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## Celebrating the Contribution of Douglas Hamblin

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This article celebrates the life of Douglas Hamblin, and his significant contribution to pastoral care, personal-social education and the lives of schools, teachers and pupils. From very incomplete information, it offers a brief account of his career, and lists his most relevant publications.

*Keywords:* Hamblin; pastoral care; personal-social education.

Douglas Hamblin, widely known for his contribution to pastoral care, education and to the quality of life of pupils and teachers alike, died peacefully on November 12th 2004 after a lengthy experience of life with cancer.

Many of those who knew Douglas never knew his age, and in his most active years he would make references, which never helped them find out. Guesses were that he saw life into his eighties. Piecing together an account of his life from a small number of passing mentions, we know that he came from a Dorset family. He very occasionally mentioned his own experience of hardship in that context, and a teacher who showed him the care and help that a young boy needed in order to develop resilience. That could be seen as the theme for his own contribution to follow.

Childhood ill health meant he could not serve actively in the 1939–1945 War, so he worked with the Church Army in Holland with victims of concentration camps. His work in education may have begun with teaching in Birmingham. He also worked in the London Borough of Waltham Forest, at a time when the School Psychologists had begun their move away from Child Guidance (Marshall, 1973) and developed a commitment to counselling group for teachers, which had significant impact on policy in the LEA. In the 1960s, Douglas worked at Mulberry Bush School in Oxfordshire, a therapeutic community for severely emotionally troubled young children. This school made positive ground-breaking achievements over decades, and continues to do so with young people who are often

the most difficult to care for (Reeves, 2001). Further study took Douglas to the London School of Economics and an MSc in social psychology with Hilda Himmelweit.

In the early 1970s, he founded the course leading to the Diploma in School Counselling at University College Swansea. It was one of a number in UK Universities (Daws, 1976) which had been set up following the recognition of need and the possibilities for such a role. His 1974 book *The Teacher and Counselling* was welcomed as a breakthrough for it left behind the clinic and individual notions of treatment in order to address counselling in the daily life of the school. Reviewers said, 'with this book British school counselling comes of age'. Just four years later his *The Teacher and Pastoral Care*, set out principles for a developmental programme of pastoral work to address pupils' developmental needs and the critical incidents of the secondary school. His courses became Masters degrees and he made significant contributions to the B.Ed. The importance of his contribution was recognized abroad, with visits to Hong Kong, Singapore and Ireland, and the translation of *Teaching Study Skills* into Russian.

Throughout the 1980s, Douglas directed Summer Schools in Pastoral Care at University College Swansea. Hundreds of teachers would arrive from UK and beyond to a week of lectures and workshops, and leave with their own plans, curricula and materials for supporting the personal and academic development of the pupils they knew. The engagement and energy created by such intense events was considerable, and is in stark contrast with today, as a result of decades of centralist prescription. But Douglas was ahead of his time in recognizing the importance of school-based professional development.

Douglas retired from the University around 1990, and afterwards expressed no displeasure at being apart from today's functionalist and performance-dominated education system, describing it in similar terms to his mentor Prof. WD Wall as 'the arctic winter in education'. Yet there are many who survive that winter with greater ease as a result of the human principles he expounded and the challenging experiences he facilitated.

Courses of initial teacher education continue to acknowledge his texts, and award-winning schools honour his contribution (Welsh Secondary Schools Association 1999: see also Wood and Millichamp, 2000).

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