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ABSTRACT

THE EVOLUTION OF THE GENERAL CERTIFICATE
OF SECONDARY EDUCATION TO 1986

CHRISTOPHER J. TURNER

M.A. THESIS, 1991

The evolution of the G.C.S.E. was a phase both in the history of examinations and also in the social and political interaction of education with its environment. Each subject discipline has its own development. The turbulent development of modern languages appears to have experienced a more easily discernible phase of progression in the period approaching the G.C.S.E. than at other times over the century and more especially in the post-war period; in fact 'languages' reached a greater spread of effective contact of the school population than ever before. Such an incidence of events merits some attention even though alternative sequences were occurring in other subject disciplines.

The G.C.S.E. followed in the tradition of the School Certificate, the G.C.E. and the C.S.E. yet it also mirrored major movements in British society and its expectation of public education. Competition became paramount. Differentiation resolved, somewhat, the problems of a common system for the high and low achievers. The irony was that the G.C.S.E. suited the comprehensive schools but the comprehensive schools did not suit everybody. The teaching profession, whilst trying to deal with this problem sensitively, felt its national profile deteriorate. These fundamental changes took place at a time of growing concern over the education system. Yet fundamental changes in society were the key to fundamental changes in education.

Languages, throughout, democratized down the hierarchy of learning; other subjects followed the pattern. World War II had polarized for languages a pacific, literature-civilization from a

message-communication. These became the opposing sides of the battleground, the victory being a merger of the two. This century's main lost soul of the curriculum found its resting-place in G.C.S.E. 'practicability'. The post-war extension to the whole ability range forced a lonesome mental introversion. Sound experienced psychoanalysis and therapy by the subject association with basic guidance from the examination boards brought restoration to a new state of health. In fact restoratives primarily for the low achiever had been vital.

The new government in 1979 encouraged practicality and usefulness of school subjects. Having advised throughout, the subject associations, like others, took the initiative in the teachers' cold war lull, to sound out true opinion (which could not be done publicly due to the intractability of positions) and made recommendation to the government. The contribution of the low achiever was finally acknowledged. The subject associations, uniquely, were in a position to test opinion and act with speed. The disappearance of Ordinary Level and Grammar Schools had proved a strong brake, yet the post World War II period upto the 1980s was inevitably between staging posts of major educational reform and nothing was to stop the G.C.S.E. being by accident or design the frontrunner of a series of reforms.

The sources for this study have been the professional literature and reviews underpinned by personal interviews with relevant and representative personnel.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE
GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
TO 1986

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Christopher J. Turner, B.A., Dip.Ed., M.Ed.

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BRIEF REFERENCES

C.S.E.	Certificate of Secondary Education
G.C.E.	General Certificate of Education
G.C.S.E.	General Certificate of Secondary Education
<u>M.L.</u>	<u>Modern Languages</u>
N.E.A.	Northern Examining Association
<u>T.E.S.</u>	<u>Times Educational Supplement</u>
<u>T.N.</u>	<u>Times Newspaper</u>

CHAPTER 1

IDEALISM - AND A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE; THE OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF EVENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE G.C.S.E.

Nearly three weeks before Christmas in 1969 The Times carried the headline, 'G.C.E. may go in reform of studies'.⁽¹⁾ This front page leader article explained that a detailed programme for the most sweeping reform of the examination system ever undertaken in schools in England and Wales would be put forward the following week at the headquarters of the Schools Council. It was likely to be adopted throughout the whole of the educational system by 1974, although it might be modified. It would recommend the abolition of Ordinary and Advanced level as university entrance qualifications.

One relevant point about this article was that the newspaper saw Ordinary and Advanced level as university entrance qualifications, primarily. The article continued by stating that the programme proposed the universal introduction of a new system in which all pupils would study eight major subjects until sixteen, five until seventeen and then, if wanted for university, three until eighteen. Similar proposals had been put forward by the Council's Policy Study group, the Headmasters' Association, the Headmasters' Conference and the Assistant Masters Association.⁽²⁾ The universities had also accepted the need for reform. The reform had been prepared by two working parties set up on the initiative of the Schools' Council. One had been set up jointly with the Standing Conference on University Entrance, the other under Dr. E. Briault, a Deputy Education Officer of the Inner London Education Authority.

The new system would involve the sweeping away of the apparatus

(1) T.N., 8th December, 1969, p.1.

(2) T.N., 14th July 1966, p.9; 2nd Dec. 1966, p.11; 17th July 1967, p.3;
27th Sep. 1968, p.6; - 1 - 25th Oct. 1969, p.2.



of G.C.E. administered by eight separate bodies. The new system would also be administered by a national body.

Another relevant point in the article was that the proposals were also an early attempt to stop premature specialization before seventeen years of age.

Phrased as it was, then, the main thrust of the article for the general public referred to an examination for pupils considering a continuation of their education after age sixteen. Only as the matter developed further were wider implications across the ability range to be seen.

By March of the following year,⁽²⁾ the National Union of Teachers was into the fray at round two with the flourish of an early acronym which did not quite reach target but which made the opposition drop back onto its guard. The article explained that another new national examination for secondary schools, the Certificate of General Secondary Education, had been advocated that day by the National Union of Teachers. The new examination would replace the G.C.E. and the C.S.E.

The argument had now spread more widely across the ability range to include the Certificate of Secondary Education, within the scope of the new C.G.S.E. The recommendation followed a then recent Schools Council and university proposal for new examinations at seventeen and eighteen and confirmed the growing movement for reform of secondary school examinations. The union proposed that the new examination should be a common examination for all pupils taken at sixteen and should be awarded in five grades. It wanted the examination to be controlled by teachers.

During the 1960s and 1970s as union power was in the ascendant

(2) T.N., 24th March, 1970, p.24.

Lord (Harold) Wilson - the Labour-dominated
1960s

(Kindly supplied by Lord (Harold) Wilson)

Lord (Harold) Wilson - the Labour-dominated
1960s

(Kindly supplied by Lord (Harold) Wilson)



it was the unions who became more fashionable in appearing to act on behalf of teachers. Therefore teacher-control was an understandable suggestion by a teachers' union. This was also to become part of the battleground over a common examination at sixteen. As union dominance declined into the 1980s it was the voice of the subject associations which tried to respond to the mood of the day. Throughout both periods the examination boards continued to innovate and push forward.

The newspaper, indeed, stated that the union wanted the syllabus to be chosen by the schools instead of by the examination boards. The schools also should be able to select for themselves the method chosen to examine pupils.

The repetition of the word 'should' was not accidental. It was part of the attitude of the unions that they thought that they knew best, or thought that they were voicing the opinions of teachers and thus the educational good. At times this was the case and at times this was not. Apart from what they thought 'should' be, the school choice and school control indicate a very strong insistence on union intentions.

It was also revealed that an agenda was ready for a total reform of the national system of secondary school examinations, the first for twenty years, outlining a new simplified structure of examinations at sixteen, seventeen and eighteen. Under the union plan there would be one terminal examination mostly for pupils intending to leave at sixteen.

Here again the purpose of the examination at sixteen from the union's viewpoint was for the school-leaver and not as certain others saw it, part of a university qualification.

It anticipated that students who stayed on would sit five

subjects for the proposed new qualifying examination at seventeen followed by an examination in three subjects for further education level and matriculation to university.

It anticipated that the reform was likely to be accepted by the Schools Council. The reasons for this were explained. The union had seventeen out of fifty seats on the Council. It also anticipated that the new examination would be introduced within the following decade especially since it felt there was a universal desire to abolish G.C.E. Ordinary level.

The union felt that the new examination which could be used for academic and non-academic pupils would remove one of the principal objections to suggested reform. This was that if G.C.E. Ordinary level continued, most schools would continue to enter pupils for it as a safeguard; and that pupils would then be confronted by difficult national examinations at sixteen, seventeen and eighteen. The new examination would offer an all-purpose examination at sixteen enabling pupils to bypass Ordinary level and sit their first public examination at seventeen.

It would seem that the union had in mind a very unusual examination or that it was suggesting a new examination of doubtful quality. A very broad-based, all-purpose examination at that point would be quite a breakthrough but the atmosphere for a substitution of Ordinary level equivalent was not even right at that time, far less the alternative suggested by the union.

Nearly four months later the Schools Council was busy with a meeting before a meeting - political manoeuvring. It was activities such as that which Fred Naylor was to bring to light in later years. However, that July the headline was, 'New examination for sixth form,

and abolition of the Ordinary level in its present form likely to be agreed tomorrow⁽³⁾

A meeting of the Schools Council before the crucial debate the following day had shown thirty two to seven in favour of amalgamating the present Ordinary level with C.S.E. (at that time designed for the ability range immediately below Ordinary level). A previous effort at a so-called 'Qualifying' and 'Final' examination formula had been rejected by the National Union of Teachers, the Headmasters' Association and the Headmasters' Conference because of the threat of three public examinations in three successive years and a mandatory grouping of subjects. Yet it was not seen as a setback for reform.

The 'Qualifying' and 'Final' examination debate had forced parties to think seriously about reform and to meet the sixth month deadline set by the Schools' Council and a clarification of several areas of mutual agreement: broadening sixth form curriculum; delaying specialization; and the needs of the sixth forms to go to university. The National Union of Teachers had proposed an amalgamation of C.S.E. and G.C.E., an extended C.S.E. for sixth forms and an examination in five subjects at eighteen.

The Headmasters Association and the Headmasters Conference had approved the first two of those and had suggested a new examination at 'A' level midway between Ordinary and Advanced level.

Also the universities had said that they would stop using Ordinary level for university entrance; usually five subjects was also entry to the sixth form. It was expected that there would be agreement the following day on: a new sort of examination at sixteen;

(3) T.N., 6th July, 1970, p.3.

a new examination for the less able sixth former and a broader, less specialized curriculum, plus research into methods of examining which put less emphasis on essays and memory.

This last point was a very significant addition. The Schools Council was continuing to push at the barriers of the curriculum and of the examinations system and the unions made their own contribution to this. At a later date the examination boards, for whom this was an ongoing process with regard to examinations, would be seen to be carrying on this process. Finally the subject associations were to make their contribution. The fact is that these groups were basically made up of, or gained their strength from, one common individual - the teacher. At times over the following years it would seem that the teachers had withdrawn their contribution. However, generally speaking when they were compromised in 'Union' areas they sought Associations. The large majority of teachers showed professional integrity.

The week of the meeting before the meeting was very critical since many of the leading 'war ministers' were being encouraged to the sort of 'deal' on which they had rarely agreed; nor were they likely to agree in later years. Two days later it was announced that after a five hour discussion the Schools Council had approved a programme of research and development which should enable it to make a firm recommendation by 1973 on the first reform of sixth form examinations since the G.C.E. was introduced in 1951. (4)

If it were to prove successful it would mean the end of the Ordinary level in its present form. Amongst the major conclusions were; that there should be a single examination system at sixteen-plus

(4) T.N., 8th July, 1970.

operated by the Schools Council; some sort of C.S.E. for older pupils in the sixth form; the sixth form examinations' content and structure would be revised; there would be improved forms of assessment and a reduction of factual content; and there was an affirmation that it was desirable to reduce specialization and broaden the scope in the sixth form. It was finally added, rather as a reassurance of the statement's depth of commitment, that the Council had met to consider proposals made the previous year.

Such broad, albeit loosely defined agreement was important. It took place in an atmosphere at the start of the 1970s when secondary education was much more robust than it was to be fifteen years later. Criticism or reappraisal of every feature within the educational service was not yet commonplace. The agreements were made in good faith because it was thought that they would improve the educational service. Yet apart from the development and research techniques (which was non-controversial and would have happened anyway) it took sixteen years before even one of these recommendations came about.

It has been stated that Fred Naylor of the Schools Council had been unhappy about the way in which the Schools Council itself had operated on that occasion. (The movement of a member such as Mr. Naylor, of the Schools Council to a right wing organization was, it should be added, a good example of a general trend in society which was to become a theme). It was, however, six years later before he voiced that dissatisfaction sitting more safely in an attacking position elsewhere(see below)⁽⁵⁾

A headline stated 'Exam proposals wasteful'.⁽⁵⁾ Criticism had

(5) T.N., 5th April, 1976, p.4.

come from the right-wing National Council for Educational Standards. Its chairman of research, it was revealed, was Fred Naylor a former officer of the Schools Council. He recalled that in 1970 the Schools Council had decided that there should be a single examination, at a meeting where the matter was not on the agenda and no papers on it had been circulated. The Schools Council he felt had been determined to bring in the examination regardless of criticism.

Fred should not have been too worried about manoeuvring by the Schools Council since even ten years after voicing his concern over a single examination, the Schools Council had been killed off and the examination was still not in. A significant consideration here is that a right-wing representative had voiced concern about a single examination. Often in the years to come it would be the conservative, conserving viewpoints that wanted to keep Ordinary level and the standards which it represented.

Upto 1976 a large proportion of people with loud voices had also moved onto the attack of the secondary system. By 1976 more pupils than in 1970 were in comprehensive schools and the mention in that same article that five years later it was expected that ninety per cent would be in comprehensive education was just the sort of thing to keep the alarm bells ringing in the educational critics' emergency bases. The Times was often the conveyor of such information.

It stated that the National Union of Teachers which had seventeen of the approximately eighty members on the Council had welcomed the plan which was to be considered by the Council in July. Mr. Alan Evans, the Union's education secretary, said that a dual

(5) T.N., 5th April, 1976, p.4.

system of examinations at sixteen wasted teaching time and other resources. It was confusing and unnecessary now that sixty per cent of pupils were in comprehensive schools.

The feasibility studies had demonstrated clearly that it was possible to design a syllabus for the ability range of G.C.E. and C.S.E. candidates. Mr. Evans stated that it was interesting to note that the raucous opposition to the proposals came from those people who had little or no experience of examining over the ability range being considered and had seldom had to face up to the difficulties of operating a dual system within the schools.

He felt that the justification for a dual system would become extremely tenuous as the years went by and particularly after 1981 when it was estimated ninety per cent of secondary school children would be in comprehensive schools.

Thus did the newspaper sting with its tail, in the final delivery those hoping to conserve the aspects of the British education which were enshrined in G.C.E. Ordinary level.

In these fifteen years between firm attempts to initiate the single system and the actual introduction of the common examination at sixteen a very complex situation arose which in effect froze progress. Clearly those 'frozen years' are a key component of the evolution of the eventual General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Because a whole generation had grown up with strong feelings towards Ordinary level the substitution for it was always going to be difficult. In many ways it had been popular and had exceeded all expectations. Deep down, most people knew that it was outdated. For business and industry it was a widely accepted fact that a continual

process of development and improvement was necessary. This would have to apply to education also. Unfortunately the emotional hallmark of Ordinary level, its 'gold rating' at a time when the currency of English education had a worsening exchange rate, made people reluctant to trade it in. It was doubts about the direction of the whole secondary system which made difficult a decision which at other times might have been easier. That trace of doubt remained for the fifteen 'frozen years'. For many it would not disappear for a further fifteen, after the examination's introduction. Another important consideration was that the incoming system appeared to many to be basically quite sound and it was therefore not a true reflection of its value that it was deferred for so long.

It was to be eight years later that this debate came to the surface. Wittingly or unwittingly, for he is a person of massive internal preponderances, Sir Keith Joseph possibly eventually succeeded in convincing some doubters about the exchange. He highlighted the weaknesses of the existing system and slowly put together a dramatic new alternative, using existing proposals and creating some extra ones. By 1984 when this proposal was for some organizations well forward, one article in a daily newspaper stated that,

'If Mrs. Thatcher's antipathy to the education service is to be believed he will have a job persuading her that he has not "gone native".'(6)

The leading article following his 'Sheffield speech' in January 1984⁽⁷⁾ detailed the highlight on the weaknesses of the existing system.

(6) T.N., 7th January, 1984, p.2.

(7) T.N., 7th January, 1984, p.9.

It revealed that the Department of Education and Science was known as 'the white man's grave south of the river'; yet Sir Keith who arrived as Secretary of State in 1981 had refused to succumb. The bulk of his speech was devoted to the question 'what was education for?'. The answer was a matter of urgency since by the Summer he would have to end a long period of uncertainty by determining the configuration of the new sixteen plus examination.

It maintained that Sir Keith had a quality rare in public life - an ability, almost a compulsion, to parade his short-comings; for he had admitted the previous day that, originally, on his arrival at the Department of Education and Science he had underestimated the difficulty of lifting standards. More than two years of reading inspectors' reports had shown that much of what pupils were asked to learn was 'clutter' - a sentiment that would be echoed by many an anxious parent worried by failure of the state system to provide the skills of learning which they wished their progeny to acquire. The remedy which Sir Keith proposed was two-fold - to raise eighty to ninety per cent of all pupils to at least C.S.E. grade four, the level now achieved by pupils of average ability in individual subjects; and also to devise a system whereby the absolute and not just the relative attainment of a pupil could be gauged by examination. It would be of great value to parents, employers and universities if a results sheet indicated not just a young person's position relative to his or her peers but whether he or she could read, comprehend and communicate, set a historical event in context or perceive a pattern in scientific data. He believed devising such a system could prove immensely taxing.

Compounding the difficulty were the many purposes for which the sixteen plus was being introduced. However it was constructed, whether

Lord (Keith) Joseph - decision
on the sixteen plus

(Kindly supplied by the Press Association)

Lord (Keith) Joseph - decision
on the sixteen-plus

(Kindly supplied by the Press Association)



it remained a two-tier process or a merger of Ordinary level and C.S.E, it had to provide the evaluation needed at one end by the university admissions tutor, and the prospective employer of the sixteen year old at the other.

The speech had obviously been designed to express his sincere feelings. It contained very important notions. Going from 'clutter' to success for ninety per cent stretches the imagination and expectation of even the best well-wisher. The fairness of gauging the absolute attainment was obviously a good hinge-point. Furthermore, a hint at a certificate which was also a record of achievement (or were employers supposed to be acquainted with subject and grade criteria?) was innovatory in a major speech. All-in-all devising such a system could, indeed prove taxing; but were not the covers about to be pulled off a similarly-finished product? The newspaper obviously thought so, but not before asking him to think twice about the whole idea. For an agonizer this would only make matters worse.

Nevertheless the newspaper warned Sir Keith to beware of the pendulum swinging too far from the system which differentiated between abilities. He would also be acutely aware that a minister of education was the custodian and paymaster of some thirteen billion pounds, of a service over which he has no real control. The experience had added to his reputation as an agonizer. In the final analysis it was the quality of the teachers that counted. If that were lacking, sensible direction from national or local government and adequate funds could be of little effect. Sir Keith, to his credit, was concerned about that too. He had returned the previous day to the need for education authorities to be able to sack 'dud' teachers from a profession from where they could do such disproportionate harm. The newspaper warned

that unless he ended the absurd distinction between the mechanisms for determining the pay of teachers and the conditions of service, enshrined in the Remuneration of Teachers Act he would probably be condemned to wringing his hands vainly on this crucial issue.

It thought that Sir Keith's spell in 'the white man's grave' would be remembered for his decision on the sixteen plus and his management of the education service in a period of financial austerity. He had said the previous day that the system was standing at a watershed. Whether or not decline or regeneration waited across the divide would not be known for some years. The issue would turn largely but not wholly on teacher quality. Without improvement there, rejigging examinations, revising curricula and a host of more or less administrative reforms would be to no avail.⁽⁷⁾

If Sir Keith thought that he was clearing his thoughts with the speech, the newspaper was just as quickly filling them up for him. However, it serves to indicate the apparent near-intractability of the problem - which was being attacked over those fifteen years (and more) by similar such sniper shots as 'duds', 'bored silly', 'beatings', 'part-time workers', 'valueless qualifications' and many other emotive terms.

Nevertheless, Sir Keith, feeling that he had now won over the population with his threat to remove the 'duds' who were no longer creating 'bored silly pupils' - less than six months later - he nearly came to the first of many 'final' decisions that the sixteen plus would go ahead. The newspaper headline ran, 'New certificate to

(7) T.N., 7th January, 1984, p.9.

replace Ordinary level and C.S.E. examinations'.⁽⁸⁾ One wonders why the newspaper typesetters bothered to change the typeface from fourteen years previously. The article gave 'nearly full marks for Sir Keith'. It then continued by nearly congratulating him; it would not go fully into congratulations in case the run of events went badly. Nevertheless it thought that headteachers, examiners, essay markers and blackboard-scratchers would breathe a sigh of relief that Sir Keith had decided to introduce a single system for examination at sixteen plus. Also breathing a sigh there would be such representatives of that important band of customers, the employers, the Confederation of British Industry and the Engineering Employers Federation. The universities, neutral in the contest, had for the most part stood aloof, a significant silence in this particular connection. The only group likely to feel seriously troubled by the announcement would be amongst that relatively disregarded and voiceless other category of customers, the parents.

Many of them it was felt regarded the C.S.E. as an almost valueless qualification in terms of employment prospects. The newspaper quoted a then recent survey which showed one third of parents thought it a waste of time. Ordinary level was recognized everywhere as the hard currency and ambitious parents did not want to see the standards, that it represented, compromised or confused.

The newspaper thought that Sir Keith's plan ought to be judged on whether it threatened to cloud the assessment of important standards. The scale of educational attainment was so wide that any attempt to impose identical syllabuses and identical examination papers would be

(8) T.N., 21st June, 1984, p.13.

bound to be unfair to pupils at one end of the scale or the other. Sir Keith had been at pains the previous day to allay fears that the new system would operate in any such crude fashion or that it would be based on any misconceived idea that the cause of equality was served by obscuring evidence which betrayed unequal attainment.⁽⁸⁾

If the reality of standards related to Higher Education was threatened by the change, the universities would have made more protest. The newspaper here was inferring that the framework for the new examination must have maintained some Ordinary level standards, otherwise the universities, representing the standard required for the Ordinary level portion of matriculation would have made more protest at a drop in standards. They, indeed, were responsible for much of the higher Ordinary level grading through Oxford, Cambridge and the Joint Matriculation Board.

Thus, if the dangers of the change could be avoided there were great advantages in a single system. It was unfair on late developers that children were effectively divided into sheep and goats as early as fourteen. The concentration on an academic approach and intensive study of a limited number of subjects was as cramping to the development of Ordinary level as the non-academic bias of C.S.E. courses was limited to the rest. There was more to the concept of quality than the special qualities needed for Higher Education.

However, the article was not really recommending a change to a single examination, but doing what newspapers enjoy most; it was recommending to the person responsible that he should be forthright and take a decision - yet at the same time it was covering itself

(8) T.N., 21st June, 1984, p.13.

against the decision proving at a later date to be wrong. All newspapers like to boast that they were right or, 'as it was pointed out in this column several months ago'. Rarely, however, do they admit to being wrong and say 'as we wrongly pointed out in this column'. Hence errors or apologies generally appear in obscure parts of newspapers. Thus it was that having persuaded Sir Keith, if he even read that newspaper, that the universities seemed to be giving a tacit agreement, and so also were the employers, nevertheless he should not be too hasty. For the article had a converse argument also.

It stated that the misgivings remained real and the distinctions between Ordinary level and C.S.E. in the public mind were so firmly established that it would have been wrong to hide it. The Ordinary level end of the new system would be administered by the G.C.E. boards who would remain responsible for their standards on national criteria while the authorities administering C.S.E. would continue to be responsible for the other end of the scale. It would be up to them in concert to give substance to the idea of a joint syllabus and a real continuum of achievement, and to seek in time to demonstrate in practice that the disparity of esteem was unfounded.

Thus it was that 'the thinker', Sir Keith Joseph combined his 'duds', 'part-timers' and their useless qualifications with his new suggestions for a framework for schools in the January; by June he announced that education had entered a new era. Yet the attacks on teachers and on the system had been so plausibly delivered that problems remained - especially since it seemed to be true that the issue turned on teacher quality, so constantly criticized.

Certainly there were built-in problems with trying to alter the

climate of the education service and to alter the equipment for measuring it, both at the same time. Sir Keith had already tried to explain that his key target was to bring more pupils upto the level of C.S.E. Grade four, across the curriculum. There are two ways of looking at this suggestion. One way is that it is ambitious to bring upto 90% of the school population (for many of whom formal examination was never meant) upto average performance level in a range of subjects. If this target were not reached - and the problems of simply teaching without disturbance in the schools, then, were massive - would secondary education have failed yet again? Would it not be better to open the scope of certification for all levels to the growing movement of profiled records of achievement in order that non-academic and personality factors could be included along with formal results on a comprehensively descriptive document? The other way of looking at Sir Keith's statement is to dismiss it, since grade four was supposedly 'worthless' anyway. The latter response is of course more cynical. One thing Sir Keith was determined to do was to reduce the number of pupils being judged as failures. Making them all achieve grade four C.S.E., some might say, could do just the opposite, and produce more failures in many people's minds. Sir Keith had stated that the existing examination system did not tell employers or anyone else whether a pupil could do specific tasks such as calculate percentages in mathematics or understand the split-infinitive in English.

The employer, in fact, probably wanted his infinitives to be split. More importantly, most employers had been pursued for years in an attempt to link them with the education service. The endless range of their brains had been picked, also, in an attempt to find out what

they wanted of the school-leaver. The most consistent response came as a snipe, when not requested, that school leavers were innumerate and illiterate. The employers, then, presumably knocked back another whisky and whimsically reflected that they had left school at fourteen for the real world and that was why they had got on! The statements issued by differing employers' bodies were often confusing. In 1983⁽⁹⁾ a group of prominent businessmen stated a need for radical change in school curricula. In 1984⁽¹⁰⁾ the Institute of Directors claimed that employers did not want a change in the examinations system. In 1981⁽¹¹⁾ a serious gap was discovered between employers' stated needs and the actual demands of the job. The year before a survey had shown that employers were satisfied with their school-leavers.⁽¹²⁾ That same year, 1981,⁽¹³⁾ however, an article had indicated that poor attenders were better at finding jobs. Most ominously in 1974, as if to confirm teachers' doubts, it was discovered in a survey that early leavers were quite successful on the job market.⁽¹⁴⁾ The implications of these last two does not bear thinking about! However, the one overriding theme is that employers' opinions are many and varied; and so also is the influence of examination documentation on the employment opportunities of young people. Therefore, to try to gear entirely the education system to the world of work could be quite hazardous.

Sir Keith continued in his explanation that pupils were able to

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- (9) T.N., 9th January, 1983, p.3.
(10) T.E.S., 22nd February, 1984, p.3.
(11) T.E.S., 12th June, 1981, p.6.
(12) T.N., 19th August, 1980, p.4.
(13) T.N., 11th September, 1981, p.13.
(14) T.E.S., 26th July, 1974, p.3.

obtain a pass without showing certain basic knowledge. Therefore, when trying to judge standards and to improve them it was not possible to be precise about what was meant by them. A grade criteria furore had come to the surface in the newspaper on the eleventh of September 1981 with an attack on the Government's proposals by a leading professor,⁽¹³⁾ four days before the appointment as Secretary of State of Sir Keith Joseph. During 1981 the normal simmerings about education within the Cabinet had been going on with hints that a radical change in the secondary curriculum was imminent. Whilst Sir Keith was still removing the eggs from his suit, as Industry Secretary, the atmosphere was changing. The Schools Council, having already been restrained had caught the wind of change in Government attitudes. With pique the Schools Council replied that 'any new examination which it did not control' would be scrapped within ten years.⁽¹⁵⁾ The Council was right about an imminent scrapping - but within its own walls, and sooner than expected!

Those years from 1981 to 1984 allowed these early thoughts to ferment. In his Sheffield speech of 1984, Sir Keith was continuing to 'build up' confidence in education. He felt that the people of Britain ought to be dissatisfied with the standards expected and achieved in their public examinations at sixteen plus. If they considered what their children and young people had it in them to achieve; if they considered the challenge of the world into which they were going, then the examination standards were far from impressive. Continuing the theme of criteria for grades, was the similar theme of defining the

(13) T.N., 11th September, 1981, p.13.

(15) T.E.S., 3rd April, 1981, p.6.

curriculum for pupils from five to sixteen years. He wanted everyone to know what children should be achieving at different ages.⁽¹⁶⁾ He did not believe that this could be done overnight and said it would be achieved over the kind of longer period in which educational advance had always been made in Britain.

It is no wonder that Mrs. Thatcher might think that he had 'gone native'; Sir Keith even invited the teachers and their unions to take part in talking on reform. If he actually meant talking with himself this was indeed a breakthrough. After one of the, by then, ritual pay and conditions battles, an independent arbitration body had concluded that teachers' unions and any Government of the day had lost the barest skill of dialogue.

Many people have associated the Sheffield speech with a major breakthrough in education. Even the dismissal of the Schools Council, for some, may have been seen as a correcting procedure in helping to reassert the target of education. However, it was the Schools Council and similar groups which had kept up the momentum of investigation into the curriculum throughout the 1970s. Indeed it was later seen that it was that section (for Curriculum) of the Schools Council, which the Council's Joint Examinations Committee tried to silence or ignore, that had had the most far-reaching brief.

An article revealed⁽¹⁷⁾ that the Governing Council of the Schools Council had resolved by sixty four votes to one that there should be a single examination system at age sixteen plus. Equally interestingly the newspaper continued by adding that the Schools Council had

(16) T.N., 7th January, 1984, p.1.

(17) T.E.S., 19th September, 1975, p.1.

sponsored a series of feasibility studies with the G.C.E. and C.S.E. examination boards to see if examinations could be set which tested, at one time, high flyers and those who scrape low grades in C.S.E.

The snags were the same as those which already existed in the two separate examination systems; however the expertise was available to get round most difficulties. The teachers seemed to have been more enthusiastic than the examination experts, and the C.S.E. boards more eager to go straight ahead than the G.C.E. boards. Oxbridge had reservations. The grammar school lobby repeatedly referred to the shortcomings of experimental examinations for the brightest examinees.

More disquieting were the questions about the effect of the necessary changes in examination techniques on syllabuses and choice of classroom activities likely to be conducive to success.

The newspaper's use of the word 'disquieting' was an understatement. The word could here be compared to the seismic shudders which sometimes occur in isolation well in advance of a major earthquake.

The article felt that it was not clear how far syllabuses had been trimmed in certain subjects to establish a common body of examinable material, but there must have been anxiety about the possible backwash effect on the curriculum.

The Joint Examinations subcommittee had been adamant about it being teacher controlled examinations and great weight had been given to the availability of mode Three forms of examination and teacher assessment in association with more traditional techniques. The examination bodies were much less happy than the teachers. Examination bodies had long and painful experience of human weakness and the propensity of pupils (and teachers) to cheat if they had the

opportunity. The boards maintained overall fairness and security. The public at large also placed high value on the examinations system as an independent check on schools.

Mode Three examining had flourished and so had the trust and confidence built up by the external examining system of long standing and great probity. There was a risk of forgetting that professional freedom was counting on that element of public trust. The Secretary of State's responsibility was to ensure that public examinations never turned into private ones. Any general extension of teacher assessment would have placed more importance on the standard of external moderation required to regulate it.

By insisting on a single examination system instead of a single examination the subcommittee had left open the door for examination papers which explicitly distinguished between more and less advanced candidates in subjects like mathematics and modern languages. That was an important distinction; one that many teachers would prefer not to have to make, but without it the technical difficulties would threaten to overwhelm the whole system. The grading system followed logically from recently-introduced Ordinary level grades and the existing C.S.E. system. However, there were administrative issues; and there were some people, probably, who pretended that once the Secretary of State had ruled on the main issues, suitable administrative issues would evolve.

The report seemed to address most problems. The Schools Council reflected the consensus of opinion of schools. A marriage of G.C.E. and C.S.E. made more sense for comprehensive schools, the article maintained, than the maintenance of two separate systems rooted in a segregated secondary system.

Perhaps the article had touched on a basic raw truth here. It may well have made sense to have a common system for comprehensive schools but for those who did not want comprehensive schools the sixteen plus may well have seemed to be a common enemy.

The article asked that given the over-riding objective of creating a more open system which carried a larger group forward with exceptions of success, was it either necessary or desirable to fasten a grade upon everyone at sixteen (except the hapless minority designated as misfits whose label would be that they got no label at all).

The Whole Curriculum Project had been forced to consider questions like those and had reached certain answers; but the Joint Examinations Committee had been prevented from doing so by their terms of reference. To them the Whole Curriculum 'merchants' were just an irritating diversion.

The newspaper felt that it was by no means clear that the sixteen plus was the kind of examination that was really wanted. It was not crystal clear that what was needed was an all embracing examination which could discriminate between individuals arranging everyone in finely judged rank order.

The point which is being brought out here is that criterion-referenced grades on a leavers' certificate maintain the concept that people have different abilities and the rank order of Ordinary level and C.S.E. is perpetuated more subtly; whereas a progressively profiled leavers' certificate is more able to break through the barrier, that academic skill and craft skill are simply different skills and only history has made one seem better than the other. Some might say that the former system is elitist and that the latter system is egalitarian. However, if academic achievement has quality in its own

right why should it not be able to 'hold its own' even on a sophisticated record of achievement which might give much room to the other types of skills - the exact skills of personality, sociability and adaptability which are immediately applicable to employment.

In returning to the article, a significant conclusion was being reached. It was thought that certain people would have liked the examinations system to do a different job (perhaps at a different age) of making sure that certain levels of competence and mastery were being generally achieved. But whatever view might be taken of these content matters, the short answer was that these had been treated as closed questions. By not asking them the subcommittee had made their task easier and had rocked the boat less; but if they were not going to ask them who would?

In reality, if the educational world were not yet ready for the G.C.S.E. it was certainly not ready for the combined record of achievement. A question could be asked whether the profiled record of achievement would have been too much change too quickly; or should the mood for change have been used to make 'the big push'? Unfortunately the records of achievement might have been seen to be too egalitarian, even too socialist. Therefore, although the Conservative government had created the atmosphere for change that particular change was probably too much to ask. A government less committed to preserving aspects of the 'status quo' might have found it an easier task.

One problem which arose here, however, was that these newer

concepts came at a time when education was under heavy fire. In October of the previous year⁽¹⁸⁾ Sir Keith Joseph had been delivering his own bombardment. He had recently issued a handbill for distribution on what for him must have been the uncomfortable but fashionable pre-election 'walkabout' and 'meet the people'. The leaflet mentioned 'the giant menace of inflation'. In fact inflation was not the real menace, for his philosophies. He believed that a 'bigger, more damaging ogre stalks the land in the form of fanatical socialism and in the decline in standards of education and behaviour and the weakening of the family'.⁽¹⁸⁾ The newspaper explained that private reading and family life were an integral part of that public man's personality. He drew deeply from the two in formulating his philosophy on life in general and Conservatism in particular. He believed that the simple, single, wrong idea of the Conservatives' opponents which presented a greater danger to Britain than even inflation was the idea that the State knew best and that the private citizen seeking his own interests within the law was immoral.

The article maintained that Sir Keith's most difficult task when expounding his theories was the fact that the opposite idea (of Marxism) was easy to grasp whereas the contrary arguments (of the Conservative party) while no less powerful were more difficult to comprehend, especially in the atmosphere that was then prevailing. His failure to spread the Conservative doctrine, he blamed not only on himself but on other politicians within his party. His public performances were spiced with buoyancy but, it was claimed, he veered towards pessimism in private. He erroneously admitted guilt,

(18) T.N., 3rd October, 1974, p.4.

thought the newspaper; a thing which had never been regarded as a virtue in politics. Thus his tendency to self-criticism was not thought to be a 'plus' in the corridors of power.

He admitted that he used to worship the bulldozer and go to bed happy that he had given the 'go-ahead' for yet another block of flats. Later, more currently he had realized that he was destroying communities. He told his constituents at his adoption meeting in Leeds that they had indeed chosen a keen young man; but had he not seemed inexperienced. When first they had chosen him, he had said, both he and they disagreed about almost everything. As the years had gone by they had got closer together. What he had in those days was booklearning; what they had was life experience; bit by bit he had come to see the booklearning in the light of the judgement of life.

Such honesty and sincerity is, in fact, overpowering. From a man of his intellect this was surely a 'cri de coeur', not political speechmaking. Such total truthfulness could be considered to be naive; and to some people naivety in a high-ranking politician raises suspicions. Seventeen days later he did just that. A leader article on page one⁽¹⁹⁾ stated that the previous day Sir Keith had denied that his major speech in Birmingham had been intended as a bid for leadership of the Conservative party. Sir Keith's comments about birth control and its application among socio-economic groups four and five had sparked off a tinderbox of reaction, most of it hostile. He had admitted the previous day that he had been naive and should have devoted a separate speech to the subject. Even the content of his admission was over-frank for a politician trying to get his party to

(19) T.N., 20th October, 1974, p.1.

power. Yet the admission was only one side of the emotions which were to come out; for he explained that the speech had been for the moralization of Britain and had been widely misinterpreted as an attempt to swing the party to the right.

He went on to set the educational scene against the social backcloth. Real incomes had risen beyond what anyone had dreamed of a generation ago; so had educational budgets and welfare budgets, delinquency, truancy, vandalism, hooliganism, illiteracy and with it came the decline in educational standards. Some secondary schools in Britain's cities were dominated by groups operating extortion rackets against small children. Teenage pregnancies were rising; so were drunkenness, sex offences and crimes of sadism.

He knew that some universities had been constrained to lower their standards for entrants from comprehensives, discriminating against the more talented because they came from grammar or independent schools.

Therefore since those universities were financed directly by taxpayers only a minority of whom would have access to them it was the right of the public to pass judgement on how money was spent. He felt it was the right of all to question in the light of experience the rapid expansion of universities. When young people were taken away from their home milieu in late adolescence, crowded together in age groups with diminished parental and adult influence and the social disciplines which the need to earn a living imposes, was it surprising that their late adolescent rebelliousness should feed itself and seek ideological rationalisations; left-wing ideology was so convenient for that purpose; it required little knowledge and less analytical thought, just a compendium of all-purpose phraseology.

He felt that many would, no doubt, grow out of this when they left for the world of work, but not all. Some would carry on an extended adolescence as teachers in schools, polytechnics and universities. Some abused their power and authority to urge 'liberation from the trammels of outmoded family life'; but what had been the result? Drugs, drunkenness, teenage pregnancies, vandalism, 'drifting' - then given new names but basically vagrancy.

If Sir Keith thought that teachers were busy producing all of this it is no wonder they could devote little time to his educational standards. Thus it was, nevertheless, that within twelve months of that occasion when the Whole Curriculum Committee was suggesting their particular view of a more liberal examination qualification, their striker hit a cracked bell. This was in spite of the fact that some of the concepts which they had suggested were to be picked up again later and used by Sir Keith.

It was in fact in the following year that the Whole Curriculum Committee's suggestions came to the surface in a newspaper article.⁽²⁰⁾ The readers were informed that a major revision in style and purpose of examination in secondary schools had been proposed in a report from a committee of the Schools Council that week. 'The Whole Curriculum 13 - 16' called for a system of assessment that would not perpetuate the divisions in the curriculum between academic and non-academic pupils. The committee believed that what was increasingly required in the fourteen to sixteen age range of secondary schools was not so much terminal measures of achievement to be used for selection purposes, as the kinds of assessment which provided teachers, parents and pupils

(20) T.E.S., 5th September, 1975.

with guidance. It wanted every pupil to be given a documentary record of its attainments, interests and aspirations on leaving school. Examination boards should widen their responsibilities to validate these documents and offer a comprehensive assessment service to replace the present system of examination at sixteen plus.

Then came the ice-clear logic to reappear years later in assessments that differentiate between different kinds of achievement rather than different levels. If the criteria of educational achievement were widened, it was stated, more pupils would enjoy a sense of personal achievement. The selective function of examinations at sixteen had hampered attempts to establish a more liberally-conceived curriculum. But the importance of these as entry qualifications to higher education would be reduced if proposals for broadening the sixth form curriculum (the proposals for Normal and Further^(20a)) were accepted.

The report came out against the common system of examining at sixteen plus then being considered by the Schools Council.

Thus, the Whole Curriculum Committee's proposals were so radical that they were seen as an automatic threat to attempts to establish a common sixteen plus; but that was partly because of the then prevailing attitudes of the examination boards, of the organizers of sixth forms and of the administrators of Higher Education.

For all the Whole Curriculum Committee of the Schools Council seemed 'out of line,' many of its suggestions have since taken place. Besides the suggestions that have taken place there may well be others, not currently acceptable. Of these latter some may have served to indicate where the future direction lay.

The Committee believed that the sixteen plus would do nothing to
(20a) Times Higher Education Supplement 5th July, 1974 p.2.
T.E.S. 1st Nov. 1973, p.6; 13th Nov. 1974, p.4

raise morale of one quarter of all pupils who left school without paper qualifications. It believed a pupil who had completed a course of secondary education should be offered a documentary record to that effect. The record should include evidence of attempts in mathematics and language, refer to achievements in additional courses, pupils' extra-curricular activities and also their contribution to school life. Discovery learning and new aims for education which included such things as moral behaviour, social sensitivity and the spread of individual learning, required new approaches to assessment. Those new techniques should help the teacher to teach better and to educate the pupil to assess himself.

The Working Party avoided any prescription for the curriculum but said instead that there needed to be more consultation between teachers, parents, pupils and society at large about the aims of education. Teachers should take the final decision, but the curriculum ought to be formed by a social compact or educational covenant between all interested groups. Though there was room for local variations in emphasis, the principles of this covenant should include a respect for pupils as persons and an entitlement of all children to an education which made available the widest range of knowledge and skills possible, equipped them for a job and Further Education, and treated them as responsible partners. Parents, they felt, had a right to be consulted in any decision affecting a child's future, particularly where course options were involved. Teachers were the mainspring for curricular improvement and all teachers were entitled to contribute to decisions about a school's aims and policy. Teachers were entitled to have their expertise recognized when they offered advice to parents. The reconciliation of views although involving conflict and being time-

consuming might be possible, if explained in terms of the particular relevance to peculiarities of teaching and learning rather than general propositions held to be true in all circumstances. The curriculum was a matter for negotiation, not prescription. Mr. J. Hipkin, secretary to the Working Party said also that the curriculum should not be regarded as the exclusive province of professional innovators. Mr. Hipkin, who was at that time the director of the Advisory Centre for Education in Cambridge, said of the common system of examining at sixteen plus that he believed it to be a false trail. It would be out of date before it was ratified. The report shifted the focus for curriculum development from the Schools Council to the schools, with the Schools Council taking a supportive role.

It has been stated that attitudes which prevailed at the time of the Whole Curriculum report made the report seem to be a threat. One of the groups affected by the report was the examining bodies. It is necessary to go back twenty-five years to consider their position. In 1951 when the G.C.E. first appeared as a single subject examination instead of the old School Certificate (requiring passes in a group of subjects) it was based on the belief that individual children had different aptitudes, that what the schools taught should match these aptitudes and provide for these differences. The 1944 Act inferred the right of each child to be educated according to age, ability and aptitude. This was for some eventually interpreted as being in separate institutions. Even so, from thenceforth examination boards would have to reflect child variability rather than to set examinations and expect children to match up to them; examination boards would respond

to the schools rather than schools to the boards. The schools would also have to shape the curriculum to suit the child. The system would now centre on the schools and the examination boards would service them.

An increased range of subjects would be available from which most children could at some point be guided in order to maintain balance - this was an early principle. That, however, was simply the curriculum. For examination purposes, it was for the top twenty per cent that the preparations were going on. It was considered that this percentage could obtain five passes in Ordinary level. In other words, traces of the old School Certificate principle laid the foundation for examinable groups in the new secondary schools. Even so, the single subjects in allowing for individual talents would allow for a differentiating curriculum and a cluster of passes in certain subjects was probably not the essential philosophy - even though eventually it did come down to the same thing for the child of grammar school ability. The secondary modern children would not have to suffer the same fate of being tied to past traditions. They would not have to work towards targets set from outside the schools by external examining bodies. The third component of the tripartite system was the technical schools which lay somewhere between the other two.

From the start the G.C.E. appeared to make its own pace as a single subject (not School Certificate-style) examination. The fact that the universities appeared to control major decision in Ordinary level policy, especially with two leading boards being based in Oxford and Cambridge, reinforced the system. London University and the Joint Matriculation Board cemented this structure. A popular board in Further Education colleges was the Associated Examining Board especially

since they offered Engineering, Technical Drawing and Commerce, upto Advanced level also. The Associated Examining Board had an individual slot in this system. It maintained the esteem of Ordinary level standards for technical and vocational subjects; and it was independent of any university.

Very quickly this new Ordinary level examination, far from being mainly an avenue of approach to Advanced level and university, had a much wider impact. Industry and commerce used it as their own matriculation. However as if to reinforce the cyclic nature of education it was the five subject pass (which was similar to the School Certificate) that became the most common statement of eligibility for different institutions. This then became a psychological challenge for many. The secondary modern schools also picked up this gauntlet. The 1944 Act type of equality was to be approached through the back door for the secondary modern schools by allowing their pupils to take the G.C.E. Ordinary level, originally deemed for the grammar pupils. Thus, those from secondary modern, denied access to grammars, took and passed the same examination. At first this was looked on patronisingly, even with warmth by those who felt comfortable in the tripartite system. It soon turned to the glowing warmth of embarrassment, however, as the better streams of the secondary modern schools produced better results than the lowest streams of the grammar schools. Thus equality by access to the same examination was changing to a different concept in some people's minds - equality of access to institutions i.e. the comprehensive school. This latter was, of course, attacked unceasingly from every angle and from the highest sections of the hierarchy in a way which the tripartite system had only suffered to a minor degree in its later years. Although Ordinary level had, then, taken on different

purposes for different people it still allowed many pupils an opportunity which had not been intended for them. Other political, social and economic factors raged on throughout the decades whilst the examination retained some stability.

The examination successes of the secondary modern pupils raised the question of a suitable alternative for those not able to take Ordinary level, in the secondary modern schools. The original target group and presentation of the Ordinary level, the fact that many more streams of secondary modern pupils were attempting with, now, growing failures, helped the movement of attitudes towards a different examination. Parents, pupils and teachers now wanted little of the secondary modern freedom from the established contract. There was demand for stimulation within the school combined with the external acceptance of the terminal certificate. The Chamber of Commerce, the City and Guilds and the Union of Educational Institutes had covered and provided for the educational demand; but conversely, in those early 1960s, vocational education had low esteem and the Ordinary level style academic examination meant success for many. Local Proficiency Certificates were devised and authenticated locally. Eventually the Beloe report ^(20b) in 1962 carried the mood of many in the educational world. It recommended that a new examination should be introduced. It was to live side-by-side with Ordinary level and to be devised by teachers. A subject-orientated, single-subject theme was retained. There also still had to be a target group. This was the notional forty per cent below the Ordinary level twenty per cent; thus sixty per cent of the secondary school population was provided for. There was still little enthusiasm for the idea that the missing forty per cent had skills that were different from those to be examined in a traditional

(20b) Secondary School Examinations other than G.C.E. (Beloe Report)
H.M.S.O. 1960

examination. The fact that many of that forty per cent would not work properly for the C.S.E. reinforced the idea that by low-grading a certain proportion, credence is given to those who pass well, that is, that the low-achieving pupil, does so, wilfully, not wishing to take part; or so hopelessly, with so few human, recordable, positive aspects that they are inwardly dead.

The Certificate of Secondary Education brought in the new idea of a no pass-fail concept whereby even ungraded went onto the certificate; in Ordinary level no grade was given below a certain level. Whether 'ungraded' offers some sort of comfort is debateable. Nevertheless, continuous assessment of work in the two years before the examination could help to compensate some of this, and C.S.E. allowed for this. The examination also allowed for more adventurous activities within the classroom, moving away from the widely-used written approach. The curriculum expanded to reflect the changes. There were three Modes of examination. Mode One was where the syllabuses and examination were set by a subject panel; marking was external. The panels were mostly the teachers within the board's area; Mode Two had a syllabus agreed by the board and the school. Examination and marking were external. Mode Three was a syllabus agreed by the board and school, the examination devised by the school and agreed by the board and internal marking approved by the board through external moderation. The Mode Three was the one which offered the greatest manoeuvrability and the examination boards were to provide the room for this. The character of different boards was often reflected in their attitude to Mode Three.

One of the main features of C.S.E., then, was the element of

control given to teachers; in that different atmosphere of the 1960s, teachers, knowing what was needed, were given the opportunity to implement it in the classroom and on the C.S.E. examining bodies and other national organisations advising the educational service. However, G.C.E. and C.S.E. ran alongside each other. The possibility of a borderline pass in Ordinary level or even a failure made choice of entry for one of the examinations difficult for many pupils. The influence of parents over entry showed up in the total numbers entered for some G.C.E. subjects which far exceeded the target group. The G.C.E. boards made two concessions, eventually, in an attempt to ease this. They allowed a C.S.E. grade one to equal a G.C.E. Ordinary level pass. They also changed their grades and removed the pass-fail concept. In the same way the C.S.E. boards called all grades 'A' to 'E' pass grades whilst the old passes were still the equivalent of 'A, B and C'.

Newsom's 'other half' - the lower forty per cent not in any examination target group - mainly by this point were taking Mode Three examinations, if taking any at all. The greater classroom flexibility made this seem more logical. In response the C.S.E. examination boards allowed 'limited grade' Mode Three examinations. Excluding the now sacred grade one, pupils had a less demanding syllabus to follow. This was a differentiated examination under the same title often as the Mode One or even the Ordinary level. The idea of a top twenty per cent for G.C.E., the next forty per cent for C.S.E. and a remaining forty per cent covered partly by limited grade C.S.E. eventually moved from one into the other so that virtually a whole intake might all sit together for some of the larger-entry subject examinations in C.S.E. - with or without concern for pupil, parent, teacher or employer

criticisms of value of qualification or constraint of examinations. In fact the C.S.E. was offering all pupils the chance to show what they could do, in teacher-initiated, relevantly-devised examinations using a varied range of assessments, including continuous and oral - thus reducing the reliance on a single, terminal, traditional examination. Yet decisions were still having to be made which separated out the goats from the sheep in some cases not long after the 'eleven plus' (end of primary school examination) would have sorted them. Pupils were put into 'C.S.E.' or Ordinary level groups from the end of third year in the secondary schools. Many found that they were in C.S.E. groups for most subjects, only serving to underline previous suspicions. Parent-teacher tensions grew around the decisions on entry. 'Double entry' eased the pressure on the surface. Where syllabuses overlapped pupils would enter G.C.E. and C.S.E. as a safety net. This created extra work for pupils and teachers, complex and never-ending numbers of papers to be sat between April and June and large bills when education authorities had to decide, eventually, that they could only pay for one examination board level in any one subject. Thus entering at both C.S.E. and Ordinary level in one subject - double entry - was often banned. Thus also some subjects disappeared from the curriculum if teachers could not offer a C.S.E. for the less able who might choose their subject. With contraction in school sizes the problem sometimes went into reverse and a whole ability range might be in one class being taught to both G.C.E. and also C.S.E. Modes One and Three; or subjects, at lower ability levels, especially disappeared from option choice - thereby distorting the balance of curriculum on offer.

It has been shown that suggestions for a single system had been put forward at administrative level at the end of the 1960s and probably earlier. At classroom level the need for it was obviously also growing. The Cambridge University Local Examinations Syndicate joined with the East Anglia C.S.E. Examinations Board to form the first consortium to offer sixteen plus in five subjects - Maths, Geography, English, Technical Drawing and Biology.⁽²¹⁾ Their target was to produce examination papers suitable for the existing, official target groups of G.C.E. and C.S.E. - the top sixty per cent. The eventual examination included some common papers, some differentiated papers or some differentiated questions, or common papers. Presumably in order to avoid objections from every quarter about the eventual certification, although candidates sit one examination, they eventually receive two certificates G.C.E. and C.S.E., showing grades 'A' to 'E' and grades one to five, or ungraded.

Walter Roy, a headmaster with long experience of examinations, in simple terms described his view of the events of the next ten years. During the middle and late 1970s the pressure on the government to establish a common system was building up rapidly. The Schools Council, the teachers' unions and the C.S.E. examining bodies themselves provided the impetus for such a movement and certainly responded to it. Whilst there was some divergence of view between C.S.E. and G.C.E. bodies their community of interest appeared greater than any differences and the then Secretary of State, Shirley Williams, decided on a thorough appraisal of the problem. Waddell, a distinguished, retired civil servant, was invited to chair a high-powered committee of

(21) W. Roy, The new examinations system, G.C.S.E., 1986 (Bekenham) p.8.

educationalists whose terms of reference were to look at the possibility of introducing a common system of examining. The main recommendations of the Waddell Committee were in favour of a common system. They included statements advising national criteria, school-based and board-based examinations, the co-ordination of sixteen plus examinations by a central body, and a new structure of examining bodies.

However, the Secretary of State still hesitated and with the election of a Conservative government in 1979, the whole issue seemed to be shelved, at least for the time being. Although the new Conservative government seemed firmly wedded to the retention of G.C.E. Ordinary level, certainly while Mark Carlisle was Secretary of State the movement in schools towards a common system accelerated. More and more joint sixteen plus schemes got off the ground in nearly all parts of the country. The number of entries increased rapidly and many comprehensive schools by 1980 were running two or more sixteen plus schemes. The Schools Council, a widely representative body of teachers, local authority officers and politicians, parents, employers, Her Majesty's Inspectors - in fact education's parliament and those responsible for overseeing the public education system - went on record in favour of a common system at sixteen plus. Soon after Sir Keith Joseph was appointed, he dissolved the Schools Council and in its place established the Secondary Examinations Council under Sir Wilfred Cockcroft. This body was appreciably smaller than its predecessor and consisted of nominees directly appointed by the Secretary of State. Its brief was not only to oversee and develop the examinations system in the country but also to report directly to the Secretary of State from whom it derived its authority and much of its money. But what

sort of system was it to develop? How long could the division between G.C.E. and C.S.E. be perpetuated, bearing in mind what was happening in the schools.⁽²²⁾

As soon as the new Secondary Education Council had come to grips with the problem it recommended exactly what its predecessor, the Schools Council, had advocated - that the need was for a common system.

For some time the Secretary of State was reluctant to accept that recommendation and talked about 'harmonizing' the dual system rather than changing it. There was no doubt that among Conservative Members of Parliament there was considerable pressure to retain the G.C.E. Ordinary level - that symbol of academic respectability still seen as a guarantee of standards and selectivity even within the comprehensive system. However, in spite of certain political pressure, the popular appeal of the common system was unmistakable and finally in June 1984 the Secretary of State announced the introduction of a common system to start in 1986 with the first G.C.S.E. examinations to be held in 1988. But it was evident, even before the decision was announced that the freedom to which schools and examination bodies had been accustomed was to be severely curtailed. First and foremost, the Secretary of State made it clear that each syllabus had to conform to national criteria and that he himself had to be satisfied that such criteria were known to, and followed by, the designers of syllabuses.⁽²²⁾

Clearly, now, more direct governmental pressure was being exerted upon the schools. The influence which it has been suggested that the examinations boards had had upon the schools was in no way similar to

(22) W. Roy, The new examinations system, G.C.S.E., 1986 (Beckenham) p.10.

the direct intervention of the Secretary of State. In fact, the boards had responded well to the pressures and moods of society and of the schools; at times it was they who had carried onwards the torch, which kept going when the schools' initiatives were being extinguished.

On first appearances, then, it would seem that education in England and Wales was bumping its normal, slow, inexorable route to change: that in spite of the normal assortment of obstacles and reverses the greater majority of those involved in or connected with secondary education were all grudgingly moving towards a common aim. Surely over the years the major educational changes had not gone smoothly, yet they had still continued towards a general improvement of the system? Had not previous governments of the day always appeared to run somewhat roughshod over those connected with education in trying to press ahead for improvement?

The answer to some of these questions might seem to be in the affirmative. Some might argue that the Wilson government had similarly crushed opposition to its comprehensive juggernaut. Yet down at classroom level there was a different feel to this 1980s movement. From the start of the Conservative political continuum there was a suspicion amongst many maintained school teachers that some sort of punishment lay in store for them. It would be naive to dwell upon proverbs relating to female wrath; yet the ever-increasing tide of unimagined dismay made many wonder whether the rule-book had ever existed. Possibly hardest of all to swallow was the tirade of criticism poured onto the classroom teachers.

Yet the movement towards a common examinations system seemed to have its own logical momentum; and it attracted the professional

support of those teachers who helped it along. It seemed to have an ideal length of preparation, some twenty years. The idealism of its evolution, however, was soon to meet up with the reality of life.

CHAPTER 2

IDEALISM AND REALITY; THE PESSIMISTIC VIEW OF EVENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE G.C.S.E.

The general climate within the schools had been moving towards a common system, towards a consolidation of the changes which had slowly taken place during the late 1960s and early 1970s; these were the changes where the atmosphere within the schools had become better for teachers and pupils. The pastoral system was growing; pupil-teacher relations were improving; parent-teacher relations at the local level were improving; the content of what was taught within the schools was being discussed openly as staff met under the convivial atmosphere of the revised pay awards under the names of those in charge of the reviews - Houghton and Clegg. However the comprehensive ideal had attacked some of the foundations of the establishment and at the same time that the state schools appreciated their newer confidence, the establishment was clawing away at the foundations and the common examination at sixteen had a crucial centre to its debate - that was to ensure that standards were maintained. Since standards were an issue central to the development of a common examination at sixteen, the issue of standards in the schools remained constantly up for discussion. Whilst the teachers were talking about replacing the Ordinary level (which represented standards) with a hitherto unknown sixteen plus, more and more people were trying to show that the previous Ordinary level concept of achievement-standards was not being met; that is, that standards in the schools were not maintaining the tradition and quality which Ordinary level had come to epitomise. The argument for a common examination system, in other words, was in a way inadvertently providing the unasked-for platform from which the schools were being criticized.

The sixteen plus was fuelling the fires to burn both itself and the schools.

Some of these themes were picked up in an article entitled 'A question of Confidence'.⁽¹⁾ It maintained that all along there had been three main differences. Two were interrelated: how to design an examinations system for a wide range of ability; and how to ensure that in doing so standards at the top end were not allowed to slip. Both appeared to be central issues on which the desirability of the system depended. The third, deciding upon the administrative structure appeared subsidiary. If it was subsidiary it would be quite wrong to allow the differences in deciding on the structure to decide the fate of the system itself. In objecting to the Joint Examinations Sub-committee the three Oxbridge boards had chosen to raise the issue of standards and teacher control, of the deployment of resources, of the freedom of choice and of parents' wishes.

The eight G.C.E. boards examined one million candidates. The fourteen C.S.E. boards examined six hundred thousand. Fourteen universities, the employers and the parents regarded the G.C.E. boards as the most reliable judges of school achievement. The reputation for probity and independence which they had won had been built up over many years. The voices of the boards could not be ignored and, it was felt, must not be ridden over.

The newspaper felt that if the Schools Council had any sense it would not accept the Joint Examinations Sub-committee report in its existing form. The Secretary of State could not afford to alienate the G.C.E. boards to such an extent if he wanted to carry public confidence in the reform of the secondary school curriculum. He could not afford to sanction anything which smacked of expensive reorganization.

(1) T.E.S., 12th December, 1975, p.2

for its own sake; nor which appeared to pose a threat to academic standards in schools.

Then the article gave some sinister reminders. There was already a powerful groundswell of opinion against the Schools Council. There was also concerned public opinion outside education which felt that the teaching profession was not maintaining acceptable standards. It was very important not to allow plans for the administration of reformed examinations in schools to add grist to either mill.

So it was to be that with a few cracks of the whip the examinations boards decided to put their combined heads together. With a quick slice of the cleaver the Schools Council was to be cut to pieces - but standards in the schools, that would just not go away quite so easily.

Meanwhile in Manchester the Roman Catholic secondary schools had not taken up the comprehensive challenge along with the state schools. Therefore tripartite and comprehensive systems ran alongside each other. With Victorian Manchester brashness Mr. R. W. Baldwin, the chairman of governors of Manchester Grammar and also member of Manchester Education Committee, in order to make his point actually published a pamphlet analysing the results of secondary schools from 1966 to 1973.⁽²⁾ The comprehensive results compared unfavourably with the surviving unreorganized grammar, technical and modern schools. It was accepted that examination results could not be the sole judge of success; however it was a stronger indictment of Mr. Reginald Prentice's claim that the grammar school stream children would do just as well whilst the next twenty per cent down would do very much better in comprehensive schools than they were doing in secondary schools. The pamphlet maintained,

(2) T.E.S., 12th October, 1975, p.2.

therefore, that Mr. Prentice had mis-led the country because he did not understand how little can be said on this subject with any assurance. The editorial then made one of the last remaining references to one of the original platforms for the comprehensive argument.

It felt that when the battle of examination statistics died down, what remained was a good deal of anxiety and an imperative need to make a success of comprehensive schools which were here to stay not because someone could prove they would achieve better examination results but because the invidious system of selection into separate schools at eleven, which made sense when eighty per cent of pupils left at fourteen years of age, was intolerable in the long run.

The examination statistics battle did not die down. The fourth Black Paper was published in 1975 and the leading article of The Times took up the issue of standards which was now linked in with discipline. It felt that certainly reorganization had made these ills more visible but many other factors also: the growing size of schools, the changing attitude of teachers and the decline of traditional authority in the family, at work and in the state itself had contributed to the disturbing conditions in some secondary schools.

The paper then pointed to the reason why the establishment was fighting back so consistently and trying to dislodge the comprehensive schools. It felt that if the Black Paper erred by regarding comprehensive schools as the root of all education's ills, Mr. Prentice, if he yielded to the pressure to introduce legislation to coerce the authorities which had refused to 'go comprehensive', would make the opposite error; it was important to allow and even encourage a diversity of forms amongst which the comprehensive would clearly be dominant; but its dominance should not exclude other patterns. Belief in a panacea,

whether it was the re-introduction of selective schools or legislation to introduce a universal system of comprehensive education would only stunt the spontaneity and initiative on which the development of education had often relied.⁽³⁾

In fact the successive Black Papers started to turn grey as researchers made accusations of fraudulent research techniques and flaws in the statistics supporting a contributory argument.⁽⁵⁾ Eventually a paranoia entered into the down grading of comprehensive schools,

'There are many good comprehensive schools, we are not anti-comprehensive. Two of the researchers have children who are attending or have attended comprehensive schools; (nevertheless) it is our concern to provide the best educational opportunities for all children School children in West Germany are two years ahead of the great majority of English children in Maths. West Germany now has a selective system of schools similar in many respects to that which we have largely jettisoned. One tentative proposal might be the development in our cities of some specialist comprehensives. Such a development would rationalize scarce resources and allow the development of centres of excellence within the state system. Similar developments have been started in the United States of America in the form of "magnet schools". Could not we consider some similar exciting initiatives here?'⁽⁶⁾

As one sees and reads of the suggestions of the educational pundits

(3) T.N., 15th April, 1975, p.15.

(4) T.E.S., 16th December, 1977, p.8.

(5) Sunday Times, 9th December, 1979, p.17

(6) Marks, Pomian, Srzeanicki, Standards in English Schools, National Council for Educational Standards; examinations results research project, Report No. 2, 1983, p.4.

over the years one wonders who seriously expects a totally perfect system. May Britain be so totally reflective and subjective that it needs to compare one detail from another completely different culture or even different country and use it as a stick to beat the system. Clearly there is always a need to look beyond our horizons and keep an open objective attitude in order to continue striving for the best. Yet in our two-party political system this leaves the educational world vulnerable to massive swings of direction. The commanding majorities of either party at the beginning, of each 'new era' give such a strong mandate for change that perhaps Prime Ministers, looking towards areas of change which most readily show 'new era' evidence to the public, use the schools as their display board. Education presumably is one area where much energy can be burned up in 'change' and many 'new era' theories most easily held up for inspection, fondling and self-satisfied congratulation for 'necessary change' that has had to be enforced. It includes, of course, children. They are the hope for the future. They are also, cynics might add, non-voters. In that respect they are the ultimate immature, new-fangled consumer. Nor can they respond in a democratic way to how they feel they are being treated. Besides, they are transient groups only passing through. The cynic might also firstly concede that the only ones able to speak on their behalf are the teachers since they alone understand education 'at the chalkface'; yet secondly teachers, the cynic might add, are well-known for their 'contrary' attitudes; they traditionally complain about their conditions of work and pay, but with their holidays who would take them seriously?

Other countries' educational phases which are propounded in the United Kingdom are not taking place in countries with the same social backcloth, nor possibly with the same intense desire to prove such

things as the totally errant direction of the previous government's educational motives. More often than not education in other countries is viewed in a more circumspect way. More especially, it is probably felt that even where it is accountable to the consumer-parent, the educationalists know their job and should be best left to get on with it. If the educational system changes to a more liberal or more traditional form there, it is because it is responding to the needs of society. In the United Kingdom it is sometimes imposed at intervals, rather than subsumed.

This may be partly in the nature of the British in that they take themselves very seriously much of the time. Their formality and the formality of the development of their educational history may have made them less able to respond to change naturally; it often happens in jerks after a period of obvious unsuitability. Yet even so it has offered example to much of the world at times. In its hatching phases however it is best kept slightly to the background until it is well-mannered enough to meet the international public.

Meanwhile, in the 1970s, the attacks on standards through Black Papers had done damage. But it is still worthwhile considering that the polemic had been stimulated further by efforts to make one system; furthermore the whole comprehensive movement had almost removed another touchstone of good standards, the grammar school. All in all the reorganized secondary sector seemed to attract criticism like flies to fly paper.

It is necessary next to look at another aspect of the whole issue and to go back fourteen years. When Mrs. Thatcher was Secretary of State for Education, she published in December 1972 her White Paper

on education policy, looking ahead over the coming ten years. She changed the emphasis of spending from higher education to schools. Apart from plans for pushing ahead with a Plowden-style nursery plan, a reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio (which was taking place anyway through a falling birth rate since 1964); apart from improved teacher-training and a replacement of substandard secondary schools, a change in the role of teacher-training colleges, some ominous statements about polytechnics and universities The Times⁽⁷⁾ saw the only omission was of any provision for the improvement in the financial status of teachers. Recurrent annual expenditure on schools was to rise over the decade by six hundred and thirty million pounds. No part of that extra sum was expressly set aside for the purpose of giving teachers a lift in the pecking order. There were some - even outside the National Union of Teachers - who thought that no other single measure would do as much in the long run for the quality of publicly-provided education, ran the article.

So it was then that roughly from that point in time teachers felt the effect of, or actively pursued further changes in the schools and in their own conditions of service. Mr. Hattersley picked up some statistics from the White Paper and challenged Mrs. Thatcher in the House of Commons. He then wrote to The Times⁽⁷⁾ to boast of his further victory. He claimed that apparently Mrs. Thatcher now admitted despite previous denials that the average annual rate of growth in education was planned to fall from 5.4 per cent, 1969 - 1972, to 3.4 per cent, 1973 - 1976; whereas the real national income would grow more rapidly between then, 1972, and 1976 than during the whole

(7) T.N., 7th December, 1972, p.19.

of the previous decade.

Irrefutably, therefore, he claimed, as the nation grew richer Britain would allocate fewer resources to education.

As it happened Mr. Heath went to the nation in the February of 1974 in the midst of the three day week and lost the election. When Labour came to power they then found themselves making similar reductions in spending as the need for 'cuts' grew. Mr. Reginald Prentice admitted in the House of Commons that the education service along with other public services would be affected by the decision to limit growth of public expenditure to an average of 2.75 per cent over the following four years.⁽⁸⁾

Mr. Tebbit stated that the Labour Party was now committed to a lower level of educational expenditure than that for which it had indicated in opposition only a few months previously in the House.

Mr. Prentice replied that there would be a growth of educational spending, although a slower growth than Labour would like; education would not bear a disproportionate share of the sacrifices involved.

Whether there was difference in intent between Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Prentice could possibly be judged by how they went about their tasks as ministers. Whichever, the cuts continued, smudging over party differences in attitude towards education.

John Vaisey, educational commentator and author, wrote that he was busy musing whilst awaiting the arrival of the North of England Education Conference when there came to him the title, 'From Flo' to Reg'. Looking back over the past few years, he maintained that one could see periods of boom and slump, the great Tory boom which petered out in 1964 and then the second Tory boom which petered out

(8) T.N., 20th November, 1974, p.14.

in 1973. These were periods in which substantial increases in education spending took place. One could also remember periods of quite savage retrenchment in the post-war period which might be given the title 'From Flo' to Reg.', since Dame Florence Horsburgh was the most savage cutter the education system had known and it looked as though poor Reg. Prentice was going to bear a similar set of stigmata at a time when the economy was taking a real nose-dive. What was most marked in recent times, he felt, was that things had changed. When Mrs. Thatcher was appointed Secretary of State for Education she was greeted with a howl of horror which was mean-minded, snobbish and stupid. Yet manifestly in the past four years a radical change had taken place in thinking about education. The 'left' had largely lost interest and 'the right' had developed a positive interest, seeking in many respects to undo the harm that they thought had been done since 1957. (9)

Thus the cuts were imposed by both parties alike; although one party might have been 'cutting back' whilst the other party might have been more interested in 'cutting out'. Also, as John Vaizey pointed out, the 'right' was developing a crusading spirit. Not only that, but after laying low during the 'Plowden years' it was voicing its opinions and gaining support. John Vaizey recalled the difficulty of even organizing a balanced, lively debate a few years previous whenever it was an educational theme. (10)

He referred to the opinion that the mere fact that one was discussing equality was itself a 'left-wing' notion calculated to

(9) T.E.S., 13th December, 1974, p.4.

(10) T.E.S., 13th December, 1974, p.4.

prevent an adequate supply of 'right-wing' speakers. Had the debate been on some other issue of more interest to the 'right wing', more central to their philosophy, for example the validity of the apostolic succession or on the divine right of Kings, there might have been more 'right wing' speakers.

At first then, the public reacted indignantly to educational cutbacks. There were protest rallies of teachers, students and parents at Westminster in the Autumn of 1975; and the National Union of Teachers thought that it would be a good idea to urge teachers to take 'no cover' action for absent colleagues.⁽¹¹⁾ After the cuts, came the deeper cuts. The Education Secretary even threatened to resign; but since few people wanted the 'white man's grave' other ministers must have pretended not to notice. Just to make sure that the threat did not become too serious, Education got off more lightly in the round of cuts every now and again.

An article explained⁽¹²⁾ that unlike the Social Services education had escaped lightly in an unavoidable restraint of local services. The reasons for this were many and complex. Education was the predominant service provided by local government, the demand for education was much more definite because in many areas it was actually defined in statutory terms, whereas local authorities had fewer obligations in the areas of Social Services.

This adds one possibility to the consideration that education was the 'white man's grave'; that is that by both law and budget-size and also by demand it stood out from the other services. However if

(11) T.E.S., 31st October, p.3.

(12) T.N., 30th December, 1975, p.9.

it were thought to be often the 'white man's grave' it might not necessarily be the 'white woman's grave' since it clearly did not impede the early political career of Mrs. Thatcher excessively. As with most things, however, timing is all-important. The strong suggestions of Mrs. Thatcher during the Labour years did not fit totally the mood of the country; whereas ten years later moving from early 1970s to early and mid 1980s the country seemed to be developing more taste for change.

Similarly the swing of the political pendulum can sometimes make almost totally contradictory arguments seem quite universally acceptable; and yet although they seem contradictory, because they take place against a different social and historical setting, they are usually not quite so contradictory. In the same way that the 'Wilson years' started to seem justified for some as they gathered pace; so also the 'Thatcher years' seemed to be justified, for some, as they too gathered pace. However, electorates tire, premiers apotheosise and, in general, life goes on.

As unofficial educational debates became the 'standards' debates, over education, the teachers became more and more dispirited by the volume of criticism. The Advisory Centre for Education reported the low teacher morale.⁽¹³⁾ The educational press joined in the attack saying that there was little to show 'for ten expensive years' ⁽¹⁴⁾ and commissioned a survey into boredom amongst secondary school pupils.⁽¹⁵⁾

(13) T.E.S., 10th March, 1975, p.7.

(14) T.E.S., 14th February, 1975, p.4.

(15) T.E.S., 18th July, 1975, p.10.

Since the curriculum was part of the debate certain subjects were criticized. That particular article suggested more time to the arts and 'less boredom with academic subjects'. An accusation of boredom is, of course, a snipe. If people wanted to prod at something in the curriculum, they called it boring. Like mud, the word sticks and is difficult to remove, similarly so, defending standards. Even the Schools Council 'confirms fears'. Meanwhile the discipline and violence factor was on the increase and Secretary of State for Education Mr. Mulley agreed to a national inquiry on this much more readily than on other worries;⁽¹⁶⁾ and parents were being urged to adopt a more aggressive attitude towards schools. Books were published on how to deal with schools.⁽¹⁷⁾ With the pressure building up Mrs. Shirley Williams took over the helm as Secretary of State *implied* meekly, at first, that standards might have to rise.⁽¹⁸⁾ The unions sensed a change of mood from the government. The Schools Council was to lose much of its power.⁽¹⁹⁾ In the Ruskin speech,^(19b) the prime minister, Mr. Callaghan, announced an official national debate on education. He also expressed open concern at the poor liaison between industry and education, stating that the schools should teach the skills that Britain needed.⁽²⁰⁾ For the first time for a while also a survey was being taken of the effect of stress on the teaching profession, and a noticeable increase in breakdowns and stress-related deaths was reported by the Autumn of 1977. Teacher accountability was being pushed forward. The National

(16) T.N., 22nd July, 1976, p.2.

(17) T.N., 27th July, 1976, p.2.

(18) T.N., 24th September, 1976, p.2.

(19) T.N., 21st October, 1976, p.4. (19b) T.E.S. Oct. 22nd 1976 (delivered at

(20) T.N., 19th October, 1976, p.1. *Ruskin College, Oxford University*)

Union of Teachers became wary of Government moves in this direction. During this period also the Conservatives in opposition were setting up a series of studies monitoring education. The more frequent approach to monitoring at that point was that of tests for pupils. The Conservative answer to the national debate was a programme for raising standards. A new task force for education, industry and engineering was set up. The Conservatives promised the new alternative of variety and flexibility.

Discipline had been steadily deteriorating; however, for some people falling standards meant teachers were not doing their job, not that teachers were being unfairly attacked. When the European Court started to take an interest in corporal punishment in schools in the United Kingdom the Secretary of State started the debate on this subject. At this point opinion polls tended to show strong support for the retention of corporal punishment by parents and teachers. The Conservatives were generally for it, the Labour Party, officially, was against it. The national debate by Labour seemed somehow to spirit it away. The debate itself seemed also to be spirited away. In fact the debate served mainly to bring the Conservatives to life. They stated their intention to publish results of schools and more details of how they would give more power to parents as governors. In fact the national debate showed up Labour's paucity of views on education. Labour tried to dress up some of the Conservative views on increased control for governors in the schools, but it was spotted,

'Labour steals Conservative clothes' (22)

Meanwhile Mark Carlisle became shadow Education Secretary. This

(21) Times Higher Education Supplement, 6th March, 1976, p.6.

(22) Sunday Times, 24th July, 1977, p.5.

shadow appointment seemed at the time to have more significance than governmental announcement. Later, Mrs. Williams challenged Mrs. Thatcher, shadow prime minister,^(22a) to present a unified Conservative policy on education in the Summer of 1978. This may have been to try to get some more good ideas. Oxfordshire soon afterwards became the first local education authority to publish its examination results voluntarily.⁽²³⁾ The Labour government nearly made a major educational decision on the Waddell report but at first pulled back because of the possibility of an early general election. Then the head of steam was really lost when it finally published its White Paper proposing the introduction of the sixteen-plus in 1985⁽²⁴⁾ with, largely, the Schools Council, left out of it.

The Labour Party also picked up the parental choice of school theme with a complicated approach which would not damage the system.⁽²⁵⁾ The Conservatives simply stated absolute freedom of choice. As if to show that it, too, could be radical the Labour party announced that it intended to remove the charitable status of public (independent) schools. This type of response from Labour was to lose them public favour. In the run-up to the May election of 1979 the Schools Council developed 'second wind', planning again its own curriculum projects and working with the Open University on curriculum and assessment. By that point all but six local authorities had abolished selection or submitted plans to do so.

The teacher restlessness had continued to simmer. Although there are some cynics who consider this to be a permanent state, it was the

(22a) Mrs Thatcher leader of Conservative Party Feb 1975 -
Conservative govt. June 1970 - March 1974, May 1979 -

(23) T.N., 23rd September, 1978, p.2.

(24) Times Higher Education Supplement, 27th October, 1978, p.2.

(25) T.E.S., 10th February, 1978, p.5.

Lord (James) Callaghan - Ruskin Speech

(Kindly supplied by Lord (James) Callaghan)

Lord (James) Callaghan - Ruskin Speech

(Kindly supplied by Lord (James) Callaghan)



national discussions on Conditions of Service which had alerted the unions. It had been announced in February 1978 that after three years of talks, the culmination was likely to be a national agreement.⁽²⁶⁾ With true British grit the National Union of Teachers banned the distribution of free milk; the National Association of Schoolmasters weighed up the situation very warily. With confidence in state education at a low ebb, the election took place. Mrs. Thatcher gave the traditional shadow prime ministerial, final rallying call to the nation. With grammar schools all but gone, Ordinary levels on the way out and over a decade of abuse poured onto the reorganized secondary sector, she asked for and received a mandate to make Britain great again.

By February of 1980 Mark Carlisle edged towards one of the 'standards' issues by announcing that the Ordinary level was to go and a single examination, not system, was to replace it. This of course was not seen by some as in the same area as a common system; it was thought to be discriminatory. He suggested alternative papers at different levels of ability for the top sixty per cent, the co-operation, by consent (not amalgamation) on 'national criteria' was to start preparation for five years from then.⁽²⁷⁾ The Schools Council would be asked to comment but would not be the co-ordinating authority. Mr. Carlisle said the Government was concerned for the bottom forty per cent for whom there would be no public examination and they were looking closely at the idea of a final school leaving certificate. The hallmark was given when the secretary general of Cambridge, Oxford

(26) T.E.S., 10th February, 1978, p.5.

(27) T.N., 20th February, 1980, p.1.

and Southern Schools Examinations Council representing four G.C.E. boards said that they were pleased by the proposals for alternative papers for children of differing abilities and for the G.C.E. boards to retain national coverage of schools. To many this must have seemed like a conjuring trick to make two examinations seem like one.

Certain considerations should not go unmentioned, here. One noteworthy point was that this article was on the front page of a leading daily newspaper. Further points were that the Schools Council was being increasingly pushed to the periphery. Some may say that the Schools Council with its high teacher representation expressed ground opinion of teachers. Others may say that with its high union representation it only represented the more aggressive view of the professional teacher. It has already been stated that teachers moved between different roles, their professional dedication being more visible at times in one role than another.

Another noteworthy point in the article was that the possibility of the leaving certificate for the bottom forty per cent of the ability range was still being considered. Whereas separate papers might to some have seemed discriminatory, the leaving certificate, if it could have included a broad range of references might have begun to balance out the former.

Nevertheless by the weekend the Sunday Times was cool,

'Examinations, far short of the pass mark'.⁽²⁸⁾

It certainly seemed like one way of keeping cherished standards by keeping cherished standards.

Almost one year after telling the Headmasters' Conference that

(28) Sunday Times, 24th February, 1980, p.13.

their schools should, indeed, be achieving high academic results because of their advantages⁽²⁹⁾ (but not concluding the logic with the comprehensive side of the equation), Mark Carlisle was replaced by Sir Keith Joseph, with Dr. Boyson as his trusted schools' person. Towards the end of that year, 1981, rumblings and misgivings about grade and subject criteria continued with headlines declaring that the Government commitment to the examination was weakening.⁽³⁰⁾

That Autumn the Schools Council subject committees put forward a joint plea for greater emphasis on assessment through oral work and the acquisition of skills and attitudes. The Council also wanted some common papers for the whole ability range where possible, all except Modern Languages which wanted differentiated papers.⁽³¹⁾

As the debate continued over the future of the examination system at sixteen, so the injection of ideas from a new Secretary of State began to be felt. The Government decided that, since teachers saw the 'arbitration rule' as a lever, it would remove the automatic 'fall-back' plus a threat of sweeping changes, in pay and conditions,⁽³²⁾ linking them to rewards for 'good' classroom teachers. As an extra bonus the Prime Minister announced the intention to abolish inflation-proof pensions. The unions also became aware of the growing work-load which profiles brought onto teachers, but in spite of this much of the teaching body felt that there was a good direction for education.⁽³³⁾ The same newspaper was also trying to get the Government to move away from the concept of a block grant in order to

(29) T.E.S., 3rd October, 1980, p.10.

(30) T.N., 18th December, 1980, p.6.

(31) T.N., 1st September, 1981, p.2.

(32) T.E.S., 29th May, 1981, p.1.

(33) T.N., 13th September, 1981, p.2

make education more accountable and stop the thinking that good pupil-teacher ratios meant that there was therefore the potential for good teaching. It stated that the education offices of central and local government had pushed forward the notion of the 'block grant' by which education would be financed from the centre (and thus escape the scrutiny to which all other local spending should in those straitened times be subject).⁽³⁴⁾

The Secretary of State was making his own personal contributions to the curriculum debate by suggesting that the schools should preach the moral virtues of free enterprise and the pursuit of profit.⁽³⁵⁾ It was in that year also that the decision was taken to publish Her Majesty's Inspectors' reports of formal inspections. The ill winds which the Schools Council had scented eventually came to pass when the Department of Education and Science would not be guarantor of new premises. The demise was swift, soon afterwards. A requested meeting with Sir Keith was arranged; but he cancelled at the last minute. Dr Boyson moved in to try to heal the breach. A massive butchery took place, leaving a barely recognizable body held by a thread. There was also a continuation of attacks on 'ineffective teachers' from earlier years,⁽³⁶⁾ Further and Higher Education watched with dismay as the Manpower Services Commission made more and more forays into their territories with the schools to be affected, as a result, in their vocational preparation. It was to be no surprise that a prediction was made that the abolition of corporal punishment was seen to be the most dramatic and far-reaching change in school philosophy.⁽³⁷⁾ A

(34) T.N., 13th August, 1981, p.10.

(35) T.E.S., 26th March, 1981, p.8.

(36) T.E.S., 7th January, 1971.

(37) T.E.S., 21st October, 1983, p.12.

further blow was for the make-up of the Curriculum Committee to be announced, with no teacher representation.⁽³⁸⁾ The setting up of the Secondary Examinations Council as yet another Government agency reinforced the trend.

Stuart Maclure an experienced educational commentator took an opportunity to state his ideas on the direction of education.⁽³⁹⁾ He felt that in the year 2000 the education system would be a more business like affair, more narrowly focussed on tasks to be performed. There would be a sharpening up of the curriculum and an introduction of clearer guidelines laid down centrally, as to what schools should teach. This was being done by the education system because it was the only instrument open to the Secretary of State to bring that about.

Mr. Maclure who was speaking on the theme of young people in the year 2000 said that the emphasis in schools should be on young people's competence and capability which was not the same thing as the ability to pass an examination at sixteen.

He felt that the public exercise going on at that moment was designed to make assessment more and more important. He did not think that it was a good idea but the only lever the Secretary of State had to pull was the lever marked 'examinations'. Mr. Eric Bolton, the new senior chief inspector for schools, had said that education was too dominated by written work and the regurgitation of facts. Examinations contributed to the narrowness of teaching and learning.⁽⁴⁰⁾

(38) T.E.S., 4th November, 1983, p.6.

(39) T.N., 18th January, 1984, p.3.

(40) T.N., 18th January, 1984, p.3.

It was not without some element of truth, then, when there was a statement that the current low morale might hamper attempts to make the curriculum more relevant to children's needs.⁽⁴¹⁾ These attempts were put together in the 1984 White Paper 'Better Schools'.^(41a) In that publication⁽⁴²⁾ the newspaper stated on the front page that much was made of the need to heighten 'standards', yet Sir Keith knew well, it thought, that it was often a tired code-word for the sort of overly academic education of which Britain had a superfluity. Indeed Sir Keith said himself that the time had come for academic pupils to acquire 'manual skills', meaning presumably working a keyboard rather than building a set of shelves. The White Paper quite correctly made much use of the need for schools to differentiate much more accurately than at that time between able and less able, the natural achievers and the pupils who needed to be pushed. Yet the logic of differentiation could be separate schooling, perhaps at age eleven, perhaps later - Sir Keith had had nothing to say about the lack of faith of many urban parents in comprehensive secondaries.

Yet, maintained the article, Sir Keith required pity, more than anything. Despite his centralizing tendencies the schools system would remain an untidy pattern in which change could only be effected slowly. Throughout the White Paper there were tantalizing glimpses of an emerging system that might begin to give schools, pupils and teachers a new sense of purpose.

This had been a much repeated concept of that ministry that schools and teachers had lost their way and were looking for a new

(41) T.E.S., 26th October, 1984, p.10. (41a) Dept. Ed. and Science

(42) T.N., 27th March, 1985, p.1 Schools H.M.S.O. (1985)

goal. In one sense it suggests that teachers were still the professionals but that their vocation had waned. Further, it is a hand held out to the profession in order for them to respond and co-operate in creating a new future. At the other end of the rainbow however, for those at the work face there stood the reality of the past dozen years of fighting for the small successes that can make the teaching seem worthwhile, only to be hit by someone sniping on the system.

The White Paper continued by describing a core curriculum in the first three years, limited options in the next two which would be heavily influenced by a vocational plan leading to a sixteen plus test of attainment for all school leavers whatever their ability, to stand them in good stead whether they were heading for work or Further Education and training. It would be foolish to ignore just how difficult it would be to sell such qualitative schemes, the newspaper noted, when dispute was rife over the quantity of money for pay, for rate-support grant, for personnel. Yet it was felt that the White Paper was a plan which, providing Sir Keith and his colleagues could muster their political art, could be sold to teachers, to councillors and to parents. On it or on something like it the economy and welfare of children depended.

Once more then the familiar cycle was at work as a new system began to be seen as necessary. The development which was similar to that which had produced School Certificate, G.C.E. and C.S.E. was evident. Initially the new systems were largely for the benefit of the children and the schools yet eventually aspects of them were turned to serve the purpose of other groups.

As already stated for 1969, therefore, proposals had been put forward for the abolition of Ordinary level which was seen at that time as partly the matriculation process for Higher Education and partly for entry to the professions.⁽⁴³⁾ It was certainly seen, when put into a cluster of subjects, as an indication of a successful secondary education. It meant that the pupil had done well and that the system which produced that result was working fairly satisfactorily - given that for much of the time the progressive nature of education was rather difficult to comprehend; 'comprehensive' was probably an example of just such a development. Because society was complex and had its own expectations of what education should do and because education had its own ideas on what education should do and was therefore slightly mysterious, the need for an overlap of agreement was essential. Ordinary level had come to represent a proportion of that common ground. Its sacrosanct nature depended on the fact that not everybody obtained it. Society was a largely competitive place and understood the competitive reward. Education, on the other hand, saw competition as only one part of the process of schooling. Furthermore education was in the process of dealing with all types and abilities; whereas society could choose with whom it wanted to meet. Because Education was dealing with all types but only issuing a chosen proportion of these with an examination document in which society saw quality (namely Ordinary level) - a dilemma arose.

Society understood the tripartite system of schooling because it separated out individuals and made it more easy for them to be dealt with. The system also reinforced the concept of competition and

(43) G. Batho, M. Booth, R. Brown, Teaching G.C.S.E. History (occasional publication of the Historical Association) 1986, p.5.

rewards. Once out into society, into the real world, these differently categorized individuals could polarize to their appropriate levels and, roughly speaking, one would know where to meet or not to meet them. Yet the schools had them under one roof all together, or rather not together, depending on local educational organization. However, since the teaching profession is (sometimes) a body with at least a few common aims dealing at the very human level of personal contact, so fairness and equality of opportunity for all seemed appropriate. One goal of education, it might be suggested, then, would be to produce a leaving certificate at the end of compulsory schooling which was in some way similar to that which society could understand and was used to. One other goal might have been to teach the secondary age all together as they had been at primary age. However, if the latter idea were too contentious, then at least the former of providing a meaningful statement of schooling might show that society's expectations of education were somewhere visible on the certificate - given that the eccentric educationalists had done some strange things in terms of academic/skill-based education in the process of reaching the end-product of the certificate.

In other words a common leaving certificate at sixteen should not be such a bad compensation for society (provided Ordinary level standards were there for those who wanted to see them) in order to let education carry out the process in the way in which it saw fit. In these pages an attempt has been made to show how the abolition of Ordinary level was a contentious concept. Even more, Ordinary level, is itself a contentious concept. Having it, not having it; being proud of having it, resenting not having it; feeling uncomfortable

about having had the chance to obtain it, resenting not having done the right things at the right time to obtain it; the mere mention of it, in fact - all of these things are, or create, an emotional response in many people.

Because Ordinary level is an emotional concept and because the mid 70s to mid 80s in Education had been turbulent, the development of a substitute for the Ordinary level was always going to be complicated. From the moment that it was realized that serious efforts were being made to remove Ordinary level, the people in whom Ordinary level produces a strong reaction of some sort - all went onto the alert. In the meantime, as it has been implied, Education's efforts to produce equality of opportunity had sailed into stormy waters and unexpected squalls arrived from every (and often the unpredictable) direction. However, the early suggestions which were to form the basis of a common leaving examination had been made and the debate sporadically continued. This went hand-in-hand with discussion on the development of the curriculum for the years of compulsory schooling. Given that the 'abolition of Ordinary level' aroused such strength of feeling, the more radical proposals for the whole curriculum and a suitable certificate for it, at a time of turbulence, tended to be pushed to one side. However, some of them were to be re-used in creating the later framework. Parties who had an interest in retaining the 'status quo' of Ordinary level exerted their own pressures until they were certain of the general mood. Once they were more sure, groups such as the examination boards thereafter helped to guide through the transition.

The pendulum which had swung to the favour of teacher

in the 1960s, began to move back as the 1970s progressed. The picture was not as exact as that, but that was the general trend. Those who were less vocal when their ideas were less fashionable began to put forward stronger arguments as the climate changed. The standards which were represented in Ordinary level and in other traditions were debated with vehemence. Meanwhile expenditure of all public departments was being cut back. For their part the educational body reacted with resentment. Both political parties pursued the same aim, to make the books balance.

As the pendulum swung further away from the teachers, greater levels of accountability were demanded. Criticism of standards, of teaching method and content and of discipline ensued. The suitability of the curriculum for society's needs was questioned. One of the main figureheads of teacher curricular reference, The Schools Council, was depleted. Teacher morale started to go further into decline and with it the energy to innovate and keep fresh its approach to the curriculum and to teaching.

As the last Labour government waned in its educational efforts so the opposition, Conservative party grew in strength. The curricular debate which was part of the Ordinary level and C.S.E. debate bobbed below the surface as the abolition of corporal punishment, the publication of schools' results, parental choice of school and increasing, parent-governor representation were pushed forward.

It has been shown that the new Conservative administration suggested a common examination for the existing G.C.E. Ordinary level and C.S.E. ability range, excluding the bottom forty per cent. This examination was to have separate papers for different abilities. The

growing reaction did not feel that this suggestion satisfied the demands. The Schools Council wanted a greater emphasis on oral work and the acquisition of skills and attitudes, and also more papers common to all abilities.

In further summary of the general atmosphere, it was during this time that pressure came to bear on the teachers. Pay procedures were changed and unions were urged to negotiate on conditions of service. The 'block grant' allocation to authorities was revised. Her Majesty's Inspectors' reports were to be published and the Schools Council was again altered in preparation for total abolition. More governmental agencies were set up which removed even more areas of teacher self-determination in curriculum and examinations. Below the surface and occasionally above, ran the argument of the positive recording of pupils' achievements, competence and capability for certification with less reliance on written work and the reproduction of facts for examination.

Then, as was stated briefly, in January 1984 the Education Secretary addressed himself to one of the issues. It was his intention to raise eighty to ninety per cent of all pupils to C.S.E. grade four, the achievement of average ability in individual subjects; he also intended to devise a system where the absolute and not just the relative attainments of pupils could be gauged by examination (confirming subject and grade criteria). The content rather than the form was his prime concern. He wanted to make examinations better tests of knowledge won, concepts grasped and skills acquired and less of an exercise in sorting children into clusters. His concern was as much for the thirty per cent of children who then left school with

nothing to show for it. It is interesting to reflect that Sir Keith Joseph wanted better content for classwork and examinations; he appeared to want to make the classroom situation more enjoyable. He alluded also to defining the curricula, in detail, for ages five to sixteen so that everyone would know what children should be achieving at different ages. He stated that these proposals were distinct from the proposals for a single examination at sixteen plus on which he had not yet decided.

By June 1984 he finally decided on a General Certificate of Secondary Education. The Ordinary level boards were to administer the upper end of the grades and be responsible for their standards on national criteria; the C.S.E. boards would complement this at the other end. Together they would work out joint syllabuses. The twenty examination boards would merge into five regional boards or associations. Following common syllabuses, in some subjects they would choose between more, or less, difficult papers in others; within the paper they would choose to give a simple factual answer or a more elaborate answer to achieve a better mark. The differential between papers, indeed, was the key to maintaining standards. He also suggested a merit system in order to allow good performance over several subjects to be rewarded. The introduction of grade related criteria was going to be crucial. Minimal levels of knowledge and skill would be laid down and must be achieved before that grade in that subject could be obtained. The examination would take the place of Ordinary level and C.S.E. and would be for all abilities. It was to be examined first in 1988.

As has been shown, in the Spring of 1985 a governmental White Paper, Better Schools reinforced and complemented the move. The curriculum was to include: a greater range of skills, including manual,

for all pupils; greater differentiation between abilities in the material presented to children; a common curriculum in secondary years one to three; with a limited option related to a vocational plan in the final two years, after which the children left work or further education and training.

There was a strange feeling in the schools during those mid 1980s. Under normal circumstances after a campaign of that length, ~~the~~ effort to produce what was generally accepted to be a necessary change, might have brought a sense of exhausted, achievement. Yet because of the close movement of politics and education together in Britain, the movement towards the G.C.S.E. had drawn out other issues. Matters involving all aspects of education were being raised whilst education's new sixteen plus was in the public limelight. The sixteen plus attracted attention for one reason because it would replace that well understood document the Ordinary level certificate, which epitomized standards. This certificate had been put to the test nationally and internationally. Any substitute for it would need to have strong value.

Another reason for which it attracted attention was that it required the co-operation of the teaching profession in order to carry it through. Yet from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s the teaching profession in the maintained sector was withdrawing its co-operation. Therefore as certain aspects of its development came up for consideration and debate, many of those who would use the examination were not taking a full active part in discussion of its detail. Much useful contact normally took place in the teachers' centres where teachers met after school hours on all manner of in-service courses.

However as the relationship between the Government and maintained school teachers deteriorated, the unions recommended that extra-curricular co-operation should be cut.

As often happens when reorganization within a national body takes place, a public unofficial debate bobbed below the surface. Government statements were reported in full and also benefitted from the cohesion of the Cabinet. The statements from the teachers' side were made from a variety of locations by a variety of people with a variety of interests. Union statements for example were sometimes inflammatory or at least provocative. They also fell victim to a press which was largely hostile. Therefore the sixteen plus gave air to a general debate which often put the teachers' case in a bad light. During those early 1980s many groups which had strengthened their position through increased industrial action felt the pressure of new legislation. Severe confrontations between Government and militant groups acted as a brake on the more moderate groups.

The sixteen plus was always going to require massive amounts of extra work by teachers. In a climate where the teachers had been in the ascendent there would have been promises of generous funding of time and money in order to bring in such a dramatic change. However, as pressure against the different professions and work-groups increased, their ability to wring out fair agreements for increased work-loads decreased. The sixteen plus became somewhat like the arms limitation talks; the two sides made occasional dialogue, but the bargaining was really taking place in a different location. As the national profile of teachers deteriorated so public opinion of them dropped and their entitlement dropped with it. Yet when they tried to improve their public image by returning to traditional postures, they

appeared to lose seriousness of intent. They felt in many ways trapped by circumstances. All the time, also, there was the nagging doubt that the Government had 'taken out a contract' on the teachers.

Thus it was, then, that the idealism of the G.C.S.E., generally accepted as being well-founded and necessary, met the reality of the turbulent rhythm of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT GOES UP MUST COME DOWN; THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND THE BEGINNING OF THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS 1940-50

It has been implied so far, that from the introduction of School Certificate through to the introduction of G.C.S.E., secondary education in England and Wales responded at regular intervals to changes in the examinations system (probably more than in other ways). School Certificate, Ordinary level G.C.E., C.S.E. and G.C.S.E. were all attempts to make examinations meet both the changes in - and also the aims and expectations of - the schools. Major social, political and economic movements altered the rate of occurrence of new examinations. Each time a fresh revision took place it was not too long before the original intentions behind it became altered and the new replacement examination was subsequently made to suit the many groups who had interests in it. Like so many aspects of British life it was often when the existing system had become painfully inadequate that changes were made. Sometimes it might be from an unusual source that warnings, premonitions or advice would emanate.

Sir Christopher Soames, European Economic Community Minister, addressed modern languages teachers in this ^{his own} unusual style in 1976. (1) He stated that he would dearly have liked to have had another lunch where he himself could have been listening to the modern languages teachers speak about the state of education at that time which it seemed to him was extremely worrying and left a great deal to be desired. He thought that when Harold Macmillan had made

(1) M.L., Vol. 57, No. 2, June 1976, p.57.

the speech, 'the winds of change are blowing through Africa' it was true; but if only he had gone on to say that it also meant that the winds of change had got to blow through Britain as well. The fact was that the days when Britain drew her industrial, economic and political power from being at the heart of the Empire were over, it meant that Britain's whole attitude had to change. The changes had happened in Germany because they had to start from scratch; but because the British had won the war they thought they could go on in the same old way; and, he felt, they had gone on in the same old way. The British thought that because they had won the war it would come right and that they could afford the British way of life and how much nicer it was than others; and they did not work too hard and there were, anyway, other things in life than work.

Yet, Sir Christopher believed, that now that the British were in the Common Market this meant new materials, new marketing, different agents; it meant learning languages; it meant being able to go to their country being able to understand them, knowing how to sell in those countries; instead of the British looking abroad more and thinking that now they had a European dimension, they were in fact looking less outside and more into themselves and thinking perhaps that it was all so difficult and what could they do about it.

He felt that the Community was not a country in historical terms. It had been parachuted into the world instead of slowly growing into it; for the purpose of commerce and trading the combined communities were exactly the same as if they were one country; one day they were not there, the next day they were.

He felt that one should look at the whole north-south hemisphere complex (the relationship between the industrialized world and the

developing world). The developing world did five per cent of its trade with the communist world, seventy five per cent with the free world and the rest was done amongst themselves, the developing countries. In just the same way that mass democracy brought a desire and a push for the transfer of resources and for the redistribution of income, one now had the same thing repeated in international terms, from the richer to the poorer countries. Instead of bringing raw materials miles across the oceans, for example oil and cotton, and processing it in Britain (The 'Value Added') much of that processing was now going to take place in the developing world. That was what the transfer of resources meant; it meant very considerable problems for the British. The long established countries were going to have to be phased out because they were not going to be needed to do the work.

Yet in business, he maintained, the British must keep ahead of the game and were going to have to change their industrial structure. They must not be too frightened of change. For when the re-distribution of income had been taking place within British democratic society that very re-distribution had been the greatest motor for growth that Britain had ever known and so also it must be between the industrialized and the developing world.

He himself often repeated when he went to visit such countries that they were going to need re-distribution of income; they were going to need a lot of investment from Britain; and investment would only come to people who could show that they would make a profit, use their profit, to see political stability. The oil-price rise had hit the poorest countries much harder in terms of their standard of living. The European Economic Community was the civilian power that could offer

the resources and the help which the developing world was asking for. The community was all of them, including the British. To do all these things the British were going to need a will.

It did disturb him that there was not that will, that the country was so inward-looking. It was, he felt, still retrievable, but an awful lot of that was going to have to be done at a very young age and that was the enormous importance, the enormous contribution that modern language teachers and their Associations and others like it were going to have to make in Britain. They were going, hopefully, to awaken interests.

He had five children and all he asked for in their education, basically was that their interests should be awakened and that they should have a desire to learn and a knowledge of how to apply themselves. He felt that it was through language and the culture of the country concerned that it had to be done. All this was really imperative for an old country like Britain which had been going backwards for a long time, especially compared with their partners. He asked whether it was possible for the British to reverse the trend. He felt that indeed that was possible and that it had to be done. If it were not reversed he could assure his audience of one thing; that it would be totally impossible to sustain a population of fifty-five millions on those British islands at anything like the standard of living to which they had rightly become accustomed; and the British owed that to themselves and to their children.

He felt, encouragingly, that there was no great mystique in languages. Of course it opened up a great deal of culture; but leaving that aside, its other advantage was that it was a means of communication. In the traditional forum he believed the British

were not very good at speaking French because they had been at the heart of an empire that did their bidding and they had taught all these nations English; yet the British would not have their influence in Europe and they would not get their markets in Europe, nor would they succeed in Europe unless they had a feel for Europe, for what the Continent was and for the different ways they thought; and that meant the British opening themselves out to a degree which was almost inconceivable at that point.

Thus it was that in the same way that Sir Keith Joseph had tried to put forward the ideas of profit and business, so also two years later Sir Christopher Soames, in his conversational manner, was trying to pinpoint not just 'Better Schools' but 'Better Britain'. He had prodded at the imaginations of the modern languages teachers who for their part probably responded with exhilaration or frustration, or both. Frustration for teachers, it has been suggested increased from the mid-1970s. Also, a sense that change was imminent grew in the minds of teachers and many others in Britain. There had been something hauntingly prophetic behind this speech. It also had the feeling of somebody trying to break bad news gently. The people of Britain were being asked to reject the erroneous aims of the 1960s which might distract them from their true destiny. Britain must shake itself back to its main function and place in the world. Both knights of the realm had spoken with unaffected, deep, almost innocent belief in Britain.

As has already been suggested, the sense of being at a turning point in the development of Britain, was to allow more profound changes in education and in the revision of the examinations system.

Modern languages teachers, for example, came to realise that they were soon to implement not just another lurch in 'languages' pedagogy, but to fulfil a more relevant aim in teaching languages altogether - that of 'communicability'. Relevance and applicability were to become key points in promoting debate in most disciplines. Many subjects were already experiencing some sort of metamorphosis but it required this more widespread awareness of social, political and economic re-direction in order to carry through a more rigorous reform. It was necessary for attitudes towards certain subjects to change in order to let the disciplinary system settle into a posture which suited the fast-changing world of the 1980s and 1990s.

It is important to consider also some of the wider issues at this point. The subject disciplines, the manner of presenting them in the schools and also their content - all of this was held in place by very complex and subtle forces wherein both political parties could lose or gain. Small⁽²⁾ states that the pattern of knowledge selected and presented corresponds with society's view of the nature, distribution and availability of knowledge and is therefore liable to change as the dominant economic and political groups in society change and as different groups in society change; and as different ideological stances gain precedence over others.

Already, of course, it has been shown that Sir Keith Joseph had spoken out in favour of older British standards, saying that unfortunately socialist ideas were easier to grasp; whereas his own contrary arguments, while no less powerful, were more difficult to

(2) M. Small, Examining French and French Studies at 16 plus: rationale and content, with particular reference to a selection of C.S.E. Mode III syllabuses, (Liverpool University, M.Ed. dissertation, 1982) p.1.

pass on. He also spoke against adolescent rebelliousness feeding on ideological rationalizations.

However Young⁽³⁾ puts forward views against retaining the educational 'status quo' pointing to the stratification of knowledge and the dominance in the British educational system of so-called academic curricula with a rigid stratification of knowledge. He distinguishes between, firstly, 'high status', pure 'theoretical' knowledge taught in homogeneous groups, formally examined and not studied by the low achievers; and, secondly, the 'low status', applied, 'practical' knowledge taught in unstreamed groups not formally examined and taught to the low achievers. He states that academic curricula are based on literacy; they emphasize a written as opposed to oral presentation; are individualist, avoid group work; their knowledge and structuring is abstract unrelated to and at odds with daily life and common experience.

However, whilst conservative in politics Sir Keith had seen error in a traditional, abstract, academic curriculum. He had referred to pupils being 'bored silly' by the 'clutter' which they had to learn. Further, an attempt will be made in this section to show how academic elitism can constrain a curriculum working against the low achievers and the lower orders; and yet one wonders why during the Labour-dominated 1960s the knowledge-based 'high status' British curricula were not put more in touch with daily life. Perhaps, the 'vested interests', the same ones which corrupted each new examinations system to suit their own ends, resisted such reform.

Small⁽⁴⁾ continues in his description of the divisions of

(3) Young (ed.), Knowledge and control; new directions for the sociology of knowledge, 1971 quoted in Small, op. cit., p.11.

(4) Op. Cit., p.7.

knowledge by stating that secondary education in the United Kingdom has developed according to two quite distinct traditions. The first of these is the acquisition of a non-utilitarian/abstract knowledge for leadership designed for a small minority selected by wealth (social elitism) or by ability (intellectual elitism). The second is an education in basic literacy for future manual workers, excessive emphasis on narrow, practical subjects of utilitarian value. The first is gnostic, for the higher orders; it is intellectual, verbal, abstract, profound, involving complex thought processes. The second is 'banalistic', for the lower orders; it is sensual, concrete, superficial, passive, involving the automatic use of knowledge and experience. Such traditions as these two are of crucial significance in the development of the curriculum within the British system for the selection of content in many recent curricula, for offering different curricula to different ability levels. In the public mind, he maintains, the more abstract or theoretical then the more stringent must be the criteria for the selection of pupils to a particular course. Conversely, the more practically-orientated and accessible, the less status it would tend to have.

Sir Christopher Soames had spoken not only of the need for knowing languages in the new Europe but also of the need for knowing how to sell. Hitherto these two were skills that were well-separated; that is, the elitist skill of language learning and the practical skill of selling, of applying a knowledge of business and industrial products.

Small⁽⁵⁾ considers that modern languages and technical education in conception and in the curriculum are at opposite ends of the

(5) Op. cit., p.12.

stratification spectrum. The subjects stand as two good examples and also represent two emerging traditions of the academic/non-academic sections in British, secondary education.

The modern language subject area, like the classics into whose tradition it fitted and which in many schools it has partly replaced, formerly was of little utilitarian value, being, he maintains, associated with the leisured classes. It was a subject area based on literacy and written presentation where the content was abstract, for the most part a high-status area of the curriculum.

Conversely technical education (developing from needlecraft and cookery for girls or handicraft for boys) was always immediate and vocational. It had applied value; its presentation was practical-oral; its knowledge was concrete, common sense and everyday. It had low status.

These were the existing assumptions to which both Sir Keith and Sir Christopher alluded - education and attitudes out of tune with reality. Small continues by describing, however, more recent developments. He states that it had become evident that modern languages and technical education had re-thought their aims, re-constructed their content, changed their teaching methods and were taught to a wider section of the school.

It had of course already been indicated that the social atmosphere inside and outside of the school was changing as the 1980s progressed, thus making certain advances more easy. Small admits⁽⁵⁾ that attempts were being made to weld the two separate traditions of the comprehensive school; that society had become less stratified and that there were

(5) Op. cit., p.12.

different emphases on different curricular areas. The result of this was that by the early 1980s technical education had been upgraded; the technical culture became valid 'per se'; at the same time the modern languages subject area had become more democratized in a downward direction in terms of ability levels to which it was offered. The opponents of this movement in modern languages might refer to a levelling down of the subject area.

A useful hinge point for the consideration of modern languages is the Second World War. There is no doubt that modern languages had grown out of an elitist, classical ancestry. Nor is there doubt that at times it had grown along with practicability, only at a later date to return to its favoured position. Yet at times language-learning had seemed vital.

In war-time Britain the British Council and the Linguaphone Institute organized courses for the instruction of foreigners in the English language. Having been forced to look at language-learning more rigorously it was felt that the Linguaphone course was a great improvement on earlier ones. More unusually, however, was the fact that the Modern Language Association half a century ago seemed to be hinting that English was a language apart from the rest of the world. In itself of course this may be partly true. Yet it does reveal the other attitude that the Association least wanted to promote; that the oddity of the English language went hand-in-hand with the oddity of the attitude of the English people towards other languages.

Another contributor to that same volume wanted to bring to the

(6) Editorial, 'English for Allied Armies', M.L., Vols. 22-23, 1940-42, p.38.

notice of the authorities, at the end of the war the full extent of the demand for trained linguists in the services, civil and diplomatic. This of course, was the better-known side to the war-time modern language-learning effort, that of training Englishmen to speak modern languages. A theme which came through regularly was that of the realization that war had often come about through lack of dialogue between nations.

War-time produced one of the highest levels of practical need for languages. Professor Boyd hammered home this point at his presidential retirement address.⁽⁷⁾ He urged that the country's affairs should be more guided and finally directed by men who had some real knowledge and understanding for the mentality of the foreign nations concerned. A study of Greek was splendid; a knowledge of history, politics or economics undoubtedly provided the possessor with useful facts; but all failed in one factor; the fact that such men had been largely responsible for the guidance of our affairs to a very great extent explained the country's long and glorious list of failures during the last two decades. He could not fail but believe that much could be accomplished by a few men who understood each other's language and mentality, than by the so-called experts in the world who talked past each other and whose conversation reminded him of that of deaf men who replied to remarks they had not heard and who, unknown to each other, discussed entirely different subjects. If the daily intercourse between nations was to run smoothly it should be conducted by men who knew how the minds of those with whom they were dealing really worked - and what was going on inside their minds.

Perhaps Professor Boyd had Chamberlain's Munich agreement

(7) J. Boyd, the post-war linguist: his training and national importance (address by retiring president, Professor of German, University of Oxford, 25th October 1940) M.L., Vols 22-23, 1940-42, p.47.

freshly in mind. Certainly Professor Boyd had spoken out bravely in those early wartime years, albeit in the early stages of wartime emotions. It was, however, a positive contribution towards attempts at resolving long-term misunderstandings, throughout the world (although seen through his eyes).

He continued by stating that there was only one way to achieve that understanding and that was by an exact study of foreign languages and their literature. Those suggesting this would be told, of course, that other means would do. Federation might last while conditions were good but would crumble under the stress of conflict or war. Federation could not be foisted upon a continent made up of countries with different peoples and languages imperfectly understood, with their conflicts and diverse interests and cultures. Certainly the methods of Federation, Leagues or Unions were doomed to failure, he felt, with Europe in that current state.

Sir Christopher Soames, it has been shown, was to press for commercial appreciation of Europe thirty-five years later, but again seeing language as one of the remedies for breaking down barriers.

Professor Boyd, for his part, added that the problem which would face the British after the war would be not that of creating an ideal Europe but of preserving their own country and the Empire; for this task they would need linguists who could deal not only with the chief languages and nations, but experts in all; there were difficulties involved in introducing new languages in either schools or universities yet this was he felt undoubtedly right in principle. Without linguists the cause of the British was doomed to failure from the outset. He quoted the vice chancellor of Cape Town University that they themselves could go no further in the task of civilization in Central Africa or

even in the Union until they knew what the millions of natives say and think.

In spite of the fact that Professor Boyd was quoting something said with the flavour of a colonial officers' mess bravado, the ominous tones of the end of the quotation from Africa sounded distressingly prophetic for Britain,

'If we do not get to know their language
we shall pay for it dearly in the future.'

He continued with a mixture of threats and inducements which was to become well known in Britain during the 1980s,

'Our future policy should be: more guns,
but still more linguists so that if
possible the guns may never be used.'

There was, however, to follow, also, a repetition of the need for a literary-based approach to language-learning. Literature, or the study of civilization, was to be a constant companion of modern languages throughout its swerving journey over the years. At times the language purists may well have liked to see literature/civilization disappear on one of the sharp bends; but it did not do so, as long as languages in schools continued to spread itself either above pure language study to literary academicalism or to embrace the other extreme of the low achievers (for whom a practical 'everyday life' consideration was always to either monopolize or be part of practical language use depending on which modern language pedagogue was in the ascendancy at the time).

As Hitler's war-machine spread across Europe, the Oxford professor of German expanded his ideas further. He felt that when the day came, as come it would, when the linguists would have a larger share in the management of Britain's national and international

affairs they would of course have the practical attitude and direct mentality to cope with it. For when he spoke he had in mind the sort of person who had a sound academic training in languages and literature. But why literature, he would be asked, and why above all philology? In fact Professor Boyd would find that in later years a study of the appreciation of language would surface to an important position several times.

He felt that his opponents would suggest that it was better to have men who were unburdened with useless learning but who knew half a dozen languages picked up perhaps in the countries themselves; that such men had a greater store of useful knowledge and knew nothing that could not be utilized. But in his view such men would be worse than useless.

In fact it was similarly to become a common theme over the years for the ideas of individuals to be brushed aside - as Professor Boyd was doing - with a Gallic sweep of the arms in order to make way for their own opinions. Many modern language teachers themselves would violently attack the varied teaching approaches for modern languages of their colleagues, according to which of the many forms of pedagogy was to be in vogue at the time.

He believed that such people would be positively harmful for they could not possibly possess any knowledge whatsoever of the minds of the people of those countries, though the speakers themselves would be unaware of the fact. The only true mirror of a people is its literature and there is no other means of acquiring a knowledge of a people than by an exact and intensive study of its literature.

He went on to make a few remarks on the training the true academic linguist should enjoy, no matter whether he intended to be

teacher, civil servant or businessman. He believed in the value of philology, but not too much of it; it provided the exact scientific part of linguists' studies and acted as a corrective to minds that were inclined to wallow in the uncertain subtleties of literature. It brought home to the student mind that languages was a living, changing organism and that like literature it revealed the spirit of the people. A study of languages at that modern stage turned them into something static. They became dead languages.

It is interesting to note this statement of Professor Boyd, that a modern language became a dead language unless linguistics was studied. Linguistics, he maintained, separated languages from the peoples, from their history, from their culture and literature, allowing an objective view. Moreover, the exact habits of mind engendered by philological training were not only invaluable for the exact study of literature and of the modern tongue, such a mind was also better fitted to grapple with new languages without outside assistance, whenever required to do so in later life.

No-one would deny the inclusion of some training in history for every linguist. With the history of a people, their language and literature were linked and without it an understanding of their modern problems is well nigh impossible. It seemed to him that an outline of history and its connexion with literature was the work of the schools; if the history outline was supplied by the schools something more useful could be done than at present in the universities. But it should not be history pure and simple. It should be primarily the history of the people, their culture, their thought, everything indeed which would throw light on their mentality. History in the modern language school must come into line with language and

literature.

Such considerations are at the other end of the spectrum from Sir Christopher Soames' and Sir Keith Joseph's practicabilities. On the one hand practical applicability of school subjects such as modern languages seems very far away from an approach, on the other hand where one tries to climb inside the brain of the foreigner by immersing oneself in his or her culture; and yet, the argument seems equally persuasive; perhaps the vital link of verbal communication is what makes up some of the difference. Even so Professor Boyd has a persuasive coercion in his final summary.

He asserted that literature presented to people's mind's eyes experiences which were outside themselves and which they themselves began to live through. The events and emotions it described became unmistakably illustrative of the words and phrases which were its medium. What is more it illustrated the changes these words had undergone throughout the ages until they arrived at the particular conception together with the peculiar mental association that they then possessed.

Only the linguist, he thought, knew the meaning of what was being said in a foreign country and knew what thoughts, emotions and impulses underlined 'the saying' of something. Only the linguist could attain to anything like an adequate understanding of any given foreign mentality, for only he has the key to the foreign mind. When people had attained such knowledge and understanding they need never be surprised at anything that happened in the foreign country. Indeed they should be in a position to make a very shrewd guess at what future action was likely to take place. It was the duty of the

people of Britain, therefore, to produce to the best of their ability more and better linguists; it was highly desirable in the interests of national survival in the years of stress ahead that the linguists should take a bigger share in the guidance of the destiny of Britain.

It is significant to realize that these statements might have found a welcome response throughout many people in Britain at that time: and yet forty years later not much progress had been made in this direction. It might have been a desirable but unusual politician who would have surrendered some of his influence to somebody who could simply 'understand the foreigners'. Perhaps in Britain it was thought to be more desirable for many decades to know how to keep them at bay for as long as possible. Appearing to make concessions to the 'entente cordiale' without really making any, in fact became a political art for many years. It is possible that many British politicians felt that where enthusiasm for co-operation with the United Kingdom seemed serious 'on their part', it indicated that Britain should resist in direct proportion since Britain must have had something to lose. If in fact British cautiousness to 'things foreign' is not irradicable Britain's problems may be deeper seated than might be imagined.

One further point of significance was that it was a university teacher who had been invited to speak and advise on teaching in the schools. In 1940 the universities provided much of the inspiration for the classroom teacher. By 1986, they still controlled the important pass-grades of the examination taken by virtually all schoolchildren - Ordinary level G.C.E.

In the same volume were two other contributions which brought the reader out of the past into the present; emphasis on non-academic language skill was the way forward. The first extract, in the next issue, was a letter in which a reader wrote earnestly in reply to Professor Boyd's article stating that for the 'don' it was typical that only literature and philosophy should hold such value and also that literature and philosophy would be the only true mirror of a people; similarly, that he should think that men who knew half a dozen languages picked up in the countries themselves were worse than useless from the point of view of estimating truly the foreign mentality was erroneous. The writer stated that personally he would put the value of such men above that of the academic linguist who lacked considerable residence in the foreign country, although neither qualification could be really satisfactory without the other.

A second contributor to that volume, S. Helmsley,⁽⁸⁾ a retired grammar school teacher, in discussing performance of pupils in examination for oral tests indicated that just as he and other teachers had found out, the main difference between a strong candidate and a weaker one was mostly the difference in the extent of their knowledge rather than the degree of skill and correctness in dealing with the actual amount known. It was also fairer to the candidate for the examiner to find out how well he could deal with what he knew than to discover how badly he dealt with matters just beyond the range of his knowledge. These two considerations - offering pupils of all abilities to show their skill in expressing themselves in the spoken language, and also the awarding of credit to what was

(8) S. Helmsley, A Direct Method of examinations, M.L., Vols. 22-23, 1940-42, p.29.

known rather than what was not known - both of these were to resurface in the years before the introduction of the G.C.S.E. The G.C.S.E. re-statement forty years later, for some was treated as 'new' breakthroughs in the assessment of 'language skills' or 'positive marking'.

It is possible to detect, even in those war years, the very broad range of aims held by those people having an interest in modern languages. It has been stated that modern languages had a classical ancestry. Over the following years the movement between the spoken skill and written composition was seen by many to be the main debate. During those years the range of ability of pupil, to which modern languages was offered, also extended further. Teachers were to find that slow changes could be more difficult to respond to than massive impositions (such as the introduction of a new examinations system); the latter, at least arrives all in one piece with everyone aware of what is being asked of them; the former 'creeping' change, which teachers experienced over those forty five years occurred as politicians, and others with an interest in aspects of the educational system, flexed their political muscles.

For modern languages, trying desperately to find a suitable, final resting place in the curriculum (one which reflected its exalted origins and also met the changing needs of the second half of the century) there was constant self-analysis. This is picked up in an editorial⁽⁹⁾ which stated that it would be tedious to discuss what everyone knew too well - the sad position of modern languages in our schools. It suggested 1) tolerance; there had to be room in

(9) Editorial, M.L., Vols. 22-23, 1940-42, p.32.

our schools for many different types - for the frankly dishonest exam-crammer ("My job depends on my exam results," he quavers); the direct method fanatic, the pacifist, the Francophile, the Germanophile and the teacher of Latin. 2) A reading and reproductive knowledge of at least two languages. It recommended: the exemption of the non-linguist at the end of the first year at least; the requirement for the rest to learn a) to read fluently with correct pronunciation b) to read with understanding simple literature c) to reproduce model sentences. They would then be able to speak when they reached the continent. They would have a sound foundation when they arrived at university. Written translation and Free Composition should both cease to be compulsory. All attempts at expression in the foreign language should be oral. This would solve at one stroke the burden of correction. Pupils would learn good French instead of writing bad French. 3) Alternation of languages. No, single foreign language should be first. Latin was not easier than French. The Secondary Schools Examination Council had found that papers in German and Spanish were harder than those in French. 4) Equality of Languages. All languages should have equal time, equal-sized sets, equal preference, equal share of the best pupils. 5) Time Table. All languages should have a minimum time in the school life of a pupil. 6) Oral Examinations. The present three minutes per pupil - which he described as an oral examination farce - he felt must be ended; that there should be permanent staff of oral examiners, all the year round, retired teachers between sixty five and seventy. 7) There should be a setting system from thirty down to class size fifteen. Larger class sizes were in reality uneconomical, wasted energy and achieved nothing. 8) Overwork. The continent had found that if a language

teacher overworked he underproduced; that in Britain with a falling school population there would be redundant teachers to allow these reductions in class-size.

In some respects this editorial appeared to have been published slightly too soon. This crusade to improve the working conditions of teachers, albeit rather too much towards languages teachers, would have well fitted the 1970s wage-bargaining table. In the midst of war breaking out in so many international locations it would seem to be at least unusual. Perhaps it gave some breadth to the intense debate of the late 1970s, early 1980s by indicating that teachers' conditions of work had been at least a 'warm' issue even in those patriotic war-years.

The editor went on to suggest 9) Compulsory French. The disappearance, in those years, of the sixth form created less demand for languages teachers. 10) Where was the time to come from? The Spens Report had requested a substantial reduction in the time devoted to Mathematics. The editor felt it was time that the subject created less misery and wasted less precious time.

He continued on a broader, more tolerant note 11) The understanding of foreign nations and an appreciation of their Civilization, Art, Literature and Science. A credit in French at School Certificate could be got without the slightest knowledge of France, with not a glimmer of appreciation of her high civilization and positively no understanding of the ways of the French and their thoughts.

In spite of some personal reflections for the improvement of conditions of teachers, the editor did not lose perspective of that moment in time,

'War has loosened tongues and it is not merely the boys who are appallingly ignorant of foreign nations. No thinking man could doubt that ten years ago our statesmen could have prevented the present war. The nation is clearly paying a price for ignorance of German and of French, of France and of Germany. Of course God made the British and the devil made the rest. The rest, however, cannot be exterminated, so in the end there will be nothing for it but to find out what all these abandoned and Godforsaken foreigners really want. All of them, mark you. If Poland is to be freed, somebody will have to speak Russian rather well.'

The editor returns once more to pick up his theme. 14) The abolition of compulsory French at School Certificate was very wise. In balance, French and German should be made compulsory in the sixth form. This was the very least reply we could afford to the German compliment of making English compulsory and the first language in their schools. The Germans were a formidable foe. Britain dare not forget the power in their universities and their technical schools of university rank.

He felt the importance of languages would in due time be brought home to the nation - a little longer and the Cinderella of the curriculum would array herself for the ball!

It was, indeed to be some forty-five years before a need for languages was to grow spontaneously from the British people. Part of this grew from a realization that Britain was for the first time ever to be joined physically to Europe; that Britain's financial integrity and existence would disappear if the open European business market were not approached on equal terms by the people of the United

Kingdom.

However, the change of attitudes towards the aims of education had, for example, been already starting with Callaghan's Ruskin speech in October 1976. The suggestion that there should be a national debate on education epitomised that unrest. It was becoming clear that some practical application of subjects taught in schools should be considered as the late 1970s passed into the early 1980s. As the political pendulum moved from left to right the climate for some enforced change grew. It would be unfair, however, to see the period during which the educational system braced itself to move into a new era as wasted years. It would also be wrong to be too critical of those who resisted change. It is virtually impossible to stand in the shoes of some past generation and imagine what it was that created certain historical events. However until one has done that, one should not pass judgement too harshly. How often has some ephemeral fashion come and gone without leaving trace. It falls to the lot of some people to provide stability and for others to attempt reform; and yet there needs to be a climate for change. The editor of the periodical who saw wartime misunderstanding as a final indication that languages should be thrust to the forefront of the curriculum had possibly not anticipated the exact post-war climate.

Indeed, it was the actual provision of secondary education for all, rather than its content which fastened the attention of many people; also, there were some who questioned the division of pupils at age eleven. It was to be this very factor, the opening up of modern languages to more aptitudes and older children within those aptitudes which was to put a great deal of strain on this subject discipline, with its classical origins.

Along with the opening up of modern languages to more pupils came the suggestion that in the early years of language learning, success in the skill of using the language (before more complex manipulation of the language was expected) was roughly shared equally between low and high achieving children.⁽¹⁰⁾ This growing realization was to provide much of the momentum in the democratization of foreign languages.

S. Helmsley was a protagonist of the Direct Method since he maintained that along with other colleagues he fulfilled the main aim of teaching languages by teaching pupils to speak it. He blamed the School Certificate examination for the fact that more teachers were not teaching it. He was therefore promoting the use of a language as a skill and also blaming the existing examination system for not reflecting this. Such arguments were to be put forward over and over again by languages teachers; and yet languages teachers made up, for the main part, many of the examiners' boards. They were not always teachers of languages to children of the secondary age group; but nevertheless they were part of the same body of people in general terms.

Thus, in part, hung the framework of post-war modern languages - a formal ancestry trying to adapt itself to the many demands of its extended, growing family. Some of the members of the family were so voluble that they changed the whole family lifestyle, at regular intervals making all involved feel at times that no-one was really in charge. In short, modern foreign languages became very vulnerable to strong changes in suggested teaching styles and lesson content.

(10) S. Helmsley, Education and the teaching of French, M.L., Vol23, 1941-42, p.63.

In 1983 on the twentieth of October, Eric Hawkins, professor at York University, was to give an address. It was the Modern Languages Association Presidential talk at Swedenbury Hall, London. He reflected on the efforts at the turn of the nineteenth century to introduce an oral method of foreign language teaching into British schools and their effects on the present day. Morant, he suggested, had found at that time that the curricular bias was against education for capability and that that very theme had been perpetrated to the present day. Hawkins thought that early efforts at that time to release hold of the classics had been weakened by the competing claims of the German and French language. The early modern language reformers of nearly one century previous at first had seemed to be gaining ground yet they had advanced so little. Professor Hawkins thought that it was only in the 1970s and 1980s that the implications of their demands had been grasped. Hawkins singled out two main themes: the first was the Government's 1880 plea 'The dragon to be slain is grammar/translation'; the second (which was only one hundred years later being realized) was 'trust the ear, not the eye'.

Hawkins thought that the parochial stance of the universities and unimaginative teacher-training were partly to blame. The early reformers' main hindrance, he said, was, however, their failure to understand how modern languages were mastered; and therefore they were unable to propose to schools techniques that could replace 'grammar/translation'. Hawkins saw the need for a situation where the learner had to speak the foreign language. He looked for an

approach on two levels, one of studying the form and how the language worked; the other concentrated on the meaning, on the message. Each level was necessary. Neither was sufficient by itself. Hawkins also drew a comparison between learning a language and learning to swim. There were two levels for this latter also. The first level was the exercises on the bank, concentrating on the correct movement, co-ordinating the leg-kick and also timing the breathing. The second level comprised actual exercise in the water, carefully controlled of course, at the start, in the shallow end. Exercises on the bank could never be real swimming; on the other hand being thrown in at the deep end without rehearsal could bring only panic, thrashing about and drowning.

Hawkins then added to this one further consideration which is vital. One must bear in mind that the only real water to practise in was across in the country itself. How were the two levels to be provided, for the majority of less fortunate pupils who crowded into the new style schools after 1902. A contributor to the 1902 Modern Languages Quarterly had made an answer which strangely enough was to be echoed by Sir Christopher Soames three quarters of a century later. It was that pupils must realize that French and German could be learned at school but that all the schools could do was to lay a solid foundation on which pupils could later build.

Writing the language had for many decades been the acceptable form. Several of Hawkins' colleagues who had had brilliant careers as modern linguists could not remember ever speaking a single word of French in class all the time they were at school. However the point to remember was that so long as it was the written language that was studied, then Hawkins' analogy for swimming did not hold.

The swimming pool for the written language was not located across the Channel. It was in the school library and the pupil willing to read hard and write hard could get all the real swimming he or she needed.

Hawkins saw the collapse of the phonetic movement (on which the spoken language was carried through the first decades of the twentieth century) as the reason why the impetus for spoken French was lost; and thereby the continued concentration on the written language became inevitable and logical. Hawkins thought that the fact that university teachers never met the ninety per cent of pupils not going to university meant that the door stayed closed. Hawkins also pointed out that their narrow acquaintance with the ability range did not excuse them from being deliberate in foiling other people's attempts. The Schools Council's efforts to reform Advanced level were constantly pushed back.

Yet Hawkins does not put the loss of pace of spoken foreign language all at the door of the notorious parochialism of the British universities.

Hawkins mentioned the cry from the turn of the century 'trust the ear, not the eye' which referred amongst other things to listening rather than reading; but the comparison can be used for other purposes also. For example, Hawkins questioned this cry of the early reformers which inferred that the eye is less useful or less reliable than the ear as a perceptive device. The ear's disadvantage is that it has no way of cutting out distraction whereas the eye has a lid. More importantly the ear has a limited short-term memory upto the point where the echo fades; the eye of the reader is free to take the message at its own speed and in any order and also free to glance

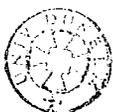
back. Indeed pupils are conditioned more and more (as is society at large) to learn mainly through the eye; the ear, however, has to be educated in order to allow effective language learning where the spoken language is a priority. Hawkins stated that it was not surprising that the attempts of the Nuffield team in the 1960s to bring the spoken language into the classroom were met with the constant cry 'we detest the tape-recorder'. The machine made no concessions, as their class teacher could, to their untrained ears.

Hawkins went on to defend the traditional acquisition of grammar as part of the process of learning a language; in fact far from pushing the classics into the corridor he reminisces of his Classics' colleague's skill, at Cambridge.⁽¹²⁾

He explained that he had been a boy from a very modest home in Liverpool in whom his teachers at school discerned a genius for Greek verse composition. He never used the Greek language as they would say at school 'communicatively'. At Cambridge he scarcely ever emerged from his attic room in Christ's where he read voraciously and wrote verses. Yet in his third year at Cambridge he won the famous Porson prize adding his name to that internationally-known roll-call of outstanding Greek scholars. His marvellous long poem of great subtlety displayed consummate mastery of syntax and idiom. He had to attend in Senate House, in borrowed white tie and tails, to read his work to the Chancellor of the University while Hawkins and his other schoolmates huddled in the gallery to give him support.

Hawkins reflected that with the previous decade upto 1984 there had been a renewal of the call to make the spoken language

(12) E. Hawkins, One hundred years of debate, what have we learned, M.L., Vol. 55, No. 4, December, 1984, p.198 and following.



'the stuff to study'. The pupil (such as his Liverpool colleague) from a disadvantaged home could no longer defend himself with the pen alone and hard work. For now, time spent in the country of the language and the confidence to speak out were in the forefront.

Hawkins admitted that levels of learning had to be considered. So long as the learning was confined to the written language and the learner had plenty of time to internalize the new language met and to reformulate it to make his new meanings; then indeed real swimming in the language could proceed. The individual's intention to mean to want to try to communicate and to make language 'stick' was brought to play. Provided the meaning on the page mattered enough to the reader who had chosen it, then there was 'acquisition'. When the learner took up his pen to express his own meanings, there were real speech acts and the language stuck. The written language gave them time to work.

Hawkins continued by adding that the problem came when there was a move to the spoken language; how to find equivalent techniques when time was no longer allowed, when reaction had to be immediate or the message lost.

Personal, spoken messages required a person to speak to if they were to be true speech acts. In a class of thirty the pupils could not all address individual messages at the same time to the teacher. Then what about the grammar dragon? Hawkins thought that it was about time teachers stopped apologizing everytime they mentioned grammar. Was it not, he thought, a terrible comment on what had happened to secondary education that teachers should feel it necessary to have to apologize for teaching about the structure and how it worked.

Hawkins reflected, like others in this study on the fact that school merely laid the foundation rather than offering the final language skill for some unknown future job. Therefore the school experience should be planned so that the pupil is offered an insight into the way all languages work and how language is acquired. Pupils must therefore learn of the framework of language into which other languages may fit. This, Hawkins believed, added impetus to the movement of language learning of all types, including English and English as a foreign language, all being put under one umbrella. Thus, possibly, the swimming exercises on the bank might be more broad-ranging. As for the actual exercises in the water, that is, the speaking of the language, Hawkins believed that: the training of the ear; the use of proper, spoken language techniques (and not just written ones disguised, as if for oral work) one-to-one speech acts - all of these he believed to be essential.

Constantly throughout the years there was the movement of debate between philosophical consideration of the position and role of modern languages and then of the exact method to try to fulfil the aim of modern language teaching. Interestingly enough, in 1943 J. O. Roach⁽¹³⁾ tried to define the aims of the Modern Language Association. One aim was to set forth the vital importance of knowledge of a modern language in conjunction with history and geography as the only means of understanding for countries and peoples in the interests of general education, international intercourse, identity and commerce.

(13) J. O. Roach, Modern Languages and school examinations, M.L., Vol. 25, No. 1, December 1943, p.40.

It was of course mainly in the 1980s that general educational aims were eventually to be forced towards practical applicability of each subject in the curriculum. The urgency of war brought the need for international understanding. The urgency of the technical revolution of the 1980s and economic survival brought the need for practical language use.

The war also brought a soulsearch for the reasons for breakdown of understanding between nations, yet again. This time, however, it was suggested that languages' learning and history could be helping-partners. It should emphasize the close relationship into which the study of modern languages should be brought with other modern studies such as English, history, geography and economics in order to form and complete the course of modern humanities. Too often in this country were we content never to bring our pupils up-to-date. Rarely do we cover seriously the history and the movement of the immediate past in order to enable them to link their studies directly with their subsequent experience of events through which they live. There is a gap of often fifty years which they may never bridge. The recent past is not history, it is controversial. The books have not been written in literature. Indeed, in literature the test of time has not yet decided who are the writers of permanent work. This sounds plausible and is trouble-saving Roach reassures us.

The fact is that modern languages for many years to come was to feel itself one of the vagrants of the curriculum. The editor of Modern Languages had to admit sadly in 1950⁽¹⁴⁾ that while it was easy to feel that the teaching of language had not received the

(14) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 36, No. 2, 1950, p.41.

prominence which its importance in the world deserved it was nevertheless true that languages must for the most part lie outside the correlated core of subjects.

Hopes had been higher after the end of the war and after the passing of the new Education Act. It may possibly serve as a reminder to those experiencing a sense of release following major new Education Acts that history has already followed that same route.

Three years previously the editor had stated⁽¹⁵⁾ that three important and educationally exciting years had passed since the Butler Act had become law and for the first time in England's history education - happily more or less free from the entanglement of party politics - was considered a fit topic for conversation for the ordinary individual including as some would have it that regrettable necessity, the parent. There was in fact a better understanding of education which in turn meant the theorists no longer had it all their own way.

As minds of minutely differing calibres were introduced to French, methods for pupils of high intelligence had to be adapted. Few of them could be taught through the medium of the grammar book, prose composition and still less through the ordinary conversation lesson.

The new Education Act had in fact introduced a new era; and with it came a full ability range of pupils who had to adapt to the profession's methods. Forty years later it was still learning some

(15) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 39, No. 1, December 1947, p.1.

of these lessons.

The editor's suggestion was that all unsuitable learning should be excluded; that pupils should be given some knowledge of the history, geography and national life of the country concerned and if at the end they have acquired some small power to read, speak and understand the language and a radical knowledge of the written language that was all that could be hoped for, for some time to come. Since international understanding and a sense of human brotherhood were so vital to human progress such limited achievements would be well worth while; and a principle which was gaining ground was that English children should be equipped to explore the mind of other children abroad.

There is little doubt that the increased range of ability to which modern languages was taught became the main problem to be solved at secondary school level; and forty years ago the first British comprehensive schools were viewed with caution by some modern languages teachers.

The editor again picked up the theme.⁽¹⁶⁾ He felt that teachers of modern languages in common with all members of the teaching profession watched the comprehensive school experiment, which had been launched in Middlesex that term, with interest and it might be with some concern. Many people saw in the role of the comprehensive school the wilful negation of the sound academic standards which had been so laboriously built up and consolidated under past systems.

(16) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 31, No. 1, December 1948, p.1.

Others believed it to be a social concept based on political rather than educational theory. Others still, feared that for economic running the comprehensive school would have to be so vast that individuality among both pupils and staff might be mangled in an inexorably efficient machine; but provided there were adequate safeguards for the human material subjected to it, the whole experiment was vitally necessary in the current state of comparative ignorance of the educational process.

The editor then pinpointed one of the problems which had beset modern languages throughout the years since the war. He felt that modern languages in Britain were essentially a grammar school (or stream) study with advanced sixth form work and university entrance as the goal for a reasonably high proportion of those taking part. He stated that according to the Spens report not more than one sixth of the population was capable of benefitting from a grammar type of education; in a comprehensive school of the Middlesex type there would be normally less than two hundred pupils of that academic calibre; whether the sixth form could be organized within such a restricted framework without involving serious financial wastage was open to question. The danger seemed to be that the intelligent boy or girl who had embarked upon languages study in preparation for a professional career was to be sacrificed, to the interests of the mass; the alternative, more readily apparent alternative was to adopt a multi-lateral system of modern languages in one or more streams under one roof, a system which had at least proved its efficacy.

Thus, then as epitomized by this editor, it was put forth that modern languages lay so high up the hierarchy of learning in the school that it might even determine the school's very nature or by

implication, that modern languages did not fit the comprehensive school and that a comprehensive school organization should be questioned because of the presence of foreign languages on the curriculum. Instead of modern languages taking up the challenge of the new era it took cover behind its traditional inheritance. To be fair to the editor he did make one reasonable claim; that there had to be something wrong with British education when a plea had to be made that the really promising child ought not even unintentionally to be held back.

Modern languages, being somehow different from other subjects, has always been in somewhat of a conundrum. The editor of Modern Languages had already said that he thought that the subject lay outside the correlated core of subjects. He went on to say that languages differed from other subjects in the curriculum because the medium of instruction was identical with the context. Also the languages teacher had to create an atmosphere and a feel for the language. He said that, furthermore, teachers of geography, history and English maintained that classes of mixed ability acted as a stimulus to both strong and weak pupils whereas for languages the effect was just the reverse.

In 1950, then, there remained the strong conviction that language teaching could only be effective for a certain proportion of the school's population. The same editor accepted that many children even in grammar schools would never achieve a high standard of accurate idiomatic work in foreign languages. By this he probably meant that whilst so ever that pupils continued to keep pace in written or even syntactical knowledge with their use of the spoken

language, the former (more abstract) knowledge would fail and thus hinder the spoken language. The important crux of this argument was probably the word 'accurate'. Once one abandoned the requirement for total accuracy and accepted some such idea that the message had been conveyed; once one accepted that modern languages was not knowledge-based, but skill-based then the subject justified itself and fitted more easily into the curriculum. But the classical ancestry of modern languages would not accept this drop down the hierarchy of learning and subjects. In those post-war years and for many decades to follow several other subjects also saw no reason to accept 'practicability' as their reason for being in the curriculum. The forthcoming technological revolution had put no pressure onto them. The Labour-dominated 1960s had imbued a mood of free expression. Previously, Plowden had encouraged a Rousseau-like frolic through the bowers of the imagination. Money (from where?) was poured into the free-flowing ideas of the Schools' Council and teachers experienced a descent into 'Shangrila'. There was even enough cordiality to allow those strange modern languages teachers to stand slightly to one side, to 'set' their classes and to teach mainly to the upper ability ranges of the pupil population.

However, 'all good things must come to an end'. As the 1970s progressed and the International Monetary Fund embarrassed Britain by dictating how the country should be run from outside; it soon became clear that some accountability must return to many things; and at that point Education used up one of the biggest sections of national expenditure. Also that experiment in Middlesex with comprehensive schools had become one of the hinge-points of the Labour government in the 1960s; the people of Britain started to feel uneasy as more and

more legislation had to be used to force education authorities to destroy the last of the grammar schools. As has been shown, the intention to remove foundation posts such as Ordinary level at a time of uneasy suspicions concerning the soundness of the whole structure was provocative to many people. It was clear that the lurch to the left was going to be followed by an equally drastic lurch to the right.

At that time in the 1950s, nevertheless (with education still going its own way, trying to ignore political moods) when it seemed that children were being entered for a School Certificate which lay beyond their capabilities, due to its knowledge-based character, there seemed no need to question the examination's basic assumptions. That was not the era for reforming the system with aggression or vindictiveness. Post-war beliefs lay in trusting hopes to education and future generations.

The Norwood Report had already separated out the school population into 'types' capable of certain operations, mental processes and skills. As long as certain groups of teachers retained the assumption that skill and knowledge of facts were inseparable then it made flexible approaches more difficult; and it certainly made it totally inflexible where they believed that given a single choice, knowledge-based facts took priority.

Not long after the second world war an H.M.I. in foreign languages noted⁽¹⁷⁾ that a significant number of boys and girls had only just missed qualifying for entry to Grammar school yet undoubtedly many of them had good linguistic ability; that there was also some

(17) H. F. Collins, M.L., Vol. 22, No. 4, December 1950, p.17.

drift of teachers from the grammar schools to the secondary modern; that the training colleges were sending out in increasing numbers teachers qualified to give instruction in modern languages. However it was far from his intention to suggest that all pupils should, or could, learn a foreign language. Thus the dilemma of trying to relate foreign language learning to the pupil body as a whole ran from top to bottom of those involved in education; this being compounded by the formal legacy which let intellectual, knowledge-based, abstract classroom learning be the main teaching process; all of which was held in place by a difficult-to-alter examination system geared towards testing the same process. In the years that followed, classroom teaching aims were reviewed in foreign languages as in other subjects.

It is important to realise that these alterations were also taking place in similar ways, to different degrees throughout the curriculum. Modern languages simply typified the movement or at least offered one of many discernible patterns.

Eventually a growing realization of the need for practical justification for subjects in the curriculum developed; and the political, social and economic reforms of the late 1970s and the 1980s, spurred on by technological changes - all of these gave the momentum for a major overhaul of the sixteen-plus examinations' system proving to be only one part of major educational reform in the later part of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 4

THE YEARS OF REFLECTION; THE EVOLUTION OF A G.C.S.E. PHILOSOPHY, 1950 TO 1973

The study of civilization and background to the language of the country had grown in importance during the war years. Many people believed that a breakdown in understanding between nations had been the reason for conflict yet again; and some maintained that to study and to understand the nature of foreign peoples might halt such misunderstandings in the future. The whole 'United Nations' philosophy of a forum-for-dialogue might possibly be carried out through a better knowledge of the character of our continental neighbours. Modern languages teachers had often lived amongst these foreigners, and modern languages was the part of the curriculum which had most direct contact with foreign people.

It has also been pointed out that in the post-war years teachers were becoming aware of the growing number of low achieving pupils to whom modern languages had to be taught. It was not fully certain at that point whether oral foreign language teaching could be effectively carried out with these children. Therefore as the years progressed 'background' and 'civilization' studies were seen as a more practical way of giving such children a certain amount of benefit and enjoyment from modern languages study. Thus on two fronts background and civilization study grew in the post-war years.

In 1955 in a lecture by a London County Council divisional inspector,⁽¹⁾ it was pointed out that in some non-selective schools where there was at that time no chance of teaching French, a new

(1) K. A. McGowan, M.L., Vol. 46, No. 3, September 1955, p.55.

subject had been introduced since the 1944 Education Act. It was known as French Studies. Such a geographical or historical approach could be excellent and interesting and could be produced by almost any Arts teacher but it should not be regarded as a substitute for oral French. However instead of conveying the idea that France was only a country of 'haute couture', cheese, wine, winter sports and crazy artists - instead of this children should be led to appreciate the France of dams and hydro-electric projects, of cars and fast railways, of France at work.

By 1956 the view was put forward that by careful choice of material in background-to-languages study, a new set of personal relationships for the pupil could be obtained. Through books and experiences an unknown people could be reached, leading him to sympathize with different ways of life and thought, helping him ultimately to make fresh personal contacts and friendships.⁽²⁾ Thus did the editor presage some of the cornucopian years of the late 1960s and early 1970s - general educational values of free expression and philanthropy.

There was perceptive effort to attempt to make lesson content relevant and realistic in as many ways as possible. Pupils, it was recommended, should feel that they were contacting real people. Travel or residence abroad would be an ideal target. In the meantime teachers should bring the foreign country into the classroom through the very material of their lesson. They should have authentic pictures of the customs and daily life of their counterparts. Furthermore, it was suggested that before a language teaching book be

(2) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 37, No. 2, March 1956, p.41.

published its contents should be verified by a panel of native experts.⁽³⁾

It must have been some comfort for languages teachers throughout the world to realize that the problems were similar from one country to another. At the seventh congress of the Federation of International teachers of modern languages it was stated that common problems included: the size of classes; the choice of active vocabulary and sufficient practice of it; the problem of adult texts with elementary language content; the age of starting a foreign language; the need for languages to be taught 'for use, by use'.⁽⁴⁾ The post-war development of education had at least some international similarities. In modern languages this was to be even more as a source of consolation since for some time after that languages were to be made to feel 'awkward' in the development of the secondary school education system.

By 1963 the attempt to use modern languages in order to improve international understanding was starting to reflect less philosophical and more practical aims. A subcommittee contributing to the Hayter Report recommended: a closer acquaintance with the languages of the communist bloc; with the languages of underprivileged races and ancient civilizations of the East by intensive introductory courses and six to eight centres of area studies to bring together teachers and research students from different disciplines to specialize in studies related to some areas or regions.⁽⁵⁾ Clearly foreign

(3) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 37, No. 4, September 1956, p.85.

(4) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 40, No. 2, June 1959, p.4.

(5) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 44, March 1963, p.45.

languages background studies, as seen more commonly being mostly related to Europe, had exalted ancestry. Furthermore, the Annan Report sought to promote Russian further by linking the study of language with history and geography. The Federation of British Industry also wanted languages as a weapon against overseas competitors, since industry and commerce would need in the future many more people conversant with modern languages and having a reasonable degree of fluency. Such statements as these emphasize the dual aims of languages practicability at that time: languages for oral communication; the use of the language vehicle in order to convey a wider knowledge of the civilization and culture. The main consideration in this latter component was whether by studying civilization as a separate 'studies' course or by studying it internally and as part of speaking the language - the one might be more logical, feasible or more effective than the other.

In 1963 a course book, which was to prove fairly popular for a while, was reviewed. 'Let's Speak French',⁽⁶⁾ as its title inferred, encouraged an oral approach. The reviews believed that such an approach in modern languages was not only an ideal one for all pupils but the only valid one for the less academic child. The reviewer thought that the book represented a new departure in that it approached the problems from the point of view of the learner instead of being concerned to set out in codified form the findings of the grammarian. By 1969 efforts were being made to analyse, even more so, the way in which language is learnt. It was proposed that the oral skills of the newer modern language courses appeared to

(6) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 44, March 1963, p.44.

depend on intelligence in listening as much as the skills required in the traditional courses, though not necessarily the same aspects of intelligence. The author thought⁽⁷⁾ that the question was still open, however, as to whether a flair for languages was inborn or whether it was a capacity developed by earlier experiences, even those of the first years of one's life in the learning of one's own native tongue.

In the same year an H.M.I. in modern languages suggested⁽⁸⁾ that teachers had all the method, hardware and software in order to teach languages but questioned whether our pupils had the will to use these resources; teachers needed to consider various forms of motivation and for an English pupil the most powerful might well prove to be interest in the life and civilization of the foreign country. The C.S.E. examination would keep in line with curricular and methodological developments by remaining flexible. He hoped that the motivational value of civilization studies would lead all boards to insist on its inclusion.

It is often believed that the resourcefulness of human nature leads certain people faced with associated problems, but working independently to develop similar, sometimes even identical solutions; that is that the same concept might be invented in more than one place. Teachers of low achieving children, faced with similar classrooms situations were also thinking along those lines. A head of modern languages from a Crawley comprehensive school spoke of the C.S.E. course taken by her children. The course included a project

(7) E. Halsall, *Linguistic Aptitude*, University of Hull, M.L., Vol. 50, No. 1, March 1969, p.18.

(8) P. H. Hoy, *The C.S.E. examination in Modern Languages*, M.L., Vol. 50, No. 4, December 1969, p.144.

on a subject of the candidates' choice, related to France. No marks were awarded for the project; but they might be questioned on it in the oral examination. The teacher, however, was not satisfied with the refusal of the Board to allocate marks to the project. She felt a C.S.E. course was well worthwhile for fifth formers leaving before Ordinary level because it would provide them with an incentive to purposeful language study within their capabilities and they could follow a realistic syllabus which should form a basis upon which to build further knowledge at school or outside.⁽⁹⁾

Another teacher, a senior housemaster and chief examiner of the Metropolitan Board, thought that there was little argument about how much or how little background should be taught. At the time, as it eventually became clear, there was an urgent need to provide something, even anything, for the low achieving child; and at the time also there was no strong lead being given as to how this could be done orally. Perhaps, furthermore, few of the fourteen, fifteen and sixteen year olds could see much point in wanting to learn a modern language such as French. Without the inducement to speak the language on a visit to the country, which for a disadvantaged child of that age must have seemed remote, French might have appeared as quite a threat on the timetable. It is little wonder that background and civilization was grasped eagerly by many modern language teachers. The teacher just mentioned was aware of the fact that work could degenerate into a mere process of copying and regurgitation. However despite all the difficulties he felt that there was a general feeling of optimism and there had been an

(9) C. M. Roberts, Is C.S.E., worthwhile, M.L., Vol. 50, No. 4, December 1969, p.148.

increasing number of candidates entered during the previous three years with good results not merely in terms of better examination grades but an increasing keenness of pupils to learn French.

In 1973 a member of staff from the Education Department of County Hall Leicester tried to isolate the cause of the problem for many teachers in the growing number of comprehensive schools. He spoke of the low achieving children. Their characteristics in the modern language lesson were: 1) a relatively short concentration span. 2) relatively speedy onset of boredom. 3) relatively rapid loss of interest. 4) unwillingness to learn the language (i.e. lack of motivation). 5) little long term memory. 6) often, little short-term memory. 7) the inability to understand grammatical terminology. 8) the inability to make analogies. 9) the unwillingness to recognize the importance of fine difference of grammar and pronunciation. 10) poor aural discrimination.⁽¹⁰⁾

The characteristics of the low achieving children in all lessons (not only modern languages) tended to include 1) short term ambitions. 2) a desire for immediate satisfaction of enquiries. 3) lack of interest in anything not patently and immediately relevant to themselves. 4) an unwillingness to be adventurous in use of the mother tongue or to use words in new situations perhaps feeling that to be too literate or too careful in speech raises them outside their class. 5) the need for a variety of teaching materials, teaching techniques and subject matter.

The characteristics exhibited by many teachers of French to low achieving children tended to include: 1) frustration. 2) lack of

(10) D. G. Smith, M.L., Vol. 54, No. 4, September 1973, p.105.

conviction that progress was possible. 3) a hankering for the problem to go away, which generally it did not. To most teachers the low achievers were a new phenomenon; there was no established body of opinion on what to do with them. Linguistically, what they were generally offered was a watered-down version of what their faster peers got.

Because the span of attention of the low achieving child was short and because the aspect was seen as worthwhile in any case, teachers tended to teach about 'background' to the language, that is, about France. This took many forms but often seemed to include geography, history, police, wine-making, cheesemaking, Paris and the monuments. Written work on these topics, with drawings, seemed to be the basis of all written work in class. Some teachers gave pupils the chance to do a project on a particular topic, with reference books and travel brochures available. With such pupils project work was not easy and tended to involve quite a lot of undigested copying of materials from books.

The education office member considered it to be arguable whether the quality of material remembered was a good measure of the educational value of the course; but it had to be admitted that at the end of a language and civilization course similar to the one above pupils seemed to have learned a little French, a little bit about France and a very little bit about the rest of Europe. He thought however that there was a need for language teachers to define to the satisfaction of their non-linguistic colleagues the educational value of their courses. It was essential that such courses provided something of value not included in any other part of the curriculum.

It is interesting to note the territoriality of subject teachers

within schools. The less one's colleagues were acquainted with a subject teaching area the more justifiable it became. The light-hearted jokes about science teachers blowing up equipment or making unpleasantly-smelling gasses support an attitude of bemused lack of understanding of what they did; similarly there are the Latin teachers who are frequently greeted with 'amo, amas, amat'. Such attitudes seem to be part of the professional toleration of other areas of the curriculum. The accepted pattern for such specialist teachers seemed to be: a vague understanding of what the other did, supported by rhymes or generally-known facts, to show that one had done the subject in the past, but never treading into deeper waters. As it has been suggested in this chapter, foreign languages had its own territoriality. This was often underlined by the awkward demands which 'languages' seemed to make on the organization of the timetable in the examination period. For many colleagues it seemed right that the eccentric foreign languages teachers should be secreted away in medical rooms and cleaners' cupboards in order to achieve suitable acoustics. The traditional French courses with translation and composition produced a readily-accepted force-field of obscurity. At the other end of the spectrum from acceptability lay the background and civilization courses. Such inter-disciplinary mongrels were less easy to catalogue. The author of the above article rightly spoke of having to convince other colleagues of the educational value of the courses. The colleagues also had to be convinced that languages teachers were not teaching other peoples' subjects in background courses. Colleagues, he said, also needed to know that there was essentially something of value which was not in any other part of the curriculum.

Strangely enough it was an initiative geared initially towards

the Primary schools which had epitomised the changing attitudes towards the teaching and lesson content of the secondary schools. The joint Nuffield-Schools Council French course 'En Avant' of the mid 1960s grew into a secondary school course in the mid 1970s under the title of 'A Votre Avis'. Titles such as 'Adelante' stretched to Spanish and so on to a variety of other languages. They all give an indication of the flavour of the time. The Pilot scheme in Primary French became a testing ground for some of the principles, aims and approaches of some contemporary modern language teaching and could be viewed as a microcosm of the wider philosophy and development of the subject area.⁽¹¹⁾ Through multi-media kits including tapes, flannelgraphs, figurines, flashcards and filmstrips, an audio-visual and audio-lingual approach was used which avoided translation and attempted to introduce practical language skills in an ordered, systematic way. It attempted to teach pupils to understand, speak, read and write French, in that order, with the last two skills as less important than the first two. It sought to enable pupils to listen carefully, to understand immediately, to repeat accurately and to use the language appropriate to a given context. Also one basic aim was to provide information which could complement the language study and provide a simple introduction to French life. Furthermore it taught to the whole ability range, in an attempt to discover whether there were levels of ability below which the teaching of a modern language was of dubious value.

Though this particular experiment was discontinued after the shortcomings were exposed by Clare Burstall in 1974, three of its

(11) Small, M. F., Examining French and French Studies at 16 plus: Rationale and Content, with particular reference to a selection of C.S.E. Mode III syllabuses, M.Ed. Dissertation (Liverpool University) 1982 p.1 and following.

main principles continued: the greater democratization of modern languages, the stress on practical everyday language and the growth of background studies. All of these have been encapsulated in later curricular development partly as a direct consequence of Nuffield-Schools Council courses and the philosophy of the pilot scheme.

Thus it is important to realise that, faced with the rapidly-produced problems of the comprehensivization of secondary schools, many modern languages teachers still uncertain of and unconvinced by, the varying theories of how the low achievers should be taught, for the most part eagerly grasped background and civilization which appeared to produce fairly high levels of motivation towards the general subject area. Teaching background and civilization was indeed a compromise; but by the same token teaching French to the low achievers was a compromise since language teaching was something that had always been done further up the hierarchy of learning. But in the late 1960s and early 1970s egalitarian views prevailed and it was not the climate for making a stand in favour of traditional attitudes. Once more then, background and civilization may have been the instinctive response of modern language teachers uncertain how to deal with the teaching of French to large numbers of low achieving children; yet such instinctive creations were to be built, eventually, into teaching content and were to prove vital components in making modern languages authentic and practicable.

(119)
D. G. Smith of Leicester Education Office continues his appraisal of languages courses with heavy background and civilization elements: if the language element of such courses provides little which is of use during a stay in France the educational value of such an interdisciplinary course is very slight. Indeed, he says, that if teachers

(119) D.G. Smith, M.L. Vol. 54, No 4, Sept 1973 p.105

were frank, the educational value declines even further if the pupils do not go to France during their course because otherwise the low achieving pupil will have forgotten practically all the language he was taught.

He therefore suggested that it was probably more important for the low achievers than for the high achievers that efforts be made to take them abroad in order to promote motivation. Much of what they spoke there would be in English. They must meet their French contemporaries. They must enjoy their visit and realize even more that they would enjoy it if they spoke in French. He suggested the teaching of phrase-book French, justifying this by saying that although this would leave huge gaps it was better than existing courses where nothing useful was taught. The new approach would be situational, not structural. Very little of new input would be taught each lesson and very few variations. The author recommended equal use of English and French since stress in recent years on oral teaching in the language had made classwork difficult. It was unwise to teach mainly orally to slow learners. Certainly, he thought it was unrealistic to expect a productive use of French to keep pace with their higher powers of comprehension. The low achievers were capable of understanding far more than they could ever speak. He saw a change of emphasis for the low achievers where the asking of questions on French they heard or read would predominate with very little oral, productive French.

He went on to state that background or area studies ran the risk of becoming ramshackle alliances of bits and pieces, of little educational worth unless shaped into intelligible units of study. For the low achiever this component needed to be kept to the

foreground constantly. However it needed to be educationally justifiable in an over-crowded curriculum. There was support for the suggestion that the area of these companion studies should be the nearer European countries and not France alone. Hopefully these children might grasp new concepts and think about new areas of activity which might not be covered in other disciplines of the curriculum.

D. G. Smith, who had suggested this approach, had written this article in 1971, although it was not published in the journal until 1973. In March 1973, M. Buckby⁽¹²⁾ of the Language Teaching Centre, University of York produced an article which embodied many of the themes already mentioned. It encapsulated for many people good practice, especially for the teaching of low achievers. A working party of the Audio-Visual Language Association with representatives of the Joint Council of Language Associations made the following proposals regarding a syllabus for modern languages at sixteen plus. 1) the existence of an appropriate, detailed statement of objectives would be a major contribution towards progress in teaching and examining of modern languages at this level; 2) the skills taught should be chosen in terms of their usefulness to the learner; 3) for pupils of all abilities the most important skills at this stage were those of listening, speaking and silent reading (for the majority of pupils at sixteen plus, writing in the foreign language should not be an examinable objective); 4) the language content under each skill should be based on what was needed to enable the learner to

(12) M. Buckby, A syllabus for modern languages at 16+, M.L., Vol. 54, No. 1, March 1973, p.41.

perform well in a number of specified conversational and survival situations; 5) any syllabus based on these proposals should be made available to all teachers and pupils. It should give details of exactly what would be expected of pupils in terms of language skills, topics to be covered and structure and vocabulary to be known.

The fifth proposal acknowledges the suggestion made earlier in this chapter, that 'civilization and background' having been part-established at a time of need would eventually absorb themselves into the curriculum.

'6) languages should be taught in the context of the culture of the countries where the languages are spoken. The working party concluded that it would not be advisable to draw up a specific syllabus for background information studies.'

Whether it was a timely coincidence or not, Britain entered the European Common Market on January 1st of that year. The day after that event at the Joint Council of Language Associations Conference January 2nd 1973 the main theme was European Studies. This area of study, its definition, its multidisciplinary nature and particularly the question of its relationship to the teaching of language skills was apparently something which had been the concern of teachers and lecturers for some months even prior to the discussion at conference.

It is interesting to note that as separate subject areas - French Studies, Spanish Studies, German Studies - the background and civilization courses appeared to have low profile without causing

excessive concern. However, as a combined European Studies alarm bells were set off. There was of course a difference and that was that the former groupings were off-shoots of separate language-cultures. The latter, European Studies, came from no single language-culture. It was a pure 'test-tube baby'. It might also be the case that federation, as one wartime contributor to this study has already stated, has not come naturally to Europe. One even wonders how much homogeneity there is to the majority of nations grouped by terms such as 'Middle East countries'. After all, probably world maps for each country indeed show that country in the centre of the world. It is unlikely that all of Israel, for example, considers itself to be east or west of anything. That apart, 'European Studies', that is a study of no particular country but of any within the general category of Europe, appeared to bring the 'background and civilization' snowball to an abrupt state of analysis.

Some lecturers at conference displayed the languages teachers' fears of European Studies becoming, to them 'intangible', in much the same way as Education generally had seemed to become for so many in Further Education. This might be because their ultimate conclusion of the 'subject', European Studies, would show it to be a woolly, indefinable composite; or also because they, the languages teachers, had not yet explored widely and successfully enough the intrinsic, multi-disciplinary (multi-skill) nature of variations to what they had for so long regarded as the linear qualities of their subject - integration versus isolation.

There seemed to be concern that entry to the E.E.C. should ascertain that no language should dominate. Also, another speaker

(13) E. M. Batley, J.C.L.A. Conference Address, 1973, M.L., Vol. 54, No. 3, March 1973, p.38.

warned of the need for Britain to avoid the immediate 'post-fanfare-to-Europe' dangers of insularity, not only in a political sense but also in terms of which languages should be taught; and that, whatever progress had been made in education in the years previous, the system had regressed in terms of the choice of foreign languages available in schools. On a further 'cheering' note another speaker reiterated yet again that languages on the professional and industrial scene were almost always ancillary to, or less important than, some other training, a view which had been stated before in a document 'Modern Languages and Careers'.

A speaker who was to continue for many years to be connected with the enigmatic world of European Studies, Mr. M. T. Williams of the University of Manchester, gave advice for constituting and organizing European Studies in the curriculum. However he warned against advocating too strongly that, for C.S.E. children, European Studies should be recommended. It was all very well for languages teachers to observe that slow learners received motivation from the content of civilization, but from the geographical point of view the C.S.E. child had a basic difficulty of making the mental leap from understanding the concept of 'immediate environment' to that of 'nationalism' and 'internationalism'. It was therefore clear that teachers should not think in terms of European Studies for the low achievers alone and foreign languages for the rest.

On a personal interview in September 1986 at Manchester University Mr. Williams with hindsight admitted that the lack of clearcut career opportunities for a teacher of European Studies, trapped between the disciplines was a further discouragement to the progress of this subject.

It is possible that clear, open statements such as this stopped teachers of foreign languages making European Studies - and to some extent French Studies, Spanish Studies and German Studies - the 'languages' part of the curriculum which would service the low achievers. If taken seriously European Studies required authoritative 'geography-method' knowledge to be conveyed to languages teachers. In these interdisciplinary experiments of the early 1970s there was often a watershed. For foreign languages, European Studies may well have offered the opportunity of bringing together teachers from other disciplines who were able to warn of the pitfalls of treading too far into other disciplines; and European Studies although at first appearing to have the perfect timing of Britain's entry into the E.E.C., in fact, may have given a shiver of stepping onto something which did not seem quite firm.

Nevertheless languages teachers continued to sound out the most extreme points of European Studies which were manageable by the foreign language classroom teacher. At the same conference⁽¹⁴⁾ a speaker talked of European Studies in Somerset with particular reference to the language element. He also mentioned that the short-term memory of the low achiever was a most important consideration. It was this realization, in trying to devise languages and background courses for the low achiever, which led teachers to set different goals for low achievers within areas of skill similar to the high achiever. For example the speaker stated that as far as the spoken language was concerned passive understanding

(14) Ibid., p.93.

and active use of some sort were within the reach of all; in written language passive understanding and active use were to be encouraged by model-based writing and by use of the language for information retrieval.

The question was more and more now starting to come back to the teaching of a modern language to low achieving children. European Studies had been one of the catalysts. It may have helped people to look again at teaching the use of the language in some form, to low achieving children. There was a group of people who had taken one step further than European Studies, into 'World Studies'; no doubt given time there might have been 'Universe Studies' also. For the majority, however, seeking a more effective way of dealing with the language itself was a priority. Professor Hawkins suggested going back to the basic philosophy and asking simple questions: why do it? How should we do it? He stated that there was still a need for a clear and reasoned statement of the case for modern language teaching at all levels which would set out the benefits likely to accrue from such teaching in a form capable of convincing administrators and colleagues in other disciplines. Languages teachers should also provide clearer definitions of what constituted a modern language course, and for administrators an order of priorities for the immediate future.

It is clear that the 'Studies' stage of modern languages, had made many modern languages teachers ask themselves some very basic questions about what they were doing. Many of them, as it has been pointed out, were uncomfortable with the lower ability ranges possibly because of 'languages' connections with formal, classical languages. Many of them hoped the problem would somehow sort out

itself. In fact there had been always a need for Professor Hawkin's types of questions right from the start, but many teachers were afraid of asking them. They were in a conundrum. If the answer came out to be that modern languages could offer little to the low achievers, the whole future of foreign languages on the timetable was under threat; for no school would tolerate, for long, an elitist subject which could only be taught to the brighter pupils. Teachers realised that the low achiever workload had to be shared equally. It was now approaching decision-time for modern languages. The real question was, indeed, what was modern languages trying to do, overall.

Running parallel to this consideration was that of reshaping the sixteen plus examination. Brian Page of the University of Leeds had strong views on this.⁽¹⁵⁾ He thought that the target for a sixteen plus examination was a format which would make a just assessment of more modest achievement and provide real motivation by offering goals that could be reached by even the low achiever. He wondered what sort of common ground or interest could be aimed at which could cater for this welter of highly differentiated individuals. Should teachers indeed not be encouraging pupils' individuality by as flexible an examination system as they could imagine rather than attempting to stuff them through the mince sieve. He thought it ironic when through group work and discovery methods teachers were trying to individualize curricula as much as possible that they should be encouraging an examination system which denied

(15) B. Page, M.L., Vol. 55, No. 1, March 1974, p.1.

all of this. Most teachers intuitively felt that it was impossible to devise a single examination which would do justice to both high fliers and low fliers at the same time, such examinations were not demanding enough for the high achievers and the fact that they included a written test usually accounting for at least 25 per cent loaded the dice against the low achievers since the majority of C.S.E. candidates found it difficult to produce a written piece of work which was worthwhile.

In fact views such as these were eventually heeded. The solution came partly in a division of the language in to four skill areas (listening, speaking, reading and writing) which were duplicated over two different levels. Weaker candidates would be able to obtain grades below 'C' (the old Ordinary level pass grade) by a 'pick and mix' which allowed the exclusion of writing provided they picked within a broad choice of variations.

As the Schools Council, before its demise, began to come to grips with the framework for the new sixteen plus, reactions still favoured the inclusion of background study components. A contributor in 1972⁽¹⁶⁾ wanted an extra paper on a project, the sort of work done by a particular class or group. The chances of such inclusions were always going to be low for inclusion in an examination at the level of an Ordinary level substitute. This was epitomised by the way in which the mostly forward thinking Schools Council 'hedged' in trying to suggest how the syllabus should be described. For decades modern languages teachers had 'subsumed' the syllabus from Past Papers with the result that in the Syllabus handbook the main language, French,

(16) J. M. C. Davidson, Some reactions to Schools Council Bulletin No. 23, M.L., Vol. 54, March 1972, p.3.

at Ordinary level took up very little space in comparison to other subjects; and the other foreign language syllabus entries mainly consisted of 'see French'. Hence, upto four or five distinct subjects were covered in a few sides. It was therefore suggested very warily in 1974 by the Joint Council of Language Associations meeting with all other such associations that there was 'considerable interest in a detailed syllabus in opposition to one couched in sentences'.⁽¹⁷⁾ It was no surprise then that background studies should receive a broadside, given the growing detail being shown to language.

'Background studies were considered to be an important part of the curriculum but because of the difficulties involved in assessment they could not form an essential part of the examination'

It is important to note that background studies was left out because it could not easily be assessed; for a number of years Spanish C.S.E. had included English questions about Spain on 'background'. It proved increasingly difficult to ask fair questions that did not repeat themselves from one year to the next; however this may have been resolved for all foreign languages to some extent if a more detailed syllabus had been set prescribing the areas on which questions were to be asked; the syllabus might have also included an annually reviewed list of possible source books.

Nevertheless, 'background' received one of its final and more significantly unanimous (given the level of representation of the conference) farewells. 'Background' had, for some time, conveyed the hopes of teachers clawing to find some area of support for the bottom

(17) A common system of examining at 16 plus, a report on a discussion held by the Language Teachers' Associations (M.L.A., A.V.L.A., J.C.L.A., A.T.G., A.T.S.P., A.T.R., A.T.I.), M.L., Vol. 55, No. 2, June 1974, p.85.

half, more or less, of the ability range which found itself directed towards a foreign language examination. Yet, all was not lost for the weaker children; for the same conference also reiterated the next of modern languages concessions to the low achiever,

'There was considerable divergence of opinions regarding the weighting of skills the main difficulty being the importance of writing. While most teachers favoured equal marks for listening, reading and speaking, some felt that the low achieving child would encounter difficulty in expressing himself in writing and that therefore this skill should receive fewer marks. The problem it was felt could be resolved by having a flexible examination with compartmentalised testing of the various skills.'

The cynics saw this as yet another zany contrivance of the modern languages group; firstly there had been phonetics, secondly the Direct Method, thirdly language laboratories, fourthly European Studies and the present stage - 'they might not write anything'; and yet there may be some perverse logic in maintaining that a language should be for speaking.

Since this seemed reasonably acceptable to many, the suggested framework of a flexible examination with listening, speaking, reading and writing being compartmentalised was further strengthened.

In this section attempts have been made to indicate how modern languages teachers responded to the demands and expectations of the subject area. A number of times, then, since the second world war teachers had tried to resolve the problem of the low achieving

children learning a foreign language, by responding with professional instinct. There were of course other developments on the wider national scene and even internationally beyond the immediate classroom situation. Many of these development, however, tended to work from outside inwards less than by teachers' instinct. Wherever this was the case, quite naturally, they were viewed with more caution and implemented where it was thought to be applicable. It is not intended to review all factors such as these, at intervals, in this work but only the post-war attitudes, which eventually led up to the introduction of the G.C.S.E., towards dealing with the growing numbers of less academic and low achieving children; and in more detail to view in perspective the attitudes which led to the introduction of 'civilization-background' which itself was henceforth to hold an important position, but more discretely, within the course text-book. The war-time period had produced the demands that the misunderstandings which had led to war could have been alleviated if nations had understood better each others' differences. Both the classroom and the university teacher saw the role of civilization and background as being crucial in conjunction with language, in improving international understanding. Post-war, the extension of secondary education to larger numbers, meant finding new ways of teaching modern languages (with its classical-traditional ancestry) to more children unable to be motivated alone by mastery of the written language. Eyes turned to external alternatives but meanwhile teachers looked for an alternative examination. The Certificate of Secondary Education allowed greater flexibility of examination and with it came the opportunity to use school-based background and civilization. The struggle to teach language to low achieving children had not been

resolved. Language was still being treated as a compound complexity. Background and civilization was taught to the low achiever along with, at first, and then eventually, sometimes to the exclusion of the language. Eventually, languages teachers realized that they were treading into unknown waters. At about the same time it was realized that the language problem could be defeated by the traditional method of 'divide and conquer'. Language study was divided into four skill areas. Children were also seeing that they could achieve short-term goals because they could master certain skills within certain contexts. Background and civilization had played an important role in holding ground until reinforcements had arrived. It was not, however, put to one side. Its importance had been recognized many decades before in times of national crisis. Background and civilization was rewarded a permanent place - built into the text books, where in the past it had made only sporadic appearance according to space available between exercises. It is significant, therefore, that a subject such as French could now be viewed in terms of French life also, a number of years after fierce battles had been fought about how much one could teach about background whilst still keeping the title of French. These staging posts of developments were, however, reached over a decade before the introduction of the G.C.S.E.

For modern languages, then, as well inevitably as for other subjects which were changing their composition during these formative years, there was a type of catalyst; but in this case it was actually part of the equation. 'Background and civilization' was indeed at first part of the very broad teaching-approach equation. It then proceeded to enter the tighter examination syllabus equation,

although still left in very broad general terms. In the process, however, it had allowed a reformulation of existing elements into a new compound. It had at one point gone to an apparently dominant position (for a large proportion of the school population) but this had attracted sufficient attention for many teachers to give a final, firm response as to where they thought it belonged; for at one point it was starting to question the whole formula (of modern languages).

The war-time crisis, of a need for better international understanding, had therefore toned down to a slightly less emotional need, for knowledge of the country to go with the language, during the post-war years. Also in those years, the Butler Act had brought more of the low achieving children into contact with modern languages. Early responses from languages teachers interested in the opportunities for these children had produced a realization of the need for the children to visit the country.

Furthermore, the intensification of the 'cold war' had added an extra twist by the statement of need for more of those slavie languages. This was always going to be difficult to service with teachers. As indication of this, it was still proving to be stubbornly difficult to create an appetite for the nearest countries' languages. Even nearby trade-enticements were not producing the breakthrough to modern language appetite in Britain, far less, then, central Europe.

There was, of course, a broad range of different personalities within the species of the modern language teacher. However, at fairly opposite ends were the two types which represented greatly differing teaching approaches. The first was the teacher who aimed at an ideal of carrying out most of the lesson in the modern language. The pupil would be in an environment of total language exposure.

Motivation would originate in being able to follow the events of the lesson being performed in this mysterious code; but it was a code, indeed, that really existed at day-to-day level in the foreign country under study. For these pupils the appetite for the lesson would originate in success in comprehension and expression in the target language. The second teacher was the one who saw great potential in revealing the lifestyle of the target culture; but this lesson would often take place in the native language of English. Motivation came from discovering the differences and similarities of these foreign people; and also of practising their language within the classroom. Whereas for the first lesson-type the form of the language and its use was of significant importance, for the second lesson-type the content of the civilization and its language in the broader curricular setting was important. The former was language skill, the latter was language and civilization. In the 1980s skills were to rise to the forefront; in the post-war decades, however, the partnership between government and teachers, which the Butler Act had highlighted, was encouraging a partnership of ideas, leading to (eventually) a partnership of disciplines within the curriculum. At that point in the post-war decades, it was not fully known whether the low achieving child could handle the language-environment lesson; and also it was still predominantly the high achieving child which made up the greater numbers in modern languages classes. Experimenting with the modern language culture was therefore seen to be quite acceptable.

It has been shown that the uncertainty as to the modern language capabilities of the ever-increasing numbers of low achieving children had, therefore, produced some texts which were at first

claimed to be a new breakthrough. Some of these texts had included drawings of stick-people. For the low achiever this may have been even more puzzling. At the worst they might have expected at some later point to meet these creatures in a foreign country, speaking this rapidly-delivered code; at best it possibly underlined their original suspicions that this particular subject in the timetable should not be taken too seriously - especially since the really authentic efforts of the teacher seemed to appear out of a loud-speaker or onto a silver screen.

Even by the beginning of the 1970s Her Majesty's Inspectors were still maintaining that an interest in the language would come from taking an interest in a well-presented civilization. The C.S.E. examination in Spanish had even included a section on this. Even so, efforts were still continuing, it has been seen, to try to solve the problem of allowing the low achieving children to survive somehow or other in the language-environment lesson. The characteristics of the low achiever were put under scrutiny, as were the teachers of them. One problem which grew for the 'background environment' teacher was that of justifying his slot in the timetable; the traditional modern language, written-based lessons had had a more widely-known setting. Indeed, as the 1980s skill-based approach to modern languages emerged, the curricular justification would be vulnerable again until modern languages skills were to develop a more identifiable profile.

The innovative approaches to curriculum development, then, such as the Nuffield Project were to produce for modern languages the 'En Avant' experiment. The Primary experiment of Junior French would prove to be one of the most far-reaching attempts to teach modern languages to non-grammar school children; and it would probably

suggest new alternatives for the low achieving secondary age children. Yet all of this potential was soon to dissipate as it was realized that education was not bringing about the long hoped-for improvements which the old system had highlighted. In addition the massive sums of money being used up at a time of national near-insolvency, doubts over the effectiveness of the Department of Education and also bad publicity over numerous educational, general and specific abnormalities - all of these things helped to take away the head of steam which had built up in that 'era of experimentation'.

Another ~~contributor~~^(17a) had underlined the importance of low achieving children visiting the country; for them, short term motivation meant that a visit was essential for any form of motivation, since this would not come from any satisfaction in successfully speaking words which had no apparent, practical use. He had suggested phrase-book or situational modern language. He felt their comprehension would always be higher than their productive use of the language.

It was also stated that a leading professor had then laid down his version of a syllabus for modern languages. These efforts tended to draw together, by the mid 1970s, disparate statements expressed in desperate sentiments throughout the years previous. The skills were broken up for ease of teaching and learning. The content was to be that which was necessary for performance in specified situations. Teachers and pupils should have a detailed syllabus for reference and for known expectations. The professor confirmed that civilization and background should be absorbed into the curriculum, with languages being taught in the context of the culture of the countries where the language was spoken.

As the new European reality dawned the 'agent provocateur' of
(17a) O.G. Smith, M.L. Vol. 54 no 4 Sept. 1973, p.105

the drama finally provoked the system once too often and the whole 'background' cover was opened wide. No longer should the low achievers have less language. The 'language environmentalists' now had sufficient confidence and experience to suggest ways of teaching languages to all abilities. These years of reflection for modern languages had elicited the well known solution to many long-standing, apparently monolithic problems - that of breaking down the mass into smaller components; thus modern languages was broken down into separate sections. In the vocabulary which was then current, modern languages became 'customized' and 'user-friendly'.

CHAPTER 5

PREPARING FOR CHANGE: THE EVOLUTION OF A G.C.S.E. PHILOSOPHY, 1974-1979

In the first chapter it was pointed out that significant progress had been made in meeting the new attitudes, which surfaced, towards a new sixteen plus by the mid-1970s; but that for a variety of reasons there appeared to be a ten year pause after that. During those ten years, from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s, not the least significant event was to be a change of government. There was a reflection of the timing of these national events, to some extent, in modern languages, as was more than likely in certain other subjects. In the late 1960s and early 1970s some of the attempts to teach modern languages across the whole ability range had for some teachers resulted in the separation of language from civilization and background. By the mid-to-late-1970s it has been inferred that this particular trend had reached its peak. The foundations for the G.C.S.E., to be implemented in the mid 1980s ten years later, were starting to be laid. During the following ten years from mid 1970s, civilization and background which had risen almost in its own right and thereby proved, to some extent, its right to exist, started to grow back into the language context whence it had originated, though the tail-end of it still moved for some years to come.

In the main modern language periodical a two-line entry, marking the emergence of a would-be major 'background' publisher served only to underline that a new confidence may have been emerging. It stated that Mary Glasgow Publications had opened a new branch in London.⁽¹⁾ Also the Schools Council/Nuffield Foundation Modern Languages Project with its broad range of approach was to be picked up by York University

(1) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 55, No. 2, June 1974, p.13.

and the work was to be disseminated from there. In that same issue a reviewer, writing of a slightly higher level book on French life, gave it a warm welcome at a time when English students of French were more than ever before taking an interest in general background studies to their subject. (2)

Another book for Advanced level based on the background to Spain was reviewed in December 1974 and showed that even at that point 'background' was strong; it stated that more and more interest had arisen in those recent years at school and at university in background studies. (3)

By March 1975 Mary Glasgow had sufficiently felt the need for new horizons by going to Australia; in later years this publisher paved the way for French video films for the classroom. She wrote back to the United Kingdom describing the experiment in forty-nine high schools in Victoria. The object behind them was to involve learners in a consideration of the nature of language, communication by word of mouth, what it really meant in human terms, what its social and psychological implications were in a community and how different modes of speech reflected different customs and often alternative behaviour. These ideas were not wholly new. Eric Hawkins and Stewart Ingram of the United Kingdom were quoted in Melbourne. Mary Glasgow spoke ^(3a) of recent experiments with 'project work', 'social studies' and 'area studies' and ways of treating language as experience of culture instead of (or as well as) skills to be acquired for ill-defined or sometimes outworn purposes; the movement away from traditional methods

(2) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 55, No. 2, June 1974, p.101.

(3) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 55, No. 4, December 1974, p.206.

(3a) Mary Glasgow, *Modern Languages down under* M.L. Vol. 56
No. 1, March 1975, p. 142

had had its point of departure in Victoria where it was linked with widespread antagonism to the hitherto fashionable audio-lingual system; in many places the video-cassette recorder was a normal tool of instruction and communication, because it was assumed that languages had to be seen as well as heard; such great achievements, she felt, in sound and vision. For the United Kingdom she, too, was to bring such dimension to modern languages resources.

Interest in 'background' was, as it has been stated, on the wane; this was accelerated by lack of confidence in European Studies; confidence was also waning in existing language teaching. Clare Burstall's attack on Primary French took the wind out of the sails of Junior School French although this was to be questioned at a later date, and later still mostly justified.^(4a) Another blow came with the discovery that only just over one third of pupils were choosing to continue studying a foreign language; this discovery was made worse by the fact that the pupils who opted out, or were timetabled out, had usually done only two years of a five year course, thus achieving little success, or had reached few of the aims of studying a language.⁽⁴⁾ A comparison was made to that of boys and girls studying a history course which did not include the twentieth century.

This H.M.I. reached the same conclusion which many more people were to make during this period of reflection for modern languages teachers. This was that background had proved its worth but surely it could not be all that was easily assimilated out of a modern language study for the low achiever. Like others during these reflective years between mid-1970s and mid-1980s, recommendations were made for the breaking up of language into compartments; and suggestions were made about which

(4) M. V. Salter H.M.I., The place of Foreign Languages in the whole curriculum of the school, What shall we teach? (J.C.L.A. Conference speech), M.L., Vol. 56, No. 2, June 1975, p.194.

(4a) C. Burstall, Primary French in the balance, (N.E.R.), Slough, 1974, also M. Buckley, Is Primary French really in the balance? Audio Visual Languages Journal, Vol. 14, 1976, p.178

aspects of the language might be more readily assimilated by the low achiever and also the high achiever. Thus modern languages, which had largely grown out of the Classics, and which for so long had been studied from an academic viewpoint, now after thirty years of being examined in that way for growing numbers of the low achievers, began to be viewed differently; the 'divide and conquer' approach was indeed being adopted and eventually was to become a central part of the framework for the new G.C.S.E. As in other subjects, skills were to become a dominant feature.

In this last particular case reference was being made to the fact that listening to a modern language had often been overlooked as a skill in its own right; more often it was required that pupils should understand in order to be able to speak. Mr. Salter pointed to the growing evidence of the capacity of pupils of a wide range of ability to understand the modern language spoken rapidly by the native speaker. Therefore a suggestion was made that there could be two levels of understanding: precise detailed understanding (for the high achiever); and gist-understanding for the low achiever.

Similarly, reading was another receptive skill. It had been the intention to link listening, speaking, reading and writing. It might now be appropriate to consider the two receptive skills (listening, reading) and the two productive skills (speaking, writing). These considerations were not entirely new. They epitomised efforts that had been made and that were being made during the reflective years between mid 1970s to mid 1980s across the range of the curriculum.

Mr. Salter suggested that the speaking should be geared towards making comfortable survival abroad a possibility. Writing should be

geared towards using relevant information not always rely on pupils' own ideas.

The H.M.I. thought that the audio-visual revolution had produced a reaction against teaching grammar. Language had ceased to be taught as illustrative of rules. However high achieving pupils were capable of learning and re-applying rules and if they were denied this their oral and written work could suffer. He suggested for grammar, therefore, an inductive approach, retaining moderation, using grammar as a means to an end, in so far as it facilitated the use of language.

With regard to civilization, he thought that most courses tried to present this aspect, but that more intelligent children should be challenged to go far beyond the normal boundaries, using powers of discrimination and making conclusions. To be avoided at all costs was copying extracts from books and magazines or the indiscriminate pasting of pictures. English should be used - or the modern language for the high achiever.

Until more recent years less intelligent children were given a watered down version of the standard course. They became frustrated, disillusioned and presented the teacher with discipline problems. This robbed the teacher's confidence and he might conclude that he was incapable. In the United Kingdom, he said, we did not have the evidence of the level below which pupils could not learn a modern language.

This notion was to be an important consideration at that time. Since teachers were starting to look at languages-learning by breaking down the subject into sections and seeing certain sections as being more easy to assimilate than others, there was a growing question as

to how far one could take this.

This was partly answered by stating that pupils would normally learn what were achievable targets. These targets should be goals within their reach which would provide a constant feeling of success.

Mr. Salter referred to a Department of Education and Science Survey, of which he had been the author, in which he reminded the reader that language learning was more difficult for the slow learner because he had a limited memory span and therefore had difficulty in learning by analogy; he could rarely re-use words and structures creatively; his command of the language did not grow in complexity, he might not learn basic structures, he might forget much of the vocabulary.

In listening comprehension most such children, without major defects could understand more than they could say. The gap between the receptive and productive skills was very much greater for slow learners than others. He suggested, therefore, that the listening skill should predominate for slow learners; and at a later stage when they were better equipped, in the limited time available, simple oral objectives and survival situations could be set and taught, without expecting the growth of complexity.

Reading was an individual activity and therefore could be undertaken by a slow learner if and when he appeared ready but it could induce inferiority and failure; therefore 'survival' reading might be the target. Examples of this might be road signs and shop names.

For writing, if possible, one should wait until the pupils appeared to want to do it, and then there should not be an unrealistic insistence on accuracy by the teacher.

Mr. Salter was adamant that slow learners did need to study the background and civilization of the country and its people but at a level and in a context which were of real significance. There was no point in presenting a middle class context to a working class boy. While civilization was likely to play a large part in a slow learner's language studies (often a major part after the first year or two) he should be led to think about factual situations which he encountered. Most teachers who presented 'background lessons' seemed not to go far enough; they did not encourage pupils to conceptualize and to come to conclusions. Life was multi-faceted. Abroad was not 'funny' but, seen in the situation, perfectly reasonable. There was a need to go beyond the descriptive stage and present facts in a variety of ways so that the point was driven in.

The H.M.I. felt that slow learners in foreign languages had two main requirements. They needed to be convinced that their teachers had faith in their ability to learn and also they needed a constant feeling of success.

He finished his lecture by quoting from Clare Burstall's final report on the French Pilot Scheme, 'It is patently unrealistic to expect that the same teacher's objectives, except perhaps during the very early stages of learning a foreign language, will be equally appropriate for children with such differing characteristics. Unless there is a sustained effort to redefine the objectives of teaching French in order to meet pupils' differing needs, some children will not realize their full potential while others will inevitably experience failure.'

Thus the balance continued to move towards changing the language objectives of teaching according to the attainment of the pupils - instead of the more frequent practice of giving low achievers minimal or even no language; that was done by increasing their study of background and civilization. The breaking down of language learning into skill areas allowed a much more flexible approach in setting differing objectives according to the differing abilities of pupils. Soon, to this, would also be added the graded objectives, in which certain survival situations were clustered in levels of difficulty thereby allowing pupils to gain credit by moving upwards from one cluster to another.

During this time of gradual change, background and civilization was of course still continuing to be taught and to be provided for. More background books became available. In 1975 'Life in a French Town' acquired a companion book, 'Life in a French Family'. A reviewer stated that the aims of the book were to assist the reader towards an understanding of the French way of life, with particular reference to the family. The author stated that he had written in English to make the book accessible to pupils irrespective of their stage of development in learning French.

There was also an increase in the number of articles submitted on 'background and civilization'. These often contained apprehensions. The Commissioner responsible for the external affairs of the E.E.C. addressed languages teachers in 1975.⁽⁵⁾ He said that European Studies had been a growth area in the curriculum of many schools in Britain. In very many cases they had been introduced in schools, willingly or otherwise, by teachers who had come to the conclusion

(5) R. C. Williams, Towards an Education for Europe, text of an address to the M.L.A. at the J.C.L.A. Conference, December 1975, M.L., Vol. 57, No. 1, March 1976, p.1.

that a substantial percentage of their pupils was no longer profiting from a language course and might be better employed on a non-linguistic study of a region, a country or countries. These courses might carry the title of French Studies or European Studies, but they usually had one thing in common, they were aimed at the low achiever and were an activity that went on at C.S.E. level rather than G.C.E. Ordinary level. It was significant that the G.C.E. Board which did offer Ordinary level in European Studies was currently looking to the older student, possibly even in Further or Adult Education. He reminded his listeners of the French educationalist who maintained that a fifteen year old could not grasp the concept of Europe in all of its senses. He went further to say that teachers of modern languages bore a considerable responsibility for introducing such courses without the co-operation and sometimes with the disapproval of their history and geography colleagues. The whole subject of European Studies was inextricably mixed up with the teaching of modern languages, usually French; and that it would be better in many ways if a divorce could be arranged which would allow languages teachers to teach languages and for the high achieving children to tackle European Studies, presumably as a subject in its own right.

As has been stated, such a divorce of background from language was to be arranged but it is probable that the timing of this coincided naturally and spontaneously with a fundamental review of the teaching of languages which allowed teachers the confidence to attempt to teach the low achiever in a beneficial manner. So far, also, it has been suggested that the breaking down of the language into skills and also into situations was being promoted as a means of doing this.

Ten years before the introduction of the G.C.S.E. those attempting

to make sure that the new examination contained components which could provide educational value and interest listened to the chairman of the Schools Council Modern Languages Committee at the Joint Council of Language Associations Conference.⁽⁶⁾ He concluded that in considering a common system of examining, modern languages appeared to be the most intractable of subjects. The conference went further to reject the idea of a single examination at sixteen plus in modern languages; however although it did not favour a common system of examination it did favour a common system of assessment aimed at attainment levels rather than age groups.

The conference also gave voice to doubts on issues such as the validity of European Studies in an already crowded timetable; there was the opinion that European Studies was becoming a kind of poor man's French for modern language 'drop-outs'. Instead there was a need amongst the low achievers for productive skills. This, of course, was another move against the teaching of 'background-and-civilization' courses in general. The frustration of those middle to late 1970s, running ~~down~~ towards the change of government, was very clear. The large 'drop-out' rate from modern languages served only to reinforce this general frustration,

'If selection at eleven plus was unsound how much more unsound have the criteria become by which children are all to drop a subject in the curriculum children know in advance that 'failure' will allow them to wash their hands of the subject. Teachers should be bolder allowing children to drop certain subjects only after they have acquired a proven minimal proficiency in the subject ... only success in a subject

(6) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 58, No. 1, March 1976, p.27.

should allow choice (in their) options. There was a passive acceptance by modern languages teachers of the present situation ... economic considerations, shortage of cashflow, staffing, teacher-supply, increasingly difficult situations in the classroom.

The slight decline in modern languages teaching was against a background of parochial apathy or insular ignorance of the present economic and trading realities for U.K. which had already lost its sovereignty, as had other countries during post-war years.⁽⁷⁾

It is understandable how the movement from background and civilization for the low achiever to a fresh system of selection of skills and situations suitable to their abilities, against a backcloth of rapidly-deteriorating self-confidence nationally - how all of this was not going to be a swift process.

The editor of this issue voiced another concern, that there was increasing frustration in British Education caused by organisational disruptiveness. He cited Middle Schools, Sixth Form colleges, comprehensivization, Primary French; in general the fragmentary teaching throughout all subjects was a cause of concern for him. There was no continuity, there were short-term solutions. He also pointed to regional courses appearing which prevented the development of national patterns. It was impossible to gain an overview. Some people in the country attributed the cause of this unsatisfactory state to the existence in Britain of a non-centralized education system. They might have wished, with hindsight, that they had never voiced such opinions.

(7) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 58, No. 1, March 1976, p.27.

Meanwhile the tug-of-war from 'background' to skill-based situational modern language teaching continued. In the same issue a new background book on Spanish Life was reviewed. The reviewer stated that it would be difficult to find a better background book on Spain useful both to the language teacher and to those followers of courses in European Studies. The following year a course was published which was to be taken up widely in attempting to teach languages to the low achievers. The 'Eclair' course, by Mary Glasgow Publications, was described as being devised and created by a team of Inner London Education Authority teachers and was thenceforth to be published in all markets outside London. It was a multi-media course which had been specially developed for mixed ability classes in the eleven to thirteen age range. It concentrated on motivating slow learners of French and was claimed to be the only multi-media course specially designed for this age and ability range. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing patterns of language acquisition and a strong cultural element ensured that the language was never abstract.⁽⁸⁾ Thus a fairly clear statement was being made that this new-style course was absorbing 'background' into the content of language teaching.

Reviews of background publications often became more aggressive. One such reviewer of a book on France said that the breathless exposé gave no time to offer explanations, to make connections, to suggest patterns so that young readers' understanding of French civilization was hardly advanced. The reader was presented with an

(8) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 57, No. 4, December 1976, p.193.

agreeably elevated appendix to language study rather than the essential, authentic matrix for the adolescent's target language; but these reviewers were only just whetting their appetites.

Reviewers also offered positive criticism which was useful to would-be writers of background books and also to those planning the new-style course texts to follow. A series on Europe was reviewed in the same issue.⁽⁹⁾ It was stated to be intended for non-examination third and fourth year pupils following European Studies and Area Studies. This text was more agreeable to this reviewer. Pupils, he felt, would be able to find their way around the text. The text was related to the visuals. There was a minimum of information in simple language. The photographs were varied and up-to-date. Few were of the posed, travel-type. They were informal photographs with human figures in contexts. There were maps, diagrams, cartoons and small advertisements. It was authentic. There was no undue overcrowding. It could be used from Primary to sixth form. It is worth remembering, then, that such a positive, concrete response as depicted in this review would prove useful for the course textbooks still in the minds of others.

From many directions the advice came that background and civilization was important, as part of the language teaching process. In a report to the Expenditure Committee of the House of Commons⁽¹⁰⁾ it was stated that windows that were to be opened on different cultures could have some real and lasting value. Children, however, had to be taught in ways which encouraged this. Achievement was likely to be highest where social attitudes and teaching together combined to promote effective learning. It was the teacher's skill and

(9) Ibid.

(10) The Modern Languages Association Memorandum to the Expenditure Committee of the House of Commons, M.L., Vol. 58, No. 2, June 1977, p.87.

personality which created the conditions for learning; in the United Kingdom teachers had not yet developed suitable materials for the low achieving pupil, the method to help him learn a modern language, ways of assessing his progress or of training his teachers. This was the first time in Britain's recorded history that schools had tried to educate the whole population from five to sixteen and they would not succeed until they had a national policy for education and within it a policy for language learning and not merely for schooling which is all they had at present. Everyone must be involved in attempting to achieve this - politicians, parents, teachers, employers and above all the children.

Once more it was suggested, then, that concern for low achieving children was helping to fuel the debate over changing teaching strategies. In modern languages the move to communicative teaching and the absorption of background and civilization as an active component becoming visible in the first new-style teaching course books, was possibly an indication of this.

A contributor, to the debate, from Manchester University confirmed the essential combination of background and the language, working together. For him the foreign word had a mental image. It was the foreign culture as it was embodied in its language which was the linguists' domain. The learner who could understand 'concièrge' had a better imaginative grasp of aspects of French life than statistics of flat-dwellers could give. He also went on to say that the ground was changing and it was no longer enough for linguists to assume that everyone would see the command of a modern language as self-evidently a good thing. It was for linguists to show that they could contribute to the general curriculum something that no other subject could do.

This could be done if linguists were clear about the case they made; and that the linguistic skills lay at the heart of all learning; that the understanding of language was powerfully helped by the experience of moving out of one's own language into another in which meaningful communication took place; and that this experience ought to be made available, to some degree, to all pupils.

Thus, again, it was felt that real communicability opened up languages to the low achiever. In the following year it was reasserted that this must also take place against a background knowledge which the speaker shared with the listener.⁽¹²⁾ He went on to underline the importance of background by stating that for the modern language learner a threefold skill was involved: firstly he must be linguistically capable of producing the appropriate utterances; secondly, the learner required the social knowledge about how natives perceive and categorize social situations; and thirdly the learner must relate his linguistic repertoire to social knowledge for social meaning. Clearly, here, background was going beyond mere snapshots of the country.

In the same issue a broader view of solving the problems of languages in the curriculum⁽¹³⁾ tried to analyse the constant swing of languages' teachers from one extreme to the other in search of a panacea,

'Pupils' modes of learning are to some extent conditioned by the school as a whole and linguists ignore them at their peril. We might perhaps be less inward-looking and pay more attention to what goes on in teaching subjects other than our own. It may be this rather

(11) J. A. McNair, Modern Languages in today's curriculum, M.L., Vol. 58, No. 4, December 1977, p.162.

(12) W. T. Littlewood, Oral Communication Ability, M.L., Vol. 59, March 1978, p.29.

(13) J. Partington, The Problems lie elsewhere, M.L., Vol. 59, No. 1, June 1978, p.102.

insular attitude which has made us so prone, amongst the disciplines, to dogma and fashion, from grammatical categories to global structurism, from translation to communicative competence via direct audio-visual and audio-lingual methods in less than fifty years'

The author went on to say that the function of the teacher in general had become more indirect and supportive - the organiser of resources from which pupils learn. Yet the linguist could not do this to anything like the same extent, for he was the only French, German or Russian 'resources', in the early years the only source of correction and information for the learner. The effect of this was to make the relationship of the language learner to his teacher quite different from that in other subjects; to a real extent it was more authoritarian. As yet the alternative possibilities in group work and mutual self-help were relatively unexplored and teachers knew little. It might be that one of the sources of the present difficulty lay in the field of classroom relationships and style. In short, language teachers might ask themselves: were they the victims of the crisis in modern languages or did they cause it?

In the meantime graded tests were gaining greater momentum. It seems likely that modern language teachers - with their exalted classical origins, accustomed mainly to dealing with the high achievers - during the period of increased contact with low achievers had begun to explore more avenues of approach. Those avenues, on the one hand, which came from classroom teachers' own instinct, such as background studies, were eventually absorbed into more logical and manageable teaching aims - namely the course textbooks of the 1980s. Whereas on the other hand, those avenues which came from outside of the main

thoroughfare of British teaching were politely allowed time to prove themselves and were then allowed to take some other route. Thus it was that whenever it seemed that the cognitive, intellectual-based aspects of modern languages could not be absorbed by the low achievers, new approaches were sought and the better of these ideas became components in classroom teaching (eventually to most abilities) within the school.

The better aspects of graded examinations, or graded tests, were to become part, of the classroom teaching process, too; these tests had grown out of classroom teachers' instinctive response to the teaching situation. An article⁽¹⁴⁾ stated that a great deal of criticism had been levelled at modern languages teachers during recent years but that it had contained some useful advice. The most important point to emerge had been the need for a clearer definition of aims and objectives, now that linguists were teaching across the ability range; and for a far more diverse spread of customers, from the eventual student of languages at university to the Common Market lorry driver of the future.

The question of demand for languages or linguists from business, and how education might respond was treated in that same issue when a prediction was made for 1990. It was twofold: that the market for international trade would grow faster in the non-European speaking world (than the reverse); that businessmen would be queueing up for crash courses in modern languages two weeks before they were due to fly off somewhere to try to sell something and that would be too little, too late. The name of the game was communication; and were

(14) Graded Examinations for elementary language learners: the Oxfordshire Project, M.L., Vol. 59, No. 3, September 1978, p.154.

the British as a nation communicating with their overseas customers as efficiently as they should, he wondered.⁽¹⁵⁾

Unofficially it has already been suggested, background and civilization as a separate subject had already been largely dismissed. The consideration and evaluation of such a possibility had however strengthened serious linguistically-based alternatives. 'Background', however, still bounced around as it waited to settle into its final slot of the fuller mental image that went with the foreign word. Meanwhile more and more books and filmstrips were being published to go with background studies. It was realized by one reviewer that one slight problem might be alleviated, the problem of the information being beyond the teacher's knowledge. He felt that pupils at all levels and of a wide ability range stood to acquire a lot of useful information about the realities of French life; that they would gain insights into the differences between Britain and France which were difficult to impart without pictures. He finally admitted that a lack of knowledge on the part of the teacher was adequately dealt with in the booklet accompanying the filmstrip.⁽¹⁶⁾ In the same issue another reviewer referred to a text on France which was intended for use by a wide range of levels; he said that it was a valuable introduction to the various aspects of French life and institutions and that it should help students of all levels to a better understanding of the French and of France in the present day.⁽¹⁷⁾

Clearly these aims of understanding the foreign mind were

(15) Does Britain need linguists, report of a conference sponsored by the University of Surrey in Association with the British Overseas Trade Board, M.L., Vol. 59, No. 3, September 1978, p.46.

(16) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 59, No. 3, September 1978, p.170.

(17) Ibid, p.171.

increasingly important. The communicative competence of the 'new era' was going to depend on a sympathetic native speaker. The sympathy might well be mutual if both parties had a better understanding of their separate ways of life.

By December of that same year some reservations were being expressed about the new wave of background material which was appearing from publishers. The reviewer *implied* that the 'back door' appearance of background had led to uncertain aims. Teachers, he said, would not need to be reminded that background studies were often an ill-defined and controversial part of the curriculum. If aims, objectives and techniques remained much less clear than in a more traditional modern language course, then clarification must be sought in schools and from teachers. It would be unfair to blame publishers for not defining what teachers themselves sometimes seemed reluctant to define. These packs reflected the uncertain, developing nature of the subject. Much of the content, the publisher stated, dealt with life in France as the pupil might meet it in a visit. However, the reviewer thought that the 'relevant to tourism' aspect might have been stressed to the detriment of all else. An attempt had been made, therefore, to widen the subject matter and to link French Studies with other subjects. However, the breadth of information could encourage an inventive teacher wishing to collaborate with other subjects. The interdisciplinary theme was still surviving at this time.

Reviewers continued to prod at the consciences of intending writers of background material, at the consensus of opinion amongst language teachers and also at publishers, eager to find that right

recipe which can at times capture an exact need.

In the same issue another reviewer wrote on another background book.⁽¹⁸⁾ This time he used the review to ask the reader to evaluate his or her own attitudes. He spoke of the growing stock of published material aimed at background studies for 'pupils with an elementary knowledge of French'. Intending purchasers might, however find it useful to ask themselves three questions. 1) Do I want a book? Do I want each person in class to have the same information or would some sort of kit be cheaper and more effective? 2) Does the mixture of English and French here-proposed fit my class? "Pupils with an elementary knowledge of French" is a label covering a great many different people.

The next consideration was a vital move forward towards the new generation of main, language, course texts

'Some may feel that the English texts undermine and neutralise the French and that they wish to give a greater language-emphasis to background studies'.

In the years to follow there was indeed to be a move back towards the language with the culture, but inside main course books and not background studies courses.

The third question was whether teachers offered to pupils only a partial, sanitized view of French life; would a more robust, more provocative view of France be less boring? In fact the missing thrust was largely to come from improving real language communicability; alongside cultural considerations.

Yet again, the new publications came as separate components of what was eventually to be the composite course books containing all

(18) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 59, No. 4, December 1978, p.220.

(19) Ibid. p.221.

the skill areas. In that same issue a reviewer dealt with a series of packs on themes of everyday life, meant to encourage conversation on a wide range of situations, some more pertinent to children than others. It offered work on an individual basis or work with groups, or the full class.

The economic stringencies affecting schools were reflected in the emergence of packs, instead of sets of class texts. In 1979 one reviewer observed, as had others, that packs had an advantage over books in that they were cheaper (one pack per class) and that sometimes it was perhaps an advantage for the whole class not to be doing the same thing at the same time. Pupils, even disruptive ones, could be remarkably diligent if they thought that they were one of only three people in the class working from a sheet.⁽²⁰⁾

There was also an increase in material designed to stimulate conversation in French. Flexibility, said one other reviewer, was the key consideration. Oral and Aural skills were to be stressed. The course under his review included tapes, wallcharts, symbol cards, campsite games, (this particular course dealt with holidays), recipe sheets, regional group work. The reviewer felt that the pack would repay the enthusiastic department with something to talk about that was different.⁽²¹⁾ Thus packs written in English were being equalled by packs written in the modern language. The former, would be primarily for the low achiever whom it was thought would not cope with the more complex vocabulary of more interesting themes. The latter was written in order to stimulate discussion in the modern language on interesting themes. However, slowly but surely the two

(20) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 60, No. 1, March 1979, p.64.

(21) Ibid.

concepts were moving towards each other; and soon, simple but interesting discussion, or response, in the modern language would be within the capability of all.

The presidential address of Summer 1979 reaffirmed the need for an awareness of social 'background' to the country to go 'hand-in-hand' with learning the language; thus it confirmed the trend for components of language-learning which were explored partly in order to help the low achiever - background studies and everyday, 'survival', minimal language use - to become components for all,

'The H.M.I. document spoke of the two main contributions to experience of modern languages ... linguistic and social ... Linguistic: the way language is organized, the understanding of language in a wider context for the study of mother tongue'

This awareness of language was a theme which always lay somewhere within the general educational value of language study...

'...Social: healthy curiosity towards foreign people and a development of an understanding of unfamiliar customs and manners through an acquaintance with the people, the way of life, the literature, the cultural heritage and international relationships.'

For one contributor it did not seem obvious that only the low achiever should be stimulated with the apparently practical application and immediate results of the communicative approach. He thought that this was a basic confusion of ability and motivation.⁽²³⁾ Observing pupils' behaviour, within defined situations, in their ability to

(22) Presidential address, what do we profess? S.R. Ingram, H.M.I. Working Paper by Mod Lang Committee of H.M. Inspectorate, July 1978, Curriculum 11-16, M.L., Vol. 60, No. 2, June 1979, p.71.

(23) M. Byram Performance Objectives and Modern Language Learning, M.L., Vol. 60, No. 2, June 1979, p.111.

perform the modern language seemed to have taken a grasp, he felt, of the thinking of modern linguists. The apparent precision and objectivity inherent to such methods for one thing offered the means of clear control over teacher-examiners. Also the stress on performance in the (spoken) language, and the character of the less intelligent for whom it was mainly intended induce the teaching of this stimulus-and-response method without any explanation of the grammatical content. Although it might not be a necessary consequence of the new trend towards performance there was a strong temptation for the teaching of performance only in a system where examinations are important and where teaching to examinations was widespread. Also, clearly concerned that modern languages was moving towards behaviour-teaching he asked, does a claim to knowledge of how a motor car engine works imply an ability to answer questions on the workings of the internal combustion engine, or the ability to repair an engine when it goes wrong? Should we be teaching 'knowing that' or 'knowing how'? Whether or not pupils understand the grammar of what they say is compared to the boy-scout formula for tying a reef-knot 'right over left and under'. It is meaningless, in the sense that it is merely a mnemonic, to help the failing memory. Thus the author felt that the movement away from grammatical language-learning towards situational, skill-based, performance of tasks would eventually place constraints on the complexity of what could be learned and on the length of time for which it could be retained. So pupils acquire only a severely restricted version of the language within the limits of their memory and this itself would deteriorate unless repeated regularly. Thus also teachers would be offering a transitory manipulative skill probably based on their

competence in their own native language. The viewpoint of that article, generally, questioned a growing move towards situational teaching wherein the target was to somehow 'get over the message'. The references to car mechanics being able to fix an engine without understanding what they had done, the boy scout performing a task by muttering a formula - both of these comparisons were not lost on a modern language teaching profession still uncertain of its direction.

More significantly this article was being read in the first full month of Mrs. Thatcher's new Government. It has already been stated previously that significant changes of examinations systems often took place when there was significant indication of changes of political mood, or at least of political majority - and also after significant national or international movements. Many of the vested interests which are against change, are curtailed when a new Government takes control or when there has been a break in normal continuity. So it was that languages' teachers felt themselves to be moving towards a new phase of language teaching. This was probably reflected to some smaller or greater degree in many other subjects. The change of Government gave the break in power lines to allow new initiatives. 'Communicability' was to receive fresh impetus as the curriculum moved towards 'practicability', subject applicability and justification on school timetables.

In this section the position of those components of language teaching introduced mainly to teach the subject area to the low achiever - situational language and background and civilization - (but most especially the latter) - has been summarized. Background and civilization is especially significant because at times it

separated itself wholly from the teaching of the language; and in some instances this was deliberate because it was thought that low achievers could gain no benefit from language-teaching. Yet as background moved further away from the language, especially at first external examination level, so modern languages teachers became apprehensive as they moved into areas beyond their knowledge. As these teachers considered the ramifications of extending their knowledge of the geography, economics, history and sociology of their countries so also did it occur to them that they were moving in the opposite direction to the spoken language. The suspicion was further underlined by European Studies, which belonged to no particular country and therefore had stepped into a new 'Limbo'. This latter subject then attracted the attention of other subject teachers, especially in an era of inter-disciplinary subject liaison. Thus this 'lost soul' drifted around, and with it started to pull subjects such as French Studies and its equivalent for other languages.

At the same time there was a growth in the teaching of things such as 'survival' language - which, it should be added, had sometimes made up the language component of such subjects as French Studies. Some of the earliest new generation situational language course texts for the low achiever had subdivided the traditional visit to France into progressive, easily digestible components. For wholly low achieving groups these components remained largely on the same level of difficulty (later books were to offer components for the low achiever, neatly dovetailed into work for the high achiever).

In this section the opinions and comments of reviewers have been included in order to give substance to the trends in language teaching. Clearly publishers tried to gauge the direction of demand in order to

sell to it (or in some instances to lead the demand) and in doing so their publications were reviewed by experienced teachers or appraisers in the leading modern language journal. Their perceptive comments helped to provide stimulating thought during those reflective years. Through their descriptive, critical reviews and through analytical, objective articles in the journal it is possible to perceive the move of background and civilization back towards the language itself; this time, however, the whole context of utterances was being seen against the backcloth of the culture which produced them. It is roughly at this point - that is where situational language met situational background - that Mrs. Thatcher's new administration began.

CHAPTER 6

THE BEGINNING OF AN ERA OF ACCOUNTABILITY: THE EVOLUTION OF A G.C.S.E. PHILOSOPHY 1979 to 1982

It has been stated that reviews of books provide an important reflection of the changing attitude towards teachers' needs. Enlightened reviewers could sometimes provide a beleaguered teacher with the substitute therapy which he or she might have received if lucky enough to go on an in-service course. Reviews, for example, could suggest a series of lesson content, but also much more besides.⁽¹⁾ This reviewer stated that the book under review provided information in English and in French, with pictures, for handling fourteen situations in France from arrival at a campsite to buying petrol, buying food for a pic-nic and cashing travellers' cheques. The photographs, notices and price lists were also authentic and the questions on them were designed to ensure that the pupil understood the written word in useful situations. If some notices contained difficult vocabulary (and the difficulty usually arises from ignorance of English and the unwillingness or inability to relate it to French) there was a good vocabulary provided for each section at the end of the book. The information given in English was clear and simple (but not patronizingly so) and emphasis was placed on the differences between the two countries.

The situations chosen were more suitable for the language content of some C.S.E. courses such as the recent French Studies course in Wales or possibly for low achieving third formers; or else they could be used just to brighten up the over-academic diet of younger forms in general. For a visitor to France they were really

(1) M. Giles-Jones, reviewing 'Destination France', (Harrap) 1978, in M.L., Vol. 60, No. 2, June 1979, p.121.

useful. A child who could cope with those situations on behalf of monoglot parents, the reviewer felt, would have them wondering what had gone wrong with their own French. The dialogues were well within the grasp of even low achieving pupils.

One of the more useful situations dealt with a visit to a chemist's shop although the French predilection for suppositories might have been mentioned. The reviewer felt that alert pupils on seeing the relevant picture which explained that the tablets had to be taken by 'voie oral' were going to wonder what other alternative function there was for a tablet.

He felt that the teacher's book was most useful in listing the flash cards necessary for each lesson and containing the text of listening exercises that were answered on the spirit mastersheets. Numerous suggestions for activities other than listening were made. Their usefulness depended more on the temperament of the teacher than the pupil since they tended to be games. The accompanying tape was clear and slow and contained a variety of voices. Low achieving pupils were initially disconcerted by authentic voices but, with perseverance, progress should be good. The flash cards were rather flimsy. They were reproductions of objects depicted in the pupil's book. Some tended to be unrecognizable; for example, pâté looked more like raspberries; the slices of 'saucisson' were ambiguous; the 'croque monsieur' looked even more unappetizing than it did in reality. The best flash cards were the pharmaceutical ones with French brand names on and the numerous ones depicting prices. All-in-all, he felt, that it was a lively and interesting book. For their part those who read this review would find it in general a lively and interesting exposé of good practice.

In this work it has been stated that it was more the developments which grew out of day-to-day teaching in action, than those things which were imposed or grafted on from some other system - it was these slower, natural evolutions which were more intrinsic, more easily understood, whether or not they had widespread support. It can sometimes, therefore, be easier to absorb a cohesive argument presented clearly than it would be to follow a wider theme. Therefore since classroom teacher's choice of text is important, reviews of main texts seem fundamental. Clearly shelves and cupboards are full of sets of books which to each successive teacher, with class or subject responsibility, seem irrelevant or outdated; but it is the unwise teacher who replaces, with a sweep, one whim with another. Over the space of a year or more, as the mood or needs of a class change, the teacher might often find himself or herself dipping into texts which lay further back on the shelves. Sometimes a different approach from a different era can enervate in an unexpected way. This consideration apart, reviewers of books are often chosen by editors for their experience, sensitivity or perceptiveness; and amongst reviews there stand out, those of the experienced teacher. Much useful teaching experience can be gleaned from hearing the spontaneous response to a publication of one who has seen many publications come and go within the classroom over the years. Reviews are sometimes one of the few opportunities for the good classroom teacher to discuss in 'solid' terms his or her opinions about current trends and practices. A book is a concrete, physical item and the listener or reader can constantly take a source of reference for the exact opinions being stated. Reviews represent a theory or opinion on a readily-available non-abstract item rather than an opinion on an idea. In that sense reviews have an

important part to play in indicating changing attitudes and patterns within an area of education.

A sister to the above-mentioned course, but for Germany, came out roughly about the same time. In these early 'new generation' modern language course books it is interesting to note how the influence of the low achiever had influenced approaches to the teaching method. The reviewer stated that the language of the active parts of the course was simple and since it was not analysed, it was well within the capabilities of virtually all. He went on to state that since weaker pupils' memory spans were short there was no way round the unavoidable necessity for frequent repetition and revision of already practised situations and that the pupil was probably better equipped, practically speaking, than after following the more usual German course.⁽²⁾ Such books as these were 'new generation' efforts to teach the practical application of the skills of modern languages. The reviewer also went on to state that given a sympathetic teacher and the right rapport between teacher and taught the book should be a very successful preparation for a visit to Germany or as the language element of a German Studies or European Studies course. Hence one can perceive, yet again that 'survival' language-speaking, designed for the low achiever (formerly considered to be the limits of their capability and also considered to be the likely language-maximum of a 'background and language' course), was being written into new-style course text books - but now for use across the whole ability range. Slowly, then, by absorption, the high achieving children were being brought into contact with the practical, situational French which was to form the

(2) I. Meyer reviewing Destination Germany, (Harrap) 1978, in M.L., Vol. 60, No. 2, June 1979, p.237.

framework of the G.C.S.E. examination structure - and it was partly experiments with the low achiever or all-ability teaching which forced the tendency.

An Italian 'background' book was reviewed in the same issue. This had no language situational target but was part of a longer series of books looking at everyday life in a variety of European countries. The reviewer stated that the obligation laid on modern language departments in comprehensive schools to teach across the whole ability range had led to two distinct developments although they were often combined in a single Mode Three C.S.E. scheme. On the one hand there were the closely defined practical language courses including the Cr dit schemes, on the other hand, Background Studies.⁽³⁾

In this review there was an example of a growing trend to want to show more everyday life than was clinically supplied. The reviewer stated that it was misleading to give too bland a picture of present day Italy and he felt that the book under review could have benefitted from a more astringent attitude to the less attractive side of Italian urban life. He then offered a word of caution to the teacher who assumed that anything under the category of 'background' might be used too liberally throughout the ability range. He warned that although the book was a most valuable source of information, it must be used with care by the teacher, especially with low achieving groups.

This opinion underlines the specific, text-related advice on teaching method being given by reviewers - often experienced modern languages teachers - more often than not with special reference to the low achieving child. This leading modern language periodical appeared

(3) P. Healey, reviewing, Life in an Italian town, (Harrap) 1978 in M.L., Vol. 60, No. 2, June 1979, p. 237, p.240.

to encourage a helpful approach.

At this staging point of modern languages - whilst awaiting the stamp of practicability which a new sixteen plus system geared towards communicative skills combined with greater knowledge of the country and its people would bring - at this point a significant obituary was noted. It was that of W. F. H. Whitmarsh. It informed all readers that in between 1935 and 1977 forty text book titles had been produced; seventeen were still in print; that there could be few people who had studied French at school or at university to whom the name Whitmarsh would not conjure up memories of thorough, accurate and useful books upon which they could always rely.⁽⁴⁾

Such thoroughness, accuracy and reliability would be difficult to follow, if indeed later generations of linguists were to seek to do so.

It has been stated that the poignant, relevant advice given by reviewers, rather like first night reviews, could give valuable advice, but in this case to classroom teachers and would-be writers of successive books, besides damning shocks to the authors themselves. Even so, this leading modern languages periodical continued to encourage these positive criticisms by publishing them. Furthermore, it helped to place background studies firmly in position in the new wave of incoming course texts and spelt out exactly the role that it had to play.

A 1978 reviewer analysed what he felt was a series of books designed to give those secondary school pupils with an elementary

(4) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 61, No. 1, March 1980, p.46.

knowledge of French a basic course of instruction in the cultural background of the lives of young people in France. Each chapter finished with a number of suggestions for written work. Many of those seemed limited and boring, he claimed; they displayed minimal connection between language and meaning. He cited an instruction for filling gaps in a passage with words supplied from a list; for copying a list of French words and writing next to each the letter of the English meaning; even more mundane was matching letters with numbers to give the correct answers to a series of questions. He wondered whether background studies was simply a test of clerky diligence rather than a problem of presenting a simple account of cultural background. Even so, that particular book because it was a little more advanced was less bland and more unpredictable. It seemed odd to him that no explicit attempt was made to provoke learners to write or talk about their own experiences and pre-occupations. He wondered whether there was any point in talking about racialism in France. He felt that it was rather a human problem with diverse forms in different places. He wondered also whether background studies had any point unless it triggered off such questions in pupils' minds. He queried whether it was possible to reconcile the question-raising function of the book with some of the pedestrian exercises which that book contained.

As a further illustration of how 'background studies' publications for the low achiever and everyday communicative French were ready partners in forming the practicabilities of the 1980s modern language teaching and learning, another publication⁽⁶⁾ went under review. It

(5) N. Beattie, reviewing, 'Passeport pour la France d'aujourd'hui (Arnold) 1978, in M.L., Vol. 61, No. 1, March 1980, p.49.

(6) Editorial review of French in the news, (Arnold), 1978, in M.L., Vol. 61, No. 1, March 1980, p.59.

was stated to contain items from recent French newspapers and magazines; although the author was obviously thinking in terms of its use with pupils 'less able to cope with the more traditional skills of written production in French', even so all pupils, in the reviewer's opinion, could gain from the modern everyday vocabulary and generally up-to-date materials. Perhaps more important, he felt, was the fact that the book looked and felt relevant and realistic and was therefore all the more interesting, meaningful and consequently acceptable to the pupils of that time.

A subscriber to that leading languages periodical wrote in a letter that same year⁽⁷⁾ in an attempt to discourage any further efforts to pursue a search for French civilization through the method attempted in normal 'background' text books. The letter stated that what prevented the modern linguist from assimilating a foreign culture was not his Englishness but precisely that anguished search for equivalents of social, musical or literary phenomena within his own culture. Since the Middle Ages French culture had been separate from, not to say alien to, British culture and could not be reached from a position of anglocentricity implied in the search for equivalents. We had 'to become other' rather than find elusive or non-existent equivalents in our native phenomena.

In the meantime the increasingly influential voice of E. W. Hawkins could be heard in a separate modern languages periodical.⁽⁸⁾

(7) Letters, *ibid*, p.103.

(8) E. W. Hawkins, Why a modern language for all, Audio-Visual Languages Journal, Vol. 17, No. 2, Summer 1979, p.109.

He had carried out a survey of advertisements requiring a modern language for use in the world of work. He concluded that syllabuses must switch to a content which was seen by students to be appropriate to their perceived needs in the world of work thus entailing a shift of perspective on the part of teachers to a view of language as an instrument of communication.

Another book in the Destination France series was reviewed by the experienced reviewer P. D. Morris.⁽⁹⁾ This particular book was intended for low achieving students for whom the normal structured courses in modern languages provided little motivation. He felt there was a growing realism in schools that teachers had to re-define their aims and objectives so that they set goals that were attainable by their pupils and goals that were functional. The book which he reviewed was ideal material for such new objectives and strategies. The total package represented a realistic investment for classes taking a new approach to learning French where long-term goals were a hindrance to positive attitudes and as such deserved wide recognition in schools. Thus the reviewer offered his opinion. The fact that a school would have to buy a separate book for the low achiever and the high achiever might be a financial impediment to widespread acceptance of such an apparently appropriate book - time would tell.

An important factor in making languages attainable by, and of interest to, low achieving children was that they should realize

(9) P. D. Morris reviewing, Destination France (Harrap), 1979, in M.L., Vol. 61, No. 3, September 1980, p.153.

there was a reason for wanting to speak the modern language inside the classroom. In the past, the 'oral' practice which was carried out by the teacher often gave unhelpful signals⁽¹⁰⁾ to those pupils considering replying in the modern language. For one thing, in the past, learners had often assumed that they should speak the modern language only when spoken to and not spontaneously; that the answer came largely from shuffling around the words of the question in a modified form and in complete sentences; that meaning was relatively unimportant; that the questions were well known by the class and that everyone knew the answer even when the question was being asked and that simply a knowledge of modern language grammar was being tested, the only communicative language being restricted to 'open your books' etc.; that most time was spent listening rather than speaking; that pupils did not talk to each other in the modern language thus not practising the things that they wanted to say. All of these negative factors, the author stated, amounted to a hidden curriculum.

As the new Conservative Government's efforts to alter attitudes towards life in general began to bite, so the place of modern languages as a skill-subject which could be effective in generating wealth for the country became more under scrutiny. A proposal to link modern languages curricula to careers, business and industry⁽¹¹⁾ concluded that capital injection was needed in the hope of heightening the awareness of the contribution which a good knowledge of a modern

(10) J. Partington, Teaching and testing foreign language conversation at 16-plus, M.L., Vol. 61, No. 4, December 1980, p.165.

(11) E. M. Batley, The proposed Modern Language Project on the relationship between modern language curricula in schools, and employers in careers, professions and industry, M.L., Vol. 62, No. 1, March 1981, p.1.

language had to make not only to education, not only to scholarship and learning, not only to international understanding, but to our general economic well-being.

In the same issue⁽¹²⁾ the Schools Council Curriculum officer stated in ominously convincing terms where education and especially modern languages stood under the new Government. He stressed how discussion during the following two years would determine the problems for the next decade or longer; that examinations must serve the curriculum and practising teachers had the chance then to say what they wanted. French had not kept pace with the increasing percentage of the age range entered for C.S.E. or Ordinary level, ~~but decreased~~ (7.5% 1965, 5.4% 1978). Advanced levels remained but with important consultation that year by the Boards on the core content.

The theme of developing the correct foundation and framework for constructing the new sixteen-plus was being picked up with more vigour now, after a change of Government. The Modern Languages Association made its own contribution.⁽¹³⁾ It prefaced its remarks by pointing out that it was the oldest and largest constituent member of the Joint Council of Languages Associations (J.C.L.A.), billing 2,500 members engaged in language teaching in all sectors. Their views were based on practical experience gained in the classroom and on ideas and opinions formed at conferences and study days. It reminded the Committee that a modern language had been an essential ingredient going back to the nineteenth century. Until the twentieth century this had been mostly Latin. In the last half of the twentieth century

(12) J.C.L.A. Conference, ibid., p.38.

(13) Submission by the Modern Languages Association to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education; an inquiry into the Secondary School curriculum and examinations, M.L., February 1981, Vol. 62, No. 2, June 1981, p.102.

there had been a huge decline in Latin and an increase in modern languages, usually French, in the first instance. Until recently schools' language provision was justified on intellectual and cultural grounds with some development of the aesthetic. Languages were then seen as a subject for the high achiever. Nowadays languages were taught to a wider ability range and there was increased awareness of the practical and vocational aims that must be added to a long list of justification for the position of languages in the school curriculum. With regard to recent statements by H.M.I.s concerning essential areas of experience in the curriculum, eight components had to be considered: aesthetic and creative, ethical, linguistic, mathematical, physical, scientific, logical and political, then spiritual; ensuring pupils had contact with all eight could help towards a balanced curriculum; many of the list were necessary ingredients in language learning. Languages teachers therefore insisted on the opportunity for as many pupils as possible to experience language learning and also, therefore, one foreign language should be a part of a core offered to all under sixteen. The determinant for the length of study should be pupils' ability to benefit in any way from the lesson. The aims of study should be a differentiation of objectives according to natural ability. The high achiever would be more successful, by age sixteen years, in listening and understanding a native speaker in daily use, in reading and understanding a newspaper, in oral and written responses, in reasonably authentic pronunciation, in grammatical accuracy. The low achiever would have a lower ability to concentrate on developing recognition skills of listening and reading. It was not impossible to visualise some future situation in which each national speaks his own tongue knowing he is understood by the listener.

The Association then referred to the more general advantages. It may be that this is how it saw the decline of European Studies or other background studies courses reshaping themselves for the 1980s.

It felt there would be a spin-off which was often ignored; that other subjects could benefit from the europeanisation of the curriculum - English language comparisons with foreign languages, social studies, Music, Literature, Art and Drama - taken as a European dimension.

Looking towards examinations, the Association did not share the view that examinations shaped the curriculum. In the previous fifteen years teachers had played a major part in the design of the curriculum; there was currently a changing pattern of oral skills. The testing of the knowledge of French society in many C.S.E. courses was another consideration.

Here the Association was referring more directly to a separate 'background' component as it had been in the past; yet one senses that the future lay in the inclusion of this area of study within course work.

The Association saw graded language examinations as outstanding. This new form brought new concepts of what constituted a pass. There was new interest in languages for many pupils. This had developed out of the demand from class teachers for examinations which were appropriate to work in schools and fitted in with the ultimate needs of pupils. The new sixteen-plus examination offered new hope. The Association felt that the new examination should have a number of components and pupils would make a guided choice to decide which elements they were entered for. Thus all pupils would do the same number of elements but some would choose a preponderance of oral

elements, others comprehension or translation or society studies.

It is interesting to note that the Association still at this point saw that this final item might be examined as a separate component. In continuation it saw the need for a sophisticated system of equivalences, built in, which ensured that top marks could be obtained only by candidates who offered a full range of language skills.

The Association picked up the growing theme of the 1980s, that languages were learned also for the world of work, for life in the European community, for leisure activities. Only a small proportion of the school population would become linguists but many more would come to need a language as 'tool subjects' in future occupations. Much teaching material would be needed. Hitherto the world of work had had slight emphasis in school courses largely because it would have seemed irrelevant in times past. Now they must face the fact that for most pupils languages were an ancillary subject and that very possibly a restricted range of subjects would be called for. The Association was currently investigating preparation for work and leisure in language courses; it thought that banking, secretarial, construction, transport and agriculture should be included in Fourth and Fifth form language courses. There was, of course, a need for the support of employers in recognizing the public value of special language skills required for a growing range of occupations at craft, technician, executive and management levels, with clearly set out opportunities by employers and careers advisers fully informed of the advantages of possessing modern language skills, when associated with other qualifications.

The Association again reiterated the need for cross-curricular

links between languages and other subjects and the need to foster the european dimension; that graded language examinations should be encouraged; that a flexible form of sixteen-plus should emerge which would prompt pupils to choose elements which suited them best.

The two considerations in background and civilization, (its general concept or its personal impact individually) were both aspects which came under scrutiny during these years. From the enigmatic European dimension to the day-to-day personal appreciation of what lay behind the language, of the details in the foreign speaker's mind as he spoke his modern languages - these aspects were now firmly locked into place in the minds of most people involved in passing on the modern foreign language. Teachers now acknowledged the foreign imagery of foreign words.

A contributor in the same year referred to this personal appreciation of the native speaker's background in the oral work within the classroom. For example in a shopping scene, conversation might involve factual routine as part of obtaining something where parrot-fashion language learning is reduced to limited unproductive exchanges. Such a topic might extend to the weather, to an enquiry about someone's health, to whether the family was doing well, even to current affairs. The real potential of dialogues became apparent when one made the effort of imagining people's interaction in the home, at work, with friends, parents talking to children, children talking among themselves, people expressing feelings, states of mind and opinions. By taking greater care in offering the students a broad range of situations one could provide them not only with the appropriate language to express their needs, but also the social

behaviour of the foreigners in their own culture. Linguistic and cultural authenticity went hand in hand.⁽¹⁴⁾

By December an editorial on compact courses in modern languages included further reference to the role played by 'background' in the development of classroom teaching for future years. Compact courses flexible in length, content, composition, methods, objectives and distribution of time could help to make learners aware of, and sensitive to language and culture. The editor thought that learner motivation would be enhanced through the provision of options. In that respect the study of civilization had an important contribution to make.⁽¹⁵⁾ The monster of motivation now began to respond to languages' newly absorbed ingredients.

By March 1982 the Modern Languages Association which by weight of numbers represented modern languages teachers and also publish the quarterly periodical Modern Languages - following a draft report from the Examinations Council on Modern Language - published the text of the statement of its own views. This was drawn up after discussion with its own members who had been invited to write in with their views after a preliminary foundation or framework had been displayed within the periodical. The statement of views mentioned above had been forwarded to all interested bodies such as the Department of Education and Science, the Schools Council, Examination Boards and professional bodies.

In stating their views towards the new sixteen-plus, which they in fact wanted to be called the G.C.S.E. for greater flexibility, it is

(14) F. Chambers, Escaping from a neutral language, M.L., Vol. 62, No. 3, September 1981, p.135.

(15) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 62, No. 4, December 1981, p.214.

interesting to note that they welcomed the widening of the target population which the working party had stated to be designed for the top sixty per cent of the sixteen-plus ability range. They felt that a precise figure might be unnecessarily restrictive and might have curricular and organisational implications at a time of falling rolls and in view of the possible development of a 'core curriculum' at secondary level; they hoped that many more high achieving and 'average' pupils would continue to study modern languages in years four and five; in addition they would welcome the inclusion of larger numbers of linguistically less gifted pupils.

Such a statement, after years of agonizing over modern languages and the low achiever, must give some indication of the fact that modern languages might possibly be coming 'out of the wood'. The variety of different approaches in order to make the subject more readily available - such as separation of skills, more attractive and authentic representation of 'background', the change to communicative competence and many others - all of these methods which had been partly stimulated by the need to teach to low achievers, had given language teachers the confidence to want to include more low achieving children within the examination.

An even greater confidence was revealed when they stated how broad-ranging they now felt modern languages to be,

'In the new examination the standard required for the award of higher grades must not be allowed to fall. Indeed the Modern Languages Association believes that by providing an examination more relevant to pupils' needs and interests, the level of competence will be raised. Yet we suggest that for the lower grades, and especially for those pupils who are at present outside the examinations system, the area of competence

should be reduced and more closely defined so that the general level of achievement within a restricted range of skills may be raised.⁽¹⁶⁾

The nature of this new flexibility, which originated in the separation of skills could be seen in the specific suggestions made: that all candidates must be entered for common core Basic level tests in Listening, Reading and Speaking. Candidates might also be entered for any combination of added tests considered appropriate by the centre, the only proviso being that Higher Level Writing might not be offered without Basic Level Writing.

The maximum grade available to candidates entered for only the common core Basic Level tests in Listening, Reading and Speaking was G.C.S.E. grade E. Each additional test raised the potential maximum grade by one. One had to bear in mind that the National Criteria stipulated that for Grade C, candidates had to take a test of Basic Level Writing and for the award of G.C.S.E. A and B, candidates had to take a test of Higher Level Writing. It had to be stressed by the Association that the aforementioned were minimum requirements for the different grades and that in each case a high overall level of competence in the stated test would be required in order to achieve the maximum grade. It was expected, therefore, that candidates aiming at a particular grade would normally attempt a wider range of tests than the minimum number on which the grade could be awarded.

Even more evidence of the influence of the teaching areas, explored partly in response to the needs of the low achiever, were some of the aims for the new sixteen-plus. Communication, enjoyment, understanding the foreigner, insights into and positive approaches to

(16) The proposed sixteen-plus examination in Modern Languages, M.L., Vol. 63, No. 1, March 1982, p.15.

the target and even to other civilizations and cultures and minimum artificiality were all to be built into the structure and thereby the whole teaching approach,

'2i1 To develop the ability to use the foreign language effectively for the purposes of practical communication. 2i2 to form a sound basis of skills, language and attitude required for further study, work and leisure including the acquisition of further languages. 2i3 To provide enjoyment, imagination, appeal and appropriate intellectual stimulation and to develop positive attitudes to modern languages learning and to native speakers of other languages. 2i4 To develop skills of more general application (e.g. analysis, synthesis, summarising, memorisation, comparing, contrasting, inferring). 2i5 To offer insights into the culture and civilization thereby contributing to the formation of a more tolerant society. 2ii2 We consider that communicative competence is of crucial importance and we are fully aware of the implications for syllabus design and techniques of examining which are of minimal artificiality. 2iii3'

The next section called an official end to the separation of 'background studies' from language studies,

'... Despite the aim set out in paragraph 2i5 we do not consider that a scheme of assessment must necessarily contain a component specifically designed to test culture and civilization in isolation.'

A further suggestion was again put forward to 'test the water'. This was that it should have been possible to design a syllabus, without a test of writing, which should have given access to the full range of grades as an alternative to a syllabus with all four skills. The Association was aware of the implications of such a scheme. The omission of any form of writing for lower grades must be countered by

a raising of the standard of achievement in the other skill areas. The provision of two schemes for the higher grades, one to three that is both a writing and a non writing scheme, must like-wise contain safeguards of standards.

In making those recommendations the Association acknowledged that not all teachers would support the omission of the writing skill for there was a substantial body of opinion which maintained that writing was an essential part, particularly at Grades one to three. To be realistic it was felt that due regard should be taken of that view.

In short, like many radical reformers, the Association felt that the general public along with a body of teachers might wonder what was happening to standards in the new sixteen-plus if candidates could obtain an Ordinary level equivalent pass without being able to write a single word in the modern language; therefore the Association with some apparent, hurt pride agreed to leave out such a contentious issue, but by the same token would expect most other suggestions to be taken up as some form of compensation.

In fairness, the Association was probably not as guileful as that. However cynics might say that in trying to ease through a radically new sixteen-plus, by stating which very radical aspects they were willing to yield to pressure in order to leave out, they would similarly expect most other aspects to be accepted, if included. For example,

'There is strong opinion in the Modern Language Association that at this level there is no place for prose translation, translation into English, dictation or Cloze tests. Such tests should not even be alternative. Despite this statement some teachers would wish to disassociate themselves from this view.'

This politely implied to such teachers that the Association was going ahead regardless.

The Association firmly believed that Mode Three schemes must be possible within the examination framework and that their position had to be safeguarded. As it was to be seen, the Conservative government would wipe out the Schools Council with its strong, teacher voice. Whether the forceful, Mode Three, teacher-dominated style of examination would survive an increasingly punitive government was less certain.

Reference has also been made to the Graded Test movement. The Association favoured the growth of graded language tests and applauded the emphasis placed on criterion-referencing a candidate's active skills. It hoped that a way would be found of integrating the higher level of graded tests with the sixteen-plus examination for teachers who considered that it would be in the best interests of their pupils.

The summary of this document which encapsulated most previous thoughts on a modern language at sixteen-plus (but paved the way in a sensitive and responsive manner for its development) made certain demands: 1. that the title of the new examination must not tie it to a specific age group; 2. that it was primarily a mark of attainment and not pre-specialization requirement; 3. that the target group should be redefined and widened; 4. that the certificates obtained should be more informative than hitherto. In that way credibility was enhanced; 5. that there should be a clear statement of aims and objectives; 6. that written skills were not appropriate to pupils of lesser ability. In general their aim was to raise the standard of competence; 7. they favoured an examination with a common core to which might be added tests appropriate to individual pupils' skills

and needs; 8. a defined syllabus would be essential, for efficient working; 9. they aimed to increase the authenticity of course materials; 10. in examinations they favoured a variety of tests but considered that all translation tests were inappropriate at that level; 11. teachers had to be seen as partners in assessment procedure and school-based assessment ought to be an essential element in the total process; 12. experience gained over the years in Mode Three and graded tests was highly relevant and both those forms of examinations ought to be integrated with the new examination.

Thus the scene was now set for modern languages to move forward into its next 'communicative' phase. In response to the draft report from the Examinations Council on Modern Languages, the Modern Languages Association (the most representative co-ordinator of teachers' views) put forward its own tentative yet firm suggestions for the way forward in March 1982. The previous June it had already made its submission to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education regarding the development of languages generally, within the schools. Whilst in June 1981 the Association saw an examination with many elements to it including the separate component of society studies, by March 1982 they saw no place for the inclusion of a component specifically designed to test culture and civilization in isolation. However, this aspect had instead taken a much more significant place amongst the aims of the new sixteen-plus. Culture and civilization would be studied in an attempt to form a more tolerant society. The essential areas of experience which the H.M.I.s sought for the balanced curriculum were seen by the Association as necessary ingredients in language teaching.

As has been shown, tentative steps were being taken by the writers of books and the publishers of them towards some type of 'new vision' of modern languages. As the mood of the nation changed in the post-war decades so too did the public expectation of the content of education. From the immediate post-war attitude of placing hope for the future in the hands of educationalists towards eventually, a much more cynical suspicion of the value being received in return for massive expenditure on education - this had been the change of mood. Similarly within the schools the attitude of the children (whose parents had experienced a change of confidence) showed traces of wearying of time-worn texts and teaching approaches. This change over the forty years after the war was a subtle, insubstantial development. Its most visible testing point was in the effort and motivation of the pupils, and also in the level of parental support for the system of which they were a part. There was much political advantage, also, in generating criticism of the educational system; and small changes of public attitude could provide a satisfactory opportunity, for those inclined, to make education responsible for a fault which appeared to have developed from a 'typical' Conservative or Labour ideology.

Even so, as the system moved from a mostly 'grammar-secondary modern' to a mostly comprehensive, aims became unclear. Towards the end of that forty year period, modern languages, being used to constant change anyway, started to show unusual symptoms. Instead of suffering from some new novel disease from across the Atlantic or the Channel it appeared to develop a bad dose of 'common sense', British Common sense.

The origin of the complaint seemed to be a virulent, 'Why study modern languages?' It was almost as painful as the 1960s and 1970s 'twiddling buttons'. Strangely enough the cure seemed to be 'to speak the language'. The new catchphrase for total recovery was 'communicative competence', but that just kept the specialists happy; for the pupils, 'speaking the language' seemed to have a nice ring to it.

In reality, nevertheless, this new development was always going to be on a sounder footing. Unlike other pedagogical trends in modern languages this one did not rely upon trying to understand other people's methods or trying to fathom mysterious equipment. In growing out of the morass of the late-1970s educational problems, the new direction was able to evolve rather than be thrust forward. Eventually it was to be the 'new generation' class text book which helped to carry through the change in 'languages'. A methodical text had often been the feature of staging points in modern languages. From the days of W. F. H. Whitmarsh's First French Book through to one of the best-selling class texts of the 1980s, Tricolore, the financial test of teacher and pupil needs had often been the more popular text, although different reasons had often accounted for popularity. There were equally successful and effective texts, yet for large sections of two separate generations best selling texts often became associated with the subject.

In pursuing the progress of 'background studies' and the provision of the language, in part, for low achieving children, some light is being thrown on the ingredients of successful publishing needs. There were intense pressures within the schools for some type of 'natural' resolution in bringing together modern languages

'Tricolore' - market leader

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Tricolore

Sylvia Honnor and
Heather Mascie-Taylor

2A



and low achieving children. In the same way that 'fibre' seemed a more natural relief for the medical profession; so also was a modern language 'muesli', of the ingredients which were popular with all abilities (a separation of skills, a layering of achievements, and a lively incorporation of the culture), a more tasty way of starting the day.

For many subjects which suffered from similar introversion, it was to be the attractive ingredients, which appealed to the low achieving children, that would be responsible for providing a new framework for the exigent demands of the new 1980s accountability. One thing was certain, any subject which stood up in the 1980s without a very well-built foundation was due for severe storm damage.

Reviewers, then, had a very important role to play in helping to mould the new-style texts; not that any major publisher would embark on its main course text book without much fundamental research. Yet reviews in the later 1970s were given more space in the leading modern language journal. The reviewers also became more outspoken as they sensed that 'something was in the air'. Reviews became so extensive and popular that they took on a 'lecturing' role. As teachers looked on from their shelters at the end of the 1970s, they were able to take advantage of much useful advice and even obtain a refresher, professional year of 'method'. The leading professional modern languages journal was thus helping to 'plug the gap' of contact as relations between the teaching body and the government made international tensions seem positively amicable, by comparison.

It is interesting to note that for many teachers throughout

the century it had been considered that a successful goal in modern languages had been reached when pupils had been able, successfully, to progress through structured exercises by making as few written mistakes as possible. A cynic might ask why the subject was not called 'Written French' or 'Written German'; and yet a reply might be that one has not sufficiently absorbed all the factors of a previous era if one becomes critical of it, to the point of saying that it was wrong. Throughout that time many other teachers had attempted some form of oral presentation; yet the examination had for decades inferred that this was of little importance since it carried so few marks. A type of tacit respect for the academic value of Ordinary level and lack of total commitment to changing the fundamental composition of Ordinary level in modern languages appeared to dominate the secondary education system for that subject.

It has been seen that contributors to the periodical were starting to ponder spontaneously on a variety of themes which appeared so obvious that one wondered what had hampered such considerations earlier. One letter *implied* that no complete command of the modern language and culture would be possible since for example French and English culture did not match exactly enough for anything other than close equivalents to be possible. Another suggested that an obstacle in past years had been that pupils saw a modern language as a way of replying to a request for information. Only when pupils realized that they could speak in order to state their opinion, would the process become more natural.

The final breakthrough, however, still remained elusive. For many British people there was still to be no direct obvious link between speaking the language and earning a living. They were aware

of English businessmen and salesmen in contact with foreigners as part of their daily life; these still appeared to be few and far between for the ordinary British person. Rarely was there to be the same appetite for a modern language in the same way that there was an appetite for English by foreigners.

The Modern Languages Association, during this early period of the Conservative government, began to state the case for languages in the curriculum. More interestingly it defended languages with regard to the eight essential areas of experience. One feels a slight sense of tongue-in-cheek as the Association point by point worked through the list from aesthetic through to spiritual justification for modern languages; it was rather like going to a Parents' Night and listening to the teachers help parents to 'opt' for their particular subject. Each subject eventually becomes equally justifiable. In reality however the process helped to prove to modern languages teachers that their subject was eminently attractive to all levels of achievement. The key consideration would be to differentiate the material according to the ability of the child. More significantly it encouraged an examination at sixteen which allowed pupils to choose from a range of components according to their strengths (although there had to be a built-in restriction on grades for lower-key choices). However, choice seemed acceptable, for the early Conservative years repeated over and over that if you had made a contribution towards something, then, indeed, you should have choice. Cynics felt that this implied all of a sudden, that the people of Britain had acquired instant knowledge and experience of professional skills. Nevertheless as far as the sixteen-plus was concerned this was to be a choice guided by the teachers.

With regard to the cultural development of modern language

teaching another breakthrough had occurred during these early Conservative years. It was finally acknowledged that saying a foreign word conjured up a picture of the word in a foreign context in the mind. This connects somewhat with the vague concept of 'thinking in the language' - a prerogative which it was thought was peculiar to foreign language near-native speakers; yet now it *implied* that perhaps the ordinary person could have a cartoon-strip continuum in the mind. This was unlikely, yet it was a closer possibility if the brain had been stimulated with mental images at the same time as the word or if situational response had been encountered. This would hopefully be in a more inductive, broader sense than the old-style filmstrips; it would be a literary-cultural-phonetic composite which had been built up by meaningful, voluntary utterances and language-background experiences.

In other subjects too the draft syllabuses began to reflect the whole experience of each subject with all of its connections with aspects of real life and real reasons for wanting to learn and explore more about it. All of a sudden the curriculum seemed to blossom with very logical statements about all manner of subjects. The hazy 'jargon' which had wrapped up many concepts fell away and a much clearer English description remained.

There was to be a four year gap between the formulation of this sixteen-plus structure for modern languages and the eventual implementation of the whole system for all subjects in 1986. Yet again, then, there appeared to be a pause between the production of the draft and the final emergence of the end product.

CHAPTER 7

THE FINAL FURLONG: THE EVOLUTION OF A G.C.S.E. PHILOSOPHY 1982 TO 1986

So it was then that the final resolution was to take another four years upto the introduction of the G.C.S.E. In the remaining four years the influence of the low achiever on determining aspects of the new system, remained strong.

M. Buckby⁽¹⁾ wrote from York describing the unit credit approach which was to feature strongly in the eventual format for the G.C.S.E. He said that one of the examining boards in Britain was now developing an approach which could extend the flexibility needed to meet the needs of a wide range of pupils and at the same time produce some clear criterion referencing grades as required by the Department of Education and Science. This board's contribution was significant.

In this model there would be two clearly defined objectives for listening, speaking, reading and writing at two levels, previously called basic and extended. The compulsory 'core' for all candidates would be basic listening, reading and speaking. Success in these would earn a grade six (the scale was one to seven); success in two of them would attract a grade seven. Candidates would take whatever additional tests, from this range, their teachers considered appropriate; for each one successfully completed the candidate would move up one grade. Success would be defined as a high level of competence and a minimum pass mark in each would probably be sixty per cent. So a candidate who reached the required standard in six of eight tests would receive a grade three. In addition his certificate would show how he earned

(1) M. Buckby, A unit credit approach to sixteen-plus, M.L., Vol. 63, No. 1, March 1982, p.31.

his grade by putting asterisks in a grid. This, combined with a clear description of what was meant by listening, speaking, reading and writing at each level would make clear to all consumers (parents, pupils, employers, universities etc.) what each candidate could do successfully. It would also mean that each grade was a positive assessment rather than the negative aspect which anything other than a Grade A was in the present system; even a grade seven would only be gained if the candidate really could do what was required to get asterisks in two boxes. In the present system all grades below grade A were negative grades; they only showed that the candidate was not as good as something as candidates who obtained a grade A. The present grades were also vague and conveyed little useful information, so a grade C could indicate a generally mediocre performance or be the result of excellent work on some questions and poor work on others.

Candidates would not decide during the examination which paper they would take but rather that they would be entered in advance by their teachers.

The Schools Council Modern Languages Committee had produced suggestions for a similar approach with three levels; but with this there would be no common core; the middle level would be too demanding for pupils towards the bottom of the ability range; also with nothing in common between the three it would make any comparison technically difficult, that is the awarding of grades; it would make entry decisions more complex for teachers; the descriptions of skills and the criterion-referencing would be more difficult.

Mr. **Buckby** thought, however, that it was encouraging that so many groups had come to the conclusion that the way ahead should be in a system along such lines; these included the joint G.C.E./C.S.E.

National Criteria Working Party, the Schools Council and also the National Council of Language Associations. Even more unusual was it to find such a wide measure of agreement and that the few points of difference appeared easy to resolve.

The approach mentioned would make criterion-referencing a practical proposition whilst enabling boards to award differing grades and all pupils to develop their skills to the maximum.

It was a tantalizing proposition, now then, for language teachers to wonder whether modern languages had found a solution to the examining of a range of children sufficiently broad in order to include the low achiever, and also to wonder whether that meant that they had thereby found a way of teaching attractively and with motivation the full range of children to which languages was taught in the secondary school.

Yet some saw the situation as being more open to variation. One contributor⁽²⁾ considered that at that time there was greater diversity of opinion on approaches to teaching and assessment than ever before. Certain issues such as the usefulness of writing as a skill, the precise requirements for grades and the differing needs of the high and low achiever were exciting a vigorous discussion and that a flexible open-minded approach to these questions would be necessary if solutions which met the needs of all sixteen-plus candidates were to be found.

Eric Hawkins saw an urgent need to banish the mother-tongue

- (2) C. Meadows, Sixteen plus developments in French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish, M.L., Vol. 63, No. 1, March 1982, p.37.
- (3) E. Hawkins, The Twentyman Lecture, a language curriculum for the 1980s, M.L., Vol. 63, No. 3, September 1982, p.146.

With the 'gale of English howling in between'; little was accomplished except the bewilderment of the low achiever.

Yet when the more significant of new publications, had come out two years previously it was clear that English still ran alongside the modern language for necessary explanation of instructions or background material. The 1982 advertisement for 'Tricolore' described it as being welcomed with great enthusiasm by French teachers with examination classes, and cited widespread adoptions. It was seen as an entirely new basic French course for eleven to twelve year old beginners; catering for all pupils of all abilities; providing material to challenge the high achiever as well as the low achiever; combining a functional approach with a clear, grammatical progression; teaching the language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing with particular emphasis on listening and reading comprehension; the aim was to represent the best of what was new in French language teaching. In the years to follow this course was to be purchased by an ever increasing number of schools.

In its December 1982 statement on the proposed sixteen-plus examination the Modern Languages Association, having collected grass-root response to its previous suggestions, repeated much of its aspirations for the future. However, in spite of making great strides away from the old Ordinary level style examination, it took one pace back from abandoning all connections. It had been thought that the Association could have been able to devise an examination without writing at all, but instead with higher attainments in the

(4) Editorial, The proposed sixteen-plus examination in French, M.L., Vol. 63, No. 4, December 1982, p.213.

other three skill areas. They regretted that this would not now be possible. Therefore writing would now be essentially a hurdle for grades three to one. It would take twenty five per cent of examination marks, but in reality it would demand more of the teaching time since it was the more demanding and more difficult skill. This decision not to abandon a traditional aspect of examinations, may well have been helpful in pushing through the whole package four years later.

Another of the leading 'new generation' course text books was reviewed in that issue.⁽⁵⁾ This one was produced by M. Buckby a leading contributor to the modern language debate in that leading modern language journal. That particular book being reviewed was the third of a five part course. It was described as continuing the excellent standard set in the first two volumes published thus far. The reviewer thought that one could not but be impressed by the consistently high standard of the course. The twelve units centred around holidays in France and the accent was on enjoying a visit to Paris and other areas of France. The language on offer to the pupil was useful and realistic with an emphasis on communication such that the reviewer felt that it was the language one really met in France, in dialogues. There was an excess of ideas for exploitation, a wealth of activities which would soon enable a pupil to accumulate enough experience and language to cope well in France. It was excellently provided with photographs, line-drawings, reproduction of letters (handwritten), diagrams, games, price-lists, timetables and puzzles. The layout was attractive and uncluttered. There was an extra practice supplement at the end of the book including systematic verb

(5) P. D. Morris reviewing, Action, (Nelson,) 1982, in M.L., Vol. 63, No. 4, December 1982, p.260.

practice.

He thought that that particular book must surely have been one of the more excellent ventures seen for many years and it was certainly a tonic to tired language teachers to be able to offer an attractive and useful communicative-based course, with realistic targets which would give both teachers and pupils a sense of achievement.

By the following Spring another contributor⁽⁶⁾ bemoaned the sense of being 'talked down to' by the teaching suggestions of text books. He felt that there was an unnerving vogue among contemporary writers of language courses for laying down the law as to how the classroom teacher was to use the products. Ever since the days of Credif's insistence that a new lexical item must be heard before it is seen in print, teachers had been told, often peremptorily, exactly how they were to present the material entrusted to their competent hands. He felt that the contrast for those teachers old enough to remember the days of best-sellers like 'Whitmarsh', which provided ample resources and left teachers to exploit them according to their own preferences did at times beget nostalgia for a less complicated and brow-beaten past. The reference in this review to 'Whitmarsh' rather than the book title indicates its influence.

In these remaining few years, between the largely decided-upon format of the sixteen-plus examination in modern languages and the green light to give official go-ahead, some issues were still being discussed. Linguistics for one, became a prominent source of contribution. The role played by the home in encouraging language

(6) A. J. Bennet, reviewing 'Beunos Dias', (Heinemann), 1981, in M.L., Vol. 64, No. 1, March 1983, p.66.

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A Second French Book

W. F. H. WHITMARSH



acquisition was considered important.⁽⁷⁾ This was always to be a controversial issue with arguments raging on both sides. In this instance it was stated that learning to read mother tongue and learning a modern language under class conditions were closely similar challenges unless children bring into school from home the verbal skills on which school learning depended. Both were, however, secondary activities. The primary activity of speaking and learning was largely innate, pre-programmed by evolution. There was no evidence of an innate predisposition for learning to read and learning another language, under school conditions, for a few minutes each week, surrounded by the use of mother tongue. These two secondary activities were learned not acquired; both depended on an awareness of primary activity. This awareness developed out of the individual dialogue enjoyed by the children in the crucial period when the expanding conceptual universe was being mapped out - upto age eight - slowly and hesitatingly into the linguistic symbols offered by the environment.

Mother tongue teachers and modern language teachers he felt, realized that they faced a common problem. The awareness of language does not take the place of mother-tongue learning to make expressive and effective use of the language nor compete with a communicative use of the modern language.

Another theme at work in those final few years was that of attempting to create a more unified direction for modern languages. The Joint Council of Language Associations handed their resolutions

(7) Prof. J. Tizard, *Adult Reading Time*, M.L., Vol. 64, No. 2, June 1983, p.100.

to the Department of Education and Science, to the Examination Boards, to the Unions, to the Secretary of State for Education and to Sir Rhodes Boyson. It was a national policy for modern languages. Modern languages should to be in the core curriculum upto option year and thereafter there should be the opportunity for all to continue school study. There should be diversification of the first modern language offered by schools in each Local Authority. The Department of Education and Science and the Local Authorities should take interest. Soon afterwards the Department of Education and Science published its consultative paper on Foreign Languages in the school curriculum.

In the meantime more efforts were being made to capture the mainstream course text book market. It is interesting to note that the courses being produced were by-and-large acting as a mirror of the final (as one now knows it) format of the G.C.S.E. in modern languages. Yet the leading modern language teachers' journal continued to encourage new efforts in order to try to get the formula better and better. For example, the Open University published what the periodical called 'The O.U.P.'s bid for the burgeoning market in "communicative" French courses'.⁽⁹⁾ The course was described by the reviewer as conforming closely to the communicative or graded objectives orthodoxy; and yet the reviewer sought to try to stop more of that kind. He questioned whether the constant use of English conveyed the hidden message that one uses English when one seriously wants to convey meaning whereas French was used to humour the teacher. In other words,

(8) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 69, No. 3, September 1983, p.193.

(9) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 64, No. 3, September 1983, p.201.

the style of language teaching, he thought, of which the test was an exponent, resembled the methods it had displaced. Applied unimaginatively and with low expectation of achievable standards it could be as stultifying as grammar-translations or audio-visual.

One contributor was perceptive enough, however, to see that the growing number of new-style texts was still not changing the examinations system.⁽¹⁰⁾ Great strides, he thought, had been made in the provision of materials but this was not the case with examining. Indeed the changes there had not really been fundamental and were nowhere near in step with the perceived, changed needs of the student population. The Ordinary level of 1951 was still with us. It was still possible for some pupils to jump through the prose-translation hoop in some boards. The weighting of skills was not properly reflective of their practical usefulness. It was essential that there should be speedy government approval of the sixteen-plus criteria for there to be significant movement in the right direction.

He felt that the modern languages teachers were keenly aware and thought a lot more about what they were doing and why they were doing it. When he started teaching, the aims were quickly stated and not really questioned; training the mind still figured prominently; it was felt that the cause of world peace might be promoted, also, some pupils might go into a job where a knowledge of a modern language might be useful; but above all Higher Education required a pass at Ordinary level in a modern language; such was the position in a conformist, elitist society. However the democratization of the subject

(10) L. G. Hadley, Looking back, M.L., Vol. 64, No. 4, December 1983, p.221.

from the 1960s had forced teachers to examine the aims more critically, to produce more lengthy, sophisticated and realistic statements. Teachers were also led to give pre-eminence to objectives; there had been the graded objective movement, an emphasis on differentiated courses.

He felt quite strongly that although the stimulus originally had been the need to provide a realistic challenge for the low achiever, the process inevitably extended to the high achiever; they had just as much right to practical skills.

He knew that teachers were more involved in those later years, than in the 1950s, in devising syllabuses and producing teaching materials; C.S.E. Mode Three, whatever its drawbacks, did at least set this movement on its way. He wondered how with so much thought, expertise and effort expended, teachers had not achieved better things with their pupils. Perhaps it had all been too diversified, too un-controlled; and of course there was always the great millstone of motivation and the hurdle of expectation. Teachers were just beginning to come to terms with motivation by emphasizing a sense of achievement and enjoyment on pupils' part. With regard to expectation, teachers still expected too much of their weaker pupils and far too little of their better pupils; thus falling between two stools.

In the present day the acquisition of skills of the trade was an indispensable pre-requisite and one could argue that it was more vital in modern languages than any other subject given the nature of the task. He felt that in spite of the fact that good training did improve a teacher immeasurably, the concept of the 'born teacher' was far too simplistic; there was no doubt in his mind that in modern languages, a teacher's quality of personality were of utmost

importance.

With regard to teaching method he felt that progression through the various years had not yet reached its final goal. The emphasis on authenticity of language and activities was interesting but it was not the final solution. Some accommodation had yet to be affected with the structural (grammatical) view of language. Teachers had not always recognized that the nature of learning one's own language is not the same in essence as learning a modern foreign language. The already acquired native language can be both a help and hindrance in the learning of a modern foreign language.

Teachers also often ignored the totally artificial character of school-based learning. Yet the author thought that there were signs that the classroom teachers were starting to climb out of the trough. The signs were encouraging. There was a growing concern and interest expressed by industry and commerce; there was an unusually decisive statement from central government for a consensus amongst linguists about what should be done. He thought finally that the spring which might set things in motion was perhaps the greater assurance, confidence and aggressive promotion of the subject from the ordinary modern languages teachers in schools.

Nationally, events were continuing to take on a firm pace. In February 1983 the periodical had published its own National Policy for languages. This had received wide acclaim coming as it did from the groundswell views of teachers and other educationalists. In May 1983 the Department of Education and Science published its own views on foreign languages in the school curriculum. The Modern Languages Association attached great importance to the Department's initiative and published their response in March 1984.

The Association felt that the existing examination system bore the responsibility for the relative failure of initiatives. The Association urged the Department to make a prompt and positive response to the proposals for the sixteen-plus examinations of the Joint Council of Languages Association. The Modern Languages Association also wanted an investigation into the possibility of the integration of the Graded Objectives scheme into the public examination at sixteen-plus and beyond. The Association also wanted an immediate investigation into Advanced/Ordinary and intermediate level examinations in modern languages. It also wanted support for an alternative, non-literary Advanced level.

With regard to the goals of modern language teaching the Association thought that expectations should not be set too low and that stress should be laid on realistic aims and therefore differentiated objectives. The emphasis on communicative skills was worthy of praise.

In general it was felt that an opportunity to learn a modern language should be provided as a right in all secondary schools. Also, greater urgency was needed to produce a sixteen-plus examination in line with national criteria. A post sixteen intermediate level opportunity should be opened up immediately. The eighteen-plus would need reform. There should be greater diversification of languages in schools for first and second languages. The consultative document tone should have been more urgent. Caution was understandable but vigorous encouragement by the Department of Education and Science was needed to effect real improvements. It would be tragic if such a desirable outcome were lost for want of vigorous governmental support for Local Authorities or adequate funding.

Clearly the secondary system was now on some sort of 'count down' waiting for 'blast off' of the sixteen-plus. One Nottingham contributor noted,

'Despite the lack of final decision from the Department of Education and Science about the future of the proposed sixteen-plus nationally, the signs are that several G.C.E./C.S.E. Board Consortia will in any case "go it alone".'⁽¹¹⁾

The author felt that the decision as to whether teachers should do their own examining of oral work or have incoming external examiners was a very 'weighty' decision about the whole sixteen-plus. He felt that in the final analysis the decision about who carried out oral testing at sixteen-plus would be made on the grounds of cost, of what the market would bear, on entry fee, on standardization. This was a feature of the over-examined British school system letting examinations lead the way of the curriculum. He felt that teachers might bring about more oral work in modern languages by forfeiting, somewhat, standardization. This might be worth a gamble.

A reviewer of books added a little more to the gradual demise of background books by stating that he felt unhappy about the current tendency to teach culture in English, restricting the modern language to humdrum transactions of daily life. More interestingly the review⁽¹²⁾ contained further opinions. It was, he felt, a common view among language teachers that they should attempt to associate the language

(11) J. Partington, Teacher or visiting oral examiners? The implications of the sixteen-plus, M.L., Vol. 65, No. 2, June 1984, p.81.

(12) Editorial review of A. Vaudeville, Modern language and classroom technique, a handbook, reviewed in M.L., Vol. 65, No. 2, June 1984, p.106.

which they were teaching with situations outside the classroom to which they frequently referred as 'the real world' of family, holidays, sports, pastimes and so on. But the school was also part of the real world. Subjects like history, geography, general science, art and so on all drew upon children's own experience. He felt that a modern language could draw upon the outside world through them. Thus teachers taught language for communication, for use rather than usage. The kind of language course which he envisaged was one which dealt with a set of topics taken from other subjects. This was exciting work done by the total immersion schools of Canada.

Meanwhile, the progress towards an emergence of a sixteen-plus in modern languages continued. An article in March 1985 confirmed that the examination boards were keeping the momentum going.⁽¹³⁾ This time the report was on a post sixteen Intermediate examination,

'The examination boards in recent years have shown themselves remarkably receptive to new ideas and more welcoming of change than a good many teachers some linguists will need to be converted; reluctance can be expected at all times.'

The committee saw a direct link between an intermediate examination and the sixteen-plus.

In private contact Professor Hawkins^(13a) was later to refer to the ongoing debate about testing at the sixteen-plus stage (given immediacy by later reforms, also); his main point was the growing political interest in the proportion of sixteen year olds staying on and taking further examinations. The numbers needed to be greatly and urgently increased.

(13) Modern Languages Association Standing Consultative Committee. Report of the working party on intermediate examinations, October 1984, M.L., Vol. 66, No. 1, March 1985, p.9.

(13a) March 29th, 1984. - 208 -

The committee, meanwhile had recognized that resources were a problem but thought that a positive, not a defeatist line was needed. Money for staffing, materials and equipment, the time and resources for training were all essential but at the same time illusory.

This is an important breakthrough to reality in the mid 1980s. Much reality had been reached by many groups in society. The progress towards the sixteen-plus had been slow and with regular halts. However, the acceptance that *extra money* might not become available was significant psychological progress.

The report accepted that the financing and structuring of the teaching profession and other new initiatives were things to be worked out. Doing nothing until resources were provided, waiting indefinitely could outlast teachers' lifetime. There was need to suggest ways of recognizing available but unsuspecting resources, of rechanneling resources from unfruitful uses, maximizing existing ones and attracting new ones.

By far the most expensive resource was the human one. There would have to be ways of utilizing teachers to the best advantage without simply multiplying timetabled hours to the point of breakdown. It was felt that language teachers overtaught and needed to be directed towards approaches and techniques where efforts truly belonged. They would have to plan and organize their pupils' work. There could be more group work.

Another sense of reality appeared in the Twentyman Lecture.⁽¹⁴⁾ It was felt that the trend in the sixth form and in Higher Education was not so much towards sciences and technology away from the arts as

(14) Twentyman Lecture, M.L., Vol. 66, March 1985, p.17.

a trend away from pure subjects such as sciences and philosophy towards applied subjects such as law, accountancy and certain language courses as well as engineering. High unemployment appeared as a permanent and endemic feature. Bright youngsters wished to learn marketable skills.

(14a)
In private interview at the headquarters of City and Guilds in London the Northern District senior examiner warmly welcomed a closer liaison between practical subjects and those subjects formerly reserved for high achieving children. He saw the extension to more gifted children of practical subjects as a natural progression.

However this interest in vocationally applicable or relevant courses was only part of the phenomenon. The reign of Newman, felt the lecturer⁽¹⁴⁾, was coming to an end. To dismiss the skills of engineering and commerce as mere necessities of life, worthy in themselves but lacking in intellectual dignity and spiritual profundity was no longer acceptable. The time had come for education to encompass practicality, to produce capable as well as sensitive spirits. The role of the universities was changing and would change not only because of government policy and financing but because of market demand and national circumstances. The binary divide between practical policy and theoretically-based universities would make less and less sense. He considered that the nineteenth century liberal education had been a curse, artificially split between the practical and the theoretical.

The well-known linguist Michael Buckby brought out part four of his course book. This was reviewed for the June 1985 issue.⁽¹⁵⁾
The reviewer felt that the implications of teaching modern languages

(15) P. Reeves, reviewing Action book 4, (Nelson), in M.L., Vol. 64, No. 2, June 1985, p.139.

(14a) 29th July 1986

in the light of the agreed National Criteria were enormous and perhaps most languages teachers were only just beginning to realize that. He felt that the book represented a sound investment for the 80s and 90s for a languages department particularly in the light of the fifth national criterion urging teachers to provide enjoyment and intellectual stimulation.

The reviewer of a book to teach correspondence in Spanish made ~~one of~~ the first references to the new examination under its eventual name. (16)

'Teachers who want to introduce their pupils to genuine Spanish letters will welcome this book and find it useful practice material to prepare their classes for the new G.C.S.E. examination'

A green paper was referred to in the September issue. (17) It stated that personal need must be set alongside the country's requirement for particular knowledge and skills. The University Grants Committee had stated that the graduates of the 1980s needed as much ability as their predecessors but far more relevant knowledge. The realities of the job market played an increasingly direct role in educational planning at all levels.

During these last twelve months before official launch the grade criteria and specimen paper debate was gaining momentum. A contributor from the University of Nottingham (18) was picking away at some of the detail of the national curriculum and relating it to his

(16) P. D. Morris, reviewing, Corresponding with a Spanish penfriend, (Macmillan), in M.L., Vol. 64, No. 2, June 1985, p.141.

(17) The development of Higher Education into the 1990s, H.M.S.O. 1986, in M.L., Vol. 66, No. 3, September 1985, p.167.

(18) J. Partington, National curricula, the sixteen-plus in theory and practice, M.L., Vol. 66, No. 3, September 1985, p.175.

views of how well the examination boards were preparing for the sixteen-plus with their specimen papers.

'The national criteria ... stipulate that practical communication should be one aim of the course to the sixteen-plus. Since all language is concerned with communication it is not immediately evident what is added or qualified by "practical". The specimen schemes of examination have usually faithfully included it in their aims but without explanation. It may be that 'practical' communication is a kind of shorthand for the doctrines of communicative competence of the sort which currently inspire the graded test movement and with which the criteria 'links'. In this context 'practical' might be synonymous with 'life-related' or 'realistic'. Viewed in this way the specimen papers show little advance, if any, on the best current G.C.E. or C.S.E. practice.'

In general he thought that the emphasis in the specimen papers was still too much on discrete skill-testing, again not what is experienced in daily communication.

In dealing with the oral test he rightly asserted that to the non-linguist layman there was something odd about testing five years' work in five minutes. Obviously at the technical level it was doubtful whether it was possible in that time to cover more than an unacceptably small sample of the structure and lexis of the syllabus. Thus, on the other hand, one obtained erratic and unreliable test results. That was hardly in the spirit of criteria - referencing where all the thinking was being directed to defining clearly and reliably just what candidates had actually achieved.

In short the author of the article noted that there still

remained the national scrutiny of specimen papers. This was necessary in order to see whether they conformed to the criteria. The early signs were that the influence of the criteria had been less than the authors had hoped for. That is, the criteria were not reflected in the specimen papers.

Amidst a growing number of statements from business and industry that tended to contradict each other as to whether knowing a competitor's modern foreign language was the main way to prepare for a career in overseas business⁽¹⁹⁾ or just simply a second string to the bow of a proven salesman⁽²⁰⁾ - amidst this came the results of the survey taken nationally on modern language performance at age thirteen.⁽²¹⁾ It stated that only about one third of those who began a modern language course completed more than three years' study. At the age of thirteen few could speak fluently and grammatically or produce coherent and accurate writing of any length. In speaking, many children were apparently inhibited by a preoccupation with correctness or apparently did not recognise the value of improvisation. The report suggested that a major factor in influencing success in efficient communication in most tasks was good vocabulary rather than recognition of grammatical features.

This report had confirmed many suspicions. It also helped to make part of the final breach towards G.C.S.E. It gave more formal blessing to the idea that low achieving children especially were still communicating even though they did not speak accurately.

(19) Eric Hawkins, News and Comment, M.L., Vol. 66, No. 3, September 1985, p.207.

(20) D. E. Ager, Languages and your future, M.L., Vol. 66, No. 3, September 1985, p.208.

(21) First National Survey of foreign languages Performance at age thirteen, M.L., Vol. 66, No. 3, September 1985, p.209.

In that Autumn, of 1985, it was stated that the General Certificate of Secondary Education was still over two years away. The difficulties encountered in the schools at that time made it seem impossible to introduce the examination any earlier,⁽²²⁾

'The report of the meeting organized by the Council of Subject Teaching Associations is the first of a series which will aim to keep members up-to-date with developments in the plans for the introduction of the G.C.S.E. in 1988'

Sir William Cockcroft had addressed the Association.⁽²²⁾ He informed them that the Open University intended to produce in-service training manuals to be distributed during the school holidays. Around sixty thousand teachers, mainly heads of department, would attend courses of about two days and one half. The cost of supply teachers had been budgeted. This would be completed by late-Spring 1986. The in-service training would be done, he said, by the 'experts', the examiners and moderators. The trained heads of departments would then be asked to train the rest of the teaching force, 186 thousand. He also stated that the universities had already indicated that future applicants would not be required to have A-S levels. As an alternative to three Advanced levels it was proposed that two Advanced levels with two A-S levels would be acceptable. With regard to differentiation, various possibilities were being considered - different papers for different abilities or common papers with an extension. A choice would have to be made but it would come later than at present. With regard to alternative examinations, City and Guilds and the Royal Society of Arts had already produced good alternatives.

(22) Editorial, M.L., Vol. 66, No. 3, September 1985, p.200.

Further considerations were also made. There was some form of a timetable. The Secretary of State had said that first examinations would take place in 1988 and that all in-service was geared to that date. In Scotland the start had been put off one year. Certain minority subjects were described as being old-fashioned and those would have to be re-thought. That policy applied to certain modern language papers which might have to have restricted grade examinations initially. In future, boards would be expected to explain their criteria and bring out specimen papers. The Secondary Examinations Council would check grades across the country and all syllabuses would be scrutinized. It was expected that the budget for examining would have to be doubled.

Even during these last few months there were different contributions towards the final basic attitudes towards teaching and learning modern languages. It has been stated that there had been an acceptance of the idea that if the message were conveyed it was more important than that the content should be fully accurate. Another contributor to the debate tried to summarize the atmosphere of learning which best fitted in with realism and authenticity. He admitted that modern languages faced a problem,

'At its crudest it may seem to the learner to be this, "What is this language in which there is seemingly so little to talk about; where in the learning process I am presented with such absurd situations (e.g. the family invented for the course-book); which (language) is broken up into separate activities, listening, speaking, reading and writing; which has a definite but unattainable end point; where writing is valued above speaking;

which involves so much mechanical repetition
and in which I can't even say what I want." (23)

He felt that it was hard for pupils to realize that the modern language had as many uses as English had. Teachers needed, in fact, to be putting in a base of realism before the business of learning French began - language awareness.

The mood of going for communication rather than accuracy continued,

'Modern language teachers spend a good deal of time correcting errors; in the classroom this can mean that many students never complete a spoken utterance without being interrupted. While in the written work there seems to be more attention paid to what's wrong than to what the learner has done well.... What matters is what the learner learns, which is not necessarily what the teacher teaches ... flexibility of response to error; the teacher must judge carefully the amount and timing of correction ... (and be aware of) the effect of correction on the learner.' (23a)

These two extracts might at first sight appear to voice the same level of frustration which had beset languages throughout the forty years. In fact it is what they do not say that is equally significant. Between the lines there is greater confidence. The problems are being stated constructively and with analysis. There are immediate and obvious answers to many of them. Gone are the days of total frustration and depression, the 'years of paranoia'. Modern

(23) T. H. Parke, Realism and artificiality in language teaching, M.L., Vol. 66, No. 4, December 1985, p.263.

(23a) ibid.

languages had actually predicted the nature of the G.C.S.E. changes, in advance. For this subject which had so often been led in different directions, this was significant progress. Furthermore, it was the teaching body which had devised this diversion; and like most people they were proud of their own ingenuity. That problem group of children, the low achievers, the ones whom they thought they could not cope with - that group had suggested some new approaches which had eventually helped to resolve some of the problems.

It had been, for example, the unit credit approach, of the graded tests, something which had partly grown out of the total intractability of teaching low achieving children or even the aimless teaching of the high achieving - it was this which had helped to break down modern languages into self-contained units on different levels, ensuring an achievable target even for the weakest child. When one of the more successful of the 'new era' publications ^(23b) appeared at the start of the 1980s it claimed to challenge the high achiever and the low achievers. Its widespread purchase appeared to confirm that there might be publications which could match the broad range of the examination.

It was clearly reassuring that all groups with interests in resolving a new approach had come to broadly similar conclusions. The asymmetric-gyrational nature of the new modern languages strategy had quite taken people by surprise, most of all the modern languages teachers. It truly seemed that languages could be turned and twisted like a ruboid toy into just about any position to suit the recipient. The two different levels of attainment when matched up with four skill areas produced a large number of permutations - a far cry this from a literary unseen translation, a prose composition into the modern

(23b) 'Tricolore' in N.C. Vd. 63 No 3 p.146
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language, a literary comprehension, a formal dictation and five minutes chat in the language; for that was the Ordinary level examination, still being taken by large numbers in the Summer of 1986, and so also the following year, whilst the pupils of the year below were being prepared for the 'G.C.S.E. spectacular in modern languages', which was to be its substitute.

Yet other similarly fundamental changes were taking place in other subjects. It has been stated that breathtakingly exciting and clear statements were being made within other school subjects. The practical nature of certain disciplines did not always seem to produce such a contrast. Even so teachers of all subject associations, the examining boards and many others had been busy during these last few years taking a profound look at their own subjects. History included in its aims an intent: to promote an understanding of the nature of cause and consequence, continuity and change, similarity and difference; to help candidates towards an understanding of the development, over time, of social and culture values; to promote the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of human activity in the past, linking it with the present.

To many people outside of each subject's regular area of close contact, picking up the new G.C.S.E. syllabuses and reading the new aims could come as an eyebrow-raising experience. Indeed the depth of vision which ran through many subject syllabuses could take one's breath away.

The Geography aims stated an intent: to encourage an understanding of different communities and cultures within our society and elsewhere in the world, together with an awareness of people's active role in interacting with the environment; to appreciate the

significance of attitudes values and perceptions of people, decision-makers and others in a geographical context; to promote a knowledge and understanding of some of the behavioural, social, economic and political forces which may influence decision-making; to develop an awareness of how landscapes and spatial patterns change over time, especially as a result of technological developments.⁽²⁵⁾

These were exciting statements which encouraged and invited further exploration. No matter where one looked amongst subjects commanding large or small numbers for entry there was a consistent unanimity of clarity of thought. The Economics syllabus stated an intent: to prepare students to participate more fully in the decision-making processes as consumers, producers and citizens.⁽²⁶⁾ Classical subjects stated an intent: to pursue a sensitive and analytical approach to language by seeing English in relation to a language of very different structures and idiom and by observing the influence of the ancient language on our own.⁽²⁷⁾

The choice of syllabuses within one subject might vary according to its content or to the way in which it was examined. Religious Studies might have two written papers leaving twenty five per cent for course work or one written paper with forty per cent for course work.⁽²⁸⁾ For those with a predilection for constant effort without the concentration of energy into a final examination there was in 1986 an entirely continuous assessment alternative English Literature syllabus.⁽²⁹⁾

(25) G.C.S.E., Geography Syllabuses A, B and C, N.E.A., 1986, pp.1-2

(26) G.C.S.E., Economics syllabus A, N.E.A., 1986, p.1.

(27) G.C.S.E., Classical Subjects syllabus, N.E.A., 1986, p.2.

(28) G.C.S.E., Religious Studies syllabuses A and B, N.E.A., 1986, p.3.

(29) G.C.S.E., English Literature syllabus B, N.E.A., 1986, p.1.

Anyone unable to find what he or she wanted within one area association of boards could select from the associations around the country until he or she found something suitable. All of a sudden the seeds which had been sown many years previously appeared to have produced what seemed to many as an unexpected, bumper harvest.

It might be thought at that point, in 1986, that the whole nature of the British educational system had finally ingested the free market ethic, that many of the original nerve centres of the past had been neutralized. The Schools Council, with its teacher domination had been substituted by a Government-controlled body; teachers' conditions of work were moving more and more under central control. In his visionary way Sir Keith Joseph had paved the way for the thrust of Kenneth Baker; by the later part of 1986 the latter signalled that he intended to continue major reform.

For their part, however, the teachers had acquired the G.C.S.E. system which admittedly they had shown so much resistance to being a part of; but that was because, like the 'standards of Ordinary level' which had more to it than met the eye, the G.C.S.E. would be a concession to the 'Thatcher government'. It would involve much preparation and marking. Just like the big cream cake that would put on weight, the G.C.S.E. would be nice to have but it would be bad for teachers' energy levels. It seemed that the profession had backed into an awkward corner. The fight to resist reform was reaching its final phase. The examination was right for most people, but it would involve a concession, the biggest concession of all - loss of face,

after years of struggle for self-direction.

Then something very strange happened during 1986. Teachers seemed to float into the government's hands. Like soulless spirits they drifted through the Spring and Summer toward the 'final dénouement in the sky'. Indeed that is exactly what did happen. Their souls went out of their teaching. It seemed to happen at a big jamboree in the Summer months called a 'cascade'. For many teachers this had recalled dream-like memories of the Wilson 'years of plenty'. In the hot weather all the pupils had three days unexpected holiday and the teachers all went to a three-day 'party'. Even the meals were paid for by the government. After seven years of threats and asset-stripping, teachers were happy to have a fuss made of themselves. From that point onwards there was hardly a murmur out of them. The only discernible difference was the 'glazed look'. Just like a client at a business lunch, both parties (teachers and government) knew what was happening; a tacit acknowledgement of a deal was struck; only in this case the client knew that production would be under robotic control with no good will or spirit involved.

So it was that the government lost teachers' co-operative spirit, but the teachers won the G.C.S.E. with its good and its bad side. Now that teachers were on the Baker conveyor belt towards ever-increasing accountability - the route which would be taken by many more professions in later years - they had become 'consumer friendly'.

There was, it turned out, some sort of gain for teachers in the G.C.S.E. because somewhere along the production line towards completion something harmful to them had fallen out. A component or two had disappeared. It had happened probably in two places. The first was

Kenneth Baker M.P. - a reformer

(Kindly supplied by Kenneth Baker M.P.)

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when it was decided that the examination should be opened up to the whole ability range. That meant that unlike the Ordinary level, everybody could achieve it. The second was when the debate over credit and distinctions in G.C.S.E. seemed also to disappear. The 'angst' of telling potentially disruptive, or even pugnaeous, pupils that they were not intelligent enough to sit an examination had been removed. The timing was fortunate since in 1986 corporal punishment was abolished in maintained schools. There had clearly been a battle fought somewhere else. Discrimination and differentiation had been used as conventional weapons. Hopefully the teachers would get somebody to fight more of Mr. Baker's oncoming reforms away from the classroom; after all, one should not argue in front of the children. These were to be philosophical, idealistic battles left to the educational elite who could command greater individual firepower. The successful plan would seem to be that of taking as much competitive national comparability out of the next set of proposals as possible, but also to do it discretely. If necessary, agree to do it, then 'do it my way'.

This of course was an alternative way of looking at what had been a long haul through these last four years. Much intense co-operative effort had gone into them, and more, as it has been seen. The issue of the inclusion of writing had been very soul-searching; concern over suitable main course texts was also quite central to any new approach, especially after so many false-starts in previous years.

The technical consideration of interference from how mother-tongue is learned, in the acquisition of a modern language was something which was to last for sometime to come. Another major movement, it has been discussed, was the effort to take this fresh start as an opportunity

for a national policy on languages. Modern languages teachers, sometimes, seen as more individual, or even eccentric than other breeds of teacher, were always going to be difficult to nail down to a cohesive policy. One encouraging sign here was the strong series of rallies between the Department of Education and Science and the Modern Languages Association (publisher of Modern Languages).

The main contributors to the low achieving child's modern language diet were slowly settling into their final positions. 'Background' had been blown up and had landed in little pieces everywhere. 'Background' in effect was in the background but obtrusively so. Attainable chunks of live situational dialogue, another favourite for the low achievers from the Graded Tests movement, were comfortably arranged in the new grid. The other side of the grid was made up of the more recent breakthrough, the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. When set up, it all looked rather like the school meal pie on the serving tray, nicely divided into child size portions.

It has been seen that the specimen papers produced the normal range of mixed indignation. However, one interesting argument was that too much testing of skills, beyond what was experienced in daily life, was involved. This is a vague 'cover' for saying that the paper was too difficult; or rather it was the loosening of some of the components which were to drop out, thus ensuring that few pupils would feel failures after not understanding or after performing badly.

Around that time reference was made by employers about learning a competitor's language in order to sell to him. Employers, individually, could always be relied upon to come forward with contradictory views. This former employer met his match with one who

(29a) Eric Handkins, *News and Comment*, M.L. Vol. 66, No 3 Sept. 1985; and D.E. Aeger, *Languages and - 223 - your future*, M.L. Vol. 66 No 3 Sept. 1985, p. 208

felt that sales 'skills' predominated over knowing the language. In Britain it was always going to be comforting to know that not speaking the language could lead to success. Our leading politicians have always reinforced this view on important occasions with vibrant speeches in English in obscure non-English quarters of the world where it would seem that the audience mainly wears deaf-aids. In fact, of course, they are listening to the arrogant English monologue in their own language, through a translator, a point not lost on British audiences.

Thus then, as stated, Sir William Cockcroft spelled out the final timetable of yet another major episode in the secondary education system. Because crisis management is probably very British and it is felt that urgency is determined by the numbers suffering, many changes are already into another phase by the time they are introduced; that way, at least, everybody is aware that the change was needed and is happening.

The natural evolution of change, slow British metamorphosis, has been a feature of British education, British life. Only when something grinds inexorably to a halt is it then seen to be in need of replacement. Usually whilst this has been happening some substitute prototype has been worked at for many, many years - sometimes brought out into daylight, sometimes pushed away as being ill-conceived. Eventually as the old dies, the new, by now looking suspiciously like the old having had so many modifications, is ready to move off. A classic example of this is that in 1970 the National Union of Teachers was suggesting the C.G.S.E. as a replacement for G.C.E. and C.S.E. Twenty-five years

later the idea with more or less the same intent was pronounced the G.C.S.E.

The factors which had caused the delay are many. Most noticeable of all was the move of British society from a long period of Labour office to what was to be a long period of Conservative office. The G.C.S.E. was a, for once visible, time record of a change of opinion and social climate.

It started in 1969 when the Schools Council and the trade unions felt confident enough to make up the rules (it even finished with the last word from the unions in 1986, albeit empty statements). The hidden element that ran throughout this period was the fear about standards in British education; and since Ordinary level G.C.E. represented many of those standards, to talk of its substitution was always going to be difficult.

The universities maintained a covert pressure on retaining the Ordinary level, one of their yardsticks for entrance. Since they were responsible for the bulk of Ordinary level candidates through boards such as Oxford, Cambridge and Joint Matriculation Board (they were also to be responsible for grades A, B and C of any new substitute), the new system depended very much on their co-operation.

Inflation continued to roar during the 1970s. Unimagineable pay increases raised the expectations of all groups. For teachers, in the early 1970s pay awards and promotions came almost without being asked for. Yet a financial bubble was building up below the surface.

As the 1970s progressed and more money was poured into education, another theme ran parallel. Grave doubts were voiced about the quality of education being received. The Ruskin speech and the 'National Debate' led the ordinary man to wonder whether there was not some

substance to it. Also union power was double-sided. It tried to secure decent wages for teachers but at the same time cut right through teachers' professional responsibilities.

Some clear thinking was necessary. This came in the person of the new Secretary of State with a new government. The people of Britain had voted for change. Sir Keith Joseph began to change components of the system so radically that it was not clear where he would stop. His Sheffield speech of 1984 to the North of England Conference would eventually lay the foundation for a new vision of education. It took in what would eventually be the G.C.S.E. and National Curriculum bound together.

The Schools Council, in the meantime, had been busy on its own efforts and nearly carried through a records-of-achievement sixteen-plus examination.

In the meantime the schools were experiencing great pressures in trying to deal with the inadequacies of the G.C.E. and C.S.E. as they ran side-by-side.

In 1984 the Secretary of State announced that a common system was to start in 1986 with the first G.C.S.E. examinations for 1988. The unions kept up the pressure to try to get the support which they needed for this system. In an apparently 'grand geste' they made a concession to allow their members to run what was already running anyway.

Efforts have been made to feature unusual patterns as much as anything, in order to highlight the more general pattern. To show the progress of all school subjects upto the agreed date of introduction of G.C.S.E. would be encyclopaedic. To investigate

thoroughly a few would be eclectic. It is partly for this reason that Modern Languages have been chosen to illuminate the complex patterns of events which has been referred to.

Furthermore it has been decided to go back beyond in years to the time of the second world war because in this case the subject development towards G.C.S.E. philosophy was longer than the examination development; and this is probably the case for certain other disciplines. Modern languages' origins may also infer this. The subject changed from a traditional leisured classes (classics-style) subject over the space of the whole century. By the time of the G.C.S.E. it had become a practical, skill-based subject. This trend to practicality typified the way in which many subjects changed in the years running up to the new examination. Technical education became valid in this respect almost by definition. Modern languages became more democratized in a downward direction in terms of ability levels to which they were offered. Opponents of this trend from within modern languages called this a levelling down. Most of the higher level subjects like languages have also democratized. They have gone in a skill-based rather than fact-based direction.

It has been well-seen how modern languages epitomised others in their post-war pattern of adapting to the changing pattern of society. In and just after the second world war it was thought that modern languages' study could contribute to better international understanding and thus to world peace.

It may well be that the progress towards the G.C.S.E. philosophy for modern languages started in the 'war years'. There was a polarization of views around, on the one hand, literature/civilization/grammar and, on the other hand, communicating a necessary message in a

variety of different circumstances. It was between these two 'poles' that the battle towards G.C.S.E. was fought. That modern languages should be featured in this study is possibly even more fitting since modern languages had been the 'lost soul' of the curriculum trying to find its resting place. It may well be, then, that it found this place along the route to the G.C.S.E. 'practicability'. It finally learned to be of more use to more people.

It was the provision of secondary education for all, thus bringing in more children, of a wider age range, which forced a radical post-war re-think of how to teach modern languages. Modern languages, of course, was not the only subject in this dilemma; but the cynics would say that they simply made more fuss about it.

Classical ancestry made the process of adaptation more difficult. This study allows a variety of leading educationalists to state their views on the general philosophy of teaching over a number of years. Occasionally licence has been taken to allow unity of theme to take over from chronological order. This can sometimes underline the fact that 'new' developments are really often re-cycled, environmentally-friendly debris from earlier years. Where not re-cycled, it can often be re-stated. Professor Hawkins made a speech in 1983; but he finds it irresistible not to refer to the turn of the century attitudes to languages in order to give true origin. Another leading linguist states his view in a 1943 article, again continuing from early century themes. Arguments are *presented* back and forth upto one of the more recent social and political developments - comprehensive education. As it has been indicated in the case of the secondary modern schools, modern languages still needed to prove that they had really learned how to adapt to the new environment. Later it was seen that instead

of relying on international peace in a doveborne idyll, 'languages' pursued practicality and it was no accident that it was a time when 'loads of money' became a bizarre social catchphrase; it was also when '1992' became an even more enigmatic touchstone; although risking european isolation, it is possible that many in Britain felt such isolation would restore the country to rightful imperial aloofness thus further increasing languages' problems.

The study of 'background and civilization' was one of the ways in which modern languages tried to adapt themselves to the comprehensive schooling system. It was a predictable attempt by a 'higher order' subject to make part of its content more palatable to the low achieving children. Originally 'background' represented the personal glimpses of modern languages teachers obtained during the 'year abroad' which was part of their undergraduate study and was no doubt expanded upon by successive visits.

Eventually, the easily assimilable nature of 'background' turned it into an interdisciplinary travelogue, crossing through the cold barriers of curricular anonymity. There still remained the odd traces of the 'international pacific', especially around the time of cold war climaxes.

Certain significant language course books have been mapped out in this study. The reasons are variously mentioned. Initially, publishers invest money in certain books. They only pay out substantially when they feel that they are placing 'a marker' in the system. Reviews of books have been used partly to show this development. Reviewers are also, usually, experienced teachers. These reviews often come with sanguine opinions on the educational climate generally. This is another reason for their inclusion.

At one point an education officer describes his views on some of

the practical problems in teaching low achieving children. He completes his counselling by defining the characteristics of the teachers of low achieving children. This provided a sort of 'identikit' for harassed teachers, all-in-all a useful reference work for those considering teaching this group. More paranoiac self-help comes in helping to pinpoint the foibles of that unusual breed, the modern languages teacher.

As part of their erratic journey, modern languages also wandered for a while through the Primary Schools; they were eventually hit by a lone sniper, Clare Burstall, whose weaponry, it later turned out, was faulty. It did, however, leave lasting traces on the system - greater democratization of modern languages, a stress on practicality and everyday language, plus a more formal place for 'background'.

A Local Education Authority officer went on to recommend taking low achieving children to France. Teachers would thereby make significant, positive discovery - that these children could understand far more than they could speak. This 'passive' potential was later to be capitalized upon.

M. Buckby, one of modern languages' leading figures described in 1973 his ideas on 'good practice'. They came as part of the conference of the Joint Council of Language Associations. Background studies were among the proposals but not as a specific, separate item. Detailed descriptions of the objectives in separate skills featured in his proposals.

The first significant event of that year had been Britain's entry into the Common Market. Edward Heath had been showered with ink at the original signing ceremony as a reminder of how strongly he should recall the significance of what he was doing. It was to be the

only strength of feeling by Britain over Europe even nearly fifteen years later. As if to augur the dislike of Europe by many in mainland Britain, at the above-mentioned conference, background and civilization's 'bête noire' - European Studies - was officially declared a suspicious subject. It was fortunate that the conference gave the official approval, however, to the other new development, which was skill-based, communicative language learning. Significantly enough the 'background' and the skills were the main new features thirteen years later for the G.C.S.E.

Much of the G.C.S.E. mental preparedness had largely arrived at least ten years before 'launch'. Yet it required political will to give final impetus. This came about partly through an electoral mandate for a change of government.

Background and civilization had typified the freedom and experiment of the mid-Labour governmental years. Throughout the later 1970s and into the 1980s, however, background bobbed above and below the surface of mainstream modern languages teaching until finally it dispersed into an ever-present shadow or image of the spoken and written word. Similarly, other interdisciplinary vagrants were finding shelter, as storm-clouds appeared on the horizon. This uncertain theme has been featured. As some reviewers welcomed new background work, other reviewers questioned it.

A leading H.M.I. in 1975 looked to languages moving away from experimentation with interdisciplinary, non-language work, towards productive and satisfying use of the language by all abilities of children. Throughout the work, furthermore, efforts are made to show the movement towards re-appraising the basic, usable skills of a

subject - the use of skills which was to typify the G.C.S.E. philosophy in all subjects for the practical 'training-and-vocational' late 1980s.

The efforts to produce even a national plan for languages in order to pull it or any other subject, out of its problems was beset with organizational disruptiveness - Middle schools, sixth form colleges, comprehensivization and in general, fragmentary teaching throughout all subjects. One contributor had suggested ominously that centralized education could remedy this. With hindsight, perhaps his message did in fact eventually reach home target, in the minds of the Conservative government.

In fact in the following year the Commons Expenditure Committee
(29b)
rightly realized that due to the Raising of the School Leaving Age, it was the first time that the United Kingdom had tried to educate the population from age five to sixteen, even more reason to reflect on forming a national policy for each subject.

The move for making children aware of the concept of language kept driving through from the universities. This may have maintained the momentum for keeping syntax and structure alive in the new-style syllabus. One H.M.I. felt this was the general educational value of languages.

It is well worth remembering that the really perceptive advances in the teaching of classroom subjects are often (in many subjects) derived from teaching low achieving children - the result of lack of response or the frustration of teachers responding to dire situations.

Making clearer aims and objectives was seen to be important in making greater progress. This was to be another of the features of the G.C.S.E. for a number of subjects.

One H.M.I. repeated the general educational value of understanding
(29b) *Mod. Languages Association Memorandum to the Expenditure Committee
of House of Commons, H.C. V.D. 58, 102 June 1977 p.87*

a language; and also the social, healthy curiosity and interest towards foreign people.

With the change of government in 1979 the theme of 'communicability' received fresh encouragement from a wave that affected all subjects; it was that they should be practical and useful.

It cannot be over-emphasized how important is the contribution of the freelance reviewer. Reviews are physical items usually written by experienced teachers. During the lean, mid 1970s to mid 1980s reviews were almost a type of substitute for teachers' meetings and the passing on of good practice - all of which was happening less and less as groups confronted each other head-on. A type of 'working to rule' was discouraging teachers of all disciplines from meeting in the normal way. Written exchanges through reviews, letters and articles maintained 'sane contact', unfettered by desire for sensationalism. All subject association publications offered this. Languages' reviewers underlined the need for realistic, authentic, materials in the classroom. Materials should 'feel' and look relevant, meaningful and thereby acceptable. A regular reviewer, P. D. Morris argued for close rather than long-term goals. Another reviewer had warned of the 'hidden curriculum' of just practising language for the sake of it, rather than using the modern language for things pupils really did think and want to say. Such contributions to the 'method' of teaching, just like those contained in good reviews were a good substitute for the in-service courses which teachers were advised not to attend by their unions because of a deteriorating relationship with the Government. That reviewers were sound in their advice was eventually proven; their

advice appeared in the written details of the G.C.S.E. framework, of course, by then internalized and stated differently. The crucial importance, though, was the central role being placed by the subject associations - in this case the Modern Languages Association and its quarterly periodical, Modern Languages.

The Schools Council warned that examinations had to serve the curriculum and that new initiatives would all be an oncoming chance to ensure that.

It was not long before the Modern Languages Association sensed that the initiative was 'theirs for the taking'. With perfect timing it set in motion the final manoeuvre. It firstly informed all readers of its representative voice. It then showed its supremacy by giving a faultless summary of every past (and every future) significant aspect of modern languages teaching - a veritable quintessence of modern languages in the United Kingdom; thus the Association supported its claim as to why it should dominate any study of modern languages.

In subsequent years it was to strengthen its role of contact point with the Department of Education and Science and all other representative bodies. The Association had held together the body of opinion during the 'wilderness years' and now was rewarded by being the direct intermediary for the G.C.S.E.

It was with unexpected confidence that the Association published its collective vision of Languages for the 1990s. It positively huddled in embrace the low achieving child - almost as though an extra sense had perceived that it was in reality, the needs of these 'alienated' children which had eventually given the final spark to the whole explosion.

It is essential to remember that it was a literary, subject-association movement in modern languages, as in other disciplines, which

had kept alive the flame of hope and revival during the difficult years. It was a professional voice, not a self-seeking, materialistic, politically megalomaniac movement; and this was only one of the disciplines eventually to resurface, purged in time for the G.C.S.E. The Historical Association had insisted on regular contact at the highest possible level and was amongst the first to request a personal meeting with Mr. Kenneth Baker, concerned as much as anything, about the gathering pace of curricular change. Similarly Classics rapidly acknowledged that a total revamp was necessary and the Joint Association of Classics Teachers responded with speed. Like the Historical Association it was well organized around the country and was able quickly to sound out opinion as each new development took place. It was essential at that time that proposals being issued centrally were quickly disseminated and replied to with authoritative and well researched urgency. Subjects which felt they lay further from the 'common core' of essential subjects may well have found that their associations were more alert. It was great credit to the unsung commitment which lay in the consciences of many teachers that they were able to unravel complex problems of loyalty. They felt indignant of their national profile and the rough-handed treatment, yet they were aware that a massive change to the system would rush by, untouched by their professionalism if allowed. For many, co-operation through the normal, local authority network seemed to be an acknowledgement that accusations laid against teachers nationally would be justified. Pride and prejudice - indeed virtually every abstract noun seemed to be embedded in the problem. This is where the subject associations had a vital position. They epitomised professional commitment. They tried to remain apolitical. They rose

'squeaky clean' out of the 'slush-fund' turmoil. Modern languages teachers bright with their new, native authenticity keenly welcomed their new penfriend - the Modern Languages Association. This was a refreshing refuge from what they perceived to be the national image from television screens of flag-waving and banner-bearing extremists.

Teachers, of course, also continued to service the curriculum wearing their other hat - as members of committees of the examining boards. In some instances the unions had asked for withdrawal of contact and co-operation with this most obvious way of promoting the G.C.S.E. to final completion; therefore teachers who felt strongly about taking a stand against the government's barrage may well have felt unable to give full commitment at that stage; and it is questionable whether they should be judged accordingly.

This undersubscription by groups of teachers in the pilot stages and within the committees of the boards clearly must have had some effect on the end result. Even so the indications were that many specimen papers were not far off target. Whether there were conclusions to be made about a 'fair version' prototype (accomplished without a proportion of the teachers) which seemed quite acceptable, is a matter for personal reflection.

In those final four years the finishing touches were very painstakingly being put to the eventual examination. The influence of the examining boards was, then, beginning to produce concrete, tested proposals for the sixteen-plus. These tended to correspond with what the Modern Language Association had been suggesting. There had been a third source of inspiration in earlier years; in fact some might have seen it as a fundamental source; that was the Schools

Lady (Margaret) Thatcher M.P. - a time for change

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Council.

In the main periodical a full range of opinion was still being expressed by teachers. One contributor thought that far from loose-ends starting to come together, it was still wide open as to whether the full ability range could be examined together; also the usefulness of writing seemed still to be controversial.

Eric Hawkins tried to encourage teachers to think in terms of producing a language environment, within the modern language lesson and room. He spoke of the 'gale of English' to which a pupil was exposed between modern language lessons.

The Modern Language Association stated in December 1982 that it was proposing to keep a writing component in its sixteen-plus examination proposals. This may well have helped to push through the package, rather like the Cowper-Temple Clause one hundred years earlier.

Two leading French course books were currently available. One explained certain things in English; one was almost entirely in French. They competed fiercely for the same market. An older reviewer bemoaned the modern-style teachers' book. He felt indignant that the current trend was to tell teachers how to teach, citing 'Whitmarsh' as an example of a text which left the teacher entirely to his own discretion.

In modern languages the teachers and their course text books were teaching to G.C.S.E.-style philosophies well before the examination. This may be one instance of anticipation of a national event; but for modern languages, out in the cold for so long, there may be an exception.

One contributor noted that still no fundamental changes had taken place in examinations in spite of the perceived changed needs of the

student population. The Ordinary level of 1953 was still around. He hoped for speedy Government approval of the sixteen-plus criteria.

He reflected how such little had been achieved after so much effort. Perhaps it had been too diversified, too uncontrolled with the added millstone of motivation and the hurdle of expectation. Motivation, more recently, had come from a sense of achievement and enjoyment; the problems of expectation were those of expecting too much of their weaker pupils.

As it has been seen a startling pace of events took place in 1983. The Association received reward for its patience. In February 1983 it published its own National Policy for Languages. By May the Department of Education and Science had produced its own suggestions for modern languages in the school curriculum. By March 1984 in true consultative style the Modern Language Association gave its response to the Department of Education and Science. The pace had been breath taking - after ten years of virtually nothing. The result was conclusive and had the concurrence of teachers, not via the local authority, the forbidden route, but mainly via those who had conveyed their views through their own professional, subject organizations.

Later on, the Modern Languages Association was to admit that in its view the existing examinations system bore the responsibility for the relative failure of initiatives.

By June 1984 it was felt that the signs were that several of the G.C.E./C.S.E. board consortia would 'go it alone' to G.C.S.E.

A university contributor felt that the specimen papers had concentrated on discrete skill-testing and not what is experienced in daily communication. The feeling may have been primarily to test rather than positively to let a pupil respond to the natural flow of

language. It was also felt that the specimen papers had not taken enough account of the criteria.

In spite of all of these problems the system was ready and with typical brinksmanship the unions gave grudging permission for teachers to have connections with what most of them had been privately preparing for for months if not years. Indeed, the General Certificate of Secondary Education had evolved.

CONCLUSION

Significant changes in the examination for the end of compulsory schooling in England and Wales have tended to come slowly. The move towards G.C.S.E. was showing signs of grinding to a complete halt until it fell under the influence of the hustling Thatcher Government. Alterations in the nature of the schools since the Ordinary level and C.S.E. had been introduced were indicating a need for a change in the nature of examination. Throughout the 1970s the trend had been for greater teacher involvement. The mood leading up to the new system in the 1970s had been one of co-operating to create a system which had the hallmark of Ordinary level combined with the best features of experience gathered from examining during those years of preparation. That mood was to change, however, from co-operation to coercion.

To the more experienced members of society there was always going to be a price to pay for the high spending 1970s. James Callaghan, then Labour Prime Minister, was amongst the first to encourage a more objective view of education. From that point onwards a fairly benign in-house investigation changed to a scurrilous purge. Mrs. Thatcher squeezed her colleagues to find out whether or not they were 'wet'. If they showed any signs of not being very tough-minded then she substituted them. The country watched, uncertain of what to expect from Britain's first lady Prime Minister. Sir Keith Joseph, the Secretary of State for Education, began the process of excising the education system.

The progress towards the G.C.S.E. up to that point had been comfortable 1970s-style with an assumption that whatever went ahead would be well-funded and well-supported. These phrases, however, were

not part of the vocabulary of Mrs. Thatcher's Cabinet. If teachers had known that they were heading towards such a lean period some might have wished that they had steered the G.C.S.E. in a different direction.

There was, of course, a momentum within the schools themselves. As society suffered its hangover for the profligate 1970s, a high-spending area such as education, which was considered a fairly soft target, anyway, seemed to be drawn more and more frequently under public scrutiny. Even slight losses of public, and thus parental, support had significant effects on attitudes within the schools. The Labour governments had pushed harder and harder for complete comprehensivization. Like all laws of nature, for each action there was reaction. Whilst society was becoming mildly restless about education, stirred on by its agitators, it certainly felt more sensitive about traditional reserves such as grammar schools and G.C.E. Ordinary level. In effect, a number of factors which might, under different circumstances, have dissipated with the normal run of national headlines, came together to produce a climate which was hostile to the publicly-provided schools.

The final disappearance of the grammar schools at the same time as the threat of disappearance of G.C.E. Ordinary level, then, combined to act as a brake on the ultimate imposition of the G.C.S.E.; for, in fact, it would have to be imposed since it was to provide, at a stroke, for the ability range of those two examinations, C.S.E. and Ordinary level.

One thing the Conservative Government would not tolerate was loose ends on any endeavour. In 1984 Sir Keith Joseph had stated an intention: to define the main parts of the five to sixteen curriculum

so as to define the level of attainment which should be achieved at various stages by pupils of different abilities; to alter the sixteen-plus examination so that it would measure absolute rather than relative performance; to aim at bringing eighty to ninety per cent of all pupils at sixteen-plus at least to the level currently achieved by pupils of average ability. Between them the Schools Council and the examination boards had been moving in and around these waters; but even so it was a very forthright target. It would seem to have addressed itself to some of the public concern of the time. For he wanted to remove boredom from the secondary curriculum, to test children on what they could do and understand rather than mark them down on what they did not know, and to relate schooling to the realities of the world of work. The G.C.S.E. would be the vehicle for this endeavour. The Schools Council went. The Secondary Examinations Council arrived. Five Examining groups were formed anew, out of the old. National criteria, the product of years of work by teachers, examiners and others, determined general and subject-specific guidelines for seventy subjects. There was a new emphasis on candidates' work, skills, coursework by teachers and differentiation by papers or questions or outcome.

By 1985 a new White Paper added the resolution to secure the best possible return from the resources invested in education. Four principles of breadth, balance, relevance and differentiation were added. Thus, politicians' concern for standards, the concern of the Department of Education and Science for specific objectives and the concern of H.M.I.s for the common curriculum were all mostly met. What was eventually to be a new standard curriculum for all children ages five to sixteen joined the 'conga dance' of more measures, led

by the G.C.S.E. in 1986. The teachers involuntarily jerked to produce the rhythm to encourage a type of progress. The music was to remain flat for some time. In short, the G.C.S.E. although part of a slow build-up over many decades towards ongoing examination development, became the front-runner of a package of reforms intended to deal with public and governmental unrest over publicly-provided education.

Apart from the examinations system being in a state of development over the decades, so too were the subjects taught within the schools. There is a constant state of flux as subjects move through their phases. The subjects which are basic to daily life have a more even course; the practical subjects have moved position staying for longer spells in each. A true 'maverick' has been modern languages. Whether or not the G.C.S.E. is seen as some type of temporary plateau of development, it does seem that modern languages were one of the subject-disciplines which actually, inadvertently or not, had a direct heat-seeking sensor for 1986 and the final decision for the G.C.S.E. to go ahead. The movement of subjects towards and during the 1980s had been in the direction of practical application, where possible. Modern languages were already moving towards this target. In that respect they provide a suitable example.

The progression of modern languages from the time of the second world war upto 1986 may well be a suitable choice since it covers the period between and around major educational reform and shows therefore a mood in the classroom rather than simply in the statute book or educational gossip publications. An interesting development throughout that period was the response towards low achieving children as firstly more and more were entered for modern language examinations from the secondary modern schools and secondly from the increasing number of

comprehensive schools. A theme over these years within the response of teachers to this challenge was background studies which eventually took up an 'atmospheric' role within the text books. It was discovered that children responded well to this presentation of the background to the language. In the early decades after the war and even for some time after that it was thought that low achieving children could not manage modern languages; this was partly because it was mainly written, certainly for examination purposes. Therefore background studies were taken up with such enthusiasm that they started to become a subject in their own right. During this period languages teachers were experimenting with a variety of teaching methods. These were to become, eventually, the framework for the G.C.S.E. That forty-two year period then between the 1944 Act and the reforming education acts which began in 1986, is suitably represented by modern languages which actually appeared to come to some form of maturity in 1986 as a result of the growth throughout those four decades. From the late 1960s to the mid 1980s a contemporaneous relationship between national and classroom events can be traced.

NOTE TO APPENDICES

The formal, abrupt and succinct nature of the G.C.E. Ordinary level syllabuses of pages 248-254 with the most brief description of examination content in Modern Languages, History and Geography give way to the more explicit syllabuses for the same at C.S.E.. The more expansive and extended versions for C.S.E. should be noted; they represent the stage of development between the formality of G.C.E. and the practicality of G.C.S.E. (including Aims, Objectives and detailed Schemes of Examination).

Note that the G.C.S.E. *National Criteria* of pages 273-286 introduce explicitly, set out clearly both Aims and Objectives and also specify in detail: Content, Relationships between Assessment Objectives and Content; Techniques of Assessment and finally Grade Descriptions.

The three stages show a development of attitudes towards examination. Ordinary level and C.S.E. (the later-starter) ran concurrently upto 1986. From that point onwards G.C.S.E. took over. The three represent the differing attitudes towards expectations of examinations.

Finally, note should be made of the changing typeface and settings, from the more formal Ordinary level to the clearer C.S.E.; further, the G.C.S.E. offers an appealing presentation encouraging interest in the content of the text.

APPENDIX I

G.C.E. EXAMINATION SYLLABUSES
(including Grade Descriptions)

G.C.E. ORDINARY LEVEL
FRENCH, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY

Source: Oxford Local Examinations Board, 1986

Modern Languages

3820, 3821 — French

3822, 3823 — German

In each of these languages two syllabuses are provided.

Candidates may not be entered at the same examination for both *3820 French* and *3821 French*, nor may they be entered for either of these with *French* at Advanced Level or with the Alternative Ordinary syllabus *French with Texts*.

Candidates may not be entered at the same examination for both *3822 German* and *3823 German*, nor may they be entered for either of these with *German* at Advanced Level.

A list of the grammar and structures of each language which candidates are expected to know for active use is printed after the syllabus descriptions.

3820 — French

3822 — German

The examination in each language consists of six papers, as follows:

- 3820/1 and 3822/1 Free Composition (50 minutes, maximum mark 40)
- 3820/2 and 3822/2 Unseen Translation and Reading Comprehension (1½ hours, maximum mark 100)
- 3820/3 and 3822/3 Dictation (about 30 minutes, maximum mark 30)

Either

- 3820/4 and 3822/4 Prose Composition (50 minutes, maximum mark 60)

Or 3820/5 and 3822/5 Listening Comprehension (about 35 minutes, maximum mark 60)

- 3820/6 and 3822/6 Oral Examination (about 10 minutes, maximum mark 30)

All candidates must take Papers 1, 2, 3, and 6, and either 4 or 5.

The dates for Papers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are fixed in the timetable. Paper 6 (the oral examination) may be held at any time during the period covered by the main examination timetable, on dates fixed by Heads of centres.

In Paper 1 candidates are required to write a composition of about 150 words in the foreign language, based on a short subject outline.

Paper 2 contains two passages for translation into English, and a comprehension passage in the foreign language with questions in English to be answered in English. Each translation passage carries 40 marks; the comprehension questions carry a total of 20 marks.

Paper 3 is a dictation test, normally conducted by the candidates' own teacher. The passage is read (i) at normal speed, without interruption; (ii) in short sections, with pauses to enable the candidates to write; (iii) at normal speed, without interruption.

Paper 4 consists of a passage in English for translation into the foreign language.

Paper 5 consists of 30 multiple-choice questions in the foreign language, testing understanding of short conversations and longer passages. Tape-recordings are supplied from Oxford. This paper is identical with Paper 3 of syllabuses 3821 (French) and 3823 (German).

Paper 6, the oral examination, consists of (i) a reading test, and (ii) general conversation. It is normally conducted by the candidates' own teacher in accordance with materials and instructions sent from Oxford. Centres may be required to tape-record the oral tests of some or all candidates, for purposes of moderation.

3821 — French

3823 — German

The examination in each language consists of five papers, as follows:

- 3821/1 and 3823/1 Free Composition (1½ hours, maximum mark 50)
- 3821/2 and 3823/2 Unseen Translation (35 minutes, maximum mark 40)
- 3821/3 and 3823/3 Listening Comprehension (about 35 minutes, maximum mark 40)

- 3821/4 and 3823/4 Reading Comprehension (45 minutes, maximum mark 40)
 3821/5 and 3823/5 Oral Examination (about 10 minutes, maximum mark 30)

Candidates must take all five papers.

The dates for Papers 1, 2, 3 and 4 are fixed in the timetable. Paper 5 (the oral examination) may be held at any time during the period covered by the main examination timetable, on dates fixed by Heads of centres.

In Paper 1 candidates are required to write *two* compositions in the foreign language: Question 1 is a composition of about 150 words based on a short subject outline; Question 2 is a composition of about 120 words based on a series of pictures. Question 1 is identical with Paper 1 of syllabuses 3820 (French) and 3822 (German).

Paper 2 consists of *one* passage for translation into English. The passage is identical with one of the passages set in Paper 2 of syllabuses 3820 (French) and 3822 (German).

Paper 3 consists of 30 multiple-choice questions in the foreign language, testing understanding of short conversations and longer passages. Tape-recordings are supplied from Oxford. This paper is identical with Paper 5 of syllabuses 3820 (French) and 3822 (German).

Paper 4 consists of 30 multiple-choice questions in the foreign language, testing understanding of short statements and longer passages.

In Paper 5, the oral examination, candidates are required to: (i) read aloud a passage in the foreign language; (ii) answer set questions on two separate pictures; (iii) take part in general conversation on topics suggested by the pictures. The examination is normally conducted by the candidates' own teacher in accordance with materials and instructions sent from Oxford. Centres may be required to tape-record the oral tests of some or all candidates, for purposes of moderation.

Lists of Grammar and Structures

The following lists define the *minimum* which candidates should have studied for Ordinary Level. They include only those elements of the language which a candidate needs to use actively, i.e. when writing or speaking French or German. They do not purport to be exhaustive lists and do not include elements required to be recognized but not used.

FRENCH (syllabuses 3820 and 3821)

Forms and uses of:

- Nouns: Gender and plural of nouns, both regular and irregular.
 Adjectives: Gender and number, including anomalous forms.
 Comparative and superlative.
 Demonstrative adjectives.
 Indefinite adjectives.
 Possessive adjectives.
 Position of adjectives.
 Adjectives followed by *de* or *à*.
 Articles: Definite, indefinite, and partitive articles.
 Pronouns: Stressed and unstressed forms.
 Subject and object pronouns; *y*, *en*.
 Position and order of these with verb, including the imperative.
 Forms in *-même(s)*.
 Demonstrative pronouns; *ceci*, *cela*.
 Relative pronouns; *dont*, *où*, *ce qui*, *ce que*.
 Indefinite pronouns.
 Possessive pronouns.
 Numbers: Cardinal and ordinal; date, time, measurements, quantities.
 Verbs: Infinitives, present and past; the common irregular verbs.
 The present, future, perfect, pluperfect and imperfect indicative tenses; the imperative; the conditional. (The subjunctive need not be known.)
 Modal and auxiliary verbs.
 Dependent infinitive with *faire* and verbs of perception.
 Reflexive verbs, with direct and indirect reflexive pronoun.
 Participial forms; agreement of past participle with *avoir* and *être*.
Aller with infinitive.
 Conditional sentences using *si*.
 Negation: *ne . . . pas*, *ne . . . que*, *ne . . . rien*, *ne . . . personne*, *ne . . . plus*, *ne . . . jamais*, *ne . . . ni . . . ni*.

- Adverbs: Formation (a) by means of suffix
(b) by other means.
Adverbs of place, time, and degree.
- Prepositions: Verbs followed by *a*, by *de*, or by no preposition.
- Interrogation: Forms of question and answer
(a) by intonation
(b) by word order
(c) by use of specific interrogative words (*oui, quand*, etc.).

GERMAN (syllabuses 3822 and 3823)

- Nouns: All genders; all cases; singular and plural.
- Articles: Definite and indefinite articles.
- Pronouns: Personal pronouns.
Possessive pronouns (*meiner*, etc., only).
Relative pronouns (*der, die, das*, etc., and *was*).
Demonstrative pronouns.
Interrogative pronouns.
Indefinite pronouns.
- Adjectives: Predicative use.
Strong, mixed and weak declensions.
Comparison.
Possessive adjectives.
Demonstrative adjectives.
Interrogative adjectives.
Indefinite adjectives.
- Adverbs: Comparison.
Expressions of time, manner and degree, and place.
- Prepositions: The most common prepositions governing
(i) accusative,
(ii) dative,
(iii) accusative and dative,
(iv) genitive.
Combination of prepositions with *da* and *wo*.
- Verbs: The forms of separable, inseparable, and reflexive verbs, including the common strong verbs.
The indicative mood: all tenses, including the conditional.
The imperative mood.
The infinitive with and without *zu*, including the *um . . . zu* construction.
The passive voice, in the present and imperfect tenses.
The subjunctive mood, in the imperfect tense in conditional sentences only.
Modal verbs (and *lassen* with the infinitive) in the present and imperfect tenses; *möchte* and *könnte*.
- Conjunctions: Co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions.
- Numbers, etc.: Cardinal and ordinal numerals; expressions of time; dates; measurements; expressions of quantity.
- Word order: In main clauses and subordinate clauses; with separable and inseparable verbs; in negative and interrogative sentences; position of adverbs and adverbial phrases and of direct and indirect objects.

2830 — History (British)

This subject may not be taken with *History* at Advanced Level, nor with any other History subject at Ordinary (including Alternative Ordinary) Level except 2837 *History (American)*.

Four papers are set (each 2½ hours, maximum mark 100), one only of which may be taken, as follows:

- 2830/1 Period 1066-1485 (this paper is not available in the Autumn examination)
- 2830/2 Period 1485-1689
- 2830/3 Period 1689-1815
- 2830/4 Period 1815-1951

In each of the Papers 1, 2, and 3, twelve questions are set, and candidates must answer any five.

Paper 4 is divided into three sections: 1815-67, 1867-1914, and 1914-51. Six questions are set on each section, and candidates must answer five questions, taken from at least two of these sections. Questions may be set that overlap the dates of adjacent sections.

2833 — History (Foreign)

This subject may not be taken at the same examination with *History* at Advanced Level, nor with any other History subject at Ordinary (including Alternative Ordinary) Level.

One paper (2½ hours, maximum mark 100) is set on European history in the period 1848-1950. Candidates must answer any five questions in the paper, but are not necessarily expected to have covered the whole period. There are no compulsory questions but some may in part refer to a map and require a factual knowledge of dates, events, personalities and the identification of places. The questions may deal with the activities of the European powers outside Europe which affect their relationships amongst themselves, and with the intervention of the U.S.A. in European affairs.

2834 — History (British and Foreign)

This subject may not be taken at the same examination with *History* at Advanced Level, nor with any other History subject at Ordinary (including Alternative Ordinary) Level.

One paper (2½ hours, maximum mark 100) is set. Candidates are not expected to study the whole syllabus and the paper is set in such a way that they may concentrate on one of the three periods except for the topics dealt with thematically in part 3 of each section: 1868-c. 1919; c. 1900-c. 1939; c. 1919-1951. Five questions in all must be answered, but not more than three from either of the two sections A and B.

2844, 2845, and 2846† — Geography

Three syllabuses, 2844, 2845, and 2846†, are provided at Ordinary Level. Candidates may **not** enter for more than one of these at the same examination, and may not take any of them at the same examination with Geography at Advanced Level.

[N.B. In all three syllabuses, temperature and rainfall statistics in the question papers are shown in the metric system only, but answers referring to the imperial system are accepted.] Details of the syllabuses are given below.

2844 and 2845

These are related schemes, each based on two compulsory papers, the first being a common paper on General Geography, and the second a paper on Regional Geography, each scheme covering a different region as follows:

2844/1 } 2845/1 }	General (1½ hours, maximum mark 48)
2844/2	Regional: British Isles; Developing World (1½ hours, maximum mark 54)
2845/2	Regional: British Isles; Western Europe; North America (1½ hours, maximum mark 54)

Questions may be set in any paper which require candidates to comment on or interpret simple statistical material, graphs, diagrams, oblique aerial photographs, etc.

SYLLABUS

2844/1 and 2845/1: General

Candidates are expected to have a knowledge of the elements of general geography set out below. Two compulsory questions are set: one on section 1, comprising short- and paragraph-answer items; the second comprising short-answer items covering all sections of the syllabus, some of which are related to a map¹ of the world (drawn on the Mollweide projection) but the scope of these is limited to those sections in which reference is made to a distribution (sections 2-6).

In addition, five essay-type questions are set, of which one must be answered. These usually refer to elements of both physical and human geography and require the use of not more than two regional examples. They comprise one based mainly on section 3 of the syllabus, one on sections 2, 4, 5, and 6, two on sections 7, 8, and 9, and one other.

1. The reading and interpretation of Ordnance Survey maps on scales 1:25 000 and 1:50 000 including sections, gradients, and intervisibility. The interpretation of oblique aerial photographs in association with maps.
2. Earth movements in Space. Day and Night. Great Circles. The seasons. Latitude and Longitude. Time, the Date Line.
3. The main types of rocks. Earth movements. The distribution of the major features of the relief and build of the Earth's surface. The common types of landforms (including coasts), their origins and modification by the agents of erosion. The effect of these features on human activities.
4. The principal factors determining climate. The major wind systems and ocean currents. Major climatic types and their distribution over the Earth's surface.
5. The control of vegetation by climate, soil, and relief. The distribution and characteristics of the principal types of natural vegetation.

¹ Blank copies of this map may be obtained by centres from the Secretary at Oxford. The minimum order is ten maps; see § 4 on p. 6.

General Geography, and the second a paper on Regional Geography, each scheme covering a different region as follows:

2844/1	}	General (1½ hours, maximum mark 48)
2845/1		
2844/2		Regional: British Isles; Developing World (1½ hours, maximum mark 54)
2845/2		Regional: British Isles; Western Europe; North America (1½ hours, maximum mark 54)

Questions may be set in any paper which require candidates to comment on or interpret simple statistical material, graphs, diagrams, oblique aerial photographs, etc.

SYLLABUS

2844/1 and 2845/1: General

Candidates are expected to have a knowledge of the elements of general geography set out below. Two compulsory questions are set: one on section 1, comprising short- and paragraph-answer items; the second comprising short-answer items covering all sections of the syllabus, some of which are related to a map¹ of the world (drawn on the Mollweide projection) but the scope of these is limited to those sections in which reference is made to a distribution (sections 2-6).

In addition, five essay-type questions are set, of which one must be answered. These usually refer to elements of both physical and human geography and require the use of not more than two regional examples. They comprise one based mainly on section 3 of the syllabus, one on sections 2, 4, 5, and 6, two on sections 7, 8, and 9, and one other.

1. The reading and interpretation of Ordnance Survey maps on scales 1:25 000 and 1:50 000 including sections, gradients, and intervisibility. The interpretation of oblique aerial photographs in association with maps.
2. Earth movements in Space. Day and Night. Great Circles. The seasons. Latitude and Longitude. Time, the Date Line.
3. The main types of rocks. Earth movements. The distribution of the major features of the relief and build of the Earth's surface. The common types of landforms (including coasts), their origins and modification by the agents of erosion. The effect of these features on human activities.
4. The principal factors determining climate. The major wind systems and ocean currents. Major climatic types and their distribution over the Earth's surface.
5. The control of vegetation by climate, soil, and relief. The distribution and characteristics of the principal types of natural vegetation.
6. Physical and human factors which affect the distribution of types of agriculture (including the animals and plants of major economic importance), forestry, and fishing. Problems of cultivation.
7. Sources of energy. Physical and human factors affecting the location of manufacturing industry.
8. Population in relation to resources. Physical and human factors affecting the location and growth of towns and villages.
9. Physical and human factors affecting the volume, direction, and composition of transport by road, rail, inland water, sea, and air.

2844/2: Regional (British Isles; Developing World)

Candidates are expected to have a knowledge of (A) the British Isles and (B) the Developing World. They must answer three questions in all, including at least one but not more than two on the British Isles.

Candidates may study the British Isles either by means of major regional units or by major topics or by both. A roughly equal choice of questions on regions and on topics is set and candidates are not restricted in their choice amongst them.

Questions are set that allow candidates to make use of field-work or of sample studies, or to comment on factual material supplied in the question paper.

(A) The British Isles (6 questions are set).

The outline of the relief, structure, climate, and population of the British Isles, together with:

Regional studies within the British Isles. No particular regions are prescribed but candidates should study a selection of contrasting regions illustrative of some of the following: difficult

¹ Blank copies of this map may be obtained by centres from the Secretary at Oxford. The minimum order is ten maps; see § 4 on p. 6.

§ 6. Subjects of Examination

The Delegates do not bind their examiners in any subject to adhere year by year to the same pattern in setting papers, provided that the syllabus is followed and the same general standard maintained.

Papers are set at two Levels, Ordinary (or Alternative Ordinary) and Advanced, on the subjects listed on pp. 19-21.

The **Ordinary Level examination** is not a pass/fail examination; results are issued to centres in grades A, B, C, D, E, and unclassified. Grade A is the highest grade and the lower boundary of grade C is equivalent to the minimum performance required for an Ordinary Level pass in the years 1951-74 inclusive. Grade E indicates the lowest level of attainment judged to be of sufficient standard to be recorded on a G.C.E. certificate. Work which falls below this level is unclassified.

The Schools Council and the G.C.E. Boards agreed on the following verbal descriptions of the official grades A-E and the unclassified category for reporting results at Ordinary Level:

<i>Official grade</i>	<i>Description</i>
A	Grade A indicates the standard of attainment to be expected of the ablest candidates in the age-group for which the examination is designed.
B	Grade B indicates attainment which, though not of the highest quality, is substantially above the minimum standard required for Grade C.
C	The lower boundary of Grade C is equivalent to the minimum performance formerly required for an Ordinary Level pass.
D	Grade D indicates performance not far below that required for Grade C.
E	Grade E indicates the lowest level of attainment judged by the Board to be of sufficient standard to be recorded on a G.C.E. certificate.
Unclassified	Candidates in this category are those whose level of attainment is below the minimum judged by the Board to be of sufficient standard to be recorded on a G.C.E. certificate.

Alternative Ordinary Level syllabuses are designed for candidates of greater maturity than is normally expected at Ordinary Level. Results in the Alternative Ordinary Level examinations are also issued in the five official grades A, B, C, D, and E, with an unclassified category.

At **Advanced Level** candidates who pass are put in one of five grades, A, B, C, D, E, grade A being the highest passing grade and grade E the lowest passing grade; candidates who fail to reach grade E may, if they reach a sufficient standard, be allowed a classified result at Ordinary Level, indicated by the symbol -o- (see § 14 and § 15 for further information).

In most Advanced Level subjects, in addition to the normal Advanced Level papers, optional Special papers are set to enable candidates of high ability to show their merit. These Special papers should be taken only by candidates who are likely to do very well in them. Candidates may take Special papers in one or in two subjects but not in more than

APPENDIX II

C.S.E. EXAMINATION SYLLABUSES
(including Grade Descriptions)

C.S.E.

FRENCH, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY

Source: North Regional Examinations Board
Modern Languages Syllabus for 1986
Examinations (First Published, 1984)

Modern Languages

- 1 FRENCH
- 2 GERMAN
- 3 SPANISH

Scope of Examination

The purpose of the examination is to test the candidate's ability to understand the written and, above all, the spoken word and to test abilities in fluent expression both in speech and in writing.

Syllabus

- 1 Vocabulary: the following list contains a number of topic areas in connection with which pupils could be expected to recognise and use the foreign language. The list is intended to be helpful to teachers, but it is not exhaustive. It is assumed that teachers will make pupils aware of the list:

The house, rooms, contents.	Seaside and country.
The family, family life.	Body, clothing, personal description.
Town, village and amenities.	Food, drink, restaurant, café.
Shops, shopping, merchandise.	Letter writing.
School life.	Sport.
Hobbies and interests.	Entertainments.
Travel, tourism, camping.	Accident and illness.
Occupations, places of work.	Animals, zoo, farm, domestic.
Daily routine.	Simple narrative, e.g., crime adventure.
Dates, times, weather.	

- 2 Structures: A list of structures is given for each language on pages 8-12.

Scheme of Examination

The four language skills to be tested will be given the following weighting:

- Written expression (25%).
- Reading comprehension (20%).
- Listening comprehension (25%).
- Speech (30%).

In each language two written papers and a test of Reading and Conversation must be taken.

Special arrangements may be permitted for candidates with speech or hearing defects, provided that the Board is informed when the entry schedule is submitted.

Paper 1

Section A. Free Composition (15%).

Section B. Letter (10%).

Section C. Reading Comprehension (20%).

Paper 2

Listening Comprehension (25%).

Oral Examination

Section A. Reading (10%).

Section B. Conversation (20%).

Paper 1 (1¾ hours)

Section A - Free Composition

A free composition of some 120 words (Spanish: 100 words) in the foreign language, involving a story based on a series of pictures.

No direct instruction regarding tenses to be used will appear on the question paper. Credit will be given for complex constructions and intelligent use of tenses – see Structure Lists on pages 8-12 – although it is possible for a candidate making effective use of the present and narrative tense to achieve the highest grade. No credit will be given for irrelevant matter.

Section B - Letter

The candidate will be asked to write **one** letter in the foreign language from a choice of two:

- (a) in accordance with short instructions given in English **or**
- (b) in response to a longer stimulus letter in the foreign language. (N.B. in cases where it is felt that it will help candidates, *two* versions of the same stimulus letter may be presented, one marked "for boys only" and one "for girls only". It is stressed that, in such cases, the letters will be basically the same with minor but necessary changes of children's names and agreements.)

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Notes

- (i) One of the alternatives will require an informal letter and the other a "semi-formal letter". By "semi-formal letter" is meant a letter between two adults who are strangers concerning a private matter (as opposed to a public or business matter).
Examples of the type of ground to be covered by the letter are:
 - (1) seeking tourist information;
 - (2) arranging holidays;
 - (3) about a special interest or hobby, e.g. football;
 - (4) arranging a school exchange;
 - (5) booking a campsite or youth hostel;
 - (6) thanking someone (e.g. for help at the time of an accident);
 - (7) enquiring about a lost article.
- (ii) Answers should be about 90 words in length excluding the address.
- (iii) 80% of the marks for this exercise will be given for the use of language in the body of the letter – see structure lists on pages 8-12. The remaining marks will be given for the correct date, appropriate salutation and subscription, and the information given in the body of the letter.
- (iv) Candidates may be required to use the past and future tenses as well as the present tense.
- (v) No credit will be given for irrelevant matter.

Section C -- Reading Comprehension

The candidate will be asked to read **one** or **two** prose passages in the foreign language, and to answer in English questions set in English. Candidates will be expected to show their understanding as fully as the questions require.

Answers should contain all relevant material but do not need to be in the form of complete sentences.

Paper 2 (45 minutes)

Listening Comprehension

A prose passage or passages in the foreign language of not more than 350 words in total will be read by a teacher from the candidate's own school. The candidate will be asked to listen to the passage or passages, read three times, and to answer in English questions written in English. This will be a test of understanding and there will be no undue reliance upon memory. Candidates will have adequate time in which to write their answers which should contain all relevant information, but need not be in the form of complete sentences.

Candidates may, if they wish, take notes after the first reading of the passage or passages.

Oral Examination

The examination in reading and conversation will be conducted by an examiner appointed by the Board.

The candidate's own teacher, or a teacher from the candidate's school, will be appointed by the Board to act as examiner following attendance at co-ordination meetings throughout the year to assess the candidate's work. Where there is no school-based examiner, candidates' work will be assessed by a visiting examiner.

Section A - Reading

The candidate will be asked to study a prose passage in the foreign language for up to seven minutes, and then to read it to the examiner. In assessing the standard, the examiner will consider the candidate's pronunciation, intonation and phrasing.

Section B - Conversation

The candidate will be required to converse with the examiner for some five minutes in the foreign language on everyday topics such as those suggested in the syllabus. In assessing the standard, the examiner will take account of the candidate's comprehension of the examiner, vocabulary and range of ideas and grammatical accuracy.

FRENCH STRUCTURES

The following list is not exhaustive, but has been prepared as a general guide to teachers preparing candidates for the examination.

1 Verbs

Present tense (indicative).
Imperfect tense.
Perfect tense.
Future tense.
Imperative.
Pluperfect tense.
Aller + infinitive.
Venir de + infinitive.
Avant de + infinitive.
Après avoir, après être.
Verbs and prepositions governing the infinitive.
Modal verbs.
Present participle with "en".
Conditional tense (for recognition only).
Passive voice (for recognition only).

2 Pronouns

Personal pronouns, including "on".
Reflexive pronouns.
Direct and indirect object pronouns.
"y" and "en".
Emphatic pronouns.
Possessive pronouns.
Demonstrative pronouns.
Relative pronouns, including "ce qui" etc., and relative adverb "où".
Position of pronouns.

3 Adjectives

Feminine and plural agreement, including common irregulars "bel", "nouvel", "vieil" etc.
Comparative and superlative adjectives, including "meilleur" and "pire".
Possessive adjectives.
Demonstrative adjectives.

8

4 Adverbs

Formation of common adverbs.

Comparative and superlative adverbs, including common irregulars.

Negatives.

5 Articles

Definite and indefinite articles, including compounds "au", "du" etc.

Partitive article.

Use of "de" after negative or before adjective.

6 Nouns

Gender and plural, including common irregulars.

Expressions of possession like "le père de Jean".

History

Aims

- 1 To give knowledge of, and arouse interest in, the history of recent times.
- 2 To help the pupils to understand the developments which have led to the world of today.
- 3 To encourage individual historical investigation.

Objectives

The objectives are to test:

- 1 Recall of relevant information.
- 2 The ability of pupils to produce a cogent exposition.
- 3 Skill in evaluating historical facts.

Scheme of Examination

The examination will consist of two parts.

Part A: Written Paper (75%).

Part B: Teacher's Assessment of Course Work (25%).

Part A: Written Paper.

One written paper of 2 hours including reading time, will be set, to test knowledge and understanding of modern history.

The following options are available:

Either Alternative 1: Modern World History.

Or Alternative 2: Modern British History.

Alternative 1: Modern World History

Section 1 - Containing thirty questions requiring short answers.
All questions to be attempted.

Section 2 - Containing seven questions from which candidates should answer four.

Alternative 2: Modern British History

Section 1 - Containing thirty questions requiring short answers.
All questions to be attempted.

Section 2 - Candidates should answer four questions.

In each alternative candidates are advised not to spend more than 15 minutes on Section 1. No questions will be asked on any development which has taken place in the three years prior to the date of the examination.

Part B: Teacher's Assessment of Course Work

In making their assessments the teachers are at liberty to include any work which they consider relevant. Notes on teachers' assessments are given at the front of this booklet.

SYLLABUS

Part A

Alternative 1. Modern World History

The First World War: The European situation in 1914 to the outbreak of the War; main theatres of war; methods of warfare; the Home Front in Britain.

The Treaty of Versailles; the League of Nations; Mussolini and Fascist Italy; the rise of Hitler, Nazi Germany.

Revolution and post revolution in Russia, 1917-1941, showing causes, personalities and internal development.

The Second World War: The failure of the League of Nations; pre-war crises; methods of warfare on land, sea and air; the German attack on Western Europe to the fall of France; Battle of Britain; Pearl Harbour and the War in the Far East; the Russian Front (Siege of Leningrad, Stalingrad, the nature of the War); El Alamein to victory in North Africa and Italy; D-Day to victory in Europe.

The Cold War in Europe from 1945: Division of Germany; the Iron Curtain; Berlin Airlift; Berlin Wall; NATO; the Warsaw Pact; Hungary 1956; Treaty of Rome; EEC; EFTA; Czechoslovakia 1968.

Major Confrontation from 1945: UNO; Korea; Cuba; Vietnam and South East Asia; the Middle East.

Either

China from 1945: The Chinese Revolution; Civil War; Mao Tse Tung's China (internal development and relations with other countries).

Or

Africa from 1945: Developments in the following countries: Algeria, Kenya, the Rhodesias and South Africa.

Part A

Alternative 2. Modern British History

Parliamentary reform from 1832: reform bills; Chartism; suffragettes.

Parliament today: elections; passing a Bill; the party system.

Farming: the Corn Laws and their repeal; the age of High Farming; competition and depression. Effects of World War I. Agriculture since 1918: Government support; changes in machinery and methods; the Common Market.

An outline of the history of Trade Unions from 1824 to the present day.

Industry: working conditions in 1815; reforms in factories and mines from 1815 to the First World War; iron, steel and shipbuilding industries from 1815 to the First World War.

Industry since the First World War: years of depression; war effort 1939-1945; mechanisation with special reference to coal, steel and power; regional development areas; automation and computers.

Education from 1833 to the present day.

Transport by rail, road and sea from 1825 to 1900.

Transport by road, rail, sea and air from 1900.

Public health and medicine:

- (a) Chadwick and developments in public health leading to Bevan and the National Health Service.
- (b) Developments in housing and town planning since the early 19th century.
- (c) Discoveries in anaesthetics, antiseptics, antibiotics; developments in nursing and surgery.

Relief of poverty: Poor Law Act, 1834 and its consequences. The introduction of changes during the 20th century: old age pensions, unemployment pay, national assistance and social security.

Geography

Aims

At the end of a course in Geography a pupil should have:

- 1 an understanding of the relationships between man and his environment, both natural and man-made;
- 2 an understanding of spatial distributions and the processes affecting these patterns;
- 3 an ability to use a geographical approach as an aid to understanding the changing world and its problems.

Scheme of Examination

There will be two written papers.

Paper 1 (1 hour 40 minutes) 40%

Paper 2 (2 hours) 60%

Paper 1

Two compulsory questions: one question on O.S. map work:
one question sampling the syllabus.

The map-reading question will be based on an O.S. map extract at a scale of 1:50 000 or 1:25 000, first or second series in each case. The calculation of gradients, accurate drawing of cross-sections and intervisibility will **not** be required.

Paper 2

Four compulsory questions.

The interpretation of photographs, maps and statistics may be included in each paper.

Magnifying glasses may be used for any part of the examination.

Objectives

These should be considered as the application of certain skills to a body of factual knowledge, ideas and principles.

(a) Skills

- 1 The ability to *find, understand and analyse* information from varied source materials, viz maps (including O.S. maps), photographs, diagrams, statistics, graphs and written material.
- 2 The ability to *apply* ideas and methods to the understanding of unfamiliar problems in unfamiliar locations.
- 3 The ability to *organise* information through concepts and principles and the ability to make generalisations.
- 4 The ability to *evaluate* information, e.g. to establish causality.
- 5 The ability to *communicate* findings through an appropriate medium - maps, diagrams, in writing etc.

(b) Factual Knowledge

The factual knowledge required is that which is implicit in a study of the areas and topics listed in the syllabus.

(c) Ideas, Principles

As a guide to teachers, some of the major ideas and principles have been organised under the headings below. Appropriate topics with which to illustrate the various groups of ideas are indicated in the syllabus.

1 Population

- 1.1 Population change is a function of birth rate, death rate and migration.
- 1.2 Distribution of population can be explained by physical, climatic, economic, political and cultural factors acting over a period of time.
- 1.3 Over-population and under-population must be defined in relation to natural and human resources and technological levels.

2 Settlements

- 2.1 The physical landscape may influence the site, form, situation and distribution of settlements.
- 2.2 Settlements are of different sizes and have differing types and numbers of functions.
- 2.3 Settlements can change in size and function through time.
- 2.4 Settlements may be regarded as central places with spheres of influence and they are hierarchically related.
- 2.5 In urban areas patterns of functional zones can be recognised.
- 2.6 The movements of people and vehicles in urban areas make significant patterns in space and time.
- 2.7 Both urban and rural settlement problems are complex and interconnected and their solutions may be sought through planning.

3 Agriculture

- 3.1 Agricultural land use depends upon physical conditions (climate, etc.), market forces, government policies, levels of technology and culture.
- 3.2 Farms and farming regions can be regarded as production systems with varying levels of input (e.g. fertilisers, capital) and output (e.g. crop yield, profits).

4 Manufacturing Industry

- 4.1 Industries are major producers of wealth; countries have different levels of industrialisation.
- 4.2 Industrial location depends upon a variety of factors including the nature and sources of raw materials and energy requirements, the location of markets, transport costs and services and political intervention.

- 4.3 The development of industrial regions and the concentration of particular industries in certain areas are responses to location factors.
- 4.4 Changes in the relative significance of location factors may lead to geographical inertia or to the growth or decline of industries and industrial areas.

5 Movement

- 5.1 The growth or decay of transport systems and the associated movement of goods, people and information are of fundamental importance in the spatial organisation of human activities
- 5.2 Areas with high densities of population and economic activity require well developed internal route networks and external links.

6 Resources and Development

- 6.1 Resources may be natural or man-made and their usefulness varies in time and between cultures.
- 6.2 The use of non-renewable resources requires careful planning.
- 6.3 The exploitation of resources may lead to conflict of interests.
- 6.4 Countries and regions may be differentiated by their level of economic development.
- 6.5 The characteristics of 'developing countries' include low per capita income, poor social provision, unemployment/under-employment, rapid population growth.
- 6.6 Economic development may be seen as a spiral of growth; lack of it as a vicious circle of poverty.
- 6.7 Economic development can have a detrimental effect on environment.

7 Landforms

- 7.1 Landforms are a function of structure, rock type and denudational processes acting over a period of time.

8 Environments

- 8.1 Weather is the result of the behaviour and interaction of air masses which may have different characteristics. (Knowledge of instruments not required.)
- 8.2 Environments may be viewed as ecosystems in which landforms, climate, vegetation, soils and various life forms (including man) interact.
- 8.3 The world distribution of these environments is determined by position (latitude and longitude), distance from the sea, altitude, wind systems and ocean currents.

Syllabus

The matrix below should be used in conjunction with the relevant section under ideas, principles in (c) pages 5-6

The layout should not be taken as prescribing the order or structure to be followed in the course

<i>Ideas and Principles</i>	British Isles	EEC	World
1 Population	England, Scotland and Wales	Italy	General world population growth and distribution
2 Settlements	Any appropriate examples of rural settlement, market town, regional centre, conurbation, new town	Raadstad Paris	
3 Agriculture	Hill farming Arable farming Dairy farming	Intensive farming in the Netherlands	Plantation agriculture (tea and rubber only) Extensive farming in the Canadian Prairies
4 Manufacturing Industry	Iron and steel Chemicals Motor Vehicles An industrial estate	The Ruhr Europort	Japan
5 Movement	National transport networks The location and development of any one major modern port and a major airport	Europort and the Rhine waterway	The problems of any one 'developing country' with special reference to population, urbanisation, food supplies, industrial growth, transport networks and foreign trade
6 Resource and Development	The changing pattern of energy supply. A national park, with special reference to conflicts of interest	Italy-North and South Land reclamation in the Netherlands Tourism - a winter resort area, a Mediterranean resort area	The general distribution and characteristics of rich and poor countries
7 Landforms	Weathering Fluvial, glacial and coastal landforms. Chalk and limestone scenery.		
8 Environments	Weather Weather maps		West European, Mediterranean and Monsoon natural environments and their world distributions

The application of all the skills which may be examined can be learnt with any, or all, topics.

Pattern of Assessment

The following levels of understanding will be assessed.

1 *Knowledge*

The pupil's ability to store information in his mind and recall it. This will include knowledge of terms used, facts, rules and principles.

2 *Comprehension*

The pupil's ability to understand information which is supplied. This includes the ability to translate technical terms and to interpret data.

3 *Application*

The pupil's ability to apply geographical knowledge to a problem which is new to him and thus solve it.

4 *Analysis*

The pupil's ability to divide information into its constituent parts (to determine, for example, cause and effect).

5 *Synthesis*

The pupil's ability to draw relevant conclusions from geographical knowledge and information provided.

6 *Evaluation*

The pupil's ability to make judgements about, for example, the relative merits of various solutions to a problem.

The questions set may require answers of both the short answer and paragraph type, but will not necessarily be set on each topic in the syllabus. Questions will give an opportunity for individual work on topics of a candidate's own choice, including fieldwork.

APPENDIX III

G.C.S.E. NATIONAL CRITERIA
(including Grade Descriptions)

G.C.S.E.

FRENCH, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY

Source: H.M.S.O.; D.E.S.; Welsh Office, January, 1985

The National Criteria

French

1. Introduction

1.1 These criteria for GCSE French examinations were devised with the general needs of modern languages in mind. In the light of comments on the draft criteria received from individual teachers of languages other than French and from the various language teaching associations, it seems clear that the criteria can be applied to other languages, though it is recognised that at the syllabus development stage individual characteristics of different languages will need to be taken into consideration. It must be stressed that these criteria apply to syllabuses bearing the title French, German, etc. and not, for instance to French Studies or German Studies, although it is assumed that individual Examining Groups may wish to develop syllabuses of that kind.

1.2 The criteria are intended to enable Examining Groups to devise syllabuses appropriate to the needs of a wide variety of candidates, including:

1.2.1 those leaving school at 16;

1.2.2 those going on to further education but not specialising in the subject;

1.2.3 those going on to specialise in the subject at Advanced level;

1.2.4 mature candidates seeking qualifications

1.3 It is essential that, from the outset, the introduction of a new system of examining is taken as an opportunity to improve syllabuses and methods of assessment in modern languages with reference to the whole GCSE ability range and to attract a much greater number of candidates than now enters for GCE and CSE modern languages examinations.

1.4 These criteria deliberately refrain from laying down a single examination pattern to be followed by all syllabuses. Examining Groups are free to explore and develop different examination models.

2. Aims

The aims set out below describe the educational purposes of following a course in French for the GCSE examination. Some of the aims are reflected in assessment objectives; others are not because they cannot readily be assessed for examination purposes.

The aims of a course in French leading up to a GCSE examination should be

2.1 to develop the ability to use French effectively for purposes of practical communication,

2.2 to form a sound base of the skills, language and attitudes required for further study, work and leisure,

2.3 to offer insights into the culture and civilisation of French-speaking countries,

2.4 to develop an awareness of the nature of language and language learning,

2.5 to provide enjoyment and intellectual stimulation,

2.6 to encourage positive attitudes to foreign language learning and to speakers of foreign languages and a sympathetic approach to other cultures and civilisations,

2.7 to promote learning skills of a more general application (eg analysis, memorising, drawing of inferences).

3. Assessment Objectives

For assessment objectives to be appropriate to candidates across the GCSE ability range it is necessary to have some differentiation of objectives for each of the four skill areas of listening, reading, speaking and writing at a basic and a higher level, as described below. These will need to be tested in differentiated levels of examination.

3.1 Common-core assessment objectives

The following list of common-core assessment objectives in the three skill areas of listening, reading and speaking are appropriate for all candidates and can be seen as the requirement of candidates for the award of Grades E, F and G.

3.1.1 Basic listening

Candidates should be expected, within a limited range of clearly defined topic areas, to demonstrate understanding of specific details in announcements, instructions, requests, monologues (eg weather forecasts, news items), interviews and dialogues. The material used should be based on French which was designed to be heard (and not involve texts which were intended to be read silently) and should be spoken by native speakers, ie recorded on tape. Candidates should be required to demonstrate only comprehension and no undue burden should be put on memory.

3.1.2 Basic Reading

Candidates should be expected, within a limited range of clearly defined topic areas, to demonstrate understanding of public notices and signs (eg menus, timetables, advertisements) and the ability to extract relevant specific information from such texts as simple brochures, guides, letters and forms of imaginative writing considered to be within the experience of, and reflecting the interests, of, sixteen year olds of average ability. Candidates should be required to demonstrate only comprehension, not to produce precis or summaries.

3.1.3 Basic Speaking

Candidates should be expected to respond to unprepared

questions on a limited range of clearly defined topic areas; the questions should be unprepared in the sense that they are not specified in advance, although the close definition of the topic areas to be dealt with will make it possible for candidates to practise the types of question which are likely to be asked. Candidates should also be expected to perform role-playing tasks which involve both taking the initiative and responding to questions, with both strangers and friends. Candidates should be expected to pronounce sounds of the foreign language well enough for a sympathetic native speaker to understand.

3.2 Additional Assessment Objectives

For candidates aiming at the award of Grade D and above, additional assessment objectives are necessary. These will comprise Basic writing and higher level objectives in listening, reading, speaking and also writing.

3.2.1 Basic writing

The additional assessment objective in Basic writing is as follows.

Candidates should be expected, within a limited range of clearly defined topic areas (mirroring those of the common-core assessment objectives for speaking), to carry out writing tasks which might include, for example, a simple letter in response to a letter in easily comprehensible French or to instructions in English, and short messages (post-cards, lists, notes) in response to instructions in English or easily comprehensible French.

3.2.2 Higher level assessment objectives

3.2.2.1 Higher-level listening

Candidates should be expected to demonstrate the skills listed under Basic listening over a wider range of clearly defined topic areas. They should, in addition, be able to identify the important points or themes of the material, including attitudes, emotions and ideas which are expressed; to draw conclusions

from, and identify the relationship between, ideas within the material which they hear, and to understand a variety of registers, such as those used on radio and television, in the home, in more formal situations and by sixteen year olds in France.

Authentic material for listening comprehension at this level may well contain natural hesitation, spontaneous repetition or rephrasing of sentences and a limited amount of background noise.

3.2.2.2 Higher-level reading

Candidates should be expected to demonstrate the skills listed under Basic reading over a wider range of clearly defined topic areas. To the range of types of text will be added magazines and newspapers likely to be read by a sixteen year old, and in addition to the types of comprehension expected under common-core assessment objectives, candidates should be expected to demonstrate the ability to identify the important points or themes within an extended piece of writing and to draw conclusions from, and see relations within, an extended text.

3.2.2.3 Higher-level speaking

Candidates should be expected to demonstrate the skills listed under Basic speaking over a wider range of clearly defined topic areas. They should be expected to ask, and respond to, questions relating to a wider range of clearly defined situations which are within the experience and scope of a sixteen year old and to conduct a sustained free conversation (ie a conversation which has not been rehearsed) on one or more subjects, as specified in the syllabus.

Candidates should be expected to pronounce the normal sounds of the foreign language accurately enough for a native speaker to understand without difficulty, to observe correct sense groupings and speak with a certain degree of correct intonation and stress.

3.2.2.4 Higher-level writing

Candidates should be expected to write in continuous French, on a

wider range of clearly defined topic areas, in response to a written stimulus in English or in easily comprehensible French, or in response to a visual stimulus.

3.3 Relationship between assessment objectives and grades

3.3.1 In discussing the relationship between assessment objectives and grades, it becomes necessary to think in terms of the elements within the examination (not necessarily distinct components) which will be the vehicles through which particular assessment objectives are met. The term 'element' is used in this sense in the following section.

3.3.2 A maximum of Grade E should be available to candidates who offer simply the three common-core Basic elements.

Candidates aiming at the award of Grade D and above should preferably be allowed to choose, in addition to the three common-core elements, additional elements according to their needs and capabilities. Grade D should be available to a candidate whatever additional element (or elements) is chosen.

To gain Grade C, candidates should be required to take a test of writing, at least at the Basic level; they should either demonstrate a very high overall level of competence in all four skill areas at the Basic level and one skill area at the higher level or a good overall level of competence over a wider range of elements. It is expected that the great majority of candidates aspiring to a Grade C award will offer at least two of the higher-level elements in addition to the four Basic elements, and in many cases more.

To gain Grades A and B, candidates should be required to take a test of writing at the higher level; they should normally demonstrate a good overall level of competence over the whole range of Basic and higher-level elements. The possibility must, however, not be precluded of Grades A and B being gained by candidates who demonstrate a very high level of competence over a slightly restricted range of

elements: in the case of Grade A one of higher-level listening, reading or speaking not being attempted, and in the case of Grade B one or two of higher-level listening, reading and speaking not being attempted. To gain Grades A and B the level of competence required over a restricted range of elements must be extremely high and the overwhelming majority of candidates aiming at Grades A and B would attempt the whole range of elements.

- 3.3.3. The minimum number of elements which must be offered to qualify for the award of each of Grades A to G can be summarised as follows. It must be emphasised that in every case the overall level of competence required over the elements listed would be very high and that candidates with realistic prospects of gaining the grade would normally offer a greater number of elements than the minimum requirement.

Grades G, F and E:	3 common-core elements
Grade D:	3 common-core elements + any one additional element
Grade C:	3 common-core elements + Basic writing + any one higher-level additional element
Grade B:	3 common-core elements + Basic writing + higher-level writing + any one additional higher-level element
Grade A:	3 common-core elements + Basic writing + higher-level writing + any two additional higher-level elements.

4. Content

Syllabus content must be closely defined and should cover:

- tasks to be performed;
- topic areas to be covered;
- vocabulary, structures, notions and functions to be used productively and/or receptively.

The inclusion of items for receptive use only would be on the understanding that a limited percentage of vocabulary or structures from outside the syllabus could occur in tests. Different specifications are required corresponding to any differentiated assessment objectives used so that the

exact nature of what is referred to throughout section 3.2 as "a limited range" and "a wider range of clearly defined topic areas" is quite clear.

5. Relationship between Assessment Objectives and Content

- 5.1 Equal allocations of marks should be given to the skill areas within any one differentiated level.
- 5.2 The allocation of marks to be given to Basic and higher-level elements in a particular skill area depends on whether two or three differentiated levels of test are to be used.

As a two-level system, for example, it is possible to envisage each of the eight sets of objectives being tested by a separate component so that candidates could opt for anything from three to eight components depending on their needs and capabilities and the degree of choice offered by the scheme of examination. Each component added to the three common-core components would increase the potential grade. In each skill area the proportion of marks awarded to the Basic and higher-level components could be, for instance, in the ratio 4:3 reflecting the fact that the Basic components would be directed primarily at four grades (D-G) and the higher level components at only three grades (A-C).

As a three-level system, for example, it is possible to envisage that three levels of test (low, middle, high) could be provided in each skill area, of which candidates would attempt two (either low plus middle, or middle plus high). The middle components would test a combination of Basic and higher-level objectives and the amount of overlap within the middle component would influence the allocation of marks to the three levels. The proportion of marks awarded to the three levels could be, for instance, in the ratio 1:2:2 or 2:4:5. In allowing for choice between easier and harder combinations of tests in each skill area (rather than accumulating components as would happen in the two-level system quoted above), a three-level system would inevitably be more complex, particularly at the awarding stage.

- 5.3 It will be necessary for the different schemes of assessment produced by the Examining Groups to be monitored carefully to see how effectively the relationship between the different levels has been achieved in practice.

6. Techniques of Assessment

6.1 Principles

The basic principle is that the tasks set in the examination should be, as far as is possible, authentic and valuable outside the classroom. The material presented to candidates should be carefully selected authentic French, although it might at times be necessary to edit, simplify, or gloss occasional words. Tests should not place candidates at a disadvantage by putting an undue burden on memory or aptitude irrelevant to the use or understanding of the language. In any syllabus the specification of the techniques of assessment to be used should include full details of the methods and principles of assessment which will be adopted.

6.2 Techniques

Appropriate techniques of assessment already in use are indicated below for each skill area. Other techniques could profitably be investigated, provided that together they carry only a maximum of 10 per cent of the marks available in the whole examination.

6.2.1 *Listening comprehension*

Assessment of listening comprehension can best be carried out by means of questions in English to be answered by the candidate in his or her own words in English on material as specified in paragraphs 3.1.1 and 3.2.2.1. Multiple-choice objective tests are also acceptable provided that they have been properly devised and pre-tested and are not the only testing technique being used within this skill area; it is considered that inter-Group co-operation in devising and pre-testing multiple-choice tests would be helpful. Multiple-choice should preferably be in English, though experience shows that questions in French are also possible; if questions are in French they should be heard as well as read in order to preserve the emphasis on listening comprehension.

6.2.2 *Reading comprehension*

Assessment of reading comprehension can best be carried out by means of questions in English to be answered by the candidate in his own words in

English on material as specified in paragraphs 3.1.2 and 3.2.2.2.

Multiple-choice objective tests, preferably with questions in English, are also acceptable with the proviso stipulated in 6.2.1 above.

6.2.3 *Speaking*

Tests of oral communication can most practically be conducted by the teacher and assessed either by the teacher, subject to effective external moderation, or by the Examining Group by means of examiner-marked tape recordings. In some circumstances it might be desirable to make use of visiting external examiners. An external form of assessment will need to be provided for private candidates. Training of teachers in oral examining techniques is essential. Both this and the need for large numbers of GCSE candidates to be individually examined by practising teachers have obvious timetabling, staffing and financial implications. The techniques of assessment will be determined by the assessment objectives given in paragraphs 3.1.3 and 3.2.2.3 and will include role-playing tests and general conversation.

6.2.4 *Writing*

Appropriate tasks for the assessment of productive writing skills are described under the assessment objectives in paragraphs 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.4, eg letters (which may be informal or formal) in response to a letter in easily comprehensible French or to instructions in English; messages (post-cards, lists, notes) in response to instructions in English or easily comprehensible French; and additionally, at the higher level, continuous writing in response to a visual stimulus (eg a single picture, a series of pictures, a diagram). At this level, bearing in mind the stated aims of the course, the principles of assessment listed in 6.1 above and the likely backwash effect on teaching, any of the following techniques of assessment would be inappropriate as a compulsory technique of assessment: summary, precis, dictation and prose translation.

6.3 Examination models

Within the requirements of these criteria, Examining Groups are free to explore different examination models.

Examinations could be at two or three levels (as suggested in 5.2 above), but whatever syllabus is devised by an Examining Group, it should include a component common to all candidates; this would provide for a unity of approach and prevent a possible polarisation into academic/communicative which is in any case unreal and certainly undesirable.

The total amount of examining time required for any syllabus should be no greater than that previously required in GCE O-level or CSE modern languages examinations, ie two sessions, each lasting no longer than two hours, and an oral examination. The tests of common-core objectives in listening and reading need probably take up only part of one session. Links with the graded tests which have so much influenced approaches to modern language teaching and examining are desirable.

7 Grade Descriptions

7.1 Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall and it might conceal weakness in one aspect of the examination which is balanced by above average performance in some other.

7.2 A detailed description of the requirements for Grade C, Grade F and other grades can be achieved once agreement has been reached on a defined content syllabus, as outlined in section 4, to which close reference can be made. At this stage it is possible to give only generalised statements of limited help about the types of performance which will lead to the award of any particular grade.

7.3 Candidates awarded Grade F could normally be expected to have shown a defined overall level of proficiency in three skill areas (listening, reading, speaking). They will probably have demonstrated a good level of attainment in tests on the common-core assessment objectives outlined in 3.1 (above). The clear definition and limited range of topic areas, structures, vocabulary, etc., will, it is hoped, make it realistic to require a high level of performance in these tests for the award of Grade F.

7.4 Candidates awarded Grade C could normally be expected to have shown a defined overall level of proficiency in four skill areas (listening, reading, speaking, writing). Within a flexible system such as is suggested in 3.3 (above) there are likely to be several ways by which Grade C could be achieved: for instance, by a very high overall performance in tests on the common-core objectives, Basic writing and one other higher-level objective or perhaps more likely by a competent overall performance, not necessarily balanced, in tests on the full range of objectives at both levels.

The National Criteria

History

1. General

- 1.1 There are two broad avenues of approach in History teaching, differing in the emphasis placed on the relative importance of "content" and "skills" in the study of the subject. The criteria apply to the subject as a whole and provide for these different approaches.
- 1.2 History is primarily concerned with re-creating mankind's past. Statements are made which are provisional yet which are derived from evidence. A range of concepts is employed, many of which are shared with other disciplines. There are, however, concepts such as continuity and change which are of particular concern to the study of History. It is in the combination of these elements that History makes its particular contribution to the curriculum.

2. Aims

The aims of a History course are

- 2.1 to stimulate interest in and enthusiasm for the study of the past;
- 2.2 to promote the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of human activity in the past, linking it, as appropriate, with the present;
- 2.3 to ensure that candidates' knowledge is rooted in an understanding of the nature and the use of historical evidence;
- 2.4 to help pupils, particularly in courses on British History, towards an understanding of the development over time of social and cultural values;
- 2.5 to promote an understanding of the nature of cause and consequence, continuity and change, similarity and difference;

- 2.6 to develop essential study skills such as the ability to locate and extract information from primary and secondary sources; to detect bias; to analyse this information and to construct a logical argument (usually through the medium of writing);
- 2.7 to provide a sound basis for further study and the pursuit of personal interest.

3. Assessment Objectives

All candidates will be expected

- 3.1 to recall, evaluate and select knowledge relevant to the context and to deploy it in a clear and coherent form;
- 3.2 to make use of and understand the concepts of cause and consequence, continuity and change, similarity and difference;
- 3.3 to show an ability to look at events and issues from the perspective of people in the past;
- 3.4 to show the skills necessary to study a wide variety of historical evidence which should include both primary and secondary written sources, statistical and visual material, artefacts, text books and orally transmitted information
 - 3.4.1 by comprehending and extracting information from it;
 - 3.4.2 by interpreting and evaluating it — distinguishing between fact, opinion and judgement; pointing to deficiencies in the material as evidence, such as gaps and inconsistencies; detecting bias;
 - 3.4.3 by comparing various types of historical evidence and reaching conclusions based on this comparison.

4. Content and its Relationship with Assessment Objectives

- 4.1 It is in the professional tradition of the discipline and inherent in its nature that candidates should be able to study History in its varied contexts. This variety is apparent in the CSE and GCE O-Level History syllabuses which were analysed. The Examining Groups should, therefore, provide a wide range of options to give freedom to innovate and to reflect local interests. It is therefore not desirable to stipulate a minimum core of content.

Each GCSE Examining Group must offer at least one syllabus which helps pupils towards an understanding of the intellectual, cultural, technological and political growth of the United Kingdom and of the effects of these developments on the lives of its citizens.

- 4.2 For the above reasons these criteria have been couched in terms of aims and assessment objectives rather than of content. Such aims and assessment objectives in any GCSE History course should be the common ground in syllabuses and will help in the achievement of comparable performance standards in the award of grades.

- 4.3 Nevertheless, aims and objectives clearly have important implications for determining course content. In order to allow the assessment objectives to be realised, syllabuses must satisfy the following criteria:

- 4.3.1 they must be of sufficient length, range and depth;
- 4.3.2 they must deal with key issues;
- 4.3.3 they must be historically coherent and balanced.

NOTE: Syllabus content should be given in some detail and not merely consist of starting and terminal dates. Syllabus writers should be careful not to overburden candidates and should bear in mind resources available.

- 4.4 All syllabuses must describe their content in accordance with the spirit of the examples in Table 1, which show how the above criteria could work in practice in different syllabuses. All syllabuses must make clear that the description of content is not rigidly prescriptive.

5. Techniques of Assessment

- 5.1 Differentiation will be achieved by the

use of differentiated questions within common papers or a combination of differentiated and non-differentiated components within a common set of papers and by setting course work tasks appropriate to candidates' individual levels of ability

- 5.2 The range of assessment techniques available in this subject has been considered from the point of view of their fitness for purpose, ie whether or not they are appropriate for the above-stated assessment objectives and taking into account the various needs of candidates throughout the ability range. It is therefore recommended that the

Table 1

Example: **Modern World History**

The syllabus would need to *balance* the requirement to demonstrate continuity and change against the depth treatment which would also be looked for. In practice, the requirement of *length* could therefore be met in one of a variety of forms of which the most obvious are

1919 to the present day
1880 to 1960

There are clearly other possibilities. It would be important to review frequently the coverage of a syllabus purporting to deal with modern world history which, because of its nature, is constantly expanding.

The *range* of content should require *inter alia* a treatment of themes and events in a world rather than, for example, a narrowly European perspective. But the range must be coherent and manageable, not shapeless and overwhelming; an example of a sensible treatment of range in world history would be a study of international relations.

In a world history study some *coherence* should be given to the detail so as to allow study in *depth* which can often be the occasion for the use of a wide range of historical evidence. An example of a suitable study in depth in modern world history would be to give a range of regional options from which students would select. Each option would be studied in its internal history. Each region would have to be drawn sufficiently narrowly to permit depth study, but not so narrowly as to preclude common themes. The following examples satisfy this criterion:

the USSR and Eastern Europe,
the Middle East and North Africa;
the Caribbean, Central and South America;
Africa South of the Sahara.

In a modern world history syllabus the *key issues* would probably comprise themes. Amongst the most important themes are:

international and regional co-operation and development;

in any scheme of assessment

- (a) questions requiring responses in a variety of forms to given historical evidence;

NOTES:

- (i) Whether historical evidence should be related to the content of a particular syllabus or not should be left to the Examining Groups.
- (ii) Prescribed documents would not satisfy assessment objective 3.4 and are therefore not recommended.

questions which can be used to test both historical knowledge and understanding;

- (c) questions demanding an answer written in continuous prose; these questions should take a variety of forms, for example questions based on stimulus materials, parts of structured questions, guided essays, open-ended essays.

Other techniques of assessment are currently used in examining History (eg site descriptions), and should be

race relations and minority problems, causes and nature of warfare and moves to détente, totalitarian and democratic forms of government, colonialism, de-colonisation and neo-colonialism, the impact of technology on society.

Example: **Britain and Europe 1450—1600**

This period is of sufficient *length* and *range* to enable candidates to study continuity and change in political, religious, cultural, economic and social life.

Coherence and *balance* would be achieved through the main concentration on Britain and the major states of Europe, but the interaction of Europe and the wider world would be introduced with the topics of geographical exploration and discovery, the expansion of overseas trade and the effects of the price revolution. *Key issues* which could be treated in depth would include the Renaissance; the Reformation; Philip II and Anglo-Spanish rivalry; the social and economic problems of Tudor England.

A study in depth of the Renaissance, for example, would cover the arts and sciences in Italy; the development of printing; the Classical Revival; the spread of the New Learning to Northern Europe.

Example: **British Social and Economic History 1760—1914**

This syllabus is of sufficient *length* to allow study, for example,

1. of population change in periods of slow and rapid growth;
2. of agriculture during prosperity and depression;
3. of development of communications over the period.

The criterion of *range* will be satisfied as the syllabus should include economic (eg changes in government policy concerning taxation and trade), social (eg attitudes and policy about poverty and public health) and technological aspects (eg impact of inventions in the textile

industry). Political aspects (such as the widening of the franchise and local government growth), religious and cultural developments (exemplified in attitudes to education and involvement in philanthropic movements) and scientific changes (such as the impact of Pasteur's work on medical and public health practices) could all be included. The importance of world trade and the impact of foreign competition should be studied so that British developments are fitted into a wider context.

In a syllabus of this length and range it is not necessary to study topics in considerable depth, as long as the combined effect of studying the various aspects gives a sufficiently detailed picture of the overall changes which take place.

In selecting specific topics, syllabuses should look to *key issues*, for example, in industrial and technological development, the textile and iron and steel industries; in studying popular political movements, Chartism; in religious aspects, Methodism and the Salvation Army.

The above three syllabuses exemplify the more chronological approach. The criteria could also be satisfied in a syllabus with a modular approach. Such an approach is provided at present by the Schools Council Project: History 13-16.

Example: **Schools Council Project: History 13-16**

This syllabus meets the criteria of *length* by providing for a study in development (medicine). The syllabus provides *range* by requiring the study of this development within its social, religious, economic and political contexts and by the study of a separate modern history topic and of a local history theme. *Depth* is achieved through the study of a limited period (for example, Britain 1815—1851). *Coherence* is provided by the emphasis in all parts of the syllabus on the nature and use of evidence. The *key issues* derive from the nature of the constituent parts of the syllabus, (for example, the Arab/Israeli conflict).

available to examining groups but the techniques mentioned in (a), (b) and (c) above are, on the basis of available evidence, most effective in testing the stated assessment objectives and, therefore, should attract between them at least 60% of the marks.

Care must be taken to ensure that undue reliance is not placed on any one technique.

- 5.3 There are some skills and abilities in History which may be assessed as well or better by the use of appropriate forms of course work. Therefore a course work component, carrying a minimum of 20% of the total marks, should normally be required of school-based candidates taking a course in the subject. Clear statements of general course work requirements, which must include the arrangements for proper external moderation, must be provided by the Examining Groups.

6. Grade Descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall and it might conceal weakness in one aspect of the examination which is balanced by above average performance in some other.

6.1 Grade F

Candidates will be expected

- 6.1.1 to recall and display a limited amount of accurate and relevant historical knowledge; to show a basic understanding of the historical concepts of cause and consequence, continuity and change, sufficiently supported by obvious examples; to identify and list differences and similarities;
- 6.1.2 to display knowledge of perspectives of other people based on specific examples of situations and events;
- 6.1.3 to show ability to comprehend straightforward evidence; to extract partial and/or generalised information;
- 6.1.4 to demonstrate the obvious limitations of a particular piece of evidence; to list some of the evidence needed to reconstruct a given historical event;

- 6.1.5 to make simple comparisons between pieces of evidence; to list the major features of two or more pieces of evidence without drawing conclusions from it;
- 6.1.6 to communicate in an understandable form; to use simple historical terminology.

6.2 Grade C

Candidates will be expected

- 6.2.1 to recall and use historical knowledge accurately and relevantly in support of a logical and evaluative argument; to distinguish between cause and occasion of an event; to show that change in History is not necessarily linear or 'progressive'; to compare and contrast people, events, issues and institutions; to demonstrate understanding of such concepts by deploying accurate though limited evidence;
- 6.2.2 to show an ability to look at events and issues from the perspective of other people in the past; to understand the importance of looking for motives;
- 6.2.3 to demonstrate comprehension of a range of evidence either by translating from one form to another (eg explaining accurately the information contained in a bar graph) or by summarising information given in a document; to answer accurately and fully questions demanding specific information to be extracted from the evidence;
- 6.2.4 to demonstrate the limitations of a particular piece of evidence; eg point to the use of emotive language and to generalisations based on little or no evidence; to indicate the other types of evidence that the historian would need to consult in relation to the topic and period in question;
- 6.2.5 to compare and contrast two or more different types of evidence and write a coherent conclusion based on them, though all aspects may not be taken into account;
- 6.2.6 to communicate clearly in a substantially accurate manner, making correct and appropriate use of historical terminology.

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The National Criteria

Geography

1. Introduction

1.1 Geography is concerned to promote an understanding of the nature of the earth's surface and, more particularly, the character of places, the complex nature of people's relationships and interactions with their environment and the importance in human affairs of location and the spatial organisation of human activities.

1.2 Geographical education may be seen in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills and values. The term 'values' is included to indicate that important topics in Geography syllabuses have obvious social and political dimensions and cannot properly be understood without taking account of the attitudes and values of those involved. Since the nature of the questions asked and the level of generalisation recognised as acceptable vary with scale, geographical studies should normally include enquiries within the range of small, regional, national, international and world scales.

1.3 Geography is a valuable medium for education in a social context which includes such characteristics with a geographical dimension as

- (a) a rapidly increasing world population with expanding consumer demand and consequent resource implications;
- (b) the existence of multicultural communities and societies;
- (c) the existence of marked contrasts in the level of economic and technological development between and within nations;
- (d) the occurrence of rapid social, economic and technological change in developed and developing countries;

(e) an increase in environmental hazards and growing concern about the deteriorating quality of some environments.

1.4 Geography can help all students in the target group make sense of their physical and human surroundings and extend their knowledge and understanding to more distant places. It will also provide a perspective in which they can place local, national and international events and enable them to function more effectively as individuals and members of society.

1.5 To understand geography adequately and to engage in geographical activities requires the development of a wide range of skills. Many of these skills are best developed through practical work and fieldwork which should always be an integral part of the course. The assessment of the skills so developed may be undertaken in a variety of ways.

1.6 There are a number of acceptable approaches in Geography, including those conveniently labelled spatial, regional and ecological. Notwithstanding the variety of approaches to Geography, all GCSE syllabuses must contain both physical and human elements.

2. Aims

The following Aims, in relation to a variety of scales, shall apply to all courses:

2.1 Knowledge and Understanding

- 2.1.1 to develop a sense of place and an understanding of relative location;
- 2.1.2 to develop an awareness of the characteristics and distribution of a selection of contrasting physical and human environments;

- 2.1.3 to develop an understanding of some of the processes which affect the development of environments;
- 2.1.4 to promote an understanding of the spatial effects of the ways in which people interact with each other and with their environments;
- 2.1.5 to encourage an understanding of different communities and cultures within our own society and elsewhere in the world, together with an awareness of people's active role in interacting with environments and the opportunities and constraints those different people face in their different environments.
- 3.3 show an appreciation of the wide range of processes, including human actions, contributing to the development of
- (i) physical, economic, social, political and cultural environments and their associated effects on the landscapes;
 - (ii) spatial patterns and interactions which are important within such environments.
- 3.4 describe the interrelationships between people's activities (including, for example, government activities, laws and systems of taxation) and the total environment and demonstrate an ability to seek explanations for them.

2.2 Skills

- 2.2.1 to develop a range of skills through practical work, including investigations in the field, associated with observation, collection, representation, analysis, interpretation and use of data, including maps and photographs.

- 3.5 show an awareness that, while geographical studies are concerned with explanations as well as descriptions, many explanations may often be tentative and incomplete.

in relation to skills,

2.3 Values

- 2.3.1 to develop a sensitive awareness of the environment;
- 2.3.2 to encourage an appreciation of the significance of the attitudes and values of those who make decisions about the management of the environment and the use of terrestrial space;
- 2.3.3 to develop awareness of the contrasting opportunities and constraints facing people living in different places under different physical and human conditions.

- 3.6 select and use a variety of techniques appropriate to a geographical enquiry, including investigation in the field, and, in particular, to
- (i) use basic techniques for obtaining, observing, recording, representing, analysing, classifying and interpreting data;
 - (ii) use a range of source materials, including maps at a variety of scales, photographs and simple statistical data;
 - (iii) depict information in a simple map and diagrammatic form;
 - (iv) demonstrate an ability to select, use and communicate information and conclusions effectively.

3. Assessment Objectives

An examination shall test the extent to which candidates are able to:

in relation to knowledge and understanding,

- 3.1 recall specific facts relating to the syllabus content and demonstrate locational knowledge within the range of small, regional, national, international and world scales.
- 3.2 demonstrate a grasp of the geographical ideas, concepts, generalisations and principles specified in the syllabus and

in relation to values,

- 3.7 questions set to test this objective must require the use of appropriate geographical knowledge of candidates who will be expected to demonstrate an awareness of the significance of attitudes and values in some current social, economic and environmental issues which have a geographical dimension; for example, an understanding of the role of decision-making, and of the values and perceptions of decision makers in the evolution of patterns in human geography.

4. Content

4.1 Guidelines

A number of different emphases are appropriate at this level. For example, satisfactory syllabuses can be structured in terms of systematic themes illustrated regionally, as well as of regions within which selected topics are studied. Nevertheless, the following elements of content are essential to the achievement of the Assessment Objectives:

- 4.1.1 a first hand study of a small area, preferably the student's home area, which provides not only opportunity for direct experiential learning but also a basis for comparative work on a scale which is readily comprehensible.
- 4.1.2 a study of contrasting areas and/or themes within the British Isles. The following areas and/or themes should be set in a national context without necessarily implying a comprehensive coverage of either the constituent countries or all the listed aspects of geography. All studies should cover such aspects of geography as the physical environment; population; settlements; agriculture; extractive, processing and manufacturing industries; 'tertiary activities' and communications.
- 4.1.3 a consideration of the United Kingdom's relationships, for example in trade and industry, with wider groupings of nations such as the EEC.
- 4.1.4 a study of the geographical aspects of important social and environmental issues such as the problems and opportunities of development in less affluent nations; the problems of large cities; the control and management of resources; the human response to hostile or hazardous environments.
- 4.1.5 topics which focus attention on the interrelationship and interaction between people and their environments.

4.2 All syllabuses must:

- (i) list not only the themes and contexts of study but also the expected range of skills to be acquired, ideas to be explained and principles to be understood;

- (ii) specify the relationship between mark weightings, content and assessment objectives.

5. Relationship between the Assessment Objectives and Content

The marks weighting allocation to particular assessment objectives should be as follows:

- (i) Recall 20%-40%
- (ii) Skills as in 3.6 (i) (ii) (iii) and (iv)
Understanding and Application 20%-40%
- (iii) Practical skills (however assessed) 20%-40%

6. Techniques of Assessment

6.1 Strategies of assessment should be capable of measuring the whole range of assessment objectives. In order to achieve this, all Mode 1 schemes of assessment must include a board-based and a school-based component. The latter should account for at least 20% of the marks.

- 6.2.1 The board-based component should consist of one or more question papers containing a variety of question types overall, so that achievement in the wide range of Assessment Objectives identified will be measured.
- 6.2.2 The very nature of the subject presents those who examine it with the opportunity to draw upon a wealth of question stimuli, ranging from maps at various scales, to photographs, diagrams and statistical data. The board-based component should utilise a variety of these in each question paper, the technique selected being that which best gives a reliable measure of a specified goal.
- 6.2.3 Examination papers should be designed to ensure that individual candidates are assessed over an adequate range of objectives. When a choice of question is given, the alternatives must be comparable.
- 6.3.1 Any school-based component of the assessment programme should be so designed as to measure the candidates' achievements in ways not appropriate to the board-based component(s). The component may include fieldwork, course work, periodic tests and assessment of abilities in a wider

available to the external examiner.

6.3.2 Fieldwork, either in the form of course work and/or individual investigations, should be a component of school-based assessments. Such first-hand enquiry should be clearly linked to the Assessment Objectives of the syllabus.

6.4 The schemes of assessment must make provision for the measurement of the different attainments of candidates. Where the full range of grades is to be awarded, the schemes of assessment must be based on differentiated papers

with or without a common component in either case, and the setting of course work tasks appropriate to candidates' individual levels of ability.

7. Grade Descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall and it might conceal weakness in one aspect of the examination which is balanced by above-average performance in some other.

Table 1: Grade Descriptions

	Grade F	Grade C
Ability	For Grade F, the student is likely to have shown the ability to	For Grade C, the student is likely to have shown the ability to
in relation to knowledge	recall basic information relating to the syllabus content and demonstrate an elementary level of locational knowledge.	recall a wide range of information in sections of the syllabus and, in so doing, will reveal a basic level of locational knowledge.
in relation to understanding	demonstrate a comprehension of simple geographical ideas; describe simple geographical relationships.	show not only a comprehension of important geographical ideas, concepts, generalisations and processes as specified in the syllabus, but will also demonstrate this comprehension, where required, in a range of situations social, economic, political and environmental. The candidate will also be able to describe and account for inter-relationships between people and their environment.
in relation to skills	be able to observe, record and attempt to classify geographical data; to use a range of source materials, including maps; to draw simple sketch-maps and construct diagrams such as a bar graph; to communicate information by brief statements.	be able to select relevant data from a variety of sources, primary and/or secondary, to plan logically a simple geographical enquiry from observations to ultimate conclusion. Techniques used may include map interpretation at different scales, photographic analysis and a range of graphical and numerical information such as flow-line diagrams or simple census extracts.
in relation to values	recognise, at an elementary level, the claims of differing systems of values which influence economic, environmental, political and social issues.	show an increased comprehension of judgements made on economic, political, environmental and social issues.

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