

BOOK REVIEWS

SETTING AND STREAMING: A RESEARCH REVIEW

Wynne Harlen and Heather Malcolm (Editors) (SCRE, 1997), pp. 52, pb £7.50

Reviewed by PETER COPE

Setting and Streaming is a deceptively small book. It has 52 pages but, as with many research reviews, it is crammed with information, so that opening it is a bit like stepping into the Tardis—it's bigger inside than it appears. The subject matter is, of course, highly topical given the recent interest in the organisation of upper primary and lower secondary. But the subject is also considerably more complex than some of the recent debate might indicate and this book is a way into the complexity for those who have not got the time to look up the many sources (about 130) upon which it bases its analysis.

The problems with which research into streaming and setting have to contend revolve around the confounding of variables. Comparison of streamed classes with mixed ability classes gets entangled with the effects of teaching content and methodologies, teacher attitudes and skills, and socio-economic factors. The latter may have the effect of making heterogeneous groups from one study more homogenous than homogenous groups from another. These complications are clearly laid out in the first chapter of the book which provides an overview of the methodology and which leaves the reader in little doubt that there are unlikely to be any unequivocal answers waiting in the final chapter.

The book deals with the complexities of the subject by discussing the evidence in sections which deal with streaming and setting in the primary context and then in the secondary context. In doing this, it largely resists the temptation to oversimplify the way in which conclusions might be drawn from the studies reviewed. This means that these chapters are not an easy read. Trying to keep track of the factors which influence the interpretation of results is surprisingly difficult but it is a necessary effort because the temptation is to go for early closure and to attempt to find an answer to a over-simple question. There are some studies which stand out in these chapters because of their recency and the clarity of their conclusions. The research by Boaler, for example, on the ineffectiveness of setting for GCSE mathematics seems to me to exemplify the need for caution before we rush down the setting road. It may be, of course, that the recency of this study means that no one has yet had a chance to criticise its methodology. Indeed, as the authors point out, one possibility is that the intricacies of the review might lead to cynicism about the value of educational research, given that the different studies seem to produce such a variety of results.

In the final chapter, the authors try to cut through the entanglements of the research findings to draw out some implications for current policy in Scotland. They point out that the crucial factor in achieving success for all children is the provision of effective differentiated learning experiences and that streaming or setting is only one way of trying to achieve this. They also point out that there is a deal of evidence which indicates that ability grouping has negative effects on teaching and learning stemming from reduced motivation and poorer quality learning experience for many children. The conclusions are measured and are related back to the researching findings.

Given the current pressure to introduce ability grouping in S1/S2, this book should be compulsory reading for all involved in Scottish education. The introduction states that the timescale was short so it could feed into the work of the SOEID group which was working on *Achievement For All*. It must be slightly depressing for the authors to look for its influence in that document.

TEACHING SCOTTISH LITERATURE – CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

Alan MacGillivray (Editor) (Edinburgh University Press, 1997), ppxi+221, pb. £19.95

Reviewed by MIKE FALCONER

The ‘Editor’s Foreword’ tae this awffy handy wee book states that, ‘This volume will address the question of why Scottish literature has not been given the attention in Scottish schools that it so much deserves:’ (page ix) an ah huftae admit thit it that point ma hert sunk for ah thot, ‘No again, ah’ve done this, read this, an hud enough o it!’ Hooever, ah turnt the page an read oan, ‘yet it will not linger on old unhappy things like social, educational and personal discrimination against the traditional culture and languages of Scotland.’ Gid! Let’s get oan wi some practical support an suggestions fur hard-pressed teachers whae need aw the help they can get. We dinnae need ony mair convincin— we need advice, help, support, guidance. An dare ah say it, mebbe a wee bit mair self-confidence in oor ain language, literature and culture? An in the maist part, this is exactly what ye get wi this book. Read oan.

The book is dividit intae fower main sections wi Appendices. The structure o each section follaes a repeatit pattern wi some discussion o the subject in hand wi a variety o exemplars. The exemplars cover suggestions fur the full range o bairns in the school and ower the piece, thay dinnae make the mistake o stickin tae the auld, read the poem and discuss wi the class format aw the time! The suggestions are stimulatit, sensible, varit and creative. Ma ain feelin aboot the structure o the book is that it starts on a fairly theoretical level wi ‘Part I Scottish Literature’ and becomes mair an mair practical in focus as it moves taewards the end o Part IV. But this is no tae suggest that there’s some sort o value judgement in the orderin o the parts—far fae it. The theory and pratice ur fimly and successfully related baith within, and bitween the articles an some thot hus obviously gone intae, no only the order o the sections but the subject maitter o each o them. This geeze the book a feelin o coherence that sometimes collections o essays dinnae huv.

So, Part I ‘Scottish Literature’ starts off the debate wi a fine piece fi Douglas Gifford and Neil McMillan where the authors try tae steer a wey through what they ca, ‘the confusing diversity of new approaches, terminologies and catchphrases’ wi a view tae, ‘enhance both teacher and pupil awaeness of texts, and in particular, Scottish texts.’ Ye dinnae need tae be a university professor tae work oot that ony piece wi sub-headins like, ‘Poststructuralism/Deconstruction’, ‘Postmodernism’ and ‘New Historicism’ is gonnae be a bit heavy goan, but ah kin assure ye it’s worth the effort. The authors dae an impressive joab o no only summarisin aw the recent theories an issues that huv influenced the wey we think aboot literature and teaching it, but also pick oot the maist relevant tae the Scottish educational context. This

hustae lend weight and substance tae ony problems teachers might huv aboot lackin confidence in the approach they might take tae texts wi their bairns.

James Alison concludes the first part o this book wi an extrememly readable an usefu piece which explores the thorny notion o what exactly coonts as Scottish Literature and offers some very interestin advice oan what might be pickt and how tae integrate this intae the wider syllabus. Altho the piece itsell in twa separate sections discusses the importance o introducun Scottish writin and language study as early as possible, it's a bit unfortunate that the exemplars for Part I focus only oan the secondary stages. But tae be fair, the primary stages ur dealt wi later oan in the book an the author diz make reference tae this.

Ah wiz educatit at Aberdeen University in the 70s an although ah found the experience tae be rewardin, ah've always thot it wiz a shame that ma studies never really gave me a chance tae explore Scottish Language in ony detail—altho ah spent a fair bit o time on Old English! Perhaps that's why ah foond the second section o this book the maist fascinatin and usefu? Whether it be the historical perspective offert by George Sutherland's piece or the thought-provokin debate that comes oot in John Hodgart's 'The Scots Language in Schuil'—this section is bound tae be attractive tae teachers, primary and secondary alike. In fact this whole section goes a long wey taewards raisin awareness o some o the issues that must be stottin around at the back o maist o oor heids when we consider explorin the Scottish dimension in oor classrooms – and further, this section offers some really practical and creative suggestions for classroom activities. Fur me, this section wiz maist important because it remindit me o how important and influential it is that maist Scots folk ur in fact multi-lingual and it's high time we celebratit and exploitit that mair, instead o makin a stick tae break wir ain backs wi by forever saying, 'Aye, we should dae mair!'

'Gaelic – the Senior Partner' by Ronald Renton will get aw us lowlanders thinkin along thae lines!

Ane o the great advantages o bein the editor o a book is that once ye hiv written the introduction an said what the book's meant tae dae, ye kin then pit in an article tae make sure it diz it! Part 3 o this book diz jist that wi editor Alan MacGillivray's very practical 'Beyond the Cringe: Using the Exemplars and Planning Programmes.' If yer department, classroom or school huznae done onything aboot Scottish literature and language afore noo, then ah suggest that this is the place tae start. The piece offers straightforrit guidance on no only how tae get startit, but also how tae sustain a programme in a coherent and efficient wey that meets a lot o the criteria used by the Scottish education system itsel tae judge and guide what we ur aw tryin tae dae. Ma ain particular favourite part o this essay is 'Clearing the Ground' where the author despatches aw the possible arguments against teaching Scottish language and literature tae the skip wi speed and skill. As he says, 'The teaching of Scottish language, literature and culture is the most reasonable and natural activity for teachers to pursue in a Scottish school.' (page 119)

Beyond this though, the author makes a very powerful argument in defence o his position that such focus fur oor teachin is no parochial, limitin or inward lookin, but sits naturally and comfortably in an international and multi-cultural perspective that integrates beautifully wi existing structures and approaches. Yet, at the same time, it can be, 'like walking through grass and heather for the first time. There is a new excitement, even a whiff of danger, in the wind.' (page 120)

The final part of this excellent wee book is where the blend of theory and practice is maist evident, an in a lot o weys, at its maist potent. The book's subtitle is, 'Curriculum and Classroom Applications' and it is in Part IV where the various contributors get tae grips wi the nitty gritty o what tae dae at each age an stage an start tae explore some o the issues thit confront aw o us when we're choosin the

focus fur wir language and literature studies—whether Scottish or no. Indeed, ah found James McGonigal’s ‘Re-reading Scottish Literature’ particularly challengin as he revisited an almost 30 year old experience of teaching, ‘Consider the Lilies’ an used it tae explore a number o issues which confront some o oor ain accepted trooths about teachin language an literature in a high pressure exam context wi aulder students.

Finally, if yer like me an rarely read the appendices o ony book, make an exception in this case. As a resource for information and sources, the appendices tae this book are well worth visitin and revisitin. They contain further exemplars, actual copies of texts, addresses and sources, lists etc which will meet quite a variety o needs.

Ah found the whole experience o reading an thinkin about this book really rewardin an challengin—no least since this is the first thing ah huv attemptit tae write in Scots since ah wiz it primary school—forbye school plays and pantomimes! Needless tae say, the spellchecker and grammar program on the word processor hud a hert attack.

LANGUAGE AND SCOTTISH LITERATURE

John Corbett (Edinburgh University Press, 1997), pp. xi+ 272 , pb. £14.95.

Reviewed by CAROLINE MACAFEE

Douglas Gifford explains in his introduction that this volume is one of three in a series, *Scottish Language and Literature*, designed to make more widely available the expertise of the University of Glasgow in distance-taught postgraduate courses. It is consciously directed towards teachers who are coming to terms with the new emphasis on Scottish literature and language in the 5-14 curriculum and in “Higher Still”. This volume is concerned with language and others with literature and with classroom applications.

John Corbett has written an excellent book. It is the first to tackle the stylistics of Scottish literature, and it will be a very, very long time before it is bettered. It is essentially an introduction to stylistics - the linguistic analysis of text - for the reader of Scottish literature. I remain unconvinced that there is a *theoretical* need for such a book. Dr Corbett draws a parallel with feminist stylistics, but to me this eminently well-written book requires no other justification than its practical usefulness and welcome timeliness. The only other introduction to stylistics that covers a similar range of linguistic approaches (Elizabeth Traugott and Mary Louise Pratt, *Linguistics for Students of Literature*, 1980) is designed for American students, assumes that the reader has an American accent, and is far too much concerned with initiating the reader into the agenda of linguistics. In Dr Corbett’s book, by contrast, linguistics is the servant and not the master. Linguistic concepts are introduced only as required, with clear and often entertaining examples. The book never gets bogged down, but pulls one successful analysis out of the hat after another, enlivened all the while by appropriate quotations, unexpected insights, and topical coverage of debates about the Scots language in the press.

Separate chapters are devoted to different branches of linguistics. In some areas, such as speech act theory, it is simply a matter of using Scottish examples to illustrate general principles, but in others there are issues peculiar to the Scots language or to

Scottish literature. Vocabulary is one such area. This chapter covers topics such as the Scots dictionaries, the adequacy of Scots vocabulary to express concepts in the modern technological world, and attempts to expand it. There is also an innovative chapter on Scottish cultural stereotypes and how to analyse them in texts. Finally, there is an all-too-brief chapter on Older Scots, describing the high, low and plain styles of verse (a helpful appendix to the book lists the main stanza forms of Scots poetry), and then giving a rather disproportionate amount of space to the Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots and its methodology, concluding the main part of the book with a trailer for the new opportunities opened up by corpora of Scottish texts on the Internet.

There is a thirteen-page glossary of linguistic terms, and a glance at this illustrates very neatly the combination of concerns that makes this book unique and uniquely valuable. Here we have basic grammatical terms like subject, predicator, object, complement and adverbial—a terminology that will be familiar to many readers from the widely used *English Grammar for Today* by Geoffrey Leech *et al.* We also have the basic terms of phonetics, semantics and dialectology, and the more fashionable terminology of discourse analysis. And then intermingled with all of these are the terms peculiar to Scottish literature—Clydesideism, the Kailyard, Doric, anglicisation etc.

The illustrative texts are drawn from a wide range of mainly modern Scottish literature in Scots and in Scottish English. There is a selected glossary of the Scots words that occur in the texts. The teacher using this book will not be able simply to transfer all of the text analyses into classroom lessons, as some of the texts are too adult in language or content. Indeed, it is clearly intended and stated that readers should be able to carry out new analyses for themselves, using the techniques presented in the book, on whatever texts they choose, including texts translated from the Gaelic. There are no exercises as such, but throughout the book there are point-by-point summaries of things to look out for and steps to go through in conducting particular kinds of analysis.

For those who agree with Dr Corbett that ‘a close examination of the language used by Scots is a powerful means of casting light upon question of personal, regional, social and national identity’, this book will be a twelve-course banquet.

TEACHING RIGHT AND WRONG: MORAL EDUCATION IN THE BALANCE

Richard Smith and Paul Standish (Editors) (Trentham Books, 1997), pp. xi + 157, pb. £13.95.

Reviewed by ALEX RODGER

In the introduction to this volume the editors inform us that its contributors are attempting to ‘map... the middle ground of morality’ between Absolutism and Relativism. More realistically it could be held to offer a useful collection of perspectives on some aspects of the terrain which tend to be neglected by many of the ‘authorised’ or self-appointed custodians of our society’s moral health. Both the lively and interesting—even provocative—contribution of this book to the exploration of

an aspect of education which is currently in the national limelight, and its ultimate inability to provide the promised map, derive from the circumstances of its origin, in particular the urgency 'to get our ideas into print quickly'.

Perhaps the book's major lack is due to the self-denying decision of the editors to refrain from introducing the chapters, or even seeking to group them according to any apparent pattern. The book is a valuable collection of essays from different perspectives and disciplines, mainly philosophical, whose overall impact is reduced by the failure to provide any easily recognisable editorial framework. The useful introduction and even more helpful conclusion cannot, of themselves, compensate for this lack.

For readers familiar with the territory, there is much to stimulate thought—even second thoughts—on key issues in the field. Important distinctions are made which are often obscured in the cut and thrust of discussion. For example, the disagreement between absolutism and relativism often bandied about in public debate should, it is held, be more correctly understood as a conflict between absolutism and subjectivism.

More than one contributor tackles the question of the nature of morality, specifically the understanding of morality as concerned primarily with virtues rather than rules. This accords with the intention of the editors to redirect attention away from an all too common focus on problem situations, dilemmas, choices and other such 'critical incidents' in the moral life, towards the recognition that morality is nowhere absent from human activities (if they are to be properly so called). Indeed, the reviewer welcomes the insistence that the most obviously moral acts in a person's life are but the public performances which reveal—and test—the effectiveness of that moral development whose pervasive process is unremarked, even unnoticed, in the flow of everyday situations in which morality is both learned and practised. The emphasis on being rather than doing as central to moral agency is important, not only because it directs attention to what is true to experience, but also because it invites consideration of the nature of human being and becoming. Unfortunately, although this is referred to, the references are brief and infrequent. The similar reticence—even in the chapter devoted to spirituality—to explore the frontiers as well as the differences between spirituality and morality is not, I think, unconnected.

The book seldom fails to communicate in an engaging manner, in contributions ranging from sharply critical philosophical discussion through exploration of social, political and psychological issues to fresh and important syntheses of different elements and shrewd human insights generously grasped and sensitively expressed. Only very occasionally could a contributor be considered to have lapsed into a self-indulgent knockabout style. I confess to feeling that something important is amiss when advocacy of expansive views of the moral life is not combined with generous treatment of those who seem not to share them. By the same token, it is also much easier to mock facile views of spirituality—and I agree with much of the comment on that score—than it is to offer some positive insight.

Despite occasional lapses, one of the things for which the book deserves our gratitude is its sustained attempt to bring a critical but fair scrutiny to bear on matters of indisputable public concern and importance; to try to attend honestly to the views one disagrees with before responding to them; to be more concerned with 'the truth' than with our own particular 'truths'; and to recognise the embeddedness of such matters in the business of human living and not simply in philosophical debate. This should be acknowledged despite the fact that, in the opinion of this reviewer, the difficulty of giving such accurate attention to other views and of remaining sensitive to the realities of the moral life is, from time to time, evident in these essays.

While the editors do not intend that the book's chapters should directly address classroom practice, teachers who reflect on their practice will find much here to

inform it. This might have been more so were there more evidence of acquaintance with research findings on moral development and moral learning or, indeed, the whole moral education movement and debate which has been a preoccupation for decades on the other side of the Atlantic.

Few would dispute the fact that we live in a period of moral ambiguity in many aspects of public and private life. The difficulties arise acutely when the given situation has to be interpreted for the sake of determining appropriate public and private responses. Is the situation one of moral decline? (If so, from what and in what respects?) Or is it better understood as one of moral confusion? moral turpitude? lack of confidence? or what? Whichever of these is favoured, the contributors to this book are agreed that the way forward is not to seek a cluster of 'core values', which are taken as absolutes even though arrived at by a process of seeking consensus within society.

I do believe that the issue is well identified, linked as it is with the increasing fact of pluralism (moral and other) within British society; and the importance of the same phenomenon on the international scene, with its accompanying search for a global ethic. That the issue is important in practical, and not merely theoretical, ways equally needs no arguing. Yet, even in such a well-disposed attempt to get beyond mere sniping, this book reveals the difficulty of reaching the kind of mutual understanding which is the inescapable foundation for mutual cooperation for the benefit of all concerned and for progress towards articulation of those values that are agreed, a clearer understanding of disagreements and of the reasons why they exist, and the means by which progress may be made towards inclusive and reciprocal respect.

My impression is that Marianne Talbot and Nicholas Tate—who are to be commended on their willingness to contribute to what they knew well was likely to be a fairly sustained barrage against their position—have in some respects been misunderstood by some of the other contributors; that they have had views attributed to them which (whether they hold them or not) are not to be found in what they have written in their contribution to this volume. One suspects either that not all of the contributions were written specifically for this present volume, or that they were written with a less clearly defined remit than would have been helpful.

One crucial question which is, on my reading, neither clearly focussed nor sufficiently addressed is the following. Given—as is frequently and forcibly argued—that consensus among a group of 150 people, however great and good, assembled for the purpose of identifying 'our' core values cannot claim universality or absoluteness; and given that pluralism is an inescapable feature of any modern society; given also that there is not total consensus even among those canvassed and that, even so, the values offered as core values are both 'bland' and 'obvious'; does this mean that there are no values which are binding on whatever group or community seeks to foster the welfare of its members and positive relationships with its non members? Or that it is in some way misguided or reprehensible for a community to seek to articulate such consensus as it shares around 'core values'? If such values can be discerned, is it a telling objection to them that they are general and in need of application—even negotiation—in particular communities and their circumstances before any clear and reasonably specific guidance for action can be derived?

It is worth at least some consideration that the values which any group or community arrives at on the basis of the kind of discussion from which they typically arise are unlikely to constitute: a) a fully coherent set of values, internally consistent and incapable of ever conflicting with each other in practice; b) always the actual values by which the members of the group conduct themselves. It does seem reasonable, however, to assume that they may, nonetheless, be the best starting point in the process of pursuing agreement; indeed, that the very willingness to engage in such a process bespeaks a disposition which is a virtue which necessarily precedes

any explicit agreement on shared values and is, in fact, a touchstone by which any proffered value may be tested. This is not the place to pursue the point. But it is to be noted that such an approach need not entail naïvety or ineptitude on the part of those who hold it. It is in fact best seen as an heuristic device, constantly holding itself open to revision in the light of discoveries arrived at by living as though it were simply true. In this way, insights which are—and can only be—first discerned in an intuitive way, remain open to the tests of reason and ‘empirical fit’ in the world of human relationships.

Or, to ask a more down to earth question, is there any more practical and appropriate way for a community to articulate the values which bind it together in its common life, and provide a touchstone by which its members may check their course as they share in that common life, while also enabling them to be responsive to new insights and developments in their mutual exploration of the implication of these values for their shared life?

In such a crucial area of public debate, where misunderstandings and misattributions are widespread, it is a precondition of progress in mutual understanding that the protagonists identify the territory, clear sufficient ground and agree basic procedural rules to enable the discussion to move forward. This book makes a contribution to that task which, though less than it might be, is significant and well worth having.

COGNITION AND CURRICULUM RECONSIDERED

Elliot W. Eisner (Paul Chapman, 1996) pp. xi + 105, pb. £11.95

Reviewed by DON SKINNER

In 1982 Elliot Eisner published his 1979 John Dewey lecture as *Curriculum and Cognition*. This is a substantially revised version of his earlier book. Eisner aims to convince schools, policy makers and researchers into school effectiveness to recognise the importance of curriculum content—especially the arts—beyond the core of language and mathematics, to move away from a technicist and bureaucratic approach to education and to exploit the role of the arts in educational assessment and evaluation. This, he believes, is necessary if education is to fulfill its role of meaning-making in the modern world, if individuality is to flourish and if equity is to be achieved.

Eisner writes in a lively, eloquent and cultured style, refreshing for a book dealing with curriculum, cognition and assessment. The book is easy, in places delightful, to read. It makes the world of education seem an interesting and cultured sphere—as of course it should be—instead of the sociological and bureaucratic morass which faces those who find their noses stuck day after day into official policy documents, standard educational texts, academic research articles and the like.

It is a book with only four chapters. This, however, proves a very helpful structure for each deals with a major theme and includes a handful of appropriate sub-divisions. The first chapter ‘Reforming Educational Reform’ presents a critique of current thinking about educational reform in the USA which has natural echoes in Britain following the globalisation of educational policy and practice. Eisner is alarmed at the military metaphors, economic competitive ethos and narrow conception of mind

and curriculum priorities which have dominated the recent debate; and is highly skeptical about the traditional psychometric basis for educational measurement underlying the school effectiveness movement.

We are then offered two chapters in which Eisner attempts to develop a conceptual and philosophical foundation for his view of the importance of the arts in curriculum and evaluation. In 'The Role of the Senses in Concept Formation' he argues that the senses are central to knowing and that cognition and affect are inextricably intertwined in all human disciplines and activities. The third chapter is entitled 'Forms of Representation.' Here Eisner reiterates and expands ideas about human knowledge from the first edition, centred around three key concepts: 'modes of representation', 'modes of treatment' and 'syntax.' His discussion here is somewhat complex and, like most attempts to introduce readers to specially concocted terminology and constructs, proves neither readily assimilable nor illuminating.

The core of his argument is that humans have an inherent need to make meaning. Education, for Eisner, means helping students to learn the various ways (forms of representation) humans have developed for constructing and expressing meaning. He thus argues for what he calls 'multiple literacy', not just traditional language and numeracy. Readers will notice a similarity to Howard Gardner's views about the range and types of intelligence, and possibly also to Hirst's 'forms of knowledge'. Eisner acknowledges Gardner's work but points out that he is concerned not with intelligence but with the different kinds of meaning that different forms of representation make possible.

The final chapter 'From Cognition to Curriculum' moves to practical considerations and includes a useful summary of the book's main arguments with which readers could profitably start. Eisner is to be commended for having the courage, which few writers on education show, of exposing his ideas to critical scrutiny by spelling out detailed, concrete examples of what they would mean in practice. Unfortunately they are not particularly convincing, at least to this reader.

On reflection the book should perhaps have been entitled 'Curriculum and Cognition Restated'—rather than 'Reconsidered'. Eisner exhorts researchers, policy makers and curriculum experts to revise their views on curriculum and cognition, but he appears unaware of recent strong critiques of his own position by philosophers writing about arts education—such as David Best (e.g. in his 'The Rationality of Feeling', Falmer, 1992). Certainly, Eisner does not address Best's trenchant criticisms. Briefly, Best takes issue with Eisner's espousal of a reference (particularly to images) theory of meaning which entails a very limited view of language; with his assumption that meaning, understanding and education can be achieved solely through the senses and experience; and with his implicit subjectivist doctrine that mental phenomena exist independently of their possible forms of expression (which implies that forms of representation are required merely to express private, subjective, 'inner' concepts). These weaknesses, Best has argued, lead Eisner to undervalue the importance of language and the various art forms in education and inhibit the articulation of more adequate justification of the role of arts in education. It is a pity Eisner's book does not address this critique.

In discussing the implementation of his ideas, Eisner draws attention not only to the curriculum but also to: 'the artistry with which that program is mediated by teachers. We call such artistry teaching'. Here, surely, is a fruitful line of thinking, worth deeper consideration by Eisner than he provides in this short volume (though he has briefly explored it recently elsewhere). In the 1970s Nate Gage usefully focused on what he called 'the scientific basis of the art of teaching.' What we need today, I believe, is a closer look at the artistic basis of the art of teaching, exploring the analogy of teaching as an art form, as Lawrence Stenhouse had begun to do in his later years.

Despite its flaws, this is an attractively published and inviting, slim book which can be recommended as provoking discussion of recent reform initiatives, the role of the arts in education and the philosophical basis of the curriculum. Eisner seeks to promote a wider vision of the possibilities of education than exist in current national curriculum statements and he deserves a fair hearing.