

HUMANITIES CURRICULUM PROJECT

Introduction for experimental schools

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I have asked you to come simply to welcome you, but also in the plainest possible way what I think is the best relationship if you join us.

We want colleagues to take part with us. It isn't a situation where you do one thing and you try it, but one thing together. We have already discussed this in letters, in discussions where you put up your heads, and in visits. In some cases we haven't got it yet, but we must make the basis of cooperation plain and as the picture emerges, whether you can honestly work with us. The outcome, we hope that the weekend will be an interesting

What are we up to then? The situation for the raising of the s

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date has been deferred. There is plenty -it may prove too much- of time to experiment.

We are charged by our sponsors, the Nuffield Foundation and the Schools Council, with the task of mounting, in collaboration with schools, a series of experiments in the teaching of humanities to adolescents on an inquiry base. We mean by the humanities an integration of social studies, arts, and religion.

I think that what we are trying to do is quite new, but at first it doesn't sound it. The kind of teaching we look towards has familiar elements. If you join us you will, of course, feed into your teaching local visits and studies, library work and so forth -familiar enough- and draw from it written work or documentary tapes or improvised drama or whatever kind of work seems to you most worthwhile. But as a centre for this work there will, we hope, be a type of discussion which is quite unfamiliar in schools.

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We want to develop this kind of discussion and to study it in the setting of the total pattern of teaching.

We could do this initially in ten schools. Both for financial reasons and for experimental reasons we could not do it in a hundred. We have in fact made contact with thirty-two schools which have expressed enough interest in the experiment to attend this series of induction conferences.

I want to introduce you to our detailed thinking by drawing your attention to the plan behind me. This is the RSLA unit at a school in Berkshire. Here, at the bottom left, are spaces for dirty craft, clean craft, and at the top left, a space for kitchen work. But here, at the right, are two rooms marked 'study reference' and 'discussion' and, in the very centre -as we think, appropriately- there is an area marked 'resources'. We want to ask "What is to go on in the humanities in these spaces?" An advanced RSLA unit like this of course offers almost ideal conditions. In most of our schools



The following table shows the results of the experiment. The first column is the number of trials, the second column is the number of correct responses, and the third column is the percentage of correct responses.

Number of Trials	Number of Correct Responses	Percentage of Correct Responses
10	7	70%
20	14	70%
30	21	70%
40	28	70%
50	35	70%
60	42	70%
70	49	70%
80	56	70%
90	63	70%
100	70	70%

As can be seen from the table, the percentage of correct responses remains constant at 70% throughout the experiment. This suggests that the subject is performing at a level of 70% accuracy.

we should have to improvise to get the same opportunities. But an ideal is always useful as something to struggle towards. These plans give a model for an educational unit. We are seeking a model for the teaching inside it.

Those rooms could be filled with bored adolescents or with adolescents entertained but not educated. We want to do something to help make sure that they are filled with disciplined inquiry and discussion work - and with the resources to support such work. We do not know exactly what that discussion work should look like nor exactly what those resources should be. Hence the need for our experiment. We do have hypotheses to test and we need colleagues in school who are interested in testing them thoughtfully.

What do we ask of teacher colleagues?

First. That they accept the desirability of mounting free and open-ended discussion of controversial

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social and personal issues with adolescents in their classrooms.

Second. That they have reached this conclusion thoughtfully, recognising this as difficult work which will tax both them and their pupils and are prepared to try to press towards higher standards than have so far been achieved.

Third. That they accept the need to work towards a relationship with adolescent school leavers which helps them to grow up by stressing their maturity and responsibility, rather than attempting to prolong their childhood and dependence.

Fourth. That they are prepared to create a suitable environment for discussion in their schools. This means in the main a classroom set out for discussion, in which desks or chairs and tables have been rearranged to make a room where discussion is more appropriate

1. Die erste Gruppe (A) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die zweite Gruppe (B) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die dritte Gruppe (C) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die vierte Gruppe (D) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die fünfte Gruppe (E) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die sechste Gruppe (F) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die siebte Gruppe (G) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die achte Gruppe (H) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die neunte Gruppe (I) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die zehnte Gruppe (J) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die elfte Gruppe (K) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die zwölfte Gruppe (L) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die dreizehnte Gruppe (M) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die vierzehnte Gruppe (N) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die fünfzehnte Gruppe (O) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die sechzehnte Gruppe (P) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die siebzehnte Gruppe (Q) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die achtzehnte Gruppe (R) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die neunzehnte Gruppe (S) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die zwanzigste Gruppe (T) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die einundzwanzigste Gruppe (U) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die zweiundzwanzigste Gruppe (V) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die dreiundzwanzigste Gruppe (W) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die vierundzwanzigste Gruppe (X) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die fünfundzwanzigste Gruppe (Y) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Die sechsundzwanzigste Gruppe (Z) besteht aus den Personen A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z.

than instruction, instead of a room where instruction is more appropriate than discussion. It means also the provision of resources for discussion. That room needs to have an appropriate collection of reference books, a growing collection of photographs, newspaper clippings and similar materials, and wall boards on which to display these.

Fifth. That they become members of the Humanities Curriculum Project team, in the sense that they accept fully the aims and implications of what is being attempted, though not in the sense that they are to be blamed for the failure of our hypotheses to work in the classroom. We want to work with teachers who care and who are tough minded and persistent. We do not expect to work with teachers who are virtuosos in discussion techniques.

Finally, we ask that teachers in the project shall be prepared to be studied, even filmed, and to study themselves in the classroom.

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This is in fact more than any curriculum experiment in this country has asked of teachers before. We recognise this and we hope that our appreciation of your cooperation will express itself both in practical help and in understanding of your problems. What do we ask of ourselves in this experiment?

First. That we provide clear and coherent hypotheses so that experimental teachers are in no doubt as to the kind of thing we are trying to find out.

Second. That we provide - in the words of our remit - stimulus, support and materials for our experimental schools to the limits of our time and ability.

Third. That once teachers have broken through their initial difficulties and begun to feel at home in the style of humanities work we are studying, we should be responsive to the reports they give us and the needs they define for us. We shall want as much



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thoughtful comment as we can get from you. All our teachers' handbooks and notes will be regarded as drafts, to be shaped by your comment. In the nature of the case we have had to produce a first batch of materials without consulting experimental teachers. Consequently these materials, in sound, vision and print, span a wide range of difficulty and will cover a variety of approaches. Your biggest problem in the early stages will be to find your way round them. A great deal of selection and change will be necessary before we find the best form in which materials can be published and made available to teachers outside the experimental schools. What you are getting is a first attempt, produced in five months.

Given that we are able to reach this basis of cooperation with a group of teachers, what will be the purpose of our common work? I think we must try to break through to a new style of teaching whose strategy we come to understand. We need to develop high standards of quality and we shall hope to get

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adolescents of around CSE level working in a more adult way and at a higher standard than is commonly the case at the moment. We must try to find the right kind of materials for this sort of teaching which we have developed together and to mould these materials into some publishable shape. We must, once we have succeeded at CSE level, try to push down the ability range.

If we can achieve this together, if we can define our tradition for ourselves, then our problem is quite simply that of communicating our hard-won experience to our colleagues in other schools. We must try to do this through working papers describing our work, through film and tape where this is appropriate, through our hand books and notes for teachers and through our teaching materials. We hope that by the end of the project we shall all agree about what we value in humanities teaching and we may be able to suggest tests or styles of examination which will do justice to what we value and which can be adapted for CSE. The measure of our work will in the end be how successfully we can get



across to teachers whom we shall never meet the fruit  
of our experience over the next couple of years. During  
this weekend we on your central team will face a somewhat  
what similar problem on a smaller scale. As I have  
already said, there is one respect - style of discussion -  
in which our hypotheses lead us away from the familiar.  
The central team have lived together for months, reading  
and arguing about this style of discussion and trying it  
out in school situations. We have come to call it 'discussion  
disciplined by evidence'. During this weekend we must put  
flesh on that phrase for you.

We take it that there is a need for discussion rather  
than instruction. There are many reasons for this. We  
must help adolescents to participate in their own education  
and begin to attain some independence of thinking before  
they leave school. If we have taught them to lean on our  
authority, they will too easily transfer their allegiance  
to any other authority which offers. Discussion seems a  
better central classroom



activity than instruction as a base for the kind of free environmental studies, library work and writing, which so many schools have developed. Perhaps, above all, we feel that in controversial areas, conscientious teachers have to resort to discussion in an attempt to prevent their pupils from being limited by their own biases. Each of us who is a parent will know the extent to which we should hope that our children's teachers bore this ideal in mind. What is at stake is not simply the issue of indoctrination but rather the difficulty of a teacher in representing fairly and cogently a point of view which he respects - or feels he ought to respect - but does not hold.

Our observation of attempts at discussion with adolescents has suggested to us that it is difficult to get them talking and, once they are talking, extremely difficult to achieve a discussion which goes much deeper than a half-baked exchange of prejudice. We hope that a discussion which is an interpretation of evidence will go some way to meet both these problems. It will help



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3. The third part of the document focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the collected data. It discusses the various statistical and analytical tools used to identify trends, patterns, and correlations within the data.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications and conclusions drawn from the analysis. It highlights the key findings and their potential impact on the organization's operations and decision-making processes.

5. The final part of the document provides a summary of the overall findings and recommendations. It emphasizes the need for continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of the implemented measures.

pupils to talk because they have something to talk about, and it will help teachers to maintain a satisfactory level in discussion by forcing pupils back on evidence.

This style of discussion is central to our purpose, and it is here that we must ask you first to focus your attention. At the same time you will need to ask about the work which fits round it both in terms of pupils' work which prepares them for discussion and in terms of the work they must draw from it. We are preparing a handbook on discussion, which will be posted on to you shortly - as soon as we can get it ready. It is not a bible. It embodies our own experience, the experience of some pre-pilot experiments in schools, and the experience of those who have thought and written about discussion in the past.

The topics for discussion we have so far begun to develop are war, education, the family, and relations between the sexes. Some work and thought has also been



given to the topics: people and work, living in cities, poverty and law and order. Let us state our aims at this stage quite simply. We want pupils to have a deepened understanding of these topics or problems. The question the teacher needs to keep asking is: are my pupils coming to understand war or education or relations between the sexes more fully, and are they developing in this area what Newsom called "judgement quickened by insight"?

In order to move in this direction, we ourselves must have a deeper understanding of the issues worth discussing. Few of us have studied these problems systematically. As an aid we are producing topic handbooks, which set out a logical framework for discussion. The one on war is now available. As soon as we can get it into your hands, you will also have a booklet on discussion in the face of evidence. These booklets will be revised in due course in response



to your comments and criticism. We might have stopped there. We might have said: "On that basis will you set about collecting materials for us?"

This did not seem to us satisfactory. A handbook of suggestions for teaching war and a handbook on discussion would be of very limited use to teachers. How could you get time to find the evidence on which to begin your experiments with discussion?

Accordingly, we set about making collections of evidence which could serve as stores or banks, starting points for resources centres intended for discussion. The first of these collections or banks, that on war, is ready in a special experimental form, and you will meet some parts of it at this conference. Our first attempt will have to be modified in the light of experience, but it is experience we need rather than opinion. If you can achieve the style of discussion towards which we are looking, then we believe that opinions based on past experience of other types of teaching will be seen to be unreliable. We must ask



you not to judge the materials on a superficial acquaintance, but only after study and use. You must have confidence that in the long run we shall achieve the right balance. We, and the Schools Council and Nuffield Foundation, are here to respond to your needs once you have gone far enough with this kind of teaching to define them clearly. At the moment what we need is agreement in the philosophy of what we are trying to do rather than agreement that we or you have yet succeeded in doing it.

The collection of materials we are offering you is constructed on two principles. It is intended to have a structure which reflects the subject. Thus a collection on the effects of war on society is split into sections such as the effect of war on families, or on education. This structure embodies suggestions for discussion. It prompts the question: what happens to family life in wartime? or what happens to schools and pupils? These questions can give a guide for gathering your own materials. Almost all these questions have been





tested in the classroom. The questions to be raised by the education pack are also available. These have all been tested in the classroom.

The collection on war consists of about 240 items - far more than we can ultimately publish. We must lose, I think, at least ninety items. We are asking you to help us in our choice - provided always that you are judging on the basis of experience of their use in discussion teaching. The collection we end up with has to cover a wide ability range. It must stretch the top of CSE. It must contain materials useable as far below CSE level as proves possible. We shall welcome warmly any materials you yourselves find and send to us in an attempt to improve the collection. We shall also welcome suggestions of passages from available published anthologies and text-books which are relevant.

Two experimental principles must be borne in mind. First, as in an intelligence test, at this stage there must be some material too difficult for all our pupils. Only in that way can we make sure that we have got up to



the highest difficulty level possible. But in all cases, we want you, having started with simpler material, to push upwards and upwards seeing as you tighten the screws how high your pupils can get up the ladder of difficulty we have built into the pack. Sometimes you may do this by adapting our materials. We believe that you will best help if you are impelled by a determined desire to break down the barriers to your pupils' understanding. There is something of the four-minute mile about this. If your pupils are not at the end working at a more adult level than ever before, we shall not have succeeded.

The second experimental principle is different. We do not regard it as our business, but yours, to decide what is fit to teach in terms of censorship. Here we shall accept your report that material is unsuitable without your having taught it, though we hope to get the agreed opinions of teams of teachers rather than of individuals. Be warned that our materials carry no authority in this respect which is intended to override your own judgement. In marginal cases you may wish to try materials before making a decision in the light



of their effect on a class, but you must obviously do so discreetly.

Both for this reason and because the material is in general controversial, schools are advised to take parents into their confidence. We have found that parents in general welcome the attempt of teachers to handle such matters responsibly.

How should you start? And when should you start? Every school will be in a different situation. If you are confident that these innovations in teaching can be gradually built into your present work, and if you have time to study the materials before next term, then you might build the project into your plans for September. But you might start at half-term or in January. We shall have some materials on education available in September to help your planning. The original urgency of the raising of the leaving age is mitigated. Prepare before you start and do not start against your better judgement.



We are not supplying you with the whole fabric of a course. At least fifty per cent of the course in your school must come from you. You must also allow for the fact that you may have to improvise if parts of our material are found to be unsuitable. At the same time, bear in mind that we shall give you all the help we can in planning or in improvisation if you want it.

All this has had the knell of caution ringing through it. I have had to make it that way to be quite clear that initially at least we shall be adding to your problems rather than presenting you with easy solutions. Our latest member of staff said that what attracted him to the job was the challenge of worthwhile difficulty.

But let me be quite clear. Once you have decided you can work with us you are not customers but colleagues. We shall be working together on the most absorbing curriculum innovation that could be imagined. No support for you which is in our power will be stinted. I and some of my colleagues are keeping large amounts of free time next session to come and discuss problems with you. It will also be possible to contact us during August.



