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vom 14.–16. März 1994
in der Universität Dortmund

Im Auftrag des Vorstandes herausgegeben von
Dietrich Benner und Dieter Lenzen

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ROBERT COWEN

Educational Studies in England and Scotland

Purpose and structure

I wish to do two things: (a) to provide a brief description of educational studies in England and Scotland, as these have developed in the last hundred years, and (b) to suggest that, within this narrative account, patterns of change can be identified. For most of the paper I will take the site of educational studies to be university departments and university schools of education; rather than colleges of education or national or local research agencies, such as the National Foundation of Educational Research, or the former Inner London Education Authority research office.

The structure of my paper is simple: I distinguish a number of stages in the development of educational studies: from the 1870s to the 1940s; from the 1940s to the 1970s; and the more contemporary developments thereafter. Inside each period, I distinguish one or two trends, usually noting (a) the institutionalization of educational studies and (b) shifts in its epistemological centre of gravity, as some kinds of studies in education rise in importance and others diminish. This structure provides me with a straightforward framework within which to construct a descriptive narrative.

However the interpretative argument of the paper is less simple, and I think it is useful to set out the general arguments straight away, and re-visit them from time to

time during the paper. This is a bit like telling the reader who did the murder at the front of the detective story rather than at the end: the sense of surprise and excitement is sharply reduced.

Argument

I have three abstract arguments:

First, that what we will discuss for England and Scotland is not »educational studies«, a field that is unified by some as yet unspecified principles, but studies of education: FRAGMENTATION – and at least a double fragmentation – of the cognitive has occurred.

Second, that the moral dimension at the centre of studies of education has moved. The moral dimension within studies of education, once located with the philosophical, has been replaced by the political: DISPLACEMENT – and at least a double displacement – of the moral has occurred.

Third, that, very dramatically, the control of educational discourse has changed in the last decade and that this is having major consequences for British education and for the future of studies of education in England especially: a REVOLUTION in discourse has occurred.

Stage One: The institutionalization of educational studies: 1870 to 1940

It is conventional to date the start of education studies in Britain in the late 1870s, with the creation of the first Chair, in Scotland, in 1876, and the publication of Bain's book of 1879 on »Education as a Science« (ALDRICH 1990, p.21; THOMAS 1990, p.11–12). From the time of the Universities Commission, in 1892, Education had become available as a fully qualifying subject for the MA in the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and St. Andrews, and after 1918 this degree stabilized in all four Scottish universities.

In England, by contrast, the institutionalization of educational studies inside universities was initially slow and far from universal. For example, the University of London created an examination in the history, the art and the theory of education in 1883; University College of Aberystwyth created a Welsh Day Training Department from 1892; and Durham created a Chair in Education in 1895 (GORDON 1990, p.165–166). However, Oxford and Cambridge declined to set up Chairs in Education, a situation from which their Education Departments have still not fully recovered, despite the appointment of very talented people to professorial chairs in recent years.

In contrast, taking advantage of the Bryce Commission Report of 1893 that »universities ought to train the teachers of (secondary) schools«, London moved relatively quickly. By May 1901 SIDNEY WEBB, Chairman of the London Technical Education Board, recommended creating an institution for those teachers wishing to make »a special study of the theory, history and practice of education«. A London Day Training College was established in 1902, as a day-time training college from which students could study for the University of London's BA and BSc degrees, and the Teachers

Diploma. The first Principal, JOHN ADAMS, was appointed with a salary of £800 a year and with the rank of Professor of the University (GORDON, S.166). This London Day Training College became from 1932 the Institute of Education, University of London, which now has about 200 full-time academic staff and more than 50 full-time researchers.

Thus, the context of the institutionalization of education studies was the growth of secondary education in the late nineteenth century; and the consequent location of educational studies at university level.

The content of those educational studies had three dimensions:

- a) A concern with the supervision of school teaching practice. All professors of education in this period had been outstanding teachers and later administrators of education. There was not a great deal of time at this stage for sustained reflection and theoretical analysis.
- b) There was a strong interest in psychology, notably Herbartian psychology e.g. ADAMS (1897), »The Herbartian Psychology Applied in Education«; Findlay at Manchester with his »Principles of Class Teaching« and »The Teachers Handbook of Psychology« (1886) (GORDON 1990, p.168).
- c) There was a place for history of education. Partly this was straightforward historical accounts of schooling phenomena. For example, FOSTER WATSON at the University College of Aberystwyth wrote on »The English Grammar Schools to 1666: their curriculum and practices« (1908) and »The Beginnings of the Teaching of Modern Subjects in England« (1909). And MICHAEL SADLER appointed to the University of Manchester in 1911 wrote a book on »The History and Administration of Education: 1800 – 1902« (SIMON 1990, p.129–130).

But there occurred an important and early shift. The history of education began to examine the »lessons of the past«. For example, ADAMS with his text on »The Evolution of Education Theory« (1912), J.W. ADAMSON at Kings College London and the Reverend R.H. Quick in Cambridge began to explore the »ideas of great educators« and »principles of education«. This was because in the words of Laurie from Edinburgh, »the study of the history of education in the writings of the most distinguished representatives of various schools of thought is an important part of the general preparation of those who adapt the profession of schoolmaster« (1903) (SIMON 1990).

I wish to argue that this period in the development of educational studies establishes an important pattern. It is clear that the slow institutionalization of educational studies was partly because it was a new subject – Oxford and Cambridge show traditional hostility to this new subject in this period. But work is being developed and it has two main dimensions, and an interesting omission.

The scientific basis of educational studies is provided by psychology (in this early period, Herbartian psychology); but the moral basis is provided by the ideas of the »great educators«. Nominally this is the historical study of education, but it is actually an early version of the philosophy of education and concentrates on the »principles« of early educators. It concerns itself with the general and correct purposes of education. It deals with visions of, and visions about, education. It is a form of moral education for school teachers, giving them access to an Idea of The Good.

The omission is interesting. There is no sustained effort to relate the nature of society – Scottish or English – to the nature of education; there is no thinking of the kind which was increasingly visible in France at this period through DURKHEIM, and in Germany, through WEBER.

The basic pattern of this stage in the development of educational studies continues up to the 1940s, although a couple of alterations in assumptions in psychology can be noted. That is:

- a) Steady institutionalization continues, especially in London (700 students per annum in 1930s), with specialist courses developing at Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh and Glasgow.
- b) There is a shift in psychological assumptions under the impact of a book, »Education: its data and first principles« (1920) by PERCY NUNN, a future Director of the London Institute of Education. The book stressed the significance of biological inheritance and the individual. It marked the possibility of a split in educational assumptions about how to think about and organize children in schools. One strand in Nunn's thinking provides indirect support for progressive education marked in a number of public reports in the inter-war years on the »Education of the Adolescent« (1926), »Infant and Nursery Schools« (1931), and »The Primary School« (1933) (SIMON 1990, p.131). But the implicit tension was later to open up in the views of educators over early childhood education, with one strand being represented by educators such as SUSAN ISAACS and JOHN DEWEY; and on the other hand, with BURT and the psychometricians interested in mental measurement and anticipating the use of intelligence testing after 1945 to allocate children to secondary schools. Particular Universities such as Manchester and several of the Scottish universities developed their psychological studies strongly along these lines, later.

However up to 1938 the pattern held. The moral elements in educational studies were provided by the *Principles of Education*, lectures often offered by the Professor and not fully separating the »history of education« from the »great man« and »great ideas« approach to educational studies and the socialization of teachers. *Psychology*, including divergent schools stressing mental measurement, and on the other hand, conceptions of the development of the whole child, provided the scientific base. The *Methods* courses on how to teach were given to graduates in training by subject specialists and former successful school-teachers. There was no general theory of didactics.

The forthcoming change had its groundwork laid by yet another Director of the London Institute of Education, Sir FRED CLARKE with his books on »Education and Social Change« (1940), and »The Study of Education in England« (1943).

Stage Two: The institutionalization of studies of education: 1940 to 1975

CLARKE criticised the highly generalized »principles of education« and their treatment as if ideas determined educational practice. He complained about the low level of awareness of the »social presuppositions« of educational writing and argued that thought and practice »are much more closely conditioned by social realities which are

themselves the result of social and economic forces.« In other words, CLARKE, among others, opened up the way for a new kind of history of education, for comparative education and a new kind of sociology of education to develop. He utilized his own experience as a comparative educator with his knowledge of South African, Canadian and American education – and his position as Director of the Institute – to press home his views. It is interesting that in the immediate post-war period the Institute appointed both a Professor of Comparative Education (JOSEPH LAUWERYS) and a Professor of Sociology of Education (KARL MANNHEIM) under the impact of this kind of thinking.

However the context, in which education was studied, changed massively in the post-war period, with the English experiments with three kinds of secondary school, and then one common school. There was also a raising of the school leaving age, experimentation with new forms of primary education and a considerable expansion of the university system in the period 1945 to 1975.

Of more direct relevance to this paper is the fact of the expansion in teacher training structures. The 1944 McNair Report recommended the establishment of Area Training Organizations, which placed universities or at least their Institutes of Education at the centre of a network of teacher training based in teachers colleges. This system gave universities considerable control over what would be studied as »education« and also offered possibilities for specialisation e.g. DURHAM and BIRMINGHAM strengthened their psychology (PEEL); Sheffield its history (ARMYTAGE); London its specialist philosophy, initially through ARNAUD REID, later RICHARD PETERS (SIMON 1990; cf. THOMAS 1990, p.195–204: »Appendix: Professors of Education in the United Kingdom«); along with the strengthening of comparative education and sociology which I have already mentioned.

In Scotland the number of Chairs in education was smaller – there were only four chairs in the university system, and only three by the end of the 1970s – and the strength of the BEd degree was very much in terms of psychology. This was a very prestigious degree and its possession was often a symbol of future success; but it remained very tightly linked to the Scottish nineteenth century tradition of psychological studies. There was no broadening of content, in the way studies of education altered in England in the post-war period.

In England, by 1963, the number of students in universities was twice the pre-war figure and the BEd. degree for teachers in training was being invented. By 1968, five universities were involved in running this degree and by 1972 there were 23 universities involved. Between 1960 and 1967, the numbers of Chairs in education went from 41 to 76; and specializations multiplied (GORDON 1990, p.174). Thus for example in the University of London Institute of Education there was a specialist chair for Child Development occupied by Professor TIZARD in 1964, in 1967 BASIL BERNSTEIN became the Professor of Sociology of Education, Professor NIBLETT the Professor of Higher Education and in 1971 MARK BLAUG took up a new Chair of the Economics of Education.

This implicit conception of the university study of education was not entirely a university invention. The very great expansion of teacher training (and its expense) meant the Department of Education and Science also had an interest. And in fact there was in Hull, in 1964, a joint seminar with university professors and the Department of

Education and Science, which included a lecture by the Chief Inspector responsible for teacher training and senior professors from schools of education including PETERS, BERNSTEIN and the psychologist WISEMAN from the London Institute (SIMON 1990, p.134). The view which prevailed was that studies of education would be best improved by basing them in the rigorous study of the disciplines underpinning educational knowledge – notably philosophy, sociology, psychology and perhaps history.

It was on the basis of this tacit understanding that such should be the correct forms of studies in education, especially the advanced study of education, that the expansion of MAs in education proceeded in the 1960s. The view was that there were certain foundation disciplines, through which both the education of teachers and the training of researchers should proceed.

Exactly what was a foundation discipline was, naturally, disputed and there was always some tension about whether in addition to philosophy, sociology and psychology, there should also be added to the list the history of education, the administration of education, and comparative education; and indeed whether students in training as teachers should be exposed to all foundation subjects compulsorily; or whether some »disciplines« should be optional (for a clear view defined by its chapter headings cf. TIBBLE 1966).

However, what was clear is that the terms of pedagogic discourse in the 1960s and through into the mid-seventies were very much defined by Professors in universities:

The moral centre of this discourse was a concern with equality of educational opportunity. Thus psychometry became increasingly attacked and sociology, especially of the kind pioneered by JEAN FLOUD and A.H. HALSEY – concerned with the sociology of access to educational institutions – began to dominate educational discussions. The government itself, in this period, was concerned with the politics of educational access to secondary and higher education.

Philosophy, in the hands of PETERS and HIRST, increasingly concerned itself with questions about the nature of disciplines and what should constitute a good school curriculum. There was some tension between sociological and philosophical perspectives at this time: the sociologists were increasingly concerned with the social construction of school knowledge, the philosophers very much concerned to work out the epistemological principles from which a school curriculum could be deduced. Oddly, in this discussion, the sociologists seemed to capture the moral, and political, concerns which would define whether an education was »good« (likely to increase access to education or not); though both groups debated curriculum. »Philosophy« of education, the new and more rigorous inheritor of the concerns for the »principles« of education, ceased to define, or to concern itself centrally, with the moral core of education and its ethical and visionary aspects. Also in this period – of the growth of the foundation subjects – lectures in the methods of education became of lower status (compared with the foundation disciplines) but there was a growth in the numbers of specialist chairs concerned with the study of the curriculum, a development obviously linked to the question of what kind of curriculum was appropriate to the new comprehensive secondary schools.

Thus in this period there was much discussion of the »rigour« of educational studies, a rigour, it was argued, that was guaranteed by the quality of scholarship underpinning

the foundation disciplines. The word »science« of education was however rarely used perhaps because, in the English context, of excessive reverberations with the idea of a science of psychology especially in its psychometric modalities. But the rigour of this scholarly study of education had a price: the foundation disciplines competing with each other for prestige, resources and students saw the fragmentation of educational studies into somewhat separate »studies of education«, marked off from each other by specialist MA programmes, conferring separated and separating disciplinary identity.

It is also crucial to note that these differentiated disciplinary identities were reinforced by the division of labour in the education market and career structures. The 1960s and the expansion of teacher education, as well as the increasing requirement that young teachers would gain BEd degrees, provided job opportunities in the colleges of education for new Lecturers with MA degrees. The colleges themselves, while wanting those with good school teaching experience, also wanted highly qualified specialists, often in the foundation disciplines that were examined in the BEd degree. The BEd degree was itself strongly influenced by the Institutes of Education (acting as Area Training Organizations) which dominated examination requirements in the colleges. Thus there was a powerful overlap between the ideological and the practical: the ideology of the period said that the rigorous scholarly study of the foundation disciplines was the ideal form of educational studies – and the career opportunities in the colleges of education provided material and status rewards for those young people prepared to embark on scholarly MA work.

In the next period in the development of studies of education both this ideology and these career structures weakened, and the main players in the game began to change.

Stage Three: The pragmatization of educational studies: 1975 to 1985.

By the mid-1970s the English education system was showing some signs of strain. The comprehensive school reform had been a major one, as had the expansion of teacher training. The number of universities had grown quite rapidly and there was increasing anxiety about school examination structures, upper secondary level vocational and technical training, and advanced technological training. The curriculum debate about secondary education was strenuous, and there had been dispute (and research) about the best ways of teaching rather young children in the primary schools. Socially, Britain was also by this time clearly a multicultural society (in the sense that it had important minorities distinguishable by skin colour) as well as the older mixes of religious, ethnic and national differences. Economically, there was increasing anxiety (expressed by both main political parties) about Britain's ability to compete in a world economy affected by the oil shock and by traditional and oppositional management and labour relations in the domestic economy.

The effects of these changes, on teacher education and on studies of education, were not linearly deducible in a simple sense. However a series of changes gradually and then cumulatively affected the definition of studies of education.

Within the teacher education group itself there was increasing anxiety about the »irrelevance« of initial teacher training for the classroom-level competence of teachers taking up their first jobs (cf., as one contemporary expression of this position, O'KEE-

FE 1990). PAUL HIRST himself offered a thoughtful indirect critique of the foundation disciplines by calling for a shift in their pedagogy, through more careful reflection of the school experience and school practice of young teachers in initial training (HIRST 1990).

In 1974, an enquiry by the University Council for the Education of Teachers led to a subsequent Report (in 1979) which argued for a school-centred training which would stress the skills required for effective teaching by new teachers in their first year of teaching. The training course was lengthened, and the possession of »recent and relevant« experience by teacher trainers became mandatory (cf. TAYLOR 1990).

The institutional base of teacher education began to change from the early 1970s. The system of 160 single purpose colleges of education, 30 polytechnics, and 20 university departments of education was affected by the smaller number of teachers required to teach a diminishing secondary school age cohort (TAYLOR 1990). Not only were there many mergers of colleges and the closure of others, but the universities began to withdraw from the validation of teacher qualifications and the (university-led) Area Training Organizations began to give way to a system of academic validation under the control of the Council for National Academic Awards.

Increasingly there emerged a national system of studies in education, but now influenced not by professorial views on the importance of foundation disciplines, but by the criteria of the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, advising the Secretary of State for Education, who was also being advised by Her Majesty's Inspectors. These criteria stressed classroom applicability of knowledge gained in initial teacher training (TAYLOR 1990).

The effect was a pragmatization of studies of education in the university institutes of education around problems directly linked to the problems of practical teaching in schools, and the provision of a multiplicity of shorter and useful courses on such themes as »education and museums«, or »race and education« (for the development of this tendency by the mid 1980s, see NAISH 1990). The aims of the teacher education system had been altered: what was needed was immediately »competent« teachers – a general principle very visible in the competency-based teacher education movement in the USA, a movement of which the English were aware though they did not copy it exactly.

Within the systems of advanced training for teachers in the universities, at Masters degree level and beyond, a shift occurred in the specialist degrees which were chosen by students – and in the range of specialist degrees open to them. Studies of the management, organization and leadership of schools became increasingly popular; more students began to do advanced courses in assessment and evaluation of education, as a set of discrete skills; there was a growth in studies applying computers and information technology for school use. New career structures began to open up as the vocational sector of upper second-level education expanded – and people could supplement their training with specialist qualifications appropriate for that sector. With the exception of psychological studies (which offered clear professional opportunities) there was a decline in the numbers of students taking up the study of foundation disciplines. Sociology of education and philosophy suffered a decline in student applications. This general pattern was compounded by shifts in the financial

support available to teachers wishing to undertake in-service teacher education. Increasingly, money was given for courses which had immediate applicability to school practice; and money was given for part-time rather than full-time study. Thus the knowledge provided in the in-service teacher education system was increasingly pragmatized as courses shortened, fewer full time teachers were released on paid sabbaticals, more part-time study was encouraged and new kinds of MA courses became increasingly linked to career structures in schools and the further education sector.

Even the research foundations of educational studies changed as the numbers of overseas students doing masters level work or above increased. They brought with them their own topics, generally intended to be of pragmatic applicability in their home countries. In parallel the Economic and Social Research Council, the source of some funding for educational research, began to stress diffusion of research results to policy makers and the Department of Education and Science began to allocate a part of its small research budget for the evaluation of educational policies. A general characteristic of the new research system began to emerge: it would become increasingly difficult for educational researchers to obtain money for researching those topics which arose directly from their disciplinary interests. Rather a preferred list of topics to be researched – typically urgent policy problems – would be published by the funding agencies, and educational researchers would compete, not least by combining their disciplinary skills, to obtain research grants.

Stage Four: The Conservative Revolution

With increasing speed and coherence since 1979, and especially since 1988, a revolution in English education has occurred. Major reforms have affected: the funding of schools, the balance of power between the Secretary of State and the Local Education Authorities, the vocational training system, the curriculum which has now been nationally defined and which is intended to be nationally tested. New types of schools have been created (the City Technical Colleges) and schools may now opt for funding from central rather than local government. The power of parents over the school system has increased and both teachers and certain pedagogic styles have been criticised at the highest levels of government (cf. COULBY/BASH 1991).

The context for the reforms is a clear anxiety visible before the first Thatcher administration in 1979 about Britain's international economic competitiveness, and in the view of the government, our educational backwardness in terms of the standards of our educational system compared with Japan and Germany. In comparative terms the situation is analogous to the sense of crisis, and the energy of educational reform in Napoleonic France or Meiji Japan – it is a »modernization crisis« – dealt with partly through centralization of education (like France and Japan in the nineteenth century) but influenced by a theory of economics which owes more to MILTON FRIEDMAN or ADAM SMITH than the concept of state-led modernization of the economic system.

Issues of »quality« and »standards«, efficiency and management, consumer choice, economics and the market are the vocabularies through which the post-war consensus on the educational system (stressing equality of educational opportunity) has been broken. The efficiency of the educational system, particularly for economic purposes,

is now the salient issue; rather than the social theme of equality of educational opportunity and the politics of access to education. The State has moved from being the provider of the infra-structure of education (school buildings, teacher supply and so on) to being a very powerful definer of the categories through which we think about education: schools and universities are now clearly organized as a »market« and the details of their institutional behaviour are beginning to reflect this. Schools and universities are now much more concerned with »staff development«, and with »evaluation and assessment«, and increasingly in their internal documentation they speak of their »customers«. Both schools and universities now ask about their »management system« and at any given moment, currently, are typically in the business of reforming it. Educational discourse has absorbed the categories of thought of business management, and as a correlate has increasingly asked questions about effectiveness and efficiency – delicate alternative vocabularies for »productivity«. Which was the State's question about the education service in the »modernization« crisis of the late 1970s.

I have argued earlier that the moral core of educational studies – the visions of »good education« captured in the writings of »great educational thinkers« and discussed in the name of »principles of education« – fractured, as educational studies became the more specialized studies of education in the 1950s and 1960s. I have argued earlier that the philosophy of education in narrowing its questions, for a while, to issues of the correct epistemological foundations of the school curriculum ceased to provide an alternative moral core to studies of education – this moral core being provided by the post-war consensus about and commitment to the theme of equality of educational access. I have argued earlier that the ideology about the rigour of educational studies – provided by basing studies in education on the »foundations disciplines« – was displaced in the 1970s by an increasing concern with providing pragmatically useful knowledge, for teachers in initial training, for new career opportunities within the education service, and that these processes were compounded by shifts in *Inset* funding, new national coordinating agencies (such as *Cate*) and the beginnings of an alteration in the priorities of research funding agencies. And finally I have tried to illustrate, while noting the counterpoint of paradoxes, the impact of the conservative revolution in education of the last decade on educational discourse.

In that discourse we are seeing the final displacement of the moral: an equation of the moral with the market. The ideology of the market suggests that it will provide a whole range of material goods and service for the nation and the individual, while also increasing individual choice in economic and social affairs, individual freedoms in society, a more democratic and classless society, and healthier and more morally responsible families; perhaps even happiness. Clearly those who oppose such a vision are in political error, are morally mistaken and may even be sinful. The market ideology as it has developed in Britain since 1979 is a powerful one; and as educational institutions have developed educational practices which reflect a market philosophy their ability to resist such views weakens as their work cultures change.

For example, increasingly universities take decisions on staff replacements on market criteria. Tenure has been legally abolished, and the number of academics and researchers working on short-term contracts has increased. Research output is now measured in a cycle of two-years and extra money is given to institutions for high

performance: the market rewards quite rapid publication. Even though it is not impossible to publish books – still the format for major statements in several fields of study – their maturation time diminishes. Soft-money research, sometimes given in large amounts, permits the creation of research units which are externally funded but located within the university. These units are as stable as their money supply, that is, they are inherently insecure – and not a comfortable place within which to develop a critique of the market. New managerial structures are being created which provide a much better information flow about the productivity of individuals, and sub-units of the university (such as faculties or departments).

These detailed changes in work culture are beginning to affect university departments of education. Studies in education, in some universities such as the English, will increasingly shift focus and direction as the market demands. If the ideology of the market, as sketched above, is correct (in practice and not merely in theory) and the university well adapted inside a market system, then the university will have fulfilled much of its moral mission – an amelioration by indirect means of the human condition.

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