

CELEBRATING BEING OUT OF DATE.

We students may have been a little in awe of the external examiner for our Masters in Education. It was Lawrence Stenhouse. Few more famous in those days. All that Humanities stuff.

Back then we had never heard of Distinctions and would not have been able to describe what one looked like. So I suppose being the only student whose dissertation was recommended for publication counted as an achievement. It never was published and as, back then, I did not work for the university I had no idea that publications provided a professional benefit. And both parents had just died so I had no need to please them.

Years later I had the dissertation scanned because I had no original copy, but unfortunately that means making typo corrections. Still not done that job. Shall try to persuade a friend to help.

The subject?

Political Education.

For eleven years I had taught in an area of very high unemployment. The people of that area decided to fight back. They began the building of what became the largest housing co-operative in Western Europe. My contribution was to design, with help from a friend in an exam board, the first GCSE in Community Studies.

This meant that kids I used to teach would sit round tables with architects and others making decisions about, for example, demographic trends in order to decide how many bedrooms houses would need. And more like that. Then they would critically reflect, as we used to say, and write it up to be assessed. After a while government decided that should not be part of education and stopped it.

The school, the teachers, all those young people and the community featured a lot in that dissertation. Another reason for giving it a quick polish. Its somewhere in My Documents.

Today I hear people say that education has moved on from those days. Work like mine is out of date. Yes it is, very. Not the sort of stuff Ofsted and our current Secretary of State For Education wish to know about.

So, again, another reason.

When I became Director of Continuing Professional Development, working with wonderful colleagues (am I allowed to mention you KJ?) I saw some great work by students who, like me, would now be told that they are out of date.

Michael Gove used the word Reform such a lot. So did Blair. I believe that what they were doing was Deforming education. Blair's advisor on education and then on policy in general, Michael Barber, even uses the word Instruction when he ought to be

using Education, a very different activity. Though not if your main intention is to measure young people.

I am told that civil servants who had been subjected to a talk by Barber described it as 'Death by a thousand bullet points and flow charts'. Hit that target, or else.

Political education? Today we are being instructed what to think.

Cliff Jones 28th. April 2022

www.criticalprofessionallearning.co.uk