An integrated studies approach to business education with special reference to the theory and practice of Business Education Council courses

John Richard Ellison

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JOHN RICHARD MEEK ELLISON

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This thesis takes as its focus the increasing use of integration in the design of business studies courses, paying special attention to the role of integration in the courses of the Business Education Council (now the Business and Technician Education Council).

Against the backcloth of the aims and objectives of modern business studies programmes the thesis examines the role of academic subject discipline and the influence over curriculum design, college organisation and teacher attitudes exerted by the traditional bias towards the appointment of subject specialists for the teaching of business studies. It goes on to explore the tensions existing between subject specialist teachers and curriculum demands for subject and goal integration.

The philosophical foundations underpinning the use of integrated studies approaches are subsequently analysed and the different forms that integration can take in the curriculum are identified and considered.

The thesis concludes by recognising that the introduction of an integrated studies approach in the teaching of business studies requires careful examination to determine the educational purpose being served, and notes the need for staff development to provide the new skills demanded of the teacher by integration.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"To be a teacher at the present time, should be both disturbing and challenging," wrote Hirst and Peters in 1970. Their observation stands as true today as it was then. For Hirst and Peters what stood out as disturbing was the increasing polarisation of teachers' attitudes towards education. The generalisation of group identity through the use of simple labels has the tendency to distort the complex reality of social structures, and should be treated with caution; however, in the interests of painting a broad, if superficial, picture of a particular phenomenon, generalising has its value. In the context of Hirst and Peters' concern, such a generalisation recognises the traditionalist at one end of the educational spectrum and the progressive at the other. They recognise that the proponents of each outlook represent clearly defined values, and view with alarm the inherent assertion of the rightness of the respective claims made by the traditionalists and progressivists to know what the content and process of educational activity should be.

The answers to educational questions are not easily found. When they are found they are sometimes ambiguous; sometimes a definite answer does not exist at all. Moreover, it is not always a straightforward task to formulate the appropriate questions to be asked. But it is in this dialogue that the challenge lies. If, however, the challenge is taken up then the teacher is engaging in a philosophical quest for which he or she must be properly equipped. Philosophical enquiry will involve the teacher in conceptual analysis, the application of logic and use

of semantics, but difficult though the task may be the practical outcome will be a clearer and more informed view of education, and the capacity to present a reasoned argument in support of or rejection of educational values, initiatives and methodologies.

Generally, there is no imperative demanding that the teacher address the challenge. It is quite conceivable that the same material be taught in the same way under the same curriculum umbrella for many years without any disturbance of the status quo. However, such an equilibrium is disturbed when external change is introduced, and change, being a fact of educational life, is likely to influence even the most cocooned teacher at some time or other.

One of the major trends in British education over the past thirty years or so has been the move towards viewing the curriculum as a coherent whole, rather than a fragmented collection of separate fields of study. This trend duly manifested itself in the field of business studies during the 1970's, and the integrated curriculum which it engendered is now an established feature of much of the business teaching taking place in the sectors of further and higher education. Since business teaching traditionally involved inputs from a range of subject specialists with a strong disciplinary grounding, the move away from the discipline base towards the more general approach of the integrated curriculum has not been easy to accomplish. Many have seen it as a challenge to academic integrity, and have put up a spirited resistance to a change which they see as both personally and educationally undesirable.

The contribution of the Business Education Council in stimulating and implementing the shift towards an integrated studies approach to business studies teaching has perhaps been the single most influential factor affecting business studies teaching in modern times. In this thesis this development is analysed by reference to an examination of the

nature and quality of the traditional academic discipline, the place of discipline-based teaching in the modern business studies curriculum, the meaning and purpose of curriculum integration, and the impact of the Business Education Council on the work of business studies departments.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

The expressions 'discipline', 'subject' and 'field of study' are part of the commonplace language of every teacher. They are spoken of separately; "my subject", "my disciplinary background". They also occur in a bewildering array of combined forms; "the teaching of subject disciplines", "the subject of a field of study" and the range of more technical expressions of recent origin which use disciplinary as a suffix, such as interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and pluridisciplinary. Despite the potential confusion which this plethora of related terms might be expected to occasion it holds good that the basic forms, 'discipline' and 'subject', as a general proposition, act non-contentiously. Nor, it seems, are they necessarily associated with any particular form of educational philosophy. Indeed, so familiar are they to teachers that they can be used in conversation without the need ever arising to define them or elaborate upon them. They are, after all, part of the stock-in-trade of education, as much a part of the structure of teaching as chalk, school and college buildings, and lectures. Significantly, they also provide the basic reference frames upon which educational research is based. Thus, to take one example, Saville and Blinkhorn (1976)[1] in studies of personality differences among students drew comparisons between the students sampled on the basis of academic discipline. So it is that whether they do actually carry precisely the same meaning to their users, and whether they should be regarded critically, are matters which their familiarity largely suppresses.

Definition motivators

Certain occasions arise, however, when the question of pursuing a definition or reaching a consensus view through the use of an alternative device, such as a paradigm, directs the mind of the teacher and the educationalist to consider the nature of these expressions. For example, A and B, college lecturers, engage in a heated argument that centres around whether A has been poaching B's subject, over which B contends A has no expertise since he has no formal qualifications; or where a group of staff are timetabled to teach on a new course which emphasises a thematic approach rather than a traditional subject-based approach, causing them to raise the grievance that the new course is outside their competence and, therefore, what can be realistically or properly expected of them.

Perhaps the most obvious occasion upon which the issue of definition is raised comes during the process of pursuing course design. Invariably mandatory demands will be pressed by external agencies such as validating bodies and employers. Alternatively, an externally-designed course will have already pursued this line, so that the operation of the course in the school or college will simply involve managers and teachers in following the thinking of the external design team. Courses provided by the Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) illustrate this principle, despite permitting in some instances a limited freedom enabling individual institutions to reach decisions about content and treatment for themselves. There remains, however, the realm of course design that is wholly or substantially an internal process, and where, consequently, it is the attitudes and competencies of the teaching staff which determine the nature and quality of the course provision. Here, even though external stimulus is limited or excluded, there remains at very least an opportunity to discuss the concepts of "discipline" and "subject" for the purpose of analysis and definition. Whether it is grasped depends upon the nature of the questions

raised during the process. Logic points to this occurring sooner rather than later, for these questions are essentially of an epistemological orientation, even though this may not be superficially apparent. If the design team fail to address themselves to such issues, as well they may if these issues fall outside set terms of reference, or are passed by consciously on the grounds that tradition is to be favoured, or unconsciously through overfamiliarity, can any conclusions be drawn concerning the end product - the course itself? There are reasons to suppose there are. As the chapter goes on to examine later, it is usually when course design, and course teaching for that matter, are pursued along mechanical positivist lines that questions concerned with the nature of disciplines and their boundaries are unlikely to be raised.

It may also usefully be noted here, without further elaboration, that a curriculum is a complex organisational structure which usually involves considerable numbers in designing, managing and teaching it. Wholesale redesign or piecemeal revision thus potentially involves a sufficient number of individuals to eliminate a consensus view of a new model. Of the piecemeal approach it has been said, "It becomes relatively easy to block any proposal which involves excisions from an existing curriculum, and change tends to be confined to additions, which further complicate the structure, until only a few experts know about it and can remember the justification for its parts."[2] In practical terms it may prove difficult to broaden out the curriculum debate to bring within its parameters discussion of where, if at all, to draw the boundaries of the knowledge chosen to be included in the course. This position is a marked characteristic of the further and higher education sector, although in defence it must be recognised as a characteristic which has a locational identity within individual departments and faculties, rather than one which occurs throughout the entire sector without exception. General and liberal

studies departments, for instance, have traditionally shown a greater willingness to depart from conventional wisdom and innovate. Business studies departments, until the emergence of the Business Education Council, had not.

The purpose of defining

The recognition that "discipline" and "subject" are terms of common usage and are not generally perceived to describe major features of debate in higher education, does not lead to a conclusion that attempts to define them constitute no more than semantics exercises. In the first place, it is possible that the perception itself is misplaced and is based purely upon conventional wisdom passed from one generation of teachers to the next. In the second place, the concepts themselves, and their instruments, the discipline and subject teacher, lie at the very heart of the higher education structure. At very least this demands a rational and educationally justifiable explanation of their existence in order that the remainder of the collegiate edifice can be seen to be legitimised. And it thus becomes untenable to respond by means of an explanation which relies on simile, comparing discipline and subject to some other, but tangible object. Take the example of the elephant. It is difficult to adequately define one, runs the argument, but I certainly know one when I see one. Rough and purely subjective yardsticks of this sort are inappropriate when dealing with fundamental concepts of a non-tangible kind, even though the teacher may himself believe and argue with force that he "knows it when he sees it." For Locke[3] it may have been the case that subjective definition sufficed to fulfil a test of understanding, seeing an idea (such as discipline) as, "the object of the understanding when a man thinks." If this thinking man is to play a useful part as a catalyst and contributor in philosophical discussions concerning education

it is surely a pre-condition that he be capable of demonstrating his grasp of the ideas being espoused by his ability to discriminate between and use words correctly. By 'correctly' it is useful to quote Paul Hirst[4] and his view of the meaning and place of language as a medium for recognising and describing subjective experience and placing an objective linguistic gloss upon it, "... whatever private forms of awareness there may be, it is by means of symbols, particularly in language, that conceptual articulation becomes objectified, for the symbols give public embodiment to the concepts. The result of this is that men are able to come to understand both the external world and their own private states of mind in common ways, sharing the same conceptual schema by learning to use symbols in the same manner."

The purpose of defining is to proffer a precise statement of the essential nature of a thing to aid common understanding and provide a basis for the analysis of ideas.

Towards a definition

What, then, are the essential natures or qualities of the terms under scrutiny? We can see that they are not words describing naturally occurring phenomena, but are arrived at as the result of particular human activity, and that, at least in part, this is concerned with the classification of knowledge. Consequently, they represent a means to an end, a way of rendering into a form which can be studied, thoughts and sense impressions, observed events, in fact all experiences. The task of studying these classified forms is the end product of the classification. No practical purpose would be served in performing such a task for its own sake, other than perhaps intellectual satisfaction. The fact is that the motivation for a classification is the desire to comprehend different forms of knowledge, and this cannot be achieved unless it is reduced to a level

which the human mind can grasp, a scheme of things. It is the organisation of thought,of which we may share A.N. Whitehead's view[5] that, "... organised thought is the basis of organised action." It is the pursuit of developing a scheme of things which has been responsible for paradigmatic approaches to the task of classifying. Kuhn (1970)[6] sees a paradigm as a prime example used as a common frame of reference, and Mullins (1973)[7] points to the accumulation of knowledge occurring within a paradigmatic framework, prior to the emergence of discipline (and by inference subject also). Friedrichs (1970)[8] goes further and states that, "Without such a paradigmatic foundation, all problems, all methods and tools, all "facts", and all criteria for identifying solutions are likely to appear equally relevant."

Ideally, neither the study of disciple bodies of accumulated knowledge nor the means by which the cumulations have been arrived at should operate in a mutually exclusive fashion. They are indispensible to each other, and a student should develop the facility for challenging the assumptions upon which the paradigmistic model operates, as well as understanding the nature and relationship of the knowledge which it produces. The task of producing suitable models is intellectually highly challenging. Lying at the heart of this challenge is the desire to produce a model which is capable of encompassing all forms of knowledge, or expressed another way a theory of knowledge forms. A contemporary illustration of such a model is that which Paul Hirst develops in Knowledge and the Curriculum[9]. Here it is sufficient to note that it recognises and categorises seven (although now Hirst contends there are in fact six) unique and fundamental forms of knowledge. They are all-embracing of human experience and activity and, being unique, have their own distinctive characteristics. It thus fulfils the obligation to provide criteria for classification purposes, although it does not yield a ready-made curriculum, for it is

too broad. The knowledge forms are not, in themselves, teachable components. Rather, the Hirst model operates in a reverse fashion. It enables us to see how specific forms of knowledge, such as moral and empirical knowledge, exist on a level outside that of the subject (i.e., the sum of cumulated factual data), but are related to it by way of an underpinning. If we take as an example the study of medicine, which is admitted to constitute a discrete subject, the student learns about anatomy (empirical knowledge) and medical ethics (moral knowledge). These bracketed knowledge forms do not, however, provide the tools by which a syllabus for medical students can be designed. This has to be achieved in other ways. What it does demonstrate is a certain commonality as between specialised areas of study when viewed from a standpoint not of the raw material of the syllabus, but of the knowledge orientation of this material. Thus it is that the doctor and the lawyer, each versed in his own distinct disciplinary skills and data, can talk in a language of common symbols when they discuss, say, the moral issues associated with abortion.

For the purpose of reaching workable definitions of "discipline", "subject" and "field of study", it is helpful to examine some of the work of those engaged in the development of new courses where the syllabus is argued to represent a novel or relatively novel area of study. An example is provided by the emergence of the study of criminal justice in the American Universities over the past twenty-five years or so. Hand in hand with the growth in popularity of the criminal justice course has come an academic interest in its status, which has led to a study of the development of new fields and the conditions that empirical research suggests need to be met before disciplinary status is attained. For Adams (1976)[10] a discipline is, "... a branch of knowledge requiring scholarly research and study, that is generally recognised as a distinct field of study." Against this he sees science as, "a branch of

systematized knowledge, oriented around a scientific method, that is generally recognised as a distinct field of study." His concern with a workable definition of a science is that criminal justice, in common with other areas of study, cannot be constrained within the limitations of non-scientific discipline. In certain aspects it demonstrates scientific approaches, and scientific discipline can be singled out by virtue of its method and schematic organisation as distinct from other non-scientific disciplines.

If we consider Adams' pre-requisites for a discipline, the following aspects emerge:

(i) he sees a discipline as the domain of intellectual activity of a high order, for its place is only secured through a subjection to the rigours of academic investigation. This is a mandatory requirement. He does not indicate the nature of the product which the investigation should reveal, presumably accepting the reasonable conclusion that academic scholarship is self-regulating and is attracted only to those fields whose potential for examination warrant such an attention. This does suggest the possibility of Cinderella fields of study which have somehow been passed over in academic terms, having gaps in the fabric of scholarly research. Of these business studies probably ranks high on the list. Hyman (1980)[11] has examined its status as an entity in its own right; "We need to move from the equivalent to medieval scholasticism into the world of modern science. We need to study business as objectively as possible and work through hypothesis to predictions, experiments and reliable knowledge ...." Hyman is advocating, it seems, the pursuit of the academic investigation which Adams regards as so vital. The conclusion for business studies is that, if Hyman's scenario is an accurate one, it fails to meet up

to a basic disciplinary requirement, and presumably if it has any substantial meaning at all takes up a lesser role - as a subject (i.e., in contra-distinction to a subject discipline).

A final comment can be made upon this aspect of Adams' definition. Academic scholarship is not measured in quantifiable terms, but in respect of its qualities. These include insight, clarity of thought and expression, depth of analysis and consistency and pertinence in its selection and interpretation of evidence according to an appropriate methodology. It is unlikely, however, that even the most brilliantly argued thesis in favour of raising a subject to discipline status would alone act as an agent for change. It is academic forces which may be measured quantifiably, which leads to the second aspect of Adams' definition;

(ii) that there should be a recognition of the discipline, as such. He does not qualify the statement by indicating who should provide this, other than that it should be "general", but by implication he suggests how it will occur - namely by dint of the scholarship which points in that direction. Doubtless the recognition has as much to do with institutional acceptance within the administrative structures of the educational establishment, as it has to do with academic legitimation, and although recognition by the first may follow recognition by the second, this effect is by no means guaranteed.

A note of caution needs to be introduced here regarding institutionalisation. If we return for a moment to the business studies example, whilst there is patent evidence of large-scale activity in this field, with FE and HE institutions boasting business

studies degrees, non-degree courses, and departments and faculties of business studies, this does not irrefutably point towards the subject "business studies" satisfying the definition being examined here. What it does do is to demonstrate a locational and syllabus dimension to something called 'business studies', but without further investigation it does not as a necessary outcome signify the quality of business studies and to Adams quality (in terms of the academic treatment of subject matter) is the hallmark of the discipline/non-discipline division. The conclusion, therefore, is that simply because the institution offers a subject it would be fallacious without further evidence to regard it as elevated to a discipline. Indeed colleges commonly offer courses which do not even achieve subject status, but constitute a much less distinct creature, a 'field of study", which is characterised by its loose and generalised definition as describing a broad sphere of investigation or operation.

In conclusion of Adams' definition and the issue of institutionalisation, it is interesting to note the work of Oberschall (1972)[12] who draws attention to the development of the study of sociology, arguing that it became a discipline after institutionalisation.

As regards further attempts at defining discipline, an additional dimension is provided by Gore (1983)[13]. She points to a distinction between subject and discipline and looks not to the historical development but to the content and skills of the syllabus followed by the student; "A discipline education provides the student with a set of analytical tools for future use. The traditional intellectual training of a discipline is less related to specific topics than to the development of certain aspects of intellectual ability. Given a good student, the result of discipline study is an individual with a knowledge of the areas most susceptible to

investigation by the studied discipline. However, of perhaps even more importance, the individual is able to perceive, interpret and understand his environment with the use of the framework with which he has been provided. This intellectual skill is being developed and refined to a high standard because of the concentrated method of study." These analytical tools are the "criteria of judgment" and "particular concepts" which back them, that Hirst[14] sees as appropriate to distinct disciplines. To them should be added the methodologies within which they operate. And he states; "All knowledge involves the use of symbols and the making of judgments in ways that cannot be expressed and can only be learnt in a tradition .... Acquiring knowledge of any form is therefore to a greater or lesser extent something that cannot be done simply by solitary study of the symbolic expressions of knowledge, it must be learnt from a master on the job. No doubt it is because the forms require particular training of this kind in distinct worlds of discourse, because they necessitate the development of high critical standards according to complex criteria, because they involve our coming to look at experience in particular ways, that we refer to them as disciplines. They are indeed disciplines that form the mind."

So we arrive at a view of disciplines as the end product of a form of mental training. It is training in intellectual skills of a high order and, moreover, if Hirst is correct in his view, training which is unattainable solely by individual effort. It is acquired through learning from others who already possess the skills, through a dialogue that seeks to introduce and make familiar the conceptual tools that we use to render experience intelligible. This dialectic view is also expressed by Oakeshott[15] in the following terms; "As civilised human beings, we are the inheritors neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor an accumulating body of information, but of a conversation begun in the

primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves. Of course, there is argument and inquiry and information, but wherever these are profitable, they are to be recognised as passages in this conversation ...."

The place of training

At this stage some mention needs to be made of the expression 'training' used by Hirst. What is the relationship between training and education and how do they relate to disciplines?

Nowadays the expression "training" commonly presents an image of a conditioning process. It is used, to take just two examples, in relation to circus animals and young children. It is used, sometimes in a derogatory fashion, to describe members of the forces and the police carrying an implication of slavish obedience to rules and orders. It is, however, apparent from selecting alternative examples that the concept of training is not constrained in this way. When one talks of "a trained social worker" or of an individual who is "trained in the skills of argument" there is no connotation of subservience. Rather there is a sense of approval. The trained condition has been learnt and an educative process has brought it about. Training appears to be an ambiguous term, for this form of training has nothing about it of the training that leads the child to dress itself. This is a condition realised through a process which is mentally rigorous demanding the demonstration of the capabilities described above by Hirst and Gore if it is to be measured as successful. Both the child dressing and the theologian arguing using his own subject criteria are illustrating that they have received education using the word in its generic form, but the aims and methods of the enabling processes are quite different. Education is a description of what Hirst and Peters[16]

term, "... a family of processes which have as their outcome the development of an educated man ..." and training is one of these processes used, itself, generically as we have seen. Now the notion of the "educated man" has existed for some considerable time. He appears to have emerged in the last century, as a vision of accomplishment in the breadth and depth of his knowledge and in his capacity to use and apply it, a person both scientifically trained and artistically cultivated. The aim of producing such individuals is sufficiently beguiling to have made its impact on the design of curricula ever since.

Since the mental training previously referred to has more to do with the use to which knowledge is put than to the knowledge per se, it necessarily follows that a man can only claim to be an educated man if his mind is trained. That is, when he is intellectually disciplined. He acquires this mental quality by undertaking the study of a subject discipline. Which subject he chooses has fundamental implications in terms of the way in which he will learn to treat experience. If the choice is a branch of scientific study the methodology used to establish facts will be quite unlike that employed if the choice had been economics or accounting. But this does not mean that the economist and the biologist, versed in separate methodologies and discrete data of their respective fields, are unable to communicate with each other. Each can describe to the other the data boundaries of his field and his methods, and since each has undergone subject-discipline study to achieve his trained status, he has the capacity to recognise the common characteristics which all disciplines reveal. Thus, in a sense, the economist and the biologist can talk the same language; the language of truth establishment and subject parameters. This common language will, in fact, reveal the features of subject disciplines for which we are searching; a discrete fund of accumulated knowledge, concepts and general terminology, an epistemology,

analytical methods, control mechanisms, paradigms and so on. Arising out of what has already been noted one would anticipate this fabric of the discipline to reveal scholarly research, academic recognition, and institutions providing courses structured to develop in the student all the facets of the chosen study.

The form and status of subject

If the components listed above make up the fabric of a subject discipline, what is the substance and status of a mere subject that forms part of a curriculum? Is there, in fact, such an entity as a subject, or is it the case that when we talk of subjects we are referring to a particular aspect of a discipline? Evidence leads one away from the possibility that the terms are synonymous.

The OED refers to "subject" in general terms as that which forms or is chosen as the matter of thought, consideration or enquiry, and more especially in an educational context as the object of study in connection with its use for pedagogic or examining purposes; a particular department of art or science in which one is instructed or examined. This, probably wisely, leaves unanswered the issue of how the subject may be rendered "particular" and what the nature of the pedagogical treatment of the subject might be. Stones (1983)[17] has examined the role of pedagogy in relation to further education, recognising the extent to which examinations have traditionally prescribed the pedagogical style adopted by teachers. It is interesting, therefore, that the OED links subject with examination. Stones points out that, "Throughout the education system teachers of all ... subjects are trying to cover the syllabus, to teach to norm referenced exams .... The easiest way to cover the syllabus is to tell 'em. Quickly. In physics lessons you tell them about physics, in maths you tell them about maths, and geography, and history and whatever

you choose. Hence the current canard, that teachers should be trained for a narrow band of subject teaching. If all that teaching amounts to is telling people about the subject you have been told about yourself, it is an eminently reasonable position. It accounts for the priority given to subject expertise by many in teacher training and by transient political polymaths at Elizabeth House."

This, it appears, points to the main aspect of subject. It is the treatment of the corpus of knowledge contained in the syllabus which holds the seeds of the discipline/non-discipline dichotomy. Such treatment is regulated, dictated even, by the breadth and depth of the syllabus, and the explicit and implicit aims of the curriculum. The less syllabus-free the more inevitable becomes the transmission approach to teaching that Stones, and many others, castigate; likewise the less discipline-based the syllabus the more subject-heavy it becomes, with emphasis on the intake of large doses of conventional fact. Yet most subjects have the potential for treatment in a discipline-based mode. Some, it should be added, either borrow from the established disciplines, or are so under-researched or factually nebulous that as entities in their own right they never reach this plateau of potentiality. It is worth repeating an earlier point that ultimately the issue of whether it is a subject which is studied, or a subject discipline, lies within the control of the curriculum designer. Because of pre-conceived ideas concerning the essential purpose of the educational process, it may be an issue brushed aside as unimportant or irrelevant. This will be so when the design pursues a "mechanical, positivist" path mentioned earlier, and it becomes helpful to examine in a little more detail what such an approach entails, together with its corollary, the relativist approach. Becher and Kogan[18] have provided a helpful summary of these alternatives.

The positivist/relativist approach to curriculum design

In the positivist mode the syllabi of the subjects making up the curriculum will emphasise the requirement of assimilating quantities of factual material which is treated as representing established truth. The student will demonstrate competence under such a regime by his facility for receiving the information handed to him by the teacher in a passive and, inferentially, generally unquestioning way. Probably this denotes a heavy workload for the student. Coverage of knowledge demanded by syllabus-bound areas of study is usually extensive, for it is based upon notions of a completeness of content which in this context is a formula for including as much as can be fitted into the available class contact time. The notion of a completeness is a peculiarly specialist orientated phenomenon. It concerns the assertion that study of a given subject at a determined level invokes a litany of specific knowledge components for inclusion in the syllabus. The absence of any one or more of these components destroys the possibility of teaching the subject 'in the round'. Put another way, it may be said that the syllabus is being regarded from a minimum contents stance. Failure to reach the minimum content level when designing the syllabus will act as a bar preventing students from obtaining an adequate grounding in their study. They cannot properly appreciate the subject because part of the jigsaw is missing.

To the student, however, the notion of completeness is alien, for he is not privy to the reasoning, arguments and specialist knowledge upon which the syllabus designers have based their judgment. He is likely to see the syllabus as containing a multitude of truths relative to the studied subject, whose interrelationship may consist of no more than a logical assumption that since they are being taught in, say, a law session they must, therefore, be principles and rules of law and be common to each

other.

In contrast, a relativist approach to the curriculum will seek to develop a judgment-based approach to the subject of study. This involves practice in its methodology and style of argument - in other words, an applied approach. The factual material that is employed is chosen primarily for its value in achieving these aims, not for an inherent factual value. As the study emphasises interpersonal skills and is largely syllabus-free, teaching is less intensive than in the positivist mode, and the student workload is physically, although probably not mentally, lighter.

It should be stressed that this is no more than a sketch of the geography of the positivist/relativist division. The reality is somewhat more subtle, and does not fit tidily into one camp or the other. The reason for rehearsing these features of the educational process is to demonstrate what is probably a self-evident proposition, viz. that it is curriculum design which practically determines whether it is disciplines or subjects that make up the fabric of the course. The answer does not derive from labels attached to the modular components, but to statements of aims and objectives, teaching methods and assessment strategies. Where these point in the positivist direction the likelihood is the study of subject taking place, whilst when they point towards the relativist view the study will tend towards the disciplinary approach. In pursuing this approach then the emphasis shifts from the positivist's concentration upon reciting in a non-critical manner established, truth-assertive statements about the subject being taught. It would, nevertheless, be misleading to suppose that there is no place for the teaching of factual content where the course objective aims to provide the student with the intellectual qualities that are associated with disciplinary work.

In fact, it is difficult to see how evaluative and critical faculties, and methodological capabilities can operate without the raw factual

material against which they are applied, and so a balance must be found between fact and application. The professions, which can be regarded as the institutional superstructure of the subject disciplines, operate as a regulator of this balance, through the use of training models which describe the educational path to be followed if professional status is to be obtained. Such a model may be a very powerful determinant (for instance, the Law Society, and the various accountancy bodies). Such models also tend to emphasise the syllabus. Hall (1967)[19] has identified, in addition to the training model, three other structural components of the profession:

(i) the creation of a full-time occupation;

(ii) the formation of a professional association;

(iii) the formation of a code of ethics.

He points out that training models not only assert the knowledge base of a profession, but also the efforts made during the establishment of the profession to provide for the betterment of its members.

Disciplinary costs and benefits

Once disciplinary status is achieved the impact upon teachers, students and educational institutions is profound. It emphasises the importance of being able to recognise the nature of the subject discipline as against other forms. Webb and Hoffman (1978)[20] summarise the apparent costs and benefits once disciplinary status has been acquired. They also allude to a highly significant factor relative to curriculum change where this involves the dilution or disappearance of the traditional subject discipline format. As an example, this could occur through the merger of economics, accounts, English and law into a single thematic

course concerned with business administration. Disciplinary arguments, they state, are based upon emotion as well as logic. The emotional component is considered later, but it suffices here to note that emotion operates as a most powerful restraining influence over agencies moving towards less subject discipline-based approaches to learning.

Webb and Hoffman identify the following pro-disciplinary 'arguments', i.e.:

(i) the possession of a discrete body of knowledge (i.e., a recognisable subject in its own right);

(ii) developing from this distinct corpus of knowledge an intellectual consensus amongst practitioners regarding problems and methodologies. This is likely to engender a rationalisation of curricula since they will be directed from a "common, unitary perspective";

(iii) a new disciplinary perspective which guides research activities. From this the knowledge base, built upon an intellectual foundation, will accumulate;

(iv) full disciplinary standing which provides the discipline teacher with enhanced standing within the teaching community, and a more secure sense of institutional identity.

(v) a growth in autonomy, producing a self-governing professionalism, e.g., control over internal operations such as staff selection, teaching programmes and

a greater role in the decision-making processes. Shils (1974)[21] sees autonomy in educational terms as assessment measurement in terms of the subject's own standards;

(vi) a greater opportunity to achieve administrative convenience, e.g., classifications become easier;

In contrast, the following are seen as the potential weaknesses of disciplinary status;

(i) as a result of academic consensus theories and methodologies are exaggerated, and the discipline becomes over-rigid, preventing innovation and critical analysis;

(ii) academic isolation can lead to over-emphasis of some parts of the discipline at the cost of others;

(iii) duplication of effort can occur in the ill-defined areas where disciplines merge or overlap. For instance, a sociologist and a psychologist might be studying exactly the same problem, such as the effect of unemployment upon behaviour. The authors point to the waste of human and financial resources where this occurs;

(iv) the accumulation of knowledge can be better achieved by paradigmatic means. Indeed, it seems (Mullins (1973)) that chronologically a paradigmatic framework

precedes the formation of a discipline, which emerges as a specialism;

(v) autonomy is a myth. The reality is that a variety of external forces, political, social, industrial/commercial, deny the role of the self-governing discipline;

(vi) disciplines do not seem to be as suited to equipping students with socially and occupationally relevant knowledge as do other approaches.

Conclusion

From this outline of the strengths and weaknesses that are apparent in pursuing a disciplinary approach the following proposition can be stated. The discipline/non-discipline dichotomy which superficially suggests an academically esoteric line of thought in fact lies at the heart of curriculum planning and is imbued with practical philosophical issues. These concern, inter alia, the means by which knowledge develops and is classified, the methods employed for teaching and applying knowledge, and the perceptions of teachers and the institutions they teach in concerning such matters as professionalism, academic integrity and departmental/faculty organisation. If it is indeed the case, as has been proposed, that tradition has maintained the status quo, and conspired to stifle moves to question the sanctity of the discipline, it is equally the case that within the further and higher education sector over the past few years such sanctity as exists has been repeatedly and systematically breached. How this has happened, who has been responsible, and above all what has been offered in place of the

established order will now be considered.

CHAPTER 3

THE BUSINESS STUDIES CURRICULUM

Education for business must be based upon an identification of what business is, a proposition simply stated yet troublesome to satisfy. Superficially at least it becomes readily apparent from an examination of existing course provision within the further and higher sectors of education that this fundamental statement of direction can yield many answers. "Education for business is not an exact science", as the former Chairman of the Business Education Council has pithily stated it[1]. Gore[2], for instance, points to the presence of seventeen different subjects validated by CNAA for inclusion within business studies degree programmes. The Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) provides specifications for at least forty areas of study which it recognises as falling within the general phraseology of business studies[3]. Exactly what this evidence tells us about business education is open to debate. One interpretation would have it that it appears to demonstrate a truly remarkable breadth of opportunity of choice available to the business studies student, but a choice that necessarily carries with it the disquieting notion that if a student pursued his or her studies in College A the educational profile on completion of the course might possess qualities quite different from the profile that study on the course at College B would have yielded. The alarming aspect of this proposition is that, taken to its logical extreme, the only commonality in the approach to the teaching of business studies in the institutions offering business studies courses would lie in use of the expression "business studies" itself. Were it to be the case that the concept of business studies lent itself to such divergent

interpretation then as a concept it would be rendered largely meaningless. This is patently not the case. A workable commonality does exist. It is demonstrated by the movement of business studies staff from institution to institution, regional and national meetings of business studies practitioners, the publication of journals such as Business Education, and so on. Moreover, if courses are examined in a qualitative way it is clear that the quantitative diversity referred to above is illustrative not so much of alternative views of the structural substance of business, but has more to do with providing vocational biases through option studies that represent the different functions of business. Core studies based around established disciplines are recognisable in all business studies courses.

That so many subjects can be fitted logically within the framework of what is designated business studies simply illustrates the diversity and dynamic quality of the job market that the business student aims to enter. Between 1961 and 1978 occupational changes significantly boosted the numbers of people engaged in managerial and administrative jobs, from 1.63 million in 1961 rising to nearly 1.9 million in the next ten years and reaching 2.14 million in 1978[4]. (This occurred against the backdrop of a fall in the number of manual workers.)

The combined effect of an increasing demand for a suitably qualified workforce to meet this expansion (met through developments in educational provision as a consequence of the Committee reports of Crick[5] and Haslegrave[6]), and a growing professionalism within the business community brought about by such factors as technological changes and the gradual acceptance of the view that modern business decision-making properly encompasses a wider range of subject inputs than hitherto, have both contributed to the diversity of subjects within the contemporary business curriculum.

The choice range available to students enables them to select mixes which provide course specialisms that increase their employment potential by matching specific knowledge and skills to the needs of particular employment markets, such as insurance or the travel industry. Alternatively, they may opt for courses which are less related to a highly specific section of the employment market, but which still aim to point the student in the direction of a generic feature of the market such as courses with a financial or computing flavour. Needless to say, range of choice is not a goal that should be blindly followed simply for its own sake, and few business educators are likely to dispute one of BEC's cautious attempts at describing business education when it commented that business education, "is not just a series of parcels of knowledge to be acquired haphazardly until enough parcels have been accumulated to justify an award."[7] It is analysis of core areas of study from course to course that is able to reveal whether business studies students are able to communicate using the same language. Even here content and process differences are apparent and Appleton's assertion that, "Today, there is still no coherent, defined body of knowledge or classification of skill which uniquely represents a discipline of Business Studies"[8] appears germane.

What we may reasonably conclude is that the concept of business education encompasses a much wider range of educational activity, in terms not only of content, but also of teaching method, than is usually the case for a single discipline course, such as accountancy or law. This means that the contemporary business studies student will be exposed to a variety of subject perspectives through the action of inputs from a spectrum of established academic disciplines, no one of which dominates the others. This is in contrast to the single discipline student who may simply encounter other disciplines than his own, if at all, as subsidiary components that feed the main study, or just en passant within the

framework of his own subject syllabus. The comprehensive make-up of the curriculum pursued by the business studies student can be seen to represent a mirror image of the heterogeneous demands faced by modern business managers. As new topics appear within the curriculum we are seeing the end product of the relationship between the practitioners and the colleges. For example, as business personnel may find the focus of their role shifting from, say, the field of financial control towards management decision-making and control, so in time this change translates into educational revision. Thus accountancy's position as an item central to business studies courses may be weakened and moved aside by industrial relations and sociology as the behavioural sciences come into the ascendency. Moreover, as this evolutionary process unfolds, its influence is felt beyond the mere appraisal of the subjects to be studied, reaching out to the methods used to teach business, that is, the teaching processes. It does, however, need to be appreciated that in practice the requirements of employers are by no means easily identified, and it is a distortion of the reality to suppose that when they are identified there is any facility available within the education system to provide an immediate translation into a revised curriculum model. Cantor and Roberts, in examining the role of BEC, comment that a "reason put forward by BEC for curricula change in business education is to meet the changing needs of employers. However, as BEC itself concedes, very little is known about what employers want, or even that they are dissatisfied with the present position."[9] Curricular change and innovation is sometimes more an outcome of enlightened guesswork than a response to demands from employers for revision. But certainly as the winds of curriculum change have begun to blow, basic preconceptions about business education have been challenged. In response, emphasis has shifted towards studies based around business themes that cross and recross established subject boundaries, through the

analysis of business from a functional point of view or in terms of people, money, communications and technology (as used by BTEC[10]). Emphasis has also been given to learning on the job, through work placements as favoured by the MSC. However, this is to bring the story of business education up to date. There is value to be gained in firstly examining in outline the historical background to business education, since the greater part of modern thinking associated with it has its origins embedded in the past, thinking that is no longer in vogue suggesting perhaps that in E.M. Forster's words, "We can recover self-confidence by snubbing the dead."

The professional bodies

Historically it is the influence of the professional bodies upon business education which has been the single most significant developmental force. They dominated business education in the United Kingdom right up until the 1950's, and continue to make their presence felt forcefully, as evidenced by the conflicts over exemptions that persist between some of the professional bodies and BTEC, conflicts which exemplify and highlight the very different educational thinking of the respective organisations. Reference has already been made to the work of Hall (1967)[11] in detailing the components of the professions. This reveals the central place of training models within the fabric of the professions as a means of self-regulation and improvement in the status and opportunities for the membership. At the time of the emergence of the professional bodies, which commenced during the latter half of the 19th Century (for instance, Chartered Accountants 1875, Institute of Bankers 1879, Chartered Secretaries 1890) their practical ethos laid stress upon the need for educational provision to emphasise vocationalism, resulting in examination schemes that comprised subjects with a strong bias in favour of business utility. Doubtless this reflected the views of those like Spencer,

quoted in Nuttgens, that, "Our industries would cease were it not for the information which men acquire after their education is said to have finished."[12] Horn[13] has commented that the attitudes of the professions towards education continues to suggest the commercial spirit in which they were conceived. And he refers to Postan's summary of the character of the times as, "the general anti-intellectual bias of the late Victorian age, notable for its attitude of exaggerated empiricism, its insistance on learning the job whilst doing it."[14] This approach represented an implaccable mental distancing from the established institutions in higher education, which still lingers on today in the form of a mutual distrust of each other's methods. An extreme example of the polarisation of the practical viewpoint as against the intellectual viewpoint is Newman's assertion, also quoted by Nuttgens, that a university represents like-minded persons engaged in a study where, "the intellect instead of being forced or sacrificed to some particular purpose, trade or profession is disciplined for its own sake."[15]

The traditional academic view regards the public professional examinations, which most students continue to take following a correspondence course, as anathema to the true purposes of higher education and simply a forcing house of knowledge. How can this view be reconciled with the response of the commercial professions who purport to argue the validity of their approach by what happens in industry and commerce? The spheres of employment dominated by the professional bodies and their training programmes (often competitive and with high failure rates) apparently thrive. Whilst those into which academia has made inroads appear to be less successful. It would be trite to suggest that vocational training alone can provide for the economic invigoration of the industrial and commercial sectors of the economy or that there is a necessary connection between successful work achievement and qualifications (Berg (1978)[16], yet

there is no gainsaying the link between general economic well-being and a managerial class whose education has selected and nurtured only the most able. As Horn says, "Over the years the academic values have gradually achieved wider acceptance, particularly in engineering, chemistry and similar areas. The commercial professions will, however, point out that these are precisely the areas in which British industry is increasingly uncompetitive whilst commercial institutions like insurance, banking, etc. flourish, pay high rewards, and attract high calibre recruits."[17] There are, of course, many who refute the suggestion that education and training should singlemindedly pursue an employment goal, a view reinforced during periods of high generalised unemployment. In 1972 Warren stated, "For a rapidly increasing proportion of the population some form of technical, commercial and other vocational education provides their last contact with formal education; it must be, therefore, their 'finishing school' not only technically but educationally, giving them not only the 'means' of earning their living, but saying something also of the 'ends' to which that living should aspire."[18] Sadly this highly laudable aspiration remains beyond the realm of most business studies courses where the debate continues to concentrate more on means rather than ends, certainly ends which appear to have no connection with the "aspirations" that underlie working for a living. Equally certain is the fact that the professional bodies see such educational processes as those postulated by Warren as falling outside their remit. Theirs is a commitment to the highly contentious educationalist issue, the maintenance of standards, which they see as being realised through and characterised by a system of examination testing which possesses the capacity for accurate assessment and measurement. Examinations of the professional type emphasise the importance of fact, the application of fact to detailed situations, and limitations upon choice (to reduce the opportunity of

avoiding the study of major elements of the syllabus). The contrast between this approach and examinations at degree level (where greater choice offers a student the opportunity to demonstrate the strengths of his or her examination repertoire, and where question design offers the potential for encouraging and rewarding originality and perception) echoes the different philosophical aims of the academic and the professional. Degrees in commerce, which were introduced at the beginning of this century in London and some of the provincial universities, sought to bridge the gap between these two schools of thought, and combine the academic with the vocational. This not only led to a somewhat contemptible regard for them as a sort of academic lower league degree for intellectual inferiors, but proved to be an unworkable marriage of what in a university setting were apparently disparate elements. The academic and theoretical influence prevailed over the practical elements of the degree, which was hardly surprising given the location in which the degrees were being offered. Horn refers to the extremes to which this drift between the academic and the business world reached as stated by an American observer, "that the staff felt successful businessmen had nothing to tell their students."[19]

Convergence between these two forces does however occur within the administrative domain of the examination. It is recognised by both that the examination should be externally set and marked, or internally set and marked, but subject to the scrutiny of an external examiner. Integrity is preserved, standards maintained, the confidence of government, employers and the public satisfied. Qualifications awarded outside such a system are imbued with a stigma that at best places them, like the old commerce degrees but for different reasons, in a lower league of academic achievement, and at worst condemns them for lack of veracity. This explains the obvious concern of BTEC, expressed in different forms since its inception, that its moderation system (and modular content)

should be seen to overcome such criticisms. It has expressed a policy intention that for its students the value of its qualifications should be their, "credibility simultaneously: (i) to employers as an indicator of potential; (ii) to educational institutions and professional bodies as a passport to further educational progression and to professional qualification."[20] However, professional bodies remain sceptical about its methods and their views are exemplified, fairly or otherwise, in the comments of Craven and Franklin, "that unless BEC reinforces its present system of moderation the credibility of BEC awards as representing a uniform national standard will be seriously undermined."[21] If this view is correct, it casts doubt upon the realisation of the Council's avowed intention to reconcile the vexed issue of the maintenance of traditional academic standards whilst simultaneously pursuing a radical approach to business education. "It is essential that [the Council] provide a sound and unambiguous yardstick by which to validate the college-designed courses."[22] Yet this failure, if it is indeed the case that reinforcement of moderation is needed, may be the evidence of a resistance to the academic drift in vocational courses which academics like Nuttgens[23] depricate, and an identity with the view of Appleton[24] and others that business education will only be fulfilled by going forward with new ideas. This especially involves an attack upon the traditional disciplines associated with business as exemplified by the views of Burgess[25], Leftwick[26] and others.

The curious fact remains that the professional bodies in their infancy represented a radical force in education, whereas judged by the contemporary standards of business education they stand for the old order. They are seen as reinforcing an educational mode which has been largely rejected by the academic establishment, whose own values the professional bodies once rejected as theoretical and esoteric and having no constructive

part to play in educating for careers bound up in the day-to-day operations of business life. Now the roles have been reversed and it is the colleges which are challenging the values of the professional bodies. It seems that a revolution has taken place. Many would say that it is still being fought and its final outcome is uncertain. Others that the process is gradual, evolutionary. Whatever the long-term effects may be, clear shifts in the provision of business education courses have been occurring over the last three decades, to which passing reference has already been made. But what precisely are these changes, and what are their implications for teachers and students?

New approaches

Innovation in respect of the teaching of business in the colleges of further and higher education, and the universities in England and Wales can be firmly established as having its beginnings in the early 1960's: significantly a period of great expansion both in the public (LEA-funded institutions) and autonomous (university) sectors of FE and HE. Precisely what form this innovation has taken is outlined later. There have been some important contributions to research in the area of innovation and change, both in Britain, for example, Thompson (1976)[27], the USA Schein (1972)[28] and Lindquist (1979)[29], and Sweden Berg and Ostergren (1977)[30]. Strategy for change has been discussed by Hewton (1979)[31] building on earlier studies (Hewton et al (1975)[32]) which concerned the value of curriculum experts in course teams. Elton (1981)[33] has advocated institutional change through staff development. Change in business teaching has concentrated on the content of business studies courses and the methods/approaches adopted in the design/teaching of them. Development has continued since that time. There is no reason to suppose that it is nearing a conclusion, or indeed that there is an ideal business

studies teaching model. If anything, contemporary business studies literature indicates a growth in the debate about the ways and means of business education. Although this debate is wide-ranging, covering such aspects as the sandwich principle (Daniel and Pugh [34], Toft[35], Vaughan (1981)[36], Appleton (1983)[37]), integration (Preston (1978)[38], Oldham (1974)[39], Joyce, Woods and Wagstaff (1984)[40], Rendell (1983)[41]), and the role of disciplines (Nuttgens (1978)[42], Burgess (1978)[43], Harrison and Vaughan (1980)[44], Leftwich (1981)[45], Gore (1981)[46]), at its heart lies a central issue, which is summed up by an editorial in the Higher Education Review. "The task that the system now faces is to devise new solutions to what is, in fact, an age old problem of relating education to working life. This cannot be done by trivial change. It involves fundamental analysis of the basis of education."[47] One of the hallmarks of business education has always been, and has remained, its concern with the application of theory to practice. This concern has manifested itself in the inclusion of work experience/sandwich placements in full-time (and occasionally part-time) business studies degrees and non-degree courses. Through their use business education is seen, at least by educationalists, as fulfilling the three aims which it is generally seen as needing to pursue; relevance, practicality and vocationalism. In respect of the vocational element Vaughan (1982)[48] has remarked upon the close philosophical and structural trends that have emerged in the polytechnics between the institutions themselves and the BA Business Studies degree programmes which they all include in their prospectuses. Alternative views regarding the validity of a relevant, practical and vocational approach in business education, such as those of Stoddart (1981)[49] appear to be out of step with mainstream thinking, which continues to demonstrate a predilection towards acknowledging the business career as the ultimate product the course of study should be seeking to aspire to.

It emerges even in broadly framed statements of philosophy, for instance, Buttery et al, that, "Business education should be based upon the fundamental principle that there is a wide body of knowledge which must be collated, analysed, structured and imparted in such a way that the efficiency and effectiveness of business is enhanced, and its place in society defined."[50] Given a general consent to the first limb of this statement but with the proviso that there may always be room for debate as to the parameters of the "wide body of knowledge" (exemplified for instance by David Fairhurst's examination of what should properly constitute the subject matter of the HND Business Resources module[51]), we are left with business "efficiency" and "effectiveness" as the very practical yardstick by which the value of the whole educational process may be measured. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to ask how these qualities themselves may be measured, and by whom. Who is to say what is effacacious and upon what criteria of judgment? If as seems logically necessary this is to be carried out by those engaged in business and by reference solely or primarily to what are seen by them as the current demands the working environment places upon them, then the onus rests upon the business community to address its collective mind to the design of an educational programme for business which ought presumably to contain the three elements previously mentioned. It may appear that the professions already do this through their examinations systems, but such an observation is specious; the thrust of the professions in terms of educational provision is directed towards the use of parochial selection procedures using the sole medium of the traditional examination and paying little or no heed to the broader needs of the student, or to alternative methods of assessment that could be employed.

As for the remainder of the business community, to the extent that views are articulated upon the subject of business education through

public statements, representation on college industrial liaison committees, membership of college governing bodies, service on advisory bodies such as the FEU[52] and on curriculum bodies such as BTEC, the prevalent view is that practical skills are preferable to academic ones and immediate employability a greater asset than possession of a theoretical grounding which requires adaptation in order to perform sufficiently the job demanded. However, this is by no means a universal view, thus the evidence of industrialists to a government select committee in 1980[53] was in support of the view that quality of mind is preferable to specialised subject expertise. Additionally, doubts have been raised as to whether the perceptive and critical faculties which those like the industrialists favour in their business recruits is as enlightened and forward-looking as it appears. There is, incidentally, no reason to assume that the development of qualities of mind and practical work-related skills are separate distinct activities, for a "problem-posing" education that matches the academic range of the client group is quite capable of doing so. In an editorial in Business Education attacking the complacency of both teachers and businessmen towards the introduction of new teaching approaches, in particular learning that is student-centred, it was suggested that, "Those 'enlightened' businessmen on BEC's committees support the practical, applied and skills-orientated nature of the BEC approach. This is not however because they support the theory of a 'problem-posing education'. They, even more than the teachers, resent any attempt to undermine their power and control within their organisations. They want the practical skills, but not the critical awareness and ability to change situations which are implied by a 'problem-posing' education. Ultimately they are not a force for change ...."[54]

It would be unjust to single out the business world as somehow uniquely representing a mode of thinking on educational matters that some antagonists

regard as simply antidilusion, and others such as the proponents of Friere[55] as politically and economically motivated - a control mechanism for the maintenance of the established order. Issues of control and power exist in all sectors of organised human activity. Nevertheless, if they are given freedom such attitudes inevitably affect both the design and operation of the curriculum. No doubt they are often subliminal attitudes possessed without any conscious awareness of them. Lees[56], for instance, in discussing a suitable education for business managers has talked about, "the political reality which many educational courses do not prepare the manager to deal with," by which he is referring to the real world of the organisation, an environment which even teaching around a good case study model does not properly equip the individual to cope with effectively. He astutely points to the personality of organisations, possessing their own cultures, their own "way of doing things". A part of that culture involves the power/control aspect, the office politics of the situation, and a business education that seeks to equip an individual for a managerial career should at least strive to cope with such a reality, for as Lees says, "self knowledge of his [the manager's] capacity to deal with such situations can help enormously." But as has already been pointed out this is precisely the realm of business activity which the employers regard as 'out of' bounds to critical examination for it is an area of sensitivity; it is not sufficiently negative and it, therefore, has become a taboo. It is Foy's view[57] that the achievement of the condition Lees advocates involves, inter alia, a "permeability" between the business world and the world of education, in which educationalists venture into the organisations whose potential recruits are presently studying business on college courses, in order to identify and provide the techniques and back-up necessary. Whilst Lees and Foy are dealing with the more specialised needs of management education there is a clear message implicit

for all business educators. It is not a new message. The Franks Report[58] in 1963 recognised that management schools could only be effective if they worked closely with the business organisations for whom their activities were ultimately designed.

If there is indeed an unspoken tension between educators and organisations with respect to the appropriate qualities for students entering a business life, it is interesting to note that research into sandwich placements, representative of a half-way house between college and job, indicates that students and employers alike regard them as of great importance, for instance, Vaughan[59]. Pickard[60] suggests that this is in part because students become familiar with the qualities of character that are important in business. It is perhaps unfair to propose that the high regard paid to placements is due to the placement organisation receiving the opportunity of asserting its "way of doing things" early enough in the educational process to feel it has reduced a potential threat to its equilibrium from students whose course work may encourage and enable them to point directly to the weaknesses and deficiencies in the administrative and managerial structure of the organisation they have joined. Only the most robust organisation can tolerate and benefit from a high level of critical awareness in its new recruits. It is easy enough to recognise the value to students of supervised work study, for if it is a worthwhile placement it has an immediate relevance, stressing the vocationalism of the business studies course, providing practical experience and activity, useful both as a means of learning by doing and also by providing material that can be included in a future curriculum vitae, of great value in periods of job shortage when the market favours the experienced to the inexperienced employee, even though the potential of the latter might be promising. Appleton[61] sums it up by saying, "the time out introduces knowledge development, skills growth and insights which

so far have eluded both the academic content and the teaching methodology of the [BA in Business Studies] degree course." It may also mean a foot in the door for the student if the placement organisation is looking for new staff.

Mention has already been made of the development of innovatory practices that have occurred since the 1960's, and also to the existence of certain features of business education which have remained essentially constant (despite differences in interpretation) over the entire period during which business studies in one form or another has been taught. These have been identified as relevance, practicality and vocationalism. Of course, they are interdependent. It is out of a strong vocational bias that course relevance and practical training have emerged. But the range of interpretation that is capable of being applied to these features, through the process of rendering into a workable curricular form such generalised statements of intent, helps to explain why the modern business studies course, degree or non-degree, does not comply to any universal and established pattern. The external bodies responsible for course validation, in particular CNAA and BTEC (but not the examination boards for the General Certificate of Education that offer business studies) do, of course, work within a prescribed framework that requires them to place specific demands upon institutions seeking approval for courses. Superficially, this might appear to be demanding conformity to a general pattern which leads to course commonality as between institutions; but such strictures as apply do so within the context of general issues of curricular design, for instance, BTEC's insistence that its courses reflect stated business themes that remain constant whatever modular mix a validated course contains. There is, in fact, a considerable range of modular/subject variation from course to course, and perhaps even greater

variation in methods of implementation from institution to institution. These differences are not merely cosmetic; they reflect to a greater or lesser extent the philosophical outlook of each of the business studies faculties or departments to which the courses belong.

In discussing the status of discipline the two extreme positions represented by the positivists on the one hand and the traditionalists on the other were identified. The dichotomy applies equally well to the interpretation of how a business education should be achieved. It is clear that there is no consensus in this respect either among teachers or, as we have seen, the employers themselves who ought ideally to be providing an unambiguous lead given the vocationalism associated with business education. There are, however, certain clear trends that can be recognised as representative of a more radical approach to the teaching of business. These can be linked to the major external forces which have provided the stimulus to business education during the past twenty years or so. Of special mention are the organisations mentioned above, CNAA and BTEC. They have responsibility for two of what Hyman[62] describes as the "three divisions" of business education in Britain, namely, to paraphrase him, basic skills and elementary education, operated by BTEC and developed particularly through the use of themes; undergraduate courses at universities and polytechnics - mostly the latter - which offer CNAA-validated part-time and full-time Business Studies degrees based upon the recommendations of the Crick Report[63]; management studies, especially the DMS. He suggests there are at least three divisions. An obvious additional division covers postgraduate work in the polytechnics and, especially, the university business schools for taught and researched higher degrees.

The relationship between business studies and management studies

Whilst management education is included under the general umbrella term "business education", in practice it remains a separate and distinct entity from the study undertaken on a business studies course. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that managerial skills are best developed in those who already possess some managerial experience, or at very least some work experience, and so are not studying management "cold". This emphasises the practical nature of the subject*. There are some in business education who deprecate what they see as the artificiality of this division. Hymans explains it as, "studying the human body [i.e., business] pretending it does not have a brain and heart."[65] Management and business, whilst having a natural connection which should perhaps be better exploited, are nevertheless distinct fields concerned with fundamentally different aims; business concerned with the supply of goods and services, management with human relationships within the organisation.

The forces for innovation. I : Degree provision

It was the Robbins Report[66] in 1963 which set in motion the expansion of the higher education sector, and indirectly provided the stimulus for the developments which were to occur in business education later in the decade. The celebrated statement of principle that, "all young persons qualified by ability and attainment to pursue a full-time course in higher education should have the opportunity to do so", occurred at a time when government was prepared to invest in educational growth in order to meet the unquantified statement of the report of the need for, "a great increase in the present provision of places in higher education." Government implicitly accepted the social and economic values underlying

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*Urwick[64] defines it as essentially being concerned with controlling others.

the thinking of the Committee, values ably illustrated by the Committee's statement that the growth they sought would satisfy the, "aspirations of a modern community as regards both wealth and culture." The University Grants Committee[67] has pointed out that Robbins did not, in fact, institute expansion in the public sector or the universities, which was already underway by 1963. Rather, it gave authority through the medium of a government report to principles for the guidance of this development. And so in the atmosphere of an "age of plenty" technological universities were set up, and in 1965 in speeches first at Woolwich and then at Lancaster* a policy was outlined for the establishment of the polytechnics, which were subsequently created out of the larger regional technical colleges following the White Paper of 1965[68]. The close association between the polytechnics and Business Studies degrees they offer has already been remarked upon. These were built upon the foundations established in the colleges of advanced technology (which were subsumed within the new technological universities), and developed rapidly into the largest single area of study pursued by undergraduates, under the auspices of CNAA. The current figure lies at around 1,200 degrees awarded annually, and the polytechnics seem to encounter no difficulty in recruiting suitable students for these degree courses (see Bonner and McQueen (1983)[69].

The polytechnics were to be "equal but different" under the new binary system they shared with the universities. The difference was to be found in the work they performed, "mainly to be concerned with teaching" and with research work, "to grow out of close links with industry especially that in their locality."[70] In essence, they were to possess a responsiveness to the economic and social needs of their immediate geographical locality through offering relevant courses of study, and hence was borne their initial vocationalism. The provision of part-time business studies degrees is an example of this responsiveness. The first approval was given

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*The Secretary of State for Education, Anthony Crosland.

by CNAA in 1968. By 1981 part-time courses made up in excess of one-quarter of all first degree courses in business studies validated by CNAA, although in the same year part-time enrolments made up only 13% of total business studies degree enrolments.[71]

At about the time of the appearance of the polytechnics a further institutional development within the higher education sector was emerging - the colleges of higher education, which in the main were formed through amalgamation between existing teacher training colleges and local technical colleges. Somewhat overshadowed by their larger LEA colleagues, the polytechnics, their contribution to business studies development has meritably been associated with BTEC courses. Degrees in business studies are outside their terms of reference.

Despite being endowed with a strong vocational direction the polytechnics began to experience the influence of the basic characteristics of higher education, and underwent what Pratt and Burgess[72] describe as an "academic drift" towards the modes and aspirations of the universities. Instrumental in this drift has been the CNAA, which was founded in 1964 for the purpose of regulating non-university degree standards, and adopted criteria in order to do so which bore a marked similarity to the approaches used by university senates. Although in its early days the CNAA was "a relatively passive institution, more content to be the recipient of external pressure than the active initiator of policy"[73] by the end of the decade its position had changed to one of leadership, so that in 1972 Baker could say that it had, "already exerted a significant influence over the thinking of teachers in polytechnics", adding that whilst a "CNAA committee do not necessarily wish to agree with what they find, but they do expect to discover a logically argued and convincingly presented case."[74] Lancaster and Saunders[75] have outlined the consequences of such an approach. They comment that the expansion of higher education created "an aggressive

entrepreneurial style of management", and that, "In the non-university sector in particular this tended to lead to the advancement of a breed of 'talkers' rather than 'doers'." As regards a CNAA visit, "to be able to 'perform well on the day' ... was seen to be a positive attribute, rather than the ability to research and publish" and this has led to "a preponderance of academic leaders who are there principally because of their oratorical skills." The curricular framework laid out for the business studies degree provided an ample opportunity for these oratorical skills to be put to good effect.

The Crick Report in 1964 laid down the framework for the content of the new degree to be run by the polytechnics. Although vague in some areas the report provided a clear enough formula for the curriculum design of the degree, which would have, to quote the report, "a few basic disciplines" as a core to the academic base. Those suggested included economics, law, accountancy, sociology and mathematics. The report included a brief reference to the content of these disciplines. What the report sought to achieve was a workable balance between on the one hand a certain amount of academic freedom of choice; "We would hope to see variation from course to course with the emphasis falling at different points", whilst on the other a qualification that satisfied all the traditional requirements of a business education; "the need would be for a good general education of honours degree standard with a sufficient vocational bias to prepare them (students) specifically for business careers." Empirical evidence, such as that provided by Vaughan[76] indicates that this freedom has been fully exploited, and he remarks that, "Degrees show both flexible and rigid course structures, with no 'favourite' structure being developed as the degree has matured", whilst Gore[77] refers to, "the emergence of courses of an integrated nature provided on the basis of business rather than individual disciplines." Such development is of

interest on two levels. Firstly, in terms of educational philosophy it points towards a fundamental change in the outlook of those designing degrees that use integrative methods, since this represents a departure from the apparently well worn path of the traditional discipline conjunction Crick appeared to advocate. Secondly, in terms of the climate of the institutional environment which has responded favourably to such change. The colleges have accepted it, and so has CNAA, which raises the question, what stimulated the change and encouraged the use by some of the colleges of the Crick formula in a positive way? The change is, after all, made more remarkable by the academic drift previously referred to which tends to pull degree courses away from radical innovatory experiment.

It seems likely that there is no single, fundamental cause. Becher and Kogan[78] have examined what they refer to as the "changing norms" in higher education. Their remarks seem apposite to a discussion of the factors which may help to account for innovatory trends within degree design both in business studies and more generally. They identify the "assertion of the public ethic" as of significance and go on to state, "the changes in client groups and the reciprocal weakening of authority in traditional institutions affected the whole academic milieu. Thus, if higher education was traditionally private, elite and eclectic in its purposes (and such was the character of its pre-expansion nature) it had certainly become far more open and socially responsive at the end of the period of expansion. Even before the economic blizzards of the early 1970's set in, academia seemed ready to acknowledge the need to respond to society's demands - always on the understanding that it would do so in its own ways ...." Whilst it may be that businessmen and industrialists associated with polytechnics made known in general terms what they saw as the needs of their particular sectors in terms of recruiting a suitably educated workforce this in no way constituted an irrepressible force for

change. I believe it rested ultimately with the teachers themselves to respond to the new economic and social climate and that there were enough of them prepared to meet the challenge and rethink the curriculum that, aided by a responsiveness within CNAA, changes were gradually wrought within this department of business education.

The forces for innovation. II.: Non-degree provision

During the period under discussion, the 1960's and early 1970's, the non-degree public sector of business education based mainly in the colleges of higher and colleges of further education remained largely immune from the developments occurring outside. In numerical terms business education in these colleges was located principally in the ONC/D courses they operated, with the numbers enrolled on HNC/D courses lower. (HNC/D courses then as now were also run by polytechnics.) In many colleges these courses were, and still are, the financial mainstay of the departments operating them. They had a considerable antecedence. The ONC in Commerce, for instance, was introduced as early as 1935. These courses enjoyed a broadly recognised status, and a popularity both amongst students and employers. Many employers provided for day-release facilities to enable employees to attend the local college on such courses, thus maintaining the close link between theoretical study and practical application. Sometimes, the acceptability of the qualifications awarded under the Ordinary National and Higher National schemes may, in an employment sense, have had more to do with complacent familiarity than with any real awareness of the qualities the courses contained, nevertheless, even the professional bodies had begun to accept that the qualifications gained at Ordinary and Higher National level possessed a certain academic worthiness. Horn[79] has put it that, "Somewhat belatedly the professional bodies had begun to accept the HNC/D and work with it for mutual advantage."

It is worth reminding oneself that at this level of course provision it is the further, rather than the higher education sector which dominates the field, and whilst it is not the purpose of this thesis to investigate the status of these respective components, there are variations between them that are tangibly reflected over the entire range of college activity; staff attitudes, resources, college organisation and above all the perceptions of self held by the colleges through the instrumentality of their staffs - as it were, their corporate persona. There is a notorious difficulty in clearly distinguishing further from higher education. "It is not easy to give an exact definition of higher education", comments Carter[80], whilst Farmer[81] says, "The face of further education is curiously ill-defined", adding that, "Its character depends very much upon which element is under scrutiny and where it is being observed." The position is complicated by the interchangeability of the expressions "further" and "higher" education, for they may be taken on one level as indicators of the academic standing of the study being pursued, whilst on another as descriptive of institutional status. It is sufficient here to remark that degree provision in business studies comes outside the aegis of colleges of further education, being found principally in the polytechnics and universities, whilst the non-degree courses provided by BTEC at National level are found in the FE colleges, and Higher National, other BTEC provision (such as post experience courses) and non-BTEC business courses (professional courses) are found in both. The character of the corporate persona of a college has an influence which is often detectable in the curricula over which it is able to exert control in respect of design and implementation. It is "often" detectable rather than "always" because where an opportunity exists for expressing originality and innovation in course design it is possible to avoid responding in a positive manner unless there is an imperative external demand, for instance from a

validating body, or alternatively, but less likely, an internal one. A common response within the negative mode, which appears to be representative more of further education than higher education, would be to use the existing model for a further period, or, mutatis mutandis, use somebody else's. Internal pressure for academic development, if it arises, is likely to come from the teachers themselves. As Becher and Kogan[83] remark, "in British higher education they [teachers] normally play the main role in shaping academic, institutional and curricular policy." This assertion of academic and educational leadership makes up one of the most fundamental elements in the value system of higher education teachers. Educational institutions are made up of component parts, often of considerable diversity, and which Becher and Kogan have referred to as "basic units" - "the smallest component elements which have a corporate life of their own."[84] In higher education basic units are commonly arranged on subject/disciplinary lines; in further education they are based upon a course foundation. This seemingly innocuous distinction contains the seeds of the value differences between the two sectors of post school provision. In designing an organisational structure that is subject-based a judgment is being passed upon the way in which knowledge in that organisation is categorised. Likewise, a course-based institutional framework provides an indicator of the likely character of the teaching that is performed within it, namely, teaching that is likely to favour emphasising the unity of knowledge. The expertise of the teacher within the former structure is thus measured in the main by the competence he or she overtly demonstrates in the subject. This is seen less in the teaching itself which has always been, in British higher education, the private domain of the teacher and his or her students, than in the realm of academic achievement; qualifications, research and publications, external professional activities (all of them in turn widely regarded as

measurements of intellectual capacity). In such an environment, it is only natural that the intellectual resource pool should be focused upon the broader concerns of curriculum development.

This is not the culture of further education, which as a consequence of the limitations upon the type of work it performs is seen as academically less prestigious. It has its own values, which are not always easy to identify. Certainly it can be recognised that some of them overlap the values of higher education (as provided by LEA's). The servicing of the educational requirements of the local community is a prime example. But further education does not possess an academic heritage. Indeed, FE colleges are traditionally the providers of education for the middle ability range of the 16-19 year age group and arguably the needs of such a client group are not met by stressing a scholarly approach, even in the field of business studies which contains a sufficient discipline base to receive such treatment. The approach of further education has been to create a flexibility that enables it to respond quickly to the demands of its clients. It is a reactive rather than a proactive stance. It has been said that, "Curriculum development in FE has, like course design, always been rather piecemeal and retrospective, with FE it tends to supply what its clients ask for. There may be a need for strengthening of its predictive capacities so that FE is ready for changes and can respond quickly and effectively to them producing students who are ready for new opportunities."[84] The author goes on to suggest that the FEU is the logical focus for curriculum development, although it would need to be expanded.

FE's strong vocational undercurrent has always been manifested in the calibre of its teachers. Employment experience has invariably been the most highly prized quality in the minds of college appointment committees when selecting staff. By the end of the 1970's only 50% of teaching staff

in FE held degrees, and a similar number teaching qualifications. Thus, whilst innovation is not unknown in FE, it may be fairly stated that it has not taken upon itself the responsibility for curriculum development in the same way that the polytechnics and colleges of higher education have done.

The business studies department of an FE college may find itself in a singular position. Within its own college environment it occupies a niche of prestige and respectability - a counterpoint to the departments that have a manual orientation, whilst in the wider context of its place in the educational structure of its locality or region it is regarded by its sister departments in the higher institutions as an academic lightweight. It is not, therefore, unrealistic to regard such departments as subject to an identity crisis, somewhere up a ladder between the highly practical craft and technician courses in its own college, and the more esoteric aspirations of its contemporaries in the polytechnics and universities. It is suggested later that the changes which have occurred in FE during the latter part of the 1970's and thereafter - government training initiatives and the influence of BTEC - have helped to overcome this state of affairs.

The Education Act of 1944 saw the local college as serving the needs of all school-leavers and acting as a cultural focus for its locality. But this aspiration has had to contend with the requirements of the influential customers of the FE college, often causing it to be dominated by local industry, Industrial Training Boards, and latterly the MSC with the effect that its courses have tended to reflect training rather than education in the wider sense. This effect has not, however, been as marked in the business studies field as in the technical areas of college work, largely it would seem because of the diffusion of needs presented by business employers and their failure to clearly put forward educational initiatives, points already alluded to. Writing about the

character of FE Parkes[85], makes the following observations; "FE has its own myths; the myth of the practical man; the myth of the remedy to the mistakes of the schools; responsiveness to industry, commerce and the community; a response to needs otherwise unmet by the education system; flexible, adaptive, hardheaded." If these worthwhile qualities are indeed myths one is left to ponder on the nature of the reality in the FE colleges. Parkes proposes that the value system of these colleges ought to combine relevance to local needs, participation by the academic community in defining them, and an accountability towards the following general groups: the local authority, examining and professional bodies, students, employers and parents. He concludes with what appears as a sort of apologia for the colleges, "Of course, colleges are adaptive; they do reflect a service. They do not represent a social/educational ideal like the comprehensive school; they have not been, until recently, the subject of political interface. However complex in internal structure they have provided an overspill for the schools, a second chance for the young, and less young adult; they have mediated between industry and the community. It is not their fault that the UK has had the lowest percentage of the 16-19 age cohort undertaking further education and training in the ECC. It is not their fault that in the last two decades the thrust of capital investment and the drive for status has been in the HE sector."

Thus, for those teaching business subjects in FE colleges the developments of the 1960's and most of the 1970's that had been taking place in the polytechnics had, by and large, no especial impact. Business courses continued to be taught in the same way incorporating the same subject combinations. The developments that were to occur were reserved for the late 1970's. They occurred as a direct consequence of the recommendations of the Haslegrave Committee[86]. These were the setting up of two bodies to be responsible for on the one hand business education, on the other

technician education. In fulfilment of its proposals the Secretary of State for Education and Science established the Business Education Council and the Technician Education Council in 1974 (merged to form the Business and Technician Education Council - BTEC - in 1983). The Business Education Council, a guarantee company, received as its remit the daunting task of, "unifying, rationalising and symplifying the provision of non-degree business education in England, Wales and the task of establishing and maintaining a system of nationally recognised awards."[87]

The first limb of this responsibility was performed by assuming policy responsibility for a range of courses, on the directive of the Secretary of State, which had hitherto been the responsibility of the Joint Committee for National Awards in Business Studies and Public Administration, the Joint Committee for National Certificates in Distribution and the National Committee for Certificates in Office Studies. The courses introduced by BEC to replace the existing provision could be regarded as occupying three tiers, using the yardstick of academic entry requirements, and the resultant grading located them across the FE and HE sectors according to level. The result was that not only did Haslegrave radically alter the work of FE colleges, it also had an impact upon the work of colleges of higher education and the polytechnics in respect of their HNC/D courses. It could be anticipated that the polytechnics would be more amenable to the changes instituted since the experiences gained as a result of implementing Crick had by this time been consolidated.

The philosophy adopted by BEC in fulfilment of its responsibilities is considered in detail in the next chapter. Here it may be recorded that the Council did not stop short at unifying the diversity of courses and validating committees. It assumed the mantle the Haslegrave Committee envisaged for it of making a radical contribution to business education. This was achieved through the assertion and implementation of a set of

"tenets of belief" which at least on paper clearly represented the most progressive thinking in the field that had so far been seen in the UK.

This thinking can be summarised as a commitment to:

(a) a thematic approach to the teaching of business;

(b) a student-centred methodology;

(c) a vocational bias; and

(d) integration between course modules.

Equally important was its attitude to implementation with its recognition that such a programme could only be fully instituted on an evolutionary basis. Its Chairman candidly stated, "We recognise that business education is a difficult field. If practical experience shows that any of the policies need to be modified, then the Council will be quite ready to consider modifications. Business must be and must be seen to be, a developing and flexible process."[88] The difficulties alluded to doubtlessly reflected the dismay of the Council at the lack of enthusiasm from employers in contributing constructive suggestions towards the shape of a fresh education programme in the business studies field. As a practical adjunct to its developmental work the Council had invited contributions from all interested parties, colleges, employers, trade unions and professional bodies, on the basis of its outline proposals, through the issue of a "Consultative Document" in June 1975. The Council was prepared to admit publicly an apathetic response from employers, and to the extent that responses were given, that the views they expressed on the nature of a suitable business education framework for the future indicated considerable divergence of opinion. The majority of approvals given for courses to run provided for a commencement date in September 1979. This allowed a period of roughly three years for colleges to

assimilate the content and methods of the BEC approach. As under the previous system courses were to be based upon three tiers, the General level for students holding less than four GCE 'O' levels, the National level for those with at least four GCE 'O' levels (or a General award at credit level), and the Higher National level for students possessing at least one GCE 'A' level, or a National award. At all three levels the detail of the courses was essentially prescriptive, but with some flexibility being allowed for by permitting choice of option studies. At Higher National level schemes had to be submitted by centres that were essentially centre-devised, but which followed guidelines laid down by BEC. Thus, courses ranged from those at General and National level which represented an externally-regulated syllabus and course design, to Higher National where colleges enjoyed a greater autonomy whilst still subject to the strictures of BEC philosophy and modular structure model for courses. All colleges were given discretionary powers to waive formal entry requirements and were exhorted to "recruit with integrity", which was cynically regarded by some teachers as an instruction to avoid failing a student once enrolled.

It probably holds true that as Parkes and others have suggested colleges only with great reluctance accepted the new demands placed upon them and their staffs by BEC. The new curricular designs, seen against the backdrop of a learning system which had remained unchanged for a great many years, represented what Leech[89] had described as a "quantum leap" for FE colleges. Many staff then, and a few even today, regarded the change as change for its own sake. They were unconvinced by the arguments that business education should develop, preferring to act as protagonists of the existing system which they regarded, whether out of respect for its longevity, fear of the unknown, lack of vision or genuine belief in its efficacy, as infinitely preferrable. Leech has said that the, "FE

colleges have undergone a significant change in working practices in order to provide these new courses; to some extent they have done no more than undergone the types of changes made by the industries the FE colleges serve. The important point is that these changes are at the very heart of what FE colleges are about."[90] These changes were readily apparent to teaching staff before the introduction of BEC courses, and this alone may have accounted for the widespread discontent that they heralded. If so, it is equally the case that changes once implemented soon establish themselves as the norm. The closer involvement of teachers in course operation especially through the self-moderating system that BEC relies upon increases the sense of professional awareness teachers have of themselves. In turn, this encourages them to view their own teaching more positively and critically, and perhaps become more innovatory in their own approaches to teaching.

Conclusion

Many, though not all, of the attributes of the BEC approach were echoes of the more radical degree programmes. Work experience, for instance, was to play an important part although it was not insisted on as a compulsory element, due it seems to regional variations in the responsiveness of industry and commerce to make places available, coupled with general economic stringency. The vocational element was stressed, through the use of four separate Boards (Business Studies, Financial Sector, Distribution and Public Administration). Registration with a Board determined the modular content of the course, so that a business studies student whilst studying some modules common to all Boards, would additionally study modules regarded as vocationally oriented towards his or her work and associated only with that Board (for example, Business Administration). The equivalent at degree level can be seen as the

basic degree in business studies linked with a complementary study, such as a language or computing. (For the problems associated with such designs see Woods[91].)

Notwithstanding the apparent specialism introduced by Boards, BEC was at pains to point out that its courses should "provide a broad educational experience", by which it meant an amalgam of vocational and general education. The use of business themes as a principal course focus followed the trend in some degrees away from the subject base towards business examined from a functional standpoint, a development seen by CNAA[92] as indicative of business studies acquiring its own unique status.

Finally, the emphasis placed upon the interrelationship between the course modules is symptomatic of a general trend, notably in many other areas of education as well as business studies, towards subject integration, which in its turn can lead to goal integration. This aspect of BEC's thinking, more than any other, has exposed the teachers and managers of business studies courses to a wave of thinking of major educational and philosophical challenge. Some have responded with enthusiasm, others with the rebuff that such change is anathema to the true needs of the business studies student. Many pay lip service to an ideal that they privately disagree with, do not understand, or lack the capacity to implement.

Some ten years on since BEC first presented its new approach to non-degree business education integration remains a contentious issue of principle in business circles. As Christine Gore[93], in her article "Towards a definition of business Studies" accurately concludes, "The main problems now appear to lie in the degree of integration, rather than the question of vocational emphasis, which seems well established."

It is to the issue of integration that the enquiry now turns.

CHAPTER 4

INTEGRATION

The curriculum debate

The process of education is pursued by means of curricular structures which reflect the beliefs of those putting them forward. It follows that the curriculum is, to a greater or lesser extent, a reflection of what its proponents hold to be true, or regard to be a suitable instrument for seeking out the truth. In a curriculum the particular forms which underpin it (political, religious, social), the specific course content, and the pattern into which this content is set, all provide indications as to the curriculum designer's conception of the nature of things. When the curriculum is subjected to a test of its validity the outcome will centre upon two concerns and how they are resolved. These are the measure of the honesty of the curriculum in identifying goals which are true to its proponent's own ideologies, belief systems and cultures, and the position of those goals in a manner appropriate to the same criteria.

The historical consequence is a curriculum debate which has continued since the age of Plato and is well documented in educational literature. In this debate seemingly irreconcilable differences emerge between competing interest groups, whose occupational, political, religious and cultural identities beget divergent approaches towards selection of curricular content and teaching methodologies - that is, what they hold to be worth learning and how they consider it should be taught. If the curriculum were to be value-free the debate would close, but this cannot be realised, for the curriculum is imbued with values which represent the

truth judgments of the particular community which has created it as its educational servant. Thus, the curriculum is the meeting place of moral, religious, political, economic and philosophical ideas and ideals. Within this dynamic and highly volatile environment the curriculum models which emerge are rarely consensus models, and the reality of curriculum planning is that it may more often present the appearance of a battleground than an area of enlightened and rational dialogue. Here one can witness the Marxist ethic in conflict with the Christian ethic, and the industrialist's pursuit of vocational utility conflicting with the liberal tradition of the disinterested pursuit of truth - education for its own sake - as advocated by the university academic. Each group pursues its perception of true knowledge, producing its own answers to what it believes this to be, through a philosophical discourse involving fundamental questions in epistemology, that is to say, the conditions that must be met if one is entitled to claim that something is or can be known. Such questions concern both the nature of knowledge in general and the features which characterise particular areas of knowledge. The work of Sheffler (1965)[1] is notable in respect of the general questions of importance which he identifies as appropriate in such an analysis. Hamlyn (1970)[2] has also provided a valuable contribution to this field of philosophy. Sheffler points out, using a recognitional argument, that a claim to knowledge is not a description of a state of mind, but a statement describing the world. Consequently, for a person properly to be able to say he or she knows something, he or she must have the capacity to recognise features of the world that are unambiguous. This supposes that there are in existence universals, which is in itself a fundamental philosophical problem (which has been explored by, amongst others, Staniland (1972)[3]).

It is, then, a characteristic of the conflicting interest groups that they possess their own sets of values, which are either actively

asserted or passively implied in the curricula they sponsor. For all these conflicting interest groups the curriculum is saying something definite about the world which they regard as certain and established. Such a curriculum is arrived at by a process of reasoning which provides the justification necessary to validate curriculum decision-making. Many questions, both of a philosophical and practical kind, are debated within the process. Underlying them all exists the primary enquiry; what is knowledge? This question is a philosophical hub from which related issues emerge and develop like the spokes of a wheel. One of these is concerned with whether knowledge is bound together by some essential quality characterising all knowledge, or is to be found in a state of differentiated forms existing independently of each other. And for those who recognise an interrelationship a supplementary question is posed: how are these bondings of knowledge described? Are they superficial, or located deep within the structure of knowledge? Is the bond, if it exists, what educationalists refer to as integration?

Paul Hirst[4] brings together these elements in his paper 'Education and the Nature of Knowledge.' He states, "Education, being a deliberate, purposeful activity directed to the development of individuals, necessarily involves considerations of value. Where are these values to be found? What is to be their content? How are they to be justified? They can be, and often are, values that reflect the interests of a minority group in the society. They may be religious, political, or utilitarian in character. They are always open to debate and detailed criticism, and are always in need of particular justification. Is there not perhaps a more ultimate basis for the values that should determine education, some more objective ground? That final ground has, ever since the Greeks, been repeatedly located in man's conception of the diverse forms of knowledge he has achieved."

The enquiry which follows upon Hirst's identification of the demand for a definition, in his exploration of the nature of knowledge, must come to an understanding and interpretation of the various conceptual components of knowledge. One of these is the concept of integration and an enquiry necessarily needs to recognise the place of integration within the curriculum, in order to identify its nature, and to attempt to discriminate between integration and related, but nevertheless distinguishable, concepts located in the same linguistic family as integration, such as interdisciplinarity and interrelatedness. This concept, as is subsequently discussed, cannot be avoided or glossed over in a knowledge enquiry. It is an inevitable and inescapable component of the enquiry, and only through an understanding of it does it become possible to recognise one of the vital facets of the quality or essence of knowledge, so that, "the complex interrelations of the domains [of knowledge] can be adequately appreciated."[5]

In conclusion, it has to be asked whether the knowledge enquiry engendered by philosophical concerns about what constitutes knowledge has any value. Brent (1978)[6] alludes to this question, "... is there any point to this debate? Is there really anything called 'truth' that can be said to transcend the particular arguments between different ... groups? Are not the claims to truth of conflicting cultures, ideologies and interest groups irreconcilable with one another? Is there ever likely to be a rational consensus, therefore, on the curriculum?" He reaches the positive conclusion that, "... there are certain fundamental concepts, procedures, differentiations and classifications that are presupposed by any human language in any society. This 'agreement in a human form of life', although impossible without society in some form, transcends the particular truth judgments of particular societies. There is, it is argued, at the basis of all human speech acts a common and universal framework of judgment that enables assessment to be made

of particular truth claims .... The grounds of their assessment is whether such claims are derivable from or in conflict with that to which any human language user must be committed .... The existence of this framework of judgment as the basis of our speech acts gives every point to the continuance of the discussion about what is true and on what the curriculum should be founded. The issue between warring curriculum factions is in principle resolvable ...."[7]

This is apparently an echo of both the early and later writings of Wittgenstein, succinctly summarised by him in the observations that, "All philosophy is 'Critique of Language"[8] and, subsequently, "The meaning of a concept is its use."[9]

Unity, and the nature of knowledge

The conceptual core of the expression integration appears to be that of a wholeness or oneness. Educational commentators frequently refer to the notion of "the unity of knowledge", thus Pring[10] speaks of, "a tradition in philosophy which argues for the essential unity of knowledge and which sees the apparent diversity of knowledge, the independence of particular truths, to be an illusion; and at crucial places this idealism impinges upon educational thinking", and Squires[11], "One of the motives behind interdisciplinarity may be an attempt to achieve a certain kind of unity ... to try and match the unity of the world as experienced with a unity of the world as known, as analysed, as conceived in terms of organised knowledge." Hirst and Peters[12] point to the importance of developing experience and knowledge systematically, "which are both independent and yet intimately interrelated." And they add the warning that, "To fail to attend to either of these aspects by sheer oversight, or in the name of some ill-considered theory of the unity of knowledge, is to distort the whole enterprise."

Bassett[13] has suggested that in British education the unity of knowledge approach has been current in primary education since the Hadow Report of 1926[14], the authors of which were themselves influenced by notions of a holistic view of the nature of knowledge. This view of an ultimate pattern or structure to all knowledge is not of recent origin. It can be traced through Hegel's metaphysic of wholeness[15] to Plato's theory of knowledge[16]. It is out of this unity view that integration is revealed as a knowledge condition. Unless the unity proponents are to suggest that our experience, as we experience it, is not diverse but entire, which none of them do, then what is left for them is the development of a philosophical thesis that seeks to explain what it is that binds knowledge together. Their propositions will try to reveal the world as it is, and man's place within it.

What has begun as an essentially metaphysical quest looses its purely abstract theoretical dimension on those occasions when its outcomes overflow into practical spheres of human activity, of which a classic example is the process of education. Given that the pursuit and development of knowledge has always been the primary concern of education it is both inevitable and highly appropriate that knowledge theories play a major role in the formulation of what should properly constitute the practical activity of educating, that is to say, of designing and implementing the curriculum.

In the process of education the interaction between teacher and taught seeks to broaden and refine the experience of the learner; to reconcile the differences between the world as subjectively experienced and the world as it is; to make knowledge meaningful. This cannot be achieved without subscribing to some theory of knowledge as a model for providing an overall framework into which the enormously diverse components of propositional facts can be fitted. "An educated man", state Peters

et al[17] is someone not only with specific skills, but also, "some body of knowledge and some kind of conceptual scheme to raise this above the level of a collection of disjointed facts. This implies some understanding of principles for the organisation of facts." But one can go further and recognise that such a theory of knowledge, bound as it must be to define what constitutes knowing, cannot hope to achieve a conclusion without coming to terms with the nature of truth, in other words, the reality of human experiences in place of those experiences which by reference to the theory propounded are now shown to be illusory. The process of philosophical analysis through which one may come to recognise what constitutes real knowledge, i.e., truth, cannot but fail to observe that mankind's complete knowledge capital, by whatever criteria are applied to arrive at this corpus, is of such range, depth and specialisation that any attempt to contain it within a general scheme capable of transcending such heterogeneity has a highly improbable quality about it. One talks of knowledge as general and specific; of fields of knowledge and of subjects and disciplines which use different approaches of truth criteria; of arts and sciences; of knowledge pure and applied. Is this all a part of the same fabric, the same map of knowledge which is interpreted in different ways to pursue different objectives? If it is, one wants to know how to interpret the map.

Philosophical enquiry in pursuing epistemological analysis has arrived at various theories of forms of knowledge, which in turn have prompted differing views as to the purpose of acquiring knowledge. The classic Greek view holds that the acquisition of knowledge is justified as the apprehension of ultimate reality. A counterpoint is provided by Hirst who, in his highly influential "Knowledge and the Curriculum"[18] proposes the pursuit of knowledge as being the ultimate educational objective on this basis of his conceptual analysis of the principles

inherent in the activity itself. He shares the Greeks' view that knowledge is organised, and that the structure of knowledge ought to be the determinant of the content and scope of the curriculum, but parts company with the Greeks when called upon to define the objects and forms of knowledge. What Hirst is seeking, in common with other educational philosophers past and present, is, "an education based fairly and squarely on the nature of knowledge itself."[19]

For Plato the human goal was knowledge of the Good.[20] This he regarded as the ultimate state of knowledge fulfilment. It was achieved by developing an awareness of certain Forms, for instance, beauty and justice. This awareness consisted of appreciating the essence of things. Geometry played a major role in the Platonic curriculum, for it embodied mathematical ideals and provided a bridge between belief and true knowledge. Thus knowledge of a circle is knowledge of a concept; the rendering of a circle into physical forms on to paper is a tangible way of achieving an understanding of the concept, but only the concept exists in a pure form for it is impossible to produce a physically perfect circle. Geometry was a means of developing an appreciation of the division between the physical and non-physical realms, leading to knowledge of the essences, through which knowledge of the Good, that is, ultimate truth, might eventually be achieved. The Platonic theory of knowledge, and the theories of those whose thinking has been based upon it in the development of elaborated theories, presupposes an underlying wholeness of knowledge, and this has clear curriculum implications. Moreover, the process by which knowledge is built up and refined, which represents the signpost to the goal, is in this sense of just as much significance as what is being acquired. The process is a necessary pre-condition for attaining the product. Plato, Hegel and Marx, whilst at variance in respect of their epistemological reasoning, are in accord

in seeing this process as dialectical.

For modern Marxist de-schoolers like Friere[21] the combination of teaching methodology and the conception of the reality of human experience is indissoluable and provides a vivid contrast with mainstream traditional educational thinking which, as seen through Friere's eyes, is a "banking mode". Friere attacks this approach in respect of its misplaced philosophical assumptions, criticising the teaching aim and the method by which it is realised, for again content and process are being seen as two facets of an underlying view of education which encapsulates a grouping of social, economic and political goals (none of which Friere shares). For him the traditional banking approach, "attempts, by mythicising reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way men exist in the world."[22] The mystification is achieved through the instrumentality of the teacher, whose "role is to regulate the way the world 'enters into' the students. His task is ... to 'fill' the students by making deposits of information which he considers constitute true knowledge. And since men 'receive' the world as passive entities, education should make them more passive still ...."[23] Friere sees this approach as being characterised by its compartmentalised subject-based curriculum underpinned by the assumption that subject knowledge is essentially discrete and that the differentness of subjects is ultimately explained by each subject being the antithesis of the others. His alternative is a "problem-posing education". It is an approach diametrically opposed to the banking mode. It wholly rejects the idea of static knowledge transmitted by the teacher in the form of answers to questions which the student has not raised or would not have chosen to ask. The lecture method, a mechanism which is an anathema to Friere, is ideally suited to fulfil the role of transmitting static knowledge. He replaces it with a thematically organised integrated curriculum using a dialectic teaching method operated

on a problem-posing basis, hence, "The task of the dialogical teacher in an interdisciplinary team working on the thematic universe revealed by their investigation is to, "'re-present' that universe to the people from whom he first received it - and to 're-present' it not as a lecture but as a problem."[24] For Friere the true knowledge that is revealed is the Marxist view of historical development based upon economic needs which has created a class-bound society: an explanation of the present character of the material world. Platonic and Hegelian thinking also leads to a recognition of the world that fits into an all-embracing interpretation, with the difference that ultimate reality for Hegel was the divinity of the state - a spiritual view of the world, and for Plato the metaphysical awareness of Forms. There is nonetheless a strong philosophical continuity between these schools of thought in terms of the explanation they provide in support of the unity view of knowledge. They see in the pursuit of an identified goal, be it the essentialism of Plato or the dialectic materialism of the Marxists, a universal coherence in what for them is true. Within each particular philosophy there lies the means for distinguishing between truth and falsehood, and for containing that truth within an interlocking framework. However, whilst this proposes a consensual appreciation by means of a dialectic of the way individual awareness is enlightened, it provides little practical guidance as to the content of the curriculum.

Three major questions seem to emerge from the foregoing. Firstly, is the philosophical analysis that points to a unity of knowledge sustainable? Secondly, if the unity contention is sustainable, what practical message does this contain for the educational environment generally and for curriculum design specifically? And finally, does the concept of a unity of knowledge as applied to education extend beyond a description of the relationship between components of knowledge, so as to act as

a more pervasive force which says something about how we should teach and how institutions should be structured.

The unity view analysed

Firstly, it should be pointed out that the meaning which underlies the expression "unity of knowledge" is ambiguous. On the one hand, the expression can be regarded as a broadly descriptive reference to the commonality of all experiences qualifying as that which constitutes what is true, through the application of objective truth criteria. On the other, it may be held to mean the way in which individual knowledge components can only be made meaningful if they are fitted within a structure which organises them. This is sometimes referred to as an "atomistic" view of knowledge, described by two leading commentators in terms of, "reality as comprising a multiplicity of nuggets of truth."[25] Disembodied knowledge arguably is not knowledge at all, but merely awareness or meaningless experience. The experience or awareness of the observer can only become meaningful as connections are made, such as those of cause and effect, and as the interrelationship between tangible and, ultimately, abstract things is appreciated. The concept of a cup becomes knowledge rather than mere experience only when it is related to other concepts, such as drinking (its use quality) or design and colour (its aesthetic quality), or physical characteristics (its qualities of dimension, weight and composition). The more developed is the range of conceptual relationships, so the more profound the quality of the knowledge becomes in the mind of the knower. The knowledge can be used in a variety of ways.

In a framework or structure which tries to coherently relate tangible and intangible knowledge to the dynamic world there is a unity of knowledge which, regarded from a purely logical viewpoint, appears to be unfolding.

Even in knowledge of the mundane cup, the types and levels of knowledge that were identified, conceptually so different if looked at in isolation, are brought together in a cohesive way when applied to the tangible knowledge object under discussion. Unity thus appears to be an attempt at describing the prerequisite for the knowledge condition. In Pring's words, "To have a concept is to have some principle of unity in what would otherwise be a series of totally unrelated happenings."[26] Unity, it seems, is a necessary component of effective knowledge development, but this being the case is not to say that a pre-condition of the development has to be an awareness of Pring's "principle of unity". On the contrary it will be a consequence of the development, rather than a cause of it, and it is for this reason that unity unfolds. The emerging picture of the world steadily assimilated by the learner is refined as learning potential is fulfilled through growth in the mental faculties of recognition and identification. New connections are made and interrelationships observed, and out of this growing perception is born a comprehension of the nature of things. The measure of the knowledge and understanding that we carry is determined by our use of language to demonstrate it. Wittgenstein sees this demonstration as a language game. Observation of our use of language indicates our level of knowledge and understanding, thus we do not need to see mental images, as nominalists such as Locke suggest. Our understanding of higher order concepts such as aesthetics and morality is revealed in our ability to use these concepts to judge and discriminate. It may be, however, that our understanding is not entirely language-bound. Whitehead[27] has suggested that, "all men enjoy flashes of insight beyond meanings stabilised in etymology and grammar." Nevertheless, such insights can only be effectively communicated if they are translatable into the agreed language of ideas. And this language is, of itself, probably the most obvious manifestation of the binding together of ideas, so

that in our use of language we are constantly re-inforcing the notion that because ideas rendered into words can be talked about within a common frame of reference, then this carries with it the inference that the ideas, qua ideas, must be a part of a whole. If this be so, it is a view based upon an ill-founded logic. Common agreement as to the meaning of concepts certainly does not imply the existence of a structure, located outside that language, but expressed through it, that unites the sum of what is known. If there is a quality of oneness or ultimate indivisibility of knowledge it is not because language creates it even though language expresses it, and one needs to look elsewhere for an explanation. Consequently, the work of philosophers who have engaged in an analysis of the philosophical foundations of the curriculum requires consideration.

What is revealed is a diversity of opinion. The dominant view remains the Platonic model, with its assertion of an ordering of all things within a general philosophical scheme and a unity derived from pursuit of the Good - an essentialist approach. There is clear evidence of a direct link between current curricular thinking and the basic Platonic model, echoing the observation attributed to A.N. Whitehead that, "The history of Western philosophy is, after all, no more than a series of footnotes to Plato's philosophy." It has also been suggested that Hegelian thought, with its refined view of the nature of knowledge and understanding, which builds upon aspects of Platonic thought, has had a significant effect upon curricular thinking in Britain. For Hegel the universe is rational. His revolutionary logic of the dialectic involves a recognition that man reaches truth and rational order within society by a process of reasoning, that is, by testing the assertions made by others. Truth is achieved through the application of thesis and antithesis to reach a synthesis. This may then form a new thesis, which over time is testable in the same way until finally the whole truth is

known. For Hegel thesis and antithesis are both rational parts of the whole - the synthesis of the conflicting propositions. Pring, in his analysis of integration, identifies the evidence of Hegelian thought in two major reports, Crowther[28] on sixth form education, and Newsom[29] on the academically less able secondary school pupil, and in Schools Council working papers. He states: "The Crowther report says of the sixth-former that 'as he sees how the facts he has been handling in his own subject knit together, he begins to wonder how his subject fits into the whole field of knowledge. He reaches out for himself towards a wider synthesis.' Again the report says that 'it is basic to our thinking that what is done in majority time should form a coherent whole, one subject continuously reinforcing another, so that teaching and learning may be enriched by cross-reference.' The Newsom Report is similarly concerned with how subjects 'fit in' with the whole field of knowledge. It says 'the separate lessons and subjects are single pieces of mosaic; and what matters most is not the numbers and colours of the separate pieces, but what pattern they make when put together.' 'Coherence', 'synthesis', 'balance', 'pattern', raise epistemological questions about the unity of knowledge."[30]

There are many critiques of Platonic and Hegelian philosophy: for instance Crombie (1962)[31] on Plato, and Popper (1945)[32] on Hegel. Both thinkers share a belief in a single ultimate metaphysical truth; for Plato, the Good, for Hegel, the State. For Plato true knowledge is intuitive and cannot be rendered into language. For Hegel there is an historical dynamic in which it is seemingly impossible for us to say where in the dynamic we are. The problem this creates for curriculum planning based upon such philosophies is the difficulty in working around a goal that cannot be identified in advance. Furthermore, we are unable to apply principles of objective verification to such philosophies.

Both Plato and Hegel are engaged in raising the right questions, viz. what kinds of things are true, but we also need criteria set out in advance of any enquiry, to help distinguish what is true and what is false, or at least what will enable us to proceed in the right direction. In this debate we need to assess whether the unity view represents the total map of knowledge, and, as noted above, this involves epistemological questions. In his leading and influential paper "Curriculum Integration", Richard Pring analyses the epistemological underpinnings associated with the unity view and its integrated curriculum implications.

Pring's philosophical research leads him to identify two separate theses in support of unity, which he refers to as the 'strong' thesis and the 'weak' thesis, and these are now considered. The 'strong' thesis recognises that there is in all knowledge a unity. As has been previously suggested there is undoubtedly a prerequisite of the knowledge condition which involves a certain integration of experience: knowledge, to be meaningful, demands organisation. As Pring puts it, "If experiences were not integrated, there would be no knowledge."[33] There can be little contention in such a proposition. It is an observation echoed by many other philosophers. Thus to take an example, Newman[34] remarks, "that knowledge, in proportion as it tends more and more to be particular, ceases to be knowledge." As Pring comments this is no more than a recognition that knowledge and understanding be developed together, and that if this is what developing an integrated curriculum is concerned with it is "a meek enough request".[35] The 'strong' thesis goes much further than this and asserts a system of knowledge in which any knowledge claim gains meaning or sense from, "a whole system of propositions that are logically or conceptually related even though they are not of the same formal kind"[36], i.e., where it would be possible to observe that, for instance, new medical research findings would be bound to affect, in some

way, all other areas of knowledge. Thus a development in genetic engineering would have to be shown to impinge upon the social sciences, a new economic theory be shown to touch upon moral knowledge, and so on. By way of analogy what the observer would be seeing in this process, were it possible to develop such a faculty of awareness, would be the amendment or alteration of all the parts, so that as in dropping a stone into a pond the ripples affect the entire surface, but with diminishing intensity as they radiate out, whilst the level of the pond is infinitesimally raised. This is the daunting task facing the true integrationalist. A general synthesis has to be shown, in which a new whole comes into being: "There would have to be some formal characteristic of the whole from which the parts gained some new identity, this characteristic belonging only to the whole."[37] Pring recognises the possibility that the support for this view is at least in part based upon a purely emotional appeal, which may have as its source monism, "in the sense that every judgment qualifies reality as a whole"[38], and he also quotes Froebel's view, with its echoes of Platonic intuition, of an all-controlling law "necessarily based on an all-pervading energetic, living self-conscious, and hence eternal unity."[39] Froebel adds, "a quietly observant human mind, a thoughtful, clear human intellect, has never failed, and will never fail to recognise this unity."

Pring's 'weak' thesis sees unity in a less profound way; a "unity of knowledge within broad fields of experience." The difficulty he experiences in clarifying precisely what this means translated into curriculum terms lies partly in the variety of 'fields of experience' which different commentators recognise and partly in the nature of relationship that is being advocated between the different fields. In the first case one is brought back to the systems that are used to organise knowledge according to agreed criteria for selection and

truth verification. "Only where there is public agreement about the classification and categorisation of experience and thought can we hope for any objectivity within them"[40], state Hirst and Peters, and this demand for objectivity is essential not only within these categorisations, but also in order to embark upon any discussion of relationships between them and shared qualities and characteristics that may exist across them. Clearly, the effort which philosophers have made over the centuries in arriving at a recognition of a coherent broad scheme of knowledge lies at the very heart of the enquiry for unity. It has previously been noted that the Platonic curriculum was achieved through a theory of knowledge which proclaimed what should be included in the curriculum, viz.: that which leads to true knowledge, but that its ultimate weakness lies in its lack of verifiability and the impossibility of describing it. Recognising these deficiencies, and examining knowledge in a less mystical way, has produced alternative structures which are both linguistically analysable by their users, and describable, and here the contribution of Paul Hirst is highly significant. Hirst[41] has identified a set of unique categories or forms of knowledge, each of which emerges by reference to the following qualities:

(i) a network of interrelated concepts, logically independent of the network of each other form;

(ii) the existence of distinctive tests for truth, enabling the distinctive concepts of the form to be instantiated, and its distinctive propositions to be validated; and

(iii) the existence of skill in addition to knowledge in order to apply the distinctive truth tests of the form, so

that learning demands contact with practitioners.

Hirst recognises the following possible knowledge forms[42]; the empirical, the mathematical, the philosophical, the moral, the aesthetic, and the historical/sociological, although he has doubts concerning the latter.[43] In common with others who have sought to achieve a scheme of knowledge, Hirst has been criticised on various grounds. It has, for example, been argued that his forms are not based upon a conscious decision concerning the logic of the curriculum[44]; it has also been suggested that Hirst places the emphasis upon passive rather than active knowledge, i.e., knowing 'that' rather than knowing 'how', and uses the notion of category loosely.[45] Be this as it may, out of Hirst's categories we have an open-ended view of knowledge, enabling different fields of knowledge to be constructed according to particular needs or interests: "I see no reason why such organisations of knowledge, which I shall refer to as 'fields', should not be endlessly constructed according to particular theoretical or practical interests ...."[46] "Subjects in the disciplines as we at present have them are in no way sacrosanct on either logical or psychological grounds. They are necessarily selections from the forms of knowledge that we have ...."[47] It is this type of curricular organisation which Pring sees as the 'weak' thesis. It is not a total unity, for the categories of knowledge employed are ultimately separate and irreducible, but they can be used to illuminate in their own unique way any chosen topic of study. Pring uses as an example the study of man. For Hirst, development of knowledge of the forms should be the aim of a liberal education, but may not be easily achievable in a specialist education. In the liberal approach the choice of subject (i.e., in Hirst's terms the "field of study") will be pragmatic, and concerned with its capacity for paradigmatic representation rather than its innate qualities.

It is interesting to note, however, that Hirst's proposals are seen by some as a justification for the traditional subject-centred curriculum[48], through, among other reasons, the allegedly pure knowledge bias. His influence over modern curricular thinking is evidenced by the extent to which his work, in addition to its impact in Britain, has been critically analysed abroad, particularly in the USA (Soltis (1979[49] and 1984[50]), Martin (1981)[51], Feinberg (1983)[52], Schilling (1986)[53]).

Pring is of the view that a study which uses "broad fields of experience" as the mechanism for exploring categorical knowledge has a "unity which is built in, as it were, to the very concept of knowledge [and] is manifest in the different disciplines and forms wherein knowledge is developed." And he continues, "this unity must find its logical basis ultimately in the 'categorial' structure that underpins, or provides the essential conditions for, any thinking whatsoever."[54]

Earlier, it was mentioned that Pring draws attention under his 'weak' thesis to precisely what integration means here in practical curriculum terms. In particular, he draws attention to the terminology applied to integrated courses, questioning the valid use of the term integration where the activity being pursued does not, on a proper analysis, fall within his conception of a true unity. He expressed this concern in the following terms: "the focusing of one's knowledge on a particular set of questions does not involve necessarily a new integration of that knowledge. There is not necessarily any new structure to that knowledge arising out of one's concern for a particular problem or question or theme. Or at least, if there is such a structure, then it would have to be demonstrated. It would have to be shown how the idea or the problem or the subject of the study provided a logical, as opposed to a purely contingent, unity to different disciplines. If this cannot be shown, then it would seem that what we have is not an integrated but rather an <u>interdisciplinary</u> approach ...."[55]

The test of contingency is therefore critical to the determination of what is taking place. If integration in the sense used by Pring is not taking place then, as he remarks, it avoids the difficult philosophical problems that have been observed above.

To proceed further with this analysis it now becomes necessary to place the current usage, or alleged usage, of curriculum integration under direct scrutiny in order to seek an answer to two further questions, namely whether it is possible to use the term 'integration' to cover educational activities falling outside the strict parameters of the curriculum, and whether there is an abuse of the proper meaning of integration through loose and confused terminology which conflates integration with similar, but semantically discrete terms. In doing so one may be mindful of Wittgenstein's enjoinder that, "Everything that can be said can be said clearly."[56] The following two observations help to illustrate why these questions are important. Firstly, Barnett[57]: "It is not always clear to which use the term 'integration' is being put. Suppose we categorise the different meanings of integration into those which refer to:

(a) the epistemological features of knowledge (subjects, concepts, relational ideas, general principles);

(b) the educational process (organisation, pacing and transmission of knowledge, and relationships between those involved in the learning process);

(c) the utilisation of knowledge (e.g., in a professional situation, for psychological development; for social 'need').

The claims made for 'integration' have to be assessed quite separately in terms of the level of meaning at stake .... The desirability or even possibility of integration on one level says nothing for its desirability or possibility on another." Secondly, Pring[58]: "... it can be seen that the very application of the word 'integration' is ambiguous. And, unless this ambiguity is cleared up, what is being claimed by the 'integrationalist' is limited."

These concerns, cast in the form of questions, lead to practical outcomes relevant to anyone involved in the educational process, even though they are generated from the ideological preferences of curriculum designers. They are now considered in more detail.

Practical issues of integration

The importance of integration to the curriculum lies as much within the practical outcomes for teachers and students which an integrated approach generates, as with the philosophical issues involved an examination of the question, "what do we mean by integration and why should it be adopted as a curriculum approach?" It follows that there is nothing esoteric or sterile about a philosophical enquiry directed towards resolving these questions, even if such enquiry concludes that there is, in fact, no real concern here at all. If such be the case, then as Pring observes, whilst, "one will have devoted a great deal of philosophical energy to showing that there is no real philosophical problem, but then (to parody Wittgenstein) it might be argued that the chief job of philosophy is to do itself out of business - and if, at the same time, we do a few mistake curriculum performers out of business, this may be a good thing."[59] Such an outcome, even though it might be regarded as a negative one, is nonetheless a practical outcome, enabling the curriculum designer to avoid the pitfall of constructing his course upon assumptions of major educational

importance which have been revealed as fallacies.

An appropriate starting point for analysing any concept is to ascertain what meaning or meanings are commonly attributed to it. The establishment of a precise descriptive meaning then enables the researcher to test out the concept against events, observations and other subjects which are claimed to demonstrate the qualities of the concept, enabling discriminations to be made. Discriminations are of especial importance when the concept is part of a linguistic family of additional concepts and terms which are used as interchangeable or as virtual synonyms with the concept under scrutiny. Such is the case with integration. Great confusion can result in understanding an application where related concepts, which are however self-sufficient and carry their own distinctive meanings, are used in an interchangeable manner as though to suggest they mean the same thing. "Integration" is part of a linguistic group of this kind. It is vital to assess semantically whether such expressions as "interdisciplinarity", "interrelatedness", "multi-disciplinary" and "thematic" are totally synonymous with "integration", or whether, as seems likely, they do possess qualities which distinguish them from their linguistic cousins. Such an examination is necessary because of the untidy and loose usage of these terms in the hands of educationalists. Examples of this are rife and the meanings of the authors can become increasingly unclear. Thus, in a paper produced by the Group for Research and Innovation in Higher Education (1975)[60] interdisciplinarity and integration are used in an apparently interchangeable sense. Squires[61] appears to do likewise. Dressel[62] refers separately to experiences which are integrated and integrating, and in similar vein Lynch[63] refers to BTEC courses in terms of their "contribution to integration" which represent "an integrative focusing". BTEC itself makes confusing references, thus in its First Policy Statement[64] the underlying philosophy of courses

involved, "a positive attempt to interrelate the contents;" certain fundamental concepts were identified as "major integrative factors in the learning process", (the Central Themes); and the courses were "designed to offer a broad, integrated, educational experience." In an appendix to this document (Appendix B) one of the stated terms of reference for the influential Education Committee was, "To co-ordinate, as required, the development of interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary courses." It is not easy for the curriculum planner to design, nor for the practising teacher to deliver a course in which these elements are specified as part of the process or product, or both, if there is ambiguity and uncertainty as to their precise meaning and import. Is a teacher on an integrated course required to demonstrate connections between separate knowledge components, or to present a coherent whole through some form of synthesis that he, the teacher, or the student, or both working together have deliberately set out to achieve? Alternatively, is the integration that is being sought directed towards an educational behavioural outcome that the student can demonstrate, for example, solve problems using analytical techniques which are a composite of the approaches used in various separately taught fields of study? Or is the integration a description of the process of study being undertaken, so that the integrations are not consciously made by either teacher or student, because there is no separation of the parts in accordance with, say, the traditional academic approach of discrete discipline areas? There are many integration models that can be suggested, and these are not restricted exclusively to learning processes or syllabus content. So widespread has become the trend towards integration that its impact can be seen not just within the pedagogical sphere but throughout the educational structure. Thus, Lynch[65], in a survey of trends and developments in further education in 1978 recognised, "... a number of clear

trends [which] can be identified as having taken place within the last decade or so which have led to an accelerating pace of collaborative innovation and integration. The first of these has been the movement towards greater institutional integration; the second is the establishment of greater collaboration and integration in the validation of courses; and, the third is the development of more integrated curricular provision both in content and organisation." Again one senses here a very broad use of "integration" as a description of a human dynamic, and Lynch apparently recognises this when, having referred to the merger of various validating bodies into a single organisation, BEC, he comments, "But the Business Education Council's contribution to integration has been much more fundamental than mere organisational or structural change .... The integrated build up of core areas of study is nothing less than an epistemological revolution for this level of work."[66]

Clearly, in the use of his language Lynch is recognising that within these variant forms of integration, curriculum integration, the scene of the "epistemological revolution", occupies a distinct category of experience which distinguishes it from the institutional and validation categories. But one is left to ponder upon what conceptual similarities exist between the three examples of integration he cites. Is this, perhaps, an example of the indiscriminate use of the term? It is clear that such categories may indeed exist, for instance, along the lines of the classification that Barnett has suggested. But what is needed is some explanation of what is actually going on, if the teacher involved in course delivery is to come to terms with an educational environment in which integrations are occurring at every level. A distinction needs to be drawn between what may be described as "academic integration" on the one hand and "curriculum integration" on the other. In a certain sense in practice they do impinge upon each other, but only as a casual link. An example may help

to illustrate the point. Suppose two hitherto separate departments in an educational institution, Departments A and B, are merged to form a single departmental unit. The new unit now decides upon its administrative structure and organisation. This may be on the lines of the arrangements for the old Department A or Department B, or combine aspects of both, or be based upon an entirely new structure. Has administrative integration taken place? To many it will have, particularly if the revised structure subsumes elements from the separate structures of Departments A and B. If this is to be truly regarded as a form of integration, it is integration of a very physical, corporeal kind since it is bonded by the concrete features of the new enterprise; its lines of communication, resource organisation and allocation, control mechanisms and so on. Now suppose the head of the newly created department, drawing upon the now broader range of staff expertise, develops a new curriculum which harnesses this expertise. The course is entitled 'Environmentalism' and its aim is to develop in students an awareness of environmental issues and their implications for society. A political scientist, an economist and a sociologist are used to teach the course. They are all attached to the new department and have been allocated the same workroom. Is this curriculum integration? Again, to some extent it will be. But how is the nature of this integration distinguishable from the administrative integration referred to above, and where does the integration lie? The answer is that the new curriculum uses the knowledge and skills of the individual teachers, versed in the language and methodologies of their own disciplines to illuminate an area of study which crosses discipline boundaries. This appears to be the location of the integration. The thematic approach adopted by the course viz.: the environment, draws upon the conceptual capital of each teacher to achieve the curricular aims and in so doing, it can be argued, the nature of

the integration is a "goal integration".[67] Clearly, the nature and purpose of these differing forms of integration is of very separate kind.

If there is confusion here it may well be that its origins lie in an apparently affirmatory quality which integration carries with it, a point which is developed later. Suffice it to note here that to be associated with innovation and therefore with contemporary practice is something most aspiring managers in education regard as a desirable goal, for reasons which include the consequential prestige value for the organisation they represent and its spin-off, the enhancement of their own professional esteem. So to be seen to be actively integrating may be more important than asking what it is that is actually being done and whether it is worthwhile. To say, "I operate a fully integrated department" may be a grandiose way of saying, "we have open government here" or "my staff work as a team", both desirable characteristics but hardly warranting the appellation of 'integration'.

In respect of the curriculum, attention has already been drawn to the importance of clarifying the precise meanings attached to the language of integration. CERI, the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, recognises three distinct but related terms which are often used in the context of integrative approaches, "multi-disciplinary", "pluri-disciplinary" and "interdisciplinary". Multi-disciplinary is seen as describing the juxtaposition of various disciplines, sometimes having no apparent connections, and pluri-disciplinary is assumed to be more or less related to this same definition. Interdisciplinary is a description of the interaction between two or more different disciplines ranging from the simple communication of ideas to the mutual integration of organising concepts, methodologies, procedures, epistemologies, terminologies and data. The definition of a discipline, upon which these expressions build, is a specific body of teachable knowledge with its own background of

education, training, procedures, methods and content areas. Gore[68] sees multi-discipline study to be aimed at, "allowing a more comprehensive view to be developed of a broader study area, by providing an introduction to several different disciplines," whilst interdisciplinary study goes further and, "enables the student to develop the ability to use models provided by alternative disciplines to analyse situations." Her view of interdisciplinary is shared by Pring, who explores the interface between this form of study and integration, observing that, "integration raises certain questions in epistemology to which 'interdisciplinary' remains indifferent."[69] Integration changes the subject of the study, he considers, whilst interdisciplinary study does not. One does not have to search far, however, to discover alternative views of what these terms connote, thus Hyland[70] talks about, "a version of integration designed to promote practical thinking. This may more accurately be described as multi-disciplinary rather than inter-disciplinary since the idea is, not necessarily to integrate the whole curriculum, but to deal with practical issues ... in an appropriate manner, giving due emphasis to all the various areas of study which have a bearing on them." Certainly he appears to see interdisciplinary as 'integrated', and, possibly, multi-disciplinary as 'interdisciplinary'. The concern that this sort of confusion raises is in the danger of misinterpreting the language of the curriculum. The use by external bodies such as BTEC of terms like 'interdisciplinary', etc. makes it vital that a clear common picture is held of what precisely is being envisaged. It may be in response to such concerns that, in the case of BTEC, efforts have been made latterly to give clearer guidance on these matters than its original literature achieved. It remains the case, however, that definitions are less helpful than practical examples, thus BTEC's definition of "interdisciplinary themes"

as, "integrative themes central to the development of students' competence, in particular their versatility to meet the broad and developing needs of industry and commerce. They are designed to shift emphasis away from limited interpretations of the knowledge requirements for particular occupational areas"[71], is a very bland statement of little practical help. It is more like a statement of intent. This deficiency is, however, made up for by supporting literature which seeks to provide the practitioner with some suggested approaches to the implementation of its courses through the medium of the 'integrative themes'.[72]

Integration, higher education, and curricular change

It is apparent from even a superficial survey of contemporary British education that there is a growing general awareness of and interest in the issues integration raises. This is reflected in the steadily increasing fund of literature on the subject. It is to be doubted whether the awareness and interest has stimulated the development of the literature rather than having emerged as a response to it, given that curriculum change and innovation tends to be led institutionally. From the teacher's standpoint there may appear to be little opportunity to challenge or otherwise affect the evolution of the educational process. And as for the causes of change, such as the shift away from compartmentalised subject specialist teaching towards an integrated approach, it is difficult to identify any specific and exclusive causal component. It is likely that it is accounted for by a mixture of ideological and psychological motives. Barnett alludes to these, commenting that in addition to the compelling psychological appeal of the unity view there may also be a sociological interpretation in which the move to integrated codes acts as a conservative influence since, "the basic forms of knowledge are less susceptible to fundamental challenge and transformation."[73]

There is, it should be noted, no shortage of literature on the use of change agents, and Hoyle (1975)[74] in particular has observed that the use of deliberate change strategies has been a notable feature of modern British education by means of creating such bodies as the Schools Council and the Nuffield Foundation. Significantly, Pring points to the influence of the Schools Council in moves towards the integrated curriculum.

In further and higher education, which has addressed integration issues later than the schools, integration has become a major element in the design and delivery of many courses, ranging across the academic spectrum from BTEC courses to degree courses. Often it is an explicitly stated course goal.

Historically, it was during the 1960's, in British schools and especially at primary level, where the integrated approach to curriculum first exerted a significant influence over the thinking of educationalists in terms of practical action. It was advocated as a valuable tool by which to achieve a wide range of alternative outcomes, as reflected in the literature of the period. Postlethwaite (1964)[75] saw it in terms of integrating the pupils' experience, Brown and Precious (1968)[76] identified the use of the integrated timetable, and Yardley (1970)[77] supported integrating the "various ways of learning" used by pupils. The retreat from subject specialisms towards a broad integration of knowledge was encouraged by Schools Council Working Papers of the period, and the Plowden Report (1967)[78]. As Pring points out, the encouragement towards integration in its various guises that these sources of writing advocate is underpinned by an assumption of its appropriateness. Integration, he says, is an "approval word".[79] Barnett supports this contention. It is "an 'in-word'" and "is assumed to be a good thing".[80] Such affirmation carries with it an obvious danger that integration can easily find its way into a curriculum without an adequate examination of its appropriateness.

The process of curriculum design involves asking certain questions. Taba (1971) states that, "a good design describes the elements and the relationship between them and their supporting principles in such a way as to indicate priority amongst the factors and principles to be considered."[81] Various models to effect curriculum design in an orderly and thorough way have been identified, for example, Tyler (1949)[82], Taba (1962)[83] and Jenkins and Shipman (1976)[84]. Nevertheless, it may in practice be relatively easy to by-pass the rigorous approaches these models advocate, resulting in an uncritical, possibly mechanistic selection of curricular components chosen for administrative or organisational convenience, or for their status as enjoying broad contemporary approval in educational circles. The determining factor will be the mechanisms used by the validation agencies, and how critical they are in their analysis of the new design. There can be no guarantee that if a critical path is followed it will necessarily lead to a valuable outcome: for instance, a curriculum proposal may flounder for lack of empirical evidence to support the philosophical contentions of its advocates. However, within the activity of critical analysis itself there is inherent value - namely a clarification of and justification for decision-making through argument and analysis. Wittgenstein's comment that, "philosophy is not a theory but an activity"[85] seems apposite here. Moreover, the articulation of ideas generated by such curriculum debate should also benefit those whose task it is to deliver the curriculum. In relation to issues of integration, it should help to overcome the sort of difficulty recognised by Haigh (1975)[86] in his telling remark that whilst teachers seem to understand the concept they might find it, "difficult to come to terms with integration in a theoretical sense." The philosophical nature of integration must surely make a theoretical appreciation a pre-requisite of any understanding.

Barnett makes the surprising observation that in the field of higher education this uncritical approach is prevalent; "What precisely 'integration' in courses of higher education is, or whether it is actually worth promoting, is rarely asked."[87] He adds as a rider that those investigations which have been carried out in higher education concerning the validity of integration have been conducted in a purely theoretical manner, as he says, "a theoretical vacuum", whereas in contrast the theory has been put to the practical test in the schools. Quite why it should be that in the higher education sector there is a lack of investigation into the meaning of integration, and that what work has been done exists in the realm of theoretical debate is not clear. It is particularly surprising given the culture of higher education, which is located as much within the pursuit of practical applications and vocationalism as it is to the development of theoretical knowledge.

Teachers, institutions and integration

The paucity of research into the issues associated with integration may be at least partially explained by the attitudinal characteristics traditionally demonstrated by teaching staff towards curriculum change and development. These have been previously alluded to and are essentially associated with notions of professional status and disciplinary integrity which are perceived to be threatened by any attempt at creating a coherent whole out of hitherto discrete course components, in other words, a shift towards what teachers broadly regard as subject integration. This is the corollary to the "academic drift" referred to in Chapter 3, a phenomenon involving the tendency for innovative academic institutions to revert to the mean. The possible reasons underlying this phenomenon have been examined by Elton (1981)[88].

A further explanation may be a more deep-seated failure of research

work in higher education, in the area of the relationship between the curriculum and teaching/learning issues, and higher education policy. Oxtoby (1980)[89] has commented that, "The nature of current research activity continues to pose many questions about quality and effectiveness, quite apart from the fact that the volume of research is almost certainly insufficient to be of real value to practitioners and policy-makers." Heywood (1969)[90], for example, has specifically noted the lack of work on a theory of integration in relation to sandwich courses.

However, the observations made by Barnett, writing in 1981, no longer appear to represent an entirely accurate picture of the condition of further and higher education, for there is a growing literature centred upon the analysis of integration at this level, albeit still a limited one which is directed more towards theoretical than practical issues. It is germane to this discussion to consider the possible causes of this development.

Given a growing awareness of and interest in the significance of integration as an educational goal within colleges as, for example, in Smithers (1976)[91], Lynch (1978)[92], Hyland (1980)[93], Carman (1980)[94], Anderson (1984)[95], which is itself but one facet of a broader debate upon the shape of education for the future, what has been the stimulus for the shift? It was noted earlier that whatever may be the underlying motive for change, it is generally effected institutionally. Evidence suggests that the most notable change catalyst in the non-degree business field has been BTEC, for the literature previously referred to invariably takes as its reference point the courses designed by the Board with their emphasis upon vocationalism and practical work-related studies, which the Board asserts should be achieved by a process involving integrative design components of a knowledge and skills kind.

The role of the Council in bringing these elements into the curriculum arena emphasises how the changes that have occurred in business studies

owe their origins more to institutional intervention than to a movement brought about by the demands of practising teachers. This goes some way towards providing an explanation of the mixture of antagonism and lack of conviction shown by many teachers towards the modern business studies curriculum with its weighting towards an integrated programme of study. Indeed one of the underlying problems associated with curriculum change is this apparent gulf between the potential influence of the individual teacher over the curriculum and the generally institutionalised nature of the curriculum. There are certainly opportunities for individual staff to influence curriculum design in cases of centre-devised and validated courses. A certain measure of individual interpretation may also exist in externally-devised and validated courses (such as BTEC Higher Nationals) as a method of achieving some form of compromise between prescription and academic integrity. A tension nevertheless exists between the individual and the validating organisation in terms of curricular offerings which alter in significant ways the subject content of the units to be taught, and the delivery methods to be used in order to meet course aims and objectives.

By no means is this a universal experience. Some commentators have noted that staff respond to the changing demands placed upon them by moves towards integrated codes[96], but there is empirical evidence pointing to the considerable problems inherent in the implementation of integration within business studies courses inside the classroom (see Franklin, R. et al (1983)[97]). In the context of higher education generally, Carter (1980) has recognised the difficulty of achieving a consensus view of the curriculum amongst those directly involved. He quotes the anonymous comment of an academic in American higher education, contained in the preface to studies on the undergraduate curriculum produced by the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education and the Carnegie Council for

the Advancement of Teaching, "The curriculum does not matter. If it did we could not do anything about it. If we could do something about it, we would not know what to do."[98] This extreme view of the impotence of the individual teacher in the face of the curriculum is almost a form of educational nihilism. It is Carter's view that what is actually being expressed here is an implied statement, representative of the view of many teachers, that it is the nature and quality of the relationship they enjoy with those they teach that is of higher concern. If this relationship is right then valuable outcomes should follow. Probably such an observation is no more than the disguised assertion that teaching is ultimately a personal matter concerned with classroom interaction. But it also has about it the echoes of individual academic excellence: teaching performance measured not by reference to externally pre-determined integrated codes, but by the knowledge and skill of the teacher in inculcating students in the culture of his own discipline or subject specialism. Becher and Kogan have noted that in the case of discipline specialisms, "the influential members of the peer group ... give no strong lead in the direction of regarding teaching as a serious intellectual task"[99], acquiring their influence rather by means of their contribution to and promotion of their chosen discipline. There is no reason to suppose that the picture is any different where the contribution and promotion concerns curriculum innovation rather than subject specialism. In other words, reputations are made by those who develop teaching models and come to be regarded as curriculum specialists, rather than by those whose efforts are directed towards classroom performance. It is the former group who inevitably take up places on the boards and committees which, either within the educational institution, or outside it, are responsible for curriculum development. In turn this can lead to allegations from "chalkface" staff that their professional autonomy is being threatened by

those who know little of what teaching is about. The threat to autonomy is derived either from the prescriptive character of the curriculum, described earlier, or from a misinterpretation of the particular curriculum model. In relation to BTEC courses, Joyce et al (1983) have said, "The real power of external validating bodies means that their expectations (beliefs about what is likely to happen) are interpreted by those under their sphere of influence as norms (beliefs about what should happen)."[100] The allegation of divergence between those who design and those who deliver is drawn out in Carter's earlier observation.

The conditions required to aid the process of carrying through significant change, of the kind generated in business courses as they have moved towards integrated approaches, need to be viewed from both an institutional and an individual perspective. At the institutional level "organisational health" has been seen as essential. Miles (1965)[101] has indicated the criteria for a healthy organisation, whilst McLoughlin and Marsh (1978)[102] have emphasised that organisational health, in this case the receptiveness of the social and cultural climate of the workplace to change, is needed if innovation is to be successfully achieved. Wilson (1983)[103] not surprisingly identifies the college principal as the individual most directly responsible for and influential in the establishment of this climate. At the individual level the concern is primarily attitudinal, a point already alluded to. Essential here is the need for staff to act as "extended professionals", rather than as "restricted professionals". These terms are used by Hoyle (1974)[104] who describes extended professionality as a preference for professional collaboration, high involvement in non-teaching activity, and active readership of educational literature, whilst restricted professionality seeks autonomy, limited involvement in non-teaching activity, and infrequent readership of literature. Creating an extended professional involves

knowing something of the individual in terms of his or her motivations, aspirations, interests, background and so on. Staff development may well be needed to create a sympathetic attitude towards change and innovation.

Research into staff development in education has been conducted primarily in the USA. Whilst it has examined the personal characteristics of academic staff in a professional setting from a variety of differing perspectives it has been suggested that the range of data extracted by researchers is so diverse that it is difficult to draw general conclusions.[105] The lack of sophistication in the design of these research projects has also been remarked upon.[106] The orientations of the research have included expectancy theory (Swierenga (1970)[107]; Corwin (1977)[108], role theory (Clark (1973)[109]) and personality theory (Hesseldenz (1976)[110]).

The radical curricular changes experienced by teachers of business studies to Britain over the past two decades or so have brought calls for staff development programmes to meet the challenges presented by interdisciplinary courses,[111] but thus far little by way of concerted effort has been made. Development work has tended to be "in-house" and of variable standard. The expectation of educational managers has been to assume in their staffs both the willingness and the capacity to adapt. But a case for the need to adapt must first be made out, and made out convincingly. If the change agent is an external validator, such as CNAA, BTEC or a professional body, then it is the primary responsibility of the validating body to make out the case for its revised curriculum.

Conclusion

The curriculum is a product of choices, for curriculum development involves a process of decision-making through which a curriculum design emerges. The classic decisions involved are the determination of aims,

goals and objectives; the selection of learning experiences; the selection of content; the organisation and delivery of learning experiences and content. These are essentially issues of educational product and process, and to address them is to raise both philosophical questions about what is being learnt, and psychological questions about how learning take place.

In the demands that are frequently made within this decision-making process for curriculum integration, the philosophical questions generated are of a fundamental kind. As seen by Pring[112] they involve asking what curriculum integration means, what assumptions are being made about knowledge, the forms of knowledge, the relationship between these forms and the structural unity of language. None of these questions can be dismissed lightly. Interrelated as they are, each in its individual capacity contains the germs of profound study. This is not to say that integration is alone in inspiring discussion about basic concerns of the education process, for patently this is not so. It does, however, seem to be uniquely placed as a conceptual stimulus for promoting deep discussion of a wide range of issues vital to the achievement of an honest curriculum. The decision to pursue a course based upon integrated study immediately lifts the lid on a pandora's box of semantic, epistemological and ideological issues.

If these issues are not adequately resolved, resulting in integration appearing in the curriculum without a supporting rationale by way of self-explanation, or an elaboration of the form of integration envisaged and how it is to be achieved, the curriculum product will be seriously flawed. For those having responsibility for course implementation the consequences are likely to include difficulty in answering basic questions concerning practical operation of the course, perhaps because of the absence of an appropriately developed theory supporting the curriculum (Heywood (1969)[113]), or through instrinsic faults and inconsistencies in

the syllabus content of a curriculum which incorporates demands for the achievement of integrations (Mace (1980)[114]), or as an outcome of the lack of precise guidance as to how the integrated course should, or could, be taught (Morris (1977)[115]). Of the latter possibility Morris has said, "If successful curriculum development merely involved a statement of intentions, vague non-operational prescriptions for action and a series of organisational changes, then educational reform in the UK could have ceased with the 1944 Education Act."

Perhaps the feature of integration which, more than anything else, characterises the dilemmas and ambiguities inherent in its use lies in the sheer variety of its forms. Barnett has identified the scope of these forms, "the components of curricula in higher education" he calls them, which lend themselves to being integrated. He notes:

"(a) items within a subject;

(b) items across subjects;

(c) items within a subject and the underlying form of thought (that is, the fundamental conceptual structure or mode of procedure);

(d) forms of thought themselves;

(e) subject contents and the skills instantiated by competence in the procedures specific to each subject;

(f) contents of different subjects through subordination to some relational idea or topic;

(g) inputs from different staff responsible for teaching a course;

(h) staff inputs and students' experience;

(i) subject contents and the skills instantiated by the professions which those (formal) packages of knowledge underpin;

(j) curriculum outcomes and the psychological development of the individuals."[116]

Analysis of a programme of integrated studies will need to identify where the integrations lie, i.e., which of the above categories is being sought. It will need to indicate whether and to what extent the aim is instrumental, seeking to enable the student to operate at an autonomous level, and it will need to consider the pedagogical implications of such a curriculum - who is to achieve the integration? Is it the teacher, who will "present" it to the student, or the student who must achieve his own integrations? If it is the latter, then logically the student will first have to develop an understanding of the separate components of the course, for there must be something to integrate.

It is clear that the use of integration as an educational tool needs to be handled with great care. If this is done the many benefits accruing from following an integrated course can be gained. These include a broader knowledge perspective, the demystification of knowledge through the loosening of knowledge frames, and the ability to formulate and analyse real problems and solve them using the methodologies required from different forms of thought. If it is not done the result is likely to be a degenerate curriculum in which role confusion and lack of security combine to produce a sense of non-achievement. Schein[117] counsels that, "a premature integration can be genuinely harmful in a rapidly changing society." This caveat can be usefully extended to the warning that the careless and indiscriminate use of integration in the curriculum can be equally damaging. Indeed it is true that all forms of curriculum development need to be accomplished with care, the more so where the change is of substance and is sought to be introduced rapidly. Carter has seen curriculum development as a gradual, evolutionary process.

He says, "... by far the most important determinant of a curriculum is its own past history. It preserves, like fossils, the ideas of yesterday, while still adding the sediment of today's ideas."[118] This gentle process is doubtless a consensus model view, but it fails to account for the occasional upheaval wrought by the emergence of new ideas, such as innovation of the kind generated by the moves towards the integrated curriculum. When such change occurs then, to borrow from the language of Carter, the very stratum of the curriculum is altered to a new level in a radical fashion. Suddenly, a new picture is revealed.

Radical curricular change is usually generated from the centre, and in the field of business studies teaching the contribution of the Business and Technician Education Council as a centrally-established organisation is of especial importance. The work of BTEC provides a practical illustration of a national exercise in institutionally-led educational innovation in which subject and goal integration play a major role in its course design. In the next chapter the theory underlying BTEC courses is examined, and the practical consequences of its work assessed.

CHAPTER 5

BTEC AND ITS APPROACH TO INTEGRATION

The new vocationalism

When the Business and Technician Education Council[1] (BEC as it then was) introduced its First Policy Statement in 1976[2] it set out the underlying facets of its educational philosophy. These were to guide it towards the final curriculum design for the three levels of courses it subsequently offered to colleges and schools. The philosophy that it pursued shared little in common with the thinking that had supported the Ordinary and Higher National Certificates and Diplomas, which were swept aside by the new BTEC approach to non-degree business education. These pre-BTEC courses of the Joint Committees[3] were firmly anchored in the traditions of GCE 'O' and 'A' levels with their emphasis on subject competence derived through teaching methods appropriate to the acquisition of substantial quantities of knowledge and the promotion of intellectual capacities developed out of the knowledge base. Under this system assessment was primarily achieved using the unseen terminal examination, with relatively little attention being paid to coursework. In consequence, these courses lacked the vocationalism that might have been anticipated from their titles (public administration, business studies), and from their attendance methods. All Certificate courses were organised on a day release basis from the place of work to allow for college attendance. Such a mode of attendance clearly suggests a relationship between the work undertaken during the college day and the activities being performed during the remainder of the working week.

The specific subject syllabuses of the Joint Committees militated against the ability to discern any obvious vocational relationship between college studies and employment activities, leaving students invariably wondering what purpose was being served by their attendance at college. The essence of vocational education is, according to Wall (1968)[4], "a scheme of education in which the context is intentionally selected, wholly or largely, by what is needed to develop in the student some of the most important abilities on which professional competence depends." It is, in other words, a theoretical and practical training for the development of the skills required in the student's chosen employment sphere. If lack of relevance represented the picture in the field of business studies, students employed in jobs involving manual skills, such as building and construction, or in the applied sciences, such as engineering, had no such difficulty in recognising a clear connection between their day release studies and their work, a relationship of theory to practice. For them "day release" possessed an obvious educational value.

The underlying cause of an absent vocationalism in much of the work undertaken in Joint Committee courses appeared to lie in the lack of any clear view taken by employers as to what they expected of a business studies course. For those who simply required their staff to be developed through an exposure to the knowledge and methodologies of a range of traditional subjects and disciplines loosely associated with business and commerce, the courses were an entirely suitable vehicle. They also met the needs of employers, particularly in the public sector, whose career structures were linked to educational achievement, and for whom, therefore, success or failure of their staff on an ONC or HNC course provided a useful justification for determining career progression or restriction. Measurement of course utility using such criteria pointed to an absence of interest in both the content and process of the course.

There is little firm evidence to indicate how widespread such views were, although frequent reference was made by BTEC and others to the disaffection of employers towards these courses as being, in various ways, unsuitable to their needs and the needs of their students. For example, Cantor and Roberts (1979), writing at the time when BEC courses were about to be introduced nationally, could comment that, "the weakness of many business education courses at present is precisely the over-concentration on separate subjects, which results in the practical, vocational application of knowledge not being mastered by the student," and BEC indicated its awareness that, "vocational education can be fully effective in the interests of employers and employees only if it is accepted by employers as one essential part of a combined education and training programme. The second, equally vital, part is complementary in-house training which enables the employee to acquire those skills and that understanding which is peculiar to the individual employer or group of employers."[6] It can be presumed that such observations were based upon views expressed by employers themselves, since the Council prefaced the above remarks by commenting that its views on business education needs had been arrived at, "from research conducted both on behalf of the Council itself and by other bodies and from continuous consultation with a wide range of interested organisations and individuals."[7] Research conducted by Franklin, Rawlings and Craven (1983)[8], however, caused them to conclude that both the breadth and the depth of consultation that had taken place was insufficient. Furthermore, it seems clear that the interests of certain employers, as represented by the professional bodies, were not to be met by developing a vocational bias to the courses at all. Thus for some, though by no means all of the professional bodies, the vocational thrust was seen to denegrate the academic value of the new courses, making them an unsuitable foundation for entry on to courses of study leading to professional qualifications.

In the areas of accountancy and banking this view was particularly strongly held. The Association of Accounting Technicians expressed its dissatisfaction with BEC courses by abandoning them in favour of its own alternative curriculum model; syllabuses which stress the acquisition of knowledge, unseen examinations and, in consequence, a traditional teaching methodology. The Institute of Bankers[9] commented that it was most worried by the views of many FE colleges that BEC courses were not intended as a foundation for professional studies, and indeed the Institute had previously expressed its doubts as to the efficacy of the ONC in this respect. The Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators has also expressed concern about the academic rigour of BTEC Higher National courses, a concern evidenced by its endless deliberations over exemptions (module for subject) for entry to its courses.

The conflict that this demonstrated between the educational philosophy pursued by BEC and the views of the professional bodies in identifying a consensus model for the teaching of business studies at a national level, is proof that their respective goals are essentially incompatible. In its turn this provides confirmation of the observation contained in Chapter 3 that there are serious problems inherent in the search for what employers and students require from a non-degree business education, making the Council's task of establishing, "a unified national system of non-degree courses for people whose occupations fall within the broad area of business and public administration,"[10] a most difficult one. The divergence of thought represented by these sharply contrasting views suggests that to hope for a truly "unified system", if by this the Council meant its own courses to the exclusion of all others, was and remains a hopelessly unrealistic goal. The vocationalism advocated and enshrined in BTEC courses, laudable as this is as a means of escaping from the criticisms of the old courses that they were too academic and compartmentalised,

cannot accommodate the demands of those who see the business studies course purely as an instrumental mechanism for climbing up to the next rung of the educational ladder. This is despite BEC's view that its awards represented an opportunity for the student to benefit from a liberal as well as a vocational education; what it referred to as a "broad educational experience,"[11] an element which is considered later.

Despite these difficulties the vocational dimension to the new courses was broadly welcomed by employers and students. Lynch saw in this, and in other innovations introduced by BEC, "important examples of the newly found willingness of those involved in education and employment to overcome the traditional dichotomy in English thought and action between education and training,"[12] and Clark could observe that, "once their initial unfamiliarity with the style of learning has been overcome, students appear to enjoy positively the assignment work, the practical nature of the material covered, its essential coherence, and its direct applicability to their everyday lives ...."[13] An inherent flaw in any course that is ostensibly concerned with providing a balanced programme of vocational education in business, is that if one of the possible routes of study is by full-time college attendance it can be very difficult for students to appreciate the relevance and significance of the study in which they are participating to real world problems. Mindful of this, BEC stipulated the need for a work experience component to be built into courses for full-time students. The Council carefully avoided, however, imposing this component as a mandatory requirement, presumably on the grounds that some colleges would be unable to recruit on to diploma courses for lack of suitable local placements. The caveat was added that, "this policy will be monitored and, if necessary, revised,"[14] however the policy has remained that of emphasising the value of work placements without moving to a prescriptive position, so that at present,

"centres should, wherever possible, seek to obtain placements for their students."[15] This appears to be a purely pragmatic response, based upon the increasingly heavy demands made of employers to provide work places, as an increasing number of vocational initiatives have appeared during the 1980's; notable have been the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) and the Youth Training Scheme (YTS). The latter initiative, through its MSC funding, presents employers with a particularly attractive incentive to make available work placements: payment for each trainee who is taken on. BTEC's very limited funding, derived from registration fees, totally precludes such an arrangement. The response has been to allow as an alternative to work placements, work simulation exercises, but this is clearly a second best, and may fail to achieve BTEC's stated purposes for placements by reason of its artificiality. These purposes are the achievement of Course Aims[16], and the capacity to, "contribute to the motivation of students and help them to understand the relevance of their studies."[17]

Relevance of course studies to work is a central feature of BTEC thinking, and not surprisingly is repeatedly emphasised within its strategy statements for course design and operation. One of the allegations levelled at the old Joint Committee courses questioned, "how it was possible to do a meaningful course in Business Studies without any direct experience or knowledge of business" (Hannaghan (1978)).[18] Criticisms of a like kind were made by students (Oldham (1974)[19]; Sellers (1977)[20]). Consequently, the atrophied quality of these courses, set in their traditionalist mould, rendered them an unsuitable vehicle for meeting the "changing concept of the technician" which the Haslegrave Report, 1969[21] recognised. Since BEC was created in furtherance of the Report's recommendations it was not unexpected that the Council's response to its initial term of reference,

of "surveying the whole of current provision in business education"[22] prior to developing its own awards, was to pursue an innovatory approach that reflected the changes in employment needs noted by Haslegrave. It has been suggested that the Haslegrave Report, in its use of the term "technician", was more mindful of those employed in manufacturing than in commerce and public administration (Morris (1977)).[23] Whilst this may be so there is no reason to suppose that such marginally inappropriate use of terminology significantly affected the curriculum development work undertaken by BEC.

The change dimension

The Council's proposals represented a radical shift from existing course provision in terms of content, assessment and, by implication, teaching method. The proposals generated a high level of interest in both the practical and theoretical implications of the new curricula for each of the three levels of awards.[24] This was certainly not a quiet revolution. After years without change, any significant alteration of the status quo would have been traumatic. What BEC was introducing was a root and branch destruction of the old order. Some teachers welcomed this as a long overdue overthrow of a system which had largely lost touch with the requirements of students and employers. Others regarded the emergence of BEC as marking the end of a stable, respected and known system of education. Lysons has succinctly remarked, 'Teacher attitudes to BEC vary from acclaim to anathema."[25] Such a striking polarisation of views graphically illustrates the deep seated nature of the attitudes of the proponents and opponents of BEC philosophy. BEC's proposals acted as a catalyst in opening up a general debate which initially centred upon the aims of a business education, but which could not contain itself solely within the confines of the business curriculum, and broadened out into a

discussion about fundamental issues of educational theory and practice. It would be wrong to see this debate as an ultimately negative activity, on the view that it could achieve nothing, either because of the entrenched views held by either side, or as an educational indulgence pursued by those with nothing better to do than waste energy on abstract philosophising. In reality, it brought into the open and subjected to careful scrutiny the latent views of teachers on issues of principle and practice, which was of itself a learning experience. This was certainly an outcome envisaged and encouraged by the Council. Its Chairman stated, "We recognise that business education is a difficult field. If practical experience shows that any of the policies need to be modified, the Council will be quite ready to consider modifications. Business education must be and must be seen to be, a developing and flexible process."[26] He subsequently commented that, "BEC is quite prepared to make changes ... when practical experience and advice from employers and colleges justify change."[27] Such remarks made clear from the outset that BEC course provision was of an evolutionary kind, and in the period since the inception of its courses changes have been introduced from time to time, notably the general revision of each of its three levels of awards during the period 1984-87. The consequence of introducing change has been the charge from some teachers that BEC (and latterly BTEC) is always "moving the goal posts". This is an interesting view. It illustrates the continuing tension between an emphasis on process, which the Council promotes, and a clearly identifiable product, which is sought by the proponents of the need for static goal posts.

The Council, in pursuit of its desire for vocationalism, concluded that, "All courses will be designed to offer a broad, integrated educational experience, relevant to business."[28] Converted into a practical curriculum this general objective was realised by a teaching/learning strategy which

bore no resemblance to any previous model used at this level of business teaching. In respect of the content of study, the learning method, and the assessment method the approach was new. The vocational yardstick determined that syllabus content would strongly favour the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills selected for their relevance to the work situation. Since the working environment does not compartmentalise business problems, it was argued, but looks at them in the round, so the student should be encouraged to replicate this approach in college time, and integrate his studies. Through integration the broader interrelatedness of the business world could be appreciated, and to assist the student in appreciating this perspective, pre-determined central business themes would be used as an integrative device. These themes were identified as money, people, communication and technology. (The choice of themes during the life of the Council has undergone amendment; change is now a Central Theme in place of people and numeracy.) As this is a study of the real world, it would be artificial to use a teaching method directed towards providing the student with the teacher's predigested version of the real world. Moreover, the need to develop business skills, and to interrelate the component parts of the course, should be accomplished by student-centred rather than teacher-centred activity, for skills are acquired by doing, and interrelationships are best appreciated by finding them out for oneself.

In order to satisfactorily assess achievement within such a teaching/learning system, the development of the student's abilities should be regularly monitored by the use of in-course assessments (assignments) as well as examinations of a more formal type, and these assignments should be both relevant and realistic. Since assessment should be measuring the capacity to interrelate knowledge from the study of individual components of the course (modules) and to demonstrate the transferability

of skills, certain assignments should be devised which, "help students to integrate the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in the core studies by applying them to practical business problems."[29] These became known as cross-modular assignments, and they linked, through the formal mechanism of assessment, the core areas of study, that is, the "compulsory modules designed to cover fundamental knowledge and skills".[30] Thus, the teaching/learning strategy, having an internal philosophical coherence borne of its vocationalism, could be said to be characterised by its emphasis on integration, its work related orientation in terms of classroom activity and assignment work, and its encouragement towards student-centred learning. It is hardly surprising then, that this model engendered the debate mentioned previously, or that the conflict involved rationalists arguing that academic knowledge stands in a pure form outside our everyday world of confusion and empiricists emphasising their own view of knowledge as a personal condition derived from the interaction with one's environment; a social construct.[31] Likewise, it saw the instrumentalist arguing in support of the educational process as a means to an end, rather than something having its own inherent value, and the "progressive" attacking the "traditionalist" in the arena of teaching method - transmission of knowledge in conflict with the student-centred approach of learning by discovery through enquiry, as favoured by Dewey.

It is not clear whether the Council had in mind from its inception a vision of an embryo curriculum model of the kind outlined above, or whether the course design arrived at was a true product of an open-minded search for a business education to meet the legitimate requirements of all the interest groups involved. It may well be that its officers and committee members pursued the task presented to them with pre-conceived notions of what they regarded as an appropriate formula for business education. The Council has indicated that it interpreted business in a "generic sense as

extending to all those who need education (other than for scientific or technical qualifications) to equip them for their work in any part of the public or private sector - whether in industry, commerce, central or local government."[32] To accommodate this broad spectrum separate Boards were established. One of the responsibilities of each Board was the design of its own "Board Core" modules. These would be added to the "Common Core" modules, which all students whatever Board they were registered for, would have to study. In this way the needs of different vocational streams were met, whilst the underlying philosophy of pursuing certain studies relevant to all business activities was sustained. Teaching and assessment methods were also common across the curriculum, thus maintaining their own integrity as basic design components.

The innovations that BEC introduced, it has been previously noted, were ambitious, and radically conceived, a fact well documented by educational commentators. Joyce et al have said that what the Council was, "trying to achieve was not marginal adjustment but total transformation,"[32] whilst the Institute of Bankers saw the changes as creating, "an entirely fresh and unpredictable dimension ...."[33] Evidence suggests that many staff perceived the change in terms of its quantitative dimension: changes in terminology from subject to module; the manipulation of knowledge content of syllabuses from module to module; casting the syllabus in the language of general and specific behavioural learning objectives;[34] demonstrating the interrelatedness of the course modules. The explanation for this perception appears to lie within the cultural dimension of teaching in the further and higher education sector. Staff are strikingly autonomous in their relationships with their classes, they are recruited for their subject expertise and experience, which tends to produce individuals with a strong single discipline bias, and they work in an environment which is often more reactive than proactive. The perception

was, however, misplaced. BEC saw the curriculum in instrumental terms;[35] syllabus content, in the final analysis, was subservient to vocational interests, a point which many teachers failed entirely to appreciate. Pursaill (1979)[36], himself an officer of BTEC, has identified that BEC's emphasis was on the process of learning, rather than the content. Since changes in process require a level of organisational and structural support which changes in content, of themselves, do not, it may be that Departments of Business Studies had their own motives for discouraging a qualitative view of the changes, thereby avoiding upsetting the status quo. Joyce et al have alluded to this possibility, suggesting "that BEC may have re-inforced a conflict that already exists in academic institutions in higher education; this is the conflict between the increasing need to integrate the work of specialist academic staff and the traditional commitment to academic independence,"[37] whilst the Group for Research and Innovation in Higher Education[38] has recognised that in inter-disciplinary courses central support from faculty or institution is often necessary in order to cut across the departmental and disciplinary boundaries, to create a suitably qualified teaching team. Additionally, Callaghan (1980)[39] has noted the physical and financial resource costs for a college management implicit in fully operating a BEC course, and that, "The introduction of BEC courses has proved to be a substantial burden on colleges .... The reallocation of existing financial distribution of a department's budget has meant that provision for BEC has not always been given a top priority." BEC itself seemed to be lacking in the detail of its early literature, which emphasised course content, but was largely devoid of any guidance for teachers about teaching and learning methods, assessment strategies,and resources (Morris (1977)[40]; Anderson (1984)[41]). This failing has been more than made up for by its later publications which clearly reflect the importance the Council attaches to teaching,

learning and assessment.[42]

The use of integration in BTEC course design

Following the merger in 1983 of BEC and TEC to form BTEC, the Council determined to set out publicly its general policies and to provide an indication of the priorities it would use to guide its future course development work. As a preliminary step it followed the practice of its predecessor BEC, and sought the views of interested parties by publishing a discussion document.[43] The outcome was the Council's publication "Policies and Priorities into the 1990's" (September 1984). This wide-ranging document contained, amongst many of the views it expressed, a number of general statements emphasising the Council's views on integration. The importance attached to the role of integration as a major component of the design and operation of courses had been emphasised by the Board from the outset of its work as a validating agency. In a sense, the policies and priorities document represented a coming of age of the Council, reflecting the wisdom and experience of its officers gained over six years of course operation. In it the Council saw a breaking down of the distinction between education and training, and expressed its belief, "that education and training should, as far as possible, be planned as an integrated, coherent process of learning and developing, so that the trainee experiences them as such."[44] This appears to represent a belief in the merger of two otherwise distinct types of educational process, whenever this is achievable. How it might occur is not indicated, although there is a suggestion that it is in some way connected with interrelating work experience with college study.[45] Interrelatedness is certainly not merger and one starts to express doubts as to what precisely is being envisaged. Integration in this context is apparently seeing how things might relate to each other viz. knowledge, understanding and skills

gained through an educational programme being applied to the conditions of the workplace. This is certainly not a highly ambitious aim: it is merely a demand for relevance, but whether it can be truly called integration is debatable.

Elsewhere in the document this same view is echoed in the context of the construction of BTEC courses. "Council believes it important that education and training leading to BTEC qualifications should, as far as possible, be planned as an integrated, coherent programme of learning and development .... Integration could involve the development of core studies related to the particular vocational area in question, and/or of the development of interdisciplinary themes which cut across traditional perceptions of occupational requirements."[46] In respect of these two forms of integration, the use of core studies, and of interdisciplinary themes, the Council was more explicit in describing their nature. Within the guidelines for the revised National and Higher National courses in business studies efforts were made to put flesh on the bones. The National level Guidelines[47] noted that historically and conceptually the interdisciplinary themes were a product of the cross-modular assignments and Central Themes operated under the previous BEC schemes, as the primary mechanism for the realisation of BEC's view of integration. (Cross-modular assignments are considered later.) The new interdisciplinary themes were of two types: "cross-course themes", and business-related "skill areas".

The use of a thematic approach is the traditional way to demonstrate the types of interrelationships that are possible in a course of study containing separate components. It has many proponents, including Friere,[48] whose views were examined in Chapter 4. The curriculum of isolated subjects, Friere argues, presupposes that the various areas of study to which the student is exposed are essentially the antitheses

of each other and will necessarily always remain thus, without change. The contradictions of the subjects of the curriculum are final. The thematically organised integrated curriculum represents the true nature of things. It is the means of seeing things as they really are. As with most aspects of BTEC's educational philosophy, the thematic course is a borrowed idea, used arguably to considerable effect in achieving the goal of enabling business students to appreciate the reality of business activities. Without the benefit of the wider perspectives that such an approach achieves, the understanding of students is seriously curtailed (Fairhurst (1982)[49]), although staff will be obliged to work more closely together (Cantor and Roberts (1979)[50]), and this may result in undesirable attitudes on the part of staff who see the course as "a mongrel" (Oldham (1974)[51]). BTEC sees the use of interdisciplinary themes as a mechanism for, "encouraging the development of assignments set in realistic business situations, thereby enabling students to develop a systematic approach to the analysis of and solution of interdisciplinary problems."[52] In so doing the course should go a long way towards meeting Rendell's view of the objective of educating business students; which "is not for the purpose of regurgitating their teachers' views, but for the ability of students to think logically and rationally in any type of situation in which they are likely to find themselves in their everyday business lives."[53]

A criticism which is directed at the use of a thematic approach to course design is that it operates so as to create a superficial familiarity. Barnett raises the question, "If the real information level of the integrated code is an easy familiarity with the surface structure of knowledge, rather than a problematic encounter with its deep structure, we may ask why is 'integration' being promoted with such zeal in our educational institutions?"[54] His answer is that such courses are intended as a realistic preparation for industrial and administrative careers, but notes

that they are unlikely to achieve, "fundamental transformation of role or cognitive content."[55] The BTEC response to this view is that the themes do not stifle the study of individual course units, but merely seek to illuminate their interrelatedness. They are not, it would therefore seem, being used as a means of securing a merger of the presently separate course units, so as to create a new field of learning at some future time, although there is a certain ambiguity here in the language of BTEC literature.

The detailed specifications for individual units of study have moved away from the original syllabus model which extensively listed specific behavioural learning objectives, replacing them with what is termed "indicative content". Indicative content, the Council emphasises, is merely a guide ... to the knowledge and skills which are appropriate to the achievement of the General Objectives of each unit. It does not have the highly prescriptive quality of the old learning objectives. It is, in fact, subservient "to the needs of individual student groups"[56] in terms of the breadth and depth of coverage afforded to it, thus substantive course content - the discrete knowledge base of the separate areas of study - has been eroded when measured against its predecessor model. Stress is laid on achievement of the unit's General Objectives, which themselves have been broadly drafted so as to demonstrate the interrelatedness of the units, and which in so doing render the units more amenable to a thematic treatment. What the student is being encouraged to learn, it would seem, is that although it is helpful for him to study separately certain principles of economics or accounting, or law or any other area of business the syllabus prescribes, the knowledge he thus gains, is of value, not by reason of any inherent quality, but because it enables him to demonstrate the achievement of a skills based General objective. In turn, the General Objective should be seen not so much

as an ultimate course goal, but more as a gateway to the other General Objectives of the different units, so that the student develops awareness of a coherence to the whole of his studies; a whole reinforced by the themes which are revealed through the teaching/learning strategies for the core element[57] of the course. The Council, in its most recent publication which comments on the use of themes, has stated that core themes should, "help to integrate courses by linking work in different units or parts of the course; provide a means by which course team members can collaborate to develop integrative teaching and learning strategies, and design inter-disciplinary projects".[58]

The repeated emphasis in course design, implementation and assessment that is placed upon what is variously described as "interrelatedness", "interdisciplinary", "integrative" and "integrated" blurs the essential distinctiveness of these separate ideas in a way which leaves one sensing that the authors of BTEC literature either use them indiscriminately to mean roughly the same thing, or do have an appreciation of some distinctive quality in each expression, but have failed to communicate it adequately. This is of major concern to course organisers and to teachers. An integrated studies approach to business education is a cornerstone of BTEC philosophy. Integration is clearly seen by the Council as part of the mortar which binds courses together. It is, therefore, essential for managers and teachers to be clear what depth of interrelationship is being sought, what the aim is, and how these aspects can be practically accomplished. Without sufficient clarity in such matters the teaching and learning process must fall apart.

The statement quoted above (at 58) is a typical example of this absence of precision. In attempting to highlight what the cross-course themes are aimed at achieving and the means for realising the aim(s), we are told that they "help to integrate" through enabling unit links to be

made. "Integrate" in such a context could denote anything from the achievement of a full-scale merger of units, to a demonstration that they share certain common features - two very different outcomes. Does this raise any particular problems? One can assume that since the units are discretely identified in the course specifications a full merger between them is not contemplated, but it has been noted previously that the units are constructed in a way which reduces the role of knowledge whilst emphasising the General Objectives. These are actively described, "suggesting, where possible, both business contexts to which they relate, and types of appropriate learning task"[59], i.e., indicating what will be taking place in the learning process. It thus seems difficult to pin down with any precision what the teacher responsible for dealing with a specific unit is actually required to achieve. Is it the specificity of the subject unit, which should be portrayed as something with its own identity, but which also contributes to a greater whole, or is it that over the length of the course the student should be seeking to achieve integration as a goal by coming to recognise each unit as something which in reality is subsumed within the greater whole of "business studies", through the instrumentality of common themes and common skills?

Thus, some concern must exist over the extent of subject integration, and this is compounded by further reference to features of the course content, namely the "design of interdisciplinary projects", and to the process for achieving this, which is through staff collaboration "to develop integrative teaching and learning strategies". In themselves, they may be commendable activities. Interdisciplinary projects can reveal to a student a dimension of interrelatedness in his studies which would not, perhaps, be made available in other ways. Collaboration between staff over the teaching programme encourages a team approach, and it is clearly essential if coherence is to be attained. But closer

analysis, looking at these references in their overall context, and at the juxtaposition of 'integrated', 'integrative' and 'interdisciplinary', throws up further concerns. It may reasonably be demanded, for example, why it should be that an integrative teaching/learning strategy, i.e., one which is seeking to lead the student towards integrations, should have as an outcome something which is merely interdisciplinary. Surely the expectation should be of a fully integrated project, given the type of teaching/learning process involved and the general aim of integrating the units via the linkages between them. Reformulated to maintain an internal consistency and a clarified meaning, the statement in reference 58 might read, "help to interrelate courses by linking work in different units or parts of the course; provide a means by which course team members can collaborate to develop integrative teaching and learning strategies, and design integrated projects."

To summarise, once course design moves away from a discrete subject-based model towards an integrated model, it is essential to describe the new model in terms which clearly indicate what is required of the teacher, and which, therefore, avoid ambiguities and inconsistencies in the terminology of the curriculum of the type explored above. Integration is a sophisticated and remarkably fluid concept, and thus demands the most careful attention of the curriculum designer and draftsman, if it is to produce the sort of course cohesion which will enable teacher and student alike to recognise it and understand it. If this is not done the laudable aim of presenting an educational programme which strives for a unity within its component parts will be sacrificed to the chaos of uncertainty.

Subject integration within BTEC courses

Joyce et al have described BTEC's objectives "as the achievement of goal integration and subject integration, with the latter being seen as

instrumental in the realisation of the former."[60] They see subject integration as the relationship of one subject to another, and goal integration as the use of knowledge and skills developed out of the study of individual subjects in order to serve the purpose of the course. From the outset of its operations, the Council made it abundantly clear that in its aim of pursuing vocationalism to render its courses meaningful through their practical bias and their work-related emphasis, it saw as the primary evil of the old national certificates and diplomas their strong subject orientation. This, the Board considered, led away from the aims it wished to pursue. Its response was to suppress as far as possible those features of a study of business along traditional lines which caused such distortion. It did so by creating a core of interrelated study components which were designated "modules" rather than subjects (modules have since transmogrified into "units"), to breach the psychological barrier of word association. Subject meant discipline, and discipline-based teaching meant course fragmentation. It was, however, not possible to eliminate these expressions entirely, and the Council's literature continued to make reference to them for some time, although they now appear to have been eradicated entirely from BTEC publications. A unit, for example, is defined as "A teaching/learning component of the course"[61].

The idea of a course "core" of study components is not new. In business studies the Crick Report[62] advocated the use of core disciplines as an academic base, whilst more generally the core concept has been used by Lawton (1969)[63] as the basis of a general curriculum in which integration is used to bind the component parts together. For BTEC the selection of the component parts of the core is based upon areas of study chosen for their coverage of the essential content for a particular qualification (i.e, business studies, publication administration, etc.) out of which

and within which the core themes (previously referred to) and the core skills, "work-related skills which students will need to develop in order to fulfil the types of tasks and duties associated with their career"[64] can be realised and used to deliver the course as an integrated whole.

The core is thus seen as the heart of the course, a single organ whose central function can only be fulfilled as long as the themes and the skills flow across the units making up the core. Under the initial BEC schemes the cross modular assignment (CMA) was the device for ensuring that this system worked, but before considering this specific component and its integrative role, some further examination of the core needs to be made.

Both at National and Higher National levels one of the major modules of the original core was, itself, an amalgamation of areas of study that had always hitherto been treated as separate subject areas. These were economics, law and government, and the modules they gave birth to were, at National level, the Organisation in its Environment, and at Higher National level, the Business Environment. The former is still a core unit under the revised National scheme. They are of interest because they were specifically designed as integrated areas of study, thus for teachers of the disciplines represented within them the teaching of the module, if it was to be taught as a single entity, involved a radical alteration of role from discipline specialist to polymath. Bedingfield, Callaghan, Ellison and Todd (1982)[65] have identified a possible strategy for coping with the level of integration demanded in the delivery of the Organisation in the Environment (the "double module"). They note that this module, "had been expected to be the most challenging of the new BEC modules", because of its integrated nature; it represented a most basic form of subject integration. Many commentators have recognised the demands and tensions faced by teachers in coping with full subject integration. Lysons has reflected that, "Teachers recruited as subject specialists feel,

in some cases, that BEC has resulted in deskilling, whereby they have been reduced from experts to generalists. Others feel that their thinking is dominated by BEC, so that they find it difficult to adjust back again to subject-based courses."[66] Mace (1980), in examining the role of economics under the BEC National arrangements, has argued that the Council was unwise to note its role as a disciplinary foundation within business studies teaching. He, too, noted that, "The changes heralded by the course will mean retraining and deskilling ... it has been suggested that BEC can best be taught by polymaths. However, such a move involves certain dangers. Lack of knowledge by teachers may compromise BEC's aim of clarity of understanding by students; standards may fall; the course may not, after all, provide an adequate foundation for further study."[67] And Cantor and Roberts recognised a further dimension: "If such courses are to be successful, then lecturers will have to work more closely together than has been the case hitherto."[68]

Subject integration, indeed any form of integration which removes a teacher from a familiar teaching situation to an alien one, is a level of curriculum change which demands support for staff development. Elliott and Fricker (1981) have emphasised this. "If the objectives of a more effective national programme of vocational education are to be achieved, then staff development is a crucial element in its success. BEC has maintained throughout its work that one of the most effective forms of staff development is achieved by encouraging staff in colleges involved with particular courses to work and plan together as a team."[69] It is interesting, therefore, to note that Bedingfield et al were able to comment a year later that in bringing together staff involved in teaching the double module for the purpose of writing integrated student learning packages, "one of the most valuable outcomes of work on the packages was the staff development engendered by the discussion and examination of

the module objectives. This involved consideration of the connections between them, the overlaps and the need to search out the extent to which there was indeed a natural integration ... and has led to insights into areas of integration that had not been previously apparent." They add, "team members, as a result of their joint work, have found themselves far better equipped to actually teach the module since their total knowledge of the module and of the terminology within it has been broadened. No longer do they find themselves paying lip-service to ideas of integration by making references to concepts drawn from other disciplines about which they have no real knowledge."[70] As a balance to this experience of a strategy that enables practical integration through team work to take place, Franklin et al have suggested that, in fact, much of the work taking place within the colleges involves the old national certificate and diploma courses still being taught, "with a thick BEC veneer applied upon them for external appearances."[71] Doubtless this will indeed be the reality in those institutions where lack of suitable staff development has militated against the proper implementation of the courses as conceived by the Council. As Lysons reflects, "The effectiveness of BEC depends in the last analysis upon the extended professionalism of the teaching staff involved; and where such professionalism exists the opportunities for innovation, integration and team work provided by BEC are unlimited."[72]

The cross-modular assignment

For the staff whose teaching input fell outside those modules that were themselves integrated components, their main formal involvement in integration was through the cross-modular assignment. The cross-modular combined both subject and goal integration. The Council stated: "Implementation of the core design depends upon a student-centred strategy, where case studies and problem-based cross-modular assignments are both a

binding force, and an activity of central significance in developing vocationally relevant understanding and skill."[73] The creation of a cross-modular assignment brought together the members of the core team for the purpose of conceiving an integrated business problem. From a teacher's standpoint it prompted the need for a meeting of the minds of a kind not previously required. From the student perspective it involved the practical demonstration of the interrelated nature of the knowledge and skills contained within the core. Furthermore, it embodied the heuristic approach favoured by the Council as a learning process, that is, an enquiry method under which the student is trained to find out things for himself. Although the student-centred approach to learning is not an automatic consequence of developing an integrated curriculum, there is a strong philosophical link between them. The student-centrist is of the view that the only genuine learning is discovery learning. The reason for this can be found in the ideas of one of the leading advocates of the student-centred approach, Douglas Barnes. Barnes[74] recognises two kinds of teaching styles, the "transmissive" and the "interpretative". They are diametrically opposed, and produce different kinds of student response. The transmissive teacher tends towards an approach that is authoritarian and dominating. The teacher holds the truth and passes it down to the students, who demonstrate their grasp of it by responding to questioning articulately, using technical language. This is an example of the "banking mode". Barnes argues that despite what may appear to be an impressive verbal display by the student, the level of knowledge and understanding of the real meaning of concepts is shallow. The approach of the interpretative teacher on the other hand is to stimulate the student to discover for himself, whilst keeping teacher intervention at a minimum. In the unstructured discussion between a group of students in a seminar used as a part of this discovery process, despite the presence of comments

and observations which would be "off the point" to the transmissive teacher, the students are, in fact, searching for real, meaningful understanding of a kind which the recipients of the transmissive approach are less likely to experience. Along the axis between transmissive and interpretative styles BTEC lies well towards the interpretative end, advocating what it terms "learner-oriented strategies". The Council states, "For much of their time, students will be working independently or in small groups on assigned tasks, ... The success of the learner-oriented approach depends upon strong support for it from individual centres,"[75] and, "student-centred learning activities should be the main way in which students acquire and consolidate knowledge and skills."[76]

It was then through the instrumentality of the cross-modular assignment that BEC envisaged the realisation of the aim of student-centred learning. "The development of practical thinking abilities which underpins this form of curriculum organisation is", states Hyland (1980)[77], "closely linked with problem-solving theories of learning, and it is in this area that the rationale of cross-modular activity is most clearly revealed. The BEC literature abounds with reference to the importance of organising learning around the solution of practical problems. A problem-solving methodology is, without doubt, what provides the basis for the integration of knowledge, skills and understanding in BEC cross-modular assignments, and clearly this philosophy has a key role to play in achieving the all-important aim of giving practical and vocational relevance to business education studies."

For Hyland the concern with this approach was neither the value to the student of practical problem-solving nor the methodology to achieve it, but rather the narrow parameters which are created by treating problem-solving as the focal point of the study. He comments, "After all, there is knowledge to be gained about the business world which, surely, cannot be

thought of as simply a solution to practical problems."[78] Once again it seems that one is brought back to the familiar debate between vocationalism and a liberal/generalist education. The Council itself seems to have little doubt about the efficacy of the cross-modular assignment as an integrative device and valuable student outcome. "The integrative problem-solving activities associated with cross-modular assignments in courses validated between 1978 and 1985 have been the most potent force for course development in centres, and commonly the most successful feature of courses in operation. Such approaches should now be the normal way of implementing all core units and will no longer feature separately in the course structure."[79]

Conclusion

It is not an overstatement to say that the impact of BTEC upon the provision of non-degree business education has been revolutionary. Its interventions have been felt not only by teachers and students, but also the teaching institutions themselves through the changes required in administration and organisation, and by employers who have found the need to interpret the nature of the BTEC courses. The absence of any comprehensive empirical research makes it difficult to estimate how far its proposals have been implemented in spirit and in fact. Through the use of the moderation system, the quality-control mechanism employed by BTEC, an empirical base could have been acquired, but the various inadequacies of the system[80] have inhibited such a step.

Inevitably, many strident voices are still raised against the BTEC approach to business education. Its antagonists argue variously that it went too far too fast, that there were fundamental flaws in its design and implementation strategies, and that it signally failed to achieve an adequate level of consultation with the interested parties. Franklin et al

rather patronisingly remark that, "On reflection BEC seems to be an animal of the early 1960's Robbins genre, and the present economic and social climate will make its lifestyle rather uncomfortable."[81] Whilst this may be so, and only time will tell, the Council's unquestionable contribution has been in stimulating an educational debate which no business studies teacher has been able to escape from, and which has prompted a discussion of aims, teaching/learning strategies and assessment methods appropriate to the teaching of business unheard of in the pre-BTEC era. This must be a healthy development. Moreover, business teachers, whatever their educational standpoint, are now familiar with the concept of integration, having been obliged to question and clarify their own views on the inter-related nature of business studies. Again, this must be a worthwhile outcome.

Since BTEC has acted as a positive force for innovation, it is perhaps appropriate to leave the last word to Anderson, who optimistically predicts that, "We may be only at the beginning of inspired innovations in Business Education."[82]

CHAPTER 6

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The integrated studies approach to business education advocated and encouraged by BTEC has radically transformed the content and process of business teaching at the non-degree level in institutions of further and higher education. The Council's innovations are echoed by similar changes affecting the provision of business degrees in polytechnics and colleges of higher education. At the same time as these innovations have been absorbed within the colleges, certain areas of business teaching coming within the remit of the professional bodies remain firmly embedded in the traditional mould that the integrationalists have rejected. The existence of such entirely different educational models operating side by side in the same institutions provides very physical evidence of the gulf that now divides the views of the interest groups representing "traditional" values and "progressive" values. Divergence of opinion in curriculum decision-making is generally a sign of a healthy and robust process through which a balanced and complementary design can be achieved. It must be a cause for concern, however, when qualifications within the same broad field of study can be obtained through alternative routes which bear absolutely no resemblance to each other, either in terms of content or process. Such a dichotomy can, of course, be sustained if an appropriate justification is available. It could, for instance, be argued that different types of business qualification signify the achievement of different types of goal. This would appear to be a complete defence, but unfortunately it is not. The problem that remains lies in the essentially vocational orientation of all business

studies courses. By general consent business qualifications are qualifications for business. Consequently, the inescapable conclusion to be drawn must be that the goal being pursued in business courses will always be the same one, and thus one returns to the basic concern, which simply formulated can be presented as a question. Is there a "right" approach to the teaching of business, and if so, in which school of thought is it located? A great deal hangs upon the answer to this question. To those who recognise the sole legitimacy of one particular model, any alternative is inevitably a fraud.

Advocating an integrated approach to business teaching is to assert, in some measure, a view of business studies as a kind of unified entity, hence, an enquiry into the nature of integration is an essential journey for anyone subscribing to this conceptual view. Such a journey is likely to reveal a wide range of fundamental issues of vital importance to all teachers. These issues cover the nature of knowledge and its interrelationships, and how true knowledge can be best discovered. In BTEC terms the nature of the integration that is sought appears to be essentially of an interdisciplinary kind. In "Interdisciplinarity", a paper published in 1975, the Group for Research and Innovation in Higher Education summarised its findings on its research into interdisciplinary courses. These findings usefully highlight the main issues which are associated with moves towards an integrated code. The findings noted that:

(i) an interdisciplinary approach seems able to survive in almost any academic environment, given enough commitment by staff and students;

(ii) such courses seem to be increasing;

(iii) central support from faculty or institution is often necessary in order to cut across departmental/disciplinary boundaries;

(iv) modular schemes are compatible with interdisciplinary work up to a point, however, demands for flexibility and choice can conflict with demands for continuity and integration;

(v) interdisciplinary work usually involves career risks for staff;

(vi) interdisciplinary work necessitates greater explicitness about aims, teaching methods and assessment than is the case with other courses;

(vii) career prospects for students engaged on interdisciplinary courses do not seem to differ from those for other students;

(viii) students should not be led to expect greater integration than is possible;

(ix) interdisciplinary work is more likely to recur at higher levels of organisational complexity. (In this respect it is interesting to note that the model adopted by BTEC for its Higher National courses in respect of the core design is of a more sophisticated kind than that for its National courses.)

Analysis of the adoption of an integrated curriculum must seek to reveal the reason for the choice of such a mode, the level of integration expected and the means by which the curriculum is to be delivered. The

answer to the question why choose this form of curriculum rather than some alternative was examined in Chapter 4. Suffice it to note here that influences affecting curriculum decision-making are often motivated as much by ideological considerations as by practical ones. It is, however, practical matters which have to be addressed if the integrated curriculum is to succeed as an educational venture. For staff this is likely to involve a broadening of their subject base, a revision of the contextual framework into which their new teaching is to be fitted, and perhaps even a revision of their teaching methods. Autonomy will become supplanted by a team-based approach. The teacher who comes on to an integrated studies programme from a discipline-based environment is, therefore, faced with more than simply acquiring new fields of knowledge. A pyschological adjustment will be needed to cope with the demands of an entirely new educational environment. Crucial in this process of change through innovation is the quality of staff development work taking place within the institutions themselves. Ultimately, for an integrated studies approach to be successful teachers not only need physically to deliver the product; they must believe in it as well.

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