
Conference Reports

Educational Research and Developing Countries

For the first time at BERA, a symposium focussed on Third World educational research and on its links with Britain. There was a good original response, but funding problems prevented some overseas participants from attending; some higher degree students from Africa, however, were able to take part.

As this was a trial run, no specific focus had been suggested and the papers addressed a variety of topics. However, certain common themes soon emerged. The effects of the different political contexts of developing countries on educational systems were frequently stressed, and linked to the perennial question of top-down versus bottom-up strategies for educational innovation. Related themes concerned the rôle of the local educational professionals, as opposed to government, and the part that outsiders might play. Alternative research practices and policies were discussed, and the need for indigenous models stressed.

The first session explored action/participatory research frameworks in three different continents: Beatrice Avalos reviewed qualitative and popular educational research carried out recently in Latin America, Janet Stuart reported on a teacher-centred action research initiative in Southern Africa, and Susan Durston discussed the use of action research rather than illuminative evaluation in studying the rôle of curriculum advisers in Papua New Guinea. A common theme was the need to involve people in researching and improving their own situations.

In the second session some curriculum issues were examined. Jenny Hill discussed the use of literature in the teaching of English as a foreign language, with reference to both UK and overseas. Olu Orungbemi described the problems of introducing primary social studies in Ondo State, Nigeria, where centralised curriculum development took little account of the teachers' situation. Ian Haffenden reported how on the implementation of the Seychelles National Youth Service — a radical curriculum initiative — was constrained by pressures arising both within and outside the project. In both these latter situations the problematic relationship between the professionals and the state was highlighted.

The afternoon session focussed in different ways on the links between the North and the South. Lynn Davies raised questions about ethnocentrism and exploitation in her paper on women in educational administration in the Third World: what is and what should be the rôle of the expatriate researcher? Tony Hopkin discussed some basic problems faced by supervisors of research students from overseas, and asked whether higher degrees for such students should be aimed at training rather than at contributing new knowledge. Kenneth King outlined the kinds of educational research that is being done, in different guises, by donor agencies as they set up and evaluate aid projects, and pointed out the need for better dissemination strategies, especially for countries of the South.

Much useful discussion and dialogue was initiated, which we intend to take further next year.

Janet Stuart, Education Development Area,
University of Sussex

Policy and Practice in Contemporary State Education

About 100 people were at the eight sessions of this symposium, which ran through the whole Saturday of the conference. In the morning, Andy Hargreaves ran through the crisis of curriculum and assessment of the last twenty years, utilising and developing Habermas's theories of the crises of the modern state. Penny Weston and John Harland outlined some preliminary results from their NFER evaluation of the Lower Attaining Pupils Programme — rather than simply seeing it as an inevitable form of differentiation and social control for 'the bottom 40%', they preferred to stress its inherent potential for influencing the broader mainstream of age 14-16 thinking. Jim Campbell questioned the existence of any coherent overall policy for the primary school curriculum and pointed out the many contradictions between the HMI views on the curriculum and the existing financial constraints. Roger Dale and his team outlined their research on the TVEI, looking at the different perceptions of the schools and of the MSC about its aims, and also concentrating on the managerialism and interventionalism of the latter.

Hilary Radnor and her colleagues outlined the barriers, difficulties and contradictions that were involved in the introduction of the CPVE into their research schools.

Brian Simon and David Reynolds delivered papers on the broader theme of the relationship between educational policy and the wider political and economic restructuring brought by Thatcherism and the 'radical right'; and David Hargreaves in his inimitable style questioned the extent to which gatherings like BERA could generate useful educational policy initiatives until the constituency of educational researchers was more representative of the sexual and racial composition of the general population.

Overall, a number of issues seem more clear after the symposium, apart from the obvious conclusions as to how quickly educational researchers in Britain have been climbing onto the new bandwagon of policy related studies. Firstly, not all the policy developments of the last seven years are necessarily 'reproductive' of the existing social and economic order — TVEI with its equal opportunities commitments and its effects upon staff in forcing them to work together may have potentially radical effects, for example. Some policy changes may be 'transformative' of the existing social order in ways unexpected by the political structure.

Secondly, the precise outcomes as the policy initiatives reach the LEAs and the schools are not pre-determined but are in the process of being determined by the interactions and power struggles between schools, LEAs and governments. The process of contestation and struggle is still one, therefore, which can potentially be influenced by educational researchers.

Thirdly, there seemed to be a widespread feeling amongst people attending the conference that links between educational researchers and the political and administrative world of policy formulation and policy implementation needed to be considerably increased for potential mutual benefit. A BERA seminar devoted to that end is in the pipeline.

Maureen O'Connor of *The Guardian* very kindly chaired the session and delivered an interesting postscript. The eight papers from the day will be published in the form of an edited collection from Falmer Press, probably in Autumn 1987, edited by Andy Hargreaves and myself.

David Reynolds
University College, Cardiff

Lower Attaining Pupils Programme

The Lower Attaining Pupils Programme (LAPP) Symposium was convened by Penelope Weston and chaired by John Harland, both of the NFER National Evaluation Team. The aim of the symposium was to offer a forum for discussing aspects of the Programme.

By way of introduction to the symposium, Penelope Weston described how there were now 17 LEAs taking part in the DES funded LAPP Programme which now includes over 100 schools; 13 have been at work since 1983 and 4 have joined the Programme in September 1985. The Programme was announced by Sir Keith Joseph at the CLEA Conference in July 1982. The aim, as stated in his speech, was to introduce "a more effective education with a practical slant for those pupils for whom public examinations at 16+ are not designed" (at that time roughly the lower 40%).

The symposium was divided into three sessions. The first focused on issues raised by selecting a target group for LAPP. The second session dealt with the curriculum on offer including relevance and practicality, cognitive skills and pre-vocational education. In the last session the emphasis was placed on the students' response to LAPP.

The paper by Kathleen Langley, (local evaluator for the Northamptonshire Curriculum Project) highlighted some of the problems in the selection of a target group in Northamptonshire, particularly that of sex stereotyping. This project is an example of a discreet package in which a group of pupils are separated from their peers for virtually all of their time. The application of behavioural and academic criteria to the selection of a target group yielded a 2:1 ratio in favour of boys. Furthermore, K Langley stated that in the early days an attempt had been made to combat the sexism within the project by 'marketing' the course, although questions were asked about the effectiveness of this strategy to address the fundamental problems of sex stereotyping within the project. In discussion the notion that LAPP represented a 'marginalised curriculum for the daft kids' was challenged by other participants in the group who were involved with projects where the target group was more diffuse — in one instance involving the whole year group.

This important aspect of the applicability of project activities to a wider range of students than the lower 40% was carried over into the second session which dealt with the nature of the

curriculum. Joanne Williams (Co-ordinator for Bradford's Skills Foundation Course) gave examples from a wide range of projects claiming that pupils were experiencing a more relevant and practical course of study. However, Jo Williams noted that these practical approaches raised a number of important issues including the nature of the target group, the level of resourcing needed and the need for staff development in this area. It was observed by one of the participants that a worrying trend was the equation of the need for more practical and relevant elements in the curriculum with the needs of industry, leading to the identification of a group of students (characteristically lower attaining) for a more 'pre-vocational' education. Mary Wootten (local evaluator for the DES project in Gateshead) in her paper, described how the project in Gateshead, in common with other LAPP projects nationally, had been interpreted as an opportunity to provide a strong pre-vocational emphasis which concentrated on out of school experiences at work, in the community and through FE link courses. Mary Wootten expressed concern about the false promise offered by these types of courses in times of high youth unemployment and particularly in areas, like Gateshead, with above average youth employment rates.

By contrast, the remaining two papers in this session provided examples of projects which had decided to focus on developing competence in the learning process including Instrumental Enrichment (a programme for addressing individual learning deficits), and the specification of learning objectives in a number of subject areas combined with the use of profiling (papers presented by Brandon Ashworth NFER Evaluation Team and Marjorie Needham Project Director for the Hertfordshire Achievement Project respectively).

The final session of the day looked at pupils' responses to the project. Jack Price (local evaluator for the London Education Assessment Project) drew on data he had collected about students' perceptions of achievement and concluded that (1) students can be conservative in their views on assessment which must be taken into account when introducing alternative assessment strategies if students are not to denigrate less traditional forms of assessment (2) girls involved in the LEA Project have been less accepting of curriculum change involving alternative forms of assessment than boys and (3) some institutions were more accepting of change than others both in terms of the attitudes of their students and staff. Alan Goodwin and Dave Hustler

(local evaluators for the Manchester Alternative Curriculum Strategies) presented pupil interview material from a sample of the first cohort of project students who had left school and registered approval of the course. For the purpose of their paper only positive statements were presented. On the whole students felt that project experience was different from school to earlier years. They said they were allowed more freedom in class; school was not as routine and; teachers had more time and listened more. One student said "It's not like normal school, I don't have to wag any more". Dave Hustler attributed these responses partly to the diversity of the course but also, and perhaps more importantly, to the unpredictability of the course.

On the whole the sessions were well attended and some lively discussion was generated which is only partly covered here. One participant commented that he was "struck by the diversity both in terms of the approaches adopted by projects across LAPP and in the strategies used to evaluate them". Indeed, the wide range of issues raised by LAPP reflects many of the challenges and dilemmas found in contemporary education.

Nicholas Oatley

National Foundation for Educational Research

Becoming and Being a Teacher

The focus of this all-day symposium was on teachers as 'real-life' people in all their humanity. A deliberate attempt was made to bring together established researchers in the field with as yet unknown scholars and practitioners. It also gave an opportunity for three ESRC-funded projects (Teachers's Conceptions of their Professional Responsibility in England and France — Patricia Broadfoot *et al*, Bristol University; Primary School Staff Relationships — Jennifer Nias *et al*, Cambridge Institute of Education; Teacher Satisfaction Project — Pam Poppleton *et al*, Sheffield University) to present some preliminary findings. What united all participants was a broad commitment to an ethnographic method.

Although the day, hopefully, achieved a degree of unity, the programme was divided into five broad themes:

Teachers' Lives

Jennifer Nias explored "what is it to feel like a teacher?" Whilst Marj Hinchcliffe reported on her detailed study of the life histories of two teachers. Kath Aspinwall, in similar vein, concentrated on the in-service potential of encouraging teachers to reflect upon their biographies.

Teachers in Comparative Perspective

Distinctions drawn by French and English teachers regarding their professional responsibility were presented by Marilyn Osborn and Patricia Broadfoot. Pam Poppleton pointed to the similarities of experience by US and English teachers in "disadvantaged" areas: 'the Alamo complex' as one American teacher eloquently put it!

Process of Recruitment and Selection

Geoff Southworth stressed the importance of informal teacher participation in new appointments to the primary school. Bob Burgess highlighted some of the micropolitical subtleties of selection and promotion (crucifixes and wedding rings!) at Bishop MacGregor School.

Staff Relations

Robin Yeomans explored how new staff learn to become staff members whilst coworker Jennifer Nias dissected the partnership between head and deputy in a nursery/infant school.

Teaching at a Time of Crisis

There was a vivid presentation of the crisis of teacher morale in a mining village school in Yorkshire by Bill Dubberley. George Riseborough gave an object lesson on how not to use the overhead projector: As such, few will remember his elaboration of the ideological and cultural differences between experienced and inexperienced teachers, and the consequent conflict between them for the 1986-sparse material and symbolic rewards of teaching. Central to Stephen Ball's paper was the thesis that the key to understanding the Teachers' Action lies in conceiving it as a struggle for control over the work of teaching.

In conclusion, the symposium was well received and attended throughout the day. This reflects the growing interest in the lived experience of teachers and the belief that an understanding of the processes of schooling must be premised upon a critical grasp of social life as it *really* is.

George F Riseborough
University of Sheffield

Special Educational Needs

Six papers were crowded into a Saturday afternoon and about thirty people were crowded into the music room to hear them. The papers covered a wide range of areas within special education and, despite the pressure on time, provoked considerable discussion.

Inevitably, the implementation of the 1981 Education Act was a major theme of the symposium and Caroline Gipps and Harriet Gross

gave the first paper based on their ESRC funded research on provision for special educational needs in primary schools. In reviewing the consequences for children of different modes of provision the paper suggested that, contrary to some current thinking, withdrawal from the regular classroom may sometimes be an appropriate strategy. Supporting special educational needs in ordinary schools was also the focus of the paper given by Diana Moses on her DES funded research project in this area. A number of forms of support were discussed including new rôles for the support services, links between mainstream and special schools and INSET for special educational needs.

The question of support services was taken up by Alvin Jeffs in his paper on motivation and professional development within support services. He considered the special position of teachers working in LEA support services, their perceptions of their staff development needs and the implications of these for staff motivation. Supporting special needs in the mainstream was also the focus of David Thomas' paper on the rôle of special needs coordinators in primary schools. He suggested that the rôle expectations and the limited support available made such teachers a group with special needs.

Two further papers were concerned with children with severe learning difficulties. Bunty Davidson summarised a number of researches she has conducted on teaching strategies and learning situations in special schools and discussed the special problems conducting classroom observation in these settings. David Johnstone focussed on the parents of severely learning disabled children and used data from unstructured interviews to consider their perspectives on their children's transition from school to adult status.

Paul Croll
Bristol Polytechnic

Action Research

Maureen Barrett began the symposium with a summary of the in-service support offered to teachers as part of the DES Course *Supporting Teachers in their Classroom Research*. In order to facilitate dialogue between individuals with shared concerns the fifty participants had been asked to register a fortnight before the conference giving details of the questions they would like to pursue. This enabled the convenor to organise five groups to consider questions on:

- 1 Forming and sustaining enquiry networks,
- 2 General questions of Curriculum Review and Evaluation,
- 3 Specific questions on oracy in science lessons and the quality of writing in Curriculum Review and Evaluation,
- 4 Personal and Social Education,
- 5 Using New Technology in the primary school and evaluating classroom practice.

This symposium built upon the experiences gained at BERA '84 and '85 in the sessions on *Action Research, Educational Theory and the Politics of Educational Knowledge*. The group of teacher researchers associated with the Values in Education Research Group at the University of Bath are contributing to a living form of educational theory in which practitioners are making public their claims to understand their own professional practice. Further details of the work of these teachers can be obtained from the convenor of the Values Group, School of Education, University of Bath. More detailed descriptions of the work of contributors to the symposium are to be published in the *British Journal of In-Service Education* and in the *British Educational Research Journal*.

Jack Whitehead
University of Bath

Ethical Issues in Educational Research

This symposium was organised in order to explore more fully the ethical issues that confront social and educational researchers who are engaged in a range of investigations. Traditionally, ethical issues have been most often associated with ethnographic studies, yet it is apparent that other styles and strategies of social research raise ethical problems. The symposium therefore consisted of five papers each of which took a different research strategy where ethical problems could be explored.

The first paper presented by David Raffe examined survey based investigations focussing on the Scottish Young People Survey that had been conducted at the Centre for Educational Sociology at the University of Edinburgh. Secondly, Bob Burgess examined some of the 'grey areas' involved in the conduct of educational ethnography making specific reference to examples from his restudy of Bishop McGregor School. Thirdly, June Purvis focussed on ethical issues that relate to the conduct of historical research from a feminist perspective. A fourth paper was presented by Alison Kelly in which she considered the

ethics of school based action research focussing on the project *Girls into Science and Technology*. Finally, a paper was tabled by David Bridges on ethics and the law in which he considered issues relating to the conduct of case study research for curriculum development in police training.

The symposium provided an opportunity for discussions among the speakers and the participants who attended the session. Much interest was shown on issues relating to research design, to gender, to the values of the investigator and to the collection, analysis and dissemination of data. On the basis of the interest shown a decision has been made to publish revised versions of the conference papers alongside further commissioned material on the ethics of educational research.

Robert Burgess
University of Warwick

State and Private Education: The Assisted Places Scheme and Beyond

This symposium was held on Thursday 4th September with Professor Richard Pring (University of Exeter) as chair and critic.

The first presentation by Geoff Whitty (Bristol Polytechnic), John Fitz (Bristol Polytechnic) and Tony Edwards (University of Newcastle) made public for the first time some of the findings of a four year research project, funded by the ESRC, on the origins, implementation and initial effects of the Assisted Places Scheme. Drawing upon national data and a detailed study of the scheme in three local areas, the research team identified the main beneficiaries of the scheme and assessed some of its costs and benefits in relation to the conflicting claims made by its advocates and critics.

The paper by Debbie Wall (Lancashire Polytechnic) on the Assisted Places Scheme at London GPDST Schools was based upon the findings of an MA study carried out at the University of London Institute of Education during 1984-85 into the operation of the Scheme in seven GPDST schools in the London area and one in Merseyside. Based upon interviews with heads, it considered why the London schools consistently failed to fill their allocations of assisted places in the early years of the scheme and received reduced quotas at eleven-plus for the 1985/86 academic year.

Daphne Johnson (Brunel University) reported on a study of parental choice across the state and

private sectors. It explored the factors which influence parental choice of schooling and particularly the choice of private education. Her findings came from a recent research project, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, on the interface between state and private education, full details of which will be published in *Private Schools and State Schools: Two Systems or One?* (Open University Press, 1987)

In her paper, Irene Fox (Polytechnic of Central London), author of *Private Schools and Public Issues: The Parents' View* (Macmillan, 1985), examined the impact on A-level results of the growing trend of girls moving out of single-sex private schools into the sixth forms of boys' public schools and explored some of the problems entailed in her proposed research on this issue.

In the final presentation, Ted Tapper (University of Sussex), described the political background to the introduction of the Assisted Places Scheme and evaluated the future of the scheme in the light of political developments subsequent to its inauguration. He concentrated particularly upon the course of educational policy developments within the Conservative Party, but reached the more general conclusion that policy research could have precious little influence on policy development.

This was a conclusion with which Richard Pring took issue in his summing up and, in reflecting positively on the afternoon's proceedings while arguing for a sharper focus for research in this area, he was mildly optimistic about the possibilities for research influencing policy, especially at local level. This was but one of the areas in which the symposium stimulated lively debate and the afternoon was generally deemed to have been a success, despite its rather over-ambitious agenda.

Geoff Whitty
Bristol Polytechnic

Education Policy, Schooling Practices

An overview of policy change, 1965, 1975, 1985... *Same Problem, Different Balance*, Gwen Wallace argued that in a rapidly changing world, the ideology of competitive individualism implicit in processes of selection and certification, required repeated re-definition against the political problem of maintaining consent to the unequal distribution of 'life chances'. Geoffrey Walford's contribution highlighted the financial and ideological support currently flowing into the whole

range of privately sponsored educational and training activities from nursery schooling to YTS as well as the traditionally independent sector in *The Growing Dependence of the Independent Sector*.

The issue of 'Spot Funding' as it develops and spreads from TVEI and TRIST, raises questions regarding the effect of such an unpredictable financial basis for educational initiatives. Bridget Baines tackled this area with, *The Story of Ten Thousand Guilders: Spot Funding and Changing Educational Policies*.

Focussing on the interactive learning processes of young children, Gill Barrett presented, *An Exploration of the Relationship between Educational Policy and Pupil Effectiveness*. Arguing that developmental 'phased' theories of learning were anachronistic and relied on 'add ons' for social and attitudinal learning, she argued for a curriculum based on an appreciation of the need for pupils to evaluate their experiences reflectively.

Finally, Henry Miller presented a wide-ranging discussion on, *Teachers, Professionalism and Trade Union Action 1985-1986 in the UK*. Setting contemporary trade union action in a context of theoretical debates on professionalism, policy contraction, teachers' salaries and falling rolls, he foresaw the possibility of some 'fruitful combination' of traditions if teachers could take advantage of the 'considerable popular support for the state educational system', that had been identified.

Gwen Wallace
Derbyshire College of Higher Education

Co-operative Group Work in Secondary Schools and Industry

Both educationalists and industrialists suggest that there is a growing need for co-operative group work in schools today if we are to equip young people with the skills and personal qualities which they will need in their life and work after school. The experience of collaborating with others, it is argued, not only increases personal satisfaction and morale but also results in improvements in the quality of work and in the ability to communicate ideas effectively.

But how widely held is the view that collaboration with others enhances learning in school? How is co-operative group work viewed by pupils and teachers? What do industrialists really mean by co-operation? Are there any parallels to be found in the co-operation amongst members of a community?

Helen Cowie presented data based on interviews with 84 teachers and their pupils from the early stages of an enquiry into teachers' perceptions and experiences of group work. She described a number of ways in which the term 'group work' is interpreted by teachers, eg rôle play, discussions, team-building groups, 'real task' groups and problem-solving in groups. Some major benefits which pupils gain from working co-operatively were outlined. She also indicated the factors which constrain the development of group work in the secondary school.

Jean Rudduck gave some perspectives from industry and suggested that the concept of co-operation in the work place is, except in very small organisations, different from the concept of group work as commonly understood in schools. In schools, group work is often conceived of as a way of organising learning where young people work together in face-to-face interaction on tasks. In industry, group work is often talked about as teamwork, and teamwork most commonly means individuals making a particular contribution in a differentiated but coherent set of tasks, without the individual necessarily interacting during the conduct of his or her particular tasks.

Industry's support for co-operation appears to be entirely compatible with its interest in competition: there is no real clash of values as there often is in schools. Co-operation in industry is a means to the end of improving productivity. In a time of job uncertainty where employees might well wonder why they should bother about industry if industry isn't going to bother about them, employers are concerned to build a sense of commitment among

their employers. The flexibility in individuals that they now call for is compatible with the team approach and is a response to the rapidity of change in the conditions of the work place and is, therefore, primarily utilitarian. Industry sounds, at the moment, as though it is a humanely caring institution, concerned with the personal and social development of its workers. To the extent that it is so concerned, it is because such development is good for business.

Karen Dunn shared findings and ideas generated by her work on the relationship between community and schooling in a Yorkshire mining town. She discussed the extent to which a 'co-operative culture' permeates the life of the community and the effects which this has on teachers and pupils within the large comprehensive school which serves it.

In harmony with the theme of the symposium everyone participated in the lively and at times heated discussion which arose throughout the session, and the generation of ideas fully justified the project team's decision to present research in process rather than a finished end-product.

Helen Cowie
University of Sheffield

Philosophy and Research Methodology

Anyone interested in contributing to a symposium on the above topic at the Manchester Conference should contact: Mantz Yorke, Liverpool Polytechnic, Rodney House, 70 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5UX. (Tel. 051-207 3581, ext. 2524).

Conference Reports

Teacher Appraisal

The aim of the symposium was to clarify issues which researchers could usefully address as teacher appraisal schemes are developed at school, LEA and national levels. It was divided into three one and a half hour sessions. Each took different but inter-related themes and consisted of two paper presentations. The chairperson tried to ensure continuity and coherence in the symposium by identifying major themes and issues across the sessions.

The following people contributed papers to the symposium:

Del Goddard, Chief Adviser for Enfield, with a response from Lesley Kant, Senior Adviser for Norfolk: Issues from the Perspective of a Local Educational Authority Adviser.

Anne Moran, University of Ulster: The Significance of Organisational Climate in Schools for the Quality of Appraisal Schemes.

Christopher Day, University of Nottingham. The Contribution of Classroom Research Literature to the Development of Classroom Observation Methods for Appraisal.

John Elliott, University of East Anglia: Research Perspectives on the Problems of Defining Criteria and Processes for Appraising Teachers.

The symposium was very well attended throughout the day. The two papers per session format allowed plenty of time for discussion of issues. The papers were sufficiently overlapping to enable continuous discussion on identifiable themes throughout the day. The major themes were:

- ▶ the necessity not to treat appraisal in isolation from other Government initiatives;
- ▶ can appraisal be educative for teachers or is it simply a mechanism for de-professionalising them?
- ▶ can a management controlled appraisal system foster the professional development of teachers?
- ▶ what is the relationship between organisational development and the development of teachers as persons within the framework of teacher appraisal?

- ▶ do different research paradigms facilitate the different kinds of power relations in education and if appraisal constitutes an instrument for establishing a certain form of power does it imply a preference for a particular paradigm?

Requests for copies of papers should be addressed to the authors.

John Elliott, University of East Anglia

Further Education in Scotland

The symposium on further education developments in Scotland was aimed at a general audience of those interested in education at 16+. The Scottish context of a further education sector which had recently undergone a complete transition from traditional provision to a modular structure incorporating major innovative features was the setting for a series of papers by policy makers, researchers and practitioners on a number of aspects of the Government's 16+ Development Programme. These were: Curriculum; assessment; marketing modules and the labour market; and the practicalities of implementation.

HMI Donald Mack provided an overview of Action Plan, the document which heralded the changes in FE. He identified the main features, the current views of policy-makers and the likely directions FE might take.

The symposium then considered three of the curricular features of the 16+ programme: curriculum articulation; guidance and choice; and personal and social development (PSD) in the curriculum.

David Taylor, of Jordanhill College of Education presented findings from a study into the extent and nature of articulation, or the extent of 'fit' between modules and previous learning, between modules, and between modules and higher and advanced education provision.

The opportunities for flexibility in the modular programme were next considered by Angela Roger of Dundee University, and Pamela Munn, of the Scottish Council for Research in Education. In particular, they drew attention to the variety of guidance systems in operation in colleges and the overall lack of opportunity students had to choose the modules which made up their programmes of study.

Ron Tuck, HMI, presented the policy-makers' view of one of the innovative aspects of the new 16+ curriculum: modules in personal and social development. He described the rationale behind PSD in the curriculum and the efforts which had been made to promote PSD in colleges, which included the setting up of a working party and the implementation of staff training programmes.

Harry Black, of the Scottish Council for Research in Education, reported on current assessment practice under the National Certificate. He indicated that staff in further education found the new assessment system largely supportive of their teaching.

Work-based assessment was the focus of the contribution from Lindsay Mitchell (Scottish Vocational Education Council). She described the current concern for crediting students' achievements in the workplace and the problems posed by competency testing.

Sandy Thomson (School of Further Education, Jordanhill) and Marilyn Stone (Heriot-Watt University) who have been studying the issue of marketing college courses reported on the obstacles encountered and FE users' opinions, concluding that considerable progress was being made by colleges in adopting a marketing approach.

The symposium then considered the experience of young people themselves under the new FE system. David Raffe (Centre for Educational Sociology, Edinburgh University) presented findings from the Scottish Young Peoples' Surveys which showed the uptake of modules amongst youngsters and the routes they had followed since acquiring their modules.

Finally, the floor was given to two practitioners in FE: Assistant Principal, Joyce Johnstone (Glennrothes and Buckhaven Technical College) and Principal Mike Taylor (Telford College) who testified to the enormous effort staff in FE had made to implement the new National Certificate within limited resources and within a tight time-scale. Joyce Johnstone described the staff development programme which was launched in her college and is continuing. Mike Taylor spoke realistically of the problems encountered in implementing Action Plan and optimistically of the unexpected benefits of the changeover while anticipating continuing progress in the near future.

Further details may be obtained from the organiser of the symposium.

Pamela Munn, SCORE

Science and Writing in the Primary School

In this symposium some findings of research in progress at Bristol University were presented. The project is being funded by the Economic and Social Research Council within their Teacher Education Initiative. The purpose of the work is to study variation in the initial education and training of primary school teachers with specific emphasis on the teaching of science and writing at the junior level. Three colleges involved in teacher training are participating in the research and both B.Ed. and PGCE students have been studied. The entry characteristics of these students have been collated and relevant attitudes, beliefs and knowledge have been measured. By means of questionnaires.

Three aspects of the research findings were presented. The first dealt with a provisional model of effective teaching that listed seven necessary conditions of excellence. The research was set within this model and it was argued that quality overall was limited by the value of the weakest feature in the profile. Some initial general findings relating to this model were reported. Secondly, the link found between academic qualifications, science knowledge and confidence in teaching science was discussed in the context of teacher training and science teaching in schools. Finally, the results of a study into the treatment of children's creative writing by student teachers were presented. The research indicated that a qualitative change takes place as the students progress through their training. General findings, including a provisional model of the sequence of development, were presented.

Discussion of these areas followed. Particular interest was expressed in the work relating to the students' treatment of children's writing. The ways in which students dealt with form and content was focussed upon, and reasons why the students' in which students' treatment of form seemed to be limited to spelling and punctuation were discussed. Further research was already underway at the time of the symposium to investigate the omission of comments concerning areas such as organisations, vocabulary and grammar from the students' responses. The outcome data relating to student teacher quality was in the process of being analysed so further discussion regarding the significance of this work awaits the completion of this stage of the research.

Peter Noyes, Bristol University

Special Educational Needs

The day long symposium on Research in Special Education at this year's annual conference attracted papers from researchers with a range

of backgrounds. No specific initial issues had been suggested for a theme but the concerns emerging from papers and subsequent discussion suggested that a determination to develop more sharply focussed research practices in special education was beginning to achieve positive successes.

The first paper by Roland Chaplain focussed on the potential for abuse to children's rights by professionals under the guise of working in their best interests. An ethical code for Intervention Agencies was proposed that took account of professional inputs and the child's role in the decision making process. David Thomas outlined research projects on the issues facing managers of special schools, suggesting that accountability in special education and administrative confusions called for considerable managerial skills that are not always given sufficient contextual consideration.

The third paper by Judy Sebba traced the development and impact of INSET programmes in Special Ed. Needs in the North West of England; This paper was followed by Andrea Freeman's research on the reflexive processes involved in evaluating the special needs provision in a comprehensive school, the ethical and procedural issues were widely discussed as were the issues of research 'ownership' in special needs settings.

The post lunch presentations followed up the reflexive theme of the morning; Christine O'Hanlon identifying issues of concern in teacher education in Northern Ireland. The balance between tutorial teaching, as opposed to student facilitation was discussed. It was debated that teachers beginning to research their own practices must be encouraged to articulate their particular and individual problems in as mutually a supportive setting as possible.

The final paper from Malcolm Hind concentrated on the development of computer-aided learning for physically handicapped and speech impaired children, using BLISS symbolics. Malcolm demonstrated his innovative and revolutionary research findings which are in the final stages of development at Edge Hill College.

It is intended to publish the papers of the Special Education Symposium in March 1988. There will be a charge to cover postage and BERA members wishing for further information should contact David Johnstone, Edge Hill College, St. Helens Road, Ormskirk, Lancs LA39 4QP.

D. G. R. Johnstone, Edge Hill College

Appraisal Studies

The first paper in the symposium reported research into teachers' opinions about what kind of appraisal scheme was most likely to improve their professional performance. The results revealed the existence of strong preferences for some practices, and equally strong beliefs about the lack of value in others. Overall, the teachers in the study thought they would be most likely to improve if their appraiser was removed from their own professional specialism, the less practical benefit they expected to obtain from his or her appraiser. Thus the head of department emerged as a key figure, but governors, parents and other non-professionals were given little credibility. These were the views of a group of secondary teachers who had never yet been formally appraised. Nevertheless, such beliefs would be crucial to the success of a new appraisal scheme. For if a scheme is believed to be invalid by the appraisees, they are less likely to be influenced positively by what it says to them.

The remainder of the symposium included a paper about appraisal in higher education, another written from the standpoint of primary education, and one on issues of motivation, judgement and control. A common theme which emerged, both from the papers and from the discussion, was that appraisal is not as straightforward as some of its advocates seem to think. Appraisal may be well established in parts of industry and public administration, but perhaps the same old bag of tricks can't be applied in teaching without re-thinking a lot of basic assumptions. For instance, there was much debate during the symposium about professional autonomy—what it is, whether appraisal threatens it, and whether that would matter anyway. Another lively discussion revolved around the concept of motivation. What stimulates members of a profession to give a fine standard of service? The prospect of scoring high points on an appraiser's checklist, or something more profound? One was left with the impression that a great deal of research needs to be done on appraisal, and that we haven't yet identified all the important issues.

Nick Boreham, University of Manchester

'Qualitative and Participatory Approaches in International Perspective'

This was a well attended symposium which centred on the use of qualitative research approaches in international and particularly, Third World contexts.

A group of papers addressed research about teachers and classroom practices.

Janet Stuart referred to an action research project involving teacher in-service activities in Lesotho. Jenny Morgan presented her observations of the teaching of primary science in Botswana classrooms. Audrey Nunn referred to her anthropological study of the implementation of the Peruvian educational reform in the locality of Ayacucho, involving a macro and micro-ethnographic perspective. In all these presentations, the discussion of the characteristics of teaching as seen or as perceived by teachers was a central point, as also a discussion about the possibilities and limitations of the methods of research used.

A different set of papers concentrated on the viability of qualitative approaches for the determination of policy and for the evaluation of policy implementation. Kenneth King referred to his experience in a training workshop for policy-makers Thailand which used a collaborative and qualitative mode of investigating a particular innovation. Fazal Rizvi and Rob Walker presented a report on the evaluation of an Australian project sponsored by the State of Victoria, focussing on the difficulties of using critical/action research approach when bureaucratic interests have to be satisfied. A similar situation and similar problems were discussed by Steve Jordan and David Yeomans regarding the Leeds component of the national evaluation of TVEI carried out in Britain, which includes the use of qualitative methods of classroom observation.

Finally, Beatrice Avalos discussed the possibilities and limitations of qualitative research approaches when the concern is recognisable change in order to assess the need for extension of a particular programme. She referred to a pilot scheme for in-service teacher training carried out in Thailand.

Discussion after each presentation was lively and related not only to clarification of the work presented, but also to the raising of issues about qualitative research approaches. The international perspective was rich and the feeling of participants was that in future conferences this dimension should not be lost.

Beatrice Avalos, University College, Cardiff

16-19 Initiative

The symposium supplied details of the background and design of the 16-19 Initiative and gave the four University research teams involved the opportunity to report some preliminary results from the first wave of data collection. The 16-19 Initiative is a five-year programme of research on economic and political socialisation with a core longitudinal research project involving data collection by questionnaire, and interview and ethnographic methods from up to 6,000 young people in Kirkcaldy, Sheffield, Liverpool and Swindon.

Each team pursued a particular theme through the preliminary analysis of their data. Liverpool compared political attitudes across the four areas pointing to evidence of discontinuity—a "Liverpool effect". Swindon reported on the study of self-perception with evidence of striking differences between boys and girls and older and younger cohorts on measures of self-worth and self-esteem. Kirkcaldy explored educational, leisure participation and domestic life in the Kirkcaldy project. Sheffield compared attitudes to education, jobs and training across the four areas.

The presentations prompted many questions and some methodological criticism. It provided a valuable opportunity for the research teams to hear reactions to their work at a time when many options on future design decisions are still open. Hence that might be seen as a slightly premature venture into reporting proved to have much formative value for the development of the project.

John Bynner, Open University

GRIST OR GROPE?: a critical look at the new INSET

Two major themes emerged from the presentations. 'What, if any, are the educational priorities of the GRIST exercise?', and 'How can GRIST be located within the curriculum development and educational innovation movements of the last two decades?'

The first presentation, by members of the Surrey TRIST Evaluation Project, reported on a study of fifteen selected LEAs and their responses to the TRIST initiative. Some general findings were outlined on the way in which TRIST has enabled change in different local authority settings, and continues and discontinues apparent in the transition from TRIST to GRIST arrangements were also considered. In particular, three models of change were identified; 'strategic', 'experimental' and 'incremental'.

Charlie Naylor, representing the Bedfordshire NUT, then offered a critical view of how GRIST had developed in Bedfordshire. He gave an account of the development of TRIST and then GRIST in the county, and the response of the teacher unions to what was essentially a management-led initiative. In concluding that GRIST had made no significant difference to traditional in-service arrangements in Bedfordshire, Charlie suggested an alternative, genuinely 'school focused' model for INSET.

The local perspective was widened further by a presentation from Sheila Miles ex-INSET co-ordinator of Haringey. She argued, in her analysis of GRIST policy, that whilst the overt rationale of GRIST had been to encourage LEAs to plan and set up coherent programmes for teachers'

professional development, there was a hidden agenda. The underlying intention was to curb the independence of local authorities by making their INSET programmes more responsive to government priorities.

Leone Burton (Thames Polytechnic), Helen Burchell (Hatfield Polytechnic), and Gaby Weiner (Open University) each looked at the impact of the new GRIST arrangements on the 'providers'. Leone reported that the changes in INSET had not only caused immediate chaos in planning but had also put most of the longer term day-release courses in jeopardy. The two most immediate effects were that polytechnic staff were being bought in for 'one-off' sessions as consultants/experts by the schools, and that the demand for polytechnic-run courses was that they should be short, cheap and 'modular'.

Helen Burchell focused more specifically on the ways in which TRIST had been negotiated between LEAs, schools/colleges and HE, and suggested that the lessons learnt might well have relevance to GRIST. She identified four (often problematic) stages in the management of school-focused INSET—the identification of 'need', INSET planning, the INSET programme and the impact of the INSET programme—but was nonetheless optimistic about the value of the experience.

Its emphasis on bureaucratic mechanisms and the diversity of its implementation led Gaby Weiner (in a joint paper with Mike Flude) to question GRIST, both in its everyday working and the ideology underpinning its formulation. They argued that the redefinition of in-service education marked by the arrival of GRIST rested on a particular ideological construction of the inadequacies of state schooling. Presenting a range of evidence on the implementation of GRIST, they claimed that GRIST should be seen as part of a wider restructuring which embraces a vision of future educational provision as bureaucratic, managerial and cheap at the same

time as denigrating current provision as chaotic, unplanned and expensive.

Gaby Weiner, Open University

Electronic Networking

Five people contributed to the symposium. David McConnell (University of Bath) spoke of using an electronic conferencing facility with M.Ed. students. Tony Scott (Sussex University/Croydon LEA) described the background to, and the consequences of introducing modems into schools. In particular he noted the different strategies used by different local authorities—all of which had different educational, political and social consequences. Charlie Crook (University of Durham) reported on the use of electronic mail as a communication system within a university psychology department and between the department and its undergraduates (who had access, for instance, to terminals in their halls of residence). And finally, Bridget Somekh (Cambridge Institute) gave a graphic account of setting up an electronic mail link between Cambridgeshire and the USA.

Given the general state of the art, all contributors were able to provide accounts of implementation problems, not to say cock-ups. To this extent their papers were within the general literature on innovation. But, beyond this, the papers and the discussion reached to deeper questions, most of them related to the fact that such new media of communication disrupt cultural norms. For example, electronic mail is a relatively 'open' and informal system of communication yet it was being used in institutions not noted for their collaborative forms of working. To this extent, the future of electronic networking is, I believe, poised between structuring itself along the same lines as its host institutions (e.g. top-down) or in spearheading new kinds of relationships (e.g. sharing and collaboration).

David Hamilton, University of Glasgow