BERA Conference – 1982 style !!!!!!!!!!

BERA Regional Activities:
A paper on this subject by Brian Wilcox is included later in this issue. As financial pressure increases, and is reflected more and more even at the level of expenses to travel to conferences, it becomes necessary to think more seriously about possible ways of regionalising our activities. The subject will tre discussed at the next AGM and it is hoped that the paper will encourage members to think ahead about this.

BERA Annual Conference at St. Andrew's:
In our last number we announced that the principal theme of the Conference would be 'Methodology'. Things have moved on since then. A variety of symposium topics have been approved by the Conference Committee, including Multicultural Education, Assessment, Transition from School to Work, Pedagogy and Competence-based education and assessment and a number of others are being considered. Methodology remains an important theme but the Conference will range very much wider.

BERA Conference Guidelines*
1 General
1.1 Contributions to BERA conferences tend to fall into five main categories:
(a) Invited addresses from outside speakers on topics more or less of their choosing, e.g. Lord Boyle, Professor Armytage, Christopher Price on previous occasions.
(b) Presidential addresses whose form is decided by the incoming president.
(c) Presentation of papers reporting completed work, e.g. Putter report.
(d) Individual papers reporting work in progress.
(e) Symposium around a theme generally reporting work in progress.

1.2 Conventionally presidential addresses are normally set pieces with no questions or discussion. Invited addresses generally allow questions. Papers on finished work allow questions and discussion. Individual papers and symposia are the staple of conferences and' are intended to maximise discussion and interaction.

2. The nature of sessions
2.1 In the case of presidential addresses and invited speakers, sessions are conducted along conventional lines with the outgoing president introducing the speaker and chairing the session.

2.2 In the case of papers reporting finished work, chairpersons are chosen by the conference organisers and expected to allocate time for questions and discussion after the paper.

2.3 In the case of papers reporting work in progress, chairpersons are appointed by conference organisers and papers usually clustered in time slots. An important obiective of these sessions is the facilitation of interaction.

2.4 Symposia are generally the responsibility of the person organising them. Sometimes symposia will be suggested by conference organisers, sometimes individual members will suggest symposia and negotiate their inclusion in the programme with conference organisers.Symposia organisers generally undertake complete responsibility for the sessions, often decide on the amount of time to be allocated, and usually cha the meetings. Symposiasts speak to a common pre-determined theme and normally address different aspects of the theme. The audience is also expected to play a contributory part, not just to ask questions but to join in discussion and appraisal of the issues raised.

3. The conduct of sessions
3.1 In the case of invited and presidential addresses, sessions are conducted along normal chaired-lecture lines. Chairpersons are expected to observe the allocated time as closely as possible.

3.2 Reports of completed work are in the nature of conventional lectures. The chairperson has the responsibility of arranging with the speaker(s) the amount of time appropriate for questions and discussion as thought desirable. The chairperson is responsible for observing accurate timing.

3.3 Sessions comprising clusters of individual papers should be arranged to provide equal amounts of time to each paper unless different amounts are agreed with speakers beforehand. Chairpersons must ensure that time allocations are adhered to during sessions. Speakers may be rightly enraged if

the chair allows other selfish speakers to filch their time. Within the individual time allocations, the chairperson should ensure that time is available for questions and discussions. The conference organisers should provide sufficient time in their general arrangements for such interaction.

* Adopted by the executive on 2 February 1982.

3.4
Sessions of this nature are the ones that have most given rise to dissatisfaction in earlier conferences. Chairpersons should liase with speakers to ensure that they do not spend all the time reading papers that are already available and thus preclude questions and discussion and probably attempt to over-run. In no circumstances should chairpersons allow speakers to overrun their preallocated time. Warning should be given a minute or two before cut off time and then the guillotine should be applied ruthlessly still allowing time for questions and discussion. Clearly amicable pre-session liaison will help avoid unpleasant curtailment of speakers in full flight. Speakers at such sessions will be expected not to read papers but to explain their work to the audience in a brief introduction that raises the important issues. Such an introduction should not normally last longer than 15 minutes. Symposia organisers should observe similar procedures to chairpersons of clusters of individual papers except that they should collaborate with symposiasts beforehand to provide a unified presentation.

4. The appointment of chairpersons
The two categories of session that may be problematic are the ones reporting finished work and the clusters of individual papers. It is very important that conference organisers identify chairpersons who will exercise firm control over the sessions especially with regard to strict time-keeping. Apart from the need to maximise interaction, good time-keeping enables those who wish to move from one session to another to hear the speakers they are particularly interested in. In addition loose time-keeping can seriously upset administrative and catering provisions.

Notes to contributors
1. First decide which category of contribution yours falls into.
2. If you are reporting completed work you should liaise with conference organisers to ascertain the time available, the chairpersons, and to indicate any requirements you may have. If the work is published or available in mimeo then you should not attempt to read the paper but to introduce it and 'speak to it'. Also discuss the session with other speakers who may be sharing that time slot. If it is important for people to have read your paper beforehand, please liaise with the conference organisers to make arrangements for their distribution.
3. If you are participating in a session of individual papers reporting work in progress do not bore your audience by reading a paper and leaving no time for discussion. In no circumstance should contributors read papers that have already been circulated to the audience who then sit and read them with you. The Chair will be quite justified in interrupting sessions of this nature and asking you to talk about your work. Remember the object of these sessions is to maximise interaction so that you can get feedback from your audience that could be helpful to you. Before the session the Chair will inform you how long you have to speak. You will be informed when the end of your time is approaching and when the time is up you must finish. Contributors who feel that they cannot accept these arrangements should not submit papers.
4. If you are participating in a symposium liaise with the symposium organiser, the session will be conducted along similar lines to the session of individual papers but there may be special arrangements from the organiser. But as with individual paper sessions the aim is to maximise interaction and to provide feedback to symposiasts.
5. It is the responsibility of contributors to deliver a 250-word summary of their paper to the Conference Organiser by 31 st March preceding the Conference. Summaries of papers should be on A4 paper, typed with double-spacing. The summary should beheaded by the name(s) of the authors, an address for correspondence, and the title of the paper.
6. ALL CONTRIBUTORS TO BERA CONFERENCES ARE BY THE ACT OF SUBMITTING A PAPER CONSIDERED TO AGREE TO THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT OF THE BERA CONFERENCE GUIDELINES.