

**P**astoral **C**are  
*a n d* **P**ersonal-**S**ocial  
**E**ducation

*Entitlement and Provision*

Edited by Ron Best, Peter Lang,  
Caroline Lodge and Chris Watkins



CASSELL STUDIES IN PASTORAL CARE AND PERSONAL  
AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

# PASTORAL CARE AND PERSONAL-SOCIAL EDUCATION

*Entitlement and Provision*

Edited by  
Ron Best, Peter Lang,  
Caroline Lodge  
and Chris Watkins

in Association with the  
National Association for  
Pastoral Care in Education

Continuum



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## CHAPTER 9

# Personal-social education and the whole curriculum

Chris Watkins

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I offer a brief review of some of the changes which have affected personal-social education in the late 1980s and early 1990s in English (and to a lesser extent Welsh) secondary schools. I then propose some concepts and practices which may support further development in the next period. In particular I shall be taking a 'whole-curriculum' view of personal-social education – a term which I aim to clarify.

## WHOLE CURRICULUM STARTING POINTS

I take PSE to mean the intentional promotion of the personal and social development of pupils through the whole curriculum and the whole school experience. It is immediately clear that this definition is not simply referring to timetabled courses labelled personal and social education (or any of the other various titles which have been used).

The late 1980s proved an important time for PSE in many schools in that the notion that a timetabled course was sufficient provision for this aspect of learning came increasingly under question and increasingly lacked credibility. The 'ghettoization' of PSE courses was a common concern (Brown, 1990), as was the mismatch which could be found between the content and aims of such courses and the pupils' experience in the rest of school. Sometimes proactive PSE courses came up against reactive schools, on other occasions schools which were trying to be empowering came up against PSE courses which seemed controlling and negative in style.

Moves beyond PSE as solely a timetabled course have been tackled in a variety of ways, the best of which placed the contribution of specialist courses in the context of broader planning. This is one aspect of a whole curriculum view, and is in contrast with the minimalist view that whole curriculum means 'through the subjects'. Evidence is now more available of the benefits of a PSE course in the total provision (see Appendix 2 on the value of pastoral care and PSE).

There has also developed, in some schools but not all, a more effective view of the role of the tutorial, again within a whole-school picture. Earlier

use of terms such as 'pastoral curriculum' had been criticized as divisive. Even when the term was used in a wide sense (Bulman and Jenkins, 1989), it was suggested that the term *necessarily* implied a divided system of pastoral care in schools. The phrase 'pastoral aspects of the curriculum' was sometimes more useful. However, ways of describing or analysing the interrelation between pastoral care and PSE were not available: one view (Watkins, 1985), seemed (judging by the number of references made to it) to identify this gap, and perhaps to go some way to filling it.

## THE TERM PSE: CHANGING USE

In some ways the 1980s have seen the meaning of the term 'personal and social education' change. Donovan (1989) suggested that there were still a few schools operating the underlying notion that PSE was for lower ability pupils who would be following a non-exam timetable in their fourth and fifth years of school. There are still schools which seem capable only of viewing PSE as a timetabled course where a notional 'team' of colleagues is burdened with all the anxiety-provoking, personally demanding and controversial issues. More often the English secondary school seems to have accepted the place of both timetabled and broader personal-social considerations for all pupils.

PSE has not always had a good name: a new tutor in an inner London school once said to me, 'I know what PSE stands for – perfectly sordid experience'. In a context where small periods of a pupil's timetable were characterized by 'Death by 1,000 worksheets' (and of the personally intrusive variety), I could see the point she was making.

Perhaps it was these sorts of distortions, and the wish to distance from them, which led to attempts in some quarters to use a different term – PSD, personal-social development. This happened in some projects funded by the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI). Teachers forged a number of important achievements under this banner in the 1980s, not least an increasingly open discussion of teaching approaches, more negotiated learning, and the development of records of achievement. However, at worst the term PSD put at risk the notion of pupils' entitlement, as it could be read to imply that an educational programme was not necessary to promote such development.

Terms have also been used which give an extra highlight to *one aspect* of PSE: examples include PSHE (personal, social and health education), PSME (personal, social and moral education) and SPACE (social, personal and careers education). This may reflect the specialist background of the innovative staff in PSE. But it is common to find health educators who do not see their connections with careers educators, and vice versa. I prefer a unifying term rather than a partisan one. I have also chosen to use the phrase personal-social education (with the hyphen) in order to show the redundancy of the 'and' which is commonly used: it seems to me that you cannot have personal education without it being social, nor social education without it being personal.

Statements regarding personal-social education have rarely been found in central government views of the curriculum, but the way government addresses the curriculum has a major effect on PSE at the local level. The

1944 Education Act lacked any detailed statement about the school curriculum: this attracted central government interest in the 1970s and took a changing course culminating in the Education Act of 1988. It is to that which we now turn.

## PSE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM: A BRIEF REVIEW

A major issue which has been affecting PSE in the late 1980s has been the development of the National Curriculum. It is worth recording some of the events which are not generally known or are too often forgotten.

In 1985 the government White Paper *Better Schools* said: 'The Secretaries of State's policies for the range and pattern of the 5 to 16 curriculum will not lead to national syllabuses. Diversity at local education authority and school level is healthy, accords well with the English and Welsh tradition of school education, and makes for liveliness and innovation' (p. 4). In the summer vacation of 1987 the same government published a 'consultation document' (DES, 1987c) which took the opposite approach and outlined a national curriculum composed of a string of traditional school subjects and percentages of time allocated to them. It is reported that seventeen van-loads of responses arrived at the DES, most of which questioned the lack of reference to personal-social education. A minor DES publication (DES, 1987a) followed up with a minor reference to personal-social education, but this portrayed it as 'another topic' alongside the core and foundation subjects.

In the detailed specification of core and foundation subjects, each working group was given guidance that it should specify how the subject contributed to 'the development of personal-social qualities . . . for example self-reliance, self-discipline, a spirit of enterprise, a sense of social responsibility, the ability to work harmoniously with others' (DES, 1987b, p. 4). However, it was clear that this would not be a major priority, nor would there be a co-ordinated approach across subject working groups. Simple attempts to assess 'personal qualities', as were contained in the first report of the mathematics working party, showed the age-old difficulties of measurement in this area, were not credible or face valid, and were removed.

Attention then became focused on the NCC 'Interim Whole Curriculum Committee' which was asked to 'give early consideration to the nature and place of cross-curricular issues, in particular personal and social education'. It made an interim report to the Secretary of State in April 1989 which was not published. Important points from that report included:

- Personal and social education (PSE) is arguably the most important of the cross-curricular dimensions to which schools need to give attention. PSE can be seen as the promotion of the personal and social development of pupils through the school curriculum. It is concerned with fundamental educational aims and permeates the whole curriculum. It should be the responsibility of the teachers and a priority for school management.

- Personal and social education, in its broad sense, is part of every pupil's entitlement to a curriculum which promotes the purposes of education laid down by the Act. No component of the school curriculum is without its potential influence on personal and social development.
- Schools will need to develop an explicit whole school policy for PSE ... It should make clear that all teachers are responsible for promoting the personal and social development of pupils in their care.
- In key stages 3 and 4 it must be part of a school's policy to supplement curriculum-wide PSE provision with allocations of time for PSE objectives not adequately met elsewhere.
- In key stages 3 and 4 a guidance and support structure for pupils should be a central feature of school policy. Each pupil should relate personally to one tutor who is responsible for overseeing his or her individual welfare and progress. The role of guidance should be to help pupils to discuss, agree and review programmes of work, and to plan pathways towards future careers. Guidance is an integral part of each pupil's experience in school, not just provision for when things go wrong.

(National Curriculum Council, 1989a, paras 4.1, 4.3, 4.5, 4.7)

These were important statements, and readers looked for them to be followed up. But the report remained unpublished. The Chairman and Chief Executive of the National Curriculum Council describes the pressure from the Department of Education and Science against working on matters of the whole curriculum, in the form of a letter from the Minister telling NCC to abandon such work (Graham, 1993, p. 20). Recognizing that many schools wanted to hear an answer to the question 'Where's PSE?', NCC published extracts of the Whole Curriculum Committee report themselves (*NCC News*, June 1989).

October 1989 saw the publication of NCC Circular 6 (National Curriculum Council, 1989b), *The National Curriculum and Whole Curriculum Planning*, which included the following:

To achieve these whole curriculum aims, schools need to ensure that the planned contribution of different subjects is not made in isolation but in the light of their contribution to pupils' learning as a whole.

(para. 7)

Personal and social development through the curriculum cannot be left to chance but needs to be coordinated as an explicit part of a school's whole curriculum policy, both inside and outside the formal timetable. Personal and social development involves aspects of teaching and learning which should permeate all of the curriculum. Whilst secondary schools may offer courses of personal and social education, it is the responsibility of all teachers and is equally important in all phases of education.

All teachers recognize their responsibility for promoting the personal and social development of their pupils. This can be assisted by giving priority to making links between what they teach and what their pupils learn at other times and in other parts of the curriculum. They should have a clear view of how their teaching contributes to the whole curriculum experience of their pupils.

The introduction of the National Curriculum provides a new opportunity to promote these links. Attainment targets and programmes of study are the bricks with which the new curriculum must be built. Cross-curricular strategies bond these bricks into a cohesive structure.

(paras 10, 18, 19)

The above-quoted publications demonstrated the view adopted by the Council at that time, that PSE courses were not to disappear, nor was everything going to be incorporated into core and foundation subjects, but that a more whole-school approach would be needed. However the detail was not clearly spelled out, and a confusion was born between the phrases 'whole curriculum' and 'cross-curriculum'.

Further guidance on the whole curriculum was promised, and in 1990 a very slim, uninspiring document was published (National Curriculum Council, 1990c). This lacked any overall model of the curriculum, and became another of the weak English publications in this area (Lord, 1986; Schools Council, 1975). The disappointment was further compounded by the fact that the first guidance document on 'cross-curricular themes' was published at the same time: *Economic and Industrial Understanding* (which had been moved up the list of themes and hurried in its production to be published at the same time) was fatter, glossier, and contained colour photos (as well as a narrow conception of economic and industrial understanding). The message was that a particular set of cross-curricular themes was to be given prominence, thereby increasing the possibility of fragmenting whole curriculum matters such as PSE.

Originally the Whole Curriculum Committee had made some effective distinctions between cross-curricular dimensions, themes and skills. Cross-curricular *dimensions* were stated as:

- personal and social education;
- equal opportunities;
- multicultural education.

(National Curriculum Council, 1989a, para. 1.3)

These were described as 'interwoven in the curriculum, both formal and informal' (National Curriculum Council, 1989a, para. 1.3), whereas *examples* of cross-curricular *themes* had been listed as:

- health education;
- environmental education;
- economic and industrial understanding.

Their defining feature was 'a strong component of knowledge and understanding, in addition to skills'. They were said to be 'less pervasive than the cross-curricular dimensions' (National Curriculum Council, 1989a, para. 1.3).

By 1990 there were five themes:

- economic and industrial understanding;
- careers education and guidance;
- health education;
- education for citizenship;

- environmental education.

(National Curriculum Council, 1990c, pp.4–6).

The rationale for the choice of the above five ‘themes’, and for their separation, was not made clear: it was merely claimed that ‘although by no means a conclusive list, [they] seem to most people to be pre-eminent’ (National Curriculum Council, 1990c, p.4). They soon passed from ‘examples’ to what many schools took as a complete set. This is particularly interesting in the light of an earlier unpublished draft of the guidance on whole curriculum which included the following list of cross-curricular themes:

- economic and industrial understanding;
- careers education and guidance;
- health;
- citizenship;
- environmental education;
- information technology;
- media education;
- family studies;
- leisure;

followed by the comment ‘This list is not exhaustive but gives an indication of the variety of themes in which schools have been interested’.

The status of these themes is still misunderstood. Some have regarded cross-curricular themes as a basic entitlement. This is not the NCC view: consultants drafting the guidance on themes have told me that on several occasions they were told not to use the word ‘entitlement’ – the last use of this important term was in the 1989 report on the place of PSE.

It is distressing that teachers do not critically examine the ‘provenance’ of the guidance in these NCC publications. One consultant is reported to have been instructed to take all the adjectives out of a draft. The guidance on ‘citizenship’ is reported to have been written by three members of the NCC after the final draft from the working group had been thrown out.

The creation of the English five themes has not met with acceptance elsewhere. In Wales a cross-curricular theme of community understanding has been substituted (Curriculum Council for Wales, 1992). In Northern Ireland the cross-curricular themes start with education for mutual understanding, and cultural heritage (Northern Ireland Curriculum Council, 1989). The focus on the five themes meant that further detailed attention to the development of dimensions was not forthcoming.

## THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM IMPACT ON PSE

It is possible to view the above account with a range of feelings, from disappointment that PSE has not achieved the status of national prescription, to elation that it avoided the clutches of an alien and illiberal form of control. Whatever the feelings about National Curriculum developments from 1988 to 1993, the impact on PSE can be evaluated under four headings:

- the effects of subject-based testing;
- the weakness of whole-curriculum guidance;
- the status of 'cross-curricular' elements;
- the status of aspects outside the National Curriculum framework.

### The effects of subject-based testing

The main statutes in the Education Act of 1988 which specify the National Curriculum are not about curriculum, nor even about subjects: they are about testing. The assessment tail wags the curriculum dog.

The use of school subjects as the building blocks for the National Curriculum can be traced back to earlier years, when good teaching became equated with good subject teaching (Goodson, 1990). It is no coincidence that subject categorizations were chosen as the building blocks of a back-to-basics centralizing legislation. Despite their vague and arbitrary nature, school subjects are used for national paper and pencil tests. In this sense 'subjects' are controllable and controlling, in contrast to more person-centred goals for education.

A subject-based curriculum:

- treats subjects as though they were ends in themselves;
- becomes content-based to the exclusion of concepts and skills;
- does not cope with the enormous growth of knowledge and the demands for more economical ways of organizing it for the purposes of learning;
- draws arbitrary boundaries around subjects;
- may terminate worthwhile study that is not confined within subject areas;
- fails to make a link between subject matters, and hence one subject is not supported by another;
- leads to learning difficulties occurring when learners are switched from one subject area to another.

Such a curriculum with extensive national testing is in tension with the stated goals of the 1988 Education Act, to 'prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life' (section 1(2)(a)). It is also in tension with views of employers who have suggested that subject-based study does not suit school leavers well (CBI, 1989, para. 57).

The general impact of subject testing on secondary schools in the period 1988 to 1993 has been:

- an understandable wish to get the statutory aspects of subject testing 'under their belts', a wish which was regularly frustrated by government changes of policy over the forms of assessment;
- a hardening of subject teaching boundaries in some schools, fuelled by accountability fears, despite the clear DES statement, 'The use of subjects to define the National Curriculum does not mean that teaching has to be organised and delivered within prescribed subject boundaries' (DES, 1989, para. 4.3);

- a concomitant reduction in cross-subject working (Hall (1992) refers to an NCC survey which showed evidence of this);
- at worst, infighting over the amount of timetabled time allocated to the subjects.

This despite the statement:

The Secretary of State:

- may not prescribe how much *time* should be spent on any programme of study
- may not require particular ways of providing a subject in the school timetable
- will not specify teaching methods or materials

(National Curriculum Council, 1990a, sheet A6 referring to section 4, sub-sections 2 and 3 of the 1988 Act and DES Circular 5/89)

The particular impact of subject-based testing on PSE has been:

- that it is clear that PSE is not a government priority, and consequently
- that PSE development (as has been the case in the past) works from local starting points and develops a local character.

The weakness of whole-curriculum guidance

Given a National Curriculum composed of subjects, the government, DES and NCC were not also going to specify whole curriculum matters which might be seen to divert attention away from the subjects.

Ways of describing the whole curriculum have not advanced since the work developing from the HMI 'areas of experience' (HMI, 1983). Some LEAs have continued to use this approach in their advice to schools, and Scottish developments have taken a similar direction (Scottish Consultative Committee on the Curriculum, 1989). The body in Wales charged with implementing the National Curriculum made an important contribution. In its document *The Whole Curriculum 5–16* eight areas of experience are proposed as planning centres for the curriculum (Curriculum Council for Wales, 1991). By not giving primacy to subjects they appear to follow the Northern Ireland example (Northern Ireland Curriculum Council, 1989), which agreed six cross-curricular themes before specifying objectives in the context of subject teaching.

The overall impact of weak guidance in England has been to allow the fragmentation of subject treatment in the secondary school, and, in a time of coping with imposed change, most schools have not made innovations in their whole curriculum management.

The status of 'cross-curricular' elements

The phrase 'cross-curricular' is unclear in its meaning. The credibility of discussions using it is often compromised. Does it mean across the subjects of the National Curriculum? across the basic curriculum? across the whole curriculum? everywhere? dimensions or themes? and how does anyone decide what is 'across' and what is within? *What could a curriculum be such that some of it is across itself?*

The confusion could have been avoided if the original distinctions made by the NCC Whole Curriculum Committee (cited above) had been maintained, but in slightly different language, as follows.

For aspects of learning to which every occasion in school has a contribution to make (albeit sometimes unplanned), the term 'dimension' is meaningful. But (by definition) we are here talking about the whole curriculum. The examples of PSE, equal opportunities and multi-cultural education are good ones. Developing these dimensions requires active whole-school approaches and policies.

For areas of more specific knowledge, to which some subjects (particularly defined) make a partial contribution, 'themes' may be an appropriate term. Their development may be advanced by discussion and agreement between subject teaching teams.

Thus we have:

All locations	<i>whole-curriculum dimensions</i>	whole-school policy
Some locations	<i>inter-subject themes</i>	departmental agreements

In schools the impact of the NCC's 'cross-curricular guidance' varies. The influence of pieces of paper which are centrally published as guidance on the curriculum is as weak as it has ever been. It is frequently difficult to find these guidance publications in a particular school.

Schools adopted various strategies to the 'cross-curricular guidance'. Some failed to recognize that NCC guidance on cross-curricular themes is non-statutory (and therefore may be put to one side and replaced by something better) – sometimes because of the uninformed behaviour of inspectors and others who collude with or support the cry 'we have to do this now'. Some evidence suggests (Whitty *et al.*, 1993) that only 11 per cent of schools have adopted these five themes. Other schools examine the NCC publications alongside other such guidance, from LEAs and elsewhere.

At worst, schools have responded in a fragmented way, appointing for example a co-ordinator for each new theme, and attempting to plan in a haphazard way. One example I came across operated like this: identify all the possible learning objectives in all the NCC guidance booklets (I think it was 127); group these into a number of headings (around thirty); circulate these headings to subject departments asking if they 'do' any of them; departments which say they do become the 'lead departments' for that heading – end of problem. This fragmented response is perhaps not as alarming as the trivialized approach which allocates thirty-five minutes per week to a slot called 'cross-curricular work'!

Recent research (Whitty and Rowe, 1993; Whitty *et al.*, 1993) suggests that the different NCC themes are handled in different ways by schools. Those with a history and tradition (careers and health education) are often found in a timetabled PSE course. Environmental education is shared out between geography and science (a good example of the 'inter-subject theme' defined above). Education for industrial understanding is the most 'permeated' through a number of subjects, and citizenship is hard to find (in English secondary schools, that is – it does not apply in Wales, where 'community studies' is chosen).

Evidence is also starting to emerge that even the well-supported themes such as careers education are being squeezed from the timetable (NACGT and ICG, 1993).

### The status of aspects outside the National Curriculum framework

In some cases it seemed to be forgotten that the National Curriculum is not everything. Notwithstanding the various NCC and DES statements, such as:

The whole curriculum is broader than the basic curriculum. It includes:

- provision beyond the basic curriculum (other subjects and extra-curricular activities)
- cross-curricular elements

(National Curriculum Council, 1990a)

some schools forgot that the National Curriculum indicated that it would take up about 70 per cent of pupil time (DES, 1987c, p. 7). Some LEAs have continued to remind schools of this, as has the Curriculum Council for Wales, proposing 15 per cent of pupil time for enrichment beyond the National Curriculum. But schools were led to believe the National Curriculum is everything by this very talk of percentages: what originated as some informal advice to subject working groups was exaggerated by the efforts of others including subject teaching associations, to the point that some people argued that the core and foundation would take 120 per cent of the time available. Such nonsense emanates from viewing the National Curriculum as specifying all of a subject and its time, contrary to the 1988 Act. NCC appeared to collude in this, and sailed very close to the wind in terms of the legal prohibition against specifying timetables when referring to percentages in Circular 10 (National Curriculum Council, 1990b), but described these as illustrations of what schools do, rather than NCC recommendations.

In the light of the four elements above, the overall picture shows important features of how schools vary:

- Some or many seem frightened and destabilized, acting to 'get things right' and forgetting their own professional judgement.
- Some have a non-reactive perspective, thinking about the various aspects of change, holding on to their existing confidence including that in PSE.
- Some have been stimulated to address PSE anew (to my knowledge this has included high-status independent schools).
- Most have recognized that they will not find central government support for PSE and will have to clarify their own purposes and practices in the area.

## NATIONAL CURRICULUM – ANOTHER REVIEW

The review of the National Curriculum undertaken by Sir Ron Dearing (Dearing, 1993) has discussed some of the factors referred to above. The proposals, which were immediately accepted by government, are for a period of greater stability, for the excessive prescription of the National Curriculum to be removed, and a revised approach to assessment. The excessive content is related to the subject base: 'The Orders have, however, been devised individually and at different times by subject specialists who

were naturally keen to see that their subject was well covered' (para. 3.14). Surely there is a parallel message here for all schools: devising a curriculum by starting with subject interests leads to distortion.

The clear message that the National Curriculum is not the whole curriculum is supported by the proposal to occupy 75–80 per cent of teaching time on statutory National Curriculum and religious education in the early years of secondary school, and a more flexible curriculum in the later years. As the report states, 'The time released by slimming down the statutorily prescribed content of curriculum would be used to [amongst others] cover issues such as health education and careers education' (para. 3.29).

I take the view that the Dearing proposals offer a breathing space for schools, in which they may take a more rational and less pressured look at their curriculum offer. The possibilities for improved whole-curriculum thinking are there, and they include giving attention to the personal-social dimension of the whole curriculum. The statement 'we can't run a PSE course because of the National Curriculum', which in my experience was more often anticipated than heard, and which was always a misattribution, is now more clearly erroneous.

Notwithstanding this window of opportunity, it would be unwise to ignore the changes on areas other than curriculum which government introduced in the period 1988–93. Whatever the developments in curriculum prescription and testing, the quality of school life is affected by other developments. It is in the climate of schools that we see change occurring. School climate may be difficult to assess, but it is fundamentally important in a discussion of personal-social education. In the 1990s I see examples of schools becoming more competitive, both within themselves and in their stance towards others, more parochial in their goals and their view of their role, and less accepting, as shown through the increasing number of exclusions, for example. If this were the whole picture it would be extremely worrying. Perhaps it has always been the case that in poorly managed schools the needs of the institution take precedence over the needs of the pupils. Now the possible increase in some aspects of school autonomy raises the possibility of more schools taking on the characteristics of closed systems.

In the next period schools' approaches to PSE will doubtless continue to differ, and perhaps such differences will increase. But there will be a new opening for whole-curriculum considerations and for schools to clarify their provision in this area.

## PUPILS' ENTITLEMENT IN PSE

Although many schools have accepted that they make a planned contribution in the area of personal-social education, it does not follow that they make an explicit statement of pupils' curriculum entitlement in this area.

In training events I ask teachers to examine such statements of entitlement as the following:

Pupils' personal-social entitlement

Pupils are entitled to respect, dignity and promotion of self-reliance; and knowledge, skills and understanding which help them to:

1 *maximize their academic achievement at school:*

- communication skills;
- skills of learning in classrooms;
- co-operative work;
- skills of managing study;
- reflection and review.

2 *maximize the use of their academic achievements after school:*

- skills of understanding themselves, their opportunities and their choices;
- personal-social skills, including skills of self-presentation;
- interpersonal skills for their future work and non-work contexts.

3 *maximize their contribution to and satisfactions from adult life:*

- maintain bodily health, psychological health and a healthy lifestyle;
- develop interpersonal relationships including intimate and sexual ones;
- understand social relations in family, work and community;
- promote positive relationships, identify and avoid negative relationships;
- skills of making moral judgements and developing appropriate action;
- understand democratic and political processes;
- skills in communicating ideas and opinions to influence social change;
- understand and respect the beliefs, faiths and cultures by which people interpret life and on which they base their behaviours;
- cope with change;
- combat prejudice.

An important feature of such statements is that they incorporate both *general* aspects, to which all teachers can imagine making a contribution, and *specific* aspects to which the teacher with some specialist training can make an extra contribution. This can be very important in moving past the view of PSE as all the difficult personal and controversial issues to do with sexuality, drugs, AIDS and so on (a portrayal which led many teaching colleagues to feel inadequate if support was not available), to a more balanced position where those highlighted issues take their place in the context of the broader themes of development and achievement.

The issue of the relation of PSE to 'academic achievement' is also made clear in such statements. This again can help to take us beyond the point where PSE is portrayed as something separate from (or even an antidote to) the school's proper concerns with achievement. Underlying these polarizations there sometimes lurks a very narrow view of how pupils achieve, that is by being 'taught at'. In general terms this sort of polarization has waned as schools become more effective at talking about effective teaching and learning. However, outside pressures such as those towards 'traditional methods' and 'learning the facts' sometimes cause it to resurface. This is despite the available evidence that co-operative learning enhances and does not reduce academic achievement. The most comprehensive research review of the effects of co-operative teaching

approaches (Slavin, 1986) identified forty-five studies done between 1972 and 1986 investigating the effects of student team learning on achievement. Thirty-seven out of forty-five studies showed that student team learning classes significantly outperform control group classes in academic achievement. Eight studies found no differences. None showed negative effects for co-operative learning.

## PUPILS', PARENTS' AND OTHERS' VIEWS OF NEEDS IN PSE

Pupils' views of their own needs in personal-social learning are gathered all too rarely it seems. This is a missed opportunity, as PSE can then degenerate into teachers suggesting the content and then cajoling pupils into it. Simple survey devices (such as the example in Watkins, 1991) can prove engaging and illuminating for younger pupils. A different style of eliciting concerns would be appropriate for more mature pupils, and equally important.

Some of the evidence of pupils' and parents' views gathered through cross-school research surveys is included in this volume – see Appendix 2, 'The value of pastoral care and PSE'.

Parents are not generally asked their view about PSE. However, even on those aspects which some wish to make the most 'controversial', parents are supportive. An important survey on sex education (Allen, 1987) demonstrated that 96 per cent of parents wanted sex education to take place in school. And on a more local level, I have been told about many occasions when teachers ran a parents' evening on PSE, using the methods and materials they normally would with pupils, and found enthusiastic support from parents, sometimes contrary to the teachers' own expectations.

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI, 1989) argued for a greater prominence for cross-curricular elements, careers education and guidance amounting to at least one period of teaching a week in years 9 to 11, and a higher prominence to core skills rather than subject knowledge:

- values and integrity;
- applications of numeracy;
- understanding of work and the world;
- problem-solving;
- effective communication;
- applications of technology;
- personal and interpersonal skills;
- positive attitudes to change.

It is interesting that these views were not obviously incorporated into national curriculum reforms of the late 1980s: it is important for each school to engage such views at a local level when reviewing and developing its curriculum.

## DESCRIBING A CURRICULUM

I take the curriculum to mean the planned learning offer of the school. Describing a curriculum is then about key questions such as what learning should be offered, when, in what order, through which approaches, and so on. At a national level it may be difficult or impossible to achieve a consensus over such matters, so the categories of school subjects are used.

However, at the local school level there is real scope for describing the

curriculum (see Marland, p. 107 above). It becomes possible with appropriate whole-school management to build a consensus on just these matters.

Developing the personal-social curriculum in a whole-school sense requires a statement to be agreed on the following aspects of the learning offer:

- goals in PSE
- the content of PSE: a cohering model
- locations for learning: a whole-school approach
- personal-social aspects of all classrooms
- teaching skills and methods

Each of these will now be discussed in turn.

### Goals in PSE

Goals may be framed in a variety of ways with different results. It is important to discuss the goals in PSE in order to clarify what is really possible for the school to contribute in this area (Watkins, 1991), and to put aside the distortions which can arise. It is crucial to discuss how goals relate to the goals of the school, as the relation is often considerable. Schools have given increasing attention to their statements of goals: it is one element in increasing purposefulness and direction which can enhance PSE.

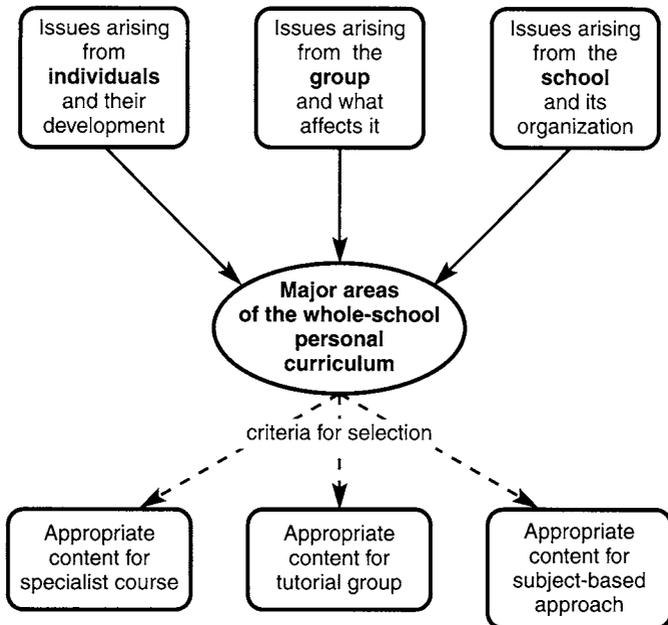
Goal statements in PSE link back to a view of entitlement. It can be valuable to consider statements such as:

- to develop rational thinking skills and critical faculties in order to make informed decisions;
- to promote responsible attitudes towards the maintenance of good health through an understanding of the factors leading to healthy lifestyles;
- to provide opportunities for the development of effective interpersonal relationships;
- to develop the ability to assimilate knowledge, to study independently and to have a positive attitude towards continued learning;
- to provide opportunities for students to develop skills in communicating ideas and opinions to influence social change;
- to provide an opportunity for students to understand and respect the beliefs, faiths and cultures by which people interpret life and on which they base their behaviours;
- to make sense of their present personal and social experience.

As a device for planning, goals statements are insufficient. Teachers plan their classrooms on the basis of content and activity. These need to be covered in some appropriate way.

### The content of PSE: A cohering model

The days when PSE was described by its proponents as more importantly process than content are behind us. Teachers, pupils and parents want to know what it's about. Here the difficulty of phrasing arises which may



**Figure 9.1** The sources and locations of the whole-school personal curriculum

explain those past references to process. The content of personal-social education is clearly not a set of testable facts or depersonalized knowledge. It does contain knowledge, of a more personal and open-ended sort than that which typically composes subjects. It also contains procedural knowledge, about how the social world works. The open-endedness may raise anxiety levels for some teachers, until they see what role the teacher plays in providing structures which help pupils extend this sort of knowledge, rather than being the source of it all themselves.

Content of PSE is distorted by reacting to the latest ‘moral panic’ especially when associated with a demand, ‘what’s the school doing about this?’ Sex, drugs, gambling, juvenile crime . . . – all these may be real issues which adolescents wish to address, but not in a way which is stimulated through adults’ anxieties.

Schools need to develop an approach to PSE content which is open-ended yet stable.

If one asks the question, ‘where does the content of PSE come from?’, the model in Figure 9.1 (Watkins, 1992a; Watkins and Thacker, 1993) highlights three main sources and the need to clarify criteria for the distribution of the learning offer.

The following set of headings may bring coherence and completeness to a whole-school personal curriculum.

- *Bodily self.* Understanding changes and their variety; reflecting on the impact of these; addressing the use and misuse of the body, including through substance abuse.
- *Sexual self.* Understanding sexual development; the role of sexuality in relationships.

- *Social self.* Understanding others' perspectives and their role in relationships; making sense of others and their judgements; coping with conflicts; presenting oneself in a range of situations; working with others.
- *Vocational self.* Developing awareness of adult roles, lifestyles and preferences; taking a wider look at what sort of contributing adult to become; valuing a range of contributions; transition to adult roles.
- *Moral / political self.* The making of judgements; resolving moral dilemmas; taking action on issues.
- *Self as a learner.* Understanding strengths and competences; reflecting on approaches to learning.
- *Self in the organization.* Becoming an active member of a school; making sense of the organization and getting the most from it.

For a further expansion see Watkins (1992b). These extend from the work of Wall (1947, 1977), in order to pick up some time-honoured themes in adolescent development. The repeated use of the notion of self reminds us that students' views of themselves are developing fast in adolescence, and that student-centred teaching approaches are required. Also these seven approaches give a reasonably 'whole-person' result, and are framed at a sufficiently general level to engage the concerns of the vast majority of teachers.

These headings have proved attractive to schools (Saywell, 1992), including those featured by the BBC (BBC Education, 1992), to LEAs (Surrey County Council, 1991; Hertfordshire County Council, 1993; Norfolk County Council Education Committee, 1992), and have even received passing mention by NCC (National Curriculum Council, 1990c, p. 7).

In practice they prove useful for:

- helping teachers talk about pupils developmental needs in various years;
- planning aspects of an overall programme;
- discussing the contribution to pupils' personal-social development made by subject classrooms;
- thinking through the messages in the school's climate and organization;
- constructing a whole-school picture and policy;
- communicating with parents;
- promoting communication between adolescents and parents.

(Watkins, 1982)

Locations for learning: a whole-school approach

A whole-school approach to PSE means:

- an approach in which all teachers recognize they have a contribution to make;
- an approach which engages the perspectives of the whole school –

teachers, pupils, other staff, and so on. It is likely that this will be supported and achieved through an active whole-school policy, which spells out the whole-school cycles of review and action.

- an approach in which different teams complete different tasks, and the contribution of *all* 'locations for learning' are examined:

- tutorial programmes
- specialist guidance lessons with a specialist team
- subject lessons (some specific ones/all)
- the para-curriculum of classrooms
- extra-timetable activities
- residential experience, work experience
- school organization and climate
- links to community.

Adopting such an approach will not be constructive for planning until questions such as 'how do you distribute the content?' are raised. Criteria for distributing are needed, and have often been in short supply, resulting in either competition (say between tutorials and specialists in PSE, and between both of those and subjects) or dumping (especially on the tutorial occasion which might be characterized as addressing sex and drugs and litter).

Watkins and Thacker (1993) make the following suggestion. Personal tutors might initiate considerations which link to:

- previous knowledge of the pupil and his/her development, social relations;
- knowledge of the parents and their views, hopes, etc.;
- knowledge of the pupil's performance across subjects;
- broader school-related themes.

Subject tutors might initiate considerations which link to:

- particular aspects of the subject and its study;
- specific issues in the classroom they manage;
- particular learning needs of pupils in a subject.

Personal-social aspects of all classrooms

It is surprisingly rare for teachers to talk about their teaching and classrooms, especially across subject boundaries. The National Curriculum stress on subjects has made it more likely that talk across classrooms may be couched in terms of subject overlap and the like. There is an urgent need to develop the language which overarches subject considerations, with which we can start to talk about the contribution a subject-teaching classroom makes to some superordinate goals. The four major categories below can provide a start.

- *The goals of the subject.* How the subject contributes to a young

person's competence in the world; what's the point of it, etc.

Statements on this may be found in what the subject says it's for, and why teachers are enthusiastic about it, and justify it.

- *The content of the subject.* Particular topics and themes which are included in the subject.
- *The skills developed in the classroom.* Communication, problem-solving, reflection, action-planning, assertion.
- *The learning methods used in the classroom.* The sorts of teaching and learning activities which are employed.

Such categories can start to generate important discussions and exchange across subject-teaching classrooms, both in terms of the overall picture of the curriculum which is created and also in terms of the contributions each makes to pupils' personal-social development. Further developments of these headings are given in Watkins and Thacker (1993).

In such discussions the overall picture created from subject classrooms will no doubt show that pupils' specialist entitlement in PSE, in such areas as health and careers, is not met through the core and foundation subjects but that the experience of these subjects is important to discuss in personal-social terms.

Evidence is available to show that action-learning programmes in PSE have greater impact than those focusing on fact-learning programmes in subjects (see Appendix 2). An emphasis on all classrooms must not be at the expense of a well-targeted programme.

### Teaching skills and methods

Teaching methods remain a central issue in PSE. In the face of some attempts to challenge the validity of action learning, and a general trend to see teaching as 'delivery', teachers will continue to need occasions to review and reaffirm the rationales for group-work. Groups offer:

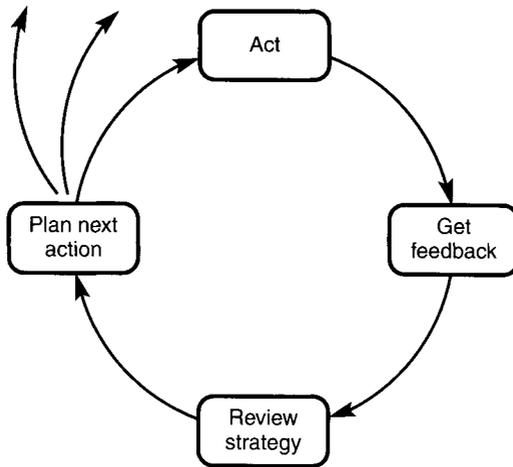
- more efficient arrangements for the teacher;
- increased communication and engagement about a learning task;
- a range of ideas and perspectives.

Groups demand:

- the use of communication skills;
- collaboration on some occasions or some tasks;
- group processes when faced with problems to solve;
- skills of identifying and making decisions.

Groups may:

- recognize and enhance the social processes which support learning;
- become supportive places, including for learning;
- be used to simulate social processes which occur elsewhere;
- provide a platform for preparing for other group experiences, outside the group, in the future, etc.;



**Figure 9.2** The process of personal-social learning in adolescence

- provide a context for reflecting on our own performance;
- provide opportunities for people to give and receive personal feedback;
- become safe contexts for supporting growth and experiment.

It is useful to recognize that some rationales for group-work are distinct from rationales for reflection and action-learning. These latter also need review and re-affirmation.

If personal-social education is to support and enhance personal-social development, then it needs to be built on an understanding of how such learning occurs.

Much adolescent learning in such areas may be described by the process characterized in Figure 9.2. Through a process such as this adolescents learn strategies, skills, perceptions and the associated understandings.

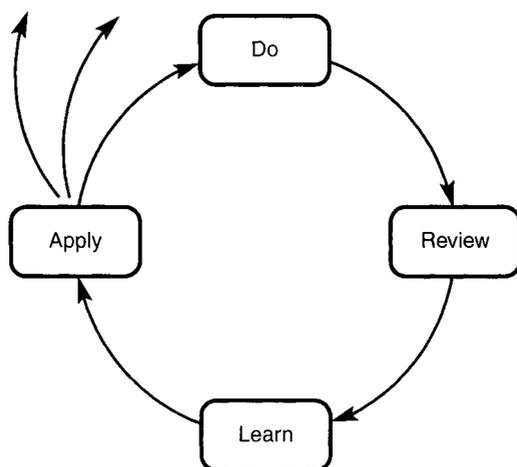
It is most useful for personal-social education (wherever it takes place) to operate in support of this process, through a cycle which is sometimes called action-learning, and which is characterized in Figure 9.3.

The 'Do' phase might be an activity in the classroom – a case study, a simulation, a learning activity – or it might be some experience outside the classroom. The 'Review' phase is a structured way of looking at the important points. The 'Learn' phase is where pupils learn from different approaches and identify what more they wish to learn. The 'Apply' phase asks them to transfer their learning to situations they know, to plan some action and to set goals.

The role of the teacher is to provide the necessary structures for pupils to progress through this process. Action-learning at its best is a highly structured (but still open-ended) process, not a sloppy interminable discussion.

## CONTEMPORARY DIFFICULTIES FOR SCHOOLS IN THIS AREA

A key phenomena present in many British secondary schools has been that of reactivity. By this I mean the way in which a school can allow its agenda and functioning to be defined by outside forces. Here I am not proposing that schools should be impervious, nor am I underestimating the very



**Figure 9.3** The process of action learning

major forces to which schools have had to respond. More I am remarking on the style of response. At one end of this spectrum is the school which seems to throw away its history and previous knowledge, saying 'We've got to do all this now', while at the other end is the school which evaluates the influences and proposals coming in its direction, and decides more critically which ones to develop. This dimension is similar to the one which David Hargreaves labels 'survivalist school versus empowered school' (Hargreaves, 1994).

In the area of PSE, reactivity has always been a particular problem, with the provision in a school being driven by the publication of resource packs, by particular staff predilections, by the anxieties of a range of adults and more recently perhaps by the rushed considerations of a government quango with an uncertain future.

A contemporary difficulty for PSE is to establish and to maintain its rationale, value and approach, and thereby reduce its vulnerability to whatever changes a school is facing. This vulnerability perhaps reflects the confusion which exists in some teachers' minds about the purposes and approaches which are appropriate for promoting young people's personal-social development. It is all too easy to polarize teachers on an issue, and PSE seems to attract more than its fair share of this.

In such a context, leadership is required, at school level and elsewhere. The need is for leadership which handles the polarizations, reaffirms the rationales and combats the fragmentation which has increased in recent years. At school level, this is in part the task of senior managers who play a key role in bringing status to a whole-school concern with personal-social development, and who continually articulate the link to other measures of achievement. Their contribution alone is not enough: it needs to be followed by a meaningful structure for whole-school co-ordination.

### ISSUES OF CO-ORDINATION: WHAT MAY IT MEAN?

During the late 1980s the notion of co-ordination was at one and the same time raised and trivialized. For reasons of overlap or coherence, senior

managers were encouraged to carry out 'curriculum audits' of a range of sorts. These often turned out to be bureaucratic exercises asking teachers questions of doubtful validity ('What percentage of your year 10 English teaching covers citizenship?') and creating complex pictures which more often than not led nowhere.

This raised the fact that structures and mechanisms for whole curriculum co-ordination were lacking in many or most cases. To be effective, curriculum co-ordination requires:

- *monitoring*, i.e. gathering information and examining for patterns;
- *evaluating*, usually by comparison with plans or with outcomes;
- *decision-making*, i.e. re-planning, so that aspects of the curriculum change.

In many schools such co-ordination has been shown to be lacking, and separate subjects continue with little real communication. In some schools the responsibility (but not the power) has been given to new role-holders, often young, enthusiastic, and receiving a minor incentive allowance. With these colleagues I sometimes find it important to raise the following points under the apparently dramatic title of 'How to kill off a PSE co-ordinator'.

- 1 Give them no structure to work in.
- 2 Give them no budget.
- 3 Give them no symbolic support from senior managers.
- 4 Subject them to negative 'role-sending':
  - 'You're the expert. Your job is to do it.'
  - 'You're stealing time from me.'
  - 'You're just a co-ordinator: I'm the real thing.'
  - 'We need someone to do this - you'll do.'
- 5 Make sure you never make a clear statement about their role and what it's meant to achieve.

The development of improved management structures in the secondary school is a key need identified in discussions of whole-curriculum management and the management of pastoral care (see Chapter 2 by Caroline Lodge, above), and some schools have made inspiring moves in this direction.

Looking toward the next period, in which there will doubtless be another pot-pourri of forces impacting on our increasingly different schools, there will doubtless be further experiments with the form, structure and balance of PSE in the context of a 'slimmed-down' National Curriculum. Whatever these may be there is no doubt that a whole-school picture and some fundamental entitlements are vital to schooling and achievement, and that the need to improve our whole-curriculum thinking will remain.

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