

References

- Aquino, J. (1974). The Nature of the Beast. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 25(4), 360-3
- Barnett, L. (1983, November). Assistant Director. ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education. Written correspondence.
- Burchinal, L. G. (1983). ERIC The International Educational Information System. In E. Paisley & M. Butler (Eds.), *Knowledge Utilization Systems in Education*, (pp.43-63). London: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Chesley, R. E. (1979). "Dissemination of Educational Information Through the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)." Educational Resources Information Center (DHEW), Washington, D.C. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 171 285).

- Colby, A. (1983, October). Documents Co-ordinator, ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges. Written correspondence.
- Ensley, P. S. (1984, November). The British Library, Lending Division. Monograph Acquisitions. Written correspondence.
- Howe, R. W. (1983, October). Director, ERIC Clearinghouse for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education. Written correspondence.
- Julius, L. (1983, September). Senior Information Analyst. ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education. Written correspondence.

Conference reports

BERA 1974-1984

Report to the AGM by S. Delamont
(Retiring President)

Part One — The Past

BERA is now ten years old. Professor Nate Gage paid a brief visit to the 9th Conference in London in 1983, and told me afterwards that it reminded him of the American Educational Research Association in 1946. Let us hope that by the time we are forty years old we are as large and influential as the AERA is in the USA. We have never managed to achieve a membership of more than 500 in any year (although at least 950 people have been members at sometime in the last decade) and we should, if we are to emulate the AERA, aim to be 2,000 strong.

As we are ten years old, it is appropriate to look back and pay some tribute to those people who have worked hard for the Association. Many individuals have performed important roles on the committee and by running our ten conferences, and all members must be grateful to them. In particular I want to thank our Presidents and a handful of key individuals who have worked particularly hard. First there are the seven past presidents who are still alive, although three of whom are unable to be present at the 10th conference.

John Nisbet (1974-75) was our first President, and his commitment and reputation as an educational researcher got BERA off to a good start.

Ed Stones (1975-76) succeeded John. He has been so much a part of BERA since its foundation that it is hard to remember all the different tasks he has performed and the extent of his labour. The debt BERA owes Ed will be most readily apparent when he finally ceases to be active, and has to be replaced.

Jack Wrigley (1976-77) gave BERA firm leadership, and was not only an active President, but has continued to offer the Executive Committee his advice and experience.

Brian Simon (1977-78) who is attending an international conference in Germany and is unable to be here, gave the BERA presidency its first historian, and led the Association in his own inimitable style.

Jim Eggleston (1978-79) was an innovative and energetic President, whose vigour is now being directed to the editing of BERJ. Among his many contributions were the Nottingham conference of the Association and the work on postgraduate training.

Ted Wragg (1981-82) is also unable to be here, as he is marooned in Swinshire. His contributions to the Association included writing our evidence to the Rothschild Enquiry into the SSRC, establishing better relations with the mass media, and the funniest Presidential Address.

Peter Chambers (1982-83) had been Secretary of BERA since the beginning, and one of the Association's most devoted and tireless servants. Among his many contributions over the years has been his steadfast reminder of the role of research in the public sector of higher education.

While we regret the absence of John Nisbet, Brian Simon and Ted Wragg from today's AGM, there are two past presidents to whom we must pay special tribute because of their untimely deaths.

Lawrence Stenhouse (1979-80) brought to his presidency a concern for research students, and a strong desire to build international links for the Association. HE was a BERA stalwart, who always came to the conference with provocative papers, and he is much missed.

Bruce Choppin (1980-81) was as keen as Lawrence on our international links, and he brought the association the important perspective of the career researcher in the research unit or institution. He had been treasurer of BERA for many years before his presidency, only handing over our finances when VAT loomed, and our loss when he moved to Los Angeles was considerable. We are all diminished by the loss of Bruce and Lawrence.

I feel very proud to be in the illustrious company and to have been the first woman president. Members may not be aware that Baroness Wooton, who was the first woman president of the British Sociological Association, has recently said on television that sociology was mostly rubbish. I hereby promise not to emulate Baroness Wooton in that regard.

Apart from the presidents, there are four other people who though not present at this conference, deserve our thanks for their services to BERA. **Richard Whitfield**, now working for the Save the Children Fund, was membership secretary and a loyal committee person, as well as a prime mover in our foundation. **Mike Smith** has been the backbone of the publications committee for much of our history, editing *RJ* and controlling the editorial board. **George Brown** was the first editor of *RJ*, and of *BERJ*, getting our publications off to a good start; and **Ray Jackson** put in a great deal of work as editor of *BERJ* after George. All these people have given BERA their time, and their energy, upon which a voluntary association relies totally.

The official history of BERA has not been written, but members will be interested to read Ed Stone's personal account of the first ten years which is due to appear in 1985. (1)

Part Two — The Present

The 1983/84 year has been a successful one for BERA. Although I was foolish enough to be president

when I was also dean of my faculty, which meant that BERA could not have as much of my time as I would have wished: indeed one recurrent problem we have is that BERA officers tend to be successful people in all spheres of their work, and are thus over-committed. We certainly want to see new faces on the Council, and would like to hear from any members with time to serve the Association.

The highlight of my own year was my attendance at the American Educational Research Association's conference in New Orleans, where it was splendid to see a strong BERA presence even when the pound is so weak. While it is exciting to attend a conference of 6,000 people in two skyscraper hotels with 40 parallel presentations, the pleasures of BERA are heightened — at least at BERA you have a chance of finding the session you want and meeting old friends. On that note I wish to express our gratitude to Eric O'Hare and Neville Bennett for all the work they have put in to this conference, which has been well up to our usual high standards, so violated in 1983.

This year we have continued to reclaim our traditionally sound financial position, as the accounts show. We have taken a full part in the association of Learned Societies in the Social Sciences, submitted our views on research funding to the University Grants Commission's enquiry, and had a successful day conference on Transitions in Sheffield run by **John Gray** and **Brian Wilcox**. We have also, via **Patricia Broadfoot's** hard work, begun to rebuild our international links which had been neglected since the death of Lawrence Stenhouse. In the next few weeks we will be submitting evidence to Scottish Tertiary Enquiry, and sending delegates to the National Council for Modern Languages in Higher and Further Education's Day Conference in London.

Finally, it is sad to relate that we must find a new Treasurer and a new Secretary. **Chris Kyriacou** and **Iain Smith** have decided that they have done their share of the Council's labours in their jobs, and asked to be replaced. Chris has been a splendid treasurer: he is deeply pessimistic, reliable and conscientious, and has a terrier-like grip on the important issues. He will be a hard act to follow. Iain Smith took over from Peter Chambers as Secretary, and has done a splendid job for the Association. We are all in their debt.

BERA's first decade has been successful, in a climate of educational pessimism and retrenchment. In **David Hamilton's** hand, the second decade is off to a fine start.

Note

- (1) E. Stones (1985) 'The development of the British Educational Research Association'. In M. Shipman (ed) *Educational Research: Principles, Policies and Practices*. Brighton: Falmer Books. (Reprinting in *BERJ*, 1985)

The changing face of educational assessment

Educational assessment symposia have become a regular feature at BERA conferences during the last few years. This year was no exception, and with examination reforms and alternative approaches to assessment very much in the public eye at the moment the symposium seemed to take on a new air of relevance, controversy and lively debate. The 8 papers that were presented in the symposium included some reports on recent research on different approaches to moderating institutional assessment of TEC courses on a national basis; school-based assessment in public examination; and the many issues that arise in the planning of schemes of assessment for recently developed courses in health education in secondary schools. Several other papers took more of an overview of current research on topics such as 16+ examinations, profile reports, graded tests, and other developments in the field of criterion-referencing.

There was widespread agreement that the face of educational assessment in Britain is indeed changing at the present time. After many years of working with fairly traditional approaches to assessment through public examinations and nationally validated standardised tests, the range of alternatives has dramatically increased. The direction that many people in the educational world seem to be moving in appears to be towards more

flexible approaches to assessment, often involving profiles with much scope for teacher assessment and even self-assessment by pupils. There also appears to be a strong desire to move away from norm-referencing towards criterion-referencing, although some of the implications of such a move do not always fit in with other commonly held aspirations.

During the symposium there were repeated pleas for researchers in this area to take on the new types of investigation that are urgently needed to explore ramifications of many of these alternatives. It was argued that this would involve educational assessment research breaking away to a large extent from the shackles of its statistical and technical measurement orientation (although there would still be a place for some research of this kind). Research is currently needed that will explore wider issues such as the pedagogical implications of alternative approaches to assessment, and these might best be approached through ethnographic, comparative and historical research methods.

Several speakers asserted that many of the current developments in this area were too far ahead of the research, and it was hoped that, despite the difficulties involved in obtaining the necessary research funds for the type of investigations that are urgently needed, a concerted effort would be made.

This is not to suggest that there was any lack of enthusiasm for a move away from traditional approaches — the feeling was more of wanting to prepare the ground better for developments that might then have a more enduring influence.

Roger Murphy

Talking point: the future of the PhD in education

As I noted in my Presidential Address, the PhD in the arts and social sciences is being pushed in the direction of PhD as research-training and away from PhD as original enquiry (see, for instance, the Swinnerton-Dyer Report on Postgraduate Education, 1982, Cmnd 8537; and Lord Rothschild's Enquiry into the SSRC, 1982, Cmnd 8554). I believe these arguments merit close attention and may (will?) have important implications for the future of postgraduate studies in education. The following observations seem relevant.

1 The drive towards research training seems to stem from the fact that sound science PhDs seem to take much longer to complete. Swinnerton-Dyer, for instance, suggests (table 3.5) that among those who obtained a first degree in 1970, 73% of science graduates had completed their PhDs in 4 years as compared with 46% of social studies students. (Note: sample sizes were small for social studies, absolute figures are not

available for science, and the figures refer only to males.)

- 2 Despite such difficult measurement problems, Swinnerton-Dyer 'suggests' in addition that completion rates have declined, 'particularly' in 'Social Science' (para. 84).
- 3 Hence, so the argument runs, the solution for the social sciences is to squeeze them into the 3-year research training mode of the natural sciences.
- 4 But, it seems to me, this argument misses the point that, in the natural sciences, the PhD has become only a preliminary to the Post Doctoral Fellowship. That is, extrapolation from the natural to the social sciences might be reasonable if it was accomplished by a comparable expansion of Post-Doctoral Fellowships. (Recently, the ESRC has made some moves in this direction but, as yet, I have been unable to compare their initiative with other areas of the Academy.)

- 5 Given the foregoing argument, it seems defensible to claim that the current Arts/Sciences PhD is intellectually somewhere between the Natural Science PhD and the Post Doctoral Fellowship. Certainly, this explanation would go some way in explaining the different completion rates.
- 6 Where then, does educational studies fit in? My own impression is that, given many PhD candidates already have a good Master's Degree, the education PhD is pushed even further towards the difficulty level of the natural

science Post Doctoral Fellowship.

- 7 Given the above, the Swinnerton-Dyer/Rothschild derived proposal is not the only option. Should we be thinking of offering PhDs in education for a folio of papers written over a period of time? Or should we argue for a modular system whereby students may have their 'training' MAS or MEds 'referred' for later submission as PhDs? Or should we look towards the EdD model used in the United States?

David Hamilton

New publications

Research Papers In Education

Members will be interested in this new journal that should provide a unique outlet for reporting researches in education.

RPE will publish research articles that are more substantial than is usual for journal articles but shorter than books or monographs. Approximate word length would be 12,000-22,000 and might typically be based on higher degree work or interim or final reports from research projects.

A catholic view of educational research is taken and members who think they may have something to contribute should write in the first instance to Ms. Lynne Mcfarland, NFER-Nelson, 2 Oxford Road East, Windsor, SL4 1DF. Copy for the first issue by October 1985.

Information Development

This is a new journal for librarians, archivists and information specialists. A useful new resource for the essential support system for educational researchers. For further information write to Mansell Publishing Ltd., 6 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL.

Teaching and Teacher Education

This is a journal of research and studies to be launched by Pergamon Press in 1985. It is to be concerned with teaching at all ages and papers from a wide variety of fields will be considered for publication. Enquiries to the British Assistant Editor, Dr. Sara Delamont, University College, PO Box 78, Cardiff, CF1 1XL.

BETI Thesaurus

Librarians of Institutes and Schools of Education

This is a compilation of main index terms, cross references and name references in paper print and is an accompaniment to the British Education Theses Index (BETI) Cumulation 3. BETI cumulation 4 is due in 1983 and an up-dated thesaurus will be published at the same time. The current, interim thesaurus is

available on computer print out at a cost of £12.50 post free from Joan V. Marder, Sub-Librarian (Education), University Library, University of Southampton, Southampton, SO9 5NH.

History of Girls' Schools

Librarians of Institutes and Schools of Education

Histories of girls' schools and related biographical material. A union list of books in the stock of education libraries in British universities with an introduction and supplementary index. Compiled by Barbara A. Barr, Leicester University. Available from Roy Kirk, LISE Secretary, School of Education Library, University of Leicester, 21 University Road, Leicester LE1 7RF. Price £3.00 post free.

Finding Research Funds for Language and Language Teaching

Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research

Comprises sections on Research Grants, Applying for a Research Grant, Postgraduate Awards, Published Information Sources. Aim is to assist researchers in language, linguistics and language teaching to find out about available research funding. Price £1.50 plus 45p p&p from CILT Mail Order, Regent's College, Inner Circle, Regent's Park, London NW1 4NS. Tel. 01 486 8221.

The Australian and South Pacific Directory of Applied Research and Program Innovation

(Teacher Education, pre-service and in-service)

South Pacific Organisation for Teacher Training

This directory provides information about a wide variety of educational research projects in Australia and New Zealand. Brief details, duration and contact persons are listed. Copies may be obtained from Dr. Bill Young, South Australian College of Advanced Education, Kintour Avenue, Kent Town, SA 5065, Australia.