

## Abstracts

**I am conscious that educators throughout the world write many millions of words each year that are read by very few people and often solely for the purpose of obtaining a qualification. It is my view that the voices of professional educators making critical sense of all aspects of their work deserve a wider audience and to be heard by both fellow professionals and policy makers.**

**It is some years since I began trying, unsuccessfully, to persuade various organisations to provide an on-line facility where people could place abstracts or expanded abstracts and contact details for dissertations and theses that are not subject to contractual publishing arrangements elsewhere. Perhaps someone might like to pinch the idea. I am sure I cannot be the only one thinking like this.**

**Unfortunately, I do not have the capacity to receive and post abstracts. Others will have. Below is my thinking on what such a service might look like.**

I do not believe that we should hold a professional learning beauty contest. There should be no judgments or grading. I simply wish to encourage the exchange of knowledge. Contributors, when considering slightly expanding or contextualising their abstracts, might wish to consider adding some reflection on what they felt might have been the professional significance and context of their work. That will help others to decide if they wish to make contact and read more of the full dissertation or thesis.

From time to time it might be useful to include some editorial drawing attention to developing themes, issues, concerns and matters of interest. Just to get things going and as an example I am taking the risk of starting with an abstract of my own from 1987 when the past was a foreign country where they did things differently. The second abstract provided by Richard Holmes of the University of Dundee is more relevant to the growing concerns of current educators.

I have included the statement by the International Professional Development Association ([www.ipda.org](http://www.ipda.org)) of its **VALUES** and **Purposes** in an ANNEX and propose their use as a guide to the kind of content that might be placed in such an on-line facility.

**Cliff Jones**

***Title***

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE PLACE OF POLITICAL  
EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM FOR CHILDREN  
FOURTEEN TO SIXTEEN YEARS OLD**

**ABSTRACT**

This dissertation begins with a background to political education in Britain and a review of some of the definitions of political education currently in use. This is followed by a description of St. Brigid's and the area in which it operates in terms of political systems and the model of political education most appropriate for the school. Both school and the area are described together with the environment which they share. There is a curriculum history of the school which makes use of interview material with certain members of staff on their perceptions; and finally a model is presented which provides both a means of making sense of what is happening in the school and a conceptual framework for further study.

***Background***

The dissertation was of 20,000 words for a masters degree from the University of Liverpool and was examined in 1987. It comes from a time when schools and teachers in Britain had power to experiment and choose what and how to teach and what and how to assess. The external examiner for the programme was Lawrence Stenhouse<sup>i</sup>.

As a newly reorganised comprehensive school in an area of extremely high unemployment with a number of teachers who had not worked together before or in such an environment there were tensions, stresses and uncertainties to resolve. It helped that the pupils were very positive and that, while large factories were being closed, the local people were planning what at the time was the largest housing co-operative in western Europe together with community businesses. The young people of the school were sometimes involved in community planning helping, for example, to make decisions about the number of bedrooms houses would need based upon demographic trends. Such activities were linked to official, though customized, programmes of accreditation<sup>ii</sup>.

A key innovation for the school was what might be called the democratisation of its management so that all staff could be involved in decision-making. Its early traditionally hierarchical management had exacerbated the tensions. Recognition of this enabled the change to be made.

To devise the new approach to school management I drew upon a centripetal

political systems model so that although the arrow of decision-making pointed to the centre it emerged from discussion and debate outside the centre. I also drew upon an article by the then Chief Designer of Triumph Motorcycles, Doug Hele, who described how technical decisions were taken in the company. From memory he called his article, 'No Gaffer at the Meeting'. He meant that no one attending a meeting who had an idea should have to defer to anyone else on the basis of any formal seniority.

My attempt to involve children in the management of the school was less successful. I persuaded the staff to make time for all pupils to carry out a weekly evaluation of their learning. The idea was that every teacher would take this into account before writing any formal comment on the performance of young people. I failed to do enough to embed this idea in the culture of professional practice and too many members of staff ignored the views of the children (See **Beyond the Qualification**).

The dissertation was written at a time when the concepts of political education and political literacy had largely replaced that of citizenship. The introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988 reversed that trend and today we do not hear of either political education or political literacy.

The dissertation was recommended for publication but that never happened. What did happen shortly after were the closure of the school and the dispersal of its staff so that its numbers could be used to top up the rolls of more conventional schools as their numbers fell. In interview one experienced member of staff who was new to the school said it was the best school she had ever worked in.

### **About the author**

At the time of writing I was a local authority advisor working on alternative curriculum and assessment strategies. Our Unit had a project looking at low attaining 14-16 year old children. St. Brigids was a project school. Previously I had been its head of humanities and before that I had been heavily involved in campaigning to influence the shape, structure and values of the proposed system of comprehensivisation. Forming St. Brigids was a tiny victory for that campaign but the phrase people used about it was 'designed to die'. I was determined that it would not die so it was the only school I applied for. Its motto was PAX. Now it rests in it.

## Assessing Enterprise Education

Richard Holme and Heidi Ford, University of Dundee

Contact: [r.j.holme@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:r.j.holme@dundee.ac.uk)

This study considers how enterprise education is currently being assessed in primary schools and evaluates the teachers' and pupils' perceptions (in two Scottish primary schools) of six existing enterprise education assessment tools (which have been developed and utilised elsewhere in the UK).

### Abstract

Although there has been a focus, from a policy perspective, on enterprise education in the UK in recent years there is limited published research on teaching enterprise, especially at a primary school level. Furthermore, evidence of how enterprise education is effectively assessed is limited. On a local level some authorities (for example Rotherham Council in England and Fife Council in Scotland) have produced bespoke resources and provided good support for enterprise education. However, such support and initiatives appear to be sporadic, relying on level of priority given by individual schools and teachers.

This study considers how enterprise education is assessed in schools around the UK and the teachers' and pupils' perceptions of the value of six methods which have already been utilised elsewhere in the UK.

The results of this small scale study show that of the six assessment tools presented to the teachers and pupils three of these (i.e. scrapbook, benchmarking enterprise capability wheel and the enterprise award scheme) were valued most highly. As a result of this research the implications for teachers' professional practice are considered.

### Key words

Enterprise education; assessing enterprise; enterprise assessment; primary education

### About the authors

Richard Holme is an early career lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Dundee. Prior to this Richard was a primary school teacher with management responsibility for enterprise education.

Heidi Ford was a final year BEd student working toward a degree in Primary education at the University of Dundee. The focus of Heidi's final year dissertation thesis was the assessment of enterprise education in primary school.

## Annex

Below are the VALUES and PURPOSES of ipda. They are included as reference points for the above.

### VALUES

- Commitment to consultation and open decision-making
- Respect for and understanding of different cultures
- Willingness to support, encourage and exchange the learning of professional educators
- Commitment to the importance of research and dissemination
- Respect for dialogue and critical debate.

### PURPOSES are to:

- stimulate critical insight and provide support for policy-makers, providers and professional educators;
- share among members ideas, practice, concepts and theories relating to professional learning in education;
- provide opportunity to share problems, interests and concerns through critical friendship.

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<sup>i</sup> In 1975 Lawrence Stenhouse produced *An Introduction To Curriculum Research And Development*. It was an Open University set book. The Times Educational Supplement called it 'a profoundly important book' and predicted that it would be read widely.

That was a time when thinking about what and how to teach and what and how to assess were regarded as proper activities for professional educators and when universities appointed professors of curriculum development.

Stenhouse had a vision of teachers as researchers supported by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).

<sup>ii</sup> Strangely, perhaps, the urge of government to simplify, sanitise and standardise what had to be learned and how it had to be examined stimulated a lot of professional activity. I adopted as a personal slogan: 'We must do what we have to do while protecting and promoting what we want to do'.

In terms of St. Brigid's I shall refer to one initiative. For a short while it was possible to design a GCSE according to Mode 3 rules. Those rules allowed you to design your own syllabus, examination paper and mark scheme. You had, of course, to obtain approval and though it was possible to obtain temporary approval the Olympic Standard approval was acceptance by the body overseeing what was then Section 5 of the 1988 Education Act. With the invaluable help of Janet Holloway and support of Kathleen Tattersall of what became AQA (the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) I designed a Mode 3 GCSE

that enabled young people to engage in community work, especially the planning for the housing co-operative, and, by reporting and reflecting on it, gain credit in a public examination.

I remain very proud of that initiative but the local education authority for which I worked seemed to regard it as somewhat strange: not what schools should be doing. A little later the government put an end to the possibilities of Mode 3. Professional energies were more and more directed to working within the orthodoxies given to us by government (central government).