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Editorial – Peter Humphreys

Personalised Education Now Chair: Current events

Mainstream events in the UK continue to amaze me… 45 000 daily school 'truants', fears about cheating in course work, Headteacher vacancies (Cumbria Local Authority has 33 unfilled), 80 000 pupils attending 'poor' secondary schools (head of the SSAT – Specialist Schools and Academies Trust), massive crisis in social and community cohesion and the failure of multiculturalism. But don't worry folks, the government would have us believe things are getting better and that they've got all the SATs statistics to prove it! (The astonishing thing is they actually appear to believe their own spin.) Depressingly, the usual answer to a crisis in schooling is more of the same… so it's back to basics and the default positions. So we will continue to create the surveillance society with the Children's Index, we will identify potential deviance before birth; we will remove course work and bring on more 'real life' experience like exams. We will ensure social cohesion in our families and communities by guaranteeing young people are sifted, segregated, progressed and targeted by age – stage schooling, and provide ever more control over their 'free time' beyond the classroom. Given that the UK has recently moved to catch up and improve inequalities in the workplace through ageist thinking, it's quite staggering that we still think it doesn't apply to children and young people. But… then again, we all have exactly the same needs until 16 don't we?!! '*It was Albert Einstein who defined madness as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.' (Simon Caulkin – You call this "best practice" in The Observer 5th June 2005)*

Thank god at PEN we can rise above this unimaginative thinking. We really understand education, learning and the relationship to the lives we lead. Our national members conference at Toddington October 14-15 considered the theme of Recycling Schools and all the associated blinkered philosophies associated with them. Our deliberations will be the subject of Journal 6 which will be especially devoted to the topic.

Some children matter more than others – Bernard Haezwindt

Bernard argues a very different case for ensuring 'Every Child Matters' (current UK educational mantra). At PEN we absolutely agree that people need to get back control and responsibility for their own lives and that really does begin with young people having control over their education.

At a time when it appears that "every child matters", the present government, with the best of intentions, throws millions of pounds out of the window. There is a desperate need to question the basis of our not so modern educational thinking for the masses and revisit utopian theories from the past which could now be profitably applied in a technological world full of promises. However, the new law on education, through which, in the United Kingdom, Tony Blair advocates the funding of schools by the taxpayers and the placing of these schools under the control of "philanthropic" captains of industry and/or possible religious fanatics, will only improve grades at the expense of learning. We desperately need humanist educational "prophets" to protect us against institutionalized education as much as the protection of all the gods of the universe against established religions since these two are undoubtedly major sources of social exclusion and conflicts. The fight for control of the population's minds has been going on for more than two centuries in France between the Church and those who wish to impose a lay system of education. The latest flare up was caused by Mitterrand in an attempt to get rid of religious schools, the so-called "free school", as in "free from the state", not free from religious indoctrination. I have to use a somewhat pejorative word instead of "education" as religion "learning" consists mainly in memorising and taking for absolute tenets allegedly dictated to self proclaimed prophets by various divinities. The word "education", in my mind, would subsume the application of some form of critical reasoning.

A question which needs to be addressed more seriously than before is how some people take to learning anything on offer in educational establishments and how others cannot or will not gain any amount of knowledge of much of what is on offer in schools, colleges and universities. Could this be connected to the nature of knowledge? Some educationalists, mainly behaviourists, assure us that, somewhere, there is a defined body of objective knowledge which must be acquired by students of all ages through the good offices of teachers who, individually, are the repository of some of this knowledge. To use an analogy, such teachers pour knowledge into empty brains. And by "empty brains" we mean "brains which are theoretically devoid of the specific knowledge which has to be provided by the schools". Students who fail to receive the knowledge are deemed to be un-academic. However, we know that, prior to attending schools, children seem to learn a phenomenal amount of stuff without being formally taught. In schools it is felt that since children differ in their motivation to learn, the "pouring of factual knowledge" is differentiated.

Other educationalists, like some constructivists, state that every one of us makes – or constructs - our own knowledge from what we come across in the muddle of a lifetime. If this second view were true, it would seriously undermine the traditional educationalists' thesis which is underpinned by behaviourist thinking. The constructivist starting point puts into question the whole educational apparatus founded on testing some very specific knowledge at very specific times, on behalf of a particular social order which rests on the tenets of individual achievement and competition between these individuals. In this competitive environment, does every losing child matter? The answer is obviously "no" as, in our society, those who arrive first tend to be more appreciated than those who arrive last, hence the ironic connotations hinted at in the title of D. Nobbs' novel 'Second But Last In The Sack Race.'

A simplistic view held by some right wing politicians is that the foundation of educational success in schools rests squarely on ethos and discipline. This may be an interesting conception of schools as providers of docile citizens but does not necessarily guarantee academic success nor indeed lifetime chances of economic well being. Discipline and uniforms conjure up a vision of a society where dissenters are shouted at into submission by those in control who are given the power to use sanctions to turn them into future subservient citizens.

Why do some politicians in France and in Britain advocate the presence of the police in schools? Has this measure improved the students' grades in the ghetto schools in the United States? Could it be the case that poor discipline is a symptom of dissatisfaction in the learning process by desperate students, rather than the root cause of poor learning? In this case, no amount of threats and punitive retributions will turn disaffected students into high achievers. Also, dissent was seen as a quality by the Western powers when it applied to those who disagreed with the soviet regime. In the same western world, dissention is equated with hooliganism. How can one aspire to an alternative lifestyle in a society where everything is already allegedly permitted? Logically, the dissenters must be mentally challenged… This kind of argument filled a lot of soviet lunatic asylums. Lack of "discipline" or failure to respect one's "betters" should be seen as a healthy symptom of life in a free democratic society where everything is open to discussion, rather than an excuse for voting in a law and order driven government.

One problem is that, once one is comfortably installed in one form of educational culture or another, one tends unquestioningly - willingly or unwillingly - to subscribe without thinking to its fundamental tenets and play a part as honestly as possible in one's students learning process. If our society requires, for example, the teaching of a modern language in reasonably manageable and identical chunks to a disparate group of students of a specific age at specific times to culminate in tests which are designed to grade such students according to the size of their memory, so be it! Some countries believe in the virtues of making students, who do not make sufficient measurable memory progress, repeat a year with a new and younger group of peers thus implying that failure at school is linked to having a lower intellectual age than one's peers. And so it also goes for science teaching in George W. Bush's creationist society. There, if one accepts as a matter of fact the reality that there is only one single true religion, one has to admit one of its main corollaries that there is no place for Darwin's misguided theories in American science education… Other cultures may dearly hold values which we believe to be against our own 'common sense' and for example, believe sincerely that women should not be educated. The view of how societies shape their people's thinking is, according to D.C. Phillips, held by 'social constructivists':

Although their focus is on individual learning or construction, not all of the so-called psychological constructivists posit individual mechanisms to explain learning; some bring social influences into the story to account for how it is that individuals construct the knowledge that they do.[…] Thus, for example, the Russian social and developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky and the contemporary social psychologist Kenneth Gergen have stressed the role played by language in shaping the individual's construction of knowledge. Language, of course, is the social phenomenon par excellence, and it is the medium through which parents, teachers, and peers can influence the way in which the individual comes to understand. Vygotsky and many others also point to the often underappreciated role played by the vast cultural repertoire of artefacts, ideas, assumptions, concepts, and practices which the individual inherits or is "born into". (p.11)

Letting students learn on their own what they choose to learn at any given time may be a practical solution for disenfranchised pupils. Since some educationalists allegedly know best what is good for their students, this suggestion is bound to attract cries of anguish from teachers who are about to potentially lose control over their pupils! Not forgetting the defenders of a properly ordered and controlled society! And this also includes the nurturing types who will guide their charges step by allowed step to a never never land of independence. Let us not forget that the archetypal nannies are fundamentally authoritarian! Let us not forget that they also tend to confuse training with education!

The next problem with letting students work things out for themselves is the question of correcting their inevitable mistakes. Can one let learners loose on a foreign language or history without checking their work at every step of their learning process? You definitely cannot possibly do so if you belong unquestionably to a behaviourist educational system where students' progress is marked negatively by penalising their grammar, their syntactical mistakes and their factual errors. In this system, achievement is measured by the paucity of mistakes, rather than achievement which is less easy to quantify out of 100. In an oppressive authoritarian environment based on 'correction', 'discipline', 'uniforms', 'norms', 'assessments' and 'national curriculum', you definitely can't. This is the reason why there seems to be a backlash return to the phonic way of learning to read in the UK and the syllabic way in France. The political right advocates the use of these methods as this does away with the unfashionable individual's holistic perception of the word and, why not, of the world. What is more enchanting than to hear children shouting disunited syllables or sounds together, apart from watching a well oiled squad of soldiers square bashing? Hweoevr, the asbloute imprtieave and domagtic neecsisty to use wrod comnpoents to peicerve a wohle word is porevn rtaehr ftuile if you hvae been albe to dehciper this snentece…

The frightening thing is that few teachers seem able to question a national "need" to grade students like commodities such as potatoes or eggs. In this type of education system, every child matters, but only as long as s/he remains docile and passive in his/her achievement's pigeon hole. To quote Voltaire's Candide, is this the best of possible worlds? If this is so, why does one find the following topic of discussion at a UNESCO workshop?

How do the content and processes of formal education relate to processes of social exclusion and to patterns of violence associated with the breakdown of social cohesion?

The UNESCO workshop was based on the South African society, but is our Western social order so fundamentally different? Refreshingly, the members of the UNESCO workshop believe that violence is not a spontaneous thing, but a reaction to another form of social violence which can be more subtle than mere physical aggression. Excluding someone from education, social interaction or consumption is a traumatic and violent act for this person, even if it does not show visible physical scars.

To sum up, I suggest that one can only make sure that each child matters:
By giving each child full control of his/her education. This will be rightly perceived by some people – but for the wrong reason - as a complete loss of control of the education system on the students. In other words, this will open the door to a genuine democratization of learning and, initially, to a form of chaos for most people and by a lot of teachers who believe sincerely that a democratic society is one where one goes to vote from time to time, and very little else. This way of thinking explains why few people question the role of an authoritarian organisation, like an army, being chosen to impose - or is it to facilitate? - democracy in Iraq or Afghanistan! Do as you are told since it is eventually for your own good! Teachers who would fight passionately for the defence of human rights think nothing of imposing order and discipline before delivering a lesson few pupils are interested in.
By carefully guiding students in their educational progress, from what they initially wish to know, to things they will find useful to know later. Studies have shown that what students seek on the web is social interaction and sharing of knowledge, something which is totally at odds with practices in the classroom. This, of course, will put the concept of rational curriculum on its head. At present, it is something which has to be served daily in properly defined chunks to everyone in a given classroom, like slices of salami. This process is like painting by numbers. By doing so, one ends up with a finished product, but one has not learnt anything transferable to any other kind of life activity.
By teachers ceasing to be the alleged repositories of all knowledge and becoming facilitators. Relaxing the degree of academic control over their pupils would reduce violence in schools..
By allowing each child to develop at his/her own pace throughout the compulsory years of education, but in a collaborative and convivial environment. This means, in actual fact, in a non competitive environment.
By changing the prevailing emphasis of learning facts to learning to learn. With the advent of the Internet, who needs to memorize the name of the capital of Outer Mongolia, unless of course, taking part in Mastermind or University challenge is one's biggest ambition in life.
By generating interest in learning, through the careful design of meaningful collaborative tasks where students divide up the work and the satisfaction derived in its successful outcomes, whatever their share of participation in it.

Before the Renaissance, students learned by memorising what their teachers knew. With the advent of printing, those who could afford books became endowed with a detachable memory which they could leave at home when not necessary. One did not have the same need to carry all one's knowledge in one's head. When our nineteenth century forebears needed to educate the whole of their country's population, they probably had to revert to memorisation as books were not in enough quantities for everyone to possess an unlimited library. To rationalize the economics of educational book production, curricula had to be established and the existence of empires brought about the necessity to impose a body of knowledge which united the subjects of such empires. This is the baggage we are still carrying despite the fact that we now have the Internet. We are delivering a nineteenth century education in the twenty first century.

For every child to matter, all that is required is to connect every child to the Internet, help him/her to make sense of knowledge and convince him/her that knowledge is for life and not just to enable them to take an examination whose basic raison d'être is to rank students for the benefit of employers and universities. This will undoubtedly cost money, but it appears that the government have a lot of it to spend on education. Why not spend it to make a difference, rather than consolidate the present methodological and philosophical status quo?

I started my career in education in 1967, as a primary school teacher in France and I have been teaching since in various institutions in Zambia, Nigeria and the UK, from secondary schools to universities. After some forty years' teaching, I am convinced that the biggest obstacles to education are mass teaching and individual assessment. Bernard Haezewindt, Faculty of Education and Language Studies, The Open University.

Ed Lines – inspirational poem

Don't impose on me what you know
I want to explore the unknown
And be the source of my own discoveries.
Let the known be my liberation and not my slavery.

The world of your truth can be my limitation;
Your wisdom my negation.
Don't instruct me; let's walk together.
Let my richness begin where yours ends.

Show me that I can stand
on your shoulders.
Reveal yourself so that I can be
Something different.

You believe that every human being
Can love and create.
I understand, then, your fear
When I ask you to live according to your wisdom.

You will not know who I am
by listening to yourself
Don't instruct me; let me be.
Your failure is that I be identical to you.

An abridged translation of a poem in Spanish, originally written by the young son of the Chilean Biologist, Umberto Maturana.

Learner's Rights and Responsibilities.

- Extension of the Learner's Rights and Responsibilities Declaration – Brent Cameron

This extension follows the declaration reprinted in a previous journal (Journal 1 Autumn / Winter 2004) and sits well with the Learner's Charter For A Personalised Learning Environment (Journal 4 Spring / Summer 2006). All three begin to describe aspects of personalisation as we see it.

1. The Learning Process

1.1. Every human is born with an inherent ability to learn. Learning is integral to living. It is the awareness of change and development.

1.2. Learning is a lifelong natural process. Learning increases one's ability and choices in responding to, and being responsible for one's actions and thoughts.

1.3. Learning emerges from an integral enthusiasm to understand and has inherent worth. Learning is a desire to know, and characteristically has its own intrinsic reward.

1.4. Learning implies growth, and growth implies the realization of an inner pattern of design and harmony. Balance in growth is achieved by maintaining a harmony between one's conscious development and the underlying unconscious awareness.

1.5. Learning is a mirroring process. If an individual is respected then one will learn respect. It is a human need to create meaning and to be in a responsive loving relationship.

1.6. It is essential to shift focus from teaching and expectations to learning and curiosity. Meeting the needs of the individual is the best way to invest in society, as fulfilled individuals will make positive contributions to society.

2. The Learning Individual

2.1. Learning is based on experience. Patterns of experience form models for understanding one's role in the world. One naturally learns through modeling. Learning emerges from an inner desire and enthusiasm to understand and to form meaningful relationships in the world.

2.2. Every individual has the right to determine the direction of one's own learning, and correspondingly is responsible for one's learning.

2.3. Every learner has the right to be treated as a whole and competent learner. The responsibilities for the results are each learner's opportunity for growth.

2.4. Natural learning is the unfolding of the infinite potential within. Self-realization is a process of understanding one's potential as one's role in a dynamic between self and others.

2.5. Learning is ultimately a self-design process, therefore each individual has the right to follow their own inner wisdom.

2.6. It is the right of every learner to be held in respect and it is the responsibility of each learner to hold everyone else in respect.

2.7. It is the right of every individual to live and learn from a sense of fulfillment, and to set goals that increase one's sense of self-confidence and one's sense of oneself as a resourceful individual.

2.8. One's self is ultimately not exclusive of others, it is inclusive of others through a sense of love and compassion. The purpose of living from one's sense of fulfillment is that one's actions will naturally enhance the experience of others and maintain a balance in relationships.

3. The Learning Relationship

a.) The Family - Parents

a3.1. The parenting relationship is the first and most significant relationship. Each learning parent is responsible to respond to the learning needs of the child as expressed by the child. Every child has the right to a nurturing and responsive family.

a3.2. One's capacity or ability to learn is determined more by the quality of one's relationships than any other factor. Given a meaningful and responsive relationship, every child makes appropriate choices for their level of ability.

a3.3. All families have the right to equal access to funding available for learning within a society. It is the family's right to decide how to best invest this funding for the lifelong development of learners.

a3.4. Life is a challenge, living is maintaining a delicate balance. Children naturally model parents, and integrate their strategies. It is therefore essential that parents are supported in taking responsibility for becoming optimum models for learners.

b.) The mentor

b3.1. A collaborative learning relationship is designed around a mutual enthusiasm for learning. The roles of mentor and learner shift and it is the responsibility of a mentor to share strategies and insights with the learner. The learner-mentor relationship is based on the principles of friendship and mutual respect.

b3.2. Every individual has the right to choose to participate in a relationship that is essentially nurturing and caring. Conversely, in achieving one's needs, one must be responsible to the realization of another's needs.

b3.3. Each individual in a relationship has the right to choose to enter into a relationship that is based on mutual gain. It is the right of an individual to end a relationship.

b3.4. Learning is a self-evaluative process. Learning is a collaborative process as it is important to include other points of view for an increase in self understanding. It is the responsibility of each learner to invite the point of view of others to gather information for further self-evaluation.

4. The Learning Organization

4.1. It is the responsibility of every learning organization to remain open to redesign, to include everyone in a process of consensus evaluation for ongoing openness and change.

4.2. Each individual has equal access to the resources of the community to increase their learning through development. Each individual is responsible to reciprocate the investment by the organization.

5. The Learning Society

5.1. It is the responsibility of a society to provide equal access to resources and to invest in the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical growth of learners. It is the right of every individual to develop to one's full potential and one's responsibility to share what one gains.

5.2. It is the responsibility of society to encourage diverse points of view, and it is the responsibility of individuals in society to respect other view points. A society has the responsibility to withdraw support for view points that are against individuals or groups.

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Educational Heretics Press and Education Now Books
- Roland Meighan

The supply of material leading the way to a Personalised Educational Landscape continues to flow.

The new series, *Community-Creativity-Choice-Change,* edited by Mark Webster continues with the latest books in this series: *Comparing Learning Systems: the good, the bad, the ugly and the counter-productive* by Roland Meighan, Educational Heretics Press, ISBN 1-900219-28-X and *Informal Education* by Tony Jeffs and Mark Smith, Educational Heretics Press, ISBN 1-900219-29-8

Find details via www.edheretics.gn.apc.org the link from the PEN website http://c.person.ed.gn.apc.org/ or via the General Office Address on the back page.

Roland Meighan was a director of Education Now and is a leading thinker, publisher, and author of Education Now and Educational Heretics Press. He has written and presented extensively across the world. His booklist is too numerous to list but includes *A Sociology of Educating* with Iram Siraj-Blatchford, Continuum Books (4th Edition .5th with Prof Clive Harber pending) IBSN 0-8264-6815-2. His latest work is *Comparing Learning Systems: the good, the bad, the ugly and the counter-productive* Educational Heretics Press, ISBN 1-900219-28-X

Ed Lines

"It is possible to store the mind with a million facts and still be entirely uneducated."

Alec Bourne

Worth a look... websites

The encyclopaedia of Informal Education
http://www.infed.org/encyclopaedia.htm stunning resource
John Taylor Gatto links http://www.johntaylorgatto.com/
http://www.preservenet.com/theory/Gatto.html
http://www.spinninglobe.net/gattopage.htm

Book Review
- Alan Clawley

Learner-managed Learning and Home Education: A European Perspective (2006). Edited by Leslie Safran Barson. Educational Heretics Press in association with Learning Unlimited www.learning-unlimited.org ISBN 1-900219-31-X Price £12

Learner-managed education is a philosophy that has many supporters but little official recognition in this increasingly centralized and bureaucratized Europe. The home education movement has led the way in advancing this approach to education; Learning Unlimited was set up in part to promote it throughout Europe and is was for this reason that this project was born.

The book is based on lectures given at the Learning Unlimited conference in 2005 and the articles have been translated into English, French and German, and each copy of the book contains all three versions.

Whilst much of the content of this book will be familiar to home-educators and members of PEN the two sections on the experience of home-educators in France and Germany (where it is illegal) may recall the anxious feelings that many in this country felt when they first decided to withdraw their children from the state system even where it is legal. (Even within the last month I had a phone call from a worried woman who had found our number in a 20-year-old issue of the Education Otherwise newsletter and who wanted to know how to take an unhappy child out of school.) The law on home education, it seems is not a matter for the European Union to harmonise across its member states. So while "liberalisation" is applied universally to the market in goods and services the right of parents to take their child out of the control of state institutions is not. Every writer in the book tells how they started with an imposed structure and gradually gave themselves and their children more and more freedom to learn in their own way. If only governments could have the same faith in the ability of children life would be much less anxious for everyone.

Alan Clawley has been the Chair of the West Midllands New Economics Group since 1997. In his spare time he works as a self-employed project development consultant for community groups or voluntary organizations. Alan studied architecture at the Architectural Association in London in the sixties where he was first exposed to serious self-directed learning. He has just completed an exhibition 'Back to the Modern' about the Birmingham Central Library. Alan joined PEN as a trustee in 2004.

Book Review
- Glyn Yeoman

The Face of Home-based Education 2: Numbers, Support, Special Needs.(2006) Mike Fortune-Wood. Educational Heretics Press. ISBN 1-900219-32-8 Price £10

The book 'Home Education 2' reports on the second phase of the extensive ongoing research on Home Education in the UK being carried out under the auspices of the Centre for Personalised Education Trust. The first phase, published in 2005, asked three questions: who are the people who home educate? why do they do it? and what sort of educational provision do they make? The current volume sets out, and discusses the implications of, the data gathered in response to the following questions.

1. How many children and young people are currently being home educated?
2. What sort of support can home educating families access?
3. What sort of options open up for home educated young people e.g. regarding university entrance?
4. What sort of provision can be made for children with special educational needs?

For several reasons the number of children and young people currently being home educated isn't accurately known; a reasonable estimate is about 50,000, but the number is increasing as comparisons with estimates made in earlier years shows. The decision to home educate is a very substantial one for the parents involved, and the amount of support available can be quite crucial. The Report lists the various networks that families can link into, and it introduces wide-ranging supporting contacts across the UK. The third question is discussed in a chapter headed 'What about University?.' It becomes clear that some university departments regard a conventional sixth form course with requisite 'A' level grades as necessary for admission. But others include more broadly-based judgements when making their decisions and are closer to the view expressed in a letter from the Boston University Admissions Director that "Boston University welcomes applications from home-schooled students" with their "independence and self

reliance that enables them to excel in an intellectually challenging programme of study." The data acquired in response to question 4 shows the quite remarkable "level of material sacrifice and life-changing alteration" accepted by parents when they decide to home educate. However, the rewards for doing so can be great with "improved relationships within the family between parents and child" and "reduced stress" being mentioned.

The research that underlies this slim (94 pages) but important book is to be warmly welcomed. On 13th May 2003 the House of Commons debated Home Education and John Randall, MP for Uxbridge, began his speech in the House by saying that "like the vast majority of people in the country I was ignorant of Home Education, not to say slightly prejudiced." Of course the publication of 'The Face of Home-Based Education' will reduce the ignorance - and hopefully the prejudice - of those who can get a copy. But it will also throw down a challenge. Some thousands of families are currently working with a Learning System that is radically different from formal schooling, and a society that is committed to education must surely pay serious attention to their experience.

The present volume is full of interest and it is to be warmly recommended. It brings into focus a question that at this time is both relevant and urgent. 'What can we learn from Home-Based Education?'

Glyn Yeoman was formerly Senior Lecturer in education at Nottingham University. Glyn is currently a Chair of Governors at a Nottingham School.

Ed Lines

'People can be divided into three groups:

those who make things happen
those who watch things happen
and those who wonder what happened'

John Newbern

If you want to build a ship, don't herd people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work; but, rather, teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.

Anon

Food for Thought

'At present, we spend about three times as much on testing children in schools than we do on learning resources.'

John Crace in "Cook the Books"
(Education Guardian 12th May 2005)

Truancy and the Criminalisation of Youth - Christopher Shute

We can always rely on Chris for his perceptive insights and his ability to point out the double standards of adults. This article is all the more timely following the recent admission that in the UK truancy is getting worse and some 45000 young people skip school daily. PEN strongly advocates children's rights and a total reappraisal of how we treat young people in our society.

The names we give to groups of people of whom we disapprove can tell us a great deal about how we feel about them. When a person steals we call him a 'thief', and the very word reverberates with contempt. Other words, like 'murderer' and 'arsonist' carry a similar charge of moral outrage, and serve to express in a small compass ordinary people's anger about crime. Many of these words come from the picturesque word-hoard of mediaeval law, and they remind us that wrongdoing has been with us as long as civilisation itself.

Children who do not attend their school are scarcely in the same category as thieves, fire-raisers and murderers, but the name by which we stigmatise them comes from the same general source. 'Truant' is the old French word 'truand', and it means a mediaeval Parisian bandit, an outlaw and a thief. Truands were routinely hanged and flogged, as Victor Hugo's novel 'Notre Dame de Paris' shows. They were the Underworld, desperately poor and on the look-out for anything which might be turned to pecuniary advantage. They were unscrupulous, immoral and godless, the off-scourings of a society in which most people's lives were 'nasty, brutish and short'. It is hard to justify using the same word to describe young children who decide not to go to school.

Perhaps the chief reason for this seeming anomaly is as deep seated as it is unrecognised. Maybe we call our school-avoiding children 'truants' because our feelings about them stem from the same fear and loathing which have made us long to see offenders suffer for their crimes since the Middle Ages and even before. We use the word because our culture encourages us to see it as a symbol of the danger which surrounds childhood. It exemplifies the century's old doctrine of Original Sin, the conviction, still almost universal in the Christian West, that children are not only ignorant of life's more complicated realities, but also inherently malevolent and unwilling to accept the wholesome restraint and control which their parents feel obliged to impose on them.

The British attitude to corporal punishment is a vivid example of this simplistic approach to young people. Over the past three or four centuries English Law has progressively rid itself of the right to punish certain categories of people by inflicting pain on them. We used to beat soldiers and sailors, and we still whipped young men who were training to be sailors until the middle of the last century. Slaves could be flogged until we abolished slavery in the early part of the nineteenth century. Apprentices were liable to be lashed by their masters until late in the 19th century and women, who are still routinely battered by their partners, could be treated in that disgraceful way with the sanction of the Law until relatively recent times. Only children are still allowed to be hit by adults, as long as those adults are their parents. We managed to wrest the cane out of their teachers' hands in the eighties, against the shrilly expressed indignation of the teacher unions, but nothing, it seems can work the final miracle of persuading parents to forget about disciplining their children by force.

I remember reading a book by a Native American from Canada called Buffalo Child Long Lance. In it he described his childhood on an Iroquois reservation. His parents never punished him. It seemed as if the mere fact of living in a tented village, adapting to the natural pressures of such a way of life was discipline enough. His father would beat him, but only when he asked him to. The boys of the tribe would sometimes agree to find out who was the best at enduring pain. They would hang from a tree-branch by their hands, and their fathers would beat them until they let go. The last boy still hanging was the winner, and acquired great prestige for his endurance. Even allowing for major cultural differences, the apparently primitive impulse to see children as harmless, to approve of them more or less all the time, and to value their courage without endlessly watching them to see if they break the rules with which we have chosen to surround our youngsters feels like good sense. You might, of course, object that Native Americans did not have to cope with the complexities of urban life. They could afford to give their children the freedom of the open plains and endless forests. We, on the other hand, have to teach our children to live with many different constraints and dangers created largely by having to live in the concrete jungles of Western Europe. This argument, however, makes a nonsense of traditional morality.

We insist on claiming that our aim is to 'teach our children right from wrong'. We confront them from their earliest years with a set of moral considerations which we claim are based on well-understood and venerable foundations. Yet when they express their individual responses to our admittedly complex society in ways which disturb us we do not, as the Native Americans obviously did, accept that children have to learn for themselves, by living and experiencing their environment, how their particular bit of the world works for them. Instead we brand them as 'irresponsible', 'thoughtless,' and, worst of all, 'immature'. From this treatment many of them draw the conclusion that we don't like them much, or at best, we only like them when they behave exactly as we want them to, and share our view of the world in close detail.

For this reason we have, I would suggest, constructed for ourselves an alternative morality. It includes the basic moral commandments - treat others as you would have them treat you - but adds to them a massive extra element made up of countless rules and regulations. The first of these is a general insistence that a child must always do what an adult tells him to do. This rule is morally neutral. If I tell a child in my care to do something, and he does not do so, I am expected to treat him or her as an offender, a bad person. This principle of obedience is not confined to situations where the child is in danger or likely to hurt someone else - no-one would object to my giving that child an order which might save his or her life. It applies with equal force to any other type of command. If I tell a youngster to go to bed, to be quiet, to kiss an elderly relative, to wear this or not to wear that, disobedience is not an option, and the child's own feelings do not enter into consideration. The child has no more right to object or refuse than a slave or a prisoner.

As a result, we find ourselves endlessly dissatisfied with our children. Programmed as we are to expect that they will misbehave and force us to punish them, we have become suspicious of any approach to education which attenuates or even denies this 'common-sense' view of childhood. Our ideal student is one who never questions our authority or refuses to obey us. The other type of student, the resister, the trick-player, the diversionist, the boy or girl who challenges teachers and the curriculum they are trying to teach, is a threat to the whole idea of school-based education. We cannot allow ourselves to see them as anything other than an evil. They may be intelligent, restless, creative, tangential thinkers, but our present system rarely recognises their potential, because to do so might mean finding a place in the school community for determined nonconformists, who refuse the orderly succession of lessons, exercises and formal acknowledgement of the hierarchy.

Society insists on claiming that our aim is to 'teach our children right from wrong'. It confronts them from the earliest years with a set of moral considerations which it claims are based on well understood and venerable foundations. I have met a fair few young people in my time who, having been endlessly told by their teachers that they are 'bad' decided that they might as well act out the role assigned to them. Many of them compounded their relatively minor breaches of school discipline with more or less serious criminal offences. In all of them it was possible to perceive a malaise made up of resentment, rejection of all kinds of adult authority and a devout philistinism which made a great virtue of knowing nothing except the trivial culture of their group.

For some reason, since organised education began, the people who have given it a shape and defined its purposes have almost unanimously assumed that the only reasonable response to this malaise must be 'discipline'. Disruptive pupils cannot be reasoned with, listened to or allowed to negotiate with their teachers to find a better way to work together. That would be equivalent to accepting that they operated from a set of morally neutral motives, that their behaviour was not 'evil' or 'naughty' but more akin to the natural response of a healthy human organism to boredom or bewilderment. That in its turn would throw responsibility for their behaviour onto their schools. These would have to accept, for the first time ever, that if their 'customers' - the pupils - felt intolerably disgruntled with the fare they were offering to them, it was for the schools to change, not the pupils.

After all, schools are infinitely better equipped to modify their ways of working than their pupils are. They are run by adults, who have a wide experience of the different ways in which life can be lived. One would expect those adults to possess reserves of patience and self-control which children could not yet have acquired. Yet our complacent culture, inspired by nothing more noble than the convenience of grown-ups and the constraints of finance, expects children to make all the concessions needed to enable their elders to carry on playing their authority games.

In conclusion, I want to say that our criminalisation of our children solves a lot of problems for us, and absolves us from thinking about the environment we create in our schools for those who reject the schooling process. Yet I would maintain that those children are as intelligent as any others, and their behaviour is no more unreasonable or immoral than that of an adult who walks out of a bad play or refuses to pay for an ill-cooked meal in a restaurant. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves for having accepted for so long a regime that either subjects them to humiliation and punishment in school, or calls them 'bandits' if they stay away from school.

Christopher Shute is Copy Editor of the journal and trustee of PEN. After 25 years secondary teaching Chris has researched and written widely on education. He was a regular contributor to Education Now News and Review and is author of *Compulsory Schooling Disease*, Educational Heretics Press. ISBN 0-9518022-5-9 in addition to books on Alice Miller, Edmond Holmes and Bertrand Russell (all in the Educational Heretics Press and Education Now Publishing catalogue)

Book Review
- Terri Dowty

Making Sense Of Citizenship: A Continuing Professional Development Handbook. Editors: Ted Huddleston and David Kerr. Hodder Murray ISBN 0-340-92681-3

I have a real problem with Citizenship. Not with *citizenship*, because I think that the education children receive should help them to develop the understanding and skills they will need to become active adult citizens in a democratic society in their own country and to appreciate their place in the world and their duty as human beings to do what they can to make it a better place. Phew – sorry about that definition, but at least I've got it off my chest.

No, my difficulty is with *Citizenship*. The capital letter labels it not as a right way of living but as the National Curriculum subject. This was dreamed up by David Blunkett, who seemed to me, as both Education and Home Secretary, always to be wanting to slot people into neat niches in society so that they won't cause trouble. Logically, then, if that's the aim it's necessary to mould them early, while still at school, to pummel them into the correct shape to fit that niche. The Crick Commission planned it: Citizenship (with a capital C) would become a subject.

But what does that mean? In the UK it means it has to be taught as a statutory requirement. But teaching isn't enough for us Brits nowadays. Nor is learning: there has to be measurement. I sat on working groups for two organisations which produced responses to the proposals, and both fell out with me (politely) when I refused to support the idea of formal assessment. I was almost a lone voice. Everyone else, from Sir Bernard Crick downwards, had signed up to the notion that no subject will be valued unless it is part of the formal assessment regime. Actually, in the looking-glass world of UK (or, to be more precise, English) education that's true – but that doesn't make it right.

Since then I've always experienced a frisson of grim satisfaction whenever concerns are expressed that *citizenship education* (by which they actually mean *Citizenship Teaching*, something entirely different) isn't being done well in many schools. At a DfES meeting I heard a tone of outrage from a normally calm and level-headed OFSTED official (they do exist). "Why aren't schools taking it seriously?" he asked plaintively. "After all, it's a statutory requirement. It's a National Curriculum subject." He's a nice man, and I tried to explain gently the difference between what Government Orders term priorities and what schools think and do about them. I spoke with authority: I've only ever taught Music, RS, Philosophy and Latin, so I know all about low-status subjects - and they never gained credibility simply by being part of the exam timetable at the end of term.

I plough my own furrow, trying to be both missionary and ambassador for school councils and democracy. Curiously, *Student Voice* is so very "now" in education that I've apparently and abruptly turned from loony into expert, which is quite unnerving. So, where I can, I preach that citizenship is about doing it and living it, not about being taught or assessed in it. Come to that, I wonder how highly the PM or Home Secretary (past or present) would score on Citizenship assessment. Listening to the views of others and modifying their own? Building consensus and promoting compromise? Hmm. In any case, neither Tony Blair nor his former advisor and present DfES mole Lord Adonis is a great fan of Citizenship, though their emphasis on the Respect Agenda suggests that they may have strong views on citizenship, views which I suspect might be at variance with mine or with those of the average PEN reader. An ASBO for anyone who dares disagree.

But this is a book review. As a card-holding Citizenship rebel, I desperately wanted to dislike *Making Sense Of Citizenship*. I thought I'd be able to tear into it and rip it apart. But I can't. It's an extraordinary piece of work. I've never seen a book on any topic more completely cover the whole of its subject matter. Quite simply, everything is there. Huddleston and Kerr, both experts in their field, have given us the complete guide to Citizenship Education in schools. It will tell you how to do it and to get all the boxes ticked when OFSTED comes round - complete coverage of "Citizenship As She Is Seen By QCA and Government".

It does much more than that. The authors - who are billed as editors, but I think they wrote nearly all of it and assembled the rest from other sources with consummate skill - write with passion and belief, and with absolute authority. They fulfil the brief of telling teachers how to do the job required by the Statutory Order, but so strong is their conviction that the book is principled as well as pragmatic. Even when I try to fall out with it, I cannot do so for long. Thus I dislike the statement on page 83 that

> *School ethos or culture can be assessed, planned for, implemented, monitored and evaluated like any other aspect of a school's work.*

Does absolutely everything have to be weighed and measured? But it's hard to disagree with the subsequent sentence:

> *It should be referenced in the citizenship education policy and development plan, and strongly linked to the school improvement plan, as well as featuring explicitly in the school prospectus.*

Spot on. If I were choosing a school for my children I'd be keener to get a feel for the ethos than read pages of exam results.

Besides, I'm being unfair in my choice of extract. That section comes well down the page after the wise and welcome introduction to ethos that states:

> *Creating a citizenship* [democratic] *ethos involves more than just drawing up a 'wish-list' of the sorts of values and relationships you would like to permeate your school. It means embedding those values and relationships in concrete practices and procedures – in particular, through providing opportunities for students to:*
>
> - *play a part in decision-making*
> - *take on positions of responsibility*
> - *manage their own learning.*
>
> *Research suggests there is an association between school that encourage student participation and overall academic achievement, attendance and general discipline.*

The authors advise carrying out a review of the school's current ethos, and add: *What is important is that students are involved in the process from the outset.* Hooray!

The book is principled, based on democratic values, but still manages to be utterly pragmatic, giving nuts and bolts guidance on building citizenship in a school. As I've said, it will tell the reader how to satisfy the requirements of Citizenship as an

assessed and inspected subject. But it is altogether deeper and fulfils a more profound purpose. Being a handbook for teachers it's not one to read cover to cover (though it's not hard going). As something rather to dip into and find nuggets of practical wisdom it's outstanding.

I still don't like Citizenship as a subject, but I like at least two people who write about it. And I like their book.

Terri Dowty is the Director of Action on Rights for Children ARCH. It is an internet-based children's rights organisation with a particular focus on civil rights. Arch supports equality, choice, respect and privacy for all children and young people. http://www.arch-ed.org/ .

Ed Lines

"At first people refuse to believe that a strange new thing can be done
Then they begin to hope it can be done
Then they see it can be done
Then it is done and all the world wonders why it was not done centuries ago."

Frances Hodgson Burnett

Compulsory Attendance: Good Policy or Bad Policy? – Dr Steven W Simpson

I like Steven Simpson's reflections of his teaching and education. Earlier this year his Ed Net Briefs contained this piece where he too questions compulsion. At PEN of course we argue that learning and assessment should be non coercive and invitational.

I frequently experience a conflict between my education values and education law. It starts with the fact that my students are required by state law to be in my class. I always wonder what would happen if teachers could work with groups of students not forced to be present.

In Washington State, the compulsory attendance law requires parents to force their children to attend an "approved" public, private or home-based instruction program until the child is at least 16 years old. So, most parents send their children to public schools.

A free education, by anyone's standards, is a good thing. It allows the concept of equality to be realized, generates the educated citizenry needed if democracy is going to work, and helps improve the human condition.

I am not questioning the value of education. I am questioning the value of forced education. As a basic premise, let's consider the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

I like the idea of this amendment. Individual rights are protected from infringement by an oppressive government. People are free to practice any religion they prefer. People in the United States have freedom to make choices about what they say, where they go, and with whom they associate.

People are free to elect whomever they want to govern. Freedom of choice is the fundamental principal of democracy itself. But that fundamental principal is denied to parents who are forced to send their children to state-approved education programs. Any group of people, students included, resent being forced to be anywhere. This resentment, as any dictatorship demonstrates, breeds dissent and rebellion.

As teachers we spend huge amounts of our time doing what we call "classroom management." We have a bunch of kids in a room who are there because we force them to be there. What if we took the opposite approach and made school a free choice? What if parents, not state law, determined if students were in our classrooms? What if attendance at school was a privilege instead of a requirement?

I wonder if it would change school culture. The only force involved would be parental force. Educators would be free of police work and could educate. If their programs were good, they would attract students. If the programs were of poor quality, students would attend some other school. Teachers could focus all of their efforts and energy on teaching the best classes possible, rather than splitting their efforts between classroom management and content education.

If students at school behaved inappropriately, they could simply be asked to leave. No progressive discipline system, no detention, no suspension, no thousands of hours spent by educators doing discipline, no special school law at all. Students would be expected to behave in accordance with disorderly conduct laws, just like all other citizens. Any conduct that disrupted the education process would result in the person being asked to leave the classroom.

Teachers could spend their time teaching academic content and skills. If parents want their children educated, they teach them to behave in an appropriate manner. If they don't do that, their children will not get to be in school. Just like in retail stores, restaurants, and automobiles driving down the highways, appropriate behavior is required or people don't get to be there.

I am not sure where this would all lead. I just like the idea of education more than the idea of law enforcement. I value law enforcement, but my choice would be to work as an educator in a free society. Taking away the force of state compulsory attendance laws would change education in public schools.

I wonder how it would change public school education, and for whom?

New Journal
- Hazel Clawley

Home Education: The Journal of Home Education in the UK and Beyond… Cinnamon Press, quarterly, 52 pp., £6 single issue, £22 per annum. Review of issues 1-3

It doesn't always follow that home-based education is personalised learning. Homes can be run as mini-schools, with tight discipline imposed by parents, strict timetabling, and a curriculum not chosen by the learners. However, such homes appear to be in the minority, at least in the UK, according to recent research. Certainly the styles of home-based learning reflected in this new journal reflect the principles of PEN, which is why the journal merits a review on the PEN website. In addition, there are regular articles from familiar PEN names, Roland Meighan, Jan Fortune-Wood and Mike Fortune-Wood (who also edits the journal).

The journal, with its attractive, glossy, full-colour cover, claims to be unique in appealing both to home-educating families and to those with a professional interest in home-based learning. Each issue contains the expected, but none the less fascinating, accounts of the learning journeys of a variety of families, including a large family (10 children), Muslim families, a single-parent family, and families whose children have special educational needs. But there are also articles on recent research into home-based learning, and some insights into how LEAs view the phenomenon. In particular (in Issue 1) a piece from the inside, by an officer of Leeds City Council's education services. Professionals who have an interest in the outcomes of home-based learning will also be impressed by interviews with older home-educated young people, and the piece by a second-generation home-educator.

Most useful to home-based educators is the regular column on legal issues, helping families keep up to date with the implications of new legislation and regulations. There are also reviews of resources, and contact lists.

The journal has an international outlook, featuring (in the first three issues alone) articles on home education in the USA, Japan, Germany, Belgium, Holland and Canada, as well as the UK, including special mention of Scotland.

Other items of interest in brief: National Curriculum, virtual schools, Open University, school refusal, running a learning centre – and "Quote of the Quarter". Issue 1 quotes Illich:"…we have come to realise that for most men the right to learn is curtailed by the obligation to attend school." Food for thought.

Hazel Clawley was involved in home-based learning with her own children for 12 years; during that time she helped to run community playgroups and playschemes. As a Green Party activist, she convened the education policy group for 10 years. She is a long-term supporter of Education Now, and currently a PEN trustee.

Food for Thought

In 2005 a City and Guilds Survey reported in the Guardian (25th February) the

Percentage Of People Saying They Enjoy Their Work
Ranked 1 Hairdressers 40%
Ranked 21 Teachers 8%
Ranked 30 Social Workers 2%

Given that teachers and increasingly social workers are charged with core care and influence over children's learning and lives it's depressing to know 92% of teachers and 98% social workers are unlikely to be enjoying any of it!

PERSONALISED EDUCATION NOW STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The vision of *Personalised Education Now* is grounded upon a legitimated and funded *Personalised Educational Landscape* that includes:

- a focus on the uniqueness of individuals, of their learning experiences and of their many and varied learning styles
- support of education in human scale settings, including home-based education, learning centres, small schools, mini-schools, and schools-within-schools, flexischooling and flexi-colleges
- recognition that learners themselves have the ability to make both rational and intuitive choices about their education
- the re-integration of learning, life and community
- advocacy of co-operative and democratic organisation of places of learning
- belief in the need to share national resources fairly, so that everyone has a real choice in education
- acceptance of Einstein's view that *imagination is more important than knowledge* in our modern and constantly changing world
- a belief in subsidiarity… learning, acting and taking responsibility to the level of which you are capable
- adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in general and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in particular - recognising current limitations on educational choice.

PERSONALISED EDUCATION NOW

Maintains that people learn best:

- when they are self-motivated and are equipped with learning to learn tools
- when they take responsibility for their own lives and learning
- when they feel comfortable in their surroundings, free from coercion and fear
- when educators and learners value, trust, respect and listen to each other
- when education is seen as an active life-long process

What is meant by 'Personalised Education'?

Personalised education as promoted by *Personalised Education Now* is derived from the philosophy of *autonomous education*. This centres on learner-managed learning, invitational learning institutions, the catalogue/natural versions of curriculum, invited rather than uninvited teaching, and assessment at the learner's request. Its slogan is, *'I did it my way – though often in co-operation with others'* and operates within a general democratically based learning landscape that has the slogan, *'alternatives for everybody, all the time'.*

We already have institutions that work to the autonomous philosophy within a democratic value system. A prime example is the public library. Others are nursery centres, some schools and colleges, museums, community-arts projects, and home-based education networks. They work to the principle of, *'anybody, any age; any time, any place; any pathway, any pace'*.

Such institutions are learner-friendly, non-ageist, convivial not coercive, and capable of operating as community learning centres which can provide courses, classes, workshops and experiences as requested by local learners.

These are part of a long, rich and successful but undervalued personalised learning heritage, from which we draw strength and which we celebrate. Our urgent task now is to share the benefits of personalised learning and to envision a *Personalised Educational Landscape* that really attends to the needs of all learners and to the greater good of society at large.

Personalised Education Now seeks to maintain *'Edversity'* and the full range of learning contexts and methodologies compatible with Personalised Education, our latest *understanding about the brain,* and how we *develop as learners and human beings* throughout our lives.

Personalised Education operates within a *framework of principles and values* resulting in learners whose outcomes are expressed in their character, their personality, in the quality of life they lead, in the development and sustainability of our communities and planet and in peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution. Performance indicators are measured as much in their physical and mental health, in peaceful existence, freedom from crime, the usefulness of their contributions and work, theirlevels of active citizenship etc as they are in the existing limitations of the assessment scores and paper accreditations.

Re-integration of Learning, Life and Community

Under the current mainstream education system most learning, living and sense of community is fragmented in a way that defeats learning and fractures social cohesion and the development of our quality of life and community. It is structured around the needs of institutions and not learners, and fails to understand the brain and human development. These issues must be addressed and learning, life and community re integrated.

Democratic Values

Democracy is not predetermined - it needs democrats to shape it. Our education landscape must cultivate active democratically minded communities. Nelson Mandela's Minister of Education, Professor Bengu, declared that, *'Democracy means the absence of domination'.* In the spirit of this principle, all the activities of *Personalised Education Now* are designed to promote the key ideas of co-operation, participation, learner-choice and responsibility, flexibility, diversity, self-motivation, equal access, as well as personalised learning. The slogan of democratic forms of learning is *'we did it our way'.*

We trust the membership and those who are sympathetic to our cause will join the continuous campaign to ***challenge current limited perceptions of personalised learning, influence the educational debate*** by engaging in dialogue, lobbying, writing and *practising Personalised Learning* wherever they can.

Personalised Education Now seeks to develop a rich, diverse, funded Personalised Educational Landscape to meet the learning needs, lifestyles and life choices made by individuals, families and communities. It promotes education based on learner-managed learning, using a flexible catalogue curriculum, located in a variety of settings, and operating within a framework of democratic values and practices. The role of educators moves from being, predominately, *'the sage on the stage',* to, mostly, *'the guide on the side'.*

Membership of Personalised Education Now

Personalised Education Now welcomes members, both individuals and groups, who support and promote its vision. Its membership includes educators in learning centres, home educating settings, schools, colleges and universities. Members range across interested individuals and families, teachers, Head Teachers, advisers, inspectors and academics. PEN has extensive national and international links. Above all the issues of personalised education and learning are issues with relevance to every man, woman and child because they lie at the heart of what kind of society we wish to live in.

Futures Thinking

The need to look for future scenarios for education is apparent in all sorts of places. The debate as to what education will look like in 5, 10 or 20 years is taking place alongside the struggle to define what is meant by Personalised Education and how we learn. It is clear that the dominant learning systems know that the status quo is not tenable. At PEN we believe we can assist clarity of thinking here. We urge members to become familiar with the extent of current debate and engage wherever possible. Follow links to Futures thinking / Personalised Education / OECD Schooling for Tomorrow and alike on these websites

www.oecd.org
www.demos.co.uk
www.dfes.gov.uk
http://www.qca.org.uk/11232.html

The Centre for Personalised Education Trust (CPE)

Personalised Education Now (PEN) is the trading name for The Centre for Personalised Education Trust (CPE), a charitable company, limited by guarantee. (Charity number: 1057442). It emerged from Education Now in 1996 as The Centre for Personalised Education Trust (CPE). In 2004, after 17 years pioneering work Education Now transferred its resources and membership to PEN.

What can you do?

Don't let the Journal and enclosures end with you or just share with the converted….distribute widely. This is a message for everyone. Enter a dialogue with as many people as you can. Engage them in the issues and encourage others to join PEN. We find kindred spirits in all sorts of surprising places and those who just need a little more convincing. Often people partly understand but cannot conceptualise solutions. This is not an issue of blame… We need to engage the present system, not alienate it. Some have never thought at all and need deep engagement. One of our roles is to explain and show how it is and could be different. Within a developing personalised educational landscape solutions will evolve according to localised possibilities… including ways of learning that we have not yet imagined. It's all too easy to take the moral high ground and believe we have all the answers because patently the enterprise is challenging and far from easy. But even now we can share the rich history and current practice of learning in all sorts of institutions and home based situations and we can assist in the 'Futures' thinking that can envision and give rise to its evolution. Together, the debate can be aired throughout grass roots and the current learning system, with the general public, media, and politicians and decision makers. The one certainty is that although the road is not easy it is more solidly founded than the one we have at present. Circulate our PEN leaflet (copies from the general office). Bring the strength of PEN to succour those currently engaged in personalised education, and provide vision to those who are not.

Find out more visit our website: http://c.person.ed.gn.apc.org/

Contact Personalised Education Now

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Newsletter

Contributions for the Newsletter are also welcomed. Contact Janet Meighan.

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Trustees Meetings
Jan 14 Trustees Meeting AGM
March 11 Trustees Meeting
June 3 Trustees Meeting
7 / 8 September 2007 Annual Working Days
Jan 14 08 Trustees Meeting AGM

E-Briefings
- Monthly

Newsletters
- Autumn 2006
- July / August 2007

Journals
- Issue 5 – Autumn 2006
- Issue 6 – Spring 2007

Learning Exchange:
- Loughborough – 1 April 2007
- TBA – 14 October 2007

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Membership Includes:
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- Regular PEN E-Briefings
- Annual Learning Exchanges
- The support of a diverse network of learners and educators in the field of Personalised Education

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