

## INDUCTION: FOSTERING CAREER DEVELOPMENT AT ALL STAGES

Janet Draper and Jim O'Brien (2006) Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press.  
ISBN: 1 903765 55 2 (pp.88, £13.50, p.b.)

Review by RACHEL SHANKS

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This is a useful book for policy makers, local authority staff, head teachers and teaching unions. It helps to identify some of the gaps in current policy and practice in teacher induction in Scotland. It sets out examples of comprehensive programmes of induction for new teachers to which we can aspire. It shows in what ways the Scottish system of teacher induction fares well in an international comparison and where it is lacking, for example in the area of training for mentors.

In the first chapter "What is induction for?" Draper and O'Brien introduce not only induction for new or beginning teachers but also the concept of induction for all teachers who are changing roles, whether in a new school or not.

The very need for induction reflects the amount of learning and adjustment that is required of the new teacher in post, and the argument pursued in this book is that this need for induction arises whenever there is a significant change in post at any career stage whether or not it involves a change of school. p.9

Chapter two "Teachers' work and professional development" covers policy initiatives and models of professional development and their varied contribution to teacher growth, confidence and effectiveness. The authors point out that "In a context of lifelong learning, professional development would be expected to be ongoing and the framework for CPD confirms this but nonetheless provides a limited ladder for CPD." (p. 24). Placing teachers' CPD into the context of lifelong learning could have been expanded further with greater reference to two projects of the ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme. The two projects with greatest relevance to the induction of new teachers are, first and foremost, the Early Career Learning project which had a central focus on the relationship between learning and context, and secondly, the Enhanced Competence-Based Learning in Early Professional Development project. Unfortunately none of the work of the Early Career Learning project is referenced. In some ways this book has also been overtaken by the current 'Developing Expertise in Beginning Teachers' (DEBT) research project of the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford.

In Chapter Three "Policy and practice in induction for beginning teachers" the authors explore the experiences of new teachers and the systems in place for them in parts of the developed world (namely, Scotland, Hong Kong, England, Australia, New Zealand and Japan). The purposes, focus, design, management and process of induction are covered and there is a list of key features of induction systems for new teachers. Chapter Four "Induction: Standards and support structures" looks at the detail of teacher standards and the structural approaches adopted in Scotland, England and the state of Victoria in Australia when introducing new induction programmes. This includes an interesting discussion of what should be in "An induction curriculum" (p. 59).

Chapter Five "Induction for experienced teachers" considers how more experienced teachers could be supported and inducted when taking on new specific roles and functions such as headship. The needs of more experienced teachers are seen to be similar to those of new teachers but they are often neglected. In Chapter Six "The future of induction" several recommendations are made for teachers

taking up new posts; for example, “there is a need to regularly review standards to prevent the system which circumscribes professional development from becoming ossified.” (p. 75).

If policy makers wanted to see how a book could inform evidence-based policy and practice then they could choose this one. It brings together the research of others as well as the authors’ own research. Some research dated back to the late eighties and early nineties under the old system of induction in Scotland and so was perhaps too old to be of relevance today. As well as bringing together research on the induction of new teachers the authors argue that induction should be provided for all teachers who change school and/or role. There will not be many people who argue with this but the problem is how to resource this type of teacher induction – something policy makers and politicians would have to decide.

Unfortunately theoretical perspectives to explain the importance of induction for new and older teachers was absent. Although constructivism and communities of practice were mentioned in the introduction to the book they were not referred to again. Another difficulty I had when reading the book was that at times a discussion of the general tumbled into an explanation of the specific situation in Scotland without adequate signposting.

Despite these shortcomings, if you wish to find out about induction in general, and, in particular, induction in Scotland, then this book is a good place to start in conjunction with Wilson et al “Developing Teachers: A review of early professional learning”.

#### REFERENCE

Wilson, V., Hall, J., Davidson, J. & Lewin, J. (2006) *Developing Teachers: A review of early professional learning*, (Research Publication No.3). GTCS Research

## BUILDING A LEARNING COMMUNITY IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

Margaret Martin (2007) Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press. ISBN 13: 9781903765685. (pp. 96, £13.50, pb.)

Review by: SHARMISTHA DAS

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The topic of the book is one which is likely to impact on how education professionals choose to view pedagogy as a driving factor for building 'collective knowledge'. Nevertheless, it is written with the aim to meet the need of a more specific audience, namely, classroom teachers, teacher-educators and newly qualified teachers. The book makes an interesting read with its coherent structure and thematic presentation of the concept of a 'learning community' in the primary classroom. The author adopted a holistic view in her discussion, including the broad policy context as well as theoretical underpinnings which embed such practices in the classroom. With equal emphasis, the core components of a learning community and how the teacher's professional self-knowledge affects the learning outcomes of this collective endeavour are discussed.

Chapter one outlines the changes introduced in the Scottish Education policy context since the 1960s. The author acknowledges the shift of the philosophy behind these policy foci which influenced the educational landscape throughout Scotland and also, how increased accountability impacted upon the practices in the classroom. The three major periods of change since the publication of the Primary Memorandum in 1965 are defined as: *child-centred*, *curriculum-centred* and *learner-centred*. The discussion provides insights into a performance-driven culture initiated by the 5 – 14 National Curriculum during the 1990s. Arguments help the reader to understand the dilemma of a classroom teacher in nurturing the development of both cognitive and affective skills for the 'whole child'. The introduction of *A Curriculum for Excellence (ACE)* in 2004 and *Assessment is for Learning (AifL)* policies (2002) brought in a different perspective. The author asserts: 'The drive to raise attainment and improve performance is still paramount, but the focus has shifted towards education for all and a social inclusion agenda.' (p. 3)

AifL's formative assessment guidelines are aligned with the goals of ACE. The four capacities of ACE – successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors – take account of the social and affective skills which are essential for any kind of information processing in a given context. The quality of these skills determines the outcomes of learning, both at a cognitive and affective level. To promote these skills and create an 'active learning' environment for the pupils requires teachers to adopt a teaching style which encourages participation and engagement through creativity and interconnectedness. This is a challenging task. The role of the teacher and the dynamics between the participants change in the process of shaping such an environment. It appears that the answer could lie in the proposed concept of a 'learning community', which advocates a democratic approach to teaching and learning. This approach urges us to question our beliefs and assumptions behind the classroom practices.

Against the policy backdrop, chapter two describes a move from the 'transmission' model to the constructivist approach to learning in the context of Scottish education. It begins by identifying the teacher's dilemma, and in some cases preference to cling on to the 'transmission' model as a result of a lack of confidence to cope with rapid change, coupled with increased accountability in the workplace over the past two decades. Referring to Dewey (1963), proposing a move away, the author suggests a 'transformative' model of learning based on the

theories focused on the importance of *experience* in learning. The constructivist theories are drawn upon in order to illustrate how mutual learning occurs through a transformation model in the classroom. The teacher's role in this type of classroom becomes that of a facilitator who provides encouragement to children and stimulus for thinking and linking existing knowledge between the participants. It replaces the role of a 'giver' in the traditionally practiced 'transmission' model of learning. Focusing on motivation, self-esteem and social context of learning, the arguments make a strong case for ACE, which has created a perfect opportunity to promote a new pedagogy based on cooperative active learning.

Chapter three provides another perspective for the reader into the inner world of the teacher's professional identity and how it affects the learning community in the classroom. It argues that the values and beliefs underlying a teacher's professional self-knowledge are extremely important in the shaping process of an effective learning environment for the pupils. Gardner's (1983) 'interpersonal intelligence' theory is discussed to reinforce the need for teacher's self knowledge in building an effective professional identity. Furthermore, it is highlighted that the teacher's professional knowledge about his/her identity helps to re-structure and re-negotiate the intellectual authority and power dynamics within a learning community. To quote specifically: 'In the co-operative learning model, the teacher no longer is the only source of ideas and information; children are encouraged to take on new roles and responsibilities in the learning and so the predictable progression through a planned lesson is not going to be the norm.' (p. 54). Balancing the power dimension poses a challenge for the teacher in the classroom.

Moreover, with all the pressure on accountability, it is only too tempting to abide by the rules of 'usual' practices of teaching and learning instead of exploring the learning context which is affected by the changes initiated by the new curriculum. However, the flexibility in developing the four capacities of ACE urges us to find unique ways to shape knowledge according to the need of each learning community in the individual classrooms. The author rightly points out that critical reflection is an important tool to increase self-awareness and emotional intelligence, which not only helps us to examine the practicalities of a lesson, but also un-earth and evaluate deep-rooted beliefs and assumptions.

The key components, conditions and the constraints of building an effective learning community are discussed in chapter four. While encouraging cooperative learning through specific instructional strategies (eg Johnson & Johnson, 1993), mutual interdependence between the members of the community is identified as an ideal avenue to develop the four capacities of ACE. However, the skills to facilitate such group dynamics rely on the teacher's awareness, understanding and capabilities to nurture cooperative learning. The author highlights the need to develop learning communities in the classrooms for the sake of developing collective knowledge instead of aiming for 'compliance' through control in a learning context. A useful checklist for managing cooperative learning is provided in the book with a caution that the tips alone will not serve the purpose unless the teacher is equipped with an overall understanding of the philosophy behind such practices. Being an experienced practitioner, her prescriptive style of writing in some areas may surprise the reader. However, the logical thinking and grasp of the topic in discussion clearly justifies the rationale behind each argument.

While focusing on the teacher's crucial role in shaping a learning community, the final chapter raises issues related to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). One of the recommendations offered includes practices promoting closer links between the use of effective learning and teaching methodology and the four capacities of ACE. It is implied that the concept of a learning community can be used within the ITE courses to emphasise the links with ACE. Subsequently, the difficulty of the newly qualified teacher's (NQT)

need to fit into the school's existing professional culture and context, while it is at odds with the core values to promote a learning community in the classroom are discussed. It is suggested that more work can be done to support the NQTs during the induction year while they try to promote such practices. This section appears relatively under-developed and perhaps justifiably so, as understanding the concept of the learning community remains the crux of the narrative.

Referring to various international studies, the author reinforces the importance of a thorough understanding of cooperative learning and a raised awareness of the benefits and disadvantages of this practice in CPD courses. Following Johnson *et al's* (2000) three stages of training needs for CPD, she suggests a gradual process of developing an understanding of cooperative learning. From theoretical underpinning and the philosophy to examining the practices in the light of long-held beliefs and assumptions through reflection – all are identified as inseparable parts of an active and on-going learning process.

In conclusion, two key elements are reinforced: the need to have a sound understanding of the cooperative learning approach in the process of building a learning community; and complementing this understanding with the reflection on teacher's own practice in the light of professional knowledge, values and beliefs.

The relationship between the teacher and the pupils is at the heart of building a learning community in the classroom. Invariably, the power dimension creates added complexity. However, the book illustrates the cultural shift required for building a learning community and appropriately addresses such issue by focusing on the development of teachers' professional knowledge on curriculum, pedagogy, practice and the philosophy behind these elements.

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT FROM BIRTH TO EIGHT: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE EARLY YEARS

Maria Robinson (2008) Maidenhead: Open University Press. ISBN: 9780335220977. (pp. 235, £19.99, pb.)

## MANAGING BEHAVIOUR IN THE EARLY YEARS

Janet Kay (2006) London: Continuum Press. ISBN 0 8264 8465 4 (pp. 194, £9.99, pb.)

Review by: ALISON FOX

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A poignant personal story in the introduction of *Child Development from Birth to Eight: A Journey Through the Early Years* vividly illustrates the principle which flows throughout: that all adults who care for and work with children must be committed to seeing and understanding the child's view of the world. Children need adult carers to understand the emotional underpinnings of their role

because any role that involves such close relationships with children will also activate individual ideas and expectations about children, bringing to the surface emotions that the adult may not fully understand. From the child's point of view, such knowledge in their adult carers encourages parents and / or professionals to have realistic expectations so that they do not ascribe motives, ideas and levels of behaviour that are way beyond the child's abilities. (p. 3)

It is incumbent on the adult to understand the 'heart of the intended communication', a theme dealt with in full in Chapter 8, and Robinson's book should help adults to do so.

The book offers a comprehensive outline, backed by research, of human development focusing on the early years. It is written in a very accessible and easy style, peppered with personal and relevant examples to illustrate some fairly complex findings from research from the areas of neuroscience and cognitive psychology. While it is firmly linked to the *Every Child Matters, Early Years Matters and Birth to Three Matters* policy agendas in England, these resonate with the principles of Scotland's *Birth to Three: Supporting our youngest children* and *Curriculum Framework for Children 3 to 5* policy documents, and the principles which underpin *Curriculum for Excellence*. It is therefore to be recommended for a range of audiences: students studying to become early years practitioners or those already in post who wish to continue their professional development; teachers and student teachers from all sectors who will benefit from developing their understanding of the origins of learning and learning behaviour; and of course interested parents and carers.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the structure of the brain: maturation, function, aspects of hemispheric laterality and potential gender differences, and the senses. These chapters lay the foundations for the development of Robinson's real interest, the roots of behaviour, motivation and the emotional life of children and young people. She stresses that understanding these areas "is essential for practitioners working with children of any age – including adolescents" (p. 79) and I agree. How I would love to see this book read by colleagues in all sectors of compulsory education, as the effects of development in the early years is felt way after the Nursery years are long past.

Having taught young children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties early in my career, I was particularly interested in chapter 5 where

Robinson discusses ‘the generally accepted range of basic, or primary, emotions: sadness, fear, anger, happiness, surprise and disgust. She notes that more complex emotions e.g. guilt, jealousy, pride can be seen as ‘subtle variations, enhancements and mixtures’ of the primary emotions.

She goes on to make links with the brain research previously discussed, along with attachment theory, offering the reader a very good grounding on which to base their understanding of the emotional and social well being of children.

In the chapter on playing and imagining I would have liked a definition of what she considers play to be, having recently read Sutton-Smith (1997) on *The Ambiguity of Play*, or at least an acknowledgement that it is hard to define. That said, this, again, is a useful chapter, which introduces and extends one’s understanding of play and imagination, particularly important when play is so central to our current policy context.

All in all, this book would seem to be an excellent introduction to, or update on what is known about human development, which should benefit a wide range of practitioners.

Janet Kay’s *Managing Behaviour in the Early Years* is a useful, accessible and well-written book, which in many ways complements *Child Development from Birth to Eight*. It would be a fine addition to professional libraries in schools and early years settings. The title does not do it justice as it goes way beyond the notion of ‘managing’ the behaviour of children in their early years. Managing – and by implication – controlling the behaviour of others raises the issue of power and leads to the question: ‘In whose interest do we manage the behaviour of children in the early years?’ This book does ask what sort of behaviour is wanted, and raises the issue that there is no single answer: what is acceptable behaviour to one adult may be unacceptable to another. Its purpose is not, however, to delve into educational philosophy. This is a practical book, which attempts to encourage discussion and reflection, and as such has the potential to lead to some constructive dialogue in staffrooms.

She states that a key factor for early years settings is “the need to develop a common view of what behaviour is required within the setting and this needs to be shared by all staff” (p. 13). A list of behaviours which may be a focus for positive development strategies is offered, but she stresses that the process of developing this common view is crucial. Perhaps more stress could have been put on the problematic nature of such an enterprise as to achieve a common view, practitioners will need to delve deep into their own experiences and understandings of the world, challenging their unquestioned beliefs and assumptions about children’s behaviour to ensure that the behaviour that ‘is required’ is in the interest of the children concerned.

She refers to an Ofsted report *Managing Challenging Behaviour* (March, 2005) which notes that teachers in training often report that they have not had sufficient guidance to manage behaviour effectively and that they do not have sufficient knowledge of child development. This book begins to address this concern in relation to knowledge of child development, though not in the detail of Robinson’s *Child Development from birth to eight*. Robinson examines the roots of behaviour in school-age children, and their capacity to manage emotions, control their own behaviour and their ability to play and learn. Kay however very effectively conveys the message that children’s behaviour is often responsive, and the behaviour and attitudes of adults who care for, and work with them are crucial when supporting positive behaviour. While this book does offer ‘helpful responses’ to particular behaviours, it stresses the importance of creating an environment in which positive behaviour can be encouraged and supported.

I think this would be a tremendously useful book for staff at all stages of their development when addressing issues of school ethos and developing an inclusive culture. Chapter 3 offers an insight into meeting all children’s needs with reference to developmental differences. Some strategies are offered in relation to working with

children whose behaviour is affected by, for example, poor communication skills, learning disabilities and delays, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder, and Autistic Spectrum Disorders. The following chapter then focuses on collaborative approaches to creating positive and inclusive environments. The case studies and discussion points provided throughout the book are particularly useful here, where readers are invited to consider some interesting and challenging situations which can occur in early years settings. These would be ideal for staff discussion when working towards shared understandings. The final chapter looks at the importance of the process of the development of a whole-school behaviour management policy and offers a structure for staff in early years settings to consider.

This book certainly does not contain all the answers but it asks some important questions and offers a framework and guidance for groups of staff to explore and consider, ensuring that their young charges are offered a positive and constructive environment in which to learn.



## CRACKING THE HARD CLASS (Second Edition)

Bill Rogers (2006) London: Sage. ISBN: 13 978 1-4129-2355-2. (pp 214, £19.99, pb.)

Review by: GEORGE HEAD

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Readers familiar with Rogers' work will recognise much of the content of this book. From the outset, it is clear that the focus of this edition is about supporting teachers: new teachers, the teacher with a new class and teachers who find themselves, perhaps for the first time, faced with a difficult class. Rogers makes it clear that in recognising that some teachers may struggle with difficult classes, his purpose is not to blame but to support. Central to the approach advocated is dealing with behaviour as a whole-school issue in which inexperienced teachers or teachers new to dealing with a hard class are supported by more experienced colleagues in order to convey a sense of purpose, enthusiasm and respect for and towards the class.

Rogers defines 'hardness' in a class in terms of the frequency, intensity and duration of disruptive behaviour. He does not, however, quantify these factors, preferring to argue that they are dependent on teachers' perceptions and beliefs. He also recognises that within any one class, a number of environmental factors can contribute, either negatively or positively, towards behaviour. These include classroom organisation, timetabling and the dynamics of different groups of students. Those which exacerbate the negative behaviours of a hard class include teachers being left unsupported and controlling classes through a mixture of criticism and intimidation. Rogers' counter to a negative regime is a collegiate approach based on a 'year-level plan' which includes small-group and 1:1 support for academic, social and survival skills. He also, however, advocates the use of more strategic or immediate support when it is necessary to deal with particularly challenging individuals or groups and, again, the tactics suggested to alleviate difficult situations will be familiar to Rogers' readers and usually entail a senior or experienced member of staff supporting a struggling colleague.

Although Rogers eschews the 'white knight' metaphor in favour of one of 'repairer and builder' to describe the role of the experienced teacher (usually himself in his illustrative anecdotes), there is nevertheless an enduring sense of rescue. As he recognises himself, a genuine no blame ethos needs to be in place for this approach to succeed and to avoid reinforcing any feelings of inadequacy that the inexperienced teacher may have.

The core strategy of Rogers' support mechanism is the classroom meeting. He describes three types of meeting for different purposes: an open meeting for general discussion, a closed meeting to allow the teacher to deal with a specific, serious issue and a mini-meeting for a small group. The open meeting is posited on democratic principles and a belief that if teachers and students are given a voice and taken seriously, then the foundations of change are created. The tools for building on these foundations are again recognisable as familiar Rogers' materials: behaviour agreements, tracking individual students, the use of time-out and individual behaviour plans.

In the early chapters, Rogers argues that these tools and strategies are not an end in themselves but the instruments of a democratic process of developing student identity based on attainment, ability and belonging (ch. 4). In chapter 7, however, his underpinning behaviourist approach is made explicit as he argues behaviour is learned, conditioned and purposeful, and, therefore, can be unlearned, taught and changed. For this reader, there remains an apprehension that there may be a tension between Rogers' long term aspirations and, as many others have illustrated, the short-termism of behaviourist approaches. However, for the teacher anxious to engage with

a hard class, perhaps these matters are more the subject of academic and psychological debate. For them, probably the real value of this book lies in the two longest chapters on establishing a class at the outset and supporting colleagues, respectively.

The first meeting between a class and a teacher, Rogers argues, is ripe for the establishment of shared rights and responsibilities. Here, the teacher sets up the routines, procedures and expectations of the class. Again Rogers' suggestions of how to achieve this are familiar and include hints on classroom management, communicating calmness and ways of speaking to pupils that are intended as positive guidance rather than negative reprimands and criticism.

Perhaps the most significant section in this chapter, however, is where Rogers deals with motivation. He argues that a delicate balance between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation must be struck, with the long-term trend being towards the latter. He recognises the pitfalls and complexity of developing such a regime, especially the tendency of some inexperienced teachers to become over-friendly with a class, and to maintain that friendship through repeated offers of extrinsic motivators. Through encouraging the teacher to think in the long-term, Rogers hopes to avoid the short-termism for which teachers may be tempted to settle as their extrinsic motivators have a positive impact on classroom behaviour. This chapter could prove particularly valuable for new teachers.

Similarly, chapter 9 may well be the most significant for support teachers. Just as establishing a democratic, motivated learning classroom is complex and delicate, so is the matter of establishing collegiate support. Rogers advocates the creation of what he terms 'a supportive ecology' through a process of mentoring. In this chapter, he again illustrates the support role as one of 'repairer and builder', helping the new or inexperienced teacher to develop strategies and confidence.

Rogers' anecdotal style provides 'real life' examples of his practice that will be easily accessible to teachers. Since the essential focus of teachers' work is practice, theory tends to be left unstated. At various points, however, the book can be understood by an eclectic mix of theories: behaviourism, choice theory and humanism.

Rogers recognises that teaching, whilst for many a way of life, ultimately is only one, albeit extremely significant, part of life. His final piece of advice to new and inexperienced teachers is to maintain a life outside of teaching and not to allow the hard class to dominate their thoughts and actions. As those of us experienced in working with difficult pupils are aware, this is not an easy balance to strike. For the new teacher, though, this book will help.

## A MOST HONOURABLE PROFESSION: THE GRADUATION SPEECHES OF JAMES SCOTLAND

Edited by David Northcroft (2008) Aberdeen: School of Education, University of Aberdeen. (pp. 49, £6.00, pb.)

Review by WILLIS MARKER

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For nearly a quarter of a century, James Scotland was a considerable figure within the policy community for Scottish Education. Principal of Aberdeen College of Education from 1961-83, he was also a member of many of the important organisations or committees of the period such as the Scottish Examination Board, the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum and the Council for National Academic Awards. One on which he was particularly proud to serve was the General Teaching Council, which he chaired for three years.

Unlike many dedicated professionals, James Scotland had a 'hinterland'. His work as an historian of Scottish Education might be linked to his professional activities but beyond that there were, among other things, his enthusiasm for drama, his work as a playwright and producer, the many scripts he wrote for radio comedy shows. He was indeed a man of prodigious energy and multiple talents.

In this book, David Northcroft has brought together excerpts from some of the speeches he made to the students leaving college, the majority of whom were not strictly speaking graduates but were receiving their college diplomas before entering primary teaching. Northcroft has grouped these excerpts into four sections: From Expansion to Crisis; Courage and Moderation; A Most Honourable Profession; and a Sense of Occasion. For each section he has provided very useful and insightful background information setting the speeches in the turbulent period in the colleges' history from the rapid expansion of the 1960s to the bitter battles over cutbacks and college closures. All this of course was taking place during a period of intense debate about the curriculum, in which perhaps the most important document was the Primary Memorandum of 1967 with in its implications both for what should be taught and how learning should be organised. Moreover, beyond this background information, he offers a critical but sympathetic view of Scotland's ideas.

Graduation speeches are a special genre. What is their audience looking for? Probably some congratulations on their success added to reassurance that their efforts have been worthwhile; advice about the tasks that lie ahead of them and encouragement to tackle them.

What then are the main themes of these speeches? Scotland wasted little time on congratulations but there are regular references to changes in the schools. In 1968, the year after the publication of the Primary Memorandum, he made much of progress in the curriculum and the consequent changes in teaching methods (though even then sounding a note of caution about too precipitate a break with the past). Such emphasis on change led him to stress a need for develop 'a sceptical, questioning attitude to the teacher's craft and a durable, constantly renewed willingness to experiment' and to press the need for more structured In-service Education – 'a ladder of improvement for our teachers'.

Another theme was that of reassurance: that teaching was a profession which offered not only satisfaction but joy. He constantly reminded his hearers that they were entering an honourable profession, but that reminder was increasingly tempered by a pessimistic sense that the times were out of joint, that a howling tempest was blowing Education off course. So the later speeches, as Northcroft points out, became increasingly like sermons, exhorting the hearers to see themselves as moral exemplars and to devote their lives to the service of their pupils.

Undoubtedly these speeches were masterpieces of their kind. To drive home his message, Scotland was able to draw upon a remarkably wide range of reading and of personal experience and to blend these with couthie stories. For instance in the afternoon speech of 1976, there were references to Thoreau, Sir Thomas More, Rozinov and Arthur Quiller-Couch as well as an amusing personal anecdote. The master of radio scripts knew how to entertain in order to inspire.

What this artistry conceals is a lack of any penetrating criticism. Scotland frequently bemoans a growing lack of respect for Education without asking to what extent the Education on offer was worthy of respect. This is not surprising. He was an archetypal 'insider': one who worked within the policy community and sought for improvement by incremental stages. Being an 'insider', however, came at a price. The SED at that time largely controlled access to the policy community and anyone of radical or subversive views was filtered out. It is doubtful if Scotland felt uncomfortable about this. One good example of his tendency to view Scottish Education through slightly rose-tinted spectacles was his pride in the GTC, a complacent view not widely shared either by teachers or the SED. When I interviewed John Pollock he commented that: 'I cannot think of much that the GTC has done. But...when I go abroad I tend to boast about the GTC controlling our profession but we know that it doesn't. Ministers only pay attention to what they want to pay attention to'. While Keir Bloomer referred dismissively to the teacher representatives on the GTC as 'the B team'.

However, I would not wish to end this review on too critical a note. From 1972-83, I worked with James Scotland on various committees. As a chairman or colleague I found him congenial, courteous, cogent in argument but never resentful of honest disagreement. If latterly he began to feel like a man out of his time, it is hardly surprising. Many of those whose lives were marked by the war years (and in his very last speech he harked back to Hitler's War) and by the years of austerity which followed when there were hopes, in Peter Hennessy's phrase, of Building Jerusalem, felt uneasy about some of the changes in society in the 1960s and after. If towards the end his rhetoric may have sounded dated and his call to view teaching as a vocation with moral implications may have fallen more and more on deaf ears, this does not mean that his unease was entirely unjustified nor that his high-minded view of teaching is irrelevant today.

## ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Mary Briggs, Angela Woodfield, Cynthia Martin & Peter Swatton (2008). Exeter: Learning Matters. ISBN: 978 1 84445 143 2 (pp. 170, £15.00, pb.)

Review by CHRISTINA MISAILIDOU

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*Assessment for Learning and Teaching in Primary Schools* is part of the 'Achieving QTS' series of books. The series intends to offer support for trainee teachers in England through their initial teacher training. The authors of this book note that it has been written 'for both trainees on courses to achieve Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 who wish to develop their understanding and practice of assessment' (p. 1). This second edition of the book has been updated to comply with the 2007 QTS Standards.

'Assessment' is defined by the authors as 'the process of finding out about what children can do and where there may be difficulties' (p. 7). Although other types of assessment are mentioned briefly, the focus of the book is on 'formative assessment' or 'assessment for learning' which is 'the assessment that is completed to inform the planning of future learning and teaching' (p. 2). The authors acknowledge that assessment is probably 'the most difficult area of any teacher's practice' (p. 1). They stress that assessment 'at its best it provides clear information for the planning of teaching and learning' (p. 7) but 'at its worst it is the process of collecting lots of data that is not used to inform...needs' (p. 7). Indeed, often, assessment has been identified with 'summative assessment' and 'testing' and has been viewed as the main outcome in education. Consequently, understanding the purpose of assessment and using it effectively in the classroom is not a trivial task. The authors suggest that their book aims to provide practical advice that will help the teachers to develop their skills.

The book has an excellent layout which makes it very easy to explore and use. It is structured in five chapters.

The first chapter is entitled 'General Principles for Assessment' and provides an introduction to the general principles of assessment as well as practical advice and examples on how to 'convert' these principles into classroom practice.

The chapter begins by examining how to plan for assessment and then discusses a range of assessment strategies that can be employed in the classroom. It is stressed that there may be a diversity of assessment needs within a children's group and simple suggestions for dealing with them are discussed. Then the chapter looks at assessment options after the end of a lesson followed by guidance about good practice in marking. The chapter ends with models of recording assessment outcomes.

The second third and fourth chapters complement the first chapter by focusing on specific issues and strategies for assessment in primary English, Mathematics and Science respectively. The fifth and final chapter presents briefly the opportunities for continuing professional development of assessment skills.

Each chapter begins with relevant references to the professional standards for QTS, followed by the chapter objectives. This is particularly helpful in directing attention towards the requirements (in relation to assessment) for the award of QTS.

One of the key features of the book is the presentation of 'research summaries' throughout each chapter. Each research summary (clearly separated from the surrounding text) offers an overview of research which is related to the topic discussed. This feature attempts to make links between theory and practice and familiarise the reader with the relevant research (something which is not always easy for a busy practitioner). Each summary is relatively brief; this is an advantage

for a book like this as the readers can follow up in more detail the information provided if and when they wish.

Throughout each chapter there are several suggestions concerning practical tasks that the reader can try out. There is a good variety of recommended tasks and the reader is encouraged to select and try out the ones that suit better her/his needs. The presentation of the tasks is again clearly separated from the surrounding text and they aim to consolidate what has been discussed in that particular point of the text. Plenty of practical examples and tools are offered throughout the book which can readily be utilised for the successful completion of the tasks.

Each chapter is brought to a close with a reflective task which facilitates the reader's reflection on her/his work up to that point and most importantly their planning for the next stage of their practice. This task is followed by the summary of the key points of the chapter.

The practicalities of 'getting started' with assessment and implementing it effectively in the classroom can be quite a challenge for a trainee or a new teacher. The main advantage of this book is that it 'translates' theory into practice; it is, in essence, a handbook that offers practical methods and tips for assessing the children's learning. In this sense, the book is not only useful to an England-based practitioner but to anyone who is interested in using assessment successfully and as an integral part of teaching practice.