storage devices for knowledge that is meaningless to them, has tended to be uncritically generalized to hostility to any kind of memorization. One of the clear implications of the consistent observation of the relationship between memory and imagination is the importance of memorizing knowledge, facts, chunks of prose and poetry, formulae, etc. for the stimulation and development of the imagination. Ignorance, in short, starves the imagination. And we are ignorant of all that knowledge which we might know how to access, but haven't, or which we have learned how to learn, but haven't. Only knowledge in our memories is accessible to the action of the imagination.

This principle might seem to run into conflict with that of the previous section. There I seem to be arguing that the imagination is suppressed if students are set to learn lots of knowledge and skills and here I am claiming that the imagination requires the memorization of lots of knowledge and skills to be adequately stimulated. The two principles are consistent when we observe the point made above about the meaningfulness of the knowledge and skills that are to be memorized; ensuring that knowledge and skills are meaningful requires engaging the imagination in the process of learning. How we can go about ensuring this kind of imaginative learning would require much more space than an essay provides (Egan, 1988, 1990, 1997). What it is important to establish here, however, is that the development of students' imaginations will not go forward without their learning and memorizing much and diverse knowledge.

This has been a constant theme in what have been called 'neo-conservative' educational writings during the late 1980s (for example Bloom, 1987; Hirsch, 1987; Ravitch & Finn, 1987). The emphasis in these neo-conservative writings has been to make the valuable point that education is crucially tied up with knowledge, and that being educated means, put crudely, knowing a lot. But, as I stressed above, it means not only that. Education is also crucially about the meaning knowledge has for the individual, and that is where the imagination is vital. A person who has meticulously followed the neo-conservative kind of curriculum may still end up among the greatest bores on God's earth. What is absent from those books is attention to, and a clear sense of, how knowledge becomes meaningful in the lives of learners; how we can ensure that students engage, in the sense I am developing the phrase here, in imaginative learning.

In oral cultures one knows only what one can remember. And so techniques that made memorization easier were of great social importance. Among the techniques invented or discovered were rhyme, rhythm, and meter. That is, it was discovered that knowledge put in a rhythmic, rhyming pattern was easier to remember than otherwise. It was also discovered that if one coded the information - one's tribal lore - in vivid images, it was still more easily memorable. We see such coding in vivid images in the myth stories of the world. It seems fair to say, then, that it was the need to memorize that first stimulated and developed many of those capacities we now label imagination.

Patterning of sound, vivid images, and story structuring were among the most important early social inventions. It was these technical linguistic tools and their effects on the mind that helped human groups to cohere and remain relatively stable through unknown generations (Havelock, 1963, 1986; Lévi-Bruhl, 1985; Lévi-Strauss, 1966; Ong, 1982). As I have explored elsewhere (Egan, 1988, 1997), these are not discoveries only of relevance to oral cultures long ago. Their social importance was a function of their effects on the human mind, and while we do not have the same social reliance on these techniques, they nevertheless still play important psychological roles for us. They can guide us in the task of ensuring imaginative learning and imaginative memorizing. That is, they can be used in learning so that they help the memory's task of creating sense and order and meaning among its shifting contents.

The narrative mind

Brian Sutton-Smith's stark claim that "the mind is ... a narrative concern" (1988, p. 22) expresses a view that is becoming increasingly widely accepted. It confronts the long-assumed view that the mind is, when functioning productively and properly, a logical concern working with abstract concepts. Reason was thus taken as evident only in limited logical operations. Increasingly these operations are seen as themselves grounded in and growing out of narrative and metaphoric bases (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). When someone could talk of a parent's reasonless love for a child, the sense of reason was restricted to what could be demonstrated in something like a formal logical fashion. A parent's love for a child is entirely reasonable, once we rescue 'reason' from the prison it has been in and reconnect it to the imagination. Without this connection it is desiccated and more close to a form of calculation than to the richness and complexity of human reason as it operates in the narratives of our lives.

As it becomes clearer that the mind functions as a whole, and that this whole includes our bodies, then the sense of the mind as an elaborate calculating organ and reason as its calculations becomes increasingly untenable. It becomes clear that rationality is not a set of skills one can train but is rather tied up with all these hitherto neglected attics, basements, and hidden rooms of the mind, in which emotions, intentions, metaphors, and the imagination, cavort. And so it has been rediscovered that we make sense of the world and of our experience in narratives, that we can recall items in narrative structures better than in logically organized lists, that we more profoundly code knowledge in our memories by affective than by logical associations, that young children deal more readily and flexibly with metaphor than do older, schooled children, and so on and on.

The rediscovery of the narrative mind encourages us to pay more attention to imagination, because the imagination is more evident in the composition of narratives and in perceiving their coherence. Learning to follow narratives is thus seen to involve the development of more significant intellectual capacities than has traditionally been recognized. In particular, to quote Northrop Frye, "The art of listening to stories is a basic training for the imagination" (1963, p. 49). The ability to follow stories stimulates and develops the narrative mode of the mind, and its sense-making, meaning-making capacities. Many and varied stories can help to make more sophisticated our grasp on and use of metaphor, which is the connecting logic of narrative and which is a central component in the causality which holds stories together. The causality of stories involves both logical and emotional components together. That is, in stories the sequencing of events that are intelligible, that make sense, is not simply logical, though they have to be so in part, but it also involves an affective pattern. We jump from, say, the scene where Cinderella sees the sisters off to the ball to that, in which the Fairy Godmother arrives. Following a purely logical causal sequence we might have to witness some dishwashing or dusting or coal heaving or whatever, but the affective causality makes the connection between the two scenes immediate and directly comprehensible.

Learning to follow stories is to develop these mental capacities. As they are developed, James Joyce's Ulysses and Finnegans Wake become comprehensible, and those sophistications of narrative comprehension become available for making sense of our own experience and of the world we find ourselves in.

The development of the narrative capacities of the mind, of its ready use of metaphor, of its integration of cognitive and affective, of its sense-making and meaning-making, and of its overarching imagination, is of educational importance because these capacities are so central to our capacity to make meaning out of experience. Our lives are "understood as embodying a certain type of narrative structure" (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 163). Any event or behaviour has no meaning by itself; it "becomes intelligible by finding its place in a narrative" (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 196). Barbara Hardy puts it emphatically: "We dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and live by narrative" (1968, p. 5).

So, in as far as we want the world to be intelligible to students, and in as far as we value the elements of the list Barbara Hardy gives us above, the stimulation and development of the narrative mode of mind is educationally vital. And this mode, born out of stories to help us remember, is the domain in which the imagination is indispensable.

Developing the narrative mode of the mind tends to receive less emphasis in schools because it is not seen to be productive, in the way that developing logico-mathematical skills is seen to be productive. The utilitarian role of schools communicates itself to children very readily. Nearly all children when asked why they go to school reply "To get a job" (Cullingford, 1985). Frye notes "Every child realizes that literature is taking him in a different direction from the immediately useful, and a good many children complain loudly about this" (1963, p. 2). One role of education is to clarify for children that the life of the imagination offers rewards that are indeed not immediately useful but that are worthwhile. And, most significantly for education, access to narratives seems possible for everyone, literate or not, and they provide an obvious route to all kinds of knowledge. Educators might wisely develop "a respect for narrative as everyone's rock-bottom capacity, but also as the universal gift, to be shared with others" (Coles, 1989, p. 30).

Social virtues

I want to add to the list of educational values that follow from the development of the imagination such social virtues as tolerance and justice. Of course it would be too much to say that the evils of the world are due simply to a lack of imagination, but some of them seem to be so. The lack of that capacity of the imagination that enables us to understand that other people are unique, distinct, and autonomous with lives and hopes and fears quite as real and important as our own is evident in much evil. The development of that imaginative insight does not, however, guarantee that we will then treat them as we wish to be treated ourselves, but it is a necessary prerequisite.

But there are more particular connections to be made between the imagination and social virtues. To pick up on MacIntyre's point in the previous section, the ability to follow stories is connected with the ability to make sense of human experience because our lives are intelligible only within narratives observing that "man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal" (1981, p. 201) he points out a complexity of our fiction-making. It is not merely a mode of entertainment but is complicit in how we make sense of ourselves and how we behave as social animals:

"There is no way to give us an understanding of any society, including our own, except through the stock of stories which constitute its initial dramatic resources. Mythology, in its original sense, is at the heart of things. Vico was right and so was Joyce. And so too of course is that moral tradition from heroic stories to its medieval heirs according to which the telling of stories has a key part in educating us into the virtues."

Stories are good for 'educating us into the virtues' because the story not only conveys information and describes events and actions but because it also engages our emotions. From Plato on, the power of stories to engage, and to engage the commitment of, their hearers has been clear. And it is that power that has made some wary or fearful of them, particularly in educating the young. The powerful stories of the world do not simply describe a range of human qualities, but they make us somehow a part of those qualities. They hold up for us, and draw us into, feeling what it would be like to make those qualities a part of our selves. In this way stories are the tool we have for showing others what it is like to feel as we do and for us to find out what it is like to feel as others do.

The story, in short, is "the ability to exchange experiences" (Benjamin, 1969, p. 83). Such stories become, simply, a part of us; as Robert Coles quotes one of his students: "in a story - oh, like it says in the Bible, the word became flesh" (Coles, 1989, p. 128).

By imaginatively feeling what it would be like to be other than oneself, one begins to develop a prerequisite for treating others with as much respect as one treats oneself. Prejudice, in the religious, class, or racial forms, which we see so commonly, may be seen in part at least as a failure of imaginative development.

The story's power to engage the imagination and contribute thereby to tolerance and a sense of justice needs to be balanced, of course, with its power to do the opposite as well. If the story is one of, say, Aryan superiority and a Nazi salvation, then it can have an equal grasp on the imagination and lead to quite the opposite of toleration and social justice.

What is the protection against this kind of abuse? There seem to me two. The more trivial, recommended by Plato and so many others since, is that we be careful to tell the right kind of stories to children. The more important protection comes from the stimulation of the imagination by a rich and varied stock of stories, as suggested in the previous section. Vulnerability to stories like that of the Nazi's is a result, in part at least, of a mind unfamiliar with, and unsophisticated by, the stock of stories that constitute the culture's resources. The value of familiarity with the stock of stories and the kind of sophistication it brings is that one can understand the fictiveness of stories. The Nazi story is compelling only to people who do not understand fictions and how they work. Not that this is an easy lesson, yielding tidy distinctions between our fictions and reality, but the degree to which we become familiar with the range of stories available in our culture, to that degree we inoculate ourselves against confusing fiction and reality.

Literature is most commonly assumed to be the part of the curriculum in which we become acquainted with some of the great stories of our culture. Proponents of the educational value of literary studies also commonly argue that they can lead to social virtues. Northrop Frye (1963, p. 32) certainly makes this argument eloquently. After demonstrating various ways in which literature stimulates and develops the imagination, he concludes:

"One of the most obvious uses (of imagination) is its encouragement of tolerance. In the imagination our own beliefs are also only possibilities, but we can also see the possibilities in the beliefs of others ... what produces the tolerance is the power of detachment in the imagination, where things are removed just out of reach of belief and action."

While literature undoubtedly has such a role in encouraging some social virtues, I think we tend to forget that among the great stories of our culture are those expressed in our science, and mathematics, and history, and so on. Mathematics and science can, if imaginatively taught, build a narrative that provides the student with a context within which the student's life and self become objects to be understood like other objects in the world. The narrative of our science can also contribute importantly to that 'detachment in the imagination' that can lead to tolerance and justice.

Imagination and freedom

Some of the earliest stories of the Hebrew and Greek traditions associated the imagination with acts of disobedience that aimed to enlarge or led to enlarging human powers, in particular the power to imagine and plan a future different from the past. I am thinking particularly of Adam and Eve eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge and of Prometheus stealing the gods' fire. This sense of being able to make choices and to make the world more nearly like what one's heart desires has long been considered central to whatever it is in human beings that makes us feel freer than we assume animals or vegetables are. Their lives seem more determined or conditioned by their genetic heritage and their environment. We too are similarly constrained, of course, but nevertheless believe that there is some part of us that can plan and shape our behaviour in ways that feel some element of freedom.

At a trivial level this is evident in daydreaming. I may imagine myself taller, handsomer, richer, more powerful, stronger even than I already am - a prodigious feat of imagination in the Walter Mitty tradition. No doubt some genetic defect or early environmental deprivation may predispose me to this kind of daydreaming, but I can choose to be blond in my daydream rather than dark, or rather than bald. The sense of freedom in these choices, and in the scenes we can project onto our inner mental cinema, may be in some degree illusory. Whether it is or not, it remains a capacity connected with our ability to imagine a different future and to plan and bring about the conditions for that different future. Being able to change the world around us in ways we find desirable and satisfactory is clearly an important capacity. It is what gives us our sense of freedom, illusory or not, and we sensibly value it. As it is a capacity whose strength or weakness turns on the strength or weakness of our imaginations, then clearly we will want to strengthen our imaginations in order to enhance our sense of freedom and enhance the powers that go with it. A well-developed imagination helps us to feel unsubdued by habit, unshackled by custom, in Coleridge's nice phrase.

"Imagination is what allows us to envision possibilities in or beyond the actualities in which we are immersed" is how Hanson sums up Sartre's general claim about the imagination's role in our sense of freedom (1988, p. 138). We have many accounts by survivors of appalling catastrophes and conditions that eloquently give credit for their survival to their envisioning possibilities beyond those in which they were immersed. Prisoners, and particularly concentration camp survivors, have consistently given witness that, despite the most terrible constraints, powerful imaginations can preserve a vivifying sense of mental freedom.

Hanson makes a further point, of some importance to education: "Imagination, then, is to be prized and nurtured because of its link to freedom; but, as is often the case, this exercise of freedom will be most productive if it is disciplined" (1988, p. 139). While we may value the mental capacity that can find expression in daydreaming, we might reasonably conclude that its exercise only in daydreaming is something of a waste. This is not to denigrate daydreaming - which seems to me generally a happy activity, rather underestimated. But the imagination needs also to be engaged with reality. The disciplines we have developed for trying to secure a sense of reality are areas within which the imagination can be disciplined. That is, physics, mathematics, and history, for example, are not disciplines to be learned separately from our imaginative growth. The imagination has to grow in these disciplines, so that their grasp on the world is enriched with meaning, and the imagination can recognize and work within the grasp they can gain on reality.

Imagination and objective knowledge

Imagination is commonly considered quite distinct from whatever mental acts are involved in our attempts to gain objective knowledge. The rich sense of imagination we have inherited, however, seems to lead to the conclusion that quite the opposite is the case.

The imagination thus should more properly be seen as one of our major tools in the pursuit of objective knowledge, and indeed as establishing the very conditions of objectivity.
One route to justifying this still uncommon view may be taken through a point Ruth Mock (1970, p. 21) makes:

"In the arts and sciences creative imagination demands that an individual frees himself from his immediate preoccupations and associates himself with the medium he is using - the paint, wood, or stone for the painter or sculptor, the words for the writer, the sounds for the musician or the facts for the scientist - so that with it he creates a new form which may to some extent be unexpected even to himself."

What is important for my point here is the observation about the imagination's capacity to inhabit, as it were, the external objects with which it engages. We may see ourselves as distinct beings carving stone, say. But the experienced carver with a well educated imagination mentally extends into the material being worked, knowing what it is like to break here rather than there, how a stroke here will sheer away whatever is below, and so on. That is, the imaginative sculptor - or mathematician or historian or whatever - becomes in a curious sense one with the materials he or she is working. They feel in high degree something of what Michael Polanyi has described as a part of "tacit knowledge" (Polanyi, 1967) - we feel through the tools and objects we work with: they become extensions of our senses and as such incorporated into our imaginations. And it is not just that the stone, say, becomes an extension of ourselves, but that we become an extension of the stone; our minds conform with the nature of the objects that they seek to incorporate, whether those objects are stone and paint, or mathematical symbols, or historical events, or astrophysical phenomena. The world is not objects out there; in as far as we can know the world it is within us by means of that curiously reciprocal arrangement whereby we also extend ourselves imaginatively into it.

Well, this is rather airy-fairy language, of course, but it is so because we cannot adequately describe even the simplest functions of our minds with notable clarity, and the more complex can only be pointed at or indicated in such vague terms as above, in the hope that others will find the pointing and indicating sufficient for them to recognize in their own experience what is meant.

Any area of knowledge, skill, or practice has its own requirements for some form of objectivity; each area has its distinctive rules, structures, forms, nature, such that our understanding is made up in some significant degree in making our minds conform to them. And while in each area of knowledge, skill, and practice these requirements are different, what is common to them all is their call on the imagination. Objectivity relies on the imaginative capacity to inhabit the forms of the materials, knowledge, skill, or practice one works in.

I think this connection between imagination and objectivity is supported by the connection we commonly make between objectivity and being unprejudiced or being a just judge. We value having someone unprejudiced and objective judge many matters of conflicting interests. Such objectivity draws on the imaginative capacity to see the world from other than the limited perspective of one's own interests. And this is essential not just in relation to the social virtues mentioned earlier, but it is a necessary component in adequately understanding any area of knowledge. As such, development of those imaginative capacities that support objectivity is of importance to education.

Imagination and emotion

The importance of emotional development to education is no doubt obvious to everyone, and connections between the emotions and imagination are more evident, even in the rather restricted sense of imagination common in educational writing. However superbly skilled or knowledgeable people are, if they lack emotional maturity we recognize them as inadequately educated. Emotional immaturity is a damage that seeps into all aspects of one's life. To suggest that emotional immaturity need not interfere with the development of rationality is to accept, as has been quite common, the sense of rationality that has been so destructive to education during the twentieth century. This desiccated sense of rationality has been the focus of most schooling activity, and the belief that reason and emotion were separable parts of us has enabled whatever affects our emotional lives to be made subservient. Taking imagination seriously brings into question the assumptions on which the sidelining of emotions in schooling has been based.

The discourse of education seems to assume that we have an intellectual part of us and an emotional part of us, or a cognitive and affective part, and that these can sensibly be separated. It has become at least operationally the case that schooling is responsible primarily for the cognitive or intellectual part. One can, of course, try to ignore the affective dimensions of, say, mathematics and treat that area of human experience as a purely cognitive set of procedures to be learnt. What is achieved by so doing is at best to make mathematics something of merely utilitarian value and to destroy its other potential values to our lives. The great wonder and fun of mathematics is largely destroyed in schooling for nearly everybody, including for those who are "good at it" when it is taught in the typical desiccated way. Some lucky few can discover the pleasures of mathematics as adults, but for most it remains merely as something that is useful when making change or keeping accounts.

The wasteland called school mathematics is perhaps the most obvious casualty of the attempt to separate something deemed rational, cognitive, and intellectual from imagination and emotion. The result is a disaster because it is built on assumptions about human learners that are false. The task we face is not simply to point out that mathematics is a passionate affair that can become engaging and meaningful only when students' imaginations make contact with the passion within it. The problem is that the very language of educational discourse is so infected with assumptions and presuppositions that need to be uprooted and challenged that people have great difficulty grasping how mathematics could be different from the way it presently is. For most people mathematics is what is in the textbooks. How we might re-inject imagination and emotion into such mathematics generates a blank, because the textbooks presuppose that imagination and emotion are largely irrelevant to mathematics. This belief persists despite the very plain passion and imaginative genius of those people who generated the mathematical knowledge that is embalmed in textbooks.

The separation of emotion and intellect, I have argued already, has been educationally dysfunctional. We need to recapture Wordsworth's sense of imagination as "Reason in her most exalted mood" (The Prelude, XIV, 192), and see the force of Frye's observation that "the combination of emotion and intellect we call imagination" (1963, p. 57). Taking imagination seriously in education directs us to transcend the intellect/emotion split and perceive both together in all areas of knowledge and all aspects of education. Our emotional lives are tied to our imaginations, which are tied to our intellects. Imaginative learning, then, inevitably involves our emotions.

Imagination is important to education because it compels us to recognize that forms of teaching and learning that are disconnected from our emotions are educationally barren.

Now, none of this is to suggest that typical classrooms are in future to be a flood with tears, wailing, and wild joy all day long. Rather, that whatever content is to be dealt with needs to be attached to students' emotions in some way, or that the human emotions that generated the content in the first place, or that attach to it in whatever way, need to be a part of what is dealt with in the class. (Elsewhere I have tried to show how this can be routinely achieved: Egan, 1986, 1988, 1990).

Visualization, originality, and creativity

These three topics are being squeezed together into a single brief section. At the beginning of this essay I noted that everyone is generally in favour of imagination and, it seems fair to say, it is the association of imagination with visualization, originality, and creativity that probably accounts for the bulk of support for its development in education. If I pass over these topics with just the briefest mention, it is not because I consider them unimportant, but simply that their importance, and their connection with imagination, seems to be already widely recognized.

Ted Hughes has observed "the word imagination usually denotes not much more than the faculty of creating a picture of something in our heads and holding it there while we think about it" (1988, p. 35). This common, restricted, sense of imagination denotes a faculty that can be developed by practice, and that has already been incorporated into various techniques of educational value. The teacher can encourage students to form mental images of whatever is the subject of a lesson, concentrate on the images, elaborate them or move them, and then turn to writing or experimenting or whatever is the appropriate activity. There are many accounts in the educational literature reporting how successful a stimulus this kind of visualizing exercise can be. The teacher can make suggestions for elaborating or making more precise students' mental images, but an important ingredient is some silent time. A related development of the basic image forming capacity is available in the technique commonly called Guided Imagery. This is used most in social studies, as far as one can judge from the literature about it. In this case, as the name suggests, the images are stimulated by the teacher's descriptions, and the students follow a verbal account that details sights, sounds, tastes, and smells, creating for themselves as vivid an internal cinematic projection as they can.

I have found that this particular form of engaging the imagination, with historical content in particular, can be immensely stimulating for students.

The importance of originality and creativity and their close relationship with imagination are sufficiently commonly made that I need add nothing. Perhaps I might, however, take away something. What seems to have become accepted as exemplifying originality and creativity most clearly is what seems to me a context less novelty. This is most evident in what are called 'creativity tests'. What they test seems to be the ability to express, without any meaningful context or productive purpose, novel expressions or ideas or uses for objects (Barrow, 1990). While this may obviously require imagination, it seems to make no special call on the creative imagination. Encouraging rapid changes of focus and novel images seems as likely to discourage creativity as stimulate it. As Brian Sutton-Smith puts it: "this incessant distraction actually inhibits the real development of creativity by constantly distracting the children from one stimulus to the next, preventing the concentration and familiarity that creativity requires" (1988, p. 17). At least, one might be wary of tests that seem to embody conceptions of imagination and creativity that lack most of the complex characteristics explored above.

Conclusion

I have included a wide range of features in this attempt to sketch reasons why imagination is important to education. Perhaps some of you might feel that I have included too much, and that the result is a sense of imagination being involved in everything of educational importance. Such a reading would not mistake my intention, but I would want to argue that this sense would not include too much. Indeed, I think imagination should properly be very pervasive in education. Such a view is difficult to take only if we think of imagination as a thing, as a particular, distinct part of the mind. If we see it rather as a particular kind of flexibility, energy, and vividness that can imbue all mental functions, as a kind of mood of mind, then its role in all the topics I have mentioned above becomes easier to understand. To be imaginative, then, is not to have a particular function highly developed, but it is to have heightened capacity in all mental functions. It is not, in particular, something distinct from reason, but rather it is what gives reason flexibility, energy, and vividness. It makes all mental life more meaningful; it makes life more abundant.

John Dewey expressed this sense of the pervasiveness of imagination this way: "Imagination is as much a normal and integral part of human activity as is muscular movement" (1966, p. 237).

An association of our current rich conception of imagination with Romanticism and romance perhaps merits a final brief note. One of the central romantic images is of the heroic journey as an allegory of our lives. It might be useful to let this image colour our sense of a more imaginative kind of education than is commonly provided today. The process of education would thus be seen, quite properly, as a heroic journey, full of wonders, mysteries, dangers, obstacles, and so on. While schooling today might not readily evoke such an image, nevertheless education as a heroic journey gives us a sense of the direction in which we might try to move schools. And for those who would like to make schooling more like an imaginative and heroic journey for students, they may take heart in seeing their own present struggles as also an heroic journey, through the tangles of debased educational language and the obstacles of institutionalised commitments to narrow conformity and utility, in the direction of something more wonderful.

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II. Sense of belonging and adaptivity

Learning and Ethos

Margaret McGhie and Ian Barr

What kind of childhood do we want our kids to experience is the important question to ask. In an age of anxiety about schools, there can be destructive neglect of climate or ethos as we try to grasp at something that in a certain sense is ineffable. Nevertheless, we do understand what we are talking about. What is the nature of this life we are leading, what kind of place is this place, how much excitement is involved, and how much caring?
Elliot Eisner [1]

People in general have an utterly common sense grasp of what 'ethos' means. They do not define it or analyse it in philosophical terms but understand it in broad emotional ways as meaning the prevailing atmosphere of a place; the kind of feeling they get when they step across the threshold about what sort of place they find themselves in, what sorts of experiences they can expect to have there and what sort of people they might be dealing with. Some places immediately make them feel energised, happy and included, others uncomfortable, nervous or ill at ease.

The kind of prevailing atmosphere in which members of a school community live and work profoundly affects how well young people do, both in terms of learning and of personal and social development. Schools have an obligation to provide an education for all pupils that allows them to acquire the knowledge, skills and qualifications required for a personally rewarding life, productive employment and effective citizenship. Equally, schools must set that in a context that encourages learners to develop into fair-minded considerate and caring human beings. The ethos in which young people learn and are together has a life-long effect on the kinds of people they are now and will become in the future. Schools *do* make a difference.

Equally, the kind of prevailing atmosphere in which school staff live and work has a profound influence on the extent to which they promote a sense of belonging in the young people with whom they work, for it is on a sense of belonging that much effective learning is founded. Effective learning is not just about subjects and courses: it is also most importantly about developing an understanding of something of the nature of human interactions.

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[1] Eisner, E (1994) *Perspectives: Ethos and Education.* Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum. Dundee.

Schools therefore need to give careful consideration as to the sort of ethos that prevails, for that ethos will reflect the underlying beliefs and values of the people that work there, answering for all to see the questions '*what do we as a community value? What are our underlying assumptions about what is worth doing and how it is right to be?*' It will also make clear the nature of the educational goals deemed important.

Schools that encourage learners to have such a sense of belonging invariably have a positive climate and ethos based on the principles of co-operation, understanding, respect, mutual support, trust and consideration. Developing such a community is about ensuring that all members of the school community feel valued, included and secure. It is to do with making the school a place where expectations of how things will be are constant, and where there is a supportive atmosphere based on caring relationships, a community of inclusiveness that celebrates, as well as a sense of collegiality, the individuality of each member.

We live in a relational society that requires effective human interaction across ever changing contexts, and in a knowledge society that requires collaborative learning and involves a focus on meaning making and knowledge building rather than simply information processing. What learners therefore require for human development is a set of educational experiences set in an ethos that provides them with the capability to see connections, to move with ease between different contexts to have the skills to compare, critique, connect disparate items in a world that is always changing and often not in ways over which the individual can have any effect. Educational goals need to be focussed on building a learning society within which individuals can gain personal understandings, and the ethos within which these goals are set should both reflect these goals and foster their development in learners.

Ethos and Achievement

A common response in recent years has been to think of ethos principally in terms of achievement in the belief that the major purpose for thinking about ethos, or planning for ethos, is to raise the achievement of pupils: an idea usually closely associated with the improving standards agenda. While raising standards is important

- there are few teachers or parents who do not want to do all they can to give children the best start in life by gaining the best qualifications that will stand them in good stead for the future - few care only about grades and not about the nature of the school experience through which young people develop into reasonable decent caring and happy human beings.

Furthermore, achievement is sometimes described in terms better suited to talking of attainment. It implies an endless ‘onwards and upwards’ mentality, a view of achievement that emphasises competition rather than collaboration. It is described largely in terms of outcomes and cognitive development, of acquisition rather than knowing, of knowing rather than understanding, and of what can be ‘measured’ rather than discerned.

Academic success is, of course, important. However, for many teachers and many parents too, this hopelessly superficial idea of achievement, where substance, engagement and depth have no place, comes to be regarded as the norm. To restrict achievement to the academic domain is to fail to say anything meaningful about the development of the whole person and to restrict the purpose of schooling to a narrow definition of learning. There is little regard for the whole person, for passion or feelings, only for intellect, mind or ideas, with no understanding of how these are mutually dependent.

Achievement, however, is a broader concept that recognises subtler pupil accomplishments. Education aims to help develop the many facets of what a young person presently is and is in the process of becoming.

"Adopting a more holistic view would mean that: the range of skills and dispositions on which value is placed is wide and achievement is seen in a holistic way as representing the very many sometimes small, but always significant advances in human endeavour. At the root of this view is a belief in the need to respect and celebrate the dignity of each individual. There is also a need to recognise the value of many more skills than appear in curriculum guidelines and which are often not recognised as important in other contexts.

Education is about opening up minds to new horizons, whether that be tying one's shoelaces or reading Kant, and both are worthy of celebration."[2]

The nature of achievement

Achievement is:

- a process, not an end-point;
- dynamic, an all pervading energy;
- a state of mind;
- affectively driven;
- multi-faceted;
- active;
- based on reflection;
- unique to the individual and expressed in many ways;
- based on an awareness of many possibilities and avenues of exploration;
- based on conversation;
- collaborative as well as individual;
- founded on self-esteem;
- discernible and describable by both learners and teaches;
- to do with qualities and dispositions as well as skills and knowledge.

A climate for achievement can be realised by:

- regarding assessment as part of the very-day learning/teaching process;
- engaging with students;
- encouraging young people to take responsibility for their own learning;
- fostering collaborative relationships;
- posing enabling and challenging questions;
- encouraging reflection;
- setting wide-ranging and collaborative tasks;
- encouraging young people to set and answer their own questions;
- encouraging self and peer assessment;
- being prepared to change activities in the light of developments;
- being prepared to reconsider the responsibilities of students and teachers;

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[2] Scottish CCC (1997). *Towards a Curriculum for Life.* Report of a seminar held at the Craighalbert Centre. Cumbernauld.

- promoting autonomy;
- fostering optimism, resilience and perseverance.[3]

Thinking about achievement should take into account all aspects of a young person's development and be able to find ways of expressing the extent to which progress has been made in developing not only skills and knowledge, but more importantly the qualities and dispositions with which we hope to equip young people to make their own meaning in and offer their own contribution in a complex and changing world. If schools were to think about achievement in terms of the development of the many facets of the whole person they might look at that development in terms of *changes for the better of these sorts*:

- young people come to see themselves differently;
- they accept themselves and their feelings more directly;
- they become more self confident and more self-directing;
- they become more the person they would like to be;
- they become more flexible, less rigid in their perceptions;
- they adopt more realistic goals for themselves;
- they behave in a more mature fashion;
- they change maladaptive behaviours, even long-established ones;
- they become more acceptant of others;
- they become more open to the evidence, both to what is going on inside of themselves and to what is going on outside of themselves.[4]

An ethos of achievement is, therefore, about a great many things; it's about endorsing a wide-ranging view of the nature of achievement; it's about the kind of climate fostered in the classroom and the school as a whole; it's about the expectations teachers have of young people; it's about the expectations teachers encourage them to have of themselves; it's about developing key emotional characteristics such as resilience, optimism and persistence which reinforce a positive attitude to wards achievement; it's about encouraging high aspirations; it's about developing a genuine feeling of self-worth in every pupil; it's about developing a variety of ways of recognising and celebrating achievement; it's about developing positive and supportive relationships; it's about the 'manner' of the teacher; it's about the messages given and received in the everyday conversations and interactions of school life; it's about the way schools are managed.

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[3] *Climate for Learning.* (1997) CCC Working paper.

[4] Adapted from Carl Rogers (1961) *On becoming a person.* Constable.

Ethos and management

Ethos is also often misunderstood regarded as a management issue. Planning for a positive ethos is seen as a matter of effective and all-encompassing policies, management strategies, workshops on whole school ethos and ethos indicators. It results in a pre-occupation on the part of senior staff with procedures, structures, bureaucracy and bean counting. This is to see schools as structures where attention to the parts will ensure the effective working of the whole, rather than as social organisms, physical and psychological environments where people live and work together. Nor are the people within the community to be understood just as teachers, pupils, parents, janitors, psychologists, cleaners and so on. *We are not simply what we do.* We bring to school the many connections that already exist within our lives - with family, with friends, with different cultures, with the wider world. This is to understand schools, not as structures, but as living systems, communities of learners that operate by the principles of community - interdependence, diversity, and partnership - in other words, the principles of organisation that are common to all living systems. To understand living systems we need to look at them in an all-encompassing way, to see the patterns and relationships, to examine the dynamics of the whole rather than the sum of the parts.

Taking a holistic view allows schools to see themselves as networks of relationships and to begin to look for and understand the connections. Schools certainly do need effective development plans, efficient policies, effective learning and teaching strategies, effective consultation with parents, but in developing these they need to ask themselves more wide-ranging questions that help them consider the dynamics of the whole, to see the connections rather concentrating on issues one at a time and in isolation. How will changing this part affect that part? How are all these things interconnected? In what ways are they interdependent? How does this school function as *a community* and *in the community*? In learning communities the principal effort is towards ensuring that connections are made and maintained, with the understanding that approaching things from this perspective will make it easier and less time-consuming to ensure that the parts are in good working order.

Seeing the connections

There are many connections that can be made.

*Firstly between and among people***.**

Consider the host of interactions that each person in a school has in the course of the day. Each of these is significant and each of these affects the working of the whole. What happens in the classroom affects what happens in the playground, or on the sports-ground; what happens in the staff room affects what happens in the classroom; what happens in the head teacher's room affects what happens in the staff room and throughout the school. The connections are infinite, the relationships inescapable. Effective schools understand this interdependence and work hard to make sure that the relationships are positive ones and that the connections work for the well being of all.

Secondly between the school and the community in which it exists.

As well as being communities in themselves, schools are also part of the wider community of parents, the world of work, of agencies connected to the school, and of the complex wider world in which we all live. By working to ensure that these partnerships are positive, that these connections are made and maintained the school takes its rightful place as an important part of all our lives. What happens in school affects what happens elsewhere and vice versa. Schools are not islands or places apart.

Thirdly, in learning.

Learning takes place in all the dimensions of our lives, and children do not leave behind what they already know when they walk through the school gates. They learn by making connections to what they already know. Effective teaching and learning is about helping to make these connections, establishing these relationships. Significant learning is individual to the learner, allows these connections to be understood and has its uses and applications beyond school.

The notion that learning might be significant (to young people) because it would bear upon what they think about their girlfriends, what they think about politics, what they think about the whole world, does not occur to them, because the whole thing was done in a classroom, there was a context label on it and it was only education anyway.**[5]**

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[5] Rogers, C. & Bateson, G. (1975). *Dialogue on Thinking, Feeling and Learning.* Esalen.

All of this is no less true for teachers as it is for young people. Schools need to see themselves as constantly evolving communities of learners.

Ethos and leadership

Developing an effective ethos based on an understanding of schools as caring communities in which real people come to know, work and care for each other, rather than merely affirming a set of abstract values, is a leadership not a management issue.

"Managing is the act of co-ordinating people and resources to produce goods or services in an organisation. Managing is critical to the success of an organisation and is performed at all levels of the organisation. Managing is even part of what leaders do. But managing is not the same as leading."[6]

Leadership is a whole different ball game. Effective leaders aim to help the community as a whole work out ways of beneficially living and working together, based on a set of underlying principles. These will be reflected in all the ways in which people interact, the kinds of language they use, and the sorts of relationships they develop. Effective leaders understand ethos as a matter of *being* together as well as *doing* together. Inclusive schools are places where encouragement, support, consistent expectations, understanding and caring are the norm and the perspectives of parents, of the wider community and young people themselves are all regarded as of equal importance. Effective leaders actively encourage this sense of inclusiveness.

Effective leadership in a learning community will:

- promote a wide-ranging ethos of achievement;
- help all members of the community to create and maintain an environment of support;
- promote the learning of all;
- promote a collaborative culture where learning is the key focus;
- help build leadership capacity in all;
- encourage shared learning;
- give teachers a sense of understanding, empathy, partnership and belonging;
- recognise the importance of partnership.

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[6] Patterson, J.L. (1993). *Leadership for Tomorrow's Schools.*Virginia, ASCD.

Leadership qualities

"Imagine the benefits for work of being skilled in the basic emotional competences - being attuned to the feelings of those we deal with, being able to handle disagreements so that they do not escalate, having the ability to get into flow states while doing our work. Leadership is not domination, but the art of persuading people to work towards a common goal. And in terms of managing our own career, there may be nothing more essential than recognising our deepest feelings about what we do - and what changes might make us more truly satisfied with our work."[7]

Rather than directing and advising, effective leaders give priority to encouraging teachers to reflect more deeply, to trust their own professional acumen and to finding their own solutions through dialogue and discussion. Effective leaders lead by example and model in their own dispositions and behaviours the educational values they wish to encourage in young people.

To be successful in a collaborative culture leaders need to forge good working relationships with many people. Successful leaders are socially competent and emotionally secure. They show self-confidence, based on a realistic assessment of their own strengths and weaknesses; they remain calm in the face of difficult situations; they persist in the face of set-backs; they value the expression of different views; they show empathy to others; they avoid unproductive conflict and mediate with self-control where conflict does occur; they understand the benefits of developing their own interpersonal skills and emotional literacy.

"A key social ability is empathy, understanding others' feelings and taking their perspective, and respecting differences in how people feel about things. Relationships are a major focus, including learning to be a good listener and question-asker; distinguishing between what someone says or does and your own reactions and judgments; being assertive rather than angry or passive; and learning the arts of co-operation, conflict resolution, and negotiating compromise."[8]

The major tasks of effective leaders are to bring a sense of common purpose to the learning community, to establish a sense of belonging based on a commitment to the whole because it is reciprocally committed to the individual.

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[7] Goleman, D. (1996). *Emotional Intelligence.* Bantam Books.

[8] Goleman, D. (1996). *Emotional Intelligence.* Bantam Books.

Key words in effective leadership are genuineness and authenticity. Effective leaders are above all emotionally literate: socially competent, able to engage with problems, hopeful, optimistic, empathetic, resilient and with a sense of purpose and future.

Howard Gardner argues that effective leaders are first of all interpersonally intelligent, that is they have the ability to: perceive and make distinctions in the moods, intentions, motivations and feelings of other people. This can include sensitivity to facial expressions, voice and gestures; the capacity for discriminating among many different kinds of interpersonal clues; and the ability to respond effectively to those cues in some pragmatic way (for example to influence a group of people to follow a certain line of action.

Equally importantly, they are also intrapersonally intelligent, that is they have self-knowledge and the ability to act adaptively on that knowledge. This intelligence includes having an accurate picture of oneself (one's strengths and limitations); awareness of inner moods, intentions, motivations, temperaments and desires; and the capacity for self-discipline, self-understanding and self-esteem.[9]

Effective leaders understand that schools need to put in place for all members of the learning community strategies built on the principles of caring and support, positive expectations and active participation. They also that the responsibility for developing a community of learners is a shared one.

Sharing responsibility

Leadership is not restricted to those in official positions and good leadership qualities are not their sole preserve. The qualities of leadership are those we wish to encourage in all staff and pupils alike - empathy, openness to change, confidence, emotional maturity and a willingness to engage with new ideas. Effective senior management put in place opportunities for all staff to be involved in the decision-making processes of the school - effective teachers cultivate the same climate in the classroom. The dispositions, capabilities and emotional competences that make for good leadership are present in other members of the learning community, including the student population. Good leaders capitalise on this – they share responsibility and give away power. Their schools are inclusive and democratic places to be. They are characterised by a willingness to allow and encourage all to become involved in matters of decision-making and choice within the community of the school. Through these experiences, they come to see themselves as people who can affect the community in its widest sense, in which they and others live and work. It is important to give people the message that their ideas count and that finding solutions and making them work is a question of mutual dependence and co-operation.

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[9] Gardner, H. *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom.* ASCD.

Effective leaders recognise that choices extend to the pupils as well as to staff, first of all because a major purpose of education is to ‘provide a framework within which young people can develop thinking and judgements which will enable them to participate as active and responsible citizens, and which will encourage them to be explicit about the values of a just and caring society founded on principles of democracy.[10]

Learning to share responsibility means learning to accept individual responsibility, but it also involves learning to accept responsibility for others. Responsibility *for* oneself and *to* others is a fundamental concept of caring.
Secondly because it makes good sense that everyone have a stake in the community and its values. "When one has no stake in the way things are, when one’s needs and opinions are provided no forum, when one sees oneself as the object of unilateral actions, it takes no particular wisdom to suggest that one would rather be elsewhere."[11]

Building a collaborative ethos

Articulating principles with clarity is not enough to ensure that they are translated into practice. Furthermore leadership involves recognising the dilemmas inherent in what can be conflicting educational principles.

"At the level of realisation, however, different ways of realising different principles necessarily engage with each other in the complexity of schools: inclusion, equality, excellence and the rest have to find particular resolution in the particular structures and practices, which, inevitably it seems, cannot embody every principle simultaneously.

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[10] Scottish CCC (1995). *Sharing Responsibility.*
[11] Sarason, S. (1990). *The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform.* quoted in Co-operative Learning Vol. 15 No. 1.

The issue therefore is not whether inclusion (*or any other underpinning principle*) is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ so much as what inclusion looks like in this particular context and what its implications are for the realisation of other principles."[12]

It also implies an acknowledgement that principles cannot be made real by diktat. Trying to reculture a school, which is at the real heart of change takes time, effort, and commitment. If people do not want to change, then no amount of people talking them about it is going to make one iota of difference. Staffs need time to collaboratively construct the meaning of principles for themselves as part of the overall cultural transformation of their schools and to ensure increasing consensus around new practices. "If there is any changing to be done everyone is implicated."[13]

This will take time and the process of change is always an on-going one. Effective schools will not only ensure that there is in place a set of systems and structures in support of principled commitments, but also recognise the central importance of trust and of acknowledging the different gifts, strengths and concerns of all members of the community and utilising them effectively.

"Developing collaborative working where people share feelings, ideas, problems and successes and feel free to offer their expertise and support to each other can be a difficult and slow process. It often involves building teachers’ self esteem by highlighting their successes, by trusting them and giving them more control."[14]

Constantly to the fore is the belief that "in helping young people and ourselves to learn joyfully as well as effectively, we must remember that the enabling devices of systems and procedures are just that – they are the means which are to be judged by the quality of the human flourishing they promote.*"*[15]

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[12] Clarke; C., Dyson, A., Milward, A., & Robson, S. (1999) *Theories of inclusion, Theories of Schools: deconstructing and reconstructing the 'inclusive school'.* In British Educational Research Journal, Vol. 25, No. 2.

[13] Fullan, M. (1991). *The New Meaning of Educational Change.* Cassell.

[14] Scottish CCC (1996). *Teaching for Effective Learning.*

[15] Fielding, M.(1997). *Delivery, Packages and the Denial of Learning.*

Ethos and change

Change needs commitment. Teachers and schools will not change unless they share a compelling reason for doing so. They need to feel that they have some say in how that change will be brought about. They need to be able to picture for themselves how that change will affect them personally. They need to understand that change does not mean more work, just different work.

"Change is something that requires the commitment of individuals not simply in the sense that they must comply willingly with externally devised and imposed innovation, but that they must actively construct their own meaning for change."[16]

Change requires an emotional as well as an intellectual commitment, a communal belief that this way of working and being together will work and is to the benefit of all involved. Believing in an idea and being part of working it out helps to develop resilience in the face of setbacks and to put in place supportive frameworks that can alleviate the anxiety that often accompanies change.

"Those who pursue the learning community goal must appreciate the role that commitment plays in the process. They must be prepared for the fact that development is apt to follow a zigzag, as opposed to a linear path as individuals work to reconcile the positive and negative elements of the new demands being placed upon them."[17]

Making this happen requires opportunities for significant discussion and debate and schools learn to ask themselves the kinds of questions to which they best know the answers. They need to learn how to step back and ask reflective questions. 'Where are we at compared with where we want to be?' 'What are the possibilities for next steps?' 'What unexpected directions can we see that hadn't occurred to us before?' 'Why did that avenue of approach not work?' 'What kind of help do we need now and who can give it to me?' 'What do we need to know to make progress?' 'What resources do we need?'

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[16] Clarke, Catherine; Alan Dyson, Alan Milward and Sue Robson (1999). Theories of inclusion, Theories of schools: deconstructing and reconstructing the 'inclusive school'. In British Educational Research Journal, Vol. 25, No. 2. Quoting Fullan, M with Stiegelhauer A (1991) *The Meaning of Educational Change,* 2nd Edition (London: Cassell).

[17] Prawatt, R.S. (1996). *Learning Community, commitment and School Reform.* In The Journal of Curriculum Studies, Vol. 28, No 1.

"It follows that real change is most likely to occur where individuals work in organisations which enable them to explore the meaning of change, where meanings are shared with other individuals and where, therefore, a genuine cultural transformation takes place."[18]

Learning from dissonance

"The school is like all social groups - constantly in a state of change. Conflict, dissent, rejection are always present to an extent in institutions, not least schools. Alternative views will exist, sometimes challenging authority, often co-existing within an atmosphere of mutual toleration."[19]

Insights and answers come from many different sources within the community of the school and effective leaders use these insights to the benefit of the community at large. Effective schools also understand and accept that useful insights may sometimes come from those who disagree, since they may well have seen alternatives not thought of or understand problems in a way that the leader cannot - their solutions are always worth considering. In difficult times the principal task of leadership is not to reach an early consensus that may not hold, but to create opportunities to learn from dissonance. Management process become not a displacement activity or a means of control, but found on principles of openness and shared responsibility.

"By experiencing change because they are living it, effective leaders become less dependent on external solutions and look for solutions within their own community and with the people with whom they work on a daily basis."[20]

No group of people working and living together is likely to always see eye to eye on every issue, nor are all problems easily resolved. There is no one-size-fits-all answer. Developing a collaborative work culture that fosters professional learning community among teachers and others is a long and complex task for which there is no one blueprint. It will change as they work together and it has no end point. It is a constantly evolving path and needs to be travelled together and on which there will be conflict. It is a test of a school's sense of belonging that conflict can be managed constructively through a belief in the positive forces of trust and respect and through strategies designed to help work out solutions that will be fair to all. All young people and all members of staff respond better in contexts where they feel valued, and that they belong, most particularly in times of conflict or distress.

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[18] Clarke, Catherine, Alan Dyson, Alan Milward and Sue Robson (1999). *Theories of inclusion, Theories of Schools: deconstructing and reconstructing the 'inclusive school'.* In Britisch Educational Research Journal, Vol. 25, No. 2.

[19] UNESCO/CIDREE (1993). *A Sense of Belonging: Guidelines for Values for the Humanistic and International Dimension of Education.* Dundee: Scottish consultative Council on the Curriculum.

[20] Patterson, Jerry L. (1993). *Leadership for Tomorrow's Schools.* Virginia: ASCD.

Ethos and belonging

Effective schools actively devise strategies to foster a sense of belonging and to ensure willing participation in the life of the school. A sense of belonging is not just a matter of a reinforcement of the feelings of solidarity and common humanity that allow the individual to sustain happy working relations and to inter-act more positively with others. It is also an active desire, a positive intention, to be part of the enterprise as a whole, of the school as a community rather than a collection of individuals.

Developing a community that cares is about ensuring that all members of the school community feel cared for and about, valued, included and secure.

"In order to reinforce their view of themselves as caring people, staff need to feel care for themselves. In coming to a sense of belonging young people and staff too need to see the school as a place where they are valued as individuals where their own needs and purposes are recognised and their sense of personal dignity sustained."[21]

Valuing staff as individuals depends on very much the same principles as apply to students.

These are:

- relationships that are positive and engender a sense of care and emotional support;
- opportunities for participation in a community which enable them to develop a sense of self-worth, to experience success and achievement;
- respite from distressing situations.[22]

Building an ethos of harmony

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[21] Scottish CCC (1995). *Reflections on Curricular Issues 4: A Sense of Belonging.*

[22] Cooper, P (1993). *Effective Schools for Disaffected Students.* Routledge.

For achievement, collaboration and belonging to work at all depends on establishing an ethos of harmony that encourages the development of emotional competences - empathy, optimism, resilience, and social skills - as well as cognitive skills. Living and learning in harmony centres around the sharing of a common life at the heart of any community, and community is essentially an idea built around the quality of relations between people.

"Good schools recognise that the essence of effective relationships is not principally an intellectual understanding of the ways in which trust and understanding might theoretically be promoted but a genuine and empathetic understanding of the centrality of feeling and emotions in human transactions."[23]

Paradoxically, creating an ethos of harmony also satisfies the other demands that so preoccupy many of our schools at present. Achievement improves, standards are raised. But at the same time it also enables all the members of the learning community to sustain the capacity to wonder and invent, to engage with change and to live happily with it; to be and to become more than they ever thought possible.

It is through an ethos of harmony that the overall purposes of education are achieved.

"Education must aim to provide a framework on which young peal can base critical thinking and judgements. These will enable them to participate as active and responsible citizens in the personal and social dimensions of society and will encourage them to be explicit about the values of a just and caring society."[24]

When schools are places where the basic human needs for support, respect and belonging are met, motivation for learning is fostered. Reciprocal caring, respectful and participatory relationships are the critical determining factors in whether a student learns; whether parents become and stay involved in the school; whether a programme or strategy is effective; whether an educational change is sustained; and whether young people feel they have a place in this society.

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[23] Scottish CCC (1995). *Reflections on Curricular Issues 4: A Sense of Belonging.*
[24] Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (1995). *The Heart of the Matter.* Dundee.

An ethos of harmony is about working together to achieve, that is "to understand the world in ways that they couldn’t have understood it before their education" but it is also about working together in ways that demonstrate to young people ways of living and being together in community that allow both the individual and the community as a whole to flourish.

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Adaptive education: a mission impossible?

Theo Boland

The damaging effect of equality prejudices is that they lead to foolish criteria, (....) they raise false expectations, they put pupils on the wrong track, they systematically further envy and lack of understanding between population groups with differing achievements and they prevent a good education.
A.D. de Groot[1] (in Didaktief, June 1990)

Introduction

In a classical longitudinal study into the development of reading ability, particularly the difference between strong and weak readers, Stanovich (1986) observes that the differences in reaching achievements between the two groups increase with time. Not surprisingly on average all the readers improve, also the weak readers. However, the strong readers do not only maintain their lead, but over the years they also increase it. In the educational research literature this phenomenon is known as the Matthew-effect[2]. Others call it the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. (The Dutch saying is that if you are born for a nickel, you will never become a quarter). If you are born a poor reader, you will apparently remain a poor reader all your life.

In my opinion the interesting part of the Matthew-effect is not the finding of the empirical study as such. You did not really expect that initially weak readers, would catch up with or would even become better than their proficiently reading peers during primary education, did you? What I find remarkable is the following. Right from the presentation of the study results, various aspects of the Matthew effect have become a negative connotation. From an (educational) sociological perspective, from the equal chances theory, it hurts to observe that the retardation of some groups of pupils is not a coincidence, but a matter of structure. Educationalists and educational psychologists are sorry to have to acknowledge that education at school is unable to reduce the differences. Worse still: privileged groups of pupils (talented children from a warm nest) prove to profit more from the educational offering at school, which in its turn results in increasing differences.

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[1] A.D. de Groot, widely considered to be the Dutch education psychologist from the second half of the past millennium, gives his reaction to the statements of the Hungarian Polgar, who contributes the unheard of chess achievements of his daughters to his unique instruction methods. 'What I can achieve with my daughters, is something everybody can basically achieve, isn't it? If everybody would raise their children the way I do, the results will be comparable.'

[2] In the gospel by Matthew we read (Matthew 25: 29): For to every person who has something, even more will be given (…); but the person who has nothing, even the little that he has will be taken away from him.
This is taken from the parable of somebody who judges that way three subordinates have used the talents entrusted to them. One of the differences of opinion in this parable (by definition a parable is suitable for different interpretations) concerns the question what is meant by 'talent' in this parable: material possessions, money, power, chance to develop, chance, ‘opportunity’?

Dear reader, three questions to start off:

- Do you agree that differences between children at school could be a cause for alarm and concern?
- Do you agree with the pessimistic view of those who observe that these differences only continue to increase?
- Accepting the fact that children indeed do differ, how should the school and the teacher in the classroom handle these differences?

Diversity as a dilemma

Many of us are indeed worried about the increase in differences between children during their school career. The concern is also to do with the characteristics of children at the moment they enter school for the first time. We often hear teachers complain and researchers confirm, that the differences are considerable already when 4 year-olds make their first steps in primary education[3]. Is this true, if so why and what differences are we talking about?

A number of factors have undoubtedly contributed to a larger diversity. Sociological conceptions on equity and equity, demographic developments, the increase of the intercultural quality of our society, possibilities for and use of pre-school education, the recent Dutch governmental policy to care for children with different capacities whenever possible in one system (for example the 'Going to School

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[3] Being concerned about the increasing differences between children in the 4 to 5 age-group, who enter primary education, is something completely different from complaining about the fact that *on average* these children seem to experience more problems these days than they did in the past. It is said that children are 'more difficult' than they used to be and the number of children with socio-emotional problems has increased. This may be true, but this is a different discussion than we mean to have here.

Together' policy). The effect of all these factors is that the lower grades of current primary education are now incomparable with the fairly homogeneous first grade of primary education in the past. Looking at the more intellectual characteristics of children when they start primary education, the difference in language ability is a significant example. Some young children can read a picture book at that age fairly well, whereas some others do not even know what books and letters are about. Children differ in many ways, but which differences are relevant in this respect and what are solutions for dealing with these differences in a school context? Before we try to find concrete answers to these questions, we will first convey a more general reflection on this subject.

Children at school differ: this is an all time fact: teachers have always known this and acted accordingly. What is the reason that the differences between children now, at the beginning of the 21st century, are considered to be problematic? Why and since when is dealing with diversity at school a problem?

From the perspective of the teacher at school, we will shortly map out the problem area. We will do this by means of statements formulated as dilemmas.

Dilemma 1: Respecting the differences between the children in ones class does not go together with the social assignment of education, whether or not legally adopted, to ensure that *all* the children comply with the (minimum) norms or standards concerning the development level to be achieved.

Dilemma 2: Tailoring education to the possibilities and limitations of each child individually does not agree with the empirical fact that in The Netherlands primary education is always given to *groups* of children. The *size* of the groups alone makes tailoring impossible. Moreover, for socio-psychological reasons we consider it desirable for children at school to receive education together, to learn something together, to work on something together, to co-operate.

Dilemma 3: Respecting the differences between children and premising that the child itself is the standard measure of all things, sustains the social inequality of children. This leads to undesired Matthew-effects.

Children with fewer possibilities and children from less privileged backgrounds will never be able to make up for their retardation.
In addition to this there is an increasing chance that negative *self-fulfilling prophecies* (‘Whatever we do, these children will never learn.') will affect the ambition level of teachers even more.

Dilemma 4: Saying how good it is that children differ and stating with great confidence that handling these differences at school should be considered as a challenge, hides the fact that differences between children are extremely difficult to manage.
Adaptive education requires additional investments in planning and organisation, knowledge and skills in the field of diagnostic education, the use of flexible working methods, implementation of pupil monitoring systems and looking for possibilities to spend the available learning time effectively. All of this goes far beyond the capability and differentiation capacity of the average teacher.

Before we drown in pessimism because of these dilemmas and say that dealing with differences adequately is indeed a hopeless task, it is time to find out what adaptive education is really all about.

Adaptive education

The concept 'adaptive' comes from the Latin *adaptare*, which means adjustment or adaptation. Originally the concept was used in a natural science context: when living organisms are able to adapt their characteristics and functions to changing external circumstances in order to survive, we talk about adaptation. (For example plants that reduce their evaporation in a climate that continues to get drier.) Transferred to the education context and used figuratively, adaptation means adjustment of education and tailoring it to the specific characteristics of the learners, the children.
The fact that we bracket together *adaptive education* and *dealing with differences* is simply because our Dutch formal education is structured into grades and groups. Evidently we can only talk about differences between children if the group is the frame of reference.

Now we can propose a definition: what is adaptive education?
The following definition[4] is based on the classical, operational opinion (the definition represents what people and institutions such as teachers and schools, actually *do*, not so much what they *say* or *think*) and recognises the original meaning we mentioned earlier. The definition covers some basic elements of adaptive education, which we will work out later.

Adaptive education is education in which teachers maximally adjust, within a given context, their education to the differences between their pupils, in order to reach the objectives established by the school.

Key concepts from the definition are the following (in a model described below they are worked out into components):

- *adjustment*: the interaction in the teaching-learning process between the teacher and the pupils, during which the teacher takes account of the differences between the children. We call this the primary process of education at micro level;
- *teacher and pupil*: the actors in the teaching-learning process;
- *differences*: children's abilities or characteristics in the teaching-learning process that make adjustment necessary;
- *objectives*: the aspired acquisition of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes with respect to certain selected education content;
- *the context*: the actual situation in school and classroom, which is considered to be a given fact;
- *the school*: the authorised institution that makes the final decisions concerning the organisation and structure of education.

As you probably notice, many words are used here to express something simple. Forms of adaptive education can be observed when teachers take account of individual differences between children in their groups.

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[4] See also Boland (1996): *Hands and feet to adaptive education*. In this publication the composition of the model of the structure of adaptive education is extensively described and illustrated.
Alternative definitions for adaptive education exist, for example the pedagogically oriented vision worked out by one of the Dutch Educational Advisory Centre (APS). Essentially, adaptive education is in this case complying with the basic needs of children: the need for competency, relationships and autonomy. In our opinion, however, this is not 'real' adaptive education, because dealing with differences is not dealt with as a problem.

How they 'take account of differences' can be shown in several perceivable learning and teaching activities. For example teachers who:

- repeat the instruction for children who did not quite understand the explanation of the approach to a problem;
- let highly-gifted children omit parts of the subject matter they already master;
- choose different teaching methods to the traditional ones for children that need this;
- provide extra intensive help to particular children in a support group;
- put different demands on children, depending on their potential and possibilities;
- give the children who learn most by self-investigation the opportunity to do this.

Obviously numerous other examples can be added to this list.

Interested readers will undoubtedly have noticed that in the last part of the definition (when it concerns the hopes of the school to reach its objectives), the author has taken the liberty to mention an aspect that does not necessarily belong to the domain of adaptive education. You are right. This passage was included to restrict the threatening noncommittal attitude and to emphasise the objective directed intentionality of education at school.

Adaptive education in a model

The following model of the structure of adaptive education represents its various components and their mutual relationships. Sometimes a model claims to be a coercive, exclusive picture of what the world looks like; this is not the case here. This model is only a framework; alternatives are obviously possible.

In the model the following components can be distinguished:

- the actors in the teaching-learning process: the teacher and the learners;
- the interaction between the teacher and the learner in the teaching-learning process; within this interaction we will later distinguish a number of *anchor points*. They form stepping stones or possibilities for adaptive education;
- the objectives or outcomes and content of the teaching-learning process;

- the context, divided into three education levels: macro-level (cross-school), meso-level (single school) and micro-level (group and classroom).

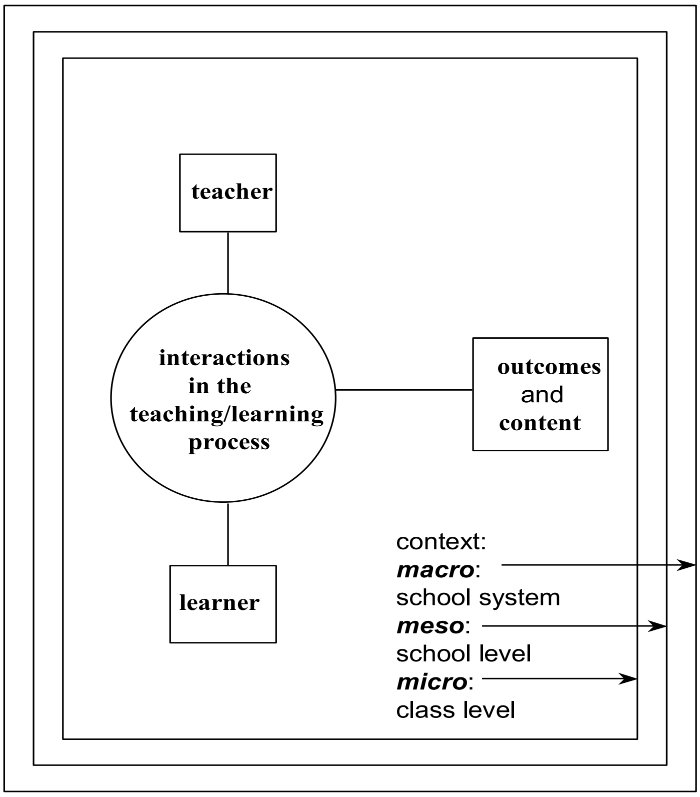
teacher
interactions in the teaching/learning process
outcomes and content
learner
context:
macro:
school system
meso:
school level
micro:
class level

Figure 1. A structure model of adaptive teaching - global view

Let us make some additional remarks on the actors in the model (teachers and learners) and the encompassing context.

- Teachers at Dutch primary schools can have different functions (class teacher, counsellor, subject teacher, administrator, headmaster, adviser for parents, member of the participation council, internal guidance officer, remedial teacher, etc.).

- When we talk about teachers in this contribution, we mean persons in their function as teachers in a group.
  Men or women, they are the same; although we do know that primary education is largely run by women. It is always about the interaction between a teacher and a group of children. This may be the formal grade teacher, but obviously also the subject teacher, the internal guidance officer or the head teacher.
  When we talk about the child (often pointed out here as student, pupil or learner, it's all the same,) we mean the child as member of a group, not the individual child. This can be an established (year) group, but also a temporary or randomly composed group.
- In the model a number of different components are anchored in a context, that is the given situation at micro, meso and macro level. Moving outward from centre this is the situation at group and class level, the level of the single school (the Boland College) and finally the cross-school level (the Dutch Primary School). Why is this context variable represented in the model?
  There are always a number of characteristics of a school and a group, which are not *directly* related to the realisation of adaptive education. They make up the boundary conditions within which adaptive education can develop itself. We call this the context.
  The context includes matters such as:
    - the legal regulations by the ministry and the inspectorate;
    - the material provisions and facilities (state of the buildings, availability and suitability of material);
    - the management form of a school;
    - the location (a school in an urban or rural area, a school in an old part of a town);
    - the size of the school (number of students and staff);
    - the students population characteristics (for example the number of children with learning or behavioural problems);
    - the composition of the team (number, age, sex);
    - general pedagogical and educational premises (for example: the fact that a school applies the traditional year group system or alternatively that the school is progressive and has completely abandoned the year group system).

Other items can be added to this context list. They all concern matters on which the schools and teachers have little *direct* influence in the concrete teaching-learning situation. The school will have to make the best of it. It is the situation within which the school works, which will have to be accepted as a given fact.

Within this context, which is evidently different for each school, forms of adaptive education can develop or sometimes not. The context gives realistic quality to adaptive education; the context indicates the limits of what is desirable and feasible. Some examples:

- In the primary process the background characteristics of children (social and ethnical background, environmental factors) cannot be changed. It is possible, however, to choose teaching methods that go together very well with the specific background characteristics of children.[5]
- Established core objectives (or attainment goals) are given context facts. They are legally prescribed. It is possible, however, to think about additional objectives for pupils who can manage more than the acquisition of the subject matter described in the core objectives. Alternatively, a school can vary the level of mastery;
  Available facilities (for example educational resources, methods or computers) are given context facts. It is possible, however, to use these means for specific groups of children at school.
- The teaching staff (including the characteristics of the individual members) we consider to be given context facts. It is possible, however, to exploit specific talents, interests and possibilities of staff members.

Below the model is shown again, but now completely. We see, framed in the context at micro-, meso- and macro-level, the actors (pupil and teacher) with a number of relevant characteristics in which they differ, the interaction process in which the actors meet and, finally, the objectives to be realised in connection with the content (the educational offering, the subject matter). The anchor points that by means of arrows point to the interaction process represent the possibilities and options for adaptive education.

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[5] In this respect Simons (in Lowyck & Verloop (1995)) talks about *direct* and *indirect* differences. Direct differences concern characteristics of children that are directly related to learning at school: learning and thinking strategies, information processing, experience of the learning situation (view on a learning assignment) and subject experiences (subjective views on subject matter content: 'I love arithmetic'). Indirect variables (such as: background, environment, sex, age) are much more distant from the learning processes.

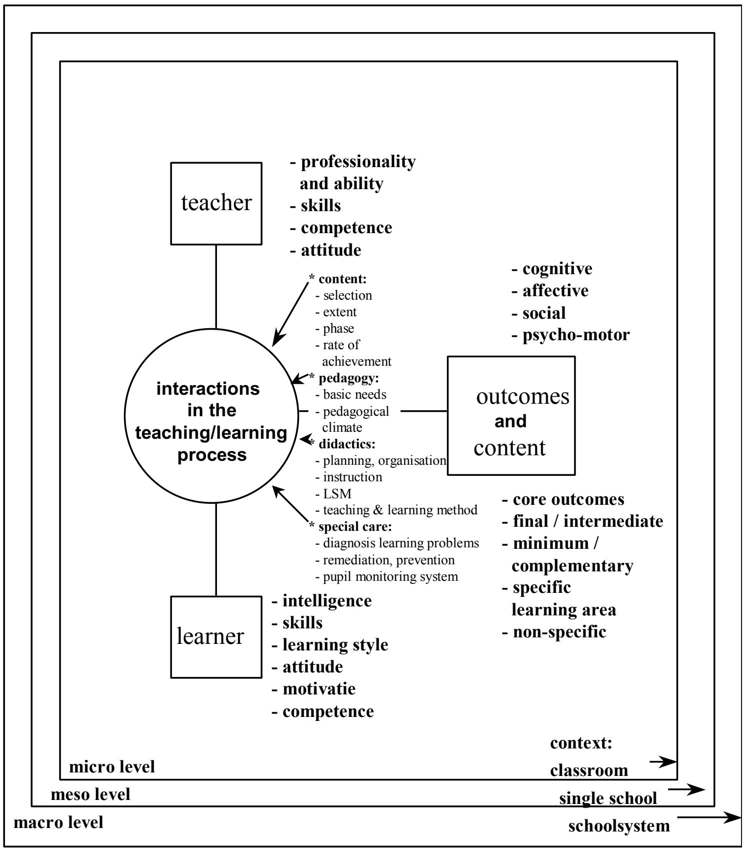
teacher
- professionality and ability
- skills
- competence
- attitude
* content:
- selection
- extent
- phase
- rate of achievement
* pedagogy:
- basic needs
- pedagogical climate
* didactics:
- planning, organisation
- instruction
- LSM
- teaching & learning method
* special care:
- diagnosis learning problems
- remediation, prevention
- pupil monitoring system
- cognitive
- affective
- social
- psycho-motor
interactions in the teaching/learning process
outcomes and content
- core outcomes
- final / intermediate
- minimum / complementary
- specific learning area
- non-specific
learner
- intelligence
- skills
- learning style
- attitude
- motivatie
- competence
context:
micro level
classroom
meso level
single school
macro level
schoolsystem

Figure 2. A structure model of adaptive teaching - detailed view

The realisation of adaptive education: the applied model

Miss Ann in group 3 uses a well-known method for initial reading/language education. The order of a single lesson looks like this: first a short introduction, then a classical instruction to the whole group, followed by a period of supervised practice. After that the children work independently, in groups or classroom corners: this is the phase of 'independent processing'. A lesson is always completed by a whole group evaluation.

In front of the class is a round table with a number of chairs. Miss Ann calls this the instruction table. During the period of independent processing, she always invites a few children to come and sit at the table to thoroughly repeat the instruction and practice with them. For these children whole class instruction and supervised practice is not sufficient. They receive a little special care and attention.

This simple example shows how a model for adaptive education obtains practical value. To begin retrospectively we could ask: which elements from the model are represented in the example? How are they worked out here?
Concerning the *actors*:

- The *teacher*: Miss Ann feels competent enough to do something extra for a particular group of weak readers in her group. Her expertise allows her to work with an additional form of instruction.
- The *learners*: some children in this grade cannot follow the instruction. They are lacking knowledge, understanding and also skills to perform assignments independently.

Looking at *outcomes, objectives and content*:

- Miss Ann retains the content and the goals of reading education, the way they are included in the reading method.

With respect to the component *interaction*:

- In the phase of didactical activities the instruction is varied. One could say that working with an instruction table-for-all is a separate didactical working method.
- In order to determine which children take a seat at the instruction table, Miss Ann has undoubtedly observed problems and made diagnoses: forms of specific pupil counselling.

The model cannot only be used afterwards, retrospectively, but can also be used previously, prospectively. Miss Ann could ask: 'I see that some children cannot follow the instruction during initial reading.
What can I do about that?' We will now mention a number of possible stepping-stones. Here, we use the model more or less as a checklist.
Concerning the *actor/teacher*:

- The *teacher*: maybe it is time that Miss Ann increases her expertise in the area of diagnostics of reading problems. Would an in-service training perhaps be appropriate?
- The learners: where exactly do some children fail? Is it the area of reading comprehension: is there a decoding problem? Or is not reading ability but motivation the point?

Looking at *outcomes and content*:

- Miss Ann retains the content and the objectives the way they are included in the reading method, but perhaps it is a good idea to give some children more time to achieve the objectives?

Concerning the *interaction* component:

- Miss Ann can see the lack of confidence a few children have while learning to read. She could decide to pay more attention to this aspect of education (stepping stone: pedagogy).
  In addition to the materials the method provides, Miss Ann could plan to use additional computer programmes. (Stepping stone; teaching strategy, learning support materials).

Concerning the *context variables*:

- Miss Ann considers this a structural problem that affects the whole school. The subject is put on the agenda of the staff meeting.

The differences under control: norms and standards

From the Greek mythology we know the story of the rogue and innkeeper Procrustes, who convinced his guests, not with argumentative power but with physical power, to stay the night at his inn. The guests were forced to sleep in beds that were either to small or too big for them. In the first case Procrustes simply chopped off the excess body parts. If the bed was too big, the innkeeper took care of a proper fit by stretching out his guests. In both cases adaptation to the norm leads to death.

It is quite a step indeed to go from a situation in which a constraint is the norm, to education in which different values apply. In any case the following description sounds very plausible and sympathetic after such a gory, normative intermezzo.

In primary education in the future we will encounter teachers that take the individual development potential of the pupils under their care as the starting-point. These teachers do not only accept that children differ in their development potential, but make these differences the foundation and basic philosophy of their education.

Children are not like photographs that are developed by external operations and interventions; children develop themselves.[6]
Teachers provide, what we call development directed education. They do this literally: they unveil the development potential of children and remove the covers that conceal and obstruct this potential. They offer a rich learning environment; make sure that children can choose from a large variety of learning arrangements and learning experiences. By offering education that suits the specific possibilities and limitations children have, teachers provide successful experiences, which will only strengthen the already available intrinsic motivation of children to learn and develop. And because teachers on their part derive their satisfaction from the positive learning processes and learning results of their pupils, everybody feels good about it. The teacher enjoys the positive development of the child, the child is addressed at his own level and is given the opportunity for personal development and growth.
Indeed, it sounds too good to be true. But is there anything to prevent education taking place as described above? Which circumstances and arguments put question marks against this ideal situation?

Good teachers have standards in mind when they set their lessons up, where the idea of 'standards' represents a specific idea of what the teacher expects a student to recall, replicate, manipulate, understand, or demonstrate at some point down the road - and of how the teacher will know how close a student has come to meeting that standard.

This is the opening sentence of a homepage of an American website[7], which gives an overview of all the 'standards' concerning all the *subject areas* in the states of the US.

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[6] In 1999 the Primary Education Process Management Team (PMPO) sent a poster to this effect to all the primary schools in The Netherlands. (Stating that a child is not a photograph. It (the child) develops itself; it is not developed by others.) It would be good to reflect critically on theoretical and practical implications of this opinion. Is the instruction by the teacher meaningless? Is the teacher no longer the transmitter of our cultural inheritance? Who of us did develop without the help of relevant others?
[7] Developing Educational Standards: www.putwest.boces.org/Standards.html. You can read here what pupils in for example the State of Arizona have to know and be able to do in area of *social studies*. This is only an example, there are many more websites, also in other countries, that provide a similar overview.

Apparently the author assumes that teachers need a certain standard[8], measure or indication to measure the effect of their education on the learning results of their pupils. A standard can be considered as a 'certain level of excellence or quality that is considered to be the objective or measure'. Teachers do not let things take their natural course, but they have a clear vision on a certain development level for their pupils, towards which they work purposefully.
Two interfering remarks have to be made concerning the opening sentence of the website. In the first place, not all teachers have a certain standard in mind, only good ones do. In the second place, it remains fairly implicit to whom the particular standard applies: is it really to one pupil or does the standard apply to everybody?

Some people claim that every type of standardisation or norms system does not basically agree with the idea of adaptive education. However, I think this reasoning cannot be sustained, because of the following reason. In another contribution to this book, Letschert, following Egan (1999), refers to the three classic functions of perspectives of formal education at school.

1. In the sociological perspective (education as a form of socialisation), the school prepares and equips children for their function and participation in the future society;
2. When one sees a school as an 'education and learning institute' the teacher transfers knowledge and explains to children how the real world around them works;
3. In the developmental perspective the school takes optimal care of providing the conditions within which each child can develop himself.

Within each of these perspectives the activities are intentional and goal-oriented. By definition goals, objectives and outcomes (whatever we call them) are of a final character: they refer to a situation and time in the future. A less complicated formulation would be to say that schools and teachers always have, either an implicit or an explicit, vision of the characteristics and the activities of the future pupil.

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[8] The most detailed Dutch dictionary (Van Dale) gives no less than ten meanings of the notion 'standard'. Varying from 'flag' or 'flag pole' to unity of for example distance (meter) or an indication of what is 'normal' (in this country it is standard to greet people that way). We interpret 'standard' as a measure for the quality of education.

They always compare the pupil now with the pupil tomorrow. To be able to compare the two a reference is needed. This reference can be a measure, a criterion, a measure, a standard or a norm. Learning standards, our common opinions on what pupils should be able to know and be able to do, can serve this purpose. In the sociological view these standards are for example our shared ideas on socially functional knowledge, skills and attitudes. In the development oriented vision we cannot get by without a standard either. Here we compare the current development level of a child with our assessment of the potential development possibilities of the child.
So the mere presence of a criterion, a norm or a standard is not the problem. Adaptive education does agree very well with norm-oriented education. However, once we have established a norm the question is if can be considered to be applicable to all children to the same extent.

The playing field for adaptive education.

According to our definition, adaptive education takes place within the margins that delimit the context in which the school acts as an autonomous institution. School autonomy, however, is also a relative notion. Context variables, such as the legally established core objectives, determine the margins within which the school can act autonomously. These core objectives describe the educational offering and the schools are expected, or rather obliged to endeavour, to offer at least these contents to all their pupils. How they do this, how they organise, arrange and structure teaching at school, is - at least in The Netherlands - an autonomous task of the school.

What are the possibilities for adaptive education within the existing context? How can the adaptive game be played on the playing field between the corner flags? Referring to the dilemmas mentioned before, we will now give an indication of the possibilities for adaptive education.

Dilemma 1: Adaptive education is incompatible with the social task of education to ensure that all the children comply with the established (minimum) norms or standards concerning the development level to be reached.

We have already advocated (and perhaps proven) that adaptive education does not necessarily conflict with norm oriented education. In fact, adaptive education cannot do without forms of standardisation or norms system. These standards can either be general indications of the educational offering, or concrete, operationalised descriptions of the children's knowledge and abilities. Given these standards, adaptive education is occupied with the way in which education can take place such that maximum account is taken of the differences between the children.

Dilemma 2: Adaptive education is at odds with education organised in groups.

Adaptive education concerns dealing with differences, at least according to our definition. Only if the group is the frame of reference, it is useful to talk about dealing with differences. It is true that the size of the group is an important factor in tailoring education to these differences. It is a limiting factor, but it is not at odds with it.

Dilemma 3: The starting-point 'the child itself is the measure of all things' perpetuates social inequality.

If you would ask the author, he would reply that the child is not the measure of all things (with the emphasis on *all*) and the child is not the only and exclusive measure of itself either. Even in the most explicit form of development directed education, there is an external criterion (for example the expectation the teacher has in mind of how a child will develop), which forms the basis for measuring and assessing the way a child develops. Given this fact, it is the task and the responsibility of education to bring the actual level and the expected development level of a child as closely as possible together. It is evident that children will differ before, during and after their school career. The point is to create as many chances as possible for deprived children, without aspiring an untenable utopia of quasi-equality.

Dilemma 4: Adaptive education goes beyond the capability and differentiation capacity of the average teacher.

This dilemma will persist as long as teachers think that they can only realise adaptive education if all the possibilities for adaptive education (the interaction components in the model and the anchor model) have *thoroughly*, *intensively* and *simultaneously* been exploited. In many cases this is too much to ask for. In our opinion it is more useful to establish which option is realistic and feasible in *this* class, in *this* school and *this* context and then to thoroughly work this option out. Nevertheless, this is still adaptive education.

Turning the perspective

The notion 'adaptive education' is of a fairly recent date[9]. This does not imply that the teachers and educationalists of the past were blind to individual differences between children[10]. So-called reform schools that became acquainted with reforms in educational theory were the first to pay attention to individual differences between children. However, in the classic grade-oriented year group system, which was *the* prevailing education system in the 20th century, uniformity is the rule and uniformness is the norm. The average pupil is the frame of reference of the average teacher. Which educational content is addressed in which stage in primary education is common knowledge. It is also more or less common knowledge which learning results will be qualified as sufficient or insufficient. A uniform teaching method is used and is applied by means of whole-class teaching. In this system overachievers and underachievers cannot be catered for, but this is more or less considered to be a natural fact. Underachievers can either repeat a class or are referred to types of special needs education; overachievers skip a class or are left more or less unattended.

The Dutch national educational policy on 'Going to School Together' (WSNS, early nineties) was a particular incentive to the discussion on dealing with differences. The distinction between regular (primary) education and special needs education was fading and the first group of special needs education (for children with learning and behavioural difficulties and pre-school children with developmental difficulties) had to integrate with regular primary education (culminating in the new Primary Education Act, WPO, 1988).

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[9] The former Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Mrs. Netelenbos, was eager to replace the then recently introduced term 'adaptive education' in policy papers by 'education to measure'. Nevertheless she did not explain which measure was meant: the human measure, the measure indicated in the objectives and outcomes, the measure society envisions? Or did she mean her own, personal standard?

[10] See for example the classic diary of a teacher from Amsterdam (Theo Thijssen: The happy classroom; published in Dutch: De gelukkige klas. (Van Dishoeck, 1926)). The leading character in the book, the teacher Mr. Staal, appears to know each of his pupils very well. He knows what they are like, their whims and their moods, their possibilities and impossibilities. He knows that learning results will only flourish if he provides a warm school climate. In the classroom, however, he treats all his pupils the same. The same objectives, the same working methods and didactics, the same intended learning results. The book is called 'The happy classroom', not 'The happy child'. And this is not accidental.

This urged primary schools and consortia of primary and special schools to think about possibilities to deal with the increased heterogeneity of the pupil population.

Shifts in the emphasis of the target group can also be observed. Initially this subject only concerns the underachievers, the pupils with problems. Adaptive education in this respect particularly concerns extending special needs provision in primary schools. Later on it became clear that attention also had to be paid to overachievers, the highly gifted pupils. And finally understanding came about that every child is special and deserves special attention. Yes, in effect adaptive education concerns each child.

Conclusion

In a recent study Hofman & Bosker (1999) give information on the current state of affairs in the area of WSNS and adaptive education. Their conclusion is that teachers have made major progress in monitoring the learning progress of their pupils and in observing the pupils who encounter problems during the learning process. However, real adaptive education, which means actually doing something about these observed learning problems and the adjustment of education to the differences, has not yet or not really taken off. They advocate for example increased professional development. Referring to the model that was presented in this contribution, one could say that the interaction component *special care* has been complied with, but (at the moment) the *didactical activities* have not.

Adaptive education: a mission impossible? The question mark indicates that the answer is still open. Perhaps the mission of adaptive education has not yet been undertaken. However, possibilities are still open for the mission to be started up.

Adaptive education will be a mission impossible if teachers loose track of reality and want to tackle too much at once. Adaptive education means taking as much account of the differences as possible within the context. However, the opinion that each child counts is an indispensable condition.

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III. School development

School ethos

A basis for school development

Luc Stevens

Introduction

Without exception teachers and pupils appreciate a good school atmosphere. The basic meaning of a good school atmosphere is hardly a matter of discussion in education. Although personal perspectives of teachers and pupils may differ there is usually a striking similarity. Teachers refer to experiences such as safety, order and care, openness and respect, as well as harmony or community: primary human values that to a large extent determine people's well-being. The same applies to pupils. Although they express it less explicitly, the same points come forward in conversations with them. However, does this therefore determine a good school life for teachers and pupils? The school is not only a community, but also an organisation with goals (learning and development results) and the question is how values represented in these goals, relate to the primary values mentioned before.

And what about the pupils who cannot meet the expected development results, for whom the curriculum is too heavy? How important is the connection between good results and prestige within the group? How safe or how respected does a pupil that we call 'weak' feel? What should our general judgement be of the competitive character of our education as opposed to values such as well being and belonging? Could it be such that pupils experience different atmospheres depending on their achievements and their adjustment skills?

Tension in the education system

Recently other questions have presented themselves. For example, can result-sensitivity of a school and external accountability of education efforts by means of national tests be considered as important values and can they be given a harmonic position in what we call a good atmosphere? Could being result-directed even contribute to a good atmosphere? Is adaptive education, another recent example, in fact applicable if we hold on to the system of whole-class education and do pupils without problems loose out to special needs pupils who require demanding attention? Teachers have their doubts here and there. They also have their doubts about another apparent threat of the good school life: the changing style characteristics of their pupils, sometimes referring to the changing opinions of these pupils on their position in the school, sometimes referring to what we call the (increasing) socio-emotional problems of pupils.

It seems that what teachers and pupils consider to be a good atmosphere and what teachers consider to be the core of their work and the determining factor of their work satisfaction, is imminently threatened by the continuous competition in school and in the classroom, which is recently reinforced by what teachers experience as unwanted external influence. In other words: standardisation of the education provision, speed, conditions and organisation have always threatened the good atmosphere in the classroom and in school and recent requirements in the sense of better achievement levels and at the same time taking account of differences in development of children, as well as requirements for external accountability make this clear. The doubt and uncertainty those recent changes in context bring about in teachers show how context bound the good school life they experience used to be and still is now (basically a school life without weak and difficult pupils and without external interference). The tension due to changing demands is of a different, more fundamental order than the changes that occurred in the past. In most cases the latter not alter the curriculum as a fixed orientation or the roles and functions of teachers and pupils. Now the continuous development of the individual pupil, which includes the obligation for teachers to cope effectively with individual differences in class, has become the key concern. The pupils themselves seem to grow out of the school system (they are no longer immediately prepared to adapt to the dated system). Adjustments within the system seem necessarily to be replaced by changes of the system as such.

For me this finding primarily encompasses a value discussion, a new definition of the good school life. In this context I talk about school ethos. This notion provides a useful framework for a discussion about what we knew was not right, but left untouched. Below a suggestion for a more specific conceptual definition of the notion is given. This definition is a sample and is also context bound, but it is not just any sample. It is primarily based on findings of empirical research studies, of which the sources have been described in earlier publications (Stevens, 1994; Stevens, Van Werkhoven, Castelijns & Jager, 1996; Stevens, 1998 a and b). They refer to a cognitive-motivational portrayal of mankind, which as a researcher I endorse. They also refer to a pedagogical disciplining or standardisation of this portrayal and its consequences, which I endorse as a pedagogue. The latter covers the opinion relevant for education that every human being is fully equipped for his own development and that the development perspective is open or hopeful. This means that what will finally be achieved cannot basically not be predicted. The essential thing is that the available development potential, the working material of the teacher, is realised.

The definition

The well-known English researcher Rutter (re) introduced the word school ethos in 1979. He refers to characteristics of the school as a social organisation each with its own rules, values and behavioural standards. In this respect this is also called the culture of a school. Characteristics mentioned by Rutter of a culture that furthers good results include:

1. general (physical and social) conditions that make school life more comfortable and the attitude of teachers towards pupils (availability, care, high expectations, paying attention to things that are going well);
2. activities shared by teachers and pupils, under referral to co-operation;
3. the responsibility of pupils in the school, with respect to a well-balanced relationship between self-control and being checked, and;
4. success experiences.

Successful schools have an orderly environment and school organisation, a social context with clear norms, social cohesion, commitment and shared responsibility of teachers and pupils, aimed at results. It is to the accreditation of Rutter and many other researchers in the tradition of effectivity research, that their findings opened a perspective on a discussion on the quality of education, depending on the characteristics of the individual school, including the quality of the part of the teachers. Until then this discussion was hardly accepted by the system. However, the meaning of the research study by Rutter and the empirical analytical effectivity research study in general is limited by its non-theoretical character. They are looking for discretely observable units or variables, groups and levels of variables that show a demonstrable relationship with important outcomes. However, they do not produce meaningful interpretations of the resulting relationships or a theory. The latter is important because the question why the resulting variables are effective needs to be answered. The effectivity should be explainable in other words. Not only to meet a possible intellectual interest, but also to make the obtained knowledge understandable for teachers, so that they can work with them in a meaningful way.

They can for example follow the advice of the effectivity literature and make use of the principle of direct instruction more often (which is fairly closely related to education results). However, this does not warn them about individual cases in which it does not work, nor do they know how to look for well-founded alternatives. And if it does work, does it work in every instruction situation or does it vary and why? A theory or meaningful interpretation of correlational connections found over groups of teachers and pupils can bring about some understanding of this matter. The same applies to the word school ethos in the effectivity tradition. In actual fact it is nothing but a collection of variables that have proved to be effective, without a meaningful internal consistent description of the variables taken together. The road ahead is one that goes from variable to notion.

Against the background of a cognitive-motivational understanding of human actions, I consider the school ethos to be a complex and dynamic (moving) concept that refers to the moral motivation or the spirit with which teachers and pupils deal and work with one another in the school context. What will move people highly depends on the value character of their motives, guided by meanings they attach to themselves in a certain situation, to others in that situation and to other context characteristics. To a large extent these meanings are connected with the biography of the people concerned and the life perspective projected from it.
In a development context it is important to be explicit about the values these meanings represent, against the background of what is experienced as morally correct.

For the moment I use the term 'morally' in the sense of 'experienced as being of value' and not the notion 'pedagogically' because it is not only about the meanings educators (such as teachers) infuse, but also the meanings pupils attach to themselves and their human and physical environment. With this interpretation the more restricted meaning of 'morality' in terms of norms and rules put on behavior in school can be passed by. Now for example the question can be asked whether it is morally responsible to maintain a common curriculum, if it is clear that for an important number of the pupils its expectations are too high and too rigid. Is this fact part of the school's ethos? Then what does the ethos look like or what is the moral motivation of this paradox? By the way, with this I do not mean to say that any curriculum should be abolished, but I would like to put the way in which we present curricula to pupils up for discussion.

A discussion on moral motives also supports an open perspective on other human perspectives than are represented in most curricula.
It keeps an open perspective for what post-modern thinkers have to offer to education (Doll, 1993), for projection from motivation psychology research as 'the transcendental self' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993), for spirituality for example, but also for a different and better understanding of the notion morality than is common in our schools, such as the perspective of the principle of the social linking, as elaborated by Maturana and Varela (1988) and Speck (1997). But also using or not using scientific knowledge itself can be adopted for the assessment in the sense of school ethos or moral motivation, for example the use of learning psychological or motivation psychological principles. Of some of these principles we know that they can considerably increase the quality of learning processes, but we also know that some practices derived form learning theory for example have proved to be catastrophic for a lot of children. And, as already indicated, we know that the effectivity research has brought us knowledge, but that that knowledge did not do much for the understanding.

School ethos: a dynamic and compound notion

My suggestion would be to replace the notion 'school concept', as it is used in The Netherlands, by the notion 'school ethos'. The first notion is of a fairly static and prescriptive nature and a typical example of 'school performance': a proposal by the management, adopted by the team and the parents, without involvement of the pupils. Moreover, generally it rather is a declaration of intent than observable practice. This is associated with the drawback that it did not originate in the practice of the school life of teachers and pupils. It is usually not 'alive'. In our interpretation the notion 'school ethos' refers to the motives of teachers and pupils and their commonalties. These motives and the values they represent are associated with the spirit of the school, a spirit inspiring to …. .
School ethos keeps moving because it is continuously influenced by whatever a community of people concerns considering the question of the value of common activities. School ethos continuously develops bottom-up, which gives it more reality value than the notion school concept. Finally, it does not have the homogeneity the notion school concept presupposes. This is because it is 'made up' of different perspectives: the perspective of the teachers, pupils and parents, although other perspectives can play a part as well. In my opinion teachers and pupils have special responsibilities in this respect: the discussion and agreements on responsibilities to share and distinguish, as

well as the question how they will be realised. Teachers and pupils will have this discussion as full partners, this implies that the perspective of pupils is considered to be equally valuable: it has its own justified motives and arguments. This recognition is the consequence of the recognition of the pupil as a subject, as an actor with its own development, as seriously involved with and committed to his/her own development task. We will come back to this.
A discussion on school ethos requires well-considered orientations. They are the subjects of the following paragraph.

About the structure of the meaning of the school ethos concept

I interpreted ethos as referring to moral motivation, to what is experienced as valuable. For empirical and experiential reasons I suggest that within the school ethos concept six related dimensions are distinguished. It is only a preliminary proposal that requires further reasoning in certain parts and on internal cohesion, but may serve as a responsible initiation for the discussion. Below the six dimensions are briefly characterised as perspectives.

The anthropological perspective: referring to the human perspective(s) or portrayals of man, showed in the daily practice of education, in particular in the quality of getting together with each other.

The pedagogical perspective: already present in the anthropological perspective, refers to the design of action in a school, representing aims and objectives and associated values and norms, to the nature of interaction and to suitable qualities of the actors in question. For a good representation of what I envisage it is easy to refer to recent reform pedagogical work, as presented by the Reggio Emilia group in Italy, Mr and Mrs Wild in Equador, as well as a modern pedagogue such as Korczak.

The curriculum perspective: does not only refer to more or less compulsory domains and contents, but pre-eminently to the question on the meaning of what is represented, the usefulness and the effectivity of the way this is realised.

The psychological perspective: refers to the presuppositions concerning the nature and characteristics of human development and learning and the conditions that can be derived from this for what is considered to be a prosperous development. These presuppositions will be derived from pre-scientific as well as scientific knowledge sources, but particularly the last, because of the thorough, documented knowledge in the area of human development.

The school organisational perspective: refers to the importance of influence of the school organisation as intermediary for motivation and behaviour of teachers and pupils, therefore also as intermediary for school ethos.

The economic perspective: this could concern a superfluous category. Adequate choices in the dimensions already addressed, should be sufficient to facilitate a maximum development result. However, there are two circumstances that make an orientation within an economic or effectivity or efficiency perspective useful. First this is the 'condition humain' (extrinsic motivation of people is sometimes necessary, in this case the prospect to be held accountable). Secondly, society's request for schools to show and account for their results.

Characterisation of an ideal example

Based on critical reflection of personal pedagogical insights (partly determined by the pedagogical sources mentioned above), in connection with current scientific sources, I propose the following elaboration of the six perspectives for a more detailed itemisation of the six perspectives. In doing so I follow the viewpoint of the teacher. Despite numerous arbitrary moments I tried to achieve maximum theoretical coherence.

The anthropological perspective includes at least:

- the recognition of the development task of every human being;
- the recognition that people should realise their own development task themselves: the human being as owner of his/her development or his/her learning processes;
- the recognition of basic motivational needs of every human being: relationship, competence, autonomy;
- the recognition of the fact that people differ: the diversity principle.

The pedagogical perspective includes at least:

- active respect for the pupil as an actor and a person (the value of individuality) and his individual development route;
- active respect for the meaning of that moment (it is about now); this implies for example active respect for the development or learning result at this moment;

- active respect for the responsibility of the pupil and his/her judgement and making an active contribution to their development;
- self-respect;
- a clear and reflective orientation on morality and its development;
- recognition of the personal role in and shared responsibility for the school ethos;
- mediation of responsibility of the pupils for the school ethos;
- courage to enter confrontations with pupils as well as colleagues;
- authority based on self-respect, respect for others and based on expertise;
- generosity.

- *The curriculum perspective* includes at least:
- collective choices of contents and working methods within the legally prescribed setting: based on the criterion of usefulness;
- workable room for personal development of the child in relationship to the conjunctive requirements society places on education;
- giving account to pupils of the choices made;
- access basically for every pupil; the curriculum works with the diversity principle;
- a flexible curriculum organisation: the year group system is abandoned.

The psychological perspective includes at least:

- unreserved confidence in the development of the pupil;
- availability, cognitive and affective, for support and challenge;
- 'being there' ('with-it-ness', monitoring and feedback);
- being able to take the perspective of the pupil';
- challenge to initiative, choice and self-control: self-regulation (also during the teaching process);
- order in time, space, contents and relationship;
- orientation on mastery, not on achievement;
- co-operation for empowerment.

The school organisational perspective includes at least:

- recognition of responsibility for the school environment as physical and social environment;
- recognition of and responsibility for regulations and their functionality;
- recognition and co-responsibility for leadership functions;
- recognition of the importance of and contributing actively to team cohesion;

- recognition of the importance of and contributing actively to professional communication;
- 'educational criticism': long-term and joint critical reflection on educational work result in development of professionalism.

The economical perspective includes at least:

- the efficient use of the available time in class and in the school in order to meet the objectives;
- assessing education efforts as opposed to education output;
- the efficient and effective use of the available financial resources.

It is obvious that during the development of a school and the development of education in this school not every perspective or condition is always equally present. Depending on requirements, priorities can be set. However, the other perspectives or conditions within perspectives should never be neglected. Moreover, it should be noted that a certain hierarchy within the perspectives can be observed (which is in a way represented in the above order of description), that not all the conditions are or should be of the same weight.

Finally

Education is human work and a human matter with a clear goal: development of the human being. This is achieved under primary conditions of motivation and making sense: the key qualities of good education. People mediate these conditions and qualities simultaneously. Strong rationalisation and materialisation in our education system have resulted in corruption of the key qualities because of an absence of a critical corrective policy. Too easily education was associated with expectations and demands, whereas for the pupils it is much more a development route, a route on which (young) people learn what they are capable of by the mediation of other people who are important to them. This last orientation, during which the development potential of pupils comes into the picture and with it the pupils' potential contribution to society, holds a promise and ignores qualifications such as 'wrong', 'insufficient' or 'weak'.

You can only score insufficiently compared to your own potential (underachievement). Personal potential as a challenge can bring motivation and the making of sense back into the picture for the pupil as well as the teacher.

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School improvement as a problem solving process

Using what we know[1]

Uwe Hameyer

School improvement can start from completely different motives: involving parents and town districts in school work, enhancing the quality of foreign language mastery, devising a more life-centred curriculum, increasing the school's reputation. Another motive focuses on the integration of children with special learning problems or gifted children. Alternatively, it may be that state level authorities expect a 'new' flexibility from schools resulting from comparative quality data across schools. In the school as a social system we will always have to take into account a broad spectrum of hidden or explicit motives. Different people look for different things.
Whatever differs, one thing is always important for school improvement: school should use what they and what others know about lasting changes in the school. This is particularly important when emphasis is given to the children.

This contribution does not specify what we know from research and practice about children´s motivation or effective ways to learn. Instead, we look at the process of school improvement in view of what schools can do to retrieve and use internal and external knowledge, which encompasses all kinds of experiences. In this sense, we picture school development as a knowledge-based problem-solving process. This process requires rules of interaction in order to reach a mutual understanding about motives to change practice, methods and conflict solving among all those involved. Communication about the dissent is an integral part of the process.

Communication takes place on two connected levels – the level of *reflection* and the level of *construction*. In other words: reflecting on something and coming up with ideas are two mutually dependent forms of problem solving conceived as a process of social interaction. Reflection as 'pensive' activity may be a looking back, critical review and feedback, analysis and evaluation. Construction as a form of coming up with ideas stimulates inventing and shaping, conceiving and developing, dimensioning and planning, organising and deciding.

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[1] The basic ideas of this contribution draw upon the author's article '*Landkarte des Wissens – Schulentwicklung als Problemlöseprozess*' published in the Journal für Schulentwicklung (2001) 1. I am grateful that the Studienverlag, Innsbruck, supports a translated, modified reprint.

The main issue of this contribution shows up in the question: what can schools do – for example by reflection and construction - to use practical knowledge, to monitor new knowledge according to their current and future needs, to apply the knowledge and to gain new insights from their own school level experiences. It has to be said, however, that knowledge alone rarely makes the world go round. It is not a guarantee at all for effectiveness, but a necessary working basis for continued efforts of changes in the school.

Forms of knowledge in school development

Knowledge that helps solving problems can be represented in different ways (Hameyer, 2001). The following section briefly shows in a more or less abstract way what different forms of knowledge are about. Being aware of such forms, a school can more precisely specify what it requires or is looking for in its own school improvement efforts.

Procedural knowledge. **T**his form of knowledge concerns itself with insights from reports about processes of initiating, implementing and institutionalising innovations (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; van Velzen, Miles, Ekholm, Hameyer & Robin, 1985; Miles, Ekholm & Vandenberghe, 1987; Ekholm, Hameyer, 2000; Huber & Hameyer, 2000; Fullan, 2000). This knowledge form is characterized by explaining beyond the singular occurrence of an event.

Discursive knowledge. This form of knowledge results from a systematic review and qualification of one's own actions, from self criticism or supervision, from analysing or evaluating critical events, from the qualification of others or the clarifying interpretation of commonly accepted apparent truths, old habits and deceptive imprecision's scientific or practice language.

Divergent knowledge. This form of knowledge is about thinking beyond common ways to conceive patterns of work in the school. It unfolds uncommon images of a given practice or pattern of work. It views a practice in different ways, it plays with new ideas and discovers unusual, new solutions. Divergent thinking implies a new look at routines and at predominant patterns of instruction. Various methods have been published within this area. However, they are seldom used or even hardly known. This is true, for example, for research about creativity and systemic intervention (Königswieser & Exner, 1999), especially where it concerns methods on developing ideas (for example morphological cases, synectic methods, associative forms of changing one´s ideas; Kniess, 1995; Schlicksupp, 1995).

Structural knowledge. Structural knowledge represents the basic ideas and elements of a particular domain such as 'school and its environment', 'the lower secondary curriculum', 'classroom learning' or 'school as a working place' (including all facets of identity, stress and anxiety). In order to avoid isolated innovation efforts, structural knowledge also aims at taking into account the systemic relation within and especially between the aforementioned domains. Fullan (2000) refers to new studies, which claim that the *coherency of structural fields in school* is most important for lasting efforts to improve a school. In that context, knowledge is only one field, the 'professional community' is a second and the quality of the educational programme a third one. Professional development of the teaching staff is useless as long as the above-mentioned components are not considered (see also Fullan 2000, p. 13).

*Formative knowledge***.** Formative knowledge is directed at creating development processes, at planning and combining activities, at structuring processes of communication, understanding and decision-making.

These forms of knowledge are specified in an overview as a 'knowledge map (see Hameyer, 2001)[2].

Ways towards knowledge management

In order to search for knowledge that is useful for school improvement, we need a compass and a map. The compass indicates the direction and the goals of our knowledge search, and a knowledge map is a signpost towards knowledge management. Knowledge retrieval and management organizes the process of gaining and applying knowledge. Thus, this process is an area of organization theory and social science analysis (Castells, 1996; Papmehl & Siewers, 1999; Keupp 2001). Transfer and growth of knowledge are the issue. In this context, knowledge is 'the total of the knowledge and abilities individuals use to solve problems' (Probst, Raub & Romhardt, 1999, p. 46, translated by the editor). Theoretical findings, research results, products and ideas, abilities and process knowledge, daily life rules and practical knowledge, licences and patents are part of it (Hameyer, 2000).

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[2] If we regard knowledge with respect to its state of matter, we may distinguish between documented from remembered knowledge, intuitive from systemic knowledge, casuistic from comparative knowledge, causal from descriptive knowledge and the dispositive knowledge as ability compared to transformed knowledge as an act with a consequence. These categories are not set out in this contribution. Rather we focus on the ways in which knowledge is represented and on what we know about knowledge in more detail.

Knowledge has various functions, as for example the function of 'knowing that' (declarative knowledge), the function of 'knowing why' (explaining knowledge) and the function of 'knowing how' (for example formative knowledge) (Broudy, 1977). We derive our knowledge from various sources: from research and case studies, from experiences of other schools, from models and theories, from reports and feedback, from evaluations and comments – or, more precisely, from the problem oriented reflection and evaluation of such sources.

School development needs a knowledge basis in order not to have to invent everything for a second time. At the same time, it creates new knowledge within its areas of decision and action, in part indirectly, by its effectiveness and by the discourse about effectiveness. The question is, what is knowledge really required for and how does it relate to problem solving processes? We will refer to these questions in the following paragraph, by attempting to think of the problem solving process in a systemic manner, by structuring the forms of knowledge according to an well-founded concept – the problem solving triangle – and depicting them in a tabular map.

School development as a problem solving process

Talking about school development as a problem solving process, we refer to the knowledge required to answer the following questions: What should be improved? How can we reach a goal or find a solution to a problem? What is the effect of certain solutions? Simultaneously, this implies asking about the importance and valence of the solutions to problems. The question circle in a problem-solving triangle looks like this (fig. 1):

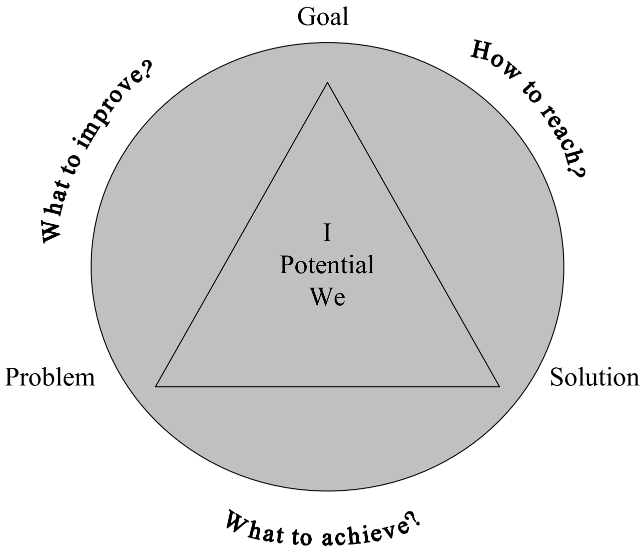

Figure 1: Problem-solving triangle

1. In consultations, the triangle is also used as a frame of reference for a better look at problems, in order to define problems precisely, to narrow them down and to determine the links between goal, solution and problem. In a way, it is a two-level-model that aims at depicting the *reflective* and the *constructive* sides of school development as a problem solving process in a very simple, basic manner.

2. The triangle is about the way to reach solutions to problems and the probable or already realized effects of solution variants. The problem solving processes we refer to in this document are based on communication and understanding. Only when we understand those processes more precisely, probe them, narrow them down and assess them, we come a bit closer to understanding. However, understanding may seem very much like a ball of wool – a thread without beginning or end. Levels of understanding get confused easily. Confusion increases. Fear, non-understanding and conflict follow wherever one goes, sometimes unrecognised and as a result even more dramatic for the understanding. In situations as diffuse as

that, one must *create mutual co-operation from the chaos*. This is impossible without co-ordinated interaction and communication.

3. Thus, a leading goal for school development is making communication *solution-oriented*, for example with the help of certain forms of self-observation by effective feedback methods. Starting problems such as a lack of learning motivation or poor concentration are not simply accepted, even though they are points of concern, but they are coupled to the goal, to what the persons involved hope from new attempts at solutions, how they evaluate such attempts in view of their own goals with respect to classes and to why they chose, for example, solution A instead of solution C. The problem-solving triangle aims at supporting and focussing communication within the class- and school-innovation process and it aims at making focussing easier. Communication is not only a matter of debate and subjective reflection. By applying scientific and practical knowledge, it may be put on an argumentation level. This is why we will refer to the aforementioned forms of knowledge when talking about the three main points in the problem-solving triangle.

4. What are many pedagogical consultations and daily life conversations about? In part, and this applies to school-like organisations as well, they are determined by the speaker not presenting a point of view systematically, but being easily tempted to thinking apodictically, which may lead to a dead end, without there being any subjective suffering. On the contrary, the world seems to become easier to manage, and to comprehend, 'more to the point'. One of the tasks of problem solving is to make people look further in professional situations, to make them imagine their professions in the light of continuing possibilities for development, to make them change their points of view and perspectives, to have them bring into play relevant knowledge. The problem solving triangle aims at affecting such thinking by systematically linking three points of view:
    - the goal;
    - the problem;
    - the solution.

These points of view form a reflection- and construction-unit. In most consultations, solutions are only useful when the goal is taken as the starting point. For that matter, goals are convincing or 'motivating' only when there is a chance of reaching them or when a set goal may at least get closer. Alternatively, the goals themselves may be changed. Solutions and goals will both have to create clarity about how they probably come across and what their consequences are. To say it differently, which problems are they able to overcome and which problems are insurmountable? On the other hand, a solution-oriented conversation about a problem is bound to the *rule of balance* that a solution promises advantages to those confronted by the problem and those deciding on merits and implementation of the problem solving and discussing advantages with respect to a 'community of practice'.

The problem-solving triangle can easily be extended into a knowledge map as long as, in order to find the proper answers, we analyse the three main questions with respect to the knowledge that is available from or already used in school development and other domains of knowledge. An overview may serve as a knowledge map, with the examples in the fields about the main questions being formulated in an action-directed manner. Directly or indirectly, they contain links to the knowledge that may be activated or that is already applied, and especially to methodical knowledge in the sense of proven know-how.

School development does not require those three points of view to be applied in a certain sequence. One may start at any corner. However, it is important to guarantee the interaction of the 'three corners'.

Not every solution is immediately greeted enthusiastically, especially when discrepant observations and inner scripts of the people involved in the discussion are at play. For that reason, one should regard the problem-solving triangle as having two levels: the I-level and the WE-level. Both need clarification in order to reach an agreement. Communication difficulties and conflicts mostly originate in a clash between those levels. People differ in their way of thinking about certain facts. That is quite normal. We have to take this as a starting point and realize that we may get stuck in certain situations for the simple reason that there may be various different subjective views on a subject. New solutions evolve as a result of communication about the subjective differences in how people see a problem.

For school development, the three 'corners' of the problem-solving triangle may be structured by impulsive questions as soon *as the focal system, the way of looking at something* that poses a problem one sets about solving, is determined.

Goal

- What do I want to achieve?
- What do we want to achieve?
- What is it mainly about?
- Which partial objectives are achievable?
- Which motives does the goal imply?
- What is not intended?
- Who is behind which goal?
- Which expectations do I have with respect to the goal?
- What is the goal's real use?
- In what context can it be placed?
- In how far do *I* back the goal?
- In how far do *we* back the goal?
- Is it really my own goal?

Solution

- What do we think about a short-term solution?
- What does a short-term solution look like?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of a short-term solution?
- Which solution is considered *best practice* elsewhere?
- What effects do I expect?
- What effects do we expect?
- Where may unexpected effects arise?
- How do we assess the quality of the solution?
- In how far is it possible to split a solution in parts or to divide it in steps?
- How do I assess the chances of implementation?
- What do we need to know in order to realize the solution?
- Which solution options should be considered?
- Who participates in which solution?
- What am I going to do myself?
- How will I recognize a good solution?
- What are the exact indicators?

Problem

- What am I worried about? What are we worried about? Why?
- Why do we need to solve the problem?
- Where and in which person is the problem apparent?
- What doesn't work? Since when?
- What has been confused as a result of the problem?
- What is going wrong, since the problem exists?
- What are we especially dissatisfied about?
- Why can't we make progress as a result of the problem?
- Which issues have reached a dead end as a result of the problem?
- What exactly is the problem for me?
- What exactly is the problem for others?
- Which dilemma does the problem cause?
- What are the problem's layers?
- How can we interpret it?
- When did it first arise? Situation?
- Who judges the problem how?
- For who is the problem especially grave?
- For whom is the problem unimportant?
- Who is involved in the problem?
- Who in the first place? Who in the second place?
- Is it new for us? Has it occurred before?
- What do we recognize in the problem and what is new?

Conclusion

Knowledge is not exclusively derived from some external sources such as research or documented case studies. All those who teach must combine the knowledge base of school development with their *own* knowledge and the 'ability to act in the situation at hand, when they want to make progress' (Fullan, 2000, p. 16, translated by the editor). They will only use the knowledge that, according to their assessment, promise to solve problems more efficiently than usual. Also, they will have to be able to visualize the meaningfulness. Therefore, one has to be able to *explore* the knowledge and make it understandable for oneself and others. Science and politics will have to come up with quite some ideas in order make knowledge resources more accessible to schools. One way to get there might be founding centres of innovation (Hameyer, 2000).

Knowledge may also contribute to widening the scope of thinking and to developing competing ways to solve a problem at hand. One of the greatest risks of modern school improvement is always regarding one aspect alone and putting all hope on it, for example human resource development *or* quality management *or* innovation of the curriculum *or* professional qualification. However, it is important to view those aspects in their complementarities and the resulting effects – to see the cake as a whole instead of the individual pieces. This is a matter of using all our creativity, of developing a knowledge-based way to communicate and of exchanging feedback about what really works.

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Social learning and values orientation

A contribution to quality development and to a democratic school culture

Heinz Schirp

As an introduction: Let’s talk about school quality

In all countries the aspect of 'quality of the school and education system' has become a central issue.
Without doubt, the issue dominating the discussion about educational policy and science in most West European countries since a couple of years is developing and ensuring 'school quality'.
The various international comparative studies as well as the legitimating of and reasoning about costs for education have seriously raised questions about the 'output' of schools, the quality of school results and comparative standards. The aspect of a growing occupational mobility within Europe and the resulting demands made and qualifications required obviously play an important part within this context.
Accordingly, this Europe-wide 'search for quality' (OECD, 1995) has resulted in many initiatives. Ministries and school administrations have started programs aiming at researching and improving the quality of schools. The scope of these initiatives extends from innovative approaches in the area of pre-school education to standardizing processes in Curricula, compulsory programs for individual subjects (national curricula), qualification programs for teachers, school directors and school inspectors and, in job training sectors, attempts at 'Total Quality Management' derived from business management models.

Almost everywhere, the issue of 'quality' is linked with the search for a new balance between governmental regulatory measures and school self-regulatory processes.
Especially, the goal is to strengthen the autonomy of individual schools. Apparently, in most countries there is a growing conviction that quality development should be linked to school autonomy, independence and deregulation (for example Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in The Netherlands, 1999).

Here we are beginning to see that the individual countries depart from different starting points. Where extensive and generally valid curricular programs exist, the tendency is towards deregulation; where, traditionally, rather open 'curricular suggestions' exist, the effort is directed at how to define and establish a core of compulsory programs. Thus, the attempts at tackling the dilemma of an increasingly self-responsible area of decision and forming, that forces one to think about how to ensure the compulsory, central curricula, come from various directions. The scope of plans extends from core curricula to increasing inspection-like evaluation measures up to suggestions of large-scale assessment.

In the context of the discussion about quality, the 'school evaluation' has developed into a central and programmatic concept. There are three basic forms.

- Evaluative measures refer for example to developing a consciousness for the necessity of common standards and the corresponding performance- and result-improving processes in individual subjects by school-internal co-operation and by comparing partner schools.
- The idea of deregulation and self-steering is served by initiatives in which, for example, institutes offer schools an external evaluation, the results of which will be presented only to the school committees involved. In that way, schools may obtain information without critical or less positive results becoming public (for example NFER, 1998). In those places where systematically applied school supervision and inspection structures exist, these are used for external evaluation as well as for advisory support of school internal evaluation processes (SICI, 1999). Apparently, external evaluations by official inspection may result in downright demands on development and improvement measures and in either closing schools that cannot produce the desired results within the given time frame or letting the schools continue only after an exchange of school director and/or teachers.

Quality development, school ethos and the necessity of moral education

Searching the empirical research data for criteria that have proven decisive for the quality of schools, it becomes clear that school climate, educational consensus and school ethos are especially important conditions for a good school.

One, if not the key variable for a good school is, for example, the manner in which the teachers of a school co-operate with each other (Haenisch, 1998) and the way they manage to find an educational consensus as a basis for a basic value-oriented school and class climate beneficial to learning and achievement. What Rutter and others have called 'school ethos', has proven a central condition for learning success as well as for school climate in numerous comparative studies. Referring to a comparison of American schools, Aurin concludes (Aurin, 1989, p. 73):

"The centring core of good schools was an educational philosophy supported by and accessible to all persons involved, which determined the intellectual orientation of the school and which is beneficial to an understanding of the schools goals and to reaching those goals."

In ministerial frameworks for the development and ensuring of the quality of school tasks, paragraphs on leading goals and lists of characteristics stress the importance of:

- the development of cultural participation and the participation in building a democratic society;
- the development of values and judgment and behaviour according to moral standards;
- the development of a mature and socially responsible personality. (MSWWF, 1998, p. 10 ff)

A systematic moral education increasingly deserves our attention, and not only in view of quality development. The new demands on the socialization of children and adolescents, arising from developments in society and their consequences, suggest thinking about new and extended concepts concerning an educational focus on democratic participation, encouragement of the competence to judge and intercultural understanding.

Development tendencies and prognoses

'Prognoses', say the witty, 'are risky and difficult – especially when they concern the future!' That is also true for the school and educational system. Nevertheless, within the areas of sociological and pedagogical science certain developments can be discerned that may be extended to prognostic assessments. Four such assessments may help to outline the interrelation between school development and school democracy more precisely. They all refer to the necessity of a more pronounced design of the democratic and social-integrative areas of school and class.

First prognosis: School as a 'system' will have to focus on the development of democratic, social and basic value-oriented competencies more than it currently does, because the conditions and results of familial socialization processes will pose new challenges to schools.
In a sense, a strengthened compensatory function of the school is a reaction on the changing trends that arise from family size, family daily life, division of labour, role perceptions, changing styles and goals of raising children etc. (Bründel 1998, p. 307 f). Many teachers complain about a sort of behaviour they observe ever more frequently in their pupils, a behaviour that is extremely self-assured, egomaniac, often inconsiderate and unsocial; putting their own interests and needs and the satisfaction of those are put first and many pupils have only a limited frustration tolerance. All this, according to the complaint, leads to numerous disturbances in class and school life, which result in the 'actual' teaching becoming more and more arduous and eventually also ineffective.
These observable socialization effects have set in motion a new wave of educational ideas with a conservative touch. Slogans such as "Stop the cuddling pedagogy" and "more strictness for children" are a sign that new authoritarian concepts are imminent.

Schools and pedagogues will have to prepare themselves and determine their positions with respect to and their methods of social learning again. Between the extremes of virtue instruction, command pedagogy and authoritarian sanctions on the one hand and the overly friendly non-committal approach and permissive 'rubber wall pedagogy' on the other hand, these methods will have to show how children and adolescents learn to think, judge and act responsibly within a common framework of values. The issue will be to develop a new democratic and social school culture.

Second prognosis: In view of the rapidly increasing importance of new information and communication technologies, schools will lose their monopoly on imparting knowledge and information for a large part. Thanks to modern media, for example further developed 'teach-and-learn-ware', school careers, learning processes and the building up and forming of knowledge databases may be shaped in a more individual, learner-oriented and therefore often more efficient way. Many such multi-media supported learning processes will increasingly occur outside of the schools. The suppliers are already on the market.

Schools will have to address a 'monopoly-like' task in another area. They will have to achieve what the new media cannot achieve; they will have to see to it that pupils learn to handle the abundance and surplus of the information and visualization flood sensibly, in order not to "drown in the flood of information and pictures' (Weizenbaum, J.). More and more often, they will have to address the meaning, the sense, the connections and the value of information and help children and adolescents to handle the information systematically and usefully. Also, they will take over a new role in the social, communicative and interactive design of learning and living together. They will have to develop models on how pupils should plan their studying and how to arrange their learning environment, their school life, and their 'house of learning', in a socially agreeable manner. The development of social, interactive and communicative competencies as a basis for participation processes in a democratically structured community will attain an entirely new status.

Third prognosis: The lecturing and instruction culture of school and classes will become more balanced in terms of self-organization and learner-orientation. 'Many classes' and 'much instruction' are not necessarily 'learning a lot'. 'Learning' is more and more seen as a process of understanding, in which the individual person is actively
– choosing, differentiating, forming, changing – participating.

A new and deeper understanding of the conditions and processes of 'learning' is supported by new data and hypothetic models from the areas of the science of learning, neurobiology, neurophysiology and the cognitive sciences. Educationalists increasingly use those models as a basis for practical, school-oriented deliberations on the didactic and methodical structuring of lessons. In addition, such models are popularised so far, that they have been published in periodicals, popular scientific publications and magazines. Remarks on the importance of feelings, emotional intelligence and social dispositions are of special importance in this respect (for example Damasion, 1996; Goleman, 1996; Rowe, 1997; Spitzer, 2000). A new understanding of learning is emerging, one that is supported and encouraged by pedagogical concepts that are already practiced occasionally. Those concepts:

- place the participating role of the learning individuals in the foreground;
- use the model-forming force of learning environments already created;
- take into account the processes of co-operative learning methods and learning communities that encourage understanding;

- use the experience-generating co-operative possibilities with the school environment and the social, cultural, political, ecological, technological … realities of the community in the lessons;
- take the connection between cognitive, emotive and social learning approaches as a starting point for creating the learning process.

Concepts aiming at a new outline of a democratic and social school culture will not be able to ignore those theoretical aspects of learning.

Fourth prognosis: Creating democratic and social schools and classes will become an increasingly important issue in the discussion about school quality, quality development and quality ensuring.
As a consequence of results published in various international studies like TIMMS (where the German pupils came out rather average) the discussion about school quality is currently strongly influenced by models on quality ensuring. This is true for most countries, and especially for Germany. Increased external and internal control and evaluation, more precise determination of the requirements in terms of knowledge, performance standards and test instruments comparing performances are the main issues of this discussion. Apparently, the demand for school researchers who point out the importance of the school climate and a social learning environment as central variables for improved performance and school success and thereby giving the qualitative development of schools an important impulse, seems to be a thing of the past. The current fixation on international performance comparisons, the dominance of orally testable knowledge databases and the favouring of class learning results following the structure of their leading specialist disciplines may be necessary – temporarily as a result of the time we are living in – but it will certainly not suffice for the medium term.

There are more and more signs that a new, broader understanding is developing again, after a period of a subject- and class-minded view on school quality. In various European countries we may observe, for example, the implementation of new main focus programs aiming at - again - the development of 'citizenship education', 'spiritual and moral development', school ethos, community education, school and community. This seems to be the beginning of a new phase in the development, where school quality – in combination with the necessary plans for ensuring the quality of teaching classes - is an aspect of the democratic, social and basic value-oriented forming.

It is sufficiently proven by school and teaching studies as well as school and model experiments, that participation, co-determination and social interaction in class and in school life are performance-enhancing elements, that help to motivate and to understand the usefulness and value of effort and work (Oser, F.K. et al., 1992; Schirp, H., 1992 und 1999).

Various determining elements for a concept of the democratic and social forming of schools may be derived from the prognoses and development tendencies sketched above. Today, such a concept must involve more than 'just' a strengthening of the pupil representation; it has to be drawn up more comprehensively and it must aim at encouraging and strengthening the elements listed hereafter and embed those elements as fixed components in the pedagogical profile of a school.

- Social interaction and communication;
- participation and co-determination;
- co-operation and social commitment;
- discourse and reflection on basic values;
- intercultural awareness and social empathy;
- integrated knowledge and social understanding.

Firstly, the elements listed above show that this refers to abilities and competencies that have to be developed successively. But in view of the uselessness of 'teaching and preaching' as mentioned in the third prognosis, it is just as necessary to think about which school-specific scopes of action and creation, areas of decision and useful learning environments are available or have to be developed.
Such scopes must refer to the three organizational contexts of schools, namely 'class teaching', 'school life' and 'school-external learning environments'.

Among the above-mentioned aspects, such a concept is an essential contribution to the development of a school climate that encourages learning and therefore to a further qualitative development of school, class teaching and learning.

Models and concepts of a basic value-oriented school development

The following three models are intended to demonstrate where and how schools may create conditions that promote the development of their pupils´ competences in the areas of democratic and social learning, judging and behaviour.

Those three models refer to:

- establishing *social structures and models;*
- establishing *learning communities that reflect on basic values;*
- establishing *scopes of action and co-operations.*

The link between organization and learning contexts established by the following suggestions may be shown more clearly in the following scheme.

Learning contexts	**Classes**	**School life**	**Co-operation with the community**
Social structures and models	Freedom, limits, and social agreements	Participation and co-design	School-external 'critical friends'
Learning communities reflecting on basic values	Moral dilemmas from subject specific issues and contents	Just Communities	School-external experts, positions, perspectives
Scope of action and co-operations	Social help and support systems	Peer mediation and arbitration	Learning ´on the spot´: local projects and initiatives

From the practical experience of the schools working with those three models, in some cases with a different focus, it becomes clear that the models are closely linked with each other in everyday pedagogy. They complement and influence each other and they are mutually dependent. For that reason they should not be seen as individual, isolable approaches, but rather as possibilities for pedagogical development, which each point out new approaches and empirical possibilities and indicate how the results already achieved may be extended.

Social structures and models

The main idea of this approach is obvious: teachers may give as many classes as they want on democratic conduct, social behaviour and the corresponding manners of treating each other; if the demands and goals that are thus made obvious show neither in the behaviour of those directly involved in school matters nor in the flexible forms of school work, which is to say that they are not proven and attested by the school practice, all attempts at teaching those aspects are useless. Teachers lose credibility, they devalue themselves and, without intending to do so, they give their pupils the idea that there is indeed a discussion on the necessity of democratic and social behaviour, but that nobody is seriously interested in practising it. Such a discrepancy between 'idea' and 'reality', between moralistic intention and opposite experiences would just about encourage double moral standards - and that would be the worst thing to propagate to our pupils. This certainly does not mean that the schools´ own basic conditions and models need to be perfect; no, they will remain largely changeable, in need of revision and improvable. New chances arise and serious interest is made obvious by involving the pupils, by letting them participate in the search for better solutions. The models emerging from the development of the proper basic conditions and the social conventions, rituals and rules developing accordingly, provide a sort of orientation models, which implicitly refer to their effectiveness and usefulness. They present order- and orientation-forming structures to children and adolescents and they offer social commitment and participation.

Such implicitly effective models are important, and ultimately essential for school socialization processes. They function as a counterbalance against social disintegration processes, social disorganization and social disorientation, processes experienced by children and adolescents all too frequently within their familial and medial circumstances (Schirp, 1966, p. 30 ff)

However, the establishment of social models in itself is not enough. More basic value- and norm-oriented reflections must become an integral part of classes as well.

It becomes clear from numerous analytical approaches towards developing judgemental competency and value consciousness that school and classes may contribute in a big way to developing a differentiating understanding of basic values. The schools´ educational responsibility necessitates that as well.

In addition to and in combination with the development of democracy-propagating structures of schools, there is always the need for processes, in which to reflect on one’s own but also on other people’s behaviour, decisions, solutions to problems and conflicts in view of the moral decisions underlying them. Social models and experiences may turn out to be not workable, not just or not applicable; solutions to conflicts that have been regarded as useful in a certain situation, may fail in another situation. In this respect, social models require permanent reflection. The issue is the connection of the two constructs that are decisive for the development of moral consciousness. Those are 'exemplary living' – in the sense of learning from 'models' referring to persons and/or structures – and 'reflecting' in the sense of a moralistically cognitive reappraisal and differentiated argumentation of moral decisions.

The following examples represent schools´ efforts to develop and make possible workable experiences with dependable lesson structures and models, those experiences being the basis for democratic and social observation, decision capacity and the power to act.

Freedom, limits and social agreements

"If one starts searching for solutions only when there is an increasing number of conflicts and problems, one has usually lost already. In any case it is going to be more difficult!"

This statement of a school director is very much to the point with regard to the necessity of continuously working on social models. In classes and school life, rules that help to find some orientation help communicating again and again about the required freedom and, no less important, limits and social agreements by which classes and school life are held together and become acceptable: schools have already developed a lot of different ways to do just that. Each school for itself, but especially in their working together, they contribute to enabling pupils to understand what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and why and how to participate in shaping and improving those expectations.
In morning talks and regular discussion rounds, events and experiences from their own school and school external life are talked about. In this way, teachers get to know more directly what kind of problems their pupils have, which permanent conflicts are bothering them, what are the disturbing factors for being together in class.

Self-organized work forms like free tasks and weekly schedule work, the use of learning workshops and learning centres help pupils to develop responsibility for themselves and others gradually.
Task-related activities of individual pupils and small groups demonstrate that everyone is needed to contribute something to the success of a class and how everyone is needed. Eventually there will often be 'experts' for certain tasks: preparing technical or medial arrangements, organizing and preparing the work for class projects, participation in the preparation of events, looking after other groups of pupils … all such activities are the model-building framework for the pupils´ corresponding freedom, but also for the rules, the binding agreements necessary to finish something successfully and according to the plan. All that needs time and has to be fit into the daily class schedule. It succeeds where class teachers have several classes with their own group; where the various teachers of a form agree that they will only be able to manage disturbances, lack of discipline and conflicts in class if they all agree on one concept and consequently make time for implementing the suggestions made in such a concept. The school director cited above answered the question:

"How do you manage to do this in addition to giving classes?"
by saying:
"Firstly, because this is also teaching and secondly because it saves us all the effort of the many individual warnings, problem discussions and class disturbances, which would require a lot of time of each individual teacher!"

Participation and co-design

Many schools are still quite a long way from redesigning schools into the much-cited 'houses of learning'. Schools do not yet sufficiently use the various possibilities that arise:

- when what is worked out in class is made accessible to others;
- when work forms are organized that go beyond class and form;
- when broader and more binding social agreements, rules and possibilities for participation become a fixed part of school life in general.

Much of what pupils note and describe as results in subject classes is of interest to others classes and may be further processed, critically studied and supplemented. Pupils experience things in such a way that their work results are useful for others. They get feedback from other groups, and sometimes the feedback is critical. In addressing such feedback, new ways

of looking at something, relevant remarks and suggestions for change that they have not seen before, may become obvious.
The main point of such forms of participation is that the relevant and subject-related work in class leads to forms of social co-operation. Social rules and agreements on a class level may need to be modified or tested for generalization purposes when different classes and forms work on a common project. How should older and younger pupils behave towards each other? Why are older pupils allowed 'more' than the younger ones? How can tasks and work be divided in a 'just' manner? Who should/could help whom?

In schools that organize such participation and exchange models purposefully, the social climate is clearly changed positively. Just as elsewhere the pupils´ insights and experiences are needed to ensure that the time and effort put in such co-operation methods pay off. Pupils learn in new, partially age-heterogeneous groups of others. What teachers in class often have to address by bans and directives may be seen from an entirely new perspective when pupils have to determine rules and agreements themselves in order to get their common tasks done. They develop new insights and a practical understanding of the prevailing group rules. This will succeed best where classes and groups have already had a chance to 'grow into' existing organization forms and models.

Possibilities for participation and co-design are not limited to the exchange of class results. They refer just as much to projects extending classes, to the design and use of classrooms, corridors, break hall, school yard, learning workshops, library/media centre, the organization of school parties and celebrations or performances and the mediation of disputes between the persons and groups acting within the school (see also 'Peer Mediation' and 'Just Communities').

School external partners as 'critical friends'
When schools leave their own pedagogic area and start up co-operations with school external partners, new empirical areas with respect to participation processes and co-determination models arise for all persons involved. When schools open themselves towards the community, they need 'critical friends'. The partners should be 'critical' in order to be able to determine whether what has been learned in special subject classes and inter-disciplinary classes proves to be just as workable under the critical eyes of social reality. However, the partners must be 'friends' as well. They should have an eye for what pupils can achieve and they must

understand how and where to make suggestions for relevant and subject-related improvements.

This interrelation between school and community has advantages for both sides. School learning gets new impulses and especially new motivation for learning as a result of the new concreteness of tasks and the demands and expectations from outside.

The community profits from schools showing their future citizens approaches to important areas of social, cultural and political reality and from schools making conflicts and their solutions transparent and concrete. Commitment and political participation need to be developed. Co-operation between schools and the community is extremely helpful in that respect. Schools use various approaches for such co-operation. Many of the issues worked out in school are of interest to the community's individuals and institutions as well. Suggestions for improving traffic regulations in school neighbourhoods, improving the traffic safety of school routes and participating in history or art exhibitions are just as much part of it as participating in ecological, urban development or cultural projects.

By considering such choice co-operations as a continuous task, schools are integrated into the community. In this way, they show all those involved, but especially their pupils, that school teaching and learning is not separated from social reality. The experiences gained from the North-Rhine Westphalia project 'Design of school life and opening up of schools', already ten years ago, show that a surprisingly large number of schools have developed solid co-operational structures with non-school partners, thereby encouraging their pupils´ capacities for co-determination, relevant and competent participation and commitment in community areas.

Learning communities reflecting on basic values

Learning with each other within peer groups is of particular importance in the process of understanding. Specific learning contexts develop where children and adolescents get a chance to exchange their own ideas, reflections, arguments and thoughts. Whereas it is often the teaching staff who clear up everything and explain everything with logical arguments – not only in discussions on basic values – comparable discussions in a peer group context have the advantage of taking place on a level of concreteness that can be understood by most of the participants. They are literally more pupil-adapted. They refer to common living circumstances and therefore create a common background of experience.

With such a background, various positions and interpretation and argumentation patterns may be more comprehensible. This aspect is especially important when discussions on moral ideas and decisions are about learning how to decide between, for example, 'right' and 'wrong' or 'do' and 'don’t' in concrete everyday situations in school or elsewhere.

In addition, learning communities as an organization form have a special function for the democratic design of school life, when they are open to other age groups than their own, to other classes, to teachers and their opinions and options, to parents and groups from the (non-)school environment. Completely new and different perspectives come into play then. Often, the issue is to understand other peoples´ interests to keep an open mind about their justified desires and to find ways to harmonize one’s own ideas with those of others, if possible together. In this sense, school organization forms are almost classically preparatory for 'politics' as a means, goal and method to solve and handle conflicts individually and in a socially agreeable manner. The purposeful development of learning communities such as pupil representation, 'Just Communities' and 'peer-mediation', eventually contributes to prepare for participation in political decision and design processes.

Moral dilemmas from subject specific issues and contents

In furthering the capacity to judge, approaches that are not based on a 'moral instruction model' but that rather understand moral development as a morally cognitive process, which children and adolescents undergo in specific stages, have proven most helpful with respect to didactics, educational science and class organization. The individual stages may be distinguished by increasingly differentiated argumentations for value-oriented judgement. Therefore, this process of growing judgemental capacity must be supported in class. (Kohlberg, 1978; Oser, 1986 and 1988; for class-oriented implementation LSW, 1991 and 1995).
The well-reflected examination of moral dilemmas plays an important role in this process. By a moral dilemma, we refer to a situation in which the individual involved has to decide between two potentially valid moral ideas. 'Is one obliged to tell the truth regardless, even when one has promised one’s friend not to tell on him?' (honesty versus friendship). 'Are laws to be abided regardless, even when they hurt people’s dignity?' (legality versus human rights). 'Is one’s own success more important than consideration for the group as a whole?'

(success versus solidarity). Similar questions arise in contexts where there is a conflict between justice versus power, obligation versus conscience, ecology versus economy, one’s own interests versus community welfare etc. There are numerous situations that force us to decide between two conflicting moral standards. The argumentation for the decision made in a particular case shows the stage of a person’s moral development, for example:

- the stage of following the existing authority, according to the motto: 'I act correctly if I do what a person of authority and respect tells me to do!';
- the stage of 'exchange morals': 'If a person does right by me, I will do right by him!', 'Don’t do to another person what you don’t want the other person to do to you!';
- the stage of 'group morals': 'If everybody in my group thinks this is right and sensible and if it is for the good of the group …';
- the stage of insight in the meaning of general rules and laws: 'It is correct to abide to the law because the law protects everyone’s interests and needs!';
- the stage of insight in the meaning of general human rights and the inviolability of every human’s dignity;
- the stage of principle-oriented morals as, for example, Kant´s Categorical Imperative in view of the necessity to make the general validity of rules the basis of judgement and behaviour.

Each higher stage is distinguished by an increased differentiated insight. It is important to use such moral dilemmas in class to further the pupils´ capacity to judge.
At a closer look, the content of all subjects and learning areas, by way of literary texts as well as the concrete issues of politics, history, geography religion, etc., offers such basic value-oriented dilemmas in great numbers. The pupils´ opinions and especially their argumentations concerning their respective decisions in a dilemma are collected, structured and compared. By changing methodical approaches (role plays, tribunals, simulations, existing cases, imaginary cases, …), but especially by teachers confronting pupils with arguments of a higher stage, pupils are supported in testing their own and others´ arguments, to view their own decisions from a different perspective and to have a critical look at other arguments.

In terms of organization, the morally cognitive capacity to judge may be continuously furthered, for example, by an agreement among the teachers of various subjects to give a dilemma lesson structured in the way mentioned above, once a week. The Kohlberg stage model of morally cognitive development has proven useful as a didactical and methodological framework for this purpose (for example LSW, 1991, Werkstattbericht).

Just Communities

The American pedagogue and psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg developed the concept of the 'Just Community'. The term refers to his approach of furthering pupils´ morally cognitive capacities by having them solve their problems and conflicts within the school environment as independently as possible, by discourse, decision-making and acting according to and committing themselves to the solutions found (Kohlberg 1986, pp. 21-55; Oser 1986, pp. 59-79). Numerous countries have adapted and modified the approach of such 'just school communities'. The experiences clearly show what the strengths of this approach are for democratic and socially integrative processes in schools.
Pupils learn:

- to become aware of their own interests; their pressing issues become meaningful for school processes of communication;
- to come to agreements with others, to deliberate; opinions and positions are exchanged, arguments are compared and weighed;
- to take well-founded decisions; a deliberation process ends in a majority decision;
- that all persons involved in organizing and designing school (teachers, pupils) have an equal seat and vote within the 'Just Community', the principle being 'one person, one vote';
- that they are able to organize, structure and perform such community hearings, to document the results and to control that the decisions are followed; even such 'formal' abilities have to be learned first. They help to develop insight into the necessity of democratic rules;
- that decisions need to be revised if they do not have the desired results; looking critically at a decision’s practical value for the majority also leads to new arguments and new insights in how generally valid solutions may or may not be.

The implementation of this approach in the school practice has shown that a whole school can conduct surprisingly effective 'school community meetings' with all pupils. However, it appears to be easier to organize, with a more differentiated character, if the 'Just Communities' take place at the level of the individual forms. In this way the pupils´ age-specific interests are better taken into account. The year committees enter their

suggestions into the common school committee by way of the pupil representatives and in this way they experience feedback from other groups.
In this respect, it is important that the potential solutions for the issues raised are such that the pupils can help implementing them actively. 'How do we prevent the parked bicycles to become damaged?'; 'Do we need a café for Turkish girls?'; 'We would like to open a self-administrated school kiosk!'; 'There is chaos in the break hall whenever the weather is bad. '; 'Why can't we arrange working and talking corners in the corridors and the school entrance hall?'; 'How can we prevent or mediate fights in the school yard?'
Such 'how-questions' and 'we-solutions' involve the pupils in a social school design and development process, they strengthen their social commitment to 'their' school and help developing pro-social capacities.

School–external experts, positions, perspectives

When the German reunion was at the centre of social-political interest in 1989/1990, an informal poll showed that only a small number of schools had picked up on this 'historical situation' and integrated it as a standard subject into their curricula. This may be symptomatic for the common understanding of compulsory curricula and teaching program demands and the political-social and social developments in the world of children and adolescents. In order to develop a democratic capacity to judge, it is necessary to address those issues in class, that are at the centre of public controversy and that are suitable to illustrate and weigh moral positions and social arguments. Classes and schools must open themselves up in that sense as well and help pupils to understand what is often described controversially, superficially or incompletely in the media or their social environment. Almost all subjects and learning areas should be able to work on such moral and decision controversies in class, with the proper curricular and didactical arguments. This is not in favour of an unsystematic 'principle of actuality'. Rather, the point is to make well-founded decisions on which socially controversial issues correspond with the pupils´ experiences, environment and interpretation patterns.
This will work best where it is possible to include the persons and groups involved in the design of the lessons, in order to get to know and to analyse new and differently outlined thoughts. Such approaches may derive from various daily life areas.

The communal environment offers a wealth of starting points: an urban redevelopment project causes a stir; the planning of a new by-pass road leads to lasting controversies; the closing of a youth centre leads to protests. The list of examples may be extended by a glance at the local papers.

Social problem areas offer a wealth of approaches. A current example: 'Should foreign citizens be allowed to acquire two nationalities?; What is 'the politicians' view on the subject?; What is 'the foreign pupils' view or their parents' view or that of the community offices …?'
Teachers that signal the importance of such social moral dilemmas, that realize the connection of such dilemmas with the pupils reality and that use them to further their pupils´ political interest and to develop their capacity to judge, report this to forge a link between the class subject content and the pupils´ reality. Including individuals and groups from the school-external environment is a logical consequence. Pupils conduct interviews with people involved or responsible, they collect official statements as well as letters to the editor from the local paper. Inviting the people involved to classes, being able to ask them directly and sharing their own thoughts is a way of developing the capacity for discourse and political commitment. That requires preparation in terms of content as well as the capacity to address the other peoples´ positions rationally and to test them conscientiously. Incidentally, this improves the quality of subject learning as well.

Scope of action and co-operations

Learning possibilities correspond with the available freedom for action and experience. The intentionally social structure of schools is essential because it implicitly imparts insight into the possibilities and the limits of such freedom of action; learning communities reflecting on basic values aim at developing the capacity to judge. In a way, the intentional design of schools as social spaces for living and experiencing for pupils is due to the insight that it all amounts to the ability to act. In actually acting, that is, in designing life situations and basic conditions, one’s own perspectives and decisions connect with those of other people. The capacity for social interaction and commitment and the ability to co-operate with others are required. In that respect, class is a first room for action, in which social help and support systems that stimulate social capacities may be build up.

School life is a second, more complex room for action. It is characterized by more diverse possibilities for action on the one hand and more complicated processes of harmonization and consensus forming, and co-operation and participation on the other hand. Designing school life together requires, for example, the clarification of 'school’s' basic institutional conditions and to take into account the interests and needs of the other pupils and, just as importantly, those of teachers, school direction and parents.

All efforts to help pupils acquire democratic and social qualifications are eventually aimed at the political ability to act, which is to say, to apply assimilated experiences and abilities in social reality. This is why schools have to forge links to this existing living environment. Co-operations with the communal area, its institutes, its problems and their solutions open up new learning potentials, new learning places and new ways to act, that schools as institutions do not have.

Social help and support systems

To learn caring for others has a double function. On the one hand it furthers the awareness that many problems, tasks and conflicts arising in the context of class and school may be more easily solved with the help of others; on the other hand, it becomes clear that one may help in many areas, that one possesses abilities that can help others along in certain situations. Such helper systems refer for example to tutorial support with learning tasks. Within the framework of concepts such as unstructured work and weekly scheduled work, elementary schools have institutionalised work forms in which pupils work on tasks together, mutually supervise each other, and in which the better pupils support the weaker ones. In view of elements such as individual assessment of performance and corresponding measures of selection and external differentiation, which are constitutive to school and class, such forms of 'caring about each other' are necessary and practically essential for developing the pupils´ social abilities and willingness to help. They strengthen the realization that one may take responsibility for one’s own learning as well as that of one’s fellow pupils and that in this way one may contribute to the development of a workable learning atmosphere and better learning and working conditions.

Learning to care about others and other issues also refers to the situations and 'spaces' used by pupils, teachers and parents within schools: One’s own 'green' class room, the school garden, the damp biotope, the learning workshop, the break rooms, the school yard, special subject rooms, and books and equipment collections, the computer rooms, …: there are enough tasks to be done by pupils in a responsible manner. In addition, in schools developing such forms of participation purposefully, there are organizational schemes accessible to everybody, schemes that contain information on who is responsible for what and who to turn to with questions. Often, certain tasks are given to a whole year, such that a sort of permanent task develops within a year group; the new, successive year groups will then be instructed, sometimes even trained by the 'seniors'. Such initiatives are essential for sound organizational patterns to emerge, which represent the conditions for developing social commitment and social participation.

Peer mediation and arbitration

"The problem is not the existence of problems but the way they are handled " (Engert, 1997 a, p. 9). The basic idea for school models like peer mediation is to instruct pupils to analyse and solve the conflicts that they themselves have (helped) produce independently. Experience with such models shows that pupils contribute specific qualities to those processes, qualities that adults do not possess. Pupils often get into conversation with each other in a less forced manner; there is hardly any conception of position or hierarchy. Pupils among each other can better understand how the other feels; they are more easily taken into confidence, especially with personal and private conflict situations. Much of what cannot be told to the teacher is communicable within the peer group. In processes of peer mediation and arbitration by pupils there is no fear of immediate punishment.

Concepts of mediation and arbitration by pupils rely on the assumption that everyone involved is able to learn to state their position towards the other(s) and to develop peaceful solutions.

Some basic principles are of importance for the design of such processes:

- whenever there is a realistic chance of pupils working on their conflicts themselves, one should try to let them do so;
- peer mediation and arbitration processes do not take place in an isolated manner. Teachers and pupils supervise them;
- pupils trusted with tasks in mediation and arbitration processes are prepared for these tasks;
- participation in such processes is voluntary and the result of the process is binding and definite only when a consensus is reached between all parties involved (Besemer, 1993, p. 4);
- the experiences of the individuals involved will be reappraised continuously in order to find out what may be improved.

The time required for such processes will be granted. This will be accounted for as part of the school’s educational consensus and it will be anchored as a fixed part in the school’s program, together with the school’s intentions and development goals.

Peer mediation and arbitration models continue what has already been made clear within the organizational context of 'class', but now on the level of designing school life. School is a place where the individuals involved care about each other and try to solve problems and conflicts together, in a harmonious way. Each individual’s personal problems are taken seriously. Emotions, interpretation patterns and needs and their articulation are important parts of a search for workable solutions. 'Good' solutions lead to rules and agreements which facilitate living together at school and which represent dependable patterns of orientation for everyone.

All in all, it appears that models of peer mediation and arbitration have proven themselves and are increasingly enquired about in school practice. They are proving themselves to be stimulating approaches with respect to pupils developing democratic and social competencies. In addition, by stimulating consensus finding processes and organisationally linking increased pupil participation to such processes, they influence the development of a school culture that furthers democracy.

Learning 'on the spot': local projects and initiatives

The discovery of a big car scrap heap on a 'green meadow' not far from school was the beginning of a long-term co-operation of the school with the municipality. In class projects, small teams and project weeks, pupils from various years worked on questions like:

- how could such a scrap yard be authorized?
- what are the effects of the scrap yard on the quality of ground and water?
- what must or can be done in order to undo this 'environment scandal'?
- what can we do ourselves?

In order to answer these questions it was necessary to address the biological, chemical and ecological contexts in class (water analyses, ground analyses, researching the flora and fauna …).

However, it was just as important to get into contact with the communal organizations, experts and initiatives, in order to realize the goal, namely removal of the scrap yard.

Such co-operations can be tiresome and often they are frustrating. Authorities and institutes are often rather reserved when contacted by schools and asked for help. A new willingness for co-operation arises whenever schools and the community are successfully working together, as in the example mentioned above. Some cities and municipalities have gone so far as to appoint individuals or small teams that seek contact with schools purposefully, in order to involve them in cases where they may participate in solving public tasks. Especially interesting co-operations may be realized mainly in intercultural areas, in ecological projects and in social areas (for example by co-operation with the institutes of youth welfare).

´On the spot´, concrete and ready to tackle, pupils experience:

- that a variety of capacities is required in order to participate and shape things; that is why co-operation is necessary;
- that it is worth the effort to commit oneself personally to a task and that it often takes a lot of staying power to reach one’s goals;
- that one can use and apply the knowledge systematically acquired in class ´on the spot´;
- that it is not always possible to reach the optimal solution immediately, that it is sometimes necessary to accept sub-optimal solutions.

The processing of and reflection on such experiences in communal co-operation projects is an essential preparation on 'real life'. In furthering democratic and social capacities, schools and classes must take the 'seriousness' of real life situations serious and help pupils extend their chances for action and experience by co-operation with the social environment.

Perspectives

Most of the outlined approaches aimed at developing a school culture furthering democracy are not new for schools. However, they are only practiced partly, rather eclectically and only for a short time, for example in the context of model trials. They cannot simply be implemented top-down. For individuals and groups having an influence on schools, the same dictum of the uselessness of 'teaching and preaching' applies.

Lasting changes in schools can apparently occur only when the individuals involved are convinced of the usefulness of those changes and when they can experience the positive effects themselves. Here, as well as for all processes of understanding, there is a ban on 'overwhelming'. However, two basic conditions that further the development may be used to initiate the corresponding new experience and design processes and making them last.

The first of those is the building up of school networks. If one takes the idea of schools as learning organizations (Fullan, 1999) serious, one has to offer schools the chance to learn by exchange and co-operation. For this reason the building up of school networks would be necessary, on a local level as well as on a media-technological level (education servers, learn:line).

Secondly, the work on school program development and school specific curricula offers new room for design. An important part of the curriculum is the development of pedagogical consensus and its corresponding practical implementation. In this way, schools have the chance to use their organizational and pedagogical freedom to develop a democratic school and learning culture. That schools have already begun to do so goes to show that they have signalled the importance of this task for their own school quality.

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Learning to participate in moral communication

New chances for effective implementation in The Netherlands

Hans Hooghoff and Jeroen Bron

The final test for a moral society is
the kind of world she leaves to her children.
(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Introduction

For decades the opinion that the only task of a school is to transfer cognitive skills, has long been considered out of date. The people involved agree that the school also has a pedagogical task in teaching social and participation skills and in fostering development of identity and moral development. These issues have always played a role in education, but in the past decade they have been discussed, made explicit and finally expressly counted as part of the formal task of education. This renewed interest, Chris Wijns of the Flemish Education Council points out, is a continuation of the route first taken in the Sixties and Seventies, but that came to a standstill in the Eighties (Wijns, 2000). Diane Berreth of the American Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), however, considers this renewed interest in the Sixties as a replacement of moral education by (Berreth, 2000):

"Cognitive developmentalism, the so-called moral reasoning, with its emphasis on critical thinking rather than moral passion. Throughout this period a new view of morality was also emerging, one that saw morality as a personal and private matter, outside the public arena."
According to Berreth:
"the decline of moral education started after World War Two, when the new demands for advanced technical and scientific skills replaced attention to character."

In recent years interest in the moral task of education has increased considerably in The Netherlands. The 'Platform Pedagogical Mission of Education' (1993-1995) played an important part in this increase.

In their final report 'The school of your life' (1996) it was pointed out that more attention should be paid to preparation for democratic citizenship. This conception was shared by the major education organisations that urged linking democratic citizenship with norms and values as well as religious/moral backgrounds. Also the Minister of Education, the parliament and many others emphasised the necessity to pay more attention in primary and secondary education to citizenship, norms and values in general and religions/moralities in particular. The general premise was accepted that the government in The Netherlands does not practice state pedagogy but does hold the responsibility to create conditions for schools to be able to give form and content to their moral task.

From the work of the Platform Pedagogical Mission of Education it appeared that young people have a need to be informed on the current social and religious/moral questions. If education does not pay any attention to these issues, the danger exists that future citizens in a increasingly plural society will be less able to give form to social coherence or to relate to questions of life and death. Multiformity certainly has positive sides to it and in fact is an essential element of a democracy, but does require citizens that can handle this. If not, society runs the risk of disintegrating.
These thoughts resulted in the development of a new learning area, Social Ethical Orientation (SEO). The learning area is aimed at senior secondary education because one of the major recent reforms concerns senior secondary education. Important elements of the renewal are the emphasis put on independent learning and the promotion of the ability to communicate. This implies being able to choose, to account for the choices made, and to apply them. These desired skills excellently match the objectives of SEO. There are therefore conceptual as well as didactical considerations to include this subject area in the compulsory part of senior secondary education.

This educational project was initiated by four major Dutch educational organisations and The Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO) and is jointly financed and executed.
After the phase of conceptualisation, validation and legitimisation, from 1997 until 1999, in 2000 a limited number of pilot projects were carried out with schools and teachers in order to develop and test model lessons. From 2001 until 2003 the project will be focused on further adoption, implementation and dissemination

The second part of this essay is a general description of the conceptual context of this learning area, which incorporates nearly all the aspects of Education for Responsible Citizenship. In the curriculum concept the integration of public and private morals and social and moral communication competencies are chosen (Hooghoff, et al., 2001). Subsequently the rationale for Social Ethical Orientation and the three subject matter domains are addressed. In the subject matter domains the fundamental principles of democracy, the variety in philosophies of life and moral communication are defined in their mutual relationship.

Part 3 will be concluded with the most difficult part of curriculum innovation, which is the question of how ideals can be realised in the educational practice. In this respect the implementation problems of the Cross-Curricular Themes (CCTs) are discussed. We will go into the pitfalls for curriculum implementation in general and pay attention to the conditions that may turn the perspective for moral and ethical development.

The revival of interest for more value-orientated education, which is a pendulum process, in the form of a cross-curricular approach and adoption preparedness of the schools, are the core of the first part of this essay.

Teaching morals

Society, the job market and politics increasingly demand the necessity of broad personal and social development as an assignment of education. The argument for this is that it is in the interest of the student, the school, the parents, the community and not least society itself.
Since the Nineties there has been active involvement of young people in co-development of the so highly esteemed pluriform society and in showing awareness of their responsibility and frequently heard education ideals.

In the new attainment targets and examinations in secondary education in The Netherlands we find explicit remarks on the development of independently operating, autonomous persons through the development of cognitive, affective, moral and social abilities (Secondary Education Process Management Team, PMVO, 1997). Moreover, in the national action plans for the improvement of educational chances for children from disadvantaged situations, one of the objectives for the period 2002-2006 is formulated as follows (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, MOCenW, 2000).

"The improvement of the social competencies for this group of students, besides arithmetic and language, to be able to manage also in social contacts."

It is remarkable that secondary vocational education also has a compulsory part of the program that deals with active participation and critical and normative behaviour, which is called the profile of citizenship competencies (Onstenk, 2001).

Nationally as well as internationally, with governments, education institutions and private organisations a renewed, sometimes ardent, interest can be observed for the implementation of educational themes, such as social cohesion, education for active citizenship, ethics and morals, intercultural communication, social services and cross-curricular competencies (SLO, 2000).
Despite the good intentions of the initiators, often organisations and people outside the educational practice, the discussions have a rather high level of ambition and they are of a fairly philosophical nature. They lack the input of educational practice when it comes to curriculum planning.
This does not impede the essential meaning of cross-curricular competencies for the development of students into responsible young people, who act and think independently.

"It thus appears that when students report that they frequently discuss controversial issues in their classes, perceive that several sides to issues are presented and discussed, and feel comfortable expressing their views, they are more likely to develop attitudes which have the potential to foster later civic participation than are students without such experiences." (Hahn, 1998).

History repeating itself
Are the concerns expressed about the egocentric and calculating citizen, the absence of social cohesion and misbehaviour of young people characteristics of current thinking or simply of history repeating itself? Moreover, each society has the morals it deserves.
Around 1900 left- as well as right-wing intellectuals complained about indiscipline becoming intolerable.

The result was the establishment of the Disciplinary Union (Tuchtunie), which was to organise a civilisation offensive. Campaigns to boost moralities were never successful and the Disciplinary Union also failed. The opposite applied to the four denominational blocs that attracted 50% of all the private associations in the period between the World Wars, and gained enormous influence on morals (including the catholic goat breeding association).

On their part, the four blocs, which differed strongly in religious identity, were more interested in their own community than in public matters. In 1930 fear of disintegration was the reason the Minister of Education wondered what the Dutch still had in common with each other, except postage stamps (and paying taxes).

Revaluation of moral awareness

The renewed awareness could also be characterised as reconsideration of the traditional responsibility of education.

In the early Nineties the Minister called on teachers, students, parents and school boards, to make adequate contributions to the highly necessary debate on the pedagogical task of the school. According to the government, transfer and development of norms and values that are generally recognised and accepted, such as respect and awareness of responsibility, did not receive the necessary pedagogical-normative attention. Some politicians even thought that decay of moral principles and lack of sense of citizenship were so advanced that young children should be periodically tested to establish the state of their moral development.

Since moral reasoning differs from moral behaviour, and knowledge and action were not born on the same day, they abandoned this idea. This takes nothing away from the desire to give students insight into elementary social norms.

What are possible causes for putting the 'morals revival' this high on the political and social agenda?

- As a result of individualisation, globalisation and the development of sub-cultures in the post-modern society, the current morality has become fragmented. Powerful direction and influence by central institutions, including the once influential church and the massively polarised political movements, has strongly decreased with a majority of the citizens. Views of the opinion leaders of these kinds of institutions are only one element in the societal discussion and in personal opinion development.

Smaller moral communities took their place. These were sometimes or even again orientated on religion or politics, but for the most part they were based on temporary agreement on isolated political issues, such as environment, euthanasia or town planning (local policy). As a result of the influence of the media and advertising world groups can now be distinguished that mix their stand-points with image and life-style, which is expressed in clothing and the way they spend their time. In connection with this family authority has been substituted by a negotiated culture. In a modern family, children take part in decisions on different subjects: the TV, the use of the computer, Internet, school choice, home rules, even family extension. Parents in The Netherlands (Smit, 2001) like to see their children develop their own identity and become self-acting persons. Schools also lay down their own premises and behavioural codes. Neighbourhoods try to solve conflicts on the basis of self-established norms. Besides the formal rights, moral practices in the community develop. Thus, moral awareness has therefore not disappeared, but has become privatised and fragmented: everybody creates his own moral environment. Hence, communality is on the decrease and is also less explicit. However, individual freedom and the prerequisites of living together must be balanced.

- Traditional political structures are crumbling. The time of controversies between political ideologies is over and the politicians now seem to concentrate on differences in accents of issues and focus more on good management and securing the public interest. Over the last twenty years there has been less and less need for an active role of citizens. Only at times when socio-political items affect large parts of the population does this need emerge. In The Netherlands this was the case during an expulsion procedure of an illegal family, who were integrated and accepted in the society, but did not have the right papers ('Gümüs issue') or for example when 'meaningless violence' provoked large-scale mourning processions and demonstrations against violence and killing of innocent passers-by. The decreasing interest in traditional politics is a tendency Dag Fjeldstad also pointed out in his presentation of the results of the Nordic Countries in the research-study 'Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries' of The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Fjeldstad put forward two results of the study: (1) a relatively high confidence in government institutions and (2) a relatively low score on political interest and the preparedness to participate.

He interrelated the two results and tried to give an explanation, which ran as follows (Munck, 2001):

"In a Nordic political self-contemplation, the good society has been almost identical with the concept of the welfare state, as an actual realisation of the so to speak highest level of modernity. The aims of the modern society, being a belief in reason, freedom and progress have all been reached. In this post-modern society the government institutions clearly adequately take care of the classic political matter of distributing costs and benefits, and citizens see no need to indulge in political activity."

- Emerging young democracies in, for example, the former Soviet Republics, South-East Europe and South Africa have resulted in a democratisation project boom. Practice soon showed that the organisation of free elections is a living truth of co-deciding who will come into power. However, this is far from sufficient, because what are good citizens? Are they the people who share concern for the welfare of others, exhibit moral and ethical behaviour and acceptance of diversity or does this concern virtues such as persistence, responsibility, and punctuality or should citizenship be a balance between individual rights and community responsibilities? Federico Mayor, former secretary general of Unesco, argues "that all democracies are emerging and thus citizens everywhere must be aware, committed and actively involved in defining democracy." (Mayor, 2000).
- There is substantial interest in human rights issues. The current UN decade for human rights education, recent attention drawn to the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ongoing stream of news about the Yugoslavia Tribunal, put human rights in the spotlight.
  Essentially the objective of these rights is pre-eminently to protect the individual's sphere of life from abuse by the state, however what has to happen to realise a just, humane and sustainable society is less clearly defined. A society has to have an on-going discussion about the arrangement of 'the good life'. This is not possible without philosophical or religious views, in order to be able to know and learn which values are meaningful and how to share them with others. In addition to a democratic constitutional state, moral communities are necessary to realise social cohesion (Jonkers, 1999).

Response

Governments, education institutions, non-governmental and church organisations all over the world have taken initiatives to start research projects aimed at strengthening the position and improving the quality of Education for Citizenship (SLO, 2000 Conference).

In the USA it is called Character Education and Service Learning. In England the new separate subject Citizenship Education was introduced. In Scotland 'The Consultation Paper on Citizenship Education' was published. In the context of the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE) a European project was started on Civics and Assessment, and the IEA conducted the largest research study ever into Civic knowledge and engagement at age fourteen. The research study covered 28 countries, for the first time including a number of emerging democracies from the former Eastern Bloc (IEA, 2001). In The Netherlands this rising interest in citizenship education resulted for example in adaptation of the educational objectives, study of and training social competencies, assigning educational objectives to the 'broad school' concept (entering collaborations with institutions outside the school and offering extra-curricular activities) and the development and implementation of a new learning area: Social Ethical orientation (SEO).

Character Education

Character education is long-term education that helps young people not only to be smart, but to be good as well. The Character Education Partnership has defined character education as -the deliberate effort by schools, families and communities to help young people understand, care about and act upon core ethical values. Or -"knowing the good, loving the good and doing the good" as Diane Berreth said in a conference in Enschede, in June 2000.

Character education started in 1992 and now affects 1.1 million schoolchildren in the US. Among its promoters is the former president of the US, Bill Clinton, as well as the present president George W. Bush. Bush who made one of the initiators of character education, Michael Josephson, part of his transition advisory team, recently tripled federal funding for values education.

The heart of character education is a set of core values, the so-called pillars. These and other values however have to be the community's values, on which the community has reached consensus. Therefore a strong emphasis is put on involving parents, local government, youth work and other constituencies.

School's reactions

Social disorder and social trends, which the school as a mini-society is able to experience every day, is at times reckoned to be the pedagogical responsibility of education. The school becomes a social laboratory of the multicultural society.

Together with the issue of curriculum overload, continuous assessment of learning achievements, discrimination, aggression and individualisation of students, an increasing aversion against renewal, hardly any time remains for the introduction, let alone structural incorporation of educational activities regarding norms and values. Only if schools are able to benefit from it themselves, will they be prepared to give these controversial subjects a serious chance. But even if certain themes or aspects such as intercultural education or subject integration have an obligatory character, success is not guaranteed, as is shown in an inspectorate report on basic secondary education (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2000). An intentional curriculum is not necessarily a practised curriculum. Not only politics, but also the school has a narrow leeway where the pedagogical mission is concerned.

Cross-curricular competencies

Social and moral competencies are part of the cross-curricular themes and skills, which intend to contribute substantially to the process of school socialisation and sharing certain basic norms and values.

It is characteristic for cross-curricular themes (CCTs) to deal with forms of knowledge difficult, usually impossible, to accommodate or to develop within the restrictions of any one traditional subject. They require alternative forms of curriculum organisation. And in all cases they challenge the secondary school itself since its organising principles, practices and procedures are fundamentally made from a segmented view of knowledge to which the principles of cross-curricularity are fundamentally opposed. A cross-curricular topic is normally included within two or more subjects, and the theme requires a range of varied contexts for its effective implementation.

The content of cross-curricular themes belongs on the whole to three broad and occasionally interrelated categories.

1. They are primarily concerned with the promotion of positive behaviour, attitudes and values. For example: social and personal education and intercultural education.
   This suggests sets of social needs perceived to be of major importance but which are too difficult to address within any one subject.
   All are concerned with affecting behaviour of various kinds and share

concerns to develop positive attitudes in the individual's current social life and in her future role as citizen.

2. Forms of content difficult to accommodate within any one subject. Here topics such as environmental education and the European dimension can be found. The needs of interest or pressure groups, the popularity of whose cause gives legitimacy to their space in the curriculum, or specific events with a broad social effect, or emergent socio-cultural needs, or new forms of knowledge, will be accommodated readily, and perhaps most appropriately, within such cross-curricular themes. These are concerned with developing students' skills, knowledge and understanding in a range of integrated contexts.
3. They may also be deeply involved in the development of core skills such as those in social, moral and communicative competences and performances, or in the acquisition of learning and problem solving strategies. Although such skills are unrelated to any subject they have a high transfer potential across the curriculum as a whole and are of inestimable value in everyday life. All three categories can be considered as helpful constructions to promote curricular balance, breadth and coherence (CIDREE, 1998).

The structure and content of traditional programmes characterised by strict subject definitions and disconnected patterns of learning are seen to be inadequate to address the needs of many young people currently in our schools. The need for a more flexible approach to the experience of learning is increasingly recognised.
Cross-curricular themes offer ways of changing the curriculum without massive reorganisation.

Social Ethical Orientation as a new learning area

Preparing students to take their place and responsibility in a democratic and multicultural society, are the most important motives to develop a cross-curricular learning area. In this chapter an account and an explanation are given of the underlying choices for the objectives and the contents of Social Ethical Orientation. This is a general outline of the SEO Core Curriculum.

Rationale
The General objective of SEO:

"Students can participate in moral communication on social issues in a democratic and religiously/morally plural society on the basis of knowledge and understanding of:

- generally accepted basic principles and basic laws that underlie the way people live together within the Dutch democratic constitutional state;
- the significance of religions and moralities for moral communication about the structuring of society.

Furthermore students should have the understanding and skills to be able to participate in moral communication."

In a multi-cultural society solutions for social questions will have to take account of the plural views on the question of what is good and human. This does not go without saying. In a plural society, a dialogue between differing cultural traditions is necessary to be able to live together and to determine the structuring of society. The quality of the democratic process is also determined by the extent to which justice is done to plurality with respect to morality and religion. The democratic structuring of society is richer if the dialogue between different religions and moralities is successful.

Moral communication is aimed at big, controversial social issues. For example environmental issues, new technological developments such as genetic engineering, issues concerning life and death such as euthanasia, the North-South issue, and the poverty issue in The Netherlands. Students learn to think about the structuring of our society by learning to participate in moral communication. This is essential for a democratic society. Various conflicts can occur in this process, because different people have different views on the structuring of society. In the course of history, principles and fundamental laws have been formulated and have generally been accepted. These principles and fundamental laws make it possible for people to live together in a democratic and plural society. They belong to the public morals of our democratic society. In this learning area students are introduced to these moral principles and fundamental rights (see Domain 1).

Moral and religious traditions play a part in thinking about social issues. They contain views on the way in which living is good and worthy (see Domain 2). These views provide a purpose to moral actions. Contrary to the principles and fundamental rights mentioned above, there is no general consensus on these views in our society. We therefore talk about non-public morals, morals that cannot claim to be generally accepted. These morals refer to moral communities as cultural bearers of certain opinions about the good life. The different religions and moralities in Dutch society become manifest in various institutions and groups, that thus make up the moral communities referred to above.

In this learning area, students gain an understanding of the religious and moral traditions that have strongly influenced our culture and the structuring of society.

This does not concern a systematic introduction to religions and moralities with a view to moral education of young people. This distinguishes the learning area Social Ethical Orientation from the subject area religion in denominational education or from a subject such as religious movements.

The focus of attention in this learning area is on learning to participate in moral communication. This communication takes place wherever people talk about social issues and discuss the question about which actions are good and morally just. This communication can be organised more or less institutionally, for example in ethical committees, in institutions and companies or in a social action group. It may be organised on a large scale, such as debates organised by the government, or on a small scale, such as in a department of a political party or in an action group for a social issue.

Moral communication, the ethical aspect, and learning to participate, the social aspect, are related to one another in this learning area. The introduction to the key notions of ethics is only given to the extent that it is necessary to be able to participate in moral communication on social issues. This is a contrast between this learning area and the item ethics within the subject of philosophy. A central part of this learning area consists of the communicative skills that students need in order to be able to participate in moral communication (see Domain 3). Although the three domains can be distinguished according to their contents it is the explicit intention to offer them in the educational learning process in an interrelated way.

Domains

Domain 1: democratic constitutional state

Objective

"Students have knowledge and understanding of generally accepted basic principles and fundamental laws that underlie the way people live together within the Dutch democratic constitutional state."

Explanatory notes

A social issue can be approached from different angles, such as the economic, historic, scientific, legal and moral angles. The moral angle shows the following characteristics: it is normative, anti-dogmatic, argumentative and aiming at all-sidedness.

- Normative means that a situation or a problem is assessed starting from the question of what is morally acceptable. The answer to this question is formulated in terms of what people 'ought to' do.
- Taking a moral viewpoint implies an anti-dogmatic attitude. If one claims absolute truths or if one takes refuge behind authorities, the process of considering what is morally acceptable has become impossible. In a process of consideration an appeal is made to principles of life or points of view based on tradition. These beliefs are however also the object of critical reflection.
- The moral point of view is in the third place strongly argumentative. If everybody would keep to his or her own point of view, it would mean the end of the moral point of view. It is necessary to aim at intersubjective consent. To be able to achieve this consent a dialogue based on arguments is required.
- Finally, from a moral point of view justice should be done to everybody's opinions, particularly of those whose interests are most affected in a given situation. This is described as all-sidedness: all interests of people concerned have to be taken into account as conscientiously as possible in a moral consideration. People can also put their own interest forward. There is nothing against this as such, provided one also considers the interest of others. All-sidedness is an ideal point of view. In the moral point of view we aim at all-sidedness. However, it will not always be possible to do justice to everybody concerned. In these situations generally accepted principles and fundamental rights can help.

Ethical principles include principles that people are obliged to observe irrespective of the position they hold in a certain situation and of their factual interests.

This concerns attempts to express generally accepted rules of public ethics. Such principles impose certain principal limits on people's actions. When applying ethical principles one also takes account of the circumstances. It is possible that the circumstances will result in actions that are now in accordance with a certain ethical principle.

The presence of different cultural, ethnical and religious groups within Dutch society is characteristic of the plural character of our society. Each of the groups has the feeling of belonging together, based on the same unique (ethnic-)cultural and/or religious characteristics. Although this feeling is legitimate and important for the development of a clear and stable self-image, it does not seem incorrect to assume that the personality gains value if at the same time feelings of solidarity with and respect for other groups can be developed.

Domain 2: moral plurality

Objective
"Students have knowledge and understanding of the meaning of religious and moral traditions for moral communication about the structuring of society."

Explanatory notes
Domain 1 addresses the public morals, while Domain 2 addresses the private morals of religions and philosophies. The term 'basic facts' is used for demographic information, such as distribution, numbers, extent and level of organisation of movements present in The Netherlands. In our plural society a number of private morals exist. Depending on one's opinion of a democratic society, these private morals play a part in the way society is structured.
Sometimes democracy is considered to be the total of individual citizen's rights and duties in a society, such as the right to vote. This is called nominal democracy. In a nominal democracy plurality of society has no conceptual meaning for the structuring of society. Democracy can also aim at the construction of a moral framework that unites people in a political type of society, in which plurality is valued as a democratic asset. The democratic society is not a supposedly homogeneous fact, but a direction that citizens in a plural society try to take together. Such an opinion is also described as participation-democracy.

A participation-democracy distinguishes itself from a nominal democracy as follows:

- in a participation democracy forms of self-government and decision-making are broader and deeper than in a nominal democracy;
- in a participation democracy, democracy is more a way of living together than a given fact like in a nominal democracy;
- in a participation democracy, democracy and plurality of society go together.

Two questions are of importance here. The key question that should be asked concerning the decision-making processes (1) is: 'Who participates in these processes and who does not?'. Concerning the process of living together. (2) The question should be asked: 'How wide is the road of living together?' or 'Who will be excluded and pushed into the verge?'. In a participation-democracy the dialogue between religions and philosophies is of vital importance. The moral plurality is considered the wealth that can be drawn upon during the democratic process structuring society.

Public morals should answer the question on how conflicts between people can be prevented or solved in a morally acceptable way. Private morals of religions and philosophies are wider than this. They answer questions such as 'How to live?'. The answer to this question is based on one's opinion of the good life. 'The good life' is a technical term for all the opinions, values and behavioural rules that indicate what is decent. 'What is a meaningful and happy life?', 'How can I live together with others?' and 'How should I treat the natural environment?'. Religions and philosophies give an answer to these questions and in doing so offer a frame of reference for the question 'How to live?'.

An important supposition in this respect is that every child and every young person is considered to grow up with private morals from a religion or philosophy. Religious and philosophical groups are also moral communities, in which people share certain norms and values. This does not mean that discrepancies cannot exist between the morals of individuals and the collective morals of the moral community of which individuals are a part.

Domain 3: moral communication

Objective
"Students have sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to participate in moral communication."

Explanatory notes
In this domain an indication is given of skills necessary for moral communication in the public domain and for communication concerning the opinions on the good life in religions and philosophies.
The moral communication in the public domain has the character of procedural argumentation aimed at reaching intersubjective agreement on the question about whether an action is morally acceptable. The quality of the argumentation influences the product of moral argumentation. The subdomain 'argumentation' includes skills, aimed at the product of this procedural argumentation. The subdomain 'interaction' includes skills aimed at the process of this procedural argumentation.
Opinions on the good life in religions and philosophies are incorporated in stories that are passed on within these moral communities. The subdomain 'narrative communication' includes skills to be able to reproduce the personal values in stories, and to be able to identify values incorporated in the stories of religions and philosophies.

The concept 'participation-democracy' refers to the process connected with the objective of citizens to create a democratic society where justice is done to plurality. Inherent in this process is the desire to create a moral framework that will unite citizens into a political type of society, in which plurality is experienced and valued as a source of inspiration for democratic citizenship. Religious/moral pluralism contributes considerably to the realisation of this objective.
In their function of moral communities religious/moral groups contribute in giving direction to moral communication in society. For the participation-democracy moral communication is of major importance: its citizens are considered to be members of a loyal society, characterised by a sense of community, moral awareness and responsibility for others.

Transfer or communication
For values education different models are used. In these models and theories two opposing forms can be distinguished: transfer of values and value communication. Wiel Veugelers describes it as follows:

"The transfer of values is the educational concept in Character education as promoted by people such as Thomas Lickona, and Kevin Ryan. Value communication is the educational concept in the Kohlberg tradition as well as in critical thinking. In the tradition of the transfer of values, an important part of the discussion is about which values education wants to transfer. The method to practice this transfer is first of all to set an example as a teacher and as a school community. Also sanctions are often used to stress the importance of morally right behaviour.
In the concept of values communication, the focus is more one on skills than on values. In many situations it is necessary for a person to think about what is right and what is wrong, which involves a considered weighing-up of issues based in part on values. Such consideration requires cognitive skills, together with communicative skills, in order to discuss value issues with others."

In practice, teachers are balancing between transfer and communication; they help students to acquire skills to develop their own values, but at the same time teachers want to influence this development. In the case of SEO as a learning area both traditions are being combined. Well-considered standpoint determination is a skill, but there is a clear connection with important moral standards such as religious, philosophical and constitutional documents with the associated guidelines on what is wrong or right and rights and obligations.

Experiences with SEO in the educational practice

In 1999 and 2000 four schools gathered concrete teaching experiences (Friebel et al., 2001) with the new cross-curricular learning area Social Ethical Orientation (SEO). Intensive discussions with the school board preceded the experiment, to ascertain the commitment with the experiment. Training sessions were organised for the teachers, followed by school-based support. In consultation with the SLO external consultants produced process descriptions. From this it can be concluded that success in the form of short-term enthusiasm and motivation of students can fairly easily be realised, but that a long-term perspective requires quite some implementation, bridging and convincing power. Although the SEO starting-points are fully supported by school boards and subject departments, which is not surprising because of the multiformity of the student population and the need for value communication and the promotion of mutual respect, other priorities apply in the school's daily educational policy.

SEO is therefore most likely to be successful if it also means a strong incentive and support for the implementation of the school's current educational policy, including active and independent learning, more co-ordination between the subjects and the mutual relationships at school. The conclusion has been drawn that in the plans for the period 2001-2003 the introduction and implementation of SEO will particularly focus on the added value of this approach for the support of democratic values, learning to respect different religious and philosophical views and students becoming morally competent.

Curriculum implementation

"(...) today's reforms are in sharp contrast to those of forty years ago in this respect. We now recognize that teachers are not mere agents of the plans of others, but can themselves play a central part in conceiving and shaping reforms." (Black, 1996).

Change: between beautiful views and reality

Curriculum problems are of all times and all places, and this will remain the same. Classic curriculum issues such as 'What do students have to know and be able to do?', 'What attention is paid to personality development?', 'What is the role of the teacher?', 'How does learning take place?', 'What are the learning results?' and 'How do we evaluate the learning process?', do not depend on time or place. These educational and pedagogical issues can already be found in the famous handbook 'Ratio Studiorum atque Institutio Studiorum', dated 1599, in which the method for education and development was laid down for the Jesuit college. The leading question remains: 'What do young adults at the end of education need in terms of skills to be able to play a constructive role as citizens in the society?'.

Educational renewal will always be a risky operation, because the school is in the centre of the political/governmental, ideological and social fields of influence. Moreover it is a place where social, pedagogical, political and moral opinions and tensions come together. The school has to take account of the achievement-directed educational policy of the government (some say settlement culture) and desires and needs of the school community. The school will also increasingly be part of a broad network of local facilities, even though the school cannot compensate all the existing deficiencies.

It should also be recognised that behind the international process of curricular renewal, an effective schools movement has grown up in

parallel with it. This movement is typically concerned with quantitative measures and its concentration on the basics will allow only a marginal position for social and moral development.
Schools, internationally, are now under the social microscope as never before; from politicians to parents, everyone assumes the role of expert, and the pressures of accountability continue to increase.

How can the gap between rhetoric and reality be bridged, when it concerns effective implementation of a new curriculum? Effective here meaning that learning experiences and results correspond with the original intentions of the developers. At first sight a translation of the formal curriculum to be implemented by agents such as developers, assessment experts, teachers, teacher trainers and/or publishers does not seem to be a too complex, sequential and logical process. But in practice a range of interpretation problems for closer operationalisation of the original starting-points and concepts presents itself. Eventually only little is retained of the intended objectives of the developer. In 2000 for example The Netherlands Education Council observed that more than 10 years after the implementation of basic secondary education the most important objectives, such as a general lifting of the level of education for the 12-16 year-olds and postponement of career choice, have not been reached. One of the most important causes were the vague and incoherent objectives, that gave rise to polarising debates about the fundamental meaning of basic secondary education (Voogt, 2001).
The way implementation is defined is closely connected with the tasks and responsibilities of the people involved. Policy makers for example may consider it sufficient if a curriculum reform is adopted by the parliament and that abundant written information is provided to the schools. This is called mailbox implementation, which will hardly lead to any kind of change.
However, even long-term innovation projects with more than sufficient expert input, generous governmental financial support, broad support and enthusiastic input by schools, do not necessarily succeed in curriculum reform.

Possible causes include (Akker, V.d., 1998):

- politicians want to score in the short term and will presently urge an increase in the scale of experimental educational projects, resulting in stagnation of the arranged development and research plan and transfer to new users will take place without sufficient empiricism;

- educational reforms of which the continuity fully depends on the government, and most reforms do, always run the risk of political/policy instability;
- there is a lack of effective and efficient co-operation between institutions that are responsible for the improvement of education, even if they are financed by the government or provided with additional financial means. Sometimes competition can be observed instead of a complementary and co-ordinated approach of the school, this professional compartmentalisation is apparently hard to overcome;
- the desired changes were insufficiently conceptualised and it was not clear who was able to benefit from them; the changes were not in accordance with school practice and of a much too high level of ambition, which meant that teachers were no longer involved;
- there was no adequate support structure for the long term, with professional co-ordination clearly stating the roles and responsibilities of teachers, developers and researchers, who were closely collaborating in the school environment;
- an implementation policy at school level had not been formulated, so it was all up to the teachers;
- the nature of the concept is strongly intentional and insufficiently defined in terms of knowledge and skills for the student; constant interpretations interfere with the process.

Barriers that block renewals, especially at the macro level, should be an incentive for creative curriculum developers to look for different possibilities of exerting influence at the school level. The more teachers are involved in the development of learning support materials in combination with subject didactical training, the greater the chance that teaching and learning take place according to the intended concept. Reasoning from the perspective of the main actors in the innovation process, the teachers and the students, it is recommended to combine the development of learning support materials with in-service teacher training (enactment).

Furthermore Van den Akker (1998), following an OECD study (Black & Atkin, 1996), has observed as regards curriculum innovations in mathematics and the exact sciences, that teachers are driven by either personal survival concerns such as self-confidence and authority or the perception of the personal professional identity, for example subject knowledge and didactical skills. Whoever innovates will have to take this into account.

To do this the professionalism of the teachers can be addressed and their self-image can be reinforced by means of the innovation.
By definition innovation can lead to uncertain situations for teachers, which may affect their feelings of safety and security. To deal with these feelings effective and meaningful training is important. Training familiarises the teacher with the unknown, there is the opportunity for practice and exchange with colleagues and learning by doing and experiencing. This certainly applies for SEO. To be able to create sufficient depth in this learning area it is essential to opt for the (moral) conflict in certain situations. This may reveal the sharp controversies that also exist in society. Often these controversies are avoided or conciliated, but that is not the desired strategy here. Starting from the controversy compromises can be found and solutions can emerge. Suitable training can give the teachers a feeling of confidence when they have to handle conflict situations themselves.

Innovation products

The result of curriculum innovations can be found in experimental learning support materials including teacher guides. These materials act as a catalyst to help teachers to cross the threshold from intending to acting.

"For teachers, but also students, seem to prefer traditional teaching and learning methods. A practical reason put forward by teachers is that they think these methods prepare students better for their examination. Other factors include the teachers' culture with its opinion that innovations may affect the authority of the teacher in the class." (Ottevanger, 2001).

To be able to act as a catalyst the learning support materials will have to be of sufficient quality.
The result of research in the past 10 to 15 years (Akker, v.d.,1988, 1998; Fullan, 1991) has contributed to a drastic change in the perception of educational innovation. It has appeared that most of the new education programmes were not used according to the intention or were not used at all, even if the school or the department had accepted the innovation. Apparently acceptation of innovation or even the use of a new curriculum or teaching package does not automatically lead to the intended educational change.

This conclusion has led to increased attention for the way a desired change should be achieved in educational practice. Also the function of publications in the innovation process has been investigated. Gradually the realisation has grown that products that support the change in the educational practice should meet certain requirements: clear, concrete, action centred and tested in practice. Developing guidebooks and lesson examples in the perspective of implementation and thus intent on demonstrable learning results of students, increases the chance of reaching the intended effect. Besides this it is of essential importance to communicate regularly in writing as well as verbally about new curriculum proposals.
In other words:

- What exactly is new about the innovation, what is the current situation, and what does the innovation add?
- How complex is the innovation? The more complex, the more resistance we are likely to meet.
- How much is changed in the innovation? Making too-large steps will lead to rejection and thus failure.
- How relevant is the innovation to others? What can others do with the ideas? Do they see reasons why things must change?
- We should make the innovation concrete by offering lessons that reflect the new ideas.
- What are the results of the new approach? What experiences are there from teaching practice? What is the balance between the investment in time and energy and the results? Is it worth the effort?

Conditions for the implementation of CCTs

Besides the above described general implementation issue, a learning area such SEO also faces the specific issue of CCTs. Social topics are presented to the school with the assignment to contribute to their solutions. Society and politics have asked repeatedly to put social topics on the school agenda. The continuously changing social priorities cause a varying need. The increasing multiformity of society led to the compulsory theme intercultural education. Brussels launched the European dimension. The indignation about the loss of norms gave rise to rethinking the moral responsibility of the school. Furthermore, since the Seventies, schools have been expected to pay regular attention to international issues, such as developing countries, human rights and environmental issues, which without doubt, are considered important by a large portion of society and teachers alike.

And even if these issues are indeed considered a task of education, it does not make it any easier for them to become implemented. To add means to leave something else out.

This might be too much to ask of schools, but they are in fact expected to have or to find the time and the ability to contribute substantially to social issues. However the available teaching time is limited. Arithmetic and language are under pressure, and complying with too many claims on the curriculum will fragmentize the teaching program.
So the question remains what the extra value would be for the moral awareness of the student if time were taken from the teaching program to address an historic or social occurrence. Except for linking up with the compulsory core objectives (minimum standards) and the existing curriculum and method, a relevant criterion is the extent to which an educational theme such as Social Ethical Orientation, contributes to the realisation of the school's educational or pedagogical goals. Examples include skills in learning to orient on the world, being able to perceive, to explain, to examine a problem, to co-operate, to present or to uphold certain values and behaviour that reflects the school's identity. Only then the necessary hard choices can be made to put effort in the introduction of a new learning area and consequently, leave something else out.

Experience with national education projects on social and historic subjects, such as environmental education and the European dimension, have shown that a directive curriculum framework is an important condition for reaching the intended goals. A directive framework states the intended learning objectives, the contents, the array of teaching methods, assessment of knowledge and skills, as well as the relationship to subject specific curricula. To promote integration in the common and broadly accepted education provision, a prime condition is the formulation of the essence of *the core program on e.g. social and moral education*. This should not be a comprehensive curriculum but a definition of the minimum content that should certainly be addressed. Core objectives are descriptions of knowledge, understanding and skills that students should minimally master.

There are three pre-requisites to cross-curricular themes:
- the theme should fit into the current subject matter;
- the theme should advance insight into relevant subject-bound notions;
- connections with other subject areas should be elucidated.

In educational practice however two problems present themselves when developing model lessons for CCTs. The lesson series is an incoherent array of notions from other subjects or contributions from different subjects, that are not in any way connected: the potpourri or polarity problem (Jacobs, 1989). A first step towards a solution is therefore a thorough curricular approach.

Development and implementation strategy in the Dutch context (Hooghoff, 2001)

1. *Analysis of core objectives*
   Which core objectives for secondary education perfectly match the objectives of the core curriculum of a cross-curricular theme such as moral communication?
2. *Integration*
   What are promising possibilities for the integration of the theme in the learning area orientation on man and society and sciences?
3. *General skills*
   Which general skills can be even better operationalised by the theme in particular, in basic and senior secondary education?
4. *Overview of educational resources*
   How is the topic addressed in the most commonly used educational resources for social studies and which recommendations can be given from the essence of the core program?
5. *Changes in education*
   Which national renewals are currently under way in education and what are their consequences for products and services to be developed?
6. *Participation of education*
   In which way can schools, development and assessment centres and training institutes participate in thinking through and preparing the development and implementation of materials and the organisation of exchange meetings?
7. *Networks*
   Networks of schools and school advisory services can contribute substantially to the exchange and transfer of knowledge and information in the classroom. How can these networks be constructed and directed?
8. *Progress evaluation*
   If the planning is to be in accordance with the expectations and is to comply with the offer .made by the education support institutions and quality expected by schools and teachers, it is distinctly desirable

to survey and monitor the over-all progression at a central level by means of a scenario.

9. *Dissemination and result*
The mere production and dissemination of an offer, without having any idea about its use, is a rather risky approach. Therefore it should be investigated at an early stage how the functional dissemination of materials and information can take place, which is more than just mail dropped in a mailbox.

Starting small
In The Netherlands, experiences with the innovation operations of cross-curricular learning areas, which are desired to be made compulsory, such as the European dimension, intercultural education and environment education, have shown that it is preferable to enter small-scale co-operation projects, the participants being four to five schools, a teacher training institution, a national educational advisory centre and developers and assessment experts. Gradually, resonance schools that are interested can be included in the development process through information meetings and specific workshops. At a later stage broader distribution of the experimental phase results can take place for schools and training institutions.
An approach like this advocates small scale and intensive co-operation based on agreements with the intention to publicise ready developed lesson examples as well as to come to a final settlement of the core curriculum. During the introduction of this learning area it is of crucial importance that the teachers involved have been trained adequately as to the content and subject didactics.

The development of CCTs involves didactic innovations with common characteristics that distinguish them from traditional education:

- greater use of working methods involving participation between all sectors of the school, staff as well as students;
- more stress on those meta-cognitive skills useful for decision making and problem solving;
- increasing emphasis on values education;
- a particular significance given, generally, to relevant and current issues, concerns and problems.

The importance of social functions of cross-curricular themes can best illustrated by the OECD (1997) work on the development of new educational indicators called 'cross-curricular competencies'.

The very development of these indicators adds weight to the importance of cross-curricular working. The OECD are interested because they are convinced that traditional indicators on mathematics, science and reading attainments give insufficient information on what contributions schools make to individual students as well as to the society as a whole. Problem solving skills, communication skills, social competencies generally become survival skills in highly educated societies. Nevertheless, there are no or few instruments or indicators available to measure students' performances in these skills, which are considered at least as important as the formal competencies learned at school. All of them are best developed within cross-curricular structures.

Opportunities for effectively implementing CCTs in schools with a strong hierarchy depend to a large extent on the leadership at the top. If the head teacher does not stimulate the teachers to work on CCTs, little or no effort will be made. Pedagogical leadership is vital! In the CIDREE publication 'Across the great divides' (Robertson, et al., 1998) other positive factors of introducing CCTs in schools are mentioned, including: "subject groups which participate in the formulation of the school's policies and the presence of a middle management level with a tradition of information and consultation and a school culture based on fellowship and which is open to change".

The role of the teacher

The role of the teacher in the development process, the connection with training, as well as working in networks have been described above. Obviously the actual work of the teacher is and will be teaching. The successful transfer of the underlying concepts of educational reforms depends on the teacher, who is the link between idea and reality. In the case of SEO this also means that the teacher as a person has a clear role. Educational programs that comprise aspects of a social, moral or ethical nature, relate differently to teachers and students than do programs with more subject-directed content. The exchange of information, opinions and viewpoints is a type of direct manifestation, which represents the personal identity. Students expect teachers to set an example and also to take part in the discussions (Veugelers & De Kat, 2000). Not everybody will be prepared to open up just like that. The value pattern of the student, rooted in the home culture, is important in this respect, but is largely outside the influence of education. However, education and especially the teacher do have a clear influence on the pedagogical climate.

Of all the variables that influence the school and learning process, the school climate appears to have the largest effect on students' school careers. A school climate that is negatively experienced particularly affects foreign students.

A teacher is particularly responsible for the classroom climate. The effect of a (good) atmosphere in the classroom is relatively large, more so than, for example, expectations of teachers or class numbers. In a safe environment students can concentrate better on learning without worrying about fear for peers, about unsolved conflicts, a predictable or negative reaction of the teacher, negative expectations and an impatient attitude of the teacher. *Feeling good means learning feels good*. This also applies to learning and applying communicative skills as well as discussions about norms and values. A socio-pedagogical climate in which students can and dare express themselves freely, even if their opinion differs from the usual norm, where everybody respects one another and takes them seriously, is an absolute pre-requisite. The teacher plays a crucial role in the process of social interaction.

Obviously the school board also plays a role in this. In fact, for social and moral development it is of vital importance, as was pointed out in various contributions to the SLO conference 'Emerging democracies, citizenship and human rights education' (Bron, 2000). A clear-cut joint approach strengthens the effect of the individual teacher. In addition to this the school can create the conditions to improve and strengthen the contacts between teachers and students.

The formation of core teams is a current example, it means that less teachers teach the same group of students and they are jointly responsible. This means breaking the tradition to change teachers every lesson and it implies that teachers have multiple qualifications or certain subjects are combined. Another possibility that is easy to realise is assigning teachers to the same class for a number of consecutive years. A recent discussion that goes even further is the promotion of scaling down education: smaller classes and (physically) smaller schools. Articles on this subject are regularly published in the Dutch press, usually in connection with misbehaviour of students. In the US the 'Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation' contributes $ 500 per student to schools in the Seattle area that split themselves up into units with no more than 400 students.

Practical approaches to further the ideas of character education through the school climate.

The method of bringing these values across to the kids in school is diverse. It consists of profession development of all staff related to the school, including bus-drivers, volunteers and cafeteria workers.
All these people should reflect the students' behaviour in relation to the core values. Extra-curricular activities are used to develop a school-wide sense of community. Self-government by students is promoted and a strong emphasis is put on creating a positive school climate. As far as didactical methods are concerned, co-operative learning is practised. Research has shown that even one hour per day of co-operative learning has a positive effect on reducing racism and bullying and promoting an atmosphere of friendliness, empathy and inclusion. A last practice of character education is the effort to build continuity and closeness between students and teachers through smaller, schools, -looping i.e., staying with a class for multiple years, and through building a structure so that each student is well known by at least one adult in school (New York Times, 2001; Chicago Tribute, 2001).

Concluding remarks
The time seems favourable for further implementation of programs focused on the development of moral competencies in education. Society and politics made the first move and various NGOs took up the initiative. Now is the time for the schools to make a move; are they prepared and professional enough to invest in further development of the programs mentioned above? The conditions for the answer to this question seem to be favourable. Recent studies in The Netherlands (Veuglers & De Kat, 2000) have shown that currently there is a nutritious breeding-ground for further implementation of SEO and similar innovations in education. The study 'The Pedagogical Mission of Independent Study in Upper Secondary Education' (Veugelers & De Kat, 2001) has shown that schools attach high priority to developmental objectives such as 'moral development', 'personality development' and 'critical opinion development'. According to teachers the aspect of 'moral development' in particular receives insufficient attention in the school curriculum.

The most important bottlenecks when realising the above mentioned objectives are: the overload of the educational program, competing claims from society in combination with changing political priorities, insufficient need and freedom for school heads to establish their own priorities in the lesson programs offered, and insufficient skills or self-confidence in this respect on the part of the teachers. In addition to this a number of conditions need to be complied with, for example a clear elaboration of the curriculum on which the CCT is based and its translation into teaching and learning materials.

In The Netherlands the further development of the SEO concept will have to take place at school level. The core curriculum is sufficiently elaborated and of a high quality. With networks of teachers, preferably operating in school teams and with a mandate by the board, a combination of training and material development will have to be started. In these networks teachers work with the necessary supervision on a joint task. This will increase the community feeling and thus the commitment. The supervisor will have to ensure that the core of the innovation is sufficiently realised and that the teachers feel capable to put the developed materials and ideas into practice. The support of the board should not only be focused on giving teachers the opportunity to participate in the development process, but also on elucidating the task of the school and the intended contribution of the school towards the development of its students.

Furthermore the ideas on SEO should be better communicated to the educational field. In this respect experiences with tested educational resources will make a greater impression than the presentation of impressive plans. Articles and publications will have to show that every teacher can teach SEO and that the materials will relieve the school or the teacher from a task or a problem.
The support for SEO will also have to be increased. The multicultural society, which occupies a central position in the SEO program, should also be reflected in the supporters and promoters of this learning area.

In the long term there are great chances for the SEO concept outside senior general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO) on which the SEO concept is currently focused. Particularly higher education offers numerous entrances and a larger population. The greatest challenge however is pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO). In The Netherlands VMBO covers 60% of the total number of students. Moreover they accommodate the largest group of students with special needs.
In The Netherlands this group consists of students from migrant families and families that suffer from unemployment and divorces.
The question of who should take up SEO could be discussed some more. Currently the decision has been made that the religious and social

subjects teachers will do so. However, this is not the only possibility to express the ideas of SEO. Literature is a good example. In 'great literature' ethical issues and dilemmas are made perceptible and concrete. Another possibility is the counsellor lesson. In these lessons conflicts arising in class are often expressed. Usually the teacher in question remains in close contact with the class (teaches at least two subjects) and is considered to be the teacher to whom students can talk in confidence about their problems. Because these teachers have different subject backgrounds, socio-emotional development will be taken out of the classic category of social sciences.

A topic that was not discussed here, but certainly deserves more attention in the future and is also found in the recommendations in the report of Veugelers & De Kat concerns the assessment and measurement of values education and the intended abilities. In which way can the effect of education on values development be demonstrated? Positive results will be an important argument for teachers to indeed put time and energy into values education.

Finally

The place and function of education in society is continuously changing. While society is becoming more complex and knowledge is sooner out-of-date, the school has changed its focus from knowledge-directed to more ability-directed. At the same time in-company training, commercial training institutes and e-learning are taking over part of the work field of education. The developments described in this essay indicate that the social cohesion of society is under pressure. In most countries education is structured such that this is one of the few places where young people of different backgrounds meet. Therefore it is not surprising that the school is referred to when the subject under discussion is the promotion of social cohesion by teaching social and moral competencies. An Environmental Scan, conducted among the CIDREE member institutions (Bron & Carter, 2000) shows that the institutions for development and research in education in Europe acknowledge that in the future this task will increase rather than decrease. The pendulum of morals, mentioned at the beginning of this essay, could very possibly swing further in the direction it has taken now.

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IV. Assessment and testing

The temptation of simplification

A call for integration of internal and external quality control

Roger Standaert

Call for quality

In the last few decades education has increasingly become the subject of certain ways of quality thinking. The quality notion has become ever present in various discussions on education and education renewal. Quality control implies having a notion on what quality entails. The quality of education depends on the quality of three important aspects: valuable objectives, efficient strategies and sufficient output in meeting the objectives (output effectiveness). In effect quality management has to do with management of these three aspects.

Firstly, it should concern objectives that are cultural, but are also considered useful by the school's consumers. In this case the word consumer covers a large spectrum of interested parties: primarily the pupils, the parents, trade and industry, society, the local community, different segments in society, the teachers. This explains why determination of useful objectives is not a straightforward automated process. The various interested parties all hold, or at least partly hold, their own opinions on what it is useful to learn at school. It is normal that in a society that considers itself to be democratic, all these groups should desire realisation of their opinions on valuable objectives in education. These consistent forces of opinions will at some point result in a kind of dynamic balance that is laid down in a curriculum. The adopted curriculum is then further divided into levels and types of education, taking into account the age of the pupils and the intended final goals. In nearly every country this is a curriculum established by the government. The government or the parliament adopts this curriculum (usually after long discussions and debates), because a transparent education system, with a comparable level in all the schools, is part of the central responsibility, a responsibility for useful and just compulsory education.

A second aspect of quality has to do with the way in which the adopted contents, skills and attitudes are taught. This concerns processes, strategies, methods and organisation structures. Subjects can include didactics, methodology, grouping of pupils, the school organisation or the school regulations. It is obvious that skilful teachers trained in educational theory and teaching methods play an important role in the quality of the processes and strategies.

The third aspect of quality has to do with the outcome of education, the effectiveness, the productivity or output. In the end the result of education should be that the behaviour, which was set out in the objectives, is reached by as many pupils as possible of the age group or discipline involved. This should be expressed in (preliminary) tests, examinations, observations or practical activities.

The three quality aspects are not educational specific. In trade and industry much attention is paid to 'management by objectives': the first aspect. Attention is paid to the processes in approaches of integral quality control, the ISO-norms, the EFQM-system that is widely used in Europe. Obviously there is still the classic product control consisting of comparative tests, which are often strongly stimulated by consumer organisations.

Discussions on the assumed quality of education are not always rational. In many cases the notion 'quality of education' is used with a double meaning. In addition catchwords such as level reduction, equalising and loss of quality often serve as a screen to conceal different motives. Sometimes it concerns the fear of change, or they may be used as welcome catchwords to motivate non-informed parties that everything should be left as it is.

On any completion as to content or concept of the three aspects described above regarding quality it continually appears that the quality of the education (the level, the standard) cannot easily be described unambiguously. The completion thereof is connected with values which in their turn are drawn from traditions, social demands, visions concerning the development of society, ideological perceptions and increasingly also on educational psychological considerations. When two people discuss the level of education it is not always a matter of course that they are on the same wavelength. On the contrary, there may often be a question of personal accents and notions of personal values, which may or may not explicitly come to the surface. The same applies when groups in society express what should be understood by quality. The vehemence with which such discussions are often conducted makes it clear that it concerns subject matter that is highly value loaded.

Discussions on the level of education often appear in the shape of opposites of various kinds.

It frequently concerns opposites in the nature of levels such as:

- quantity as opposed to quality;
- specialisation as opposed to basic education;
- cognitive education as opposed to broad education;
- subject directed education as opposed to cross-curricular education;
- theory as opposed to practice;
- sequential advancement as opposed to exemplary;
- immediate results as opposed to permanent results.

Whoever has been involved in the renewal of education will have experienced that such ideas surface regularly and that the persons discussing them always take a position at some point on the scale between the two extremes. Meanwhile it is clear that the quality is a multiple concept, in which all kinds of social, ideological, psychological and pragmatic aspects interplay in order to arrive at a dynamic ‘fulcrum’ in the delineation of the quality concept.

Various approaches to quality

Running the risk of oversimplifying matters, two streams can be distinguished in the multiple and often conflicting pleas for quality in education. As is often the case with dichotomies, they separate the subject concerned in too simplified a manner and it is better to place the two poles of the dichotomy in one continuous line in which all intermediate forms are possible, but in which one of the poles probably dominates.

An analysis of the ideas in this regard results in two types of quality thinking, which can be placed roughly and over-simplified against one other. In the first case it concerns an economic-technical approach to quality; in that second case it concerns a pedagogical-didactical conclusion.

The economical-technical approach

As the name suggests, the economic approach is derived from the approach of the thinking on quality in commercial circles in a free market economy. Anyone undertaking something, and in this case it is the school, has to give an account of the results. The results determine the reward; you get what you deserve. The person who achieves more gets more; the person who achieves less gets less. Competition and rivalry are the stimulants to increase the reward. That occurs in a struggle in order to gain favour on the market.

The market principle is the driving force to orientate the achievements and give them direction. The consumer will determine after all who is rewarded to a greater or lesser degree.

When applied to education such a view results in a strong control of education by strict national curricula, which should be regarded as the standards for ‘reward according to results’. The output through central tests determines the quality. Comparisons with other schools and the classification of schools in accordance with that output lie in the extension of the central testing. The monitoring of the output requested results in an increased external check on the school through additional demands at the edge of the output (methods, organisation, grouping of pupils, strict inspection systems …). One immediate consequence of such a vision is also the loss of position of the professionals in particular teachers and school heads. They get less and less leeway to give a shape to education themselves. In fact they are reduced, in the words of Michael Apple, to semi-schooled workers who must occupy themselves with the prosaic duties of maintaining discipline and the preparation of the tests.

The pedagogical-didactical approach

Directly opposite the extreme economic tendency is the educational didactic approach. Once again the name is suggestive. Education starts from the right of young people to a training that is as good and broad as possible. Competition is less important here because it concerns all the future citizens of a country who should be able to enjoy an education that is as meaningful as possible. A considerable dose of solidarity takes the place of competition. The results differ of course, bearing in mind the broad variety of pupils at any school. Special needs provision and extending special needs provision require tailored education, which makes comparison of schools meaningless. Adjustment to the individuality of pupils and schools demands creative action from teachers and heads, taking into account the pupils present, the context and the local requirements. Hence, the quality will not be determined centrally, but at school level. Each school will develop its own kind of quality, much being expected of a creative interaction between the behaviour of pupils on the one hand and of teachers on the other. This creative adjustment of teachers to situations concerning the pupils and their behaviour is characteristic for an educational and didactical relationship. To a rather great extent this is impossible to anticipate.

Such a view is easier to interpret at school level since developed from the actual characteristics of training and education: a dynamic, increasing and partly unpredictable educational relationship.
In this view the school is the focus of the quality control. There it is largely up to the professionals to determine the educational climate and approach. External evaluation is subordinate to internal evaluation.
The school will increase its internal control and evaluation since every school will have its own interpretation of quality. The differentiating capacity of the school with optimally tailored education, for example mastery learning is given a central position.

In cases where people might assume that the second model would set the tone in education, it turns out that at present this is less and less the case. During recent years the first model was clearly winning ground. This was caused by a more narrow economic view of education or a general malaise concerning a number of social disorientations, where education is often brought in as the scapegoat (lack of work, crime, achievement in international competition, etc.).
This gave rise to a movement often referred to as ‘back to the basics’. This movement came about in the eighties mainly in the United States. A stream of reports, based on the hit *A nation at risk* illustrates this. At the present time a similar movement is achieving unknown success in England. National curricula are drawn up and central testing of the level is planned for all pupils at the ages of seven, eleven, fourteen and sixteen. In addition the schools have to publish the results of these tests and the schools are ordered according to the test results. These movements are currently on the increase. It is not only latently that such movements are now also present in other countries.

Due to the uncritical adoption of propositions regarding educational quality, the broad press plays a considerable part in order to bring about a certain obsessive atmosphere as regards the level of education. In the United States, the significant educationalist Goodlad, in addition to others, strongly criticised what in the New York Times of 30 January 1984, was labelled as ‘educational Reaganism‘, characterised by rigorous testing practices, the call for discipline, and payment of teachers according to test results. Goodlad refers to it as a ‘pathological preoccupation with pupil effects’ against which he places the quality of school life in all its varieties as an alternative.

The situation in England illustrates the present economic-technical view of quality. Below one example of an extreme technical-economic approach is described in more detail.

One example: England

As is often the case, a view on education and the assessment of the quality of education does not materialise all at once. Also in England this was preceded by a long history, which was marked by a number of events.

External examinations

The regulation of ‘payment-by-results’ in 1862 is well known. The then assistant minister of education Robert Lowe (a follower of the well-known liberal economist Adam Smith) issued a regulation that attached the payment of teachers to the achievements of the pupils in reading, writing and arithmetic. With the system of ‘payment-by-results’ the inspectors were to note the achievements of the pupils in six categories; the teachers had an equal addition to the minimum wage in connection with the achievement.

The system resulted in much protest on the part of the inspectors also. It resulted in excessive drill practices directly connected with the tests and with the appearance of a ‘bread-and-butter-middle-group’: pupils who did not supply ‘bread and butter’ were neglected. In this system the seeds of a free market education, which still predominates in England, could already be detected. The hated 'payment-by-results’ system was only abolished in 1897, after the success of the Conservative Party over the Liberals.

This differentiated reward or ‘merit pay’ ‘avant la lettre’, was accompanied by the organisation of external examinations.

The source of the external examinations in England and Wales can be situated just after the middle of the nineteenth century when the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London introduced an entrance examination. It was not only the prestige of these universities that made such examinations reputable but it was also the public office that was conducted in 1868 by the Liberals after their election success. The government of Gladstone introduced a series of reforms, which, in history, earned it the name of ‘The Great Reforming Ministry’. These reforms were connected with the abolishment of the old systems of recruitment and promotion of civil servants that strongly favoured the aristocracy. For the recruitment and selection of civil servants examinations were introduced instead. In the same way it was made impossible for the aristocracy to purchase a career in the army. In future it would be only competence and merit that enabled promotion. Citizens of the middle classes applauded these reforms. Thus competition came about for obtaining places in the administration and examination committees had work in abundance.

The goodwill for the examinations from the middle classes also affected secondary education, which was increasingly attended by children from these better middle classes. It was not long then before a number of prestigious secondary schools asked the universities of Oxford and Cambridge to draw up examinations on their behalf. The first external examining board for secondary education was thus set up: the Oxford and Cambridge Joint Board. Other universities followed together with all kinds of private examination boards. By the start of the twentieth century there were already eight university examining boards. The public held them in the highest regard. The system aroused confusion however since each university subjected secondary education to its own standards.

The education management wished to bring order into this disparate system. Meanwhile, the examinations had gathered such high appeal that there could no longer be any question of searching for alternatives with internal examinations. The Consultative Committee of the education management was required to propose a solution to ensure greater uniformity in the examinations. In 1911 the committee issued the report: ‘examinations in secondary schools’.

Eventually, the report of the Consultative Committee concluded that rationalisation was desirable by only making the universities responsible for administering examinations. After much discussion this appeared to them to be the best solution.

A ‘secondary school certificate’ would be issued after a minimum of three years of secondary education, based on a starting age of twelve. The average age would then be 16.

The board proposed an examination of one subject at a time to be chosen from groups of subjects. Since then this manner of working is called ‘group examinations’, as opposed to reformed examinations, which since 1951 were merely ‘optional subject examinations’. The board also provided for a second examination at the age of 18, however this examination would not have a qualifying function, but a selective one, for the benefit of university studies.

These proposals were the subject of discussions by the education management with the university examination boards in 1914, 1915 and 1916. Finally the universities agreed to adapt their system to the proposals of the education management.

In 1917 the education management introduced the first ‘first school’ examinations (at the age of 16). The pupils had to sit examinations in five subjects, of which at least one should always be part of the following three groups: ‘humanities’, foreign languages and mathematical sciences. A fourth group also existed, which covered: art, music, and home economics. However, no examinations could be taken for this group. In the words of the board, this was not because they were inferior, but because they were not suitable for reasonably exact measurement. The truth was probably that the university examination boards showed little interest in these subjects. It would last until 1930 before it was possible to choose two subjects from the fourth group for the first certificate.

In addition to the first certificate for the 16 year-olds a more specialised ‘higher’ certificate was introduced at the same time for the 18 year-olds who wished to go to university.

These standardised examinations had great impact on the evolution of education in England and Wales. The prestige of the universities was considerable, which meant that the basic pattern of the traditional university was reflected in secondary education. The prestige of the universities also carried weight with employers. They too were increasingly requiring this certificate, again with the consequence that the pressure of parents on their child to obtain this certificate became ever stronger. From the official ratification of this system of external examinations in 1917, the English system became entangled in a web of threads supporting each other in the direction of external examinations. Since then it has become almost unthinkable in England and Wales to consider alternatives for the qualification of pupils, apart from central and external examinations. The structures created thinking in terms of those structures. Critical comments on the system would never question the system of external examinations, but would be limited to the execution modalities of those same examinations.

Inspectorate

In 1856 too some 30 inspectors, members of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (HMI), were appointed in the education service then established. When the education service was promoted to the ‘Board of Education’ or ‘Education Management’ this board consisted of 300 civil servants and 350 inspectors. The work of HMI gradually took shape.

In about 1900, individual inspectors or pairs of inspectors made day visits in primary education. Each primary school was visited every three to five years. As far as secondary education was concerned option ‘full inspection’ was chosen right from the start: an investigation of the whole school carried out by an inspection team. All secondary schools were visited in this way in 1912.

Due to lack of time an abbreviated version was thought up later. In this version only used a random check of indicators. Despite this, secondary education expanded to such an extent that in 1922 a school could only be investigated every ten years. The number of 'full inspections' then decreased in favour of the limited, more thematically orientated versions.

As from the appearance of the Butler Act of 1944, HMI became increasingly low profile over a period of some 20 years. In about 1950 'full inspections' did not even exist any more. Until the seventies the role of HMI was increasingly an advisory one. The significance of HMI was even questioned, partly on the pressure of rival inspectors of the regional education managements, the 'Local Education Authorities'. From 1969 there was a significant critical wind in the educational landscape. It was necessary to economise and there was growing distrust of the education results. In the influential 'Black Papers' of 1969 and 1970 prominent personalities declared their displeasure about the 'loss' of education.

There was an international tendency towards 'accountability': the schools had to give account of their results by submitting clear information on the way they used their subsidies. This movement gave a new stimulus to HMI. Once again it broadened its approach. In addition to the well-known inspections, it also organised informal visits and thematic inspections and published successful investigation reports on certain themes.

This resulted in 1974 in the establishment of the 'Assessment Performance Unit' (APU), a sub-division of HMI, which organised surveys or systematic investigations on certain themes, for example on heterogeneous groups, education in a second language, reading, arithmetic, etc.

In 1983 it became obligatory to publish the reports of HMI. The 'White Paper' 'Better Schools' of 1985 drew attention again to the advantages of a central approach on the education results, contrary to a local LEA approach whereby considerable differences were possible.

The well-known 'Education Reform Act' of 1988 (Baker Act), the showpiece of the conservative education policy, introduced a 'national curriculum' for pupils aged 5 to 16 and laid the foundation for the 'orders' in which the aims of the 'programmes of study' were to be recorded. In future national tests were to be taken at the end of the four 'key stages'. The 'National Curriculum Council' was established to advise on the 'orders' and to provide supporting material for the new curriculum.

Customer orientation and ‘league-tables’

When Major succeeded Thatcher as prime minister in 1991, he showed much interest in education and brought out the ‘Citizen’s Charter’. This charter determined that the results of every school were to be recorded in ‘league tables’. Customer orientation was a central concept: this meant that there was to be complete transparency as regards the achievements of the school, so that the parents could select schools based on clear information. The inspection was to ensure that the school gave ‘value for money’. Against HMI, which was still only accountable to the Queen, there was again a pronounced critical approach: the conclusions drawn by this inspection were not concrete enough and they insufficiently statistically supported. Moreover HMI was alleged to be insufficiently directed towards the parents as consumers on the education market. Since the inspectors were recruited from the teacher and management groups they would adhere too much to that side in their reports. In addition people were increasingly aware that there were too few inspectors, with the result that the schools did not really have to be concerned about inspections.

The independence of HMI also caused controversy with the official policy. The highly critical report of Eric Bolton, the last ‘Senior Chief Inspector’ of the old style, on the government policy as opposed to the teacher training, was the last straw.

In 1991 Minister Clark proposed an entirely new organisation in the ‘Parent’s Charter’. The inspection was largely privatised. A number of the members of HMI remained in order to train private inspectors and give instructions. The inspectorate was to be headed in future by Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector. Every school was to be inspected every four years and the inspection report was to be published. A summary was to be published for the parents with an indication of the position of the inspected school in the ‘league tables’. The school managements could make their own choice of the inspection they wanted to contract, based on the competition principle between the inspection agencies. In future, each inspection team was to have a ‘lay inspector’ present: a layman in the area who would represent the interests of the community (‘Education Schools Act’, 1992).

In 1992 the Conservatives won the elections again, with the result that the policy selected could be developed further. The ‘White Paper’ ‘Choice and Diversity’ prepared the way for a new act.

The ‘Education Schools Act’ of 1992 finally confirmed the view of Minister Clark, but did add some concrete facts. The inspection was transformed into an ‘Office for Standards in Education’ (OFSTED). All the inspectors should be registered and follow training for that purpose. The registered inspectors were to form a team and enter into a contract with OFSTED. In practice former LEA inspectors, universities and private agencies registered themselves or their members. In 1993 the inspection system was elaborated in a ‘Framework for the Inspection of Schools’, which was sent to all schools, so that they would know what to expect from an inspection. It also included all the indicators, which the inspectorate proposed as standard.

Present tendencies

Tony Blair wrote, both as the leader of the opposition as in his present position as prime minister, that the quality of education should be the central point on the agenda of Labour. His ‘White Paper’ ‘Excellence in Schools’ rests on six principles.

- Education must be the central item of interest for the government.
- The educational system must work to the advantage of many, it should also take into account the possibilities of all children, without falling into the errors made earlier by the failing 11-plus system.
- The results must be more important than the structures. With this in mind training for teachers is to be set up, but incompetent teachers will be dismissed sooner, good practical examples are to be made known and the accent is to be on the quality of inspiring heads.
- External control by the inspection should take place at least once every six years, but the inspection should focus above all at the schools that underachieve.
- There will be little understanding for failing schools: the document speaks of ‘zero tolerance of failure’. Each school must have clear aims, based on information on national aims, recent inspection material and progress in comparable schools. Each LEA should demonstrate its contribution is to the advancement of results in education in an ‘Education Development Plan’. The LEAs too will be subject to checks by OFSTED.
- Finally the government wishes to form a partnership with all those who can assist in increasing educational results: 25 ‘Education Action Zones’ are set up for this purpose. In future new subsidies for school buildings and equipment are to be connected with such educational achievements; in this context the term ‘cash-for-results-scheme' is used.

The measure of Labour to appoint a Secretary of State for ‘standards’ cannot be misinterpreted. This person will be primarily responsible for the policy on failing schools (the ‘shame and blame’ policy) and for the increase of the results of the central tests by various means.

This includes the increase of the results of reading and arithmetic, so that in 2002 80% of the 11 year-olds will achieve level 4 in their native language and 75% level 4 in arithmetic. This is based on a scale of 10 for all school ages. The newest shoot in this measure is the investment in ‘advanced skills teachers’. These teachers, if selected, can earn a comfortable wage.

The core of this quality policy is formed by the results of the central tests. They are regularly published in the ‘league tables’, in which schools are classified according to their central test results.
The scientific corner in particular expresses much criticism on the simplistic depiction of average school results, without taking into account the recruitment of pupils and the context of a school.
Besides, more than once it has been noticed that particular departments in a school do better than others, but are nevertheless represented in a school average. The most significant criticism is usually based on the remark that this type of classification system cannot successfully clarify the ‘added value’ of education.
Nevertheless in their thinking people continue to follow the logic of central classification. Scientific institutions are given the assignment to develop league tables with more ‘value added’ content. Measuring learning gains is to become the new assignment.
Forms of baseline testing are under consideration for example. In baseline testing the achievements of the pupil are measured at the start of a period of education and after a certain time, for example two or four years, the achievements are assessed and compared to the baseline. The work of the University of Durham (with Fitz-Gibbon and others) is authoritative in this respect. Although these researchers expressly regard their system as an instrument for the self-evaluation of schools and not as external ranking, their working method has already inspired the government. According to a recent measure the results at age of 16 in the league tables were to be compared with the results at age of 14. This system has been abandoned for the time being due to the heavy protest of the teachers.
In 1998 the English inspectorate also introduced the 'Performance and Assessment Reports' (Panda’s). 24.000 English schools were divided into categories according to the social background of the pupils. They are then classified within their category.
In any case in England they still think between the chalk lines of central examinations and the comparison of schools. People expect much benefit from the statisticians who will probably find formulas to correct the rough

results of the league tables on the basis of various factors such as social background, environment and intelligence.

Truth only exists within a certain grammar, as Wittgenstein taught in his day. However, grammar itself is never subject to question.

The English situation depicted fairly extensively here, actualises what should be understood by an economic technical approach to quality control. Nevertheless, there are many starting points of such a view of quality that can be subject to serious discussion.

Reserves with regard to a one-sided technical approach

The reserves regarding an extreme economic technical approach can be centred around four aspects, i.e.: The limits of measurability; A school is not a business; Comparison of schools; Correction for the social environment.

First the relativity of marks and measurability ought to be pointed out. Furthermore a school cannot be compared to a business just like that. In addition to this it is not self-evident how statistical correction is possible for a multitude of factors when schools are compared. Finally there is a whole series of negative effects connected with such a view.

The limits of measurability

1. *Putting things into perspective with the use of common sense*

   Few means to convince people are more often abused than figures and statistics. Even if this is almost popular wisdom based on common sense, it still does not seem probable that measurements and its results will become a balanced judgement. Some examples of putting things into perspective fire the imagination.

   The witticism of the famous Dutch writer Godfried Bomans describing someone, who crossed a river of an average depth of one metre and drowned, is well known. Less well known is the remark of a previous minister of defence of the United States, McNamara, who had an existential experience during the war in Vietnam. In warfare it was then normal to boast about the loss-figures of the enemy with the intention of thus systematically undermining the morale of the enemy. However, the brutal attack on the village of My Lai, in which the entire village population was murdered, caused the reverse reaction. After that the Vietcong fought on with more grimness than ever and with an unflagging morale that probably contributed to the American defeat. From that McNamara learned the following lesson which is known meanwhile as the ‘McNamara fallacy’: "What is important you should make measurable and not simply make the measurable important."

In one of his ‘Pensees’ the great Pascal, who was nonetheless a great mathematician, also pointed out clearly the relative importance of it:

"And it is seldom the case that mathematicians have a good view of things (‘esprit de finesse’) and people with a good view of things are seldom mathematicians. Because the mathematicians wish to deal with these fragile matters in a mathematical way and thus make fools of themselves, since they start with definitions and then with principles, which is not the correct way to go about things in this kind of argumentation. Not that the person with a good view of things would not do this, but he does it silently; naturally and without tricks; the expression of such things is beyond people and there are few who can sense them."

Let it be clear at the outset that the putting reality in figures useful, but also has its limitations. Great differences can be seen in the possibility of measurement. For example it is possible to use many physical measurements and go very far, whereas human behaviour becomes less and less exactly measurable with an increasing level of complexity.
Where quality in education is concerned, the alteration of the behaviour of the pupils is central. It is not surprising that a systematic educational approach attempts to get a grip on the advance in behaviour and human achievement;

2. *Measuring human behaviour*

When measuring human behaviour it is not a question of a scale of comparison against which physical quantities are measured (length, content, length of time, speed, energy, etc.). A scale of comparison has a recognisable and fixed zero. In addition the distances between the units on the scale are considered to be equal.
In behavioural sciences people often work with interval scales. The numbers are significant to the extent that the distances between the measuring points are considered equal. It is therefore also possible to calculate averages. It cannot be said that someone with an 8 out of 10 is twice as good as somebody with 4 out of 10. After all there is no fixed zero. In many tests a zero is chosen freely anyway. If someone has 30 mistakes in the Great Dutch Dictation, he is still considered to be a good speller. A person with no mistakes at all achieves the absolute maximum level. This example shows again that a test determines a minimum level and a maximum level.

The way in which this is determined is always open to discussion and depends on a standard determined ‘somewhere’. The more the standard is legitimised by consensus, the more it is accepted. Such a consensus is then derived from a number of requirements fairly accurately determined, for example by a parliament, or by a statistical standard, with the average as the starting-point. The subjectivity increases with less consensus or less comparative material.

The distance between the points remains a problem as well.

If Mary gets 8 out of 10, is she then twice as good as Johnny with 4 out of 10? You cannot say that at all. It is only clear that the marks indicate a classification. Mary does a lot better than Johnny and slightly better than Pete who got 7 out of 10.

Still, there is subjectivity here again. For the test you have a number of points per question. In a multiple-choice test for example, each question may have one point.

Are all the questions really equally important and for what reason? And if a question has more or less points, on what is that based? Furthermore you can say that a score then says nothing about the profile of knowledge of the pupil: what kind of questions could Mary not answer and what could Pete not answer? There too comparative ground is missing. The mark only expresses a classification and says little of quality.

It is even more difficult when open questions are marked. How are you going to give points without there being too much leeway? The investigations are numerous where different teachers have been given the same tests to mark and from which a great variety of scores appeared. The alternative to include only closed questions results in its turn to a considerable impoverishment of the subject matter to be learned.

The subjectivity always present in every test will only increase if the results of various tests are added up to reach an overall mark. Then you are again faced with the challenge to put for example a percentage of the points on geography and one on mathematics. On what do you base that difference? What is important and what is less important? And going a step further: what is important in context A and what in context B?

Even larger steps are set if you compare classes, or departments and *a fortiori* school averages.

What diversity of contexts is then concealed in the one average? What kinds of pupils are they? Which teachers? Which parents? What kind of infrastructure? What environment? Which school culture? What kinds of ideologies are included in the results? Etc.

> It is obvious that real psychometricians know these difficulties. Much effort has also gone into reducing the amount of subjectivity. An impressive statistical and sophisticated apparatus has been constructed. That does not mean however that direct scoring of behaviour is always based on an element of subjectivity. The delicate treatments executed for the purpose do not succeed in removing the ‘basic failing’. The most impressive statistical methods cannot remove this evil at the basis. There are no mark acrobatics that make the safety net unnecessary for subjective factors.
>
> The slogan ‘measuring is knowing’ thus clearly requires differentiation by always being aware of the subjective basic decisions and by taking into account the qualitative reduction of the marks, particularly in the case of human behaviour.

A school is not a business

It is often pointed out that education has much to learn from quality control in business. That may be the case, but that should not prevent us from regarding the individuality of the two systems. At a meeting of businessmen and educationalists the Flemish education journalist Bodifiee put it this way: "Education and business must get to know each other, to value and stimulate, but they must never become one". Businesses shape technology and not people. Naturally they do not only produce rough, blind machines and they do pay attention to human questions. Still that world clashes with education. And that is the way it should be too. No shapeless mass should be brought about from a vague amalgamation of education and business. We must accept the tension, not as a difficulty, but as a source of creativity. Both worlds must do what they are good at. That diversity is a driving force.

Education can learn a lot from the attempts of business to ensure quality care. They are sometimes summarised as ‘total quality care’ of ‘integral quality care’. Business disposes itself in a supple and more flexible way and is able to react quicker to a position of altered circumstances in demand and supply.

On the other hand it is also the case that working to increase quality has been in existence for a long time in education, but it has a more difficult entrance there perhaps. Think for example of mastery learning, pupil following systems, individualising systems, etc.

This also illustrates the fact that a school is not completely the same as a business. Many comparisons can be made of course, but there are also clear differences:

- education is not a free initiative; it is compulsory for pupils up to the age of 18;
- education is overshadowed by powerful structural limitations (freedom of education, proofs of competence, the arrangement of the school year, etc.);
- the aim of the school does not lie in profit-making, but in the training of pupils, whatever that may involve;
- the aims of the school are rather vague. Its efficiency and effectiveness is difficult to assess;
- as yet there are few clear parameters to measure the quality of a school. The parameters used are often one-sided and limited to the school results, without taking into account the effort of the pupils. Differences in quality are often caused by differences in recruitment;
- the payment of the employees does not depend on the position of certain quality demands.

Having said this, it will be clear that the quality promotion processes from the business world have to be interpreted for education. On the other hand there is no reason to replace quality formulas that have proved their value in education by other systems that are less particularly grafted on education.

Comparison of schools

The up and coming idea to compare schools with each other and to classify them according to quality is entirely in line with the businesslike approach. The indications for consumer information, resulting in the best buy, are legion. The consumer has to be able to choose and that is only possible when there are clear quality indications. The comparison with merchandise is again obvious. Washing powders and pressure cookers can be examined fairly easily as to their physical and chemical properties and be expressed in numbers. That is not so obvious for pupil achievements, and even less for schools as a whole.

The marks that the pupils gain at a school for external and central tests are significant. The classification of schools according to their results on the central tests is very tempting, since it reduces a complex reality to simple marks. The league tables in England are very popular; in France the classification of all schools taking part in the baccalaureate examination is published. Each year the paper that publishes this classification (Le Monde de l’Education) increases significantly its turnover with the issue that features the classification.

In The Netherlands they have also been obliged to publish the results of the schools and so to classify them, after a demand of the daily 'Trouw'. The 'Volkskrant' made an even greater thing of it. Contrary to the wishes of the inspectorate it quoted the reports of the inspectorate in marks. Five indicators on which the inspectorate reported in four categories were given marks of 1 to 4. These were then added up and divided by five. The result achieved was then the score for a school. The legality of the principle of the open government was appealed to.

From the foregoing it is already clear that it here concerns very great simplifications of reality. Such rough marks say nothing about the quality of a school if no account is taken of the recruitment of pupils, more determined by their social economic situation and their capacity. It is for example very clear to everyone that schools with a large percentage of target group pupils stand no chance at all against, for example, schools with a selective intake. It is a huge logical mistake to decide on those grounds that one school is better than another. It could be the case after all that the pupils in the target group school learn much more than in the school where there are only capable children. This simplistic comparison is rightly rejected in scientific circles. The critical sense present in the majority of the population is not developed to such an extent however, that they cannot be tempted by the simplicity of the marks. The result is then, often erroneously, that schools with an unfavourable recruitment are disgraced.

An interesting investigation by the London School of Economics throws better light on the differences between schools (Robinson, 1997). The real factors that mostly determine the differences in the achievements of schools can largely be traced back to three variables.

1. The poverty level in which a pupil grows up. School reports are connected with the level of poverty, which in turn leads to all kinds of non-school behaviour.
   Reducing poverty in society also reduces unfavourable school reports.
2. Increased recruitment favourably influences the achievements of all the pupils in the school, even the pupils from poorer environments. This is a plea for a balanced recruitment of pupils without imbalances. Ghetto schools result in a downward spiral. Socially speaking this would mean that certain limits are to be set to the free choice. Most people stand for social justice and solidarity as such, but not when it concerns their own children. This can also be observed in the limited success of the non-discrimination agreements for recruitment of pupils in Flanders.
3. Interest and commitment of the parents in the education of their children.

The conclusions of this research study are in fact quite shocking. The social environment and the non-balanced intake contribute much more than typical education factors such as method, grouping of pupils, good didactic material, whether or not there is much homework and the like. What do these differences then tell us about the quality of a school? Moreover, it is also assumed that typical factors of education quality, such as methods, textbooks, teachers, the class, grouping of pupils and the like determine not more that 20% of the variant in (measurable) school achievements (Creemers 1991, p. 9). The verdict is clear: 80% of the variant depends on social background and ability. In fact that means that a mere 20% of the (measurable) differences can be manipulated as to improvement by the increase of the typical quality of education.

All of this does not dispel the fact that within this kind of thinking there is a diligent search for statistical methods to correct the factors of background and intelligence. In a previous paragraph we referred to attempts to make categories of schools based on the social economic background.

But again, there is a tendency towards simplification. What is a low socio-economic background? It is too simple to define this as pupils from families with uneducated parents (whether the father or the mother) or children who get subsidised school meals. Here too the reality is much more complex than the figure acrobatics might suggest.

Correction for social background

There is unanimity in scholarly circles not to compare the results of schools just like that, but to introduce a correction factor according to personal characteristics, more particularly intelligence and social background. Intelligence will naturally be assessed with the existing intelligence tests. Within the framework of this text I will not discuss further the question of what intelligence is and how it relates to school results. In other words, intelligence often correlates very highly with school results, so that a number of critics claim that in fact a greater part of the same factors are measured which determine the school results. As already stated, these are often concerned with the social economic background from which the pupils come: the factors of poverty and stimulation within the family are very important in determining the differences between schools.

The logical next question is then how a lower social background can be determined and how to quantify it further. Classical indicators are the occupation or education of the parents, or as it is now the established in

England, whether they are pupils from families with subsidised school meals. In fact this is then an indicator of social exclusion and poverty.

It appears to an increasing degree that such categorising is too rough. Poverty and social exclusion are connected to a whole range of factors. A recent large-scale investigation in the New Policy Institute in London (Howarth, 1998), distinguished no less than 50 key indicators in the population regarding poverty and social exclusion. 14 of them are connected with children and young people.

They are summarised here:

- unemployment of the parent(s);
- less than half the average income;
- babies who are underweight (25% more in the case of mothers in lower classes);
- fatal accidents (double in lower social class);
- children who finish their education without a qualification;
- children who are expelled from school (three times as many black children);
- children of divorced parents (twice as many in the case of uneducated married couples);
- child mothers under 16 years old (4,3 of 1000 births);
- children with character disturbances in institutes;
- youth unemployment;
- hire purchase difficulties of young employees;
- poor financial position of 16-17 year olds;
- periods of drug treatments;
- suicide (60% more in the lower groups);
- 19 year olds with no single qualification (30% in England);
- 23 year olds with a criminal background.

All these indicators can of course occur together and moreover, the 36 indicators of poverty and social exclusion not appearing here can be added to them as well.

The question that intrigues us here is how you can express all these possible combinations and differences in figures to correct the school results for the social background.

Subjective decisions have to be made here in order to calculate the part played by each participating factor. If you then process those figures you can really refer to statistical laptop acrobatics. Maybe such ambitions should be referred to as scientific arrogance.

Subsidiary effects of central testing and ranking

Central tests of which the results are to be published for each school, inevitably result in hit parades of schools on the one hand and the disgrace of schools with low scores on the other. The subsidiary effects weigh so heavily that the possible positive effects of the tests as a kind of mirror function are lost without trace.

The most important subsidiary effect is to reduce the aims of education to a measurable level. Now it is no secret that a considerable number of aims of a higher nature (creative thinking, learning skills) and also aims of an attitudinal nature, are extremely difficult to measure. The result is clear: Education is reduced to the preparation of pupils for the central tests. Broad upbringing, civil responsibility and the creation of values automatically become second-rate aims.

It is also very important that the role of teachers and head teachers should be very strictly limited. It is only technical application that is expected of a teacher in the line of continually returning examination matter. The signals given by society give an opposite picture. People require creativity of teachers deal with the pupils flexibly and to transfer much more than subject knowledge and cognitive learning experiences. Should this requirement be maintained, it will be necessary to admit a partial unpredictable nature of education and self-determination of the teachers.

Fitz-Gibbon has compiled an additional list of undesirable subsidiary effects (1997):

- A *tunnel vision*: quality is reduced to examination achievements of a certain nature. Other indicators are subsidiary. Even the emphasis on theoretical subjects as against practical ones is a consequence of it;
- *Insufficient use*: schools are going to concentrate on those elements in their organisation that will increase the average score. Difficult pupils will be expelled quickly for instance; a kind of admittance selection will be organised; close attention will be given to pupils who are just below average, because they yield the greatest success. It may be possible to do something about the difficulty of the tests (give pupils hints; manipulate the time to do the test …). Teachers can be less incited to teamwork and are wasted in that respect, because they are assessed on their individual contribution to the scores of the pupils and the like. In short, people are easily limited to the ‘bread-and-butter’ pupils; pupils who bring results;

- *Shortsightedness*. People look solely at the direct achievements in the tests. The long-term results with respect to professional careers, civil responsibility, social behaviour and the like, are not an issue. Society should however be interested in the long-term effects of education;
- *Mark fixation*. The fixation on measurable results primarily puts the accent on the marks themselves and not on the achievement of aims. It is particularly the case in the behavioural sciences that people seldom make simple measurements that generate equal answers. This is even the case with relatively simple questions. For instance the question why a pupil does not answer certain questions, or even if he under-achieves or over-achieves, is not asked. In other words the number gives too little information about an achievement.

There are in addition a number of more practical problems. To start with there is the time consuming and centralised organisation. The tests are to remain confidential and the authors must guarantee a hundred percent oath of secrecy. The test bundles must be printed under strict supervision in order to avoid leaks. The dispatch must take place simultaneously and nothing must go wrong. After all, the tests must be taken at the same time. The organisational pressure on the schools is also clearly observable. Schools must adhere strictly to the dates set for the tests. The time consuming organisation and the administrative burden result in considerable costs. Finally every test can always be contested as to item selection and item construction. Discussions on validity, reliability and representativeness are always possible. The only right and proper test does just not exist.

Even when people decide to switch to assessment of learning gains as a correction to the random indications, there are still quite a number of undesired subsidiary effects. Additional subsidiary effects present themselves. It has been demonstrated that schools score badly in the baseline test in order to create more learning achievement in this way. Even in learning achievement, it cannot be avoided that clever pupils advance more quickly than slow ones. Weaker pupils come more often from deprived backgrounds, so that there is a background-determined difference in the speed of learning achievement. In the measurement of the progress of learning even greater demands are made to the test construction. Central examinations or tests which are published, whether or not through a learning progress measurement, are so determining for the image of a school that they result in one-sidedness in the training and defensive strategies in order to score as highly as possible.

The advantages of central testing are the objectivity of the scores, the better content and concept validity and the comparability of those scores. The disadvantages given here influence the balance negatively. The enforced comparison of schools is not conducive to the improvement of the quality of the broad duties of education. Only limited aims that are easy to measure and short-term education will benefit from the comparison of schools. An alternative method of working is therefore required.

Integration of internal and external evaluation

It would be erroneous to conclude from the above that marks should not be given any more. This is also a simple way of looking at things. Quality processes are clearly advanced when people succeed in quantifying certain aspects and indicators. As the behaviour to be measured becomes more complex, it becomes less suitable for correct quantification. This should be taken into account in the interpretation. When those reservations are taken due account of, numerical analyses are very useful to mirror the own practice to average scores or to comparable schools. When those details are employed for the self-reflection of schools, they are an aid to be valued. When they are used to assess schools through classification (which is largely the case with central tests) they are not functional but rather interfering for quality improvement.
The measurement of achievements is therefore not at all immodest if the results are used for self-evaluation. This self-evaluation rests on more elements however than just the school achievements.

Aims for measuring achievement

According to the Department for Educational Development (Dienst voor Onderwijsontwikkeling, DVO, 1998) the measurement of achievement is to meet three aims if it is to be useful.

Aim 1: *Monitoring the minimum*
The authorities have imposed minimum aims to guarantee a comparable minimum quality for all schools in the country. Therefore they have to have an instrument at their disposal to assess whether the attainment targets have been achieved. It is to be expected that the evaluation of the attainment targets will be stimulating for the implementation.

Aim 2*: Checking the performance of the local school*
A school performs well if it reaches a high achievement level – taking into account the intake and background characteristics – and when the pupils book more progress in the long term than was originally expected of them

(in view of the intake and background characteristics. It is then a question of checking the *learning profit* or the added value of the school for a pupil. This means that results should be measured at least two different times in order to assess the progress. By employing this principle schools are no longer compared with one another, but each school only measures the progress of its pupils.

Aim 3: *Conduct a policy and adjust it*
It is important for the authorities to monitor the extent to which the educational objectives or development aims are realised at system level. This can be achieved without comparing schools.

In the realisation of those aims the premise is a vision of the quality, which is related to the pedagogical-didactical view described earlier. The professionalism of teachers and head teachers is then confirmed and even upgraded. In addition the local school or comprehensive school is the focus for quality. Each school has its own nature, its own intake and its own context. Each school should then be judged separately. In other words: each school has its own quality.
One immediate consequence of this view is the priority of internal evaluation over external evaluation. There should be a clear interaction between the two. The external evaluation presents the school with a mirror for its own quality evaluation. In reverse the internal evaluation gives signals to the external evaluators as to the feasibility and usefulness of the objectives to be pursued and achieved.

Instruments for internal evaluation
The school can completely carry out its internal evaluation in various ways. As is the case already, the school uses tests and examinations to measure the learning achievements. When it concerns experience, attitudes or higher thinking processes, types of observation systems will have to be used. In order to be able to keep track of the learning gains in addition to the learning achievements, pupil-monitoring systems will be a must in the future.
In addition to the learning achievements the school will naturally employ all other indicators that determine the quality of the processes and the organisation, to check on their presence and follow them up.

Instruments for external evaluation
The authorities organise the external evaluation in the first place through a school inspection. A professional inspection team is to chart the processes and the organisation methods to achieve good education. In

addition the school inspection will investigate the internal evaluation of the school: tests, examinations, pupil monitoring systems and means of observation will be regarded as to quality.

As far as it concerns the learning achievement, the authorities can carry out a periodical inspection. The efficiency of the final objectives can be investigated at system level by means of representative but anonymous random checks.

The inspection can use an item bank to determine the result on certain final terms in order to render the school inspection exemplary. These details can provide a mirror for the school concerned. They can also be cumulated into an annual report on the learning achievements at system level.

Integration of internal and external evaluation

If the quality of the internal evaluation increases, the part of external evaluation can decrease. Should people wish to secure the principle of the priority of internal evaluation to external evaluation, there will need to be investment in a greater professionalism of the schools as to self-evaluation. The quality of tests and examinations has to be increased. Schools will also have to learn to collect details about practical learning and attitude development. The schools will also have to learn to question themselves critically regarding a number of indicators of quality advancement (for example in-service training, reports, contacts with parents or carers, the quality of teaching discussions, etc.). The development of good pupil monitoring systems should be encouraged, probably with the support of the authorities. Pupil monitoring systems are destined exclusively for internal use. In order to maintain their effect, they may not be used for external evaluation and *a fortiori* not for the classification of schools. It should be considered to provide schools with an item bank, for them to use, if so desired, for assessment of the attainment targets of the pupil.

Conclusion

With an integrated model of internal and external evaluation of pupil achievements and other indications of quality, an explicit choice has been made for a type of pedagogical didactical quality control. That means that the priority of the quality control is in the hands of the local school and with the teaching staff and head teachers as the professionals. The individuality of each school is ensured to a great degree.

Dishonest and resistance provoking comparisons are replaced by a moderate system of external evaluation through school inspections and periodic surveys. These sufficiently assure the legitimate quality requirements, put them before the individuality of the school and in doing so serve a general social interest.

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V. Systemic reform

Transformation of school education in South Africa

Van As Jordaan and Nicol Faasen

Introduction

Flying gracefully through turbulence, sweeping down white-water rapids, managing change while the concept of change itself keeps transforming ... these are some of the images currently typifying South Africa, a young, developing democracy boldly attempting 'the greatest social experiment of our time'.

Where amidst this ebb and flow is the South African education system positioning itself? How amidst flux are people involved in education managing to find tranquil spaces where they can overcome deeply harmful legacies, but also attain new vistas to be inspired with visions for tomorrow? In particular, once one starts looking beyond the superficial forms of systems and structures, where and in what mood does one find the heart of it all, the learners who find their world partly a dark relic of the past, partly a bright promise of unformed possibilities? How do they understand how to understand? How do they acquire the insight required to live meaningfully in a new world few adults are able to understand? How are meaning and quality defined in this flexible situation? How do the demands for quality, equality and equity play themselves out in a deeply divided nation with scarce resources? Is there a role for overseas agents to act in South Africa?

These are some of the profound and practical issues facing South Africa today. Thinking about education and training has changed radically in South Africa in the past two and a half decades – need one explain the year 1976? In a situation reminiscent of the chicken and egg scenario, the system has also undergone significant and extensive restructuring. In addition, new policies and legislative frameworks for education are giving effect to the values and goals of the democratic government.

These developments are all linked to two major issues all South Africans are faced with:

- how to redress past inequities and other injustices, especially those regarding resources and human dignity and self-concept;
- how to prepare for a future that demands itself to be lived simultaneously.

Education in South African does not exist gloriously on an island. It is deeply ingrained with the past triumphs and sadnesses of a scorching struggle for freedom and human dignity. It is intertwined with the daily toil to make a living from the earth of Africa while a worldwide swell of globalisation is changing the contours of the land. Education glimmers with the values, dreams and aspirations of a people being told they are the firstlings of the Century of Africa.

Education in South Africa is caught up in the glories of socialist ideologues; in the heart-felt cry of the peasant for his child to be able to write and read and do arithmetic and be empowered to fight oppression; in the doubts of reactionaries believing they always had the answers; in the disillusionment of a modern South Africa turning into a muddy, crime-ridden affair instead of running on a high moral ground of human rights. Dreams born from years of alternative, anti-regime educational practice and theorizing about concepts like people's education, now re-hatched in committee rooms populated by neophytes, are struggling to survive on the deep plains and far-flung hills of underdeveloped rural South Africa.

Whoever wishes to understand South African education needs to live the sometimes naive dreams of a hopeful people under the African sun; walk the long roads of both the Kalahari with its brooding two-room shacks called schools and the City of Gold with its smeary, crowded trains of face-brick rooms also called schools; sit with the grey-haired guardians of a multitude of age-old rural traditions; eat the meagre food of poverty – and, may heaven forbid, wait with utter desperation for the words to fall: "You are positive. Warn your partner."

Despite the many changes, huge challenges remain before a significant impact will be made on the quality and extent of learning success for the majority of these people. There certainly is scope for the international sharing of experiences and vision in these areas of educational reform in developing nations, and a need to articulate common approaches.

This article reviews educational changes in South Africa since 1994 with emphasis on efforts to democratise the education system. In the next section, a snapshot overview is given of the present South African context. This is followed by a description of transformation processes, results and challenges in South Africa. Finally, some future perspectives are offered.

Systemic Information

Social and political context

The current social and political landscape of South Africa has largely been shaped by colonial rule followed by apartheid. Previous to 1994 policies were constructed on racial bases and both the public and private sectors were more often than not managed on the basis of a strict racial hierarchy. The quality of service provision and individual economic and social status largely reflected racial divides. Other inherited rifts include the deep urban-rural divide – urbanisation has left rural areas isolated from social development processes – and the gender divide which has led to poverty being a social ill largely affecting women. Poverty is closely correlated with race, gender and a rural-urban divide. Nearly 75% of South Africa’s poor live in rural areas. Furthermore, deep-seated racial, ethnic and cultural differences are still reflected in the make-up and aspirations of most political parties.

Salient aspects of South Africa’s population	
Total	Approximately 43.1 million
African blacks Whites Coloureds Indians	76.7% 10.9% 8.9% 2.6%
South Africans residing in urban areas:	54% *Rates of urbanisation vary substantially by province.*
Female	52%
Under the age of 15 years	34%
Rate of growth	1.9% *This rate has decreased significantly in the last decade. An average growth rate of 0.55% per annum is expected up to 2026.*
Life expectancy	54.7 years *Expected to drop to 47 years because of poverty and disease, particularly AIDS*

Income inequality	Between 1975 and 1991, the income of the poorest 60% of the population dropped by about 35%. By 1996, the gulf between rich and poor had grown even larger.
Economically active people in productive activities in the informal sector in 1995	1.7 million *The informal sector accounts for 7% of South Africa's gross domestic product and 18% of employment. 80% of the informal sector workers are Africans and 60% are women.*
South Africans living in poverty (1996)	Almost 57% *The number of poor households has risen by 27% between 1995 and 1999, even though the economy grew at an average annual rate of 2.3%.*
Number of official languages	11
Largest home languages:	
Sotho/Pedi/Tswana	24.9%
Zulu	22.7%
Xhosa	17.7%
Afrikaans	14.3%
Largest religious grouping	Christian *There are also large Muslim, Jewish and Hindu communities in South Africa.*
South Africans with access to electricity	56%
Households with a telephone	9% *90% of white households, 11% of African households, and only 1% of rural households. The cell phone industry has taken off at virtually rocket-speed in South Africa.*

Economic context

Economically South Africa is characterised by deep inequities, high levels of poverty and unemployment, and relatively slow economic growth. There are some promising signs of economic regeneration – for example, the inflation rate seems to be well under control and sound structures and policies are in place. However, the extended slowdown in the South African economy has led to lower growth rates.

One of the most complex challenges for South Africa continues to be the difficulty of the market to create employment. Since 1994, South Africa has, in fact, experienced massive retrenchments in industry and a growth in unemployment amongst both school-leavers and adults. Statistics South Africa estimates that current unemployment is around 22.5%, although other experts are contesting these figures. Unemployment rates are highest amongst young people, with youth unemployment estimated at 53.9%.

The structural problems of the South African economy began to manifest themselves in the 1970s, and intensified in the 1980s. A balance of payments deficit, combined with the effects of massive state overspending and international economic isolation, resulted in growing debt and a dramatic increase in the rate of inflation. Simultaneously, world gold price took a dive. By 1990, South Africa had a zero economic growth rate.

Despite the wealth of South Africa relative to its neighbours, there is an enormous legacy of poverty and inequality. South Africa has one of the highest income inequalities in the world. Workers with no schooling comprise almost 12% of total employment; yet earn just 4.4% of total income. Graduates earn almost 15% of total earnings, while having just over 4% of jobs (Bot et al., 2000, p. 77).

The link between economic revival and levels of education is well researched. There is evidence that progress in education is a key determinant of long-run economic performance and income redistribution (RSA, 1996e).

The economic challenges facing South Africa largely frame its education challenge.

School education system and governance

The South African Constitution (RSA, 1996d) provides for a federal system with a central national government and nine provincial governments with clearly described functions. Four management levels can be distinguished within the education system:

- *Central government with its Ministry of Education and national Department of Education*
  The main functions at this level are the:
  - coordination of education at national level;
  - formulation of national policy and;
  - monitoring of implementation.

  The National Education Policy Act (RSA 1996a) gives the Minister of Education the power to determine national norms and standards for educational planning, provision, governance, monitoring and evaluation. In determining policy, the Minister must take into account the competence of provincial legislatures, and the relevant provisions of any provincial law relating to education. NEPA embodies the principle of co-operative governance, elaborated in Schedule Three of the Constitution (Department of Education, 2000e, p. 6). The national sphere has sole responsibility for higher education. The framing of laws and the management of administrative systems for general and further education are the shared responsibility of the national and provincial spheres.

- *Nine provincial governments, each with its own member of the executive council for education and education department*
  The main functions at this level are the delivery of education in accordance with national policy at provincial, districts and school levels. Consequently, provincial powers and those devolved by the provinces to regions, district and educational institutions must align with the goals of equity, redress, quality and democracy.

- *District level*
  Provinces vary in the structuring and allocated functions of districts, but generally there is a trend – in terms of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996c) – to delegate responsibilities for implementation and supervision to district levels.

- *School level*
  The South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996c) promotes access to quality education without discrimination, and makes schooling compulsory for children aged 7 to 14. The Act provides for two types of schools – independent schools and public schools. The school funding norms outlined in SASA prioritise redress and target poverty in funding allocations to the public schooling system (Department of Education, 2000e, p. 6).

The Act also provides for a philosophy and system of school-based management. In fact, community involvement in school management has been one of the significant educational developments in the broader arena of democratisation. The South African Schools Act has introduced democratically elected and representative school governing bodies consisting of the head of the school, parents, educators, non-educator staff and (in secondary school) learners. All governing bodies have prescribed responsibilities, powers, functions and duties, for example:

- determining the language and admission policies of the school;
- suspending learners from attending the school;
- promoting the best interests of the school;
- adopting a code of conduct for learners at the school;
- supporting the staff in the performance of their professional functions;
- administering and controlling the school's property;
- recommending to the Head of Department the appointment of staff.

Additional functions may be allocated to a governing body if it has the ability and means to carry them out, for example:

- maintaining and improving the school's property, buildings and grounds;
- determining the extramural curriculum and the choice of subject options;
- purchasing textbooks and equipment for the school.

The school education system in reality terms

Extremely serious flaws and inequities continue to exist in the school system. The Star (2001b, p. 12), a Johannesburg daily newspaper, wrote in a recent editorial:

"... In South Africa there are not just a few, not only a small percentage, not a tiny minority, not the odd quaint and curious rural school without ... basic amenities ... A quarter of the [Eastern Cape's] state schools are without toilets. Yes, without toilets."

According to the South African auditor-general's report to parliament based on an audit of provincial education departments between September 1998 and January 2000 (The Star, 2001a, p. 7) poor facilities seem to influence learners' pass rates directly:

"A sample of schools (in Gauteng), which had experienced a shortage of classrooms, was analysed. It was found that none of them had performed well in the 1988 examinations, and the low attendance experienced was aggravated by the heat, high rainfalls, and bush encroachment."

In fact, the number of schools in excellent and good condition has decreased significantly, indicating that investments in infrastructure have not been adequately maintained. The number of buildings in good condition has declined from 9,000 to 4,000, with at least 12,000 buildings in need of repair. The Department is currently exploring the minimum learning conditions necessary for every learning site, especially in terms of specific physical and resource conditions (Department of Education, 2001, p. 17).

The auditor-general's report (The Star, 2001, p. 7) refers to the Gauteng Education Department's inexplicable under spending R12,7 million on textbooks in the 1997/1998 financial year, yet stating in 1997 that 'additional textbooks for Grades 2 and 12 for 1998 would not be considered due to budget constraints'. This seems to be symptomatic of the management problems generally plaguing provincial education departments.

Educational management capacity is fragile at all levels due to a shortage of skilled and capable personnel, and lack of support and training (Department of Education 2001: 37). Another problem has been the entrenched bureaucratic and hierarchical management practices inherited from apartheid traditions (Department of Education 2001: 7).

As revealed in 1997 by the School Register of Needs inequities in the school system were deep and wide-ranging (Department of Education 2001:16). In 1996, one in four schools had no water within walking distance, and nearly one in ten had to get their water from dams and rivers. Over half (57%) did not have electricity. Over half (52%) had pit latrines for toilets, and 13% had no ablution facilities at all. Nationally, 57 499 classrooms were needed. The level of library provisioning was appalling, with 72% of schools having no library collection. Approximately half of the schools in the most rural provinces had no sports facilities. However, physical resources alone account for only about 30% in the variability in performance in schools (Bot et al., 2000, p. 81). Many researchers have commented on the considerable time lost to teaching and learning in South African schools through for example teacher and learner absenteeism and general unproductivity, poor management, extra-curricular activities, staff training and school celebrations (Reeves, 2000, p. 68).

South Africa’s poor matric results reflect the general poor performance of the system (Department of Education, 2001, p. 35; Ministry of Education, 2001). Although the pass rate for 2000 increased by 9% compared to the 49% of 1999, only 14% of those who wrote the Senior Certificate Examination in 2000 passed with an exemption making them eligible for entry into higher learning. Approximately 250,000 students annually are considered failures because they failed to pass matric, even though they have completed 12 years or more of schooling. The low pass rates throughout the education system result in a serious wastage of resources (Bot, 2000, pp. 122-123).

In 1995 South Africa came last of the 41 countries participating in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (Bot 2000:122). Despite a 'humanities bias' (Bot, 2000, p. 123) in South African schools, it has also been found that: “There is widespread and growing concern among researchers that literacy and numeracy skills are not being systematically developed in South African primary schools.” (Vinjevold, 2000, p. 72).

However, substantial progress has been made since 1994 in providing a uniform and higher quality education system. Aspects of this progress are reflected below (Bot et al., 2000, pp. 4, 103; Bot, 2000, pp. 118-129; Department of Education, 2001, pp. 7, 12, 16-17; Ministry of Education, 2001).

Progress in education provisioning since 1994

- Education expenditure by government has increased from R31.8 billion in 1994 to R51.1 billion in 2000. At almost 6 percent of GDP, South Africa has one of the highest rates of government investment in education in the world.
- Expenditure in for example the Eastern Cape and Northern Province – two of the poorest provinces – improved in 1997/1998 by 49% and 36.9% respectively. Inequities between provinces have been reduced significantly: in 1995 provincial per learner spending ranged from 62% to 168% of the national average, the range in 1999 was 85% to 130%.
- Through the Reconstruction and Development Programme, R1.4 billion was allocated for school construction and maintenance between 1995-1997.

- Between 1994 and 1998, the school system grew by almost 773 000 learners, from 11.5m in 1994 to 12.3m in 1998. There are 29 386 primary and secondary schools, 375 000 educators, 5 000 inspectors and subject advisers, and 68 000 officials, managers and support personnel.
- The secondary school system grew rapidly by 17% compared with a growth of 2% in primary enrolment. Whereas 69% of learners were in primary grades in 1994, the figure for 1998 is 66%. In other words, more learners are staying in school for longer.
- Access to primary and secondary schooling improved significantly, with near universal enrolment in primary schooling and 86% enrolment in secondary schooling by 1998.
- Whereas in 1994, 36% of educators were unqualified or underqualified, this figure dropped to 26% in 1998.
- Average per learner expenditure has increased from R2 111 in 1995 to R3 253 in 2000.
- Learner: educator ratios have improved from an average of 47:1 in 1994 to 35:1 in 2000.
- The average number of learners to a classroom has decreased from 43 in 1996 to 35 in 2000.
- Classroom shortages decreased from 49% (1996) to 40% (2000). However, it is estimated that the total cost of eliminating backlogs is in the region of R9.6 billion.
- Access to electricity has improved from 40% (1996) to 53% (2000) of all schools.
- In 1996, 40% of all schools nation-wide had no access to water, and in 2000 this was reduced to 34%.
- There is a 68% improvement in the provision of sanitation, although 16.6% of learners continue to be without toilet facilities.
- Schools with no telephones have decreased from 59% in 1996 to 34% in 2000.
- The number of schools with computers have increased from 2 241 in 1996 to 6 481 in 2000. There should be universal connectivity by 2010.

Inter-governmental relations and 'co-operative governance' between national and provincial government structures - pillars of systemic reform - have been realised by for example the national sphere giving support for systemic reform through (Department of Education, 2001, pp. 11-12):

- the provision of technical support;
- central funding for specific projects;
- collaboration regarding provincial budgeting and;
- deployment of national officials for the purpose of monitoring and support in provinces.

Examples of strengthening inter-governmental co-operation in the last three years include the strengthened administration of the senior certificate examination and the implementation of matric improvement programmes, the improved levels of procurement and delivery of learning support materials, and the development of Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) to provide indicators for the evaluation of equity and redress targets. Better information flow between the national and provincial departments, and regular monitoring and evaluation of provincial activities occur through a quarterly report to the President. Capacity building for better information use and analysis is supported through a grant from the European Union.

The extent and variety of aspects of the education system to be transformed have led to an overstretching of available person power and resources, especially given the unsuitability of many of the inherited administrative structures to deal with the required changes.
A further impetus was given to this initiative by the current education implementation plan, *Tirisano*, launched by the Minister of Education on 27 July 1999 as an education mobilization campaign. The heart of *Tirisano* (a Setswana word meaning 'working together') is co-operative governance in education and it is geared towards greater accountability. Professor Asmal announced nine priorities:

1. making provincial systems work by making co-operative governance work;
2. the elimination of illiteracy among adults and youths in five years;
3. schools becoming centres of community and cultural life;
4. ending conditions of squalor and physical degradation in schools;
5. developing the professional quality of the teaching force;
6. ensuring the success of active learning through outcomes-based education (OBE);
7. creating a vibrant further education and training (FET) system to equip the youth and adults to meet the 21st century’s social and economic needs;
8. implementing a rational, seamless higher education system that grasps the intellectual and professional challenges facing South Africans in the 21st century;

9. dealing with HIV/Aids urgently and purposefully in and through the education and training system.

A significant aspect of South African education during the past decade has been the growth in private education, including both independent schools and home schooling. Since 1994 the number of independent schools has quadrupled. In 2000 there were more than 2 000 independent schools, and they enrol more than 3% of all learners (Bot, 2000, p. 126).

The fit between national government and its partner provincial governments has not always been a comfortable one. This can possibly be expected from a young and developing democracy in a country burdened by inherited inequalities, injustices, dysfunctional administrative systems and traumatised psyches. Especially since 1998, the national Department of Education has intervened more overtly in provinces in order to 'safeguard key transformation initiatives' (Department of Education, 2000e, p. 14; Department of Education, 2001, p. 11). Whilst there are strong arguments for this stance in order to support seriously faltering management and administrative processes in some provinces, there are also serious concerns regarding its constitutional implications for provincial authority, not to mention suspicion of creeping centralisation.

National qualification system

A National Qualifications Framework has long been an ideal of various sectors in the South African training and education systems.
Prior to 1994 two systems for the development of human potential were in operation in South Africa: the one aimed at skills development and driven by the Department of Labour, the other aimed at formal education and driven by various racially segregated departments of education. An Interministerial Working Group eventually did major work on bringing education and training together within one integrated system.

The South African Qualifications Authority Act (RSA, 1996b) provided for the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The aim of the NQF is the "recognition of learning and development by the awarding of credits and qualifications". The NQF provides for flexibility of delivery, portability of credentials and recognition of prior learning by promoting modular approaches, expressed through 'unit standards' and registered programmes. To support integration all components employ outcomes-based approaches (Department of Education, 2001, p. 18).

The South African Qualifications Authority establishes standards, quality assurance systems, and management information systems to support the NQF. This includes ensuring that standards and qualifications registered on the NQF are internationally comparable and consistent (Department of Education, 2001, p. 18).
The joint launch on 23 April 2001, by the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Education of the Human Resource Development Strategy reinforced the resolve to establish an integrated education, training and development strategy (Department of Education, 2001, pp. 6, 33-34).

The NQF takes into account the needs of all learners, starting from early childhood and continuing on to adulthood. In terms of this lifelong learning approach, the NQF is made up of three main groupings of education and training, called **bands**. Learning in these bands takes place at different **levels**. The three bands consist of the General Education and Training (GET) band, incorporating a reception year – to be implemented formally from 2002 – and learners up to Grade 9, as well as an equivalent adult basic education qualification. The Further Education and Training (FET) band comprises Grades 10-12 in school education, out-of-school youth and adult learners. A range of industry-based and non-formal providers also fall into the FET band, including technical, youth and community colleges. The Higher Education (HE) band incorporates national diplomas and certificates and all degrees.

The national Department of Education has the following significant comment on the NQF (Department of Education, 2001, p. 18):

"There are many complexities in the NQF approach ... Too great an emphasis on pre-set standards and specified outcomes runs a risk of blocking innovation and localisation, and compromising the qualitative dimensions of learning and classroom processes that are inherent in inputs, but not easily captured in outcomes. Administratively, the registration of standards and providers nationally, the processes of appraisal and quality assurance, and the management of information are immense tasks. The bureaucratic requirements ... run the risk of becoming ends in themselves, ... creating a monolith with enormous inertia. In addition, we run the risk of creating structures that are cumbersome to operate efficiently and lacking in capacity. Ultimately, the quality of the system depends ... on the creativity of curriculum designers and educators in their institutions ...."

Significantly, too, no solutions to these problems are offered by the national department.

National Qualifications Framework Structure			
NQF Level	**Bands**	**Types of Qualifications and Certificates**	
8	Higher Education and Training Band	• Doctorates, further research degrees	
7		• Higher degrees, professional qualifications	
6		• First degrees, Higher Diplomas	
5		• Diplomas, Occupational Certificates	
4	Further Education and Training Band	• School/College/Training Certificates /Mix of units from all (NGOs)	
3		• School/College/Training Certificates / Mix of units from all (NGOs)	
2		• School/College/Training Certificates Mix of units from all (NGOs)	
1	General Education and Training Band	• Senior Phase	• ABET Level 4
		• Intermediate Phase	• ABET Level 3
		• Foundation Phase	• ABET Level 2
		• Pre-school/ ECD	• ABET Level 1

An outcomes-based approach

The South African education and training system is based in its entirety on an outcomes-based approach. 'Outcomes' are the demonstrated end results of learning. These results could include knowledge, skills, concepts and values.

In a curriculum design perspective, outcomes are also statements of expected learner activities and observable demonstrations of learning. The South African approach to outcomes-based education and training provides for educational principles such as:

- focusing on the learner and learning rather than on teaching and training;
- developing both the processes and products of learning;
- integrated, holistic and life-related learning experiences;
- the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes by the learner;
- authentic, continuous assessment and;
- life-long learning and development by all persons.

South Africa has defined a single set of twelve overarching 'critical outcomes' that inform all education and training. These critical outcomes state the competencies necessary to a vibrant democracy and to economic development that all aspects of learning should lead towards. They are:

Learners will

- identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking;
- work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community;
- organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
- collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;
- communicate effectively using visual, symbolic, and/or language skills in various modes;
- use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others;
- demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

In order to contribute to the full personal development of each learner, and social and economic development at large, it must be the intention underlying any programme of learning to make an individual aware of the importance of:

- reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;
- participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;
- being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;
- exploring education and career opportunities;
- developing entrepreneurial opportunities.

Curriculum design must express the critical outcomes, and refine them into specific outcomes, knowledge and skills in 'fields of learning' or 'learning areas'.
The outcomes within the National Qualifications Framework apply to all learners. This will enable learners to move more easily between different learning sites, for example between schools and technical and community colleges.
Officially no learner is excluded from opportunities to demonstrate outcomes, and separate outcomes have not been designed for learners with special education needs or for adults taking basic education courses. Different programmes are designed to allow for differences in learning abilities, pace and styles as well as for different sites of learning.
The shift to an outcomes-based approach is a major one of the nature of a paradigm shift affecting almost every aspect of the education system. This explains in part why the implementation of the new curriculum has met with so much resistance and has left so many educators stranded helplessly as they are trying to come to grips with what they perceive as a new mind and habit changing dogma.

Partnership
The government accepts that it alone cannot build a high quality education system, but that it needs creative and dynamic partnerships with civil society. Peter Buckland states (Buckland, 2000, p. 23):

"... Reform of the education system requires the attention of more than the education community. Education is too important a factor in development to be left to the education system alone."

Several partnerships have been established with for example teacher unions and organisations, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and the international community.
The Business Trust (a partnership between business and government) has for example implemented programmes through three NGOs over five

years, namely READ in 1200 primary schools, the Joint Education Trust in 600 high schools, and the National Business Initiative-Colleges Collaboration Fund in all 152 technical colleges.

The international community has played an important role to contribute to education transformation. Development co-operation partners such as DANIDA, USAID, SIDA, CIDA, DfID (UK), The Netherlands, Belgium, IrishAid, the Finnish government, and the European Union, have been instrumental in the provision of technical and financial assistance to the national and provincial departments of education. The Ministry has a strong collaborative relationship with the UNESCO office (Department of Education, 2001, p. 39).

The Transformation Process

Introduction

The political and social challenge of South Africa is to redress past divisions in the spirit of justice and equity. At the same time it needs to celebrate the cultural and social diversity upon which an innovative and enriched nation can be built.

Educational reform has been a central part of the country's reconstruction and development project. Therefore, the transformation of the education system needs to contribute to rebuilding the nation in the context of the past and to address the emerging challenges of the global era. Put differently, the task of transformation is to confront two challenges (Department of Education, 2001, p. 2):

- *The post-apartheid challenge*
  South Africans have to overcome the devastation of apartheid, and develop a system of education that builds democracy, human dignity, equality and social justice.
- *The global competitiveness challenge*
  A system of lifelong learning has to be established to enable South Africans to respond to the enormous economic and social challenges of the 21st Century with the required the knowledge, skills and competencies.

Transformation phases

A recent national Department of Education report (Department of Education, 2001, pp. 2, 4, 7) identifies three broad periods of transformation since 1994.

In the first phase of education reform (1994-1997), the Ministry of Education confronted three inter-related tasks: dismantling apartheid structures and creating a unified education system; creating a more equitable system of financing, and creating a policy framework. The emphasis was therefore on replacing minority rule and balkanised, racially resourced organisations, institutions and governance with a democratic order marked by non-racialism and non-sexism. The government developed visionary policies, new organisations, institutions, governance structures, and resourcing patterns. These were supported by legal and regulatory policy frameworks to facilitate change and create the conditions and structures for effective transformative actions.

The second period (1998-2000) deepened systemic transformation by a process of targeted actions focused on implementation and delivery through for example the *Tirisano* programme.

The third phase is now focused on creating greater equity and quality of learning conditions, and improving standards and learner outcomes. A key feature of this phase is the deepening reform of institutional processes in all sectors.

Vision and Goals

Education needs to enable South Africans to achieve national developmental and economic goals, but more than that, to improve the quality of their lives and contribute to a peaceful, concerned and democratic nation.

The following vision was formulated for education in South Africa:

- The vision for South Africa encompasses a prosperous, united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens, leading productive, self-fulfilled lives.
- The realisation of this vision requires appropriate lifelong learning, training and development to empower people to participate effectively in all the processes of a democratic society

and to excel in fields like human and natural resource development, mathematical and economic sciences, human and natural sciences, the arts and technology.

Systemic transformation

The election of a democratic government in South Africa in 1994 introduced the encompassing transformation of the South African government system as well as virtually every facet of civil society, including the transformation of education and training.

Education has been seen as an integral part of the broader South African transformation project, which in its turn is unfolding within the complex processes of globalisation.

The human rights basis for a transformed South African society guarantees access to and enjoyment of educational services irrespective of race, colour, gender, gender orientation, age, religion, ability or language. Education and training have thus been reshaped on the basis of a new vision and new goals addressing issues of access, equity, redress, quality, efficiency and democracy.

A series of policy frameworks and accompanying implementation plans have been conceptualised. A constellation of systemic transformation reform tasks has been tackled, including:

- democratising the system and introducing transparent processes;
- establishing new education management structures;
- restructuring school governance and funding;
- establishing an integrated approach to education and training;
- introducing a national qualifications framework;
- introducing an outcomes-based approach in all education and training;
- retraining educators in order to cope with a new education framework and practices;
- upgrading under-trained educators;
- ensuring access to compulsory basic education for all learners and;
- restructuring post-compulsory further and higher education systems.

Lately – with the benefits of a longer time perspective, a more considered and less fervouresly driven agenda and the practical lessons of implementation – a saner mood of reflection, review, critical analysis and reconceptualisation has set in.

Whilst the basic vision and goals, the agenda of democratisation and the outcomes-based curriculum approach have been maintained, clearer reform priorities and sounder implementation and management practices are being introduced.

Budgetary framework and redress

The driving factor in government expenditure on education has been the need for redress and equity. This the government has done through prioritising overall social services spending, allocating provincial and school budget allocations on the basis of redress criteria and rationalising teacher deployment. Despite the logical and laudable aims of the latter initiative, it has lead to such controversy and adverse effects that the national Department of Education has reconsidered this option.

Current government spending on education as a percentage of total government spending and of the GDP is relatively high if compared with international norms. Thus increases in future funding of education will come mainly from efficiency gains, rather than through an increased proportion of taxes. There is therefore a compulsion on all levels of education to be more prudent in financial management.

Despite a significant increase in total expenditure on school education, expenditure on adult education, early childhood education and special needs education has declined due to the need for addressing needs in the formal schooling system.

Two major mechanisms have been used to redress inequities. The first mechanism was the introduction of an equitable shares formula applied to the allocation of provincial revenue from the national budget vote to promote inter-provincial equity. Various provincial variables go into this formula, including the number of enrolled pupils. Moves towards equity have been to the tune of an increase of 30% in the budgets of the most rural schools. Unfortunately, an increase in budgets does not necessarily result in proper budgetary management.

The second mechanism is the *National Norms and Standards for School Funding* (Department of Education, 1998). This policy document provides a framework for allocating recurrent costs on the basis of need defined by physical conditions, facilities and degree of crowding of the school, teacher : pupil ratios, the availability of basic services and the relative poverty of the community. The main effect of this formula is that the poorest 40% of schools will receive 60% of the provincial schooling recurrent costs budget allocation, and the least poor 20% will get 5% of the resources (Department of Education, 2001, p.15).

Another driver of redress has been the movement towards a more equal educator : learner ratio. At present, each province is applying its own targets within national norms. This mechanism has unfortunately had the adverse effect of increasing salary expenditure in many provinces, thereby replacing needed non-personnel expenditure. This thwarts the government's intent to reduce the ratio of personnel to non-personnel expenditure to 80:20 in the long term (Department of Education, 2001, p. 13).
A further effect of this initiative has been that parents are being forced to make larger financial contributions. Parents' ability to pay therefore influences the quality of service provided at school level.

According to the national Department of Education (2001:14) the majority of provinces were able to reflect positive changes in their 1999/2000 budgets, but there are still inadequate allocations for non-personnel functions, in particular for learning support materials and school stationery given the requirements of the new curriculum. An additional R1.5 billion will be allocated for school and classroom development, and maintenance and upgrading of schools. An amount in excess of R1 billion per year over three years has also been allocated by provincial departments for the provision, development and delivery of learning support materials, beginning with the 2002 school year.
Other issues to which the government is committing additional resources are implementing the pre-school Reception Year, beginning in the urban and rural nodal development points, adult literacy and skills development and innovation in school design and building (Department of Education, 2001, p. 15).

The Education Policy Reserve Fund (PRF), established in 1998/1999, enables the national department to provide smaller grants to priority areas, encouraging innovation with possibilities of replication on a larger scale. It assists, for example, Education Management Development (including school governing body training and development) and teacher development for Curriculum 2005 (Department of Education, 2001, p. 16).

Curriculum transformation

The imperatives of the global environment and transformation in South Africa demand a deep going rethinking of the basics of education – what is meant by knowledge and what it means to learn and to teach.

For example, in a redefinition of the kinds of knowledge required in an increasingly complex world, emotional and social life skills are becoming more central.

The effort to transform the curriculum has been one of the government's far-reaching social projects since 1994. In fact, this process is right at the heart of the efforts to reconcile national democratic and global imperatives. Centrally integrated in this project is also the process of redefining 'quality' in the context of the new century.

Launched in March 1997 and implemented in schools from 1998, the new curriculum framework, Curriculum 2005, reconceptualises the nature of learning and teaching through the adoption of an outcomes-based system. In contrast to the traditional 'content-based' methods of learning and teaching, Curriculum 2005 seeks to place the emphasis on what learners should know and be able to do at the end of a course of learning and teaching. The assessment, qualifications, competency, and skills-based framework of Curriculum 2005 encourage the development of curriculum models aligned to the NQF.

Curriculum 2005 relies on three overlapping traditions or philosophies:

- a learner-centred approach;
- an outcomes-based approach;
- the integration of knowledge.

These views imply radical changes from the traditional approaches. Educators are considered facilitators and mediators of learning rather than direct providers of knowledge. Knowledge is considered to be a social construct best formulated and contested through human interaction.

The focus on learner-involvement requires that schools and teachers take major roles in curriculum design: teachers know learners' experiences and needs. Teachers must also take major responsibilities for assessment of learners' achievements (Department of Education, 2001, p. 20).

Curriculum 2005 defined specific outcomes and standards of achievement in eight learning areas and emphasised competencies rather than particular knowledge. The outcomes had to be defined loosely enough to enable flexibility at the school level, but tightly enough to represent common achievements. The specific outcomes delineated learning areas more broadly than in traditional 'subjects', building links from subject knowledge to social, economic and personal dimensions of learning and the multicultural character of South African society. The policy recommends 'continuous assessment' to promote learning and enable the assessment of competence and complex performances. Assessments cannot be done simply through written tests; they need to be made in the context of authentic performances (Department of Education, 2001, pp. 21-22).

The new curriculum has caused wide controversy. The design of Curriculum 2005 is said by many to be beyond the skills and experiences of educators. Much of the criticism of has been of its implementation. In the context of limited resources for the sustained training and development of educators, the curriculum has led to widespread confusion and discouragement.
The Department of Education summarises these problems as follows (2001, p. 22):

"It became clear that some shortcomings in the basic documents were compounded by diverse interpretations ... Few teachers and trainers had first-hand knowledge of the kinds of curriculum and teaching envisaged; few schools had management structures and professional capacity to manage the changes. Where schools and teachers embraced learner-centred education, they often interpreted it as laissez faire activity and group work in which the focus on outcomes and needs for careful design were lost. Alternatively, too excessive a focus on outcomes led to simplistic algorithms for curriculum design, in which attention to learner-centred approaches was lost. Concern to integrate learning areas in some cases diminished attention to progression of concept development from grade to grade. Even then, integration of knowledge presented from different learning areas often occurred with inadequate concern for how and whether integration occurred within the learners’ minds, or whether learners were integrating theory with practice, in-school experience with daily-life experience. 'Continuous assessment' was interpreted by some as frequent testing, becoming a nightmare of accounting and record keeping in the classroom, interfering with teaching and learning. Training programmes and follow up support were generally too few in number, and often did not model the approaches they were advocating. Frequently they assumed top-down, bureaucratic approaches to the documents and lost sight of teachers’ experiences and existing professional insights as critical inputs to their learning."

These severe problems with the new curriculum prompted the Minister of Education to appoint a Curriculum Review Committee on 8 February 2000. Its report was released on 31 May 2000. This review contributed to an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the South African education system and identified several improvements to be made to the design, streamlining and implementation of Curriculum 2005.

The central findings were that (Department of Education, 2001, p. 22; Review Committee, 2000, pp. 18-21):

- there was wide support for the curriculum changes envisaged (especially its underlying principles);
- levels of understanding of the policy and its implications were highly varied;
- there were basic flaws in the structure and design of the policy. In particular, the language was often complex and confusing. Notions of sequence, concept development, content and progression were poorly developed, and the scope of the outcomes and learning areas resulted in crowding of the curriculum overall;
- there was a lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policies;
- training programmes, in concept, duration and quality, were often inadequate;
- learning support materials were variable in quality, and often unavailable;
- follow-up support for teachers and schools was far too little;
- timeframes for implementation were unmanageable, unrealistic and too rushed.

Work on these improvements and the streamlining of the curriculum is currently underway. This will detail the curriculum in simple language and indicate content, progression and specific achievement expectations at various levels and phases. More time will be allocated to literacy and numeracy teaching. All stakeholders will be involved in the process with the Department playing a coordinating role. A new curriculum policy is expected to be announced in November 2001 for implementation in 2004 (Ministry of Education, 2001).

The South African experience of curriculum transformation is a lesson to those trying to straddle the needs of a developing nation and the challenges of the global era. Whilst it appears to be relatively simple to envision ways in which the education system can address emerging goals, it remains important as well to focus on the practical steps needed to turn an under-performing system into a performing one.

The Department of Education believes it is in a different situation now to re-implement Curriculum 2005 (Department of Education, 2001, pp. 23-24):

"Administrative and support systems are stronger, general understanding of the underlying curriculum principles is better, there exists a wider pool of professional expertise and experience to lead the changes, and the National Curriculum Statement is being strengthened."

Parallel to the Curriculum 2005 processes and those for the GET Band, the Further Education and Training Band is being developed as a single national framework for schools, colleges and private providers.
The FET is also outcomes-based and learner-centred, with unit standards and registered programmes drawn from twelve fields of learning. It will lead to a single certificate, the FETC, with programmes of two types: general/academic/vocational (offered in schools) and vocationally specific (offered in technical colleges). The curriculum will have a fundamental component (communication and mathematical literacy), a core (in the area of specialisation) and electives. Assessment for the FETC will incorporate classroom-based (continuous) assessment as well as externally based assessment. In 2001, national examinations will be conducted in the key subjects of Mathematics, Languages (English), Physical Science, Biology and Accounting, and one other subject, on a rotational basis.
Several curriculum-related initiatives to improve and ensure quality in education have also been launched by the national Department of Education. These range from the provision of facilities and materials, through management and information systems to human resource development. For example, the *Norms and Standards for Educator Development* redefines the roles of teachers. Pilot studies are in progress on approaches to school evaluation and school improvement that give particular emphasis to schools managing their own evaluation and planning. Developmental appraisal of teachers is also being piloted. A new admission age policy, allowing children to attend school from the year they turn seven, was implemented from January 2000. It is of interest to note that this restriction will save the state R1.4 billion per year (Schroenn, 2000, p. 24).

In order to improve productivity, educators are now required to be at school for at least seven hours per day and to work a 40-hour week. They have to attend 80 hours of in-service training each year (Bot, 2000, p. 123).

Values in Education

Because of its past, South African society needs to rebuild its moral fabric. One way of doing this is to promote a set of shared values through which South Africans can build greater social justice, equity, democracy and human dignity (Department of Education, 2000b). However, in many ways the global economy and its accompanying culture are dominated by the antithesis of such values, for example individualism, materialism, competition and often violent concepts of masculinity. The replacement of human values with market values has particularly dire consequences for an inequitable nation like South Africa. The education system has a special responsibility to confront growing individualism and fragmentation by laying a strong basis for community identification and social responsibility.

In fact, values have underpinned the educational process in South Africa since 1994. For example, the National Education Policy Act of 1996 early established a value-driven framework for educational transformation. It approaches values as inextricably linked to the principle of redress.

The NQF specifies 'critical outcomes' that must be met across the education and training system. These outcomes emphasise the importance of critical, contextual and relational thinking skills, decision makings skills, respect for and co-operation with others, and human resource development.

Curriculum 2005 approaches knowledge as being socially constructed. Because of this, learners are encouraged to evaluate knowledge critically, understand the context within which knowledge is articulated, and explore the extent to which such views apply to their own lives. The values of critical, rational and reflective thinking as well as participatory skills are central. Human rights, anti-racism, ant-sexism, equity, democracy, justice, equality, peace and common citizenship also feature centrally. These globally acknowledged values take on additional, particular meanings for South Africans. Values in education are also clearly reflected in the redesign of the curriculum.

A commitment to democracy underpins transformation in education. In terms of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996c) democratically elected school governing bodies are delegated with important governance responsibilities, including local policy formulation. In this way, education seeks not only to incorporate values into educational content, but also strives to model the values of democracy and human rights through its social relations and decision-making processes.

Confronting HIV/Aids

The massive HIV/Aids pandemic in SA has been described as explosive. HIV levels among pregnant women, for example, has risen from less than 1% in 1990 to almost 23% in 1999 (Bot et al., 2000, p. 90).

A recent report released by UNAids (2000) suggests that South Africa has the fastest growing HIV/Aids epidemic in the world, with more people infected than in any other country in the world. The report estimates that over four million South Africans (about one in every eight adults) are HIV positive. Prevalence rates are highest among young people, especially teenage girls (Department of Education, 2001, p. 36).

The national Department of Education believes that “While enormous strides have been made in awareness of Aids, there has been little evidence of concomitant behavioural changes ...” (Department of Education, 2001, p. 38).

The Metropolitan Life Group (Marais, 2000, p. 5) estimates that South Africa will be in the most devastating throes of the Aids epidemic by the year 2005, when they project that more than six million South Africans will be infected. They estimate that by then about 2.5 million people would have died of an Aids-related illness. It is estimated that more than 45.000 educators or about 13% of educators are HIV positive (Bot, 2000, p.124).

Recent studies by the Department of Health (Department of Education 2001: 36) indicate that between 1998 and 1999, for the first time, the estimated increase in HIV prevalence was not as exponential as it was between 1990 and 1998. This pattern suggests that the pandemic has entered a period of stabilisation.

Insufficient data make precise predictions on the effects of HIV/Aids difficult. However, it is clear that the impact of HIV/Aids on education transformation threatens to be vast. The following indicators seem to illustrate the overall trend (Department of Education, 2001, pp. 36-37):

- The gains made in educator to pupil ratios since 1994, dropping from 1:47 to 1:34, are being seriously threatened as educator : pupil ratios are expected to reach 1:50 by 2006.
- Drop-out rates due to poverty, illness, lack of motivation and trauma are likely to increase.

- Absenteeism among children who are caregivers or heads of households, those who help to supplement family income, and those who are ill, is bound to rise.
- Population growth rates are expected to slow and alter the structure of the population. As the proportion of potential parents (20-40 years) declines, numbers of orphaned children increase and poverty deepens, school enrolment rates will decline and dropout rates will rise. There may be negative school population growth in places.
- There may be an increased demand among sick parents for early childhood education, and an increase in pre-school intake. (Almost 16% - i.e. about 6.5m - of South Africa's total population are under the age of 7.).
- There may be a greater demand for second-chance education by learners returning to education after an absence from the system, or for more flexible learning opportunities for those who are ill, caregivers, or wage earners. On the other hand, these demands may be offset by fewer births and more deaths of under-fives.
- Significant numbers of educators will be ill, absent, and dying. Many others will be preoccupied with family crises.
- The already fragile management situation in education will only become worse as the pandemic takes further hold.

The response by the national Department of Education is focussed on three programmatic objectives in the *Tirisano* implementation plan (Department of Education, 2001, p. 37):

- awareness, information and advocacy;
- HIV/Aids within the curriculum;
- planning for HIV/Aids and the education system.

National budget measures to address social expenditure concerns include an estimated additional R150 million per year for HIV/Aids (Department of Education, 2001, p. 15).

The importance of the continuing fight against Aids is highlighted by the national Department of Education (2001, p. 38): "The success of our reconstruction and development project largely depends upon our continued innovation and determination in this area."

Negative tendencies of globalisation: threats to democratic education

While there are several positive challenges and opportunities in the global era, there are also negative tendencies, which have the capacity to undermine the developing world.

Three of the more worrisome tendencies are discussed briefly (Department of Education, 2000e, pp. 34-39).

- *Human capital, commodification and privatisation*
  There is a growing 'human capital' view that tends to sees education in terms of an economic investment. Students become 'clients' and a means to improve the economy. Closely related is the growing commodification of education, with the corresponding pressures of privatisation.
- *Culture, values, knowledge and information*
  The cultural consequences of globalisation could seriously affect the achievement of a peaceful and democratic South Africa. The dominant values of globalisation seem to be determined by global capitalism, for example materialism, individuality and competition. Recent sociological research (Segel & Pelo, 1999; Wood & Jewkens, 1998) among young South Africans indicate that young people, particularly in communities characterised by inequalities and fragmented families, associate identity, self-worth, personal power and even the capacity to be 'loved' with material symbols like Nike shoes, taking your girlfriend to McDonalds and the quality of his car. The issue of language and its importance for cultural development, and the epistemology of knowledge are seen as further dangers to the transformation process. The global world is dominated by English as a medium of communication. Multi-lingualism could easily become associated with 'inefficiency'. However, a monolingual global economy threatens the cultural wealth of the nation. Simon Dagut (2000, p. 92) has commented on the use of English only as medium of teaching and learning:

  > "... since many school governing bodies require that teachers - whose own English often tends to be fairly shaky - give instruction in English only, many South African classrooms are filled with the depressing sound of pointless class recitations from English textbooks which nobody in the room, including the teacher, properly understands."

  The tendency of globalisation is to define knowledge and information in market terms. The 'knowledge' in the 'information economy' is, to a great degree, western-based and 'Americanised'. It is imperative also to support the local generation of knowledge.
- *The political economy of globalisation*
  The education challenge of the emerging global environment is interlinked with larger political and economic challenges.

Poorly developed nations in terms of the new global logic are faced with economic exclusion and increased social despair. There is a tendency for the information economy to favour a small elite able to 'learn how to learn' and to retrain constantly, leaving behind the vast and growing numbers of those deemed 'without worth' in this context.
This tendency could directly impact transformation. Without national economic growth, developing nations will be unable to increase expenditure in education in real terms.

Future Perspective

Observers of the South African education system are often torn between optimism and pessimism. They could be overwhelmed by the excitement of seeing a developing country, for a brief period the darling of the world on account of a bloodless revolution, moving with aplomb towards the ideal of a fully flown African democracy. However, observers could also be left numbed by the vastness of problems in South African education.

The following list of items to be addressed in the South African school system give an indication of the enormity of the challenges still ahead (Bot et al., 2000, p. 4; Department of Education, 2001, pp. 39-41; Ministry of Education, 2001):

- racism and gender discrimination;
- inequities of the past;
- the creation of a high quality education system, characterised by accountability and transparency;
- strengthening national and provincial systems on the basis of outcomes, performance and professionalism;
- a culture and ethos of active engagement and a sense of purpose, empathy, pride, and achievement;
- knowledge, information, planning and monitoring systems, including the education management information system;
- credible, valid, and reliable budgets, directed towards redress and equity;
- greater poverty targeting in future budgets;
- equitable allocations to early childhood education, special needs and adult education;
- innovative partnerships with NGOs, the private sector and the international community;
- mobilising an active citizenry and widening the participation of civil society through for example school governing bodies;
- strengthening co-operation between and across national and provincial departments;

- greater institutional co-ordination;
- in-service education of school management teams;
- school evaluation and quality assurance;
- equitable provision of textbooks, stationery, electricity, running water, buildings and staff;
- developing programmes in areas of national need, such as science, maths and technology;
- understanding the specific contexts of rural and urban poverty;
- teacher development, focusing on under-qualified educators, and the upgrading of maths and science educators;
- developmental appraisals of educators;
- a programme of national teacher recognition awards;
- building a labour relations framework that encompasses the professional issues of pedagogy and quality outcomes;
- the strengthening of the further education sector;
- a system of flexible and lifelong learning;
- merging the goals of social development and South African identity with those of economic competitiveness in the global context;
- developing robust quality assurance systems, including systemic evaluation against national benchmarks, and regular whole school evaluations;
- school safety, including cracking down on sexual abuse and physical violence.

At the end of 2000 the national Department of Education (Department of Education, 2000e, p. 22) was of the opinion that:
Poor management capacity and imperfect delivery systems are perhaps the most critical challenges facing the South African education system. However, the two issues that completely overshadow the rest are HIV/Aids and poverty. Unless these are successfully managed in a holistic way by South African society, nothing might come of the rainbow nation leading and African Renaissance. There can be little doubt that this struggle will depend heavily on an education system that helps people to acquire the literacy and numeracy skills and

understandings that are required to live not only on African soil under the African sky, but also as fulfilled, dignified and worthy citizens of the world. The call to action is clear: There will be no neither equality nor equity, let alone democracy, without quality in the basics.

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Development of the schools in Austria

Helmut Bachmann[1]

Introduction

First of all I would like to describe and comment critically on a few important aspects of school development in Austria in the last few decades, whereby I will go into more detail concerning the type of discussion in educational political debates, the school partners, as well as the aspect of the endurance of developments.

The second part of this contribution is more strongly focused on development perspectives. The starting point for these considerations is a critique of some examples of the reality of school development in Austria. One part is devoted to quality of steering and connected to the beginning of school autonomy introduced in 1993. In the beginning of this part the development of the school system in Austria is presented within the European context of education.

Perhaps this chapter could become an impulse to return to the basic question of whether the institutionalised educational systems in our Western countries can comply with future political and economic challenges.

Historical and current context of school development in Austria

Ideology seems to play a major role in educational-political development, especially when it concerns public discussions of reforms and their implementation. Every public debate is accompanied by a reduction of a complex content to easily understood catchwords or slogans. 'Quality', which developed out of the school autonomy laws passed in 1993, has become the current leitmotif of our school development debate.

But let's turn our attention first to the recent history of school development in Austria.

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The last comprehensive and political approach to a reform of the Austrian School System took place in the 1970s. For many of teachers of this generation, the comprehensive school represented the attempt to realize the socio-political ideals of equal opportunity in education. The strong concentration on questions of school organization, on structural conditions was understandable in the context of socio-political development at that time. In the following years, this focus on school organization, school laws and structural conditions was the object of critical reflection in educational research (Colemann, 1966 (USA); Rutters, 1979 (Great Britain); the famous longitudinal studies by Fend in Germany; results of the evaluation of comprehensive schools by Petri in Austria). Since then, however, the focus of the international debate on school development has turned increasingly to the pupils. Even when the debate concerns general school reforms, their concrete effects on the learning conditions of the pupils is held up to question.

The discussions of educational issues, as many other areas of public life, were - at that time - strongly dictated by the standpoints of dominating political parties: Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) and the Austrian Peoples Party (ÖVP).
In Austria, educational policy of the 1970s was characterized by conflicts concerning the adoption of the comprehensive school. The SPÖ was determined to establish it in Austria, the ÖVP opposed it. Research and experimental programs for comprehensive schools were finally suspended at the end of 1985 after more than a ten-year period of operation.
The comprehensive school was a politically failed attempt, because school laws in Austria have a constitutional rank, and so the passing of resolutions demands a 2/3 majority. School reforms take a lot of time to be set into practice.
A period of stagnation followed in educational politics. The points of view were at a deadlock and, because of our educational legal framework, the political opponents needed to co-operate in educational reform projects.

Within the last decade a change in paradigms in our background of educational policy has been taking place: instead of nation-wide obligatory models in the sense of centralized control, there is an increasing concentration on decentralization. For the first half of the 1990s 'autonomy' has increasingly become the key concept for the solution to a wide range of school problems. The discussion in Austria surrounding autonomy has also increasingly become the framework for a more general discussion of school reform. This has been greeted with a sense of relief, because it implies that the predictable political polarization of the debates on education in the last few decades will not likely be continued.

In 1990, emerging from a political consensus in both coalition parties in this period (the Social Democrats and the People's Party), a basic agreement was reached for the current federal government with the following priorities:

- simplifying educational administration;
- possibilities for schools to develop their own image;
- maintenance of national minimal standards;
- flexibility of the educational system;
- salary schedules based on weekly teaching hour allotment’s;
- possibility for part time contracts also for tenured faculty;
- co-operation of everyone concerned with the appointments of head posts (Posch et al.).

This phase of school development was accompanied by the beginnings of a new budget policy of economizing and is in the context of reforms in public administration: political leitmotifs like 'cost neutrality' and 'decentralizing' since then have had an enduring influence on educational policy development.

Cost neutrality means that reform measures are not allowed to cause additional costs; this is the basic precondition for the approval of school reform projects. As such, some educators feel it severely restricts reform.

Decentralization can only be understood from the background of the Austrian constitution: 9 provinces make up the federal state of Austria (seven of which are dominated by the conservative People’s Party). Most of the provincial politicians demand more autonomy from the federal government (which has been dominated by the Social Democratic Party for the last few decades). Thus, decentralization has probably more political conflict potential. At the same time it does not mean automatically more freedom for schools because provincial government mostly try to keep power in their hands.

Within the last years the political landscape has changed. Nowadays we have a third strong political power, right winged and -since its participation in government beginning in 1999 - becoming more and more successful in elections; it is the Austrian Freedom party (FPÖ).

The Freedom Party is one of the two coalition partners in the current federal government, but traditionally has had only a tenuous foothold in the area of educational policy.
Concerning the 'Green' the smallest power in parliament the situation is quite similar – they have no influence in educational system but growing importance. Recently they started an initiative on reforming educational policy in Austria.

The current government in our country took as its goal the implementation of basic reforms in the system of government. In the some areas like social policy but also educational policy like the reforms in higher education, the government could push through reforms. In the area of the schools, however, this seems to be especially difficult.

The striving for reform comes up against a strong union representation of the teachers and this forces the political actors to become very cautious in the conceptualisation and implementation of structural reforms. This can be seen in the 'New Working Laws for Teachers' that has already been voted into law in the national assembly. It should frame a fully new organization of teacher employment conditions – in compulsory education only - that should make possible more flexibility in the use of personnel as well as redirect additional competencies for personnel management to the local schools (Dienstrecht Neu).

Since the introduction of school autonomy in 1993, new reform projects have been worked on in some areas of school development, and even partially realized:

a) *Curriculum development at the school level*
   The goal is a trimmed-down core-curriculum that can be adapted for local needs and implemented by the individual schools. By the end of 1999 all Austrian Schools are invited to establish a 'School-Program'. In accordance with the meaning of autonomy, but also to avoid conflict with the teachers' unions, the idea of a compulsory introduction of the 'School Program' was abandoned.

b) *The debate on reorganization of inspection in Austria*
The intention of reformers is to combine two professional challenges for inspectors in Austria: First to be critical friends and advisors for teachers and second to be work inspectors. A study by Schratz has shown that both teachers and inspectors want a new definition of the role of the inspectorate. In the meantime one decision has been made: a reform was implemented that includes both of the above-mentioned duties - that are actually mutually contradictive - as core elements of the professional profiles of the inspectorate.

c) *Organizational development and head masters*
In the education and further training of the heads, some clear successes have been achieved in recent years. Our study, 'Towards a Better School' (Bachmann, 1996) confirms that heads see the autonomy in the schools as a chance for professional self-realization in spite of the increasing workload.

d) *Quality development*
We are now in the middle of a comprehensive debate on the topic of quality. Since the end of 1999 all Austrian Schools are encouraged to establish a School Development Plan ('Schulprogramm'). The Ministry has demonstrated its newly defined steering function by making feedback material available to teachers, parents and pupils (www.qis.at).

As already mentioned, the debate on school quality has become a dominant discussion that has resulted in many aspects of school development have been looked at in terms of quality and so can be rediscussed in terms of this generally accepted leitmotif.

On the Culture of Discussion

In this chapter I would like to go into the aspect of school-political communication in Austria.

The educational partnership as a model for regulating educational-political conflicts

The specific Austrian form of regulating conflict, the social partnership, which was institutionalised to balance the interests of employers and employees, was systematically broadened in the 1960s to include the area of education. In connection with the school laws of 1962 (SGW 62) the proportional system was established (Dermutz).

This means, for example, that the school board at the state level (as the decision-making body for all relevant personnel questions in the area of education for that state) was constituted by the political parties on the basis of the results of the previous political election. On the basis of these party relationships, all personnel decisions were and are made. Professional criteria played and still do play only a subordinate role. So, as in the system of social partnership, in educational partnership the highest representatives of the interest groups worked out basic educational-political compromises. The political bodies that were actually responsible for these decisions - especially the national parliament - were degraded to 'rubber stamps' for the formal decision, which is a very questionable situation in democratic politics.

Rhetoric of reform rather than controversy

'Reform rhetoric' is what I call the behaviour that in the public debate (but also in internal discussions in school administration) does not take sides against a certain innovation, and indeed sometimes 'rhetorically' even praises it, but in the concrete work and decision areas, however, tries to negate or dismantle the goals and intentions of the reform project.

But however, the public confrontation about goals, forms and content of innovation is made much more difficult. At the same time reform rhetoric stabilizes the power-keeping elite.

Media and School Development

For quite a long time, the media in Austria seemed to show little interest in focusing on educational policy debates. Usually the school was the object of scandal stories about undesirable developments or about inappropriate behaviour on the part of educational officials. But in the last few years the quality newspapers, news journals, radio and TV have increasingly focused on the schools with very differentiated approaches.

In the course of our basic research work on professional profile/model for teachers, we at the ZSE have been concerned with the representation of the image of teachers in the print media (Koepnerr, 1995). Quality papers like 'der Standard' or the weekly news journals like 'News' have published rankings of the schools. However, not only have the criteria they used been criticized as being very superficial but, additionally, various voices prominent in the whole school development debate see them as being counterproductive to development.

In the meantime these rankings have pretty much disappeared, although their subtle, but very important message in terms of school development, still has an effect: Schools have a responsibility to fulfil both to society as a whole and to the 'users'!
There is a change in paradigms taking place now; the school as oriented to the needs of the teachers in many areas to one more oriented to the needs of the pupils and their parents. This trend also takes into account the 'invitation' to a co-operative school development in the teacher team and the invitation to working out school profiles and programs in co-operation with parents and pupils, both of which are anchored in the new curricula.

Role of the structurally conservative representation of the teachers
Every reform and everything new is not just a value-free improvement of the system of and by itself; every reform is always an expression of various interests at work. In the end, those interests push through reforms that serve the currently dominant power elite. In these terms, one can say that the interest group representation of the teachers has developed a point of view that is traditionally sceptical about innovation.

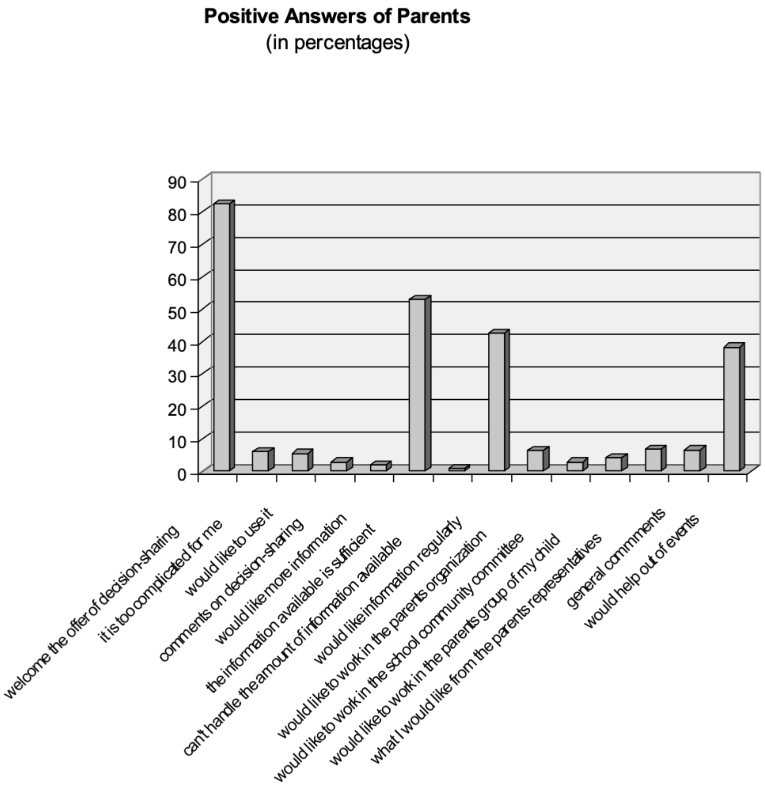
This has led to the situation that due to the politically influential teachers lobby school policy has become oriented to the interests of the teachers. The co-operation between parents, teachers and pupils, while provided for in the laws, is often seen by teachers and their representatives as an attempt to interfere in the professional business of the educators. However, in terms of 'reform rhetoric', hardly anyone can be found who would question the formal possibility for co-operation with parents and pupils. In real day-to-day school life, however, the realities of school partnership remain only minimally operational (cf.: Eder).
One of the main reasons for the lack of enthusiasm in school development, as I see it is, is that only in the most rare cases has a committed co-operation between parents, pupils and teachers actually worked. A school partnership, in which all the parties take each other seriously as equals, do not perceive each others as threats, and want to work together to achieve a goal, could develop enormous impulses and power for school development.

On school partnership

Prejudice, fear, and above all far too little direct contact between the partners altogether contribute to the situation that this enormous potential for change of the school partnership remains untapped. Only where the problems are severe have parents and teachers (and far too seldom the pupils) searched for and found new ways. As examples of this there should be mentioned the school alliance between the middle schools and the academic secondary schools in Vienna and Graz as well as the integration of handicapped children.

In the first decades after the Second World War, the participation of pupils in decision-making consisted only in the election of a speaker for the class. Even then, this procedure was seldom an act expressing democracy, but rather an attempt on the part of teachers to simplify their own administrative duties (like collecting money, or making lists etc.). Often the class speaker was asked to discipline their colleagues. With decision sharing with the pupils at this modest level in the schools (School Law of 1974). A democratisation process at the formal level began that, however, was not always in accordance with the meaning of the law. In the meantime, the legal basis and the consciousness for shared decision-making on the part of parents, teachers and pupils have developed further. The class forum and school forum (§63 School Law of 1986), the school community committee (§64) were institutionalised as instruments of decision sharing (Amendment to School Law 1986). The representation of the pupils was further developed on a legal basis (Pupil Joint Administration, School Curricula Law - §58 School Law). The Pupil Representation Law has governed the inter-school pupil representation since May 16, 1990. The school partnership at the local school level was essentially upvalued by the amendment to the school laws that introduced school autonomy in 1993.

In the debates about school partnership, the willingness to participate in decision-making on the part of the parents is held in question by the teachers. From this background there was conducted a questionnaire the purpose of which was to investigate the need for information and the willingness to co-organize the school partnership (Bachmann, 2000a). The following diagram shows the answers of the parents in percentage based on the returned questionnaire.



The high level of approval of the possibilities offered by the parents representatives at the school level for decision-sharing and co-organizing is particularly impressive: 82.4% of responders approved of the open board meetings and the amount of information offered by the parents representatives at the school. If you then see that only 5.5% of the parents want to use this possibility and at the same time 53% were satisfied with the information given out, then the following interpretation is likely (cf. Eder):

"The parents of this school are satisfied with the work of the parents group. They want the transparency, information, and the possibility for decision sharing and co-organizing, but their willingness to devote time to decision sharing is limited. These results coincide with those of the study on democracy in the schools done by Eder ."

On endurance

One basic problem is that the approaches to educational reform, like emancipatory education in the 1960s and 70s, project-based teaching, sex education, political education, have been discussed in public debate, by both supporter and opponents, as if they have already been fully implemented. Opponents and supporters have indeed become curious allies: One side acts like all the goals have been achieved, and the others are satisfied that the projects they opposed haven't been realized at all in day-to-day school routine.

Add to this that the time lag between the proposal and its enduring implementation can last decades. One example: In today's school life, physical punishment is forbidden and doesn't happen anymore. A benevolent teacher-pupil relationship is an incontestable precondition for successful pedagogical work in day-to-day school life, and has finally been anchored in the hearts and minds of the vast majority of teachers. This process has taken over 30 years, and elder people can well remember public discussions defending 'the healthy slap', that would be unthinkable today.

Turning the Perspective

School development and school policy in Austria, as well as in most of the other European countries, plays only a subordinate role in political conflict. In order to initiate changes we have to 'jump start' a public debate on educational reform. In this chapter there also should be developed options for change-strategies and be described elements of a 'new system', that would be imaginable. To realize a comprehensive reform of the educational system, a new political approach is needed.

Globalisation of the educational debate

The last decade has been one of fundamental changes in the economy. Globalisation has taken over, and political systems in the former eastern block have been changing. But the pressure on western European political systems is nearly as great now as it was on former communist countries. The western democratic systems with highly developed bureaucratic structures are not flexible enough to overcome and/or cope with all these economic challenges. So political systems all over Europe are being forced to change - although for different reasons and with different speed.

The influence that international studies like TIMMS have had on the debates and development in Austria is to be mentioned here. International reference data has been created and the development of European standards in education have been accelerated.

The OECD/CERI, among others, initiated a series of seminars that began in 1997 in Hiroshima with a seminar on examples of innovative schools and continued then, in 1998, in Scheveningen.
The theme of the Scheveningen Seminars were the effects of social development on the educational and school systems and their implications for future educational policy, entitled: 'Schooling for tomorrow' – Learning and Schooling in the Knowledge Society (Bachmann, 2000b).

From the background of globalisation, an international perspective for school development has gained importance. The simple exchange of information is no longer enough. International co-operation between school and school development institutions need to be broadened and intensified by:

- international projects for school development;
- international conferences for continuing education;
- international research and school development projects.

The time lag between the development of new concepts in educational policy and their implementation - or the perceivable effect of their implementation - is a great challenge for educational policy-makers. They have the difficult task of anticipating future societal developments. Thus international co-operation can be considered a part of a new international support structure for school development.

International research projects are an important part of international co-operation. Two of that have attracted international attention: the OECD study 'Education at a Glance' and the TIMMS-studies mentioned above. The international school development projects are of special importance, because they are more concerned with projects of clear concrete co-operation rather than of an exchange of information between institutions. These are, for example, projects that have taken form between the members of CIDREE in terms of collaborative projects. If international co-operation as a support structure for the protagonists in national educational systems is to be at all perceivable, we should put pressure on policy-makers to create sufficient budgets for research and development and to create professional work conditions for them. In order to implement the concept of 'learning by doing' in the area of international co-operation, far more protagonists from the various areas at the national educational system should be allowed to participate in international development projects than has been the case up to now. (Bachmann, 2000b).

New communication culture
Increasing autonomy of the school system as it has been introduced in many countries of Europe is not greeted by everyone confronted with this innovation.
Many schools have felt pressured into setting the pace of their own development, in spite of, or indeed because of some of the newly won possibilities though autonomy.

The resistance to reforms is a challenge for all those involved in support structures for school development.

School development in general, and school autonomy in particular - as well as every other change in education - need flexible, highly motivated teachers for their implementation. Intelligent participation strategies could help teachers change their perspectives on their own roles in school development from that of object to that of subject. Numerous expectations are brought to school, and these expectations change with changes in society at large. The demand of some teachers to 'leave the schools alone to do their work' is simply not possible to fulfil. Teachers must continually face up to changing challenges. Transparent and clearly understandable processes for development and decision-making could improve commitment to and understanding of school development as well as the motivation to active participation in school development.

New structural beginnings
In the following points I would like to sketch some concrete perspectives on development:

- The professional field of education should be basically redefined with quality demands on the educational professionals. More mobility in the educational job sector could be achieved through completely new training in a module system with integrated continuing education:
  A 5-semester university basic training in education could be the basis for further specialization (about 3 semesters). Changing between the various specialties could later be clearly and easily achieved through continuing in-service training. The spectrum of specialties could be, for example:
  kindergarten/pre-school education, primary school certificate, middle school certificate, upper secondary certificate, business education, leisure education, social education, adult education, company education.

- Common use of resources (school rooms and teachers) encourages co-operation and creativity.
- Staggering general and trade education with primary and secondary educational training and continuing education.
- Increasing the possibilities for pupils within their school type (course system, interest groups, electives, in-depth studies ...).
- New impulses for developing and using a variety of teaching methods.
- Developing new forms of regulating working hours for teachers
- Limiting individual teacher autonomy in favour of team autonomy at the local school.
- Quality orientation in all fields of school development in all subsystems of the educational system by applying standards.
- The relationship between the first education in the schools system and professional in-service continuing education - as sketched out by the Sociologist Bernd Marin in a lecture - needs to be re-defined, if we want to take the idea of Lifelong Learning (as an impulse of the EU educational policy) seriously.
- The systematic reflection on teacher's work also leads to defining new needs for education and continuing education as well as to a call for structural change.
- One part of the debate certainly needs to be devoted the issues of the elements of a model for educational professions (work times, achievement system, pay, careers, quality, regulating work hours, professional standards, education and continuing education, variety of methods, school partnerships, empathy, reflection, permanent development ...). Finally internationally tried models could be used as an incentive for implementation strategies in Austria.
- The various levels of school development (teaching, school, school control, education and continuing education, evaluation, school administration, school policy...) should be permanently related.
- School policy and school administration work increasingly more goal-oriented and development-oriented. School policy and school administration have changed their steering philosophies. One example for Austria is *Curriculum Development 99 and Quality in the Schools (QIS).* The frame conditions were set up by the Ministry of Education (White book for Curriculum 99 Information Paper of the Ministry of Education on quality in the schools). At the various levels of the educational system, these points were in turn interpreted and implemented.

- Splitting up school development in various partial projects supposedly independent of one another reduces the potential for the effect of innovation in education.
- All people who would possibly be affected by an innovation should be included in the developmental work.

Many of these ideas could find broad agreement. Because of our special legal framework – as already mentioned, most of our laws on Schools are demanding 2/3 majority - the present government has to look for support from opposition in Parliament. Because of political disagreement the process of school reform is slowing down at the moment.

Steering new

Mats Ekholm has done some research on steering models for schools in Europe. The first result is not surprising: State control of the schools has been reduced in recent years, and/or replaced by new steering models. What is more important however - but also sobering for the strategists - is that new steering models do not tell us anything about the decrease or increase in the quality of the schools.

In many countries in Europe and the world, the classical concept of the state is being questioned now at the end of the 20th century - including the area of education. In countries where social democratic or social-liberal attitudes prevail in politics (that is, in the Scandinavian countries, in some provinces of Germany and in Austria - for instance), there has always been a high acceptance of the idea that the equalization of educational differences between the various social classes should be achieved by the state. In communist countries it was very clear that the schools would be closely regulated and controlled by the state. In countries where the principle of the market were dominant, (that is, in England), schools attained strong independence by the end of the 1970s (Ekholm).

In the tense relationship between participation and implementation from above, the courage for political responsibility is essential. As an example for mixed steering (top down with bottom up elements) I would like to mention here the implementation of 'Curriculum 99'. In the spirit of school autonomy and decentralization the responsibility for school development at the local schools should be built up.

Control and steering of the educational system regarding and standards and external control procedures have been increasingly discussed. Many Austrian teachers remain very sceptical about this development. A central challenge to institutionalised school development, as well as educational policy in Austria will be to establish in the heads and hearts of the school development actors (parents, teachers, pupils, representatives of interest groups, etc) the principles of permanent further development of the school, not as threats but as chances.

Participation of all involved should be established as a principle for school development all over Europe. Transparency, involvement and participation are the keywords for a successful and lasting development of schools. Therefore the focus should be put on processes of reform rather than exclusively on aims and contents.

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What really counts!

Jos Letschert

Introduction

For a long time the quality of education was not a matter of discussion. Education was one of the systems in society with a status beyond doubt. This also applied to other systems, such as the church, medical care or the notary's office. If questions about quality came up, they were incidents. The quality of the systems themselves was not a matter of discussion.
In the meantime a different situation developed. The quality of services such as education and medical care (or lack of it) is a theme regularly featuring on the front pages of the newspapers. This essay discusses issues of quality within the education system. The focus is particularly on primary education.

In The Netherlands primary education was set up by combining elementary education and pre-school education. A characteristic of these two forerunners was the principle of freedom to determine the educational content to a great extent. In spite of this, the contents were structured into a fairly homogenous provision of subject matter.
In the course of time the provision of subject matter continuously increased, particularly under growing pressure from the expectations and demands society places on education. These are so strong that limits have to be set in order to keep education feasible.
As happened in many countries at the end of the twentieth century, the educational content was channelled to some extent by determining a common educational provision in the form of core objectives. Partly as a result of this clarification of what should be covered by primary education, questions arose inside and outside schools about the feasibility and relevance of certain parts of the content. The 'secret garden' (Letschert, 1998) had become visible. At the same time, a discussion started about the distribution of responsibilities and tasks between schools, families and institutions outside schools (Bronneman-Helmers & Taes, 1999).

At the moment it is the done thing to discuss the quality of education in wider circles than education itself. Education has become a subject on which society holds an opinion. That is good.

Apparently education matters. It should be ensured, however, that important details are not lost in the public discussion and that choices concerning persistent and fundamental issues are not only made for the short term.

Primary education in The Netherlands is a system that originated in the second half of the last century. A large part of the educational content and parts of the didactics are even older than that. In this essay the author claims that current primary education will increasingly be the subject of criticism. He poses the question of whether or not the system of primary education is ready for thorough revision instead of incidental treatment of the symptoms, which is necessary if it is to remain meaningful for society in the twenty-first century.

Primary education scrutinised and discussed

In The Netherlands primary education actually started on a large scale in 1985. Pre-school education and elementary education were abolished at the same time. Primary education consists of schools for children aged 4 to twelve, with the restriction that compulsory education in The Netherlands starts at the age of five.

There were great expectations of primary education, but there was also concern, particularly on the part of people involved in the former pre-school education system. Would primary education take due account of the achievements of pre-school education? They were particularly concerned that room would be left for the personal development of young children. It was feared that subject matter pressure from above would put essential aspects of this development at risk.

It is obvious that primary education cannot be achieved with the introduction of a law. The new type of education should develop itself and this development should be monitored in order to detect at an early stage if and when any disturbances to growth might possibly occur.

In 1991, the Committee for the Evaluation of Primary Education (Commissie Evaluatie Basisonderwijs, CEB) was formed especially for the purpose of evaluating primary education. In January 1994, not long before the second anniversary of primary education, the committee issued a report on the subject (CEB, 1994a; CEB, 1994b). The results of the evaluation were detailed, but the details were not generally understood. The image of primary education developed by the public showed a sad picture of Dutch primary schools.

At the beginning of 1997, there was again large-scale attention for primary education. Commotion was caused by the proposals for the revision of the core objectives. In 1993 the implementation of core objectives had hardly attracted any social interest, although this involved a remarkable intervention in the much-appreciated freedom that schools had for determining the education content. However, this was very different when the core objectives were revised. The content of primary education was front-page news in nearly all the national daily papers.

At the end of 1998 another (smaller) hype occurred concerning primary education. Based on the motto 'everyone is entitled to public availability', the daily papers used the results of the school checks by the Education Inspectorate to compose a kind of school hit chart. In this compilation, Standaert’s essay about the temptation of simplification goes into the risks attached to this kind of 'economic-technical approach', as he calls it, to the concept 'quality of education'.

In addition to the lists in newspapers with surveys of school results, which occur in various countries, individual schools made the news because parents complained about the lack of quality provided. Some parents even went to court to present the judge with their dissatisfaction about the school's achievements, and in some cases the parents were judged to be right.

In 1999 there was again front-page news. In some aspects the level of arithmetic was going down in The Netherlands. These findings were the result of the third assessment survey for arithmetic/mathematics at the end of primary education, which was conducted by The Netherlands National Institute for Educational Measurement, CITO, as part of the periodic survey (Janssen et al., 1999). It seems that in some aspects there was a gradual negative development in the arithmetical achievements of the pupils, without there being an obvious explanation.

There is increasing public concern about the lagging achievements of large groups of pupils. Of 1.6 million pupils in primary education, 450,000 belong to the target group of the special needs policy. About 250,000 of these are Dutch pupils from deprived backgrounds. The other 200,000 pupils are of non-Dutch origin (Adelmund, 2000).

At the beginning of the year 2000, the national newspaper 'De Volkskrant' again printed data from the Inspectorate based on the integral school inspection it had conducted. The data showed that non-Dutch pupils are falling a long way behind the Dutch pupils, especially where language and arithmetic are concerned. The teachers in particular were held responsible for the arrears. Some time after this, the CITO made a statement saying that analysis of the results of the Final Test (at the end of primary education) showed that over the years, some progression could be observed in the achievements of non-Dutch pupils, and that teachers were certainly not the determining factor for possible problems. In response to a request from 'De Volkskrant', CITO investigated the 'secret of successful black schools'. On 7 June 2000, one of the front-page headlines said that good staff represented the key to the success of black schools. It is interesting to see that research data can lead to simplistic statements, especially in the media. In his essay Standaert addresses the issue of relativity, the way research data can be interpreted and manipulated.

Around February 2000, the newspapers, magazines, radio and television were flooded for weeks on end with discussions about the failure of primary education for non-Dutch pupils and about the quality issue in general. How could it come to this? What should be done about it? Whose fault is it anyway?

For some people, the answers to these questions and problems were unambiguous. Others rightfully pointed out the ignorance of such an attitude, because the complexity of the issue cannot be mastered by apparent solutions of attractive simplicity. A first proposal put forward by the minister responsible, primarily aimed at experimental laboratory education, was rejected in Parliament, in the media and in the education field. The next one, a plan of opportunities on a larger scale, received a warmer welcome, but in essence it remained a deficiency program. The quality improvement in primary education was directed according to the parts that were failing.

In 2001 we can speak of an ongoing process of criticism. The amount of money reserved for maintenance of the buildings and for the purchase of textbooks is only 70% of what is necessary, according to the results of research by the Utrecht institute for the research of textbooks. The quality of history education is problematic, a committee report concludes. In teacher training there is an alarming lack of attention for languages and for mathematics.

In the meantime, the inspectorate seems to view the results of so-called black schools with other eyes than they do those of the so-called white schools. Oh, and in 2001 the quality of education is still deteriorating, research based on the output of CITO-scores shows. CITO denies this, however.

Something has become clear in the meantime: in The Netherlands primary education has become a general target. This has not only been the case in The Netherlands. Similar commotion can be recognised and identified in most Western-oriented societies. These media hypes will certainly not decrease. Society is more and more strongly aware of its responsibility for education to its youngest members. This responsibility expresses itself in involvement and concern by broader groups than parents and guardians, which makes it appropriate to question whether the current form of primary education still suffices. Is the growing criticism an emerging sign that there is something fundamentally wrong with the concept? With this question in mind I will discuss a number of aspects related to quality and quality assurance in primary education.

Freedom and inspection

In comparison with many other countries, schools in The Netherlands have a high degree of freedom concerning education content and the pedagogic and didactic approach. Schools have room for their own educational concept, they have their own educational policy, they choose their own teaching resources and they distribute the school hours as they see fit. Although the conceptual freedom was limited in 1993 by the establishment of requirements for the educational provision (core objectives), the freedom is still relatively great because of the generality of the directives. Up until now, we have put particular trust in our teachers where the quality of education in The Netherlands is concerned. This is all right, of course. A country that does not trust its teachers has a considerable problem. These teachers keep their own records of the development of the pupils entrusted to them. For this purpose almost every school uses a pupil monitoring system and other instruments that show where and when adjustment or explicit extra attention is required.

At the same time a counter movement can be observed. A movement that has little trust in the unique processes in the school and that wants to direct processes by defining the desired results of education in as much detail as possible and prescribing them for all the pupils.

Evidently there are still large groups of people who think that development and quality can be enforced by laying down conditions to be met by all the pupils at the final stage of education. In my opinion this movement is certainly incompatible with opinions on adaptive education and with developing constructive theories on teaching and learning. My standpoint is that an excessively strict set of communal result conditions causes a fundamental system error in primary education with its heterogeneous composition. I agree with the opinions held on this issue by Stevens, who puts 'development' forward as the central paradigm, instead of working towards a set of conditions externally imposed. I also agree with the opinions of Standaert, who puts the measurability of development into perspective.

In addition to internal quality control executed by schools themselves there is also external supervision of the quality of primary education. In The Netherlands this supervision is carried out by the Education Inspectorate under the direction of the Minister. The task of the inspectorate includes monitoring how legal regulations are being observed. In addition to this the minister has questions about the development of conceptual quality in primary education and education in general. To be able to answer these questions, the inspectorate gathers information during the regular school visits. Over the years the inspectorate has developed and tested a working method that makes it possible to look at and assess various aspects of education and the way they are related. Hence, the inspectorate assesses whether the schools perform well and if and where there is room for further improvement.

The inspectorate has always done this, but recently it has had a useful instrument at its disposal and a working method that helps the individual inspectors in executing their task. This makes the judgement of the inspectors less personal. Due consideration has been paid to the subject of assessment and the method of reporting. Whether education at a particular school is good should primarily appear from the quality of the teaching-learning process in relation to the results that are achieved.

The conditions under which education takes place play an important role in this. Therefore the inspectorate not only checks a limited number of legal conditions a school has to comply with, but the inspectorate keeps drawing attention to the importance of starting work on a quality policy. It is actually this task of the inspectorate that has become the subject of some discussion in The Netherlands. Is such a broad interpretation of its powers not outside the scope of the inspectorate?

Influenced by this discussion, a policy line was drawn up by the responsible governmental officers to broaden the powers of the inspectorate concerning the stimulation and monitoring of quality control in a broad sense (Hermans & Adelmund, 2000). There will be more external supervision of schools if these policy proposals are adopted. It is in fact an adjustment of the margins of freedom for the arrangement of education. A similar discussion about the adjustment of margins also applies when we talk about the specific education content.

A division in education?

As I mentioned before, in the discussion about the quality of education the focus is often on the effects of education on pupils who are at a disadvantage. The findings of The Netherlands National Institute for Educational Measurement, CITO, concerning the quality of arithmetic are partly about this subject. The Social and Cultural Planning Office of The Netherlands (Tesser et al., 1999) has also produced a report about groups of non-Dutch pupils who are faced with considerable arrears in primary education as a result of a variety of causes. The Education Council (Onderwijsraad), which is the most important advisory institution to the minister in The Netherlands, has given its opinion on the position of pupils with special needs more than once and expressed its concern about their chances in the current system (Onderwijsraad, 1999; 2000). The Education Council claims that our expectations of what primary education can achieve in pupils are too high, and will therefore increase instead of decrease differences. According to the Council, the current core objectives give too little direction to education, they are too general and they are not really feasible because of their multiplicity. Because of the overload, certain basic knowledge and skills cannot reach the expected level. The Education Council therefore proposes to establish objectives that are of crucial importance during the children's school careers, particularly concerning language and arithmetic. These goals should be formulated in such a way that they are achievable for nearly every pupil. To put it even more strongly, the Council calls it a result obligation for pupils. Rather inaccurately, the public media took this as a proposal for the introduction of exams in primary education. Although this was not the intention, the suggestion is obvious.

Two principles of the current situation in Dutch primary education have been abandoned in this proposal. At this moment there is a fairly unique obligation for teachers to make an effort to bring their pupils as close as possible to the requirements of the core objectives.

The core objectives of Dutch primary education are aspired targets; not conditions for the pupils, but conditions for the provision. At the moment there is no qualitative difference between the educational content of particular learning areas. Although there is a difference in the time schools allow for learning areas, all the subject matter taught is considered to be equally important. This is a basic characteristic of Dutch primary education, a characteristic under a lot of pressure now.

The question is whether the establishment of a minimum level that pupils have to comply with will contribute to the improvement of the quality of primary education in general and the achievement of individual pupils in particular. If learning standards are formulated to be met by nearly all pupils in the heterogeneous population, it is inevitable that the norm will be on the low side, otherwise too many pupils will be unable to meet the standards. The implication is that the objectives will not mean very much any more.

It seems more effective to me to stick to using aspired objectives with an ambitious character. Having high expectations of pupils has proved to be a good means for raising achievements. The teachers can then be asked why they have not met the aspired objectives in specific cases. Usually they have very credible reasons. Teachers are obliged to present the educational content in a way that is as challenging as possible, motivating pupils to master the subject matter. It is also important, of course, to keep monitoring the pupils' development very closely, and nearly all schools now do this.

Directions from above giving an obligation to achieve results, and the top-down management and organisation of the curriculum, have not been very successful in the countries where this was introduced (see Standaert’s contribution on this subject). It was not good for pupils' results, or for the professional well-being of teachers. Having high expectations of teachers is also important.

In any case, we have to observe that when the system is changed to introduce result obligations, the guiding principle is no longer the development of children, but the subject matter then becomes the general criterion. This immediately raises the question of what should be done with children who fail to meet this general criterion. Will the introduction of result requirements lead to a new division in primary education: children who can keep up and children who are left behind?

Important and less important

In the discussion about the quality of the educational provision, we often come across the question of whether it is possible and desirable to distinguish objectives that matter and objectives that matter slightly less. Language skills and arithmetic/mathematics skills and understanding are important for children. Experience shows that extra efforts for and by pupils with special needs certainly matter. Still, should these efforts be made at the expense of subjects that everybody also considers important for functioning in society? For example: road safety skills, the importance of some geographical knowledge and understanding, ability to use a computer, some knowledge of cultural heritage, a balanced socio-emotional and moral development of children, planning of work, some art orientation. These examples are mentioned in the Primary Education Act in The Netherlands as subjects the school should at least pay attention to. They are incorporated into core objectives, consisting not only of the subject contents, but also of pedagogical notions. These concern issues that society clearly considers to be relevant for the development of children. There were good reasons for governmental adoption and for inclusion in legal acts and regulations. At the same time issues are involved that appeal to the broad development potential possessed by children. The American psychologist Howard Gardner (Gardner, 1983, 1999) has proved that people have multiple intelligences. If education appeals to only one part of this potential, it fails to contribute to a multiple development and does not do justice to children, because of the decreasing effects it may have.

At the end of 1999 the Institute for Applied Social Sciences, ITS, in Nijmegen issued an 'Education meter' (Vrieze et al., 1999). The education meter surveys the opinions about education held by parents and the Dutch population in general. In the United States, these kinds of surveys have been conducted for about 30 years, and this type of measurement is not unusual in other countries either. The researchers found that among Dutch people, there is a specific demand for primary education to pay attention to norms and values, as well as social skills. The researchers indicated that the picture drawn in the media, that people are afraid children at school do not learn enough in the areas of the 'hard subjects', is not confirmed by the results of their study. By and large, parents appear to be satisfied with the education at the schools their children attend.

It takes a whole village ...

It is obvious that questions should be continuously asked about the relevance of educational content and development tasks, about feasibility within the available school timetable and about who is primarily responsible. Choices are necessary. Society keeps changing fast and this presents its demands. In my opinion the solution for the pupils with special needs should not be sought exclusively in regular education. In problematic situations it can be expected of education that an extra effort should be made for groups of pupils, but this does not only apply to education. Education is one element in a complex societal network. There is growing awareness that the school should open up to society (mainstream schools, window schools). Too often and too readily, the education sector is prepared to feel responsible for the full impact of social issues. Major social issues, such as the problems referred to by the Social and Cultural Planning Office of The Netherlands, are a responsibility for which society as a whole is obliged to make efforts. There is an African saying that goes as follows: "It takes a whole village to raise a child."

The relevancy of the contemporary curriculum

The development of content for educational purposes, and how it is structured, have been persistent problems for education from the start. I will share a few attempts with you, mainly from the last century, to make clear how intriguing this issue still is.

The Dutch sociologist Blom (1997) holds a plea for an arrangement of domains based on main sources for cultural intelligence. She distinguishes the linguistic-literate domain, the social-economic domain, the science domain, the technological-motorial domain, the mathematical-logical domain, the artistic domain and the historical-philosophical domain. She states that this arrangement is recognisable from a cultural-historical perspective and that it covers the traditional content of subjects. There is a relationship with the division of intelligences distinguished by Gardner.
The American Hirsch (1987, 1989) uses a cultural-analytic approach to provide sources for curriculum content. He tries to catch basic knowledge (cultural literacy) in a kind of encyclopaedic structure.
The British researcher Lawton (1989) analyses nine cultural variables. He distinguishes: the socio-political system; the economic system; the communication system; the system of rationalising, the technological system; the moral system; the system of beliefs about human existence; the ethical system and the system related to the growth to adulthood.
In this approach the instrumental, the cultural and the pedagogical perspectives are integrated.

Another approach, based on social-theoretical views, was followed longer ago by the German researcher Derbolav, who promoted a systemic division of social practice in what he calls areas of practice (Derbolav, 1975). Derbolav uses a very explicit and normative anthropology. A normative approach is also recognisable in the Norwegian core curriculum (Hernes, 1994). Education shall be based on fundamental Christian and humanistic values, it says. The curriculum is derived from a specific anthropology and a consecutive model built on phenomena: the spiritual human being; the creative human being; the working human being; the liberally-educated human being; the social human being; the environmentally-aware human being. It comes together finally in what is called the integrated human being. Interesting in this approach is the emphasis on respect for individual interests, abilities and differences. Education must be adapted to the needs of the individual, and a requirement is stated for social diversity, which is to be seen as an enrichment of society.

Many other attempts have been undertaken to analyse society, culture and human beings to find an adequate structure for the derivation and organisation of education, and certainly many others will appear in the near future. None of the approaches, analyses, variables or arrangements directly generate explicit or specified curricular content, probably because it is impossible to do so. What they do is give some insight into important accents, anchor points, possibilities for coherence and organisational principles.

Apparently there is dissatisfaction in some circles with the actual organisational mainstream for educational content, and the lack of meaning it has for children, because of the increasing disconnectedness of the rather atomic curricular content. Slattery (1995) states in this respect that we must move from the modern paradigm of curriculum development in the disciplines to the post-modern paradigm of understanding curriculum in various contexts, which he calls a constantly shifting process, described as *kaleidoscopic*. As the American educationalist Pinar states (1995), curriculum is no longer what a district office requires you to teach, or what the state education department publishes in scope and sequence guides. Curriculum is what the older generation chooses to tell the younger generation.

In that respect it is intensely historical, political, racial, gendered, phenomenological, autobiographical, aesthetic, theological and international. Curriculum, still citing Pinar, is the site on which the generations struggle to define themselves and the world.

The structural models sketched above are important where the generation and ordering of the potential educational provision (subject matter) are concerned. But educational content in itself does not necessarily lead to learning. In education, it is not enough to describe content structures, whether generally or in more detail, without addressing the question of how learning processes take place in pupils and what conditions are crucial to this. The key question is how learning can be stimulated, and how we can leave room for and pay attention to the differences between children while doing this.

The pedagogical task

A no less fundamental issue, when talking about the quality of primary education, concerns the question of whether determination of minimum requirements for pupils concurs with the pedagogical opinions regarding the individual differences between pupils. Children differ, which we have to accept. In education a certain common level of subject matter is not the criterion, the children are the criterion to be taken into account. For me this constitutes the core of a reconceptualisation of primary education. This is a change of paradigm with important consequences for the structure and organisation of education. Good education is tailored to the possibilities of children. Teachers work on the development potential of their pupils.

Every child brings an array of personal characteristics into the school and it is up to the school to create the conditions within which each child can work on individual development. These are the principles of adaptive education. The question this raises is to what extent the school can set objectives to give direction to the development of children. In his contribution to this compilation, Boland defines adaptive education as education in which teachers, within a given context, tailor their education optimally to the differences between their pupils, in order to reach the targets established by the school. With his last remark he specifically points out that there is a balance. The development of children is a given fact, but this takes place within the context of their growing up. This context presents its requirements and education should take these into account. This is also in the interest of the children. I will revisit this issue when I address the 'pedagogical trilemma'.

Adaptive education is about good education; education that is good for all children. The brochure issued by The Netherlands Process Management for Primary Education (PMPO, 1999), about the decrease of class size at infant level, explains again what a good school is. A good school succeeds in offering children the room and the opportunity for growing in competence, makes the children feel safe and accepted (relationship) and contributes to the development of the autonomy of the children. In his contribution about adaptive education, Boland rightly claims that this fundamental opinion about quality does not in itself solve the management problem for teachers. Adaptive education requires investments in planning, organisation, knowledge of diagnostics, using flexible teaching/learning methods, the introduction of feasible pupil monitoring systems, etc. The question remains whether the current concept of primary education, organised into year groups and based on subject matter, is sufficiently capable of achieving the principles of adaptive education.

The class teacher

In the above process a central position is assigned to the class teacher. The class teacher seems to have become the poor relation in primary education. Instead of being primarily a matter between child and teacher, education is in danger of becoming predominantly a testing ground for specialists. Both in and around the school, we do all we can to find solutions for all the specific problems that present themselves. Very often, however, these solutions lead to new problems. At school we appoint first stage co-ordinators, ICT-specialists, arithmetic and language co-ordinators, subject specific teachers for music and arts and crafts, specialists for physical education. Around the school, a network of well-willing specialists offers a solution for each specific problem that arises (dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD, highly gifted pupils, etc.).

Obviously, it is a good thing if expertise in and around education increases. A problem develops when the expertise surrounding the teacher starts to take up such a dominant position that the class teacher feels less and less co-owner of the teaching/learning process. The tendency to deprofessionalise the class teacher caused by the growing input from sub-specialists is an issue of concern. The class teacher is first and foremost a pedagogue. In my opinion, instilling development into children and facilitating the development process is the most important task of education. For the teacher and the children, the practice of education is undivided.

The best pupil monitoring system remains the class teacher, because the class teacher has an overview of the development of the whole child.

A classic trilemma

The class teacher is primarily responsible for the creation of conditions for achieving the complete development potential of the child. This development takes places in the context of what parents and society expect of the school. When we talk about the development of the children and the direction of this development, three perspectives present themselves. An important perspective is that of the child (child perspective). Education is aimed at giving the unique and individual potential of children a chance to develop. Education challenges children to develop. A second perspective is that of the common and established educational provision. This relates to the introduction of the knowledge and skills mentioned in the Primary Education Act, as areas education has to pay attention to (subject perspective). A third perspective concerns (future) societal and social functioning. This involves the skills, attitudes and knowledge that are believed to be necessary to function in a (multi-cultural) society (social perspective).

It seems that these perspectives are contradictory. Indeed, they are often experienced as such (Egan, 1997). The teacher is faced with a trilemma or a paradox. Do you choose the subject approach, the social orientation or do you focus mainly on the individual development of children. Like most paradoxes, this is only an apparent contradiction. Education has the assignment of dealing with the three perspectives. This is not easy. But just choosing one of the three is too simple and prevents children from benefiting from all the opportunities available. An over-exclusive elaboration of the child development opinion can cause tension when confronted with the requirements of society. Education that is excessively directed at subject matter takes insufficient account of the individual, the social, the emotional and value development of children. Purely socially oriented education carries the risk of following the attitudes of the day.

The curriculum perspectives described above would also constitute a reconceptualization of primary education. However, they are not the only perspectives. In his contribution, Stevens presents us with five other perspectives. There is a strong relationship between those perspectives and opinions about how children learn.

How children learn

A content structure, such as might be recorded in core objectives or standards, does not in itself lead to learning. Knowledge is a subjective issue and linked to the individual. Knowledge is not something that in itself can be recorded in documents, shared and transferred. Looking at teaching as the transfer of knowledge is an outdated and inappropriate paradigm. In Kessels' speech on taking up the position of Professor of Human Resource Development in the faculty of educational theory at the University of Twente (Kessels, 2001), he states that knowledge and skills cannot be examined separately from the individual who possesses them. Knowledge is not transferable. Everyone must acquire and develop it for himself or herself. Knowledge is the result of the ability to acquire knowledge. That is a far-reaching standpoint, of extraordinary interest to organisations for which knowledge production is 'core business', and also for education in itself, naturally. Kessels then asks to what extent it is possible to develop the capability of individuals and teams to locate relevant information, use it to develop a new expertise and then use this for the step-by-step improvement and renewal of working processes, products and services. In this connection, he introduces the concept *enticement to knowledge productivity*. In that enticement process, Kessels believes mainly in the transformation of the daily working environment into an environment in which learning and working coincide. Behind this is the idea that learning processes take place every day in and around workplaces, which are many times more powerful than those that occur in artificially organised courses and training sessions.

Learning environment is a crucial concept in this outlook on knowledge productivity, and cognitive-motivational constructive views on learning provide the foundations for this within educational psychology. Kessels formulates three vital development principles for the curriculum for a knowledge-intensive organisation, principles that can be applied unchanged to education:

- *mutual attractiveness*. It must be challenging for teacher and pupil;
- *the search for passion*. You must enjoy what you are doing;
- *enticement to knowledge productivity*. A situation should be created that leads to learning.

Self-directed educational paths are meaningful and powerful for pupils in education, even for very young ones (Pieters, 2000). The learning environment in the school is in principle no different from the working and learning environment referred to by Kessels.

There are striking similarities between the views of human resource expert Kessels and the remedial educationalist Stevens who had his say in his essay in this collection. Both are convinced of the motivational element in the learning process and the importance of a powerful learning environment. Learning environment can be defined as the total of sources of knowledge and experience that affect you in working and learning. Learning in this learning environment is not a process of recitation, but involves processes of active construction, reflection and interaction. The paradigm of the transfer of knowledge as the primary task of the school has ceased to exist here.

Towards a new primary school

At the beginning of this essay I asked the question of whether primary education still suffices. Even if I were to answer this question affirmatively, the question would then be whether it will suffice for much longer. The nature and content of primary education finds its roots in a nineteenth century structure. A structure of a mainly traditional, subject-based approach for children in a generally strict system of subject matter year classes. In the meantime, the society children grow up in has become relatively dynamic and complex. Information is subject to rapid changes, reaches children in various ways and can be turned into knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes in different ways.

The same applies to views on learning and teaching. Although we are becoming increasingly convinced that learning is not the transfer of knowledge, this still appears to be the most frequently practised form of education.

Schools are currently struggling with the discrepancy between the opinions about education as a stable and orderly system (with as its main task conveying pre-coded information to children) and opinions that meet the developmental needs of children. We cannot burden teachers with this struggle, and certainly not children. If we really want to work on improvement of the quality of education, without restricting this to special groups of children, we encounter the challenge for fundamental improvement of education as a whole. The dominance of the subject matter paradigm as a focus for education will be replaced by the development of children and respect for the differences that will occur. We have to accept that in the development of children differences will occur, partly determined by education. These differences are related to the social and cultural environment in which children grow up, to their motivation and interest, to their intellectual and physical capacities, to the involvement and capabilities of their parents and guardians.

The routes children follow in education will have to be adapted accordingly and will eventually lead to varying results. If we want to limit the variation to a certain extent, a solution could be to make the route slightly longer for children who need more time for certain parts. In the subject matter year class system, this would lead to the undesirable repetition of a year. Increasing the flexibility of primary education, with perhaps far-reaching modularization of parts of the programme, would eliminate the undesired effect of needless repetition of certain parts, as is the case with a full year's repetition. In my opinion modularization of the educational provision entails a flexible system of course units and cross-curricular, meaningful units of educational content grouped into a theme. Experiments to that effect are currently in progress in a number of schools (Janson, 1999; Houtveen & Reezigt, 2000).

A standard programme does not fit into the new primary school, simply because there are no standard children. Children differ, but are not unequal. The differences urge us to think about a teaching method that accepts differences and sustains the development of children as the guiding principle. This means less attention for the problematic character of the differences, but more attention for the individual possibilities of each child. These are the premises for the new primary school.

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About the authors

Helmut Bachmann

After graduating from teacher training college in Vienna Helmut Bachmann became a teacher in a secondary general school (German/ manual crafts) in 1977. Besides teaching, he studied political science and pedagogy at the University of Vienna and finally completed his studies and achieved his doctor's degree after submitting his thesis in 1989. During his professional career Helmut Bachmann has acquired considerable experience in teacher training courses, as author of a series of textbooks for German language in secondary schools, 'Lebendige Sprache', and is experienced in group management and moderation. Bachman worked for the Provincial School Board of Vienna as Pedagogical expert for school development from 1984 to1988.

From 1988-1991 he was a member of the Federal Ministry of Education Science and the Arts as an Expert within the department for civic education.

Since 1991 he has been a member of the Centre for school development and representative of the head of the institution. He is a specialist in school autonomy, decision-making and the democratic development of Schools. A part of his work is dedicated to system development and change management in south-eastern countries. He is Austrian representative within CIDREE (member of the executive Committee) and responsible for International co-operation.

Ian Barr

Ian Barr is an educational consultant specialising on issues relating to the arts, cultural issues, international education and learning. After teaching for thirteen years, Ian became involved in national curriculum development, working mainly on the evaluation of national projects. In 1991 he became director of curriculum evaluation with the Scottish Curriculum Development Centre and then in 1993 a director of the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, a post he held until December 2000.

In his consultancy work Ian works with government departments, international agencies, NGOs, arts councils and higher education institutions, mainly on the development of policy and strategic thinking. He has written extensively on a wide range of issues and in 1995 he co-

wrote for UNESCO ‘Guidelines for Values for the Humanistic and International Dimension of Education.’
Ian is an honorary member of the faculty of education at the University of Glasgow and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.
Much of Ian’s recent educational work has related to education for personal and social development as a fundamental and integrated component of all learning. He also has a keen interest in promoting more inclusive understandings of the processes of learning and how these can be disengaged from the formal institutions of schools, colleges and universities.

Theo Boland
Theo Boland is currently senior curriculum developer for the Primary Education sector of the Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO) in Enschede. Before that, he was - going backwards in time - policy advisor (member of the Dutch Advisory Council for Primary and Special Needs Education), academic researcher at the University of Nijmegen (field of study: investigation of educational learning processes), student (psychology and educational science) and primary school teacher.
At present, his main task is the coordination of a project in which proposals are being developed on ways in which differences between children can be taken into account in education (Project ‘Coping with differences’). In addition, he spends a considerable amount of time in designing and developing reading/language education. His PhD (1991) was based on a longitudinal study of the development of reading skills in primary education, and the consequences of this for the further development and school career of the child.
This interest in reading/language education has remained with him. He is currently taking part in a project set up by the Expertise Centre for Dutch Language Education in Nijmegen.
A third area of work is concerned with international cooperation. For example, he has in the past been a member of delegations advising national governments (Suriname, Iran) about setting up a new curriculum for primary school education. At this moment, he is doing the same thing in South Africa with SLO and CITO colleagues.
In the project ‘Coping with Differences’, he and his colleagues aim to translate the underlying ideas behind customised education or adaptive education into practical proposals for schools and teachers. Conversely, he is also trying to produce a model or theory summarising the numerous ways in which schools and teachers take into account the differences between children who have been entrusted to their care. An example of this is included in this book.

Jeroen Bron
Jeroen Bron works for the secondary education department of the SLO. His work includes both substantive and organisational tasks. His tasks in relation to curriculum content are concentrated on the learning area covering subjects such as citizenship, human rights education, civics and moral education. These include projects both within The Netherlands and abroad, for example in the former Soviet republics (Latvia and the Ukraine) and the Caribbean (Netherlands Antilles). His organisational tasks include: chairing the SLO expertise group 'Civic education in international perspective' and acting as CIDREE contact person for the SLO. In addition, he has the job of assistant international affairs manager. In the year 2000, Jeroen Bron was involved as secretary in the organisation of two international SLO conferences: 'Designing education for the learning society' and 'Emerging democracies, citizenship and human rights education'.

Kieran Egan
Kieran Egan read History (Hons.) at the University of London, graduating with a BA in 1966. He worked for a year as a Research fellow at the Institute for Comparative Studies in Kingston-upon-Thames and then moved to the USA to begin a PhD in Philosophy of Education at Stanford University. He worked concurrently as a consultant to the IBM Corp. on adaptation of a programming method, called Structural Communication, to new computing systems. He completed his PhD at Cornell University in 1972.
His first job was at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, where he has remained ever since. He is the author of about a dozen books, and co-author, editor, or co-editor of a few more. He has also written around one hundred articles. In 1991 he received the Grawemeyer Award in Education. In 1993, he was the first person in education to be elected to the Royal Society of Canada. In 2000 he was elected as a Foreign Associate member of the (USA) National Academy of Education. Several of his books have been translated into more than half a dozen European and Asian languages. His recent books include Teaching as Story Telling; Imagination in Teaching and Learning (both London, Ontario: Althouse Press; Chicago: University of Chicago Press; London: Routledge 1989/1992), The Educated Mind: How cognitive tools shape our understanding (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Children's Minds, Talking Rabbits, and Clockwork Oranges (New York: Teachers College Press; London, Ontario: Althouse Press, 1999,) and Building my Zen Garden (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000.))

Nicol Faasen

Nicol Faasen is with Nasou Via Afrika Publishing House where he heads the English and Afrikaans Language Centre. A former university lecturer, teacher, head of a teacher in-service centre, superintendent of education, language subject adviser, head of a provincial curriculum development unit and senior publisher specialising in reading materials, his particular interests are teacher development, education management, curriculum development and development of reading skills through all the grades.

In his previous positions with the Western Cape Education Department he was involved in a wide range of aspects and levels of the school system, from early childhood development to teacher in-service education. From 1996 until 1998 he was deeply involved in the development of Curriculum 2005, among other things as chairperson of the national committee that developed the Language, Literacy and Communication policy and documents.

An avid reader himself, Dr Faasen believes strongly in the importance of the role of reading in learning; in developing programmes and materials to assist teachers in the sustained development of reading abilities and in publishing high quality reading materials that will invite children into the worlds of reading.

Uwe Hameyer

Uwe Hameyer obtained his diploma in primary and secondary education in 1971 and in educational research in 1973. In 1977 he obtained his doctoral degree and in 1979 he accepted a advisory position at the OECD (Paris) - Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. Since 1984 Uwe Hameyer has worked as a research director at the Institute for Science Education (IPN) at University of Kiel. In 1990 he became full professor at Kiel University and in 1994 director at the Institute of Education, Kiel University. In 1990 he chaired the first international symposium on 'Innovation Processes in Primary Schools' (publication in 1992). He was the main editor of two handbooks on curriculum research and theory (1975 and 1983). He accepted visiting professorships in Austria and Switzerland. Uwe Hameyer was co-editor of several journals, co-author of three English ISIP-OECD-books – International School Improvement Project. Comparative IMPACT research: Implementing Activity-Based Learning in Elementary Science Teaching in Four Countries. Among his more than 20 books on education, innovation research, curriculum theory and school improvement, one of his recent books is 'Schulprogramm' (1998) and 'Knowledge management' (2001, co-edited with Anton Strittmatter).

Uwe Hameyer founded a postgraduate Advanced Studies Program in 1997 at Kiel University called AS which focuses on high level competence in educational management, systems thinking, supervision and coaching. AS is based on international components and prepares an international master of learning program together with the Swiss foundation 'Bildung, Wissenschaft, Tourismus' and universities from other countries.

Hans Hooghoff

Hans Hooghoff is senior curriculum advisor at The Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO) in Enschede. Before that, he taught law and political education in senior secondary education. His areas of expertise include development and innovation in the moral dimension of education, education for democracy, educational development and teaching and learning strategies. As Chief Executive Officer of the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE), he is closely involved in the construction of networks and exchange of knowledge between educational institutions in Europe. He is also the project coordinator of a programme for Capacity Building in South Africa. From 1997 to 1998, he was visiting professor of 'Internationalization' at the School of Education of Nagoya University in Japan.

Hooghoff holds degrees in both Law and Sociology from the University of Utrecht. He has written a series of curriculum publications, participated in national and international conferences and seminars and published in various international journals.

Van As Jordaan

Van As Jordaan is a curriculum developer, with a special interest and expertise in the areas of national curriculum policy, educational leadership in schools and classroom routines (macro-/meso-/micro-levels). He has experience as an in-service teacher trainer and as a project manager and consultant, particularly in the area of national standards, school development and teacher training. He is the author of several learning materials and project manager of teams who developed learning materials.

Van As Jordaan has been a teacher, lecturer, and superintendent of education and general manager of Kagiso Publishers. At the moment he is an independent consultant.

He has been a member of numerous professional bodies in South Africa: Western Cape Education Department — Study Committees: National Curriculum Committees (1989 — 1996). National Learning Area Committees: Technology (1997 - 1999). Boland College of Education:

Board and Senate (1994 - 2001). ORT-STEP - Member of Board (Western Cape: 1994 – 1998). Provincial task group for Agriculture — Farms - Skills Training for workers (1999 - 2000).

Jos Letschert

Jos Letschert is member of the management team of the Netherlands Institute for curriculum development SLO. He has special responsibility for primary education and the international projects of SLO.

Letschert started his educational career as a primary teacher. He holds a teaching degree in Art education for secondary schools and he has worked as an educationalist and project manager in various national and international innovation projects.

He is the author or co-author of several books and articles on education. In the CIDREE-series, for example, he worked with Theo Boland on the comparative study 'Primary Prospects', a quest for facts, trends and prospects in primary education in Europe.

Letschert is a founding member of the European association for Educational Design (EED). This association focuses on the development of contemporary and coherent didactic approaches in education, based on the storyline approach to learning and teaching originally developed in Scotland.

He obtained his doctoral degree (PhD) in 1998 at Utrecht University with a study on the development of a core content for Dutch primary education. Central question: in what way and based on what kind of motives has the policy process taken place concerning the development and determination of common core objectives for Dutch primary education in The Netherlands, and who and what have influenced the process?

Hans Lodewijks

Hans Lodewijks obtained his Psychology Masters degree at the universities of Utrecht and Amsterdam and his PhD from Tilburg University.

Presently, he is a professor of Psychology (human development, learning and education) at Tilburg University, The Netherlands. His research work is directed at issues of growth and development of individual human competencies in different socio-cultural contexts, as they evolve in or out of formal education settings. His publications relate to different aspects of learning processes and learning environments, such as learning conceptions, learning styles and strategies, powerful learning environments, the development of expertise, knowledge acquisition, meta-cognition, individual epistemological beliefs.

At an international level, Hans Lodewijks was one of the initiators of the European Association for Research on Learning & Instruction EARLI. In this respect, he has served as secretary of the executive committee of EARLI, as editor of the EARLI journal and as Programme Chair of one of EARLI's biennial conferences.
From 1985-1992, he directed the former Institute for Educational Research in The Netherlands (SVO) in the Hague and, from 1992-1998, he was professor of Education (educational psychology) at Nijmegen University.

Margaret McGhie
Margaret McGhie is an educationist with the national curriculum agency in Scotland. Her background is in Modern Languages, and before joining the Curriculum Council in 1991 she had considerable experience as a teacher in a variety of Scottish schools and conducted a research project for the Council of Europe on developing reflective practices in young language learners.
Modern Languages continues to form part of her present remit. However, most of her important work in the last 10 years has attended to matters of values and education, personal and social education, special educational needs and the ethical dimensions of teaching.
Margaret is a frequent contributor to international conferences as well as to national committees. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA). She has a keen interest in the ethical dimension of education, in discernment as a dimension of assessment, in the development of emotional literacy in young people and in collaborative learning.
Margaret has worked with a number of agencies as a consultant including UNESCO, for which she co-wrote *'Guidelines for Values for the Humanistic and International Dimension of Education.'*
Much of Margaret's current work relates to issues of education for personal and social development, to the development of the health promoting school and to issues of inclusion as it relates to all young people, but most particularly those who may require support for learning. She is also managing an innovative project on sustainable development in Scottish Secondary schools involving a wide variety of partners from arenas outwith education – making the connections in practice.

Heinz Schirp
Heinz Schirp is vice-director of the State Institute for School and Education in Soest, Northrhine-Westfalia, Germany, and head of the department 'Curriculum Development'.

He started his professional career as a teacher for German, History and Social Science. He worked in areas of teacher education at University and Teacher Colleges and made his PhD in 1979. He became senior researcher for Political Science and History in the State Institute, in 1983 head of the section Research on School and Education and in 1994 head of the department Curriculum Development.

Heinz Schirp is author and co-author in the field of curriculum theory, education and school development and has published a lot of articles in German and international journals and publications concerning various areas of education e.g.: curriculum theory and implementation strategies, school development and school programs, 'opening the school', moral-cognitive development, and values education. On these issues he has been invited as keynote speaker to national and international conferences. His current focus of research and publication is the development of models to transfer neurophysiological results to the field of classroom teaching and learning. In this context he performs an international collaborative project within CIDREE 'New Teaching and Learning Strategies' (NeTS).

Roger Standaert

From the very beginning, Roger Standaert has been the director of the Flemish Department for Educational Development (DVO). The department was established by the Flemish Community and is responsible for providing the Government and the Minister of Education with scientifically reasoned advice.

One of the main functions of the department is the development of core objectives for all types of education in Flanders. Standaert received a prestigious award from the Flemish Community because of his significance to the innovation and development of education.

He combines his work for DVO with teaching and research as a professor at Gent University. His assignment is comparative education. This was also the topic of his dissertation in 1990 about rationality in education policy in France, Germany, England and Wales.

Standaert is chairman of the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe CIDREE.

Luc Stevens
Stevens is a professor in the faculty of social sciences at Utrecht University, with a teaching and research assignment on special education. At the moment he also works at the Protestant Educational Advisory Centre (CPS) as project manager on a project about school ethos.
Stevens is a valued pedagogue in the educational field. An example of the appreciation he has earned from workers in the field is the fact that a school for special education has recently been given his name.
Stevens is the author of many publications on education. His essay 'Overdenken en doen', a pedagogical contribution to inclusive education, found its way to most primary schools in The Netherlands and proved to be a very influential document in processes of school development.
Stevens knows the world of teacher training in The Netherlands very well. He has been the chairman of several visitation committees and also of a task force with the assignment of developing a common curriculum for teacher training.