

REVIEW ARTICLE

WHY (SCHOOL) TEACHERS SHOULD BE TRUSTED

David Carr *Professionalism and Ethics in Teaching*
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The 2002 Reith Lectures, broadcast on BBC Radio 4, were presented by the moral philosopher Onora O'Neill. Her theme, 'A Question of Trust', included exploration of current levels of trust and suspicion regarding several professions, with some reference to those involved in schools and other areas of education. She argued that the recent audit culture, intended to increase public trust in institutions and professionals, has often been counter-productive, in part because of the excess of what she memorably called Herculean micro-management.

O'Neill's lectures suggest the importance of exploring different possible answers to questions such as, 'How far do we, or can we, trust teachers?' 'If trust in teachers is a good thing, should we ask for good grounds for such trust and, if so, what sort(s) of grounds? How far can we, or should we, develop a blend of limited trust and limited suspicion? How should such concerns be worked out for different cases, for example, in relation to children and students of different ages, parents, taxpayers and politicians?'

One way of appreciating the importance of David Carr's (2000) book is by approaching it as assisting us in working out more carefully considered answers to such questions, i.e. answers going beyond those suggested by our current practices, habits, attitudes and emotions. Carr is well-placed to help us in such matters, being Professor of Philosophy of Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Edinburgh. While he has worked on such concerns for the best part of his career, he has drawn this book together more directly from work done between 1990 and 2000. This is not, however, a merely collected republication of scholarly papers, but a reworking and elaboration of such previous publications, now aimed at the wider readership of Routledge's timely and respected series on professional ethics.

Carr's whole cast of mind alerts us to the dangers of going along with any lazy, superficial usage of contrasts between 'pure' and 'applied' studies or between 'theory' and 'practice'. However, it is fair to alert potential readers that only in his final two chapters does he allow himself to engage more closely in that part of the fray for which 'practice' and 'applied' are sign-posts. While questions of trust, such as those sampled above, are not placarded as a main theme ('trust' and 'trustworthy' do not appear in the index, but see p17 for example), important resources for answers to such questions are to be found, either on or just below the surface of the text, throughout the book.

For example, consider Carr's commitment to virtue ethics, as contributing to the development of virtuous characteristics of a good and true human life. This suggests that teachers should be trusted in so far as they (we?) strive to become and remain trustworthy, through trying to enact and embody regard for widely recognised moral and cognitive virtues. Carr hints that he could, and would like to, develop arguments further which at present merely begin to suggest that *only* a virtue-ethical account

can give a full account of the moral features of teachers' professional behaviour (p xii-xiii). It is a feature of Carr's style that such strong claims are hedged around with elaborate hesitations. For some readers, one pleasure of such philosophical style is to explore whether, and—if so—where, the strong claim may succumb, mortally damaged by the many hesitations, or whether it may, nevertheless, emerge strengthened by its ordeal in the teeth of its opponents.

Carr's thirteen chapters come in five parts. The first part aims to show that standard professions, as moral projects, have an inherently ethical character, as a prelude to arguing that, in this sense, 'teaching and education are genuine professions' (p xi). The apparent oddity of this latter phrase will be considered later. Part One's three chapters include key arguments on 'Teaching and skill' (p 4-7: teaching is not reducible to learned skills, but does include these) and on 'a philosophical psychology of teaching' (p 7-10: good teaching is not just any kind of attempt to promote learning (p 4-5), and not just a causally effective technology, nor just a personally attractive performing art, but 'is teaching which seeks at best to promote the moral, psychological and physical well-being of learners and at least to avoid' damaging them in these respects (p 9).

Since, for Carr, teaching is to be seen in the light of good teaching as a moral project in the sense explained here, the stress on promoting the well-being of learners, and avoiding contrasted harm, already indicates a loyalty to a certain type of ethical approach, i.e. some version of virtue ethics. For taking the promotion of human well-being as the goal for orienting development of at least a fuller range of worthwhile, admirable human powers and abilities, according to some understanding of humanity held appropriate for such purposes, is arguably the signature theme of virtue ethics. On account of such intended (goal-directed, i.e. teleological) on-going inclusiveness, such ethics can also be called, in a good sense, perfectionist.

Accordingly, it should come as little or no surprise that for Carr the apparent major rivals of such virtue ethics (i.e. Kant's ethics of duty and the rationally good will, and Bentham and J S Mill's Utilitarian ethics of calculated consequences), should be seen less as mistaken accounts of ethics and more as partial, incomplete accounts (p 34). Such accounts grasp at some contextually appropriate element in, or aspect of, ethics. In some contexts dutiful obedience to principle is more appropriate, while, in other contexts, the reduction of suffering is more appropriate; however, neither should be inflated into a generally applied master-key for answering all ethical questions and for solving all ethical problems.

This is one of the themes in his book by which Carr draws some attention to an aspect of what can be called the inclusive tendency of virtue ethics. This tendency should not, in spite of sceptical suspicions to the contrary, be seen as merely symptomatic of intellectual imperialism. Rather, it may be compared with the more formal and abstract insistence on being universal which shows itself in Kant's insistence on the universality of reason and in Utilitarianism's insistence on universal calculation of happiness or suffering. For virtue ethics, our abilities to think and act in terms of universal principles and in terms of general calculations of consequences for suffering or happiness, are parts of the wider range of relevant human abilities, all to be understood in the light of their power to contribute to human well being. For some of Carr's readers, however, this aspect of virtue ethics may, occasionally, be obscured by Carr's stress on the importance of specific moral contexts and their particularity. For, given this stress, how can Carr avoid the moral (or intellectual) relativism to which he is so avowedly averse? (See for example p.35). Carr hints at his answer to this concern already on p xi, and develops it in Part Two.

Part Two aims to show how teachers' knowledge and expertise are 'essentially grounded' in what Aristotle called *phronesis*, translated by Carr as 'moral wisdom', and contrasted by both with *techne*, i.e. 'productive reasoning'. The first two chapters

of this part (chapters 4 and 5) contain the work Carr regards as having made his most substantial contribution to the whole field of educational philosophy and, in particular, to discussion of the relationship between theory and practice. Carr rightly challenges the common assumption that 'theory' has a single coherent sense in much educational discourse (p59). Instead, he reminds us of 'the range of complex logical relations between diverse forms of so-called educational knowledge and understanding' (p59-60).

Carr criticises two contrasting and unsatisfactory models of the contested relationship between 'theory and practice', i.e. the model of applied science or technology (p60ff), and the opposed model of intuitive, non-deliberative engagement with raw practical experience (p60ff: 'raw' paraphrasing Carr's 'unconceptualised and unconceptualisable' p73). If each of these models is flawed, as Carr argues, then any vague sense that we need to 'balance theory and practice' by, in effect, balancing these models, is doubly flawed.

Carr argues that the educational action-research movement is deeply entangled in the first inadequate model, the theory-dependent, technological model, while the contrasting type of approach, the would-be theory (or concept) independent approach, tends to be associated with competences and behaviourism, or with less acceptable aspects of pragmatism and romantic child-centred progressivism. By contrast, Carr understands Aristotle's *phronesis* as a 'constellation of capacities, sensibilities and qualities of character' (p 73). *Phronesis* can, Carr argues, provide an appropriate and genuine middle way between unsatisfactory versions of theory-dependence and unsatisfactory versions of theory-independence. This requires a critique and transformation of our pictures of theory and practice, so as to centre them on *phronesis*.

Carr works this out with much careful reference to recent and less recent fashions or controversies in education. For fuller discussions of *phronesis*, Carr refers us to his co-edited (1999) *Virtue Ethics and Moral Education*, which he now thinks more successful than his (1991) *Educating the Virtues*, and to Joe Dunne's (1993) comprehensive *Back to the Rough Ground: 'Phronesis' and 'Techne' in Modern Philosophy and in Aristotle*. (Here 'Back to the rough ground' alludes to Wittgenstein's use of a similar phrase in his *Philosophical Investigations*).

Earlier, the question arose of how Carr's stress on the variety of specific contexts and their differing particularity could be compatible with his vehement rejections of relativist moral scepticism, since those under the influence of the latter loudly claim such variety and difference as grounds for their scepticism or subjectivism. Simply put, the answer is that *phronesis* involves perceptiveness or sensibility which takes seriously such particularity and variety, without being confused into supposing that such perceptiveness can only undermine, rather than enrich, the development of better understanding, better judgement and better, more intelligent, more balanced versions of wisdom. Admittedly, I don't recall Carr explaining his position precisely like this, but think that such an explanation is in the spirit of his approach, as well as shown extensively by those thinkers, ancient and modern, whom he most admires. From this well-grounded perspective, much sceptical relativism and subjectivism appear as the shadows still cast by the commitment to excessively formal and abstract versions of generality which such sceptics would like to think they had given up. Such scepticism is still trapped by the re-bound or backlash it is going through. In this regard, Carr's focus on *phronesis* has an emancipatory or liberating character.

Part Three of Carr's book turns, therefore, to the task of defending the objectivity of moral reason and judgement, in the appropriate sense of objectivity. This appropriate sense is, as we can now see, neither that of pure/applied science, with its rationalists and scientific technologists, nor that of those merely on the rebound again them, i.e. the Herculean micro-managers of behaviourism and competences, and of therapeutic management in the name of raw experience and pre-theoretical

or pre-conceptual practice. In this part, Carr draws on, amongst other earlier work, his contribution to his (1998) edited collection *Education, Knowledge and Truth: Beyond the Post-Modern Impasse*. (*Phronesis* helps us exit from the toils of both cognitive and moral relativism). Carr argues for understanding values as rational or principled preferences which one would normally give reasons or grounds for holding, by contrast with preferences which are no more than personal predilections or subjective tastes. This allows, according to Carr, for holding individually or personally to a value which one would not require anyone else to hold, as well as holding a value as a group member (with other members required to hold the value), or as a human being regardless of any group membership, the latter being intended as a universal value, to be held by all humans, or all rational beings, e.g. matters of basic justice or basic human rights (p121).

Carr recognises that it would be foolish to ignore very real value disagreements on the proper course of human development and flourishing, for example between 'secular humanists' and 'Catholics' or between '(some) progressives' and '(some) traditionalists' on 'the ultimate ends of human life' and on how to interpret 'such aspects of human development as individual self-determination' (p 147-148). Moreover, 'anything worth calling professional accountability' should not seek to close itself off from the rational evaluation of reasons and reasoning with respect to such important questioning. Such closing-off would happen if we were to appeal to any form of social, cultural or religious membership, as of a form of 'club membership', as our last word on such important matters (p 148). Here, again, we need to recall that Carr's understanding of reason and reasoning is focused on *phronesis*.

The previous paragraphs suggest that Carr may be contending, especially in Part Three, with a largely unacknowledged dilemma. His close linkage of values with reasons, which is not peculiar to him, suggests an affinity for Kant's stress on the universality of Reason (with a capital R) which comes close to, and perhaps shares in, the excessive generality and abstraction symptomatic of an un-Aristotelian rationalism. On the other hand, if the problems of developing a *phronesis*-centred account of education are to be solved by appealing to the need to take Aristotelian *phronesis* even more seriously, isn't Carr in danger of falling victim to a vicious circle? Hence the sense in his book, from time to time, of a need to swerve closer to Kant than to Aristotle. Whilst some recent scholarship has laboured to close gaps between Aristotle and Kant, Carr appears not to be impressed with these attempts.

Rather than apparently swerving towards a version of Kant distant from Aristotle (or even a version of Kant brought closer to Aristotle, along with a version of Aristotle brought closer to Kant, as has sometimes been tried), why does Carr not simply argue that, by being more consistently Aristotelian, in being more focused on *phronesis* as the model for reason, he is not falling into a vicious circle but rising into a virtuous spiral of understanding? Reconsideration here might also aid Carr in avoiding a sensed need to take a side-swipe at (a caricature of) Kierkegaard and (of) other Christian theologians (pp122 and 225, note 14) who were also trying to rethink rationality, and for somewhat similar reasons, Ways of contrasting the general and the specific are themselves sensitive to context.

In Part Four, Carr explores the ethical complexities of reflection on the aims of education and how teaching is implicated in moral concerns with human well-being and harm. He argues that it is crucial to clarifying educational aims that we distinguish carefully between education and schooling. Education is to be understood as only one of the many purposes of schooling, even though a crucially important purpose (p 180). Here, of course, schooling refers to what most people would identify (in UK contexts) as institutionalised education between about 5 and about 17/18 years of age. I have already noted how Carr refers to teaching and education as two professions. We can now see better why he does so. Education for Carr is about

‘the rational emancipation of individuals’ (p185) through voluntary submission to ‘academic and moral disciplines which conduce to self-improvement’ (p160). This does not obviously include, Carr supposes, various forms of training and support which are also important in school teaching.

Thus, for Carr, school teaching, in so far as good school teaching, is tugged between educational teaching and non-educational teaching. Earlier (p9 etc.), Carr has defined good teaching as teaching which ‘seeks at best to promote the moral, psychological and physical well-being of learners, and at least to avoid their psychological, physical and moral damage’. Carr sees important overlap between moral well-being; moral learning, teaching and education; and rational emancipation. Teaching can promote such learning educationally. However, does Carr recognise important overlap between rational emancipation and promoting the psychological and physical well-being of learners? There does seem to be a strong case for doing so, if we recognise that physical and psychological well-being should be understood as contributing to, as participating in, and as promoting rational emancipation. It is, on closer reading, worrying that Carr’s definition of good teaching does not include any overt mention of social, economic and cultural well-being. These could be taken as implied by what he has written. However, given the almost dualistic sharpness of his demarcation between educational or rational emancipation and non-educational, non- (or sub?)-rational schooling, should one be entitled to feel confident about any such implication? Here, readers of Kant may be reminded of his sharp division between Reason and the non-rational. Here, also, readers of Aristotle and Wittgenstein may be reminded of their stress on the importance of good training and (at least by implication) of different kinds of training, as contributing to a good, sound human upbringing. All of Carr’s good reasons for wanting to distinguish between education and schooling can be taken into account in other ways, which do not commit us to the counter-intuitive consequences of Carr’s ambivalence between Aristotle’s *phronesis* and Kant’s Reason.

Is Carr’s book suitable for recommending to undergraduate students? I can imagine only a few of the very best being able to do much with it. For the great majority, I would be inclined to recommend Hugh Sockett’s (1993) *The Moral Base for Teaching Professionalism*, as Sockett makes impressive introductory use of the virtue ethics approach, both ancient and modern. However, as a personal testimony to prolonged, genuine grappling with some of the most pressing matters in this area, I can think of no equal. Some will be disappointed that Carr’s version of neo-Aristotelianism (via Frege, Wittgenstein, Geach and Anscombe) is not more open to the rather different versions of neo-Aristotelianism to be found in Heidegger, Gadamer, Dreyfus and others. However, one cannot do everything in one book, or in one life-time, or in one review article. Above all, Carr’s aversions, from what he labels as ‘Hegelianism’, ‘pragmatism’, ‘post-modernism’, ‘fideism’ (and a few others), signal a loyalty to, and need for, roots which seem unperturbed by the slings and arrows of outrageous fashion or fortune. Whatever education as rational emancipation may signify *chez Carr*, it clearly has to make room for such rooted dwelling.

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ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION RESEARCH PAPERS

PAUL STANDISH

1. Jennifer Spratt, *Untrained, Unsupported and Underperforming? The complexities of employing supply teachers* (Centre for Educational Research, Aberdeen University, 2000) ISBN 1-903714-00-1 (20 pp. £5.00)
2. William F. Long & Alice Kiger, *Dissonance in the Study Approaches of University Students* (Centre for Educational Research, Aberdeen University, 2000) ISBN 1-903714-01-X (30 pp. £ 5.00)
3. Ken Brown, *Educational Rights and Wrongs: Liberal tradition versus the idea of social efficiency* (Centre for Educational Research, Aberdeen University, 2000) ISBN 1-903714-02-8 (18 pp. £ 5.00)
4. John Darling, *How We See Children: The legacy of Rousseau's Emile* (Centre for Educational Research, Aberdeen University, 2000) ISBN 1-903714-03-6 (20 pp. £ 5.00)

These Education Research Papers constitute an attractive series of pamphlets disseminating research undertaken in the Centre for Educational Research at the University of Aberdeen and at Northern College. Edited by John Nisbet, in collaboration with John Darling, Douglas Hay and Derek Shanks, the four essays bring together a variety of thought-provoking research. In view of this variety, however, it is not surprising perhaps that the texts are written in somewhat different styles and that they would seem to be appropriate to rather different audiences. In their diverse ways they provide valuable resources and provocations to further enquiry.

For this reader the least accessible is undoubtedly *Dissonance in the Study Approaches of University Students* by William Long and Alice Kiger. This is a study of effective learning carried out at the University of Aberdeen, based on the assumption that 'effective learners tend to possess the ability to deploy strategically the deep level learning that optimal functioning in higher education appears to demand' (p. 1). A version of the Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students, developed substantially by Noel Entwistle, was completed by medical and science students at an early stage of their courses. The analysis and discussion of this data that is offered in this essay is of a fairly technical kind, functioning both as a reflection on the merits of the research instrument and also as an examination of characteristics of 'failing' students. The main interest in respect of the latter is in the recognition of students manifesting anomalous combinations of 'deep' and 'surface/apathetic' attitudes to their learning. Unlike the failure of the academically weak student, the under-achievement of those characterised by this dissonance appears to be related to a mismatch between the 'deep approach outcomes they "know they ought" to aspire to, and their ability to achieve them' (p. 20). While it is not the purpose of the study to present strategies to 'rescue' either type of student, the essay does suggest that any attempt to resolve a problem of dissonance in learning patterns should take into account the relationship between the intentions of the learners and the academic contexts of the courses they undertake. This slightly cryptic conclusion presumably implies the need to attend to ways in which curricula may not encourage students to develop the 'strategic' approaches to study that they need.

To a lay reader it is not clear how much insight this casts on the problems that some learners experience. This is not so much to question the nature of the difficulties experienced by those characterised by this dissonance as to wonder whether there is

not a certain element of tautology here, and whether these difficulties might not be recognised in any case by a good teacher. Against this it might perhaps be pointed out that, given student numbers today, even the good teacher has only a limited chance of getting to know her students; hence, use of the Inventory may well serve to uncover problems that might otherwise be missed or that might go unnoticed for an unnecessary length of time. How far this legitimates the classification on which it is based I am not sure. Nevertheless, the Inventory is a much used research instrument and the sophisticated analysis provided here must be seen as a valuable contribution to its refined application.

Untrained, Unsupported and Underperforming? The complexities of employing supply teachers is an account of a study carried out in North East Scotland into what is surely a neglected though far from insignificant aspect of the education system. The author, Jennifer Pratt, is herself a supply teacher, and this gives the study a certain poignancy and helps to bring to the topic the sense of importance that it deserves. The study sets out to examine institutions' expectations of supply teachers, their selection and evaluation, and the kind of support they receive in the context of two schools, all these issues being related to perceptions held at different levels of the organisation. Apart from some documentary evidence, the study is based mainly on unstructured interviews with those in managerial roles and with six supply teachers in each school. In addition two supply teachers in each school were each observed throughout a day's work.

Not surprisingly, it was found that supply teaching arrangements tend to be made at short notice and in an *ad hoc* fashion with schools free to organise things as they see fit. While the picture is by no means entirely bleak, the study identifies problems in the form both of the dissatisfaction of managers with the quality of supply teachers and of the lack of support for the teachers themselves, in what is often the context of a culture of blame. Spratt offers some suggestions as to how these might be addressed: the provision of information booklets for supply teachers; opportunities for participating in in-service training regularly at a local school; the availability of a database of supply teachers providing schools with a readily accessible, though properly confidential account of their expertise and experience; various measures to address the teacher who is failing in the role; and opportunities for promotion offering a career route in supply work. The paper concludes by reaffirming the point that the lack of support for supply teachers stands in sharp contrast to the extent that the system depends on them. It is written in a clear and accessible style, and its broad argument on this easily forgotten matter is hard to resist.

The remaining papers are philosophical in substance and discursive in style. In *Educational Rights and Wrongs: Liberal tradition versus the idea of social efficiency* Ken Brown argues against trends in education that prioritise social efficiency, utility and conformity to certain values, to the detriment of a liberal democratic human rights tradition that extends back to Locke and Mill. A cardinal principle in the latter is an alertness to the fallibility of authority, enshrined in the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and in the Human Rights Act of 1998. Brown nicely juxtaposes a statement from the *American School Board Journal* of 1917 to the effect that the school is a factory that must be managed with Israel Scheffler's assertion that the instrumentalisation of education to social ends harbours the greatest conceivable danger to the ideal of a free and rational society. Where the goals are fixed in advance, Scheffler argues, the instrumental doctrine of schooling exempts them from the critical scrutiny that education should otherwise foster.

Brown's critique of the cult of efficiency covers territory that is now familiar enough, but his identification of such key factors as Ofsted's rigorous inspection regime and the Whittle Communications Corporation's Edison Project succinctly points up some of the pressure points in contemporary educational systems.

What is more telling, however, is his careful description of the ways in which British reservations about the European Convention's work on human rights, in relation especially to the impact of the Human Rights Act of 1998, may bring out the tensions and the injustices that are his concern. The discussion proceeds to a fascinating exploration of the ways in which the home-schooling movement and the recent Summerhill controversy bring to a head the conflict between the official enthusiasm for standards and efficiency and the rights and freedoms of parents and their children. In resistance to the sound-bite condemnation of progressivism, by Chris Woodhead or John Major, for example, Brown draws attention not only to the variety of practice that passes under that banner but also to the availability of evidence that radical alternatives to the conventional school system may better achieve such elusive objectives as social inclusion and lifelong learning. This is an original and highly articulate discussion.

John Darling's paper, *How We See Children: The legacy of Rousseau's Emile*, is written with a lightness of touch that makes deep ideas accessible. Here, as elsewhere in his writings, Darling is concerned to acknowledge our enormous indebtedness to Rousseau. Yet, ironically, one thing that can stand in the way of recognition of Rousseau's achievement, as Darling points out, is the very pervasiveness of his influence in the western world: the sea-change in attitudes to childhood, and more generally to the natural, that he brought about have come to be so deeply ingrained in modern ways of looking at the world that the extent of his achievement can be missed.

Darling writes of two rather different strands in Rousseau's ideas regarding childhood and delineates two lines of progressive educational thought and practice that would seem to be their legacy. The first of these strands is characterised by a relaxed tone and informed by a positive view of the child. There is no hurry to learn. Traditional education has too high an expectation of the child's capacity, its curriculum over-ambitious and irrelevant to children's concerns. Natural development must be allowed to take its course. Darling characterises the style of progressivism that emanated from this as libertarian, Summerhill School being perhaps the most prominent experiment in the tradition. Strangely, A. S. Neill claimed not to have read *Emile* until some fifty years after the establishment of the school, and he sometimes expressed a reaction against other aspects of Rousseau's thought: he rejected the harnessing of what he saw as the child's natural play instinct to ends thought desirable by educators. It is the failure to allow children to grow up in freedom that leads to the constricted conventional lives they come to live as adults. Children do not need to be taught how to behave.

Neill's reaction was in part against what Darling identifies as the second, more negative strand in Rousseau's thought, which focuses rather on the ills of society from which the child must be protected. This strand leads to a conception of education that requires the teacher to take steps to ensure that harmful influences are kept at bay. Paradoxically, natural development requires *controlled* development. Froebel's horticultural imagery captures the sense that, while the natural growth of the child must be observed carefully by the teacher, it is still a kind of pruning and shaping that is required for the best educational development to be achieved. Such thinking was later to find its way into the Primary Memorandum and the Plowden Report.

As western societies generally became more prosperous, Darling concludes, Rousseau's view of childhood met with wider acceptance. Any change in this, he claims, is likely to come about not in an urgent response to government initiatives but rather as a gradual process. Yet, enormous though Rousseau's influence is, it would be too hasty a reading of the discussion in this pamphlet if it left the impression that the modern construction of childhood was unrelated to broader socio-economic changes - indeed these were very much changes that Rousseau registered. Furthermore, it

would be a mistake to think of a construct as something static. In an early paragraph in the essay Darling refers to the modern reinvention of the nanny in a world where parents no longer just spend time with their children but must spend 'quality time'. There are hints here of something new in conceptions of childhood as these have emerged in recent years, with the strange confusion of the idealisation of innocence and the celebration of precociousness: on the one hand, public outrage at childhood abuse becomes the stuff of prime-time television and chat-shows; on the other, teenage fashion extends, Spice Girls style, into the lives of six year olds. Constructs themselves become confused.

John Darling was an editor of this series and it is fitting that it should include what was his last singly authored publication during his lifetime¹, not least because, in its measured simplicity, it distils what were abiding preoccupations of his thought and writings. But it is fitting also that it forms part of an attractive series that he helped to establish. If the publications discussed here are indicative of what is to follow, the series lays the way for the development of the kind of research in the newly merged faculty in Aberdeen University that he would have wanted to support. The eloquent obituary by John Nisbet in this issue indicates more fully what that approach might be like.

NOTE

1. In the months before he was taken ill, John Darling was working on and had substantially completed two essays, both in collaboration: (i) Darling, J. and Nisbet, J. (2000) 'Dewey in Britain', *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 19, pp. 39 - 52; (ii) Darling, J. and Nordenbo, S. E. (2002) 'Progressivism', in: N. Blake, P. Smeyers, R. Smith and P. Standish (Eds.), *The Blackwell Guide to Philosophy of Education*, Oxford, Blackwell.

LEARNING TOGETHER: CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN A SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Rogoff, B., Goodman Turkanis, C., Bartlett, L. (Eds.) Oxford 2001

LORNA HAMILTON

In collaboration with teachers Goodman Turkanis and Bartlett, Barbara Rogoff, a leading developmental psychologist, draws on experiences in a state elementary school in Utah to challenge traditional notions of learning and learners and the role of teachers and other adults in what she describes as a 'learning community.' Here, the pupil is not only an active participant in the learning process but also a collaborative member of a community of learners. Inspired by the philosophy of Dewey and Vygotsky, learning is defined as collaborative participation with others in activities of mutual interest.

The school itself operates as a parent-child co-operative. There is an onus on parents to give three hours a week to classroom instruction for each child they have enrolled thus emphasising commitment to the principles and practice of learning in this context. Rogoff highlights the difficulties faced by parents in trying to work in this collaborative way when she charts her own experiences as a parent/researcher and notes the need for active participation in order to come to a full realisation of the underlying principles. She highlights the frustrations involved in trying to encourage co-operation and participation and being prepared to really listen to the ideas of children. This is more than child-centred learning; it is the transformation of adult and child into collaborative learners. In supporting this form of community, a traditional model of transmission of knowledge is challenged and children as passive recipients overturned. Adults are required to relinquish control while children are encouraged to enjoy the freedom to discover. This book attempts to provide a vision of how such active involvement can operate through learning together in purposeful activities, mutual responsibilities, shared decision-making and motivation based on interest. An evaluation of pupil achievement suggests that pupils in this school are motivated, collaborative and effective problem solvers as well as successful in conventional terms in grades achieved. However, Rogoff sees evaluation within this school as important only insofar as it fosters learning and so evaluation too is collaborative and pupils help to set their goals and assess their progress. Comparison of performance is discouraged as emphasis is placed on individual progress and support for learning.

Rogoff argues that this vision is not a compromise but active involvement and participation of all learners together whether adult or child, teacher or parent. In addition this is not to be seen as prescriptive for other learning communities but instead as a perspective on principles of learning customised in a local and dynamic context. This book challenges those working in any 'learning community' to reflect on and discuss their own principles of learning and the possibilities there might be for collaborative innovation.