What Kind of Education do Young People need for the World that we live in today?

Secondary Education, Social Change and Government Policy

November 2004

Iain Springate
Volcom

Published by: Volcom, St. James Enterprise Centre, 24-30 St. James Street, Hull, HU3 2DH
ISBN 0 9543135 3 4

Neighbourhood
Renewal Unit

volcom
community learning works

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

cityventure

Published by

Volcom*

St. James Enterprise Centre, 24-30 St. James Street, Hull, HU3 2DH
Company Registration Number 3854581

First Published 2004

All rights reserved. No part of this report may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from Volcom.

Printed in Kingston upon Hull.

***Voluntary and Community Sector Learning Consortium Limited**

Contents

1: Introduction 4

2: Background 6

3: A History of Compulsory Education 9

4: New Labour Education Policy 15

5: Social Change and the Impact on Individuals 25

6: What Kind of Education do Young People need in this Context? 29

7: Bibliography 34

1: Introduction

> "Critiques of the narrowing of education to economic ends want to reclaim education as a humanizing, liberalizing, democratizing force…Education must also help people to make sense of the impact of global changes…and move beyond a tawdry subservience to market forces." (Tomlinson, 2001; 171)

Education at all levels, and especially at school level, is of critical importance in today's society.

The Government sees increasing educational attainment as the route to economic success and social justice. In a globalised economy, they suggest that a highly skilled workforce is necessary for the nation to keep the national economy healthy. They also see offering equal opportunity for all to achieve individual educational success as social justice. Consequently there is a policy focus on increasing the attainment of individuals, schools and LEA areas and on ensuring that education provides the skills necessary for employment.

Employers see the quality of education at all levels as important in ensuring that they have a workforce that can carry out the tasks necessary for individual businesses to grow, and consequently for the economy to be healthy.

Parents are faced with choices relating to where to send their children to school, and are faced with statistical attainment data to help them do this. Although school has always been important to parents, it is arguably the case that in the last 15 years, as the ability to choose has been increased and encouraged by government, it has become a more critical issue. Whereas in the past the choice was relatively simple, today, in theory at least, it is much more complex. In a system where there is evidence to suggest that a parent's ability to choose the right school, and succeed at getting their children into it is the key to a successful education, the responsibility on parents is enormous.

Young People also have views on their schooling, even if these are rarely heard or taken seriously. They often have ideas about how school could work better for them, and about the kinds of things that they feel they need to learn for the future.

As a matter of such importance to so many, education is hotly debated in the media, and any educational issues tend to be high-profile. However, the debate is narrow, characterised by discussion about raising standards, the needs of business and whether young people are 'employable'.

This discussion document takes as its starting point the idea that, important though this debate is, it may be missing the point. If education is about more than just exam results, employability and creating a healthy economy, then perhaps the debate needs to be broadened.

This paper[1] aims to do just that, looking back at the history of education in the UK to contextualise our current system, and asking the question 'what type of education do young people need in today's society?'

---

[1] The basis of this paper was written as part of a PhD in education and social justice, based in the School of Comparative and Applied Social Sciences at the University of Hull.

2: Background

This chapter will briefly outline the context for the paper, looking at the social context that young people live in, the policy direction the Government has taken, and then explain why looking at schools is of critical importance.

Social Context

The social context that we live in today could be described as being characterised by trends towards Individualisation and Risk.

Individualisation refers to a move towards an individualised society, with the focus shifting from communal ties that helped structure people's decisions to a focus on the individual, and their responsibility and right to create their own unique route through life (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Bauman, 2000). However, this does not mean that unfettered choices can be made as "…new demands, controls and constraints are being imposed on individuals" through the welfare state, labour market and other institutions (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; 2). In essence then, individualization is a juxtaposition of increased freedom and choice alongside increasing constraints on action, but with the responsibility for the outcomes of action firmly resting on the individual.

This trend towards individualization sits alongside another trend, which is an increase in risk for the individual as certainties are lost (e.g. Beck, 1992). Jobs are less secure, relationships are impermanent, and the pace of change around people is very fast (Thrift, 1995). This does not imply some 'perfect' state in the past, where jobs were all for life, relationships never ended and life was always predictable. It is more a recognition that life, and the situations of individuals, have become generally more changeable, and that attachments of different kinds have become less permanent (Bauman, 2000). It has been called the 'until further notice' society (Bauman, quoted in Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). As Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (*Ibid*) note, certainties relating to religion, nature and the social system have been lost, and individuals are left without certainty yet with the right, responsibility and expectation that they can and will determine the paths of their own lives.

Policy Context

The policy landscape under New Labour has been characterised by the ideas of Giddens, termed the 'Third Way' (1998; 2000). This approach seeks to move beyond traditional political definitions of Left and Right, and to combine market forces with the workings of the state to gain the best of both worlds. The Third Way (*Ibid*) also emphasises the importance of globalisation and how that is changing national and global economies. In addition, it talks of the importance of civic renewal, alongside a moral agenda of 'no rights without responsibilities' for all citizens. Giddens' ideas aim to create a 'Social Investment State' (2000; 52) which creates a successful economy through investment in human capital, backed up by a cohesive and responsible society; as he writes, "…a strong economy presumes a strong society…" (*Ibid*; 73).

The general policy direction from New Labour has followed much of this thinking (Hyland, 2002). Within this, two themes which have stood out as important for New Labour since 1997 have been social justice and education. Blair has recently stated that "…the central belief of the Labour Party is social justice…" (Wintour and White, 2003), and education was described as the number one priority in the Labour Party manifesto for the 1997 election (Jones, 2002). These two themes are also closely related in New Labour thinking. As Blair famously stated before the 1997 election,

> "To those who say where is Labour's passion for social justice, I say education is social justice." (Quoted in Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; 17)

The DfES have recently emphasised this, saying that education policies are based "…on the interdependence of social justice and economic success." (DfES, 2003b; 11). Blair (1998; 148) has also written that "…social injustice denies us economic prosperity…an education revolution would boost economic prosperity and social justice."

Therefore, the themes of social justice and education are important in New Labour policy, and are clearly linked to each other, as well as to the economic aims of the government.

Secondary Schools and Young People

Although these issues are of importance to all those in the education system, this paper focuses on secondary schools, and the experiences of young people at this stage. This is because these young people are at a critical point in their lives where education can make a huge impact on their future, whether positive or negative. For example, the Social Exclusion Unit (1999a) wrote that not being employed or in some form of education or training at age 16 was the most powerful predictor of later unemployment. Not being regularly in education is also linked to homelessness and involvement in crime later in life (SEU, 1998). At this formative stage, it is crucial that educational opportunities engage young people so that they can gain the skills they will need to achieve what they want in life.

The Government also place high importance on this group, recognising the critical stage that this group are at, and are working on reform of the 14-19 curriculum to try and keep more 16 year olds engaged in education (DfES, 2003a).

There are also wider reasons for studying this age group. As Wyn and White (1997; 6) argue,

> "It is important to study youth, because the points where young people engage with the institutions that either promote social justice or entrench social division are significant points of reference for every society. Hence the study of youth is important as an indicator of the real 'costs' and 'benefits' of the political and economic systems of each society."

In this case, the tensions shown up between the provision of education and the needs of young people can also give an indication of the issues facing all those individuals involved in education.

The chapters that follow aim to examine the history of compulsory education in Britain, looking in particular at the aims that lay behind education policy, and seeing what kind of society was being created through it. This provides a context and a contrast to the education policies being enacted by New Labour today, leading to a discussion of what today's compulsory education aims to achieve, and what, in the light of past policies and our social conditions today, compulsory education should be aiming to achieve.

3: A History of Compulsory Education

Prior to 1833, when the state first intervened by providing some funding for education, it was left to the family or the church to educate children, and many children received little or no education (Burden *et al*, 2000). The education funded by the state after 1833 was differentiated by social class, with working class children being restricted to elementary education, and the middle and higher classes receiving a broader education including secondary and higher provision (McCulloch, 1994). As Burden *et al* (2000) note, this was about social control, ensuring that working class children were taught to be obedient, and had the rudimentary numeracy and literacy skills needed for the roles they were expected to perform in society. In the 1900s, limited secondary education was provided for the working class, to try and increase economic efficiency by increasing the skills of the working classes (*Ibid*).

However, the Second World War led to major changes in the nature of education in Britain (McCulloch, 1994). As McCulloch (*Ibid*) writes, there was a whole cycle of reform following the war, which owed much of its energy to the high expectations that people had for a post-war society. During this period there were new institutions set up for the good of the mass of the population, and staffed by people who had a notion of the public good, including the welfare state, and a new education system (Jones, 2003). Burden *et al* (2000; 111-112) explain that "…the radicalism fostered by the war led to more support for the view of education as a right that should be available to all, rather than a privilege obtained by wealth or ability." Also, education for democracy was seen as a key defence against fascism following the War, and therefore needed to have broader aims than just preparation for work; it was also a preparation for citizenship in a democratic society (McCulloch, 1994).

The 1944 Education Act was the outcome of these reforms, marking a sea change in education policy by establishing secondary education for all up to the age of 15 (Jones, 2003). Gone was the old system of education only available to a privileged minority, in its place education as a right for all. The Act split education into primary, secondary and further, did not have control over curricula and examinations, stated that education should be 'child-centred' and adjusted to children's 'ages, abilities and aptitudes', and made provision for the regulation of teacher training, expenditure and standards (Burden *et al*, 2000).

The 1944 Act was, as McCulloch (1994) states, underlain by a 'social vision' that had broad objectives linked to society and the development of the individuals within it. The reforms,

> "…were attended by a discourse of hope, in which education came to stand for the development of a different kind of human being, embedded in a national community organised around values of democracy and citizenship." (Jones, 2003; 23-24)

These aims can be seen by looking at what the 1944 Act aimed to do for society, and then for the individual children.

Firstly, as Cooper (2002) writes, the aim was to create a meritocratic system, ensuring that the education of a child came as a result of their individual aptitudes and merits, rather than the social circumstances of their parents. This was a way to break down class divides in society, create equality of opportunity for children, and foster a sense of solidarity and cohesion across the whole of society (McCulloch, 1994). Butler, the main architect of the 1944 Act, wrote that it made Britain into one nation, when previously it had been two (Jones, 2003).

In terms of the education specified for children, there were no strict guidelines, with many decisions being left to local autonomy (Jones, 2003). Jones (*Ibid*) picks out some of the main points of the education that was suggested through the Act and following circulars. Firstly, the education proposed was holistic, seeing intellectual development as just one part of the development of the child, and wanting the education to attend to the development of the whole child. Secondly, the education aimed to rebuild some sense of community in the lives of children, forming the school as a place away from the pressures and “disintegrative processes” of industrial society (*Ibid*; 27). Thirdly, education was seen as being able to provide a “critical and compensatory” role in relation to economic development (*Ibid*; 28), so that children could recognise problems and issues in the labour market as well as engaging with it. All of this, as Jones (*Ibid*) writes, was underscored by a view of industrial society which acknowledged the benefits it brought, but lamented the loss of community and simplicity that it had led to.

In essence, then, the 1944 Act aimed to create community and reduce inequality by breaking down class divides, and to develop every child holistically to fulfil their potential as individuals. As such, then, there was a real opportunity for the Act to signal a radical break with the past, and engender a new, more cohesive society that was not divided along class lines, and which gave children an equality of opportunity to prosper.

However, the 1944 Act did not manage to achieve all these aims. Benn and Chitty (1997) argue that although all the provisions to achieve these aims were in the Act, governments failed to grasp the opportunities that it offered. McCulloch (1994) argues that the Act, while it gave room for these aims to be realised, did not have the means to ensure that the goals were achieved. There were two main issues related to the Act. Firstly, it had not laid out exactly how schooling should be organised, and it was decided, following the Norwood Report (Committee of Secondary School Examinations Council, 1943), to introduce the tripartite system of grammar, secondary modern and technical schools with the 11+ selection process. Benn and Chitty (1997; 6) describe the thinking behind this system as “…cloaked in spurious educational thinking about children’s minds, backed by supposedly scientific methods of measuring intelligence…”

Essentially the thinking assumed that children had fixed levels of intelligence which could be determined by testing and that therefore they could be classified into three types of pupil (Jones, 2003). The tripartite system provided appropriate education for these three types of pupil, which were the 'grammar school pupil' who liked learning and could grasp and follow arguments; the 'technical school type' whose interests and abilities were practical; and the 'secondary modern type' who was interested in concrete things, not ideas, and was destined for unskilled manual work (Carr & Hartnett, 1996). Educational psychologists came to doubt the validity of these ideas (Jones, 2003), and the system did not break down class divides (Cooper, 2002). Instead, the divides were perpetuated by this system, with the middle classes more able to do well in selection, and this, in effect, undermined the whole project, as there was no equality of opportunity under the system that had been developed (McCulloch, 1994).

The second issue was that the Act did not allow the state any involvement in the curriculum. This meant, as McCulloch (1994) writes, that they were not able to realise the imagined civic ideals through the curriculum, as they were not able to get involved with it. This again undermined the project, as education for democracy was not necessarily replicated in all schools. By the 1960s, nobody was happy with the outcomes from the 1944 Act. Those on the Left felt that the system was still creating inequality and class divides, and those on the Right were still unhappy with the challenge that the possibility of comprehensive education posed to grammar schools.

Within the system, then, those from the working classes were still disadvantaged by the education system. However, in the '50s and 60s, a period of rapid immigration to Britain from former colonies, those from Black and other ethnic minority groups were also disadvantaged (Jones, 2003). As Jones (*Ibid*) writes, these children were seen as a problem, and the civic tone of the 1944 Act was interpreted with a xenophobic edge, with the immigrants seen as potentially destructive to the 'British way of life'. They were therefore forced towards assimilation, and sent to different schools in small numbers to ensure that there was not a large number of immigrants in any one school (*Ibid*). So, those from black and ethnic minority groups were systematically and institutionally discriminated against. As Troyna and Carrington (1990; 2) sum up,

> "The message which these [policies] convey to ethnic minority pupils is clear: forget the culture of your parents, discard any affiliation to your ethnic background and blend in."

Whilst these problems worked against the spirit of the Act, there were some educational developments following it that were more in keeping with the 'social vision' that had originally been envisaged. The 1960s were a time when there was a focus on egalitarian reform and social justice within education (McCulloch, 1994). By the early 1960s, many LEAs were reorganising their secondary education along comprehensive lines, with the schools catering for all aptitudes and abilities together (*Ibid*). During the same period, in Primary education there was a growth of 'progressive' attitudes to education, exemplified by Plowden (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) with the emphasis not so much on filling a child with knowledge, but with developing them holistically to be “balanced, critical, [and] mature” adults (Jones, 2003; 81). The aim was to achieve this through a curriculum that related to children’s interests, an experiential and activity based approach to learning, and an environment where they could be themselves and be free to develop at their own pace (*Ibid*). The Plowden report also sought to connect education to social conditions and poverty, and led to attempts to positively discriminate to improve schooling in poor inner city areas through Educational Priority Areas (Burden *et al*, 2000).

During this period, attitudes towards ‘race’ and education began to change (Jones, 2003). The policy focus shifted from assimilation to integration, and there began to be more references in policy documents to diversity, tolerance and equal opportunities for ethnic minority young people, as well as specialist teachers and advisors funded to help recreate schools as more multicultural institutions (*Ibid*). However, alongside these positive changes, there were still also policies aiming to assimilate ethnic minority young people in many LEAs (*Ibid*).

In the 1970s, in the face of economic recession and social unrest, the direction of education was changed (McCulloch, 1994). As Brown *et al* (1997) write, the 1970s saw the end of continued economic growth, and the Government looked to deliver education more cheaply, and ensure that it was focused on delivering the skills needed for economic recovery and then growth. As the youth labour market collapsed, there was also a significant section of young people who were now leaving school at 16 with no jobs to go to (Jones, 2003). The punk movement generally, and specific incidents, such as the Notting Hill Carnival riots in 1976, contributed towards a ‘moral panic’ regarding young people, and the way that social order seemed to be fragmenting (*Ibid*).

Schools were assigned a central role in all these problems. Firstly, they were seen failing to turn out individuals with the skills needed for the economy. Callaghan, in his Ruskin speech of 1976 which marked the turning point in these changes, said that “…new recruits from schools sometimes do not have the basic tools to do the job that is required…” (quoted in Cooper, 2002). Alongside this, the critics of progressive forms of education used the media to set an agenda where the progressive types of schooling were the key factor in the perceived failings of schools, helped by some high profile scandals over schools with progressive approaches, most notably at William Tyndale Junior School (Jones, 2003). The picture given was that schools were failing,

> “…not because they were dealing with intractable problems of social inequality, but because the ideologies of progressive educators and the political commitments of a section of the teaching force were driving them away from common sense and traditional understandings of schooling’s purposes and procedures.” (Jones, 2003; 96)

As a result then, the Labour government went against their previous policies, focusing on a narrow education for skills that were relevant for employment, rather than the wider aims that had been the goals previously (McCulloch, 1994). These ideas “paved the way for the advancement of a new direction in British education policy…” (Cooper, 2002; 12).

The Conservatives were elected in 1979, and followed this new direction, having, until 1997, an uninterrupted spell in which to pursue their Neo-Liberal view of education. Their 1988 Education Act was a fundamental change to education policy, setting in motion most of the elements of the education system today (Burden *et al,* 2000). Jones (2003) writes that there were three main thrusts to the educational ideas; modernisation, marketisation and tradition.

In terms of modernisation, the focus was to ensure that education provided the skills that young people needed to be employed, and therefore contribute towards a successful economy (Jones, 2003). Bringing in a universal national curriculum ensured that all young people were being taught what the Government thought was necessary for this, and the creation of OfSTED in 1992, alongside the testing regimes that were developed over time, ensured that it was all happening the way that the Government wanted (*Ibid*). This also took away power from teachers, by reducing teaching to a technical profession, a means of passing on information, rather than seeing them as having a broader role in their work with young people (Tomlinson, 2001).

Marketisation was a central theme in all Conservative policies, and education was no exception (Jones, 2003). The aim was to use a market mechanism to ensure quality. By increasing standard testing of pupils, making schools publish results and allowing parents choice over where their children were schooled, it was expected that good schools would flourish, and bad schools close (Tomlinson, 2001). The main policy instrument to achieve this was Local Management of Schools (LMS). This transferred budgets, and therefore power, from LEAs to school governors. Critically, it also lifted LEA impositions on school intakes which had been designed to ensure that intakes were equalised, and linked a schools budget to the number of pupils on the roll. By doing this, LMS “created a context in which schools had to act in ways that were attentive to issues of supply and demand.” (Jones, 2003; 133).

Thirdly, policies espoused a notion of national identity which “stressed nation-centred themes and which embodied opposition to local diversity, and in particular to any strong response to ethnic or class-based subcultures.” (Jones, 2003; 119). The 1980s had been a time when much educational research had shown that the education system was failing ethnic minority pupils, and many LEAs had multicultural education policies that aimed to ameliorate these inequalities (Tomlinson, 2001). However, with the removal of power from the LEAs, these initiatives were marginalised, and as Troyna and Carrington (1990) write, the 1988 Act marked a return to a ‘colour-blind’ policy on ‘race’, as it made no mention of these issues, despite the ongoing public debates.

So, the 1988 Education Act marked a change in education policy. Kenneth Baker, the education secretary of the time, summed up the changes by suggesting that the age of egalitarianism was over, and that its pursuit had left Britain lagging behind its competitors economically (Tomlinson, 2001).

4: New Labour Education Policy

When Labour took power in 1997, education was a top priority, as had been promised in the build-up to the election, and there was much activity regarding education policy. As Wolf (2002; x) writes,

> "During the first three years of the Blair Government, the Department for Education and Employment in London launched the equivalent of one new educational initiative or set of instructions for every single day of the year."

Essentially, the new government continued in the Neo-liberal direction set over the previous 25 years, in common with many other countries (Priestly, 2002). For New Labour's education policy, this meant a focus on human capital (Hyland, 2002). As Woodhall (1997; 219) explains,

> "The concept of human capital refers to the fact that human beings invest in themselves, by means of education, training, or other activities, which raises their future income by increasing their lifetime earnings."

New Labour policies, then, aim to give individuals opportunities to invest in themselves, and the Government expects individuals to make use of these, thereby increasing their skills, helping themselves to productive employment, and the economy to better performance. This seems like a simple recipe for success for individuals and society, but the whole idea is underpinned by three key assumptions, all of which are suspect.

The 'New' Knowledge Economy

The first assumption is that the national economy is changing due to globalisation, moving towards a post-industrial, high-skill economy, characterised by the production of knowledge, and leaving few jobs for those without high skills (e.g. See Lloyd & Payne, 2003; Wolf, 2002). However, many criticise this idea, suggesting that people have been "…seduced by the constant drip-feed of rhetoric surrounding the new knowledge economy…" (Lloyd & Payne, 2003; 87). Some argue that although there may be new high-skill jobs in the economy, there will be a need for lower-skill jobs, as these are crucial to servicing the economy (Moynagh & Worsley, 2003). Further to this, others argue that there will never be enough high-skill jobs for all the individuals that the Government is trying to upskill (Lloyd & Payne, 2003). These two criticisms together destroy the pure economic case for the investment in human capital, as some won't need that level of skill investment to work in their chosen jobs, and others won't be able to realise their potential in the labour market due to lack of opportunity (*Ibid*).

There are other criticisms of the new knowledge economy. Part of the thesis is that it is bringing with it fundamental changes in the organisation of work, meaning that employees at every level need more skills such as communication, teamworking, and initiative (Lloyd & Payne, 2003). However, as Tomlinson (2001) writes, although there have been changes in work organisation, with increases in flexible working and outsourcing, much remains the same, and there is little evidence of the revolution in working practices that some have described. In fact, as Lloyd and Payne (2003; 89) argue, many new forms of work have led to job intensification, meaning a greater focus on specific repeated tasks and that therefore "…there is little requirement for critical thinkers or lifelong learners." So again, the notion that new work practices mean that all workers need greater skill levels than the past is questionable.

Lastly, as Lumby and Wilson (2003) note, most employers in the UK do not see a highly skilled workforce as a competitive advantage. This also raises the issue that the Government are misled to merely effect change on the supply side of the education system, and that they need to raise the demand for skilled workers, rather than hoping that a proliferation of skilled workers will achieve this, and therefore help the economy (Moynagh and Worsley, 2003).

The contribution of education to the economy

The second assumption is that there is a direct link between the education of individuals and the growth of the national economy, in that the more skills individuals have, the more they earn and produce, and therefore the more the economy grows (e.g. see Wolf, 2002). However, as Lloyd and Payne (2003; 91) write, as you look at the evidence, what you are left with is "…a hunch or assumption that lacks solid empirical evidence." Wolf (2002; 54) goes further suggesting that "…there is no evidence that education spills over to raise productivity in a general, economy-wide way…", indeed the result of such thinking, she explains "…unfortunately has been some seriously bad policy…".

As Wolf (2002) explains, the idea that more education leads to higher wages and economic growth is flawed. Firstly, although those who have more education tend to earn more, this is not necessarily down to their education level and qualifications. The situation is far more complicated as there may be other factors involved like opportunities available to them, their personality and character, or aptitudes that they have. Secondly, education is a positional good, and therefore even if the proposed simplistic link was true, it would not work out that all earned higher wages. It is more likely that people would end up being over-qualified for tasks available to them, as the higher skilled jobs would go to the *highest* skilled, who would then earn the most. Those with lower skills relative to others would not necessarily earn more, even if in actuality they had raised their individual skill level. So, the link that the Government has based its policies on is problematic.

However, even if the link was proven, there is another related problem. In order for the thesis above to work, the education provided would have to be directly in line with the future needs of businesses. As Lumby and Wilson (2003) state, there tends to be no overall clarity from businesses regarding the skills they need and Rikowski (2001) further argues that it is not possible to build a successful system of education around what businesses want. Wolf (2002) suggests that even if the clarity was there, business interests are self-serving, not having the needs of the country or individual at heart, and therefore businesses are not the best group to determine how the system should be run, and what should be taught. Overall, then, if it is not clear what business needs, or whether it is desirable to follow its ideas, then basing an education system on that premise is problematic.

The Agency of Individuals

The last assumption is that all individuals in the UK are able to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them by the Government. This assumption of equal agency is problematic, because as Greener (2002) argues, this is not necessarily the case. For some, structural barriers that are material or cultural may hold them back from taking or making the best of opportunities, despite their best efforts.

For example, Apple (2001) has noted how middle-class parents are far more able to make use of the marketised education system to get their children into the better schools, and then to ensure that they stay there due to their economic, social and/or cultural capital. Lower class parents are less able to do this, and therefore less able to take advantage of the 'equal opportunity' offered them. Also, black and minority ethnic groups tend to be disadvantaged at school due to racism (Gillborn & Mizra, 2000). The government's 'colour-blind' policies (Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, 2000) do not take account of these additional disadvantages, therefore assuming the same potential agency as individuals not affected by racism.

This is a critical issue for the Government, as all their policies, their claims to social justice, their mantra of 'no rights without responsibilities', are predicated on the notion that all are equally able to take advantage of the opportunities offered. If this is not the case then the policies will only bring further disadvantage to the already disadvantaged. This may explain why, as Tomlinson (2001) writes, there is a general improvement in the educational performance of a majority of children, alongside an increasingly disadvantaged minority.

The Social Agenda

With all Third Way influenced policies, like those of New Labour, there is, as Hyland (2002) writes, a social objective which serves the main economic one. In the case of education policy, Hyland (*Ibid*; 248) writes that its "...social purposes…are invariably attached to competitiveness arguments in a way which emphasises their interdependence." Giddens (2000) makes clear that the social purposes for education are linked to the fact that for a strong and thriving economy, a socially cohesive and stable society is needed to provide the context for that economic success. Lister (2003) writes that this view sees individuals as 'citizen-workers', and young people as 'citizen-workers-in-becoming'.

In essence, Lister (2003) argues that in the UK, the emphasis is on each individual as a worker, being defined by what they contribute to the economy. The young person at school is in the process of becoming a person who can contribute to the economy, and therefore the thrust of education for them is to prepare them for this role. The Commission on Social Justice (1994; 311) suggested that "...the best indicator of the capacity of our economy tomorrow is the quality of our children today", and the Chancellor has continued to emphasise the importance of investing in children as they are all our futures. Lister (*Ibid*; 433) writes that, "The child as cipher for future economic prosperity and forward looking modernization overshadows the child as child-citizen." So, overall, then, whilst young people and children are high on New Labour's agenda, the focus is on preparation for employment, not on any broader or more holistic goals.

The conception of citizenship that is taught in schools under the national curriculum also emphasises the point. The curriculum was drawn up from the recommendations of the Crick Report (Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998), which steered a path between a 'passive citizenship' where all that was taught was facts about how the political system operates; and an 'active citizenship' looking at understanding and appraising different political ideas (Lawton, 2000). However, what the Crick Report ended up with was a conception of citizenship which served merely to operate within the existing status quo. Gamarnikow and Green (2000; 107) explain,

> "What has disappeared from the social democratic agenda when we examine Crick's formulation of citizenship is any notion of citizenship as a struggle for rights in relation to both the state and other structures of power; citizenship as changing relations of power; and citizenship as fundamentally compromised by systemic, structured inequalities… instead we have the 'educated citizen' who is decent and responsible; involved and networked in the community; has concepts, values and dispositions appropriate to, and knowledge and understanding of, existing political institutions; and possesses skills and aptitudes to enable effective engagement with the public sphere."

In effect, then, this leaves no space for a dissident or challenging citizen, no recourse to challenge the system where it appears unjust or wrong. What it does leave is a "docile body" (Cooper, 2002) that will accept the status quo and perform their responsibilities as a citizen by being economically and politically involved in society. The social objectives of education, in seeking to create this 'citizen-worker' are subordinate to the economic aims of the Government.

The Outcomes of Government Policy Post-1997

Government education policy has been designed to achieve these objectives laid out above. Although there are many different policies relating to specific parts of the education system, there are several major themes that can be picked out across the board. These relate to the marketisation of the education system, the amount of central control over what is taught and how, the 'evaluative state' (Neave, 1988), and what Bottery (2000) describes as an 'assault on values'.

The Marketisation of Education

New Labour policy has continued to see the education system as a marketplace, with the emphasis on choice for the consumer, and a hope that this will increase efficiency and quality across the system as institutions compete to attract customers (Bottery, 2000). This has been achieved through a continuation of Local Management of Schools. In a 14-19 education context, this has had implications for schools and colleges, as well as parents and students.

For the schools, a competitive market environment means that they must demonstrate to parents that they will give children a good education, and this has led to two outcomes. Firstly, as Ball (1998) writes, schools have to devote considerable time and money to producing promotional material to sell their services to parents. This takes away money and time from the actual provision of education, but also tends to use middle-class symbolism to attract middle class children, such as emphasising cultural activities such as music, or Oxbridge entrance results to sell the school (*Ibid*).

Also, arguably the key way in which a school can demonstrate 'quality' under the present system is through its results, published in the league tables. As Davis (2000) showed through his examination of the school system, when schools do not achieve 'quality', measured by good results, parents will not want to send their children there, often starting a vicious circle resulting in further decline of the school. As the results are so critical, then, it is in the interest of a school to remove those who will not do well, or target resources where it will have most benefit for the school (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). Gillborn & Youdell (*Ibid*) talk of 'educational triage' as one way this is achieved. As only A-C grades are good for the results at GCSE, schools put resources into those pupils who, with some help, could achieve that. Those that would not, in the view of the school, be able to attain this performance, are left. This is bad enough, but as Gillborn and Youdell (*Ibid*: 146) note,

> "…it is clear that professional judgements that identify 'suitable cases for treatment' are deeply scarred by social class, gendered and racialised perspectives on the health/ability/potential of pupils."

These actions have negative outcomes for children, especially for those already disadvantaged. However, the market also serves to disadvantage them further, as there is much evidence that middle-class parents are much more able to use the availability of choice to get positive outcomes for their children than are working class parents (Apple, 2001). This is because parents with access to finance, social networks and/or cultural advantage can use these to get their children into schools they want them in, and middle-class families are more likely to have finance and the kinds of networks and cultural advantage that help (Webster & Parsons, 2000). Coffey (2001; 28) explains this as she writes that,

> "…studies have regularly concluded that school choice does involve the appropriation of social/cultural capital and the capacity and opportunity to become informed in order to make real choices - and that these are differentiated along class lines."

This means, as Tomlinson (2001) notes, that inequalities are reproduced through the market.

Lastly, a competitive situation as described above means that those who will not achieve what the school needs may be discriminated against in some form, and those who cause problems may again be discriminated against, as a school makes a utilitarian choice to make sure that they achieve the results they need to succeed in the marketplace,

> "The increasingly competitive nature of education meant further control of the reluctant, the disaffected and those 'special needs' groups who were unlikely to join the economy at anything but the lowest level, but whose presence might interfere with the prescribed education for the majority."
> (Tomlinson, 2001; 5)

Centralised Control
Hyland (2002) writes that New Labour policies tend to emphasise more centralised control, and education policy is no exception. As the aim of the education is to provide skills for the economy, the Government maintains strict control over what is taught by determining the curriculum, and how it is taught, through giving less freedom to teachers. This then ensures, for the Government, that the right things are being taught in the right way, providing the right people and skills for the economy. Beckmann and Cooper (2002) write that this view sees education as an industry, in that teachers fill students with knowledge in order to produce a certain product, in effect depersonalising teachers and students, and, for students, denying them a part to play in their own education.

Despite the problems of trying to educate for the skills business says it needs, this is still the aim of the Government (e.g. DfES, 2003b). Having a curriculum which is set by the Government allows them to prescribe education for what they think business needs, but also to put forward a view of the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991) that constitutes the nation (Priestly, 2002). This then means that as Coffey (2001) writes, the system leads to 'cultural reproduction' rather than 'cultural interruption' as the dominant values of society are transmitted and reproduced. Therefore, those already disadvantaged, those not seen as part of that community, are further marginalized. On top of this, a prescriptive curriculum denies children a space where they can challenge and re-work what they are being told, and make their own decisions, leaving them in a place where "…critical participation and dissent are…seen as undesirable." (Bottery, 2000; 79). This inhibits the development of the child, causing them harm (Cooper & Beckmann, 2003), but also as Bottery (2000; 78) writes, it

> "…actually closes off the kinds of investigative avenues which are the seedcorn of economic creativity…a stifling and demotivating educational bureaucratic system has been created which is supposed to produce a creative and flexible workforce."

So, the system, whilst producing negative effects for the individual, will probably not produce the positive outcomes for society the Government talks of.

Whilst students, in the 'industrial metaphor' are empty vessels to be filled, the teachers are part of the machinery that fills them (Alexiadou, 2001). Teachers have less autonomy in the classroom (Apple, 2001), as the Government reduces teaching to a technical exercise by prescribing what should be taught and how it should be taught, and by regulating how teachers are trained (Coffey, 2001). So although teachers can still rebel against the prescription and regain some agency in the classroom by being creative and innovative (Priestly, 2002), the plethora of inspections, league tables and managers makes this increasingly difficult (Bottery, 2000). As Lloyd & Payne (2003; 100) write, teachers find themselves

> "…caught between…heavy handed state intervention, and…the dull compulsion of market forces, performance measures, outputs and targets."

Overall, then, the 'industrial metaphor' describes the attempted production of skilled and docile workers for the economy. This is achieved though the increased surveillance, inspecting and testing regimes introduced throughout the education system, and it is to this that we now turn.

The Evaluative State

A key aspect of the Government's policies for education has been a move to a 'low trust' management style for the education system, using targets, testing and performance measurement, and a high profile punitive inspectorate to ensure that what they want is delivered (Lloyd & Payne, 2003). This creates an inflexible bureaucracy (Bottery, 2000), and ensures that education has to remain focused on the narrow, economic agenda prescribed by the Government, rather than on the potential wider value of education (Wolf, 2002).

As has been discussed above, this regime can lead to the disadvantaging of certain groups as schools are forced to focus on results rather than individuals. However, there are other issues. Firstly, when a school is not achieving well and is designated 'failing', the blame is passed onto the individual school, parents or children, without taking into account any structural considerations (Apple, 2001). As Coffey (2001) writes, this 'naming and shaming' often affects pupils, staff and whole communities, and can send schools into decline as staff move out and some pupils leave, making a situation worse. Archer and Yamashita (2003) argue further that some young people, who don't do well in constant testing, internalise their 'failure' (as described by the system), which affects their aspirations. Many do not want to continue in education, for fear of setting themselves up to fail.

OfSTED, formed in 1992, is the most high profile aspect of the Government's policy. It determines how well a school is achieving, and what the 'quality' of the education it provides is, yet a reliance on the measurable aspects of school activity (e.g. tests) means that less tangible factors (such as trust and rapport) carry less weight (Coffey, 2001). So, whatever a school does well for its pupils, the only things really counting are its test results and associated statistical measures. Research has also shown that there is so much pressure during inspections that teachers often have to perform in unsustainable ways in order to pass an inspection, thereby not having an opportunity to use the inspection as a tool to improve their practice (*Ibid*).

Despite the Government's aim of using the system to raise standards (e.g. DfES, 2003a), research has also suggested that OfSTED inspections do not do this. Shaw *et al* (2003) said that only a minority of schools showed an improvement in results after an inspection, that most did not change, and some even got worse. They suggested that school change was more complex than OfSTED allowed for, and that the biggest factor in helping a school improve was not standard of lessons or other OfSTED measures, but the amount of money available to the school. More money helped a school improve, but the intake of the school, caused by its location, was the main determinant of the performance of a school.

The way that New Labour uses evaluations in this way to raise standards has been criticised (e.g. Coffey, 2001). Wrigley (2003) suggests that much of this kind of research to improve schools is reductionist, as it denies the complexity of the influences and context that affect individual children and schools, and relies instead on assuming simplistic cause and effect relationships measured in quantitative terms. Sanderson (2003) suggests that there are the same problems across all of the Government evaluation and policymaking processes, and suggests two ways forward to improve it. Firstly, he suggests that using a variety of different methodological approaches to investigate and evaluate situations would give a better picture of the processes at work than merely relying on one form of inquiry. Secondly, he notes that present approaches to evaluation by Government privilege certain types of knowledge, for example that of 'experts' and managers, and do not recognise as valid the knowledge of practitioners and service users. In the case of schools Sanderson (*Ibid*: 341) suggests that,

> ”The question for teachers is not simply 'what is effective' but rather, more broadly it is, 'what is appropriate for these children in these circumstances'.”

Overall then, the way the Government regulates schools has questionable results for individuals and schools, but there is a broader issue. Bottery (2000; 79) suggests that the system,

> "…creates huge potential for the destruction of democratic thought, and for a critical citizenry…It becomes a system for delivering Government policy, not for discussion of what the aims of education might be…"

With no flexibility in the system, no-one, not students, teachers or parents, can use the system to think, analyse and challenge. This does not just raise issues for the present, but also for the future, as a generation is raised within such prescriptive and punitive terms.

The Assault on Values

The issue for the present, however, is the marginalisation of values within schools, and the impact this could have on young people. Bottery (2000) argues that the managerialist approach prescribed by education policies, focused on the economy, effectiveness and efficiency, represents an ‘assault on values’ by rendering them subordinate to the objectives that are set by policies. As Clarke and Newman (1997; 148) note, the managerialist approach,

> “…is concerned with goals and plans rather than with intentions and judgements. It is about action rather than reflection. It draws on analysis (breaking things down) rather than synthesis…It offers a technicist discourse which strips debate of its political underpinnings, so that debate about means supplants debate about ends.”

So this approach serves as a tool to meet objectives that are determined elsewhere, rather than to examine or challenge the essence of the objectives. Bottery (2000) argues that this direction ends up making values that are important in the education process subordinate to the management objectives. He lists autonomy, criticality, care, tolerance, equality, respect and trust as examples of important values that are subordinate to management objectives, in that they are only seen as useful if they contribute to those objectives. This is important as seeing and experiencing these values is a critical part of the education of an individual, and forms the basis of democratic society (e.g. Wolf, 2002; Bottery, 2000). This approach, and the ‘assault on values’ can only lead to ‘harms’ generated (Cooper & Beckmann, 2003) for young people as they participate in a system where the bottom line is related to a narrow measurement of corporate performance, rather than a holistic conception of individual development.

A ‘thin’ education?

Education policy under Labour, then, has largely continued in the direction set by the previous government, and in some cases has taken policies further than they would have done (Tomlinson, 2001). This has resulted in a system built on a managerialist foundation with the assumption that the work of schools can be adequately measured by statistical performance measures. Yet, as Gillborn and Youdell (2000; 30) write, these measures tend to screen out the very factors, such as poverty and racism for example, that affect individuals and schools so that,

> “…those who bear the brunt of multiple economic, social and historic structures of inequality are identified as the *cause* of their situation, rather than agents caught within a particular nexus of oppressive relations.”

As well as this, the market system continues to ensure that many children from working class backgrounds and ethnic minority groups amongst others, are excluded from the schools and universities that are seen as the best (Tomlinson, 2001).

However, all those who pass through the system arguably suffer from the impact of a ‘thin’ education system, enforced through the regulation described above. The effects of the inflexibility and target-orientated nature of the system should not be underestimated. As Gillborn and Youdell (2000; 43) write,

> “There is a very real sense in which participants on both sides of the school desk feel trapped within a system where the rules are made by others and where external forces, much bigger than any individual school, teacher or pupil, are setting the pace that all must follow.”

Wolf (2002) argues that with a narrow focus on an economic objective, and an inflexible system, there is much of potential value within education that has been lost that relates to quality of life, and the development of social, spiritual and moral values. As Hyland (2002) notes, these aims are present in Labour policy, but crucially are always subservient to the economic objectives, leaving those as the important elements to be measured. Therefore, for their own success and survival, that is what teachers and schools must focus on, leaving pupils with a ‘thin’ education for work, rather than a more holistic ‘thick’ education which could prepare them for life.

Looking back at the history of education in the UK only emphasises what has been lost. Following 1944, education was moving towards equality, and a holistic education, underpinned by a social vision. Education was about developing individuals to be a successful part of society, and aimed to create a society that was cohesive, united and fair. This was a necessary step in the face of a divided and grossly unequal society. Now, having seen these ideals lost for a focus on the economy post 1979, New Labour needs to recapture a broad vision for education. McCulloch (1994; 112) writes that,

> “…the reforms of the 1940s pursued a strong civic goal but lacked adequate means to achieve it, those of the 1990s seem to have acquired the means but forgotten the ends.”

Doubtless, New Labour would refer to their arguments outlined above, stressing that today is a very different time to sixty years ago and as such, the education system must offer something different. The next area to examine will be the society we live in today, and how that is changing. Following that, the kind of education that young people do need in this context can be discussed.

5: Social Change and the Impact on Individuals

Today is a time of social change, with a tendency towards processes of individualisation and increased risk for individuals (e.g. Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Bauman, 2000). There are disagreements about the extent, pace and meaning of change, both in the UK and globally (e.g. Giddens & Hutton, 2000), but there are several processes that have been widely recognised to underlie social change over the past thirty years or so.

Firstly, the labour market has changed, and there has been economic restructuring as some supply chains have globalised and local businesses have been affected by new technologies that have changed the workplace (Sennett, 1998). This is not to suggest a wholesale and immediate change, more a continued process, which is affecting different parts of the labour market in different ways over time (Lloyd & Payne, 2003). However, what this has meant generally for the labour market is the loss of jobs for life, and increased insecurity of employment (Sennett, 1998). Bauman (2000; 24) writes that "working life is saturated with uncertainty."

Secondly, the 'certainties' and structures that individuals used to assist them to guide their lives in the past are in a process of being lost or changed. As Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (2002; 8) write,

> "As modernity gains ground, God, nature and the social system are being progressively replaced, in greater and lesser steps, by the individual - confused, astray, helpless and at a loss."

They emphasise the fact that individuals can be perplexed by the number of choices they have to make in life without those 'certainties' from the past to at least give a direction,

> "Opportunities, dangers, biographical uncertainties that were earlier predefined within the family association, the village community, or by recourse to the rules of social estates or classes, must now be perceived, interpreted, decided and processed by individuals themselves." (*Ibid*; 4)

Lastly, the pace of life has changed. Thrift (1995) writes that life has speeded up, in terms of both global information and capital flows, as well as what individuals are having to deal with in employment and life generally. Taylor-Gooby (2001) found that individuals recognised that in some way the pace of their lives had increased, and that this brought increased stress and pressure for them.

This is not to suggest that all these changes have happened overnight, or that in the past there were no elements of uncertainty in the labour market, for example. It is more a recognition of an intensification of these trends in the last few decades (Bauman, 2000). These processes provide the background to discussion of the trends focused on here; individualisation and risk.

Individualisation refers to a move towards a society that has a focus on the individual, and their responsibility and right to make their own path through life, rather than a more communal focus which emphasises a more corporate notion of living and succeeding (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Risk refers to the ideas of Beck (1992), emphasising the fact that in a world of uncertainty, with the responsibility for decisions firmly on the individual, there is more chance of individuals suffering from problems in their life (Bauman, 2000).

The impact of these trends towards individualisation and risk are important because government policies are encouraging the same processes. As Taylor-Gooby (2001) notes, Third Way thinking, and therefore New Labour policies, buy into the idea of individuals who can and should take all the responsibility for their own lives. This is the thinking behind the notion of ‘no rights without responsibilities’ (Giddens, 1998), and policies that seek to invest in human capital. As Taylor-Gooby (2001; 198) explains, “The Third Way...is concerned to empower citizens and harness their pro-activity, while taking care to channel it in desirable directions.” As has been noted earlier, then, policies rely on the agency of individuals to be effective, and this is part of the individualisation process, as people have to take responsibility for their own biographies. There are several outcomes for individuals- a plethora of choices, a corrosion of community and togetherness, and a personalisation of risk.

Choice

> “Life, death, gender, corporeality, identity, religion, marriage, parenthood, social ties- all are becoming decidable down to the small print; once fragmented into options, everything must be decided.” (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; 5)

Everything in life is a choice, as Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (*Ibid*) write, and yet as noted earlier, with the lessening of the old ‘certainties’ or ‘old co-ordinates’ of life (*Ibid*), there are more decisions to be made, and fewer traditional structures to guide those decisions. Moynagh & Worsley (2003) suggest that individuals will eventually become overwhelmed by decisions and information about potential decisions, and will need help in filtering information and making decisions. Fitness advisors and ‘personal shoppers’ are examples of this beginning to happen (Tomorrow Project/Sense, 2004).

Eventually, Moynagh & Worsley (2003) suggest, there will be a divide between those able to make good use of information, and make decisions that can help them, and those that, without the resources, be they economic or educational, to use information well, will suffer and have to take responsibility for that. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) write that there is no escape from the choices individuals must make, and that although it can be viewed as empowering, if individuals do not have the resources to make their choices effectively, they will be disempowered by continually reproducing personal failure.

However, this is not the whole picture. In tandem with the increased freedom that individuals have to make decisions, and the expectation that they will create their own biography, there are also new constraints and demands imposed on them which limit those choices (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). These relate to the way that institutions, the welfare state and the labour market interlink to create a "network of regulations, conditions [and] provisos." (*Ibid*; 2). These relate, for example, to the welfare state, and conditional benefits; to ensuring that individuals have a pension for retirement; and to having to keep updating skills to keep or get a job. Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (*Ibid*; 11) sum up the situation for individuals;

> "You may and you must lead your own independent life, outside the old bonds of family, tribe, religion, origin and class; and you must do this within the new guidelines and rules which the state, the job market, the bureaucracy etc. lay down."

Corrosion of Community and Togetherness

The focus on the individual in society works against notions and expressions of community and togetherness in society (Bauman, 2000). The fact that individuals have to be focused on themselves means that they are working for personal good, rather than corporate good. Bauman (2003) writes of a decline of empathy, caring and meaningful connections in society, as relations are impermanent, and people are focused on themselves, participating in relationships until the 'usefulness' of them is lost.

Part of this lack of connection is because common experience does not tie individuals together as it did in the past (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Despite the fact that individuals have to act within the same conditions - an insecure labour market, insecurity of relationships, for example - the situations are not exactly the same for different individuals, and there tends to be no common cause to unite around. Bauman (2000; 24) sums up the situation,

> "The present day uncertainty is a powerful *individualising* force. It divides instead of uniting...the idea of 'common interests' grows ever more nebulous and in the end becomes incomprehensible. Fears, anxieties and grievances are made in such a way to be suffered alone. They do not add up, do not cumulate into 'common cause', have no 'natural address'."

Bauman (quoted in Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) suggested that we live in the 'until further notice' society, where everything, including relationships and attachments between people, are impermanent, underlain by a mentality that they are there to serve the needs of the individual, not the community, and when those needs are not being met, the individual must move on regardless.

Personalised Risk

This is where all the trends above come together. As Beck (2000; 167) writes, "your own life - your own failure". As responsibility is on the individual to make decisions and navigate their way through life successfully, the blame is on them if they do not. Therefore, risk is personalised and failure becomes seen as individual, rather than the result of structural or institutional factors.

For example, unemployment, in the past seen as a structural problem, is now an individual failing, resulting perhaps from poor choices, a lack of skills, education or ‘employability’. As the Work Foundation (Nathan & Westwood, 2002)) recently wrote, Government policies assume this, seeking to remedy the individual issues related to unemployment, rather than the wider structural ones.

Overall then, trends toward individualisation and risk, reflected in Government policy, are leaving individuals in a situation where they alone are responsible for their own success and failure, but with less means, in terms of support and tradition, to assist them. So, the ability of an individual comes down to their agency, their ability to use the resources that they have to effectively act on the world and create a successful life. Bauman (2002; 177) suggests that,

> “Perhaps a minority...can practice the strategy recommended to us all: seek and find *biographical* solutions to *systematically* produced problems and eke out a satisfying and stable existence despite the endemic insecurity of your position: use the uncertainties which haunt most people to your own advantage. The rest, however, may at best watch and envy. For that rest, choices are made by default rather than design.”

As was noted above, not all groups have the same agency and ability to act on the world. The ability to be successful in this situation depends on an individual’s stock of cultural, social and economic capital. Therefore, as Taylor-Gooby (2001; 209) concludes, “...disadvantage cumulates...”, and there is potential for those already disadvantaged in society to suffer from the processes of individualisation and risk more than others.

Education, then, needs to prepare young people for this reality. This means equipping them with the skills they need, not just for employment, but for life. Young people need to be confident and able to act on the world, to make good choices in every area of their lives, from jobs to relationships to consumption, and crucially, to be able to imagine and build community and togetherness as they move through life. Without all these abilities, young people may not be able to create a successful life, and will have to shoulder the responsibility for that. Even more crucially, those who are already disadvantaged, for example through poverty, ethnicity or location for example, must be those for which the system works hardest, as they are in the most danger of not being able to create their own success.

6: What Kind of Education do Young People need in this context?

In the present context, there are five major areas that need to be considered if education is to provide young people with what they need to live in our present society. These relate to adaptability to change, creativity and use of knowledge, holistic development of the individual, the relation to lived experience, and the overall aim of education.

Adaptability to change

Bauman (2000) argues that in the current climate of risk, constant and continual change, and with responsibility on the individual to create their own biography, the key skill an individual needs is the ability to quickly adapt to change. He argues that within education,

> “...learning how to break the regularity, how to get free from habits and prevent habitualisation, how to rearrange fragmentary experiences into heretofore unfamiliar patterns, whilst treating all patterns as acceptable solely ‘until further notice’- far from being a distortion of the educational process and a deviation from its true purpose, acquires a supreme adaptational value and fast becomes central to what is indispensable ‘equipment for life’.” (*Ibid*; 125)

Education must, then, give individuals the skills to react and adapt to change, and therefore to act effectively in an unstable environment. Those who cannot deal with change, and can only act under certain conditions with which they are familiar, will cease to be able to act effectively as those conditions change. Examples of this could be a manager who cannot adapt his management style after years of working in a hierarchical manner to new team-working methods introduced within his firm; or the individual who cannot adapt to the increased use of new communications technologies amongst their friends, and therefore is able to communicate less with them.

This should be the key aim of education - to give individuals the skills to adapt to change. However, individuals also need to be able to hold onto their values and identity whist adapting to change, and the other areas to be considered both enable this to happen, and the adaptability skills to be underpinned.

Creativity and the use of knowledge

> “In times of change, the learners will inherit the earth, while the knowers will find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.”
> (Eric Hoffer, quoted in Wrigley, 2003; 111)

Creativity and the application of knowledge are vital in our society today. Bentley (2000) writes that knowing is not enough; only those who can interpret and apply knowledge in different ways will be able to respond effectively to the demands and opportunities placed before them. Education needs to develop the skills to do this, and much of this comes down to the curriculum and the way that it is taught.

In terms of the curriculum, there are three important elements that can help achieve this. Firstly, the interdependence of knowledge areas needs to be stressed, and the ways in which knowledge can be applied across different situations (Young, 1999). This of course relates to the importance of the general link between education and lived experience, which will be discussed below. However, it is also about simple connections, such as how the history of colonialism and immigration into Britain affects contemporary attitudes to ethnic groups.

Secondly, it is important that the curriculum gives young people the chance to 'remake' knowledge in the light of their own experiences and ideas, rather than having knowledge transferred intact. Arendt (1977) wrote that young people must be given this chance, otherwise what is taught will be out of step with a changing world. Chomsky (Macedo, 2000) writes similarly that education must entail leading people to find 'truth' by themselves, rather than making them accept a prepared version of it. Critically, this means respecting and encouraging the opinions and experiences of those whose thinking does not fit in with majority perspectives, as these are often silenced by a pure transmission of knowledge (Beane & Apple, 1999).

Thirdly, following on from being able to 'remake' knowledge, is the need for flexibility and the chance within the curriculum to do this. This does not mean a choice between different narrowly defined subjects, which each have no internal flexibility, but choice within a subject to think widely about it and to take on board the ideas and experiences of young people. Wrigley (2003) writes that young people need to have some level of 'authorship' over the curriculum to ensure it is meaningful to their lives. Knight (1999) writes that such a 'democratic' curriculum is essential for real learning to occur.

However, as well as the curriculum itself, modes of teaching are important. Dewey (Bowen & Hobson, 1987) reacted against a mode of teaching that was purely about the transmission of a body of knowledge, suggesting that this was not a way to produce individuals who acted meaningfully, and that the process of teaching should be about young people discovering things with the aid of a teacher. The important point is that learning must be an active rather than passive process, and pedagogies must allow young people to voice opinions and come to their own conclusions (Beane & Apple, 1999).

These issues are important, both to ensure that young people can engage with education and see how it is relevant to their lives, but also so that they develop skills around application of knowledge, and of being creative with knowledge, which are critical for their education. However, as discussed above, government policies militate against this, with a prescriptive national curriculum backed up by a regime of testing and performance indicators. This is clear in the fact that most young people see learning as gaining knowledge and reproducing facts, rather than gaining understanding, changing as a person, or seeing things in a new light (Wrigley, 2003). As one young person commented, in their ideal school,

> “We will cease to be thought of as useless vessels waiting in disciplined conditions to be filled with our quota of information, just so we can regurgitate it all in exams so that our school looks good in league tables.” (Burke & Grosvenor, 2003; 63)

This discussion of knowledge and creativity has looked at how teaching needs to occur, and the next area for consideration is what needs to be taught, which is more than just skills for employment.

Holistic development of the Individual

The purpose of education must be to prepare the individual to deal with all areas of their life. As choice is a constant feature of life, in terms of employment, relationships, family and morality, for example, individuals need the tools to make effective choices in all areas of their lives.

The critical element of this is fostering the agency of the individual, and their ability to act upon the world, as this underpins their ability to use their knowledge and creative ability effectively (Strain, 2000). Strain writes (*Ibid*; 293-4), that fundamentally education must “...promote and enhance the autonomy and capability of the individual as an agent.” Both a broad curriculum and a participatory pedagogy are needed to achieve this. The ‘docile bodies’ (Cooper, 2002) produced through tightly controlled teaching by transmission will not have the agency needed to act successfully on the world and create a successful biography. Education needs to prepare individuals by allowing them to engage with knowledge and remake it, and to work out ideas and issues for themselves. These processes begin to equip them as agents with the ability to think about issues critically and make informed choices.

Education then needs to cover more than just skills for employment. Strain (2000) sees two ‘educations’ that need to go on in schools. He talks firstly of ‘education for rationality’, equipping young people with the skills needed to engage with systems and social interactions. This could relate to working in an organisation, and having networking skills to make use of social relationships. Secondly, he talks of ‘education for desire’, which equips individuals to deal with the context today where consumption is not just linked to physical goods, but the images and meanings that they carry. This education, Strain envisages, will ensure that individuals are not ‘seduced’ by the images and symbols around them, and are able to make effective decisions about their lives.

On top of these areas, it is important that education links to real life, and to actions within the world, as this is often not the case. One pupil commented that in their ideal school “...the notion of writing...essays on tropical rainforests without taking some action would be seen as strange.” (Burke & Grosvenor, 2003; 63).

Learning and lived experience

Education needs to have relevance for the lives of young people, and applications within their lives. This implies several things. Firstly, learning is a social process, and therefore must be embedded within communities that schools are a part of (Bentley, 2000). This is because the community provides the context for what young people are learning, in terms of situating knowledge and a space to apply it, and also because it contains resources, in terms of knowledge, relationships and experiences which form part of education (*Ibid*).

Secondly, education can only be relevant if the different experiences and knowledges within a community are valued as part of the education process, especially those whose ideas are different to those of the majority (Walker, 2003). Thirdly, the curriculum needs to reflect the issues and priorities of the community and the young people, to ensure its relevance. This again relates to curriculum and pedagogy as discussed above.

Lastly, education needs to end in application through action, to embed it in the world outside the classroom. It is through this process that it acquires meaning and relevance to young people, through showing them the application of the knowledge in the world (Burke & Grosvenor, 2003). Apple and Beane (1999) give examples of how schools have linked their classroom learning into action in their community, bringing positive results for the community, and embedding young people's knowledge in action.

A social vision for education

Lastly, the whole experience of school needs to reinforce what is being taught specifically through the curriculum. Beane and Apple (1999) talk about the 'hidden curriculum', describing it as what young people learn from the way that schools are run, about issues such as justice, power, dignity and self-worth. This follows the ideas of Bateson (Bauman, 2000), who discussed the way that the situation in which learning is carried out has more effect on the individual than the content of the learning. Therefore it is important that everything about a school must back up what is being taught. For example, as Wrigley (2003) writes, teaching citizenship in schools is problematic when pedagogies and structures are not participatory, forcing students to learn about being an empowered citizen when they are a disempowered student!

Purkey and Novak (1996) write that a school should be 'invitational', in the sense that everything about it encourages young people to fulfil their potential. The 'invitational' approach needs to run through every area of school life- the people involved, such as teachers and support staff; the buildings and other spaces that make up the school, the policies that operate, such as rules; the learning programmes and curricula; and processes that run within the school. So for example, teachers need to be clear that they believe in the young people's potential, classrooms must be comfortable and conducive to working in, and rules should not arbitrarily work in favour of some pupils over others.

The discussion above has focused on the individual young person, and what they need to succeed in society. But as well as aims for the individual, education has a corporate social purpose that is fulfilled through the development of individuals. In essence, schools and all the processes above need to work towards a common vision of what society should be. As Wrigley (2003) writes, education is a process of building the kind of society that people want, and as such is an act of hope. Without that vision, education becomes a hope-less exercise in processing young people and meeting targets set from above. What is needed is a ‘democratic education’ (Apple & Beane, 1999), which continually takes on board the views of the wider community and responds to it, ensuring that education is working towards a commonly held social vision.

Conclusion

In summary, then, a social vision for education needs to be remade, which should lead to a system that gives young people the skills they need in a rapidly changing and risky world, and helps move society towards a commonly held vision of what it should be. This means going back to a broader, socially driven education system, such as the 1944 Act, rather than more recent Acts, which have served to dilute the social vision for education and narrow its aims. Achieving this would necessarily mean changing the structure of the system, and the way it is evaluated, as these militate against the necessary broader aims.

It is also critical that the system gives all an opportunity to thrive, regardless of ethnicity, poverty or location. The system must take account of the different disadvantages faced by different groups, and compensate for them where necessary to ensure equality of opportunity at the least.

The discussion above sets the context in which young people are schooled. To really see how the system needs to change to meet the needs of young people, it is important to talk to the young people at the centre of the education system to see what their perceptions of it are, how it does or does not meet their needs, and to ask whether they see education as social justice for themselves.

7: Bibliography

Advisory Group on Citizenship (1998) *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools,* QCA, London.

Alexiadou, N. (2001) 'Management identities in transition; a case study from further education', *The Sociological Review,* 49(3), 412-435.

Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities,* Verso, London.

Annesley, C. (2001) 'New Labour and Welfare' in Ludlam, S. & Smith, M. (eds.) *New Labour in Government,* Macmillan Press, Hampshire.

Apple, M. (2001) 'Comparing Neo-liberal projects and inequality in education', *Comparative Education,* 37(4), 409-423.

Apple, M. & Beane, J. (eds.) (1999) *Democratic Schools,* Open University Press, Buckingham.

Archer, L. & Yamashita, H. (2003) ''Knowing their limits'? Identities, inequalities and inner city school leavers' post-16 aspirations', *Journal of Education Policy,* 18(1), 53-69.

Arendt, H. (1977) *Between Past and Future,* Penguin, London.

Ball, S. (1998) 'Performativity and Fragmentation' in Carter, J. (ed.), *Postmodernity and the fragmentation of welfare,* Routledge, London.

Bauman, Z. (2000) *The Individualised Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Bauman, Z. (2003) *Liquid Love,* Polity Press, Cambridge.

Beane, J. & Apple, M. (1999) 'The case for Democratic Schools' in Apple, M. & Beane, J. (eds.) *Democratic Schools,* Open University Press, Buckingham.

Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society*, Sage Publications, London.

Beck, U. & Beck- Gernsheim, E. (2002) *Individualization*, Sage, London.

Beckmann, A. & Cooper, C. (2002) '*Globalisation' and education: rethinking pedagogy in Britain,* paper presented to the Social Policy Association Annual Conference, 16th-18th July 2002, Teeside University.

Benn, C. & Chitty, C. (1997) *Thirty Years On,* Penguin Books, London.

Bentley, T. (2000) 'Creativity, Community and a new approach to schooling', in Lucas, B. & Greany, T. (eds.) *Schools in the Learning Age,* Campaign for Learning, London.

Blair, T. (1998) *The Third Way,* Fabian Society, London.

Bottery, M. (2000) *Education, policy and ethics*, Continuum, London.

Bowen, J. & Hobson, P. (1987) *Theories of Education,* John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.

Brown, P., Halsey, A., Lauder, H. & Wells, A. (1997) 'The Transformation of Education and Society: An Introduction', in *Education- Culture, Economy, Society,* Halsey, A., Lauder, H., Brown, P. & Wells, A. (Eds.), Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Burden, T., Cooper, C., & Petrie, S. (2000) *'Modernising' Social Policy: Unravelling New Labour's Welfare Reforms,* Ashgate, Aldershot.

Burke, C. & Grosvenor, I. (2003) *The School I'd Like,* RoutledgeFalmer, London.

Carr, W. & Hartnett, A. (1996) *Education and the Struggle for Democracy,* Open University Press, Buckingham.

Central Advisory Council for Education (1967) *Children & their Primary Schools (Plowden Report),* HMSO, London.

Clarke, J. & Newman, J. (1997) *The Managerial State,* Sage Publications, London.

Coffey, A. (2001) *Education and Social Change,* Open University Press, Buckingham.

Commission on Social Justice (1994) *Social Justice- Strategies for National Renewal*, Vintage, London.

Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, (2000) *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain,* Profile Books, London.

Committee of Secondary School Examination Council (1943) *Report of the Committee of Secondary School Examination Council on Curriculum & Examinations in Secondary Schools,* HMSO, London.

Cooper, C. (2002) *Understanding School Exclusion,* Education Now, Nottingham.

Cooper, C. & Beckmann, A. (2003) *Conditions of Domination: reflections on harms generated by the British education system,* Paper presented to the 'Tough on Crime, Tough on Freedoms?' Conference, 22nd-24th April, Chester College.

Craig, G. (2001) *'Race' and Welfare,* University of Hull, Hull.

Davis, N. (2000) *The School Report,* Vintage, London.

DfES (2003a) *14-19: Opportunity and Excellence*, DfES, London.

DfES (2003b) *21st Century Skills- Realising our Potential*, DfES, London.

Gamarnikow, E. & Green, A. (2000) ‘Citizenship, education and social capital’ in *Education for Citizenship,* Lawton, D., Cairns, J. & Gardner, R. (eds.), Continuum, London.

Giddens, A. (1998) *The Third Way*, Polity Press, London.

Giddens, A. (2000) *The Third Way and Its Critics*, Polity Press, London.

Gillborn, D. & Mirza, H. (2000) *Educational Inequality- Mapping Race, Class and Gender,* OfSTED, London.

Gibborn, D. & Youdell, D. (2000) *Rationing Education,* Open University Press, Buckingham.

Greener, I. (2002) ‘Agency, social theory and social policy’, *Critical Social Policy*, 22(4), 688-705.

Hyland, T. (2002) ‘Third way values and post-school education policy’, *Journal of Education Policy*, 17(2), 245-248.

Jones, G. (2002) *The Youth Divide*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

Jones, K. (2003) *Education in Britain- 1944 to the present,* Polity Press, Cambridge.

Knight, T. (1999) ‘*Inclusive education and educational theory: Inclusive for what?*’, Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Conference, University of Sussex, 2-5 September.

Lawton, D. (2000) ‘Citizenship education in context’ in *Education for Citizenship,* Lawton, D., Cairns, J. & Gardner, R. (eds.), Continuum, London.

Lister, R. (2003) ‘Investing in the Citizen-workers of the future: Transformations in citizenship and the state under New Labour’, *Social Policy and Administration,* 37(5), 427-443.

Lloyd, C. & Payne, J. (2003) ‘The political economy of skill and the limits of educational policy’, *Journal of Education Policy,* 18(1), 85-107.

Lumby, J. & Wilson, M. (2003) ‘Developing 14-19 education: meeting needs and improving choice’, *Journal of Education Policy,* 18(5), 533-550.

Macedo, D. (ed.) (2000) *Chomsky on Miseducation,* Littlefield Publishers, Oxford.

McCulloch, G. (1994) *Educational Reconstruction,* The Woburn Press, Ilford.

Moynagh, M. & Worsley, R. (2003) *Learning from the Future- scenarios for Post-16 Learning,* Learning & Skills Research Centre, Somerset.

Nathan, M. & Westwood, A. (2002) *Submission to the Work & Pensions Select Committee,* The Work Foundation, London.

Neave, G. (1988) 'On the cultivation of quality, efficiency and enterprise: an overview of recent trends in higher education in Western Europe 1986-88', *European Journal of Education,* 23(1), 7-23.

Priestly, M. (2002) 'Global discourses and national reconstruction: the impact of globalisation on curriculum policy', *The Curriculum Journal,* 13(1), 121-138.

Purkey, W. & Novak, J. (1996) *Inviting School Success,* Wadsworth, London.

Rikowski, G. (2001) 'Education for Industry: a complex technicism', *Journal of Education & Work,* 14(1), 29-49.

Sanderson, I. (2003) 'Is it 'what works' that matters? Evaluation and evidence-based policy-making', *Research Papers in Education,* 18(4), 331-345.

Sennett, R. (1998) *The Corrosion of Character,* Norton, New York.

SEU (1998) *Truancy and School Exclusion,* Social Exclusion Unit, London.

SEU (1999a) *Bridging the Gap*, Social Exclusion Unit, London.

Shaw, I., Newton, D., Aitkin, M. & Darnell, R. (2003) 'Do OfSTED Inspections of Secondary Schools Make a Difference to GCSE Results?', *British Educational Research Journal,* 29(1), 63-75.

Strain, M. (2000) 'Schools in a Learning Society', *Educational management & Administration,* 28(3), 281-298.

Taylor-Gooby, P. (2001) 'Risk, Contingency and the Third Way: Evidence from the BHPS and Qualitative Studies', *Social Policy & Administration,* 35(2), 195-211.

Thrift, N. (1995) 'A Hyperactive World' in Johnston, R., Taylor, P. & Watts, M. (eds.) *Geographies of Global Change,* Blackwell, Oxford.

Tomlinson, S. (2001) *Education in a Post-Welfare Society,* Open University Press, Buckingham.

Tomorrow Project/Sense (2004) *Choice (Precis No. 4),* Tomorrow Project/Sense. (www.tomorrowproject.net www.senseworldwide.com)

Troyna, B. & Carrington, B. (1990) *Education, Racism & Reform,* Routledge, London.

Walker, M. (2003) ‘Framing social justice in education: What does the ‘Capabilities’ approach offer?’, *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 51(2), 168-187.

Webster, D. & Parsons, K. (2000) ‘Liberty, equality & consumerism in state education: exploring liberal angst under New Labour’, *Journal of Consumer Studies & Home Economics,* 24(3), 179-188.

White, M. & Wintour, P. (2003) ‘The New Routes to Social Justice’, *The Guardian,* November 28th, 4.

Wolf, A. (2002) *Does Education matter?* Penguin Books, London.

Woodhall, M. (1997) ‘Human Capital Concepts’ in Halsey, A. H., Lauder, H., Brown, P. & Stuart Wells, A., *Education- Culture, Economy, Society,* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Wrigley, T. (2003) *Schools of Hope,* Trentham Books, Stoke-on-Trent.

Young, K. (1999) *The Art of Youthwork*, Russell House Publishing, Lyme Regis.