The English Educational System:
From Coping with Difference to Benefiting from Diversity

by *David B. Willis*

Introduction

The British National Curriculum provides an interesting reflective mirror for both Americans, in their ongoing debate over National Standards, and the Japanese, who have a national curriculum but who lack an understanding of diversity and The Other. Suddenly and dramatically instituted by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her conservative government in the late 1980s, the National Curriculum caused a revolution in education in the United Kingdom. This 'revolution' eliminated most formal programs of multicultural education in the schools of the British Isles, but it did not eliminate the problems, which are being faced in other unique ways, as this paper reports below.[1)]

In March 1997 I undertook a fact-finding research trip to the United Kingdom for the Japanese Ministry of Education to examine 'minority education in England,' especially how the mainstream, dominant (and in many instances hegemonic) national school system of the United Kingdom has adjusted itself to Others in their midst.

My main aim in the long discussions I had with key scholars, teachers, administrators, parents, and students involved with multicultural and 'minority' education in London, was to locate key issues for multicultural

education and to find the specific, direct challenges to children's education today in the United Kingdom. The following findings indicate future challenges and important directions for other national systems of education in the 21st Century.

The Setting and Problems To Be Examined

For this study we were particularly concerned with finding answers for the following questions:

How does the English educational system cope with difference?

What are the concerns, the issues, the problematic areas, and the possibilities for English education in terms of heterogeneity and the complex challenges facing English education?

These were the guiding questions for our research in England in March 1997.

Unlike Japan, where only about 1% of the population is non-Japanese, the United Kingdom has long dealt with large numbers of so-called 'minorities' in their midst. It should be noted in the beginning that the term 'minority' is itself a highly-charged political term and should be used cautiously. Japanese, for example, are a majority in Japan but a minority in America. Americans are a majority in the United States but a minority wherever else they travel. Issues of colonialism, imperial attitudes, racism, class, and human rights are central to the usage of the term 'minority.'

Of course, the usefulness of such terms as minority and majority is in fact questionable in most contexts. In the light of human rights issues and globalization we should note that on a global scale there are no majorities. We are all minorities.

Thus, consideration of issues surrounding education of The Other needs to be especially sensitive to the perspectives and needs of non-mainstream populations. There is much confusion, especially in Japan, about

the naming of the peoples and societies of the islands off the northwest coast of Europe we usually know as 'the British Isles.' Many people mistakenly apply the term 'English' or 'England' to the entire society and country, when in fact there are many 'minorities' in this country, including Irish, Scottish, and Welsh, as well as ethnic, immigrant, and religious communities.

Many of the problems related to education for 'minorities' begin with this usage of 'English' and 'England' when attempting to describe this historically polyethnic nation. Moreover, the other terms used are also problematic. 'British' literally excludes the Irish as it describes 'Great Britain,' a term which is itself of French origin. The best approximation is 'the United Kingdom,' but even this term categorizes everyone in these islands as 'subjects' of a rigid hierarchical order that is itself breaking down. In this paper I will use terms such as Anglo, English, England, British, the United Kingdom (U.K.), and mainstream with full awareness of their implications concerning dominance, hegemony, and oppression.

The Mainstream: Education in the United Kingdom in the 1990s

King's College at Cambridge University represents the pinnacle of traditional English education at what is one of the world's most famous institutions of higher education. This powerhouse of education has been an exemplar, a model, a well-spring for modern education. Cambridge University, along with Oxford University, clearly sits at the top of the educational pyramid. The magnificence of the setting, the established traditions, and the clear confidence in educational mission cannot be overstated. They are a source of awe.

Yet Cambridge also represented much that is wrong with British education in the 1990s, the catering for an inherited elite, the class-specific na-

ture of the context (though not nearly as severe as in the even recent past), and the reproduction of elite cultural capital (in a manner which can hardly be called democratic). Cambridge has now opened its doors further, as has British education and society in general, thanks to the daughter of a green grocer who shifted the basis of social opportunity and status from ascription to achievement, from your bloodline to your scores on standardized tests. A leveling is taking place, but as in the previous system it is the endowed who receive the opportunities and who get ahead. Only this time, it is those endowed with financial capital and knowledge of 'the inside track," rather than simply the right genes. It is no less insidious than 'being born in the right family.'

The so-called Thatcher Revolution in education in Great Britain has meant an increasing swing away from societal issues and towards measurable achievement in the new National Curriculum. Tests at many levels and the infamous, published, and very public 'League Tables' (public results, by school, of the numbers of passes and failures), grade students by a measurable national standard. This is a forewarning to those who would institute a national test in the United States. It has been done in Great Britain and the results are frightening (surprisingly, Japan does not have a national test).

The problem is who decides the standards and what content they ascribe to these standards. Education in the United Kingdom today is highly centralized, even more so than in Japan. The formal or legal status of institutions and curricula are determined by the central authority. Legally or formally-speaking, it is now very much up to individual schools, particularly Head Teachers, who have suddenly been given immense powers relative to the previous system, as to how education will be enacted on site. This leaves teaching methods as well as informal aspects up to individual schools. There is wide variation.

Unfortunately, the emphasis in British education today is not on peo-

ple but on marks, on test scores. It is not an example anyone should want to follow, except perhaps radical capitalists. It is the examination system being taken to its 'logical' corporatist, authoritarian conclusion. People in service to the machine, not the machine in service to the people. Inequality of opportunity and results are the end point of this desperate game of social climbing.

It is not surprising that one of the main offices in the London Board of Education is "Corporate Sponsorship." Moreover, the industrial ethos of the National Curriculum is revealed by the new term for the education of teachers. No longer is it 'Teacher Education,' as Professor Sally Tomlinson of the University of London told me, but now a nationally-mandated, prescribed, and centrally-regulated program of 'Teacher Training.'

Interstingly enough, the British nation state is actually losing its influence, being coopted by the ethos of English corporatism and the production of workers for the new global economy. As Professor Tomlinson, who is one of Britain's leading voices in Multicultural Education, stated in this context, "Fascism is not dead." Social divisions, which eventually make for social instability in many ways and in many areas, are rife and being exacerbated. The results of current policies, as Dr. Jagdish Gundara, also of the University of London and an expert in intercultural education, has noted, is that they "will lead to an accretion of exclusions and social divisions. Inequities and disparities will increase."

The League Tables, a 'value-added' set of measures, are assumed to be 'context-blind,' similar to the rhetoric of 'color-blind.' In fact, it is very important to know where the students in question began their intellectual and school careers. What we are seeing is a new kind of discrimination and racism which has resulted in schools labeled as 'minority' being seen as 'failing.'

Yet there are some encouraging signs as well. There are people who care and who are campaigning vigorously for change. I met many of these

educators during my stay in London. With the victory of the New Labour party of Tony Blair there is a chance, too, that once again, as in the 1970s and 1980s, education, educators, and pupils in the United Kingdom will receive the attention and support which they deserve.

One of the most interesting sites for potential new directions was the first school I visited, a public high school in North London. What follows will be descriptions of this school and others as well as comments on specific issues raised by school and other visits and long discussions with educators, scholars, parents, and students.

The Hampstead School: Multicultural Education and Refugee Education

Hampstead School, Mrs. Tamsyn Ivison, Head Teacher
Athy Demetriades, Founder and Chair of Trustees, Children of the Storm Refugee Program
Sheila Kasabora, Coordinator, Refugee Education Project
Extended Hampstead School Tour/Consultations by Hassan (17 year old Somali Refugee)

The Hampstead School is one of the most successful secondary schools in the United Kingdom. Every year 400-500 students apply for the 210 places available, remarkable for what is an ordinary public community school. Hampstead School is very special, however, as it has no predominant cultural group. There are also many mixed race people.

Moreover, it is a very democratic school. And one which welcomes refugees, 185 in all (150 from war zones). In an era where power in education in the UK has devolved to school heads, Mrs. Tamsyn Ivison is a powerful leader. And a leader who shares her power. As she told me, "Our approach is that these (multicultural and refugee) kids have a lot of contri-

butions to make to our school. They are very committed to education and are very positive for schools. Moreover, communities today will be multinational, and in school this is an outstanding opportunity. It provides a richness. We welcome them."

The school is totally committed to learning, including staff learning. During my visit I saw many meetings and much evidence of a wide variety of learnings taking place, including those involving staff and parents. The school wants to be a bridge to meaningful experiences. There are many women in senior positions, and staff development is highly encouraged. As an INSET training center the school receives much financial support. Emphases for students include continuity, work reviews, and academic monitoring. Bilingual support has to be taken more seriously in terms of assessment, action plans, and professional approaches to ESL. In her 14 years as head Mrs. Ivison has seen the school go from 25% to 56% ESL students. Yet the school has an outstanding record academically in placing students in higher education.

'Children of the Storm' is a refugee program which operates in the school with links to the surrounding community. Mrs. Athy Demetriades, the main teacher and coordinator for this project, has worked with these students in accessing, counseling, and charity activities. Many of the students are without parents and subsist on minimal support, emotionally and financially. Children of the Storm acts as a charity that helps these students in many ways, especially with counseling and legal representation.

Peer partnerships with students from the 6th form (school-leavers) are organized on a non-hierarchical basis with refugees. As a program for 16-19 year olds in acquiring citizenship, Mrs. Demetriades says, "We train them to train others. The students have done most of the work, and it has given them self-confidence in so many areas." As for teachers, tuning them in to the sensitivity they need in supporting these kids is very important. "We need to help them develop a restorative ethos, to see that the

world can also be a safe world."

This program of "Helping Friends - Peer Partnership" has become a role model program for the entire United Kingdom, with many spin-off programs following their example. The challenge in dealing with these students is figuring out how to work with them. They are very resilient, but they have had brutal experiences and continue to be brutalized by the system. "They are desperate to learn and it is our goal to give these kids a sense of the future." Some of the new students have had no formal education. Some have English as their 5th language. As Mrs. Demetriades notes, "The first need for our new students is learning English. This happens fast. Survival. The beauty of our other students is their immediate response, how much they care. It becomes a focal point of their life. All of our students say they hate holidays and weekends. We all act as parents for our new students. And we make them invite us to their new homes and prepare a meal for us so that we can see they are doing OK."

In many ways, the Hampstead School is enacting an authentic multicultural education. But teachers in the school are wary of the Multicultural Education label. The conservatives are said to use it as a race card, while community radicals seize it as a way to make essentialist and separatist demands. As Mrs. Ivison says, "This political crusade on both sides is counter-productive for the children. There are proper concerns to address, but we have to get on with our job. Our students are good students. They come expecting us to make them work, with a sense of expectation. So we believe in ourselves. And do our job."

The Brent Council: Education for Immigrant and Transient Communities

Lakshmi DeSoyza, Director, Brent Language Services, Brent Local Educational Council

Joanna Leigh, Elementary Language Services Teacher, Brent Local Educational Council

Rocky Deans, Head, Travellers Education Support Team, Brent Local Educational Council

The Brent Council is an area historically very active in multicultural and anti-racist education. It is the single most diverse educational authority in all of the British Isles, with 120 languages. Over 60% of the households are bilingual. The language programs for the Brent Council are a model for the entire country.

To understand Others means learning their history; their demographics and sociology (especially housing and jobs); issues of intermarriage, religion, food; and contemporary conditions, especially schooling and intercultural relations. Schools in the Brent Council have actively pursued the agenda of understanding Others in their midst for many years.

With the advent of the National Curriculum, however, which effectively removed funding for these activities in intercultural understanding, a shift was made towards funding for bilingual assimilation programs. The goal of these programs is assimilation to both the English language and English identity. Yet many of the administrators and teachers involved in these programs are either ethnically diverse themselves and/or have worked for years in positions sensitive to the needs of diverse communities. Thus, the struggles for multiple identities are now being waged around language issues.

Lakshmi DeSoyza, Director of the Brent Language Services for the past nine years, is a powerful and articulate champion of diversity. Dr. DeSoyza is herself an immigrant from Sri Lanka. She spent most of one morning discussing these issues with me, followed by asking me to join a Teacher's Training session for ESL teachers. These sessions showed singular sensitivity to the needs of diverse Others, pairing mainstream and

ESL teachers (many of whom are from ethnic communities) in a partnership through inservice activities. One of the most impressive aspects of the Brent Council's programs is the support for bilingual abilities, with additional supplemental support given for second languages (usually these are actually the mother tongue of students). The differing needs of newcomers compared to stable second or third generation families are carefully taken into account. The term 'immigrants' is not used: the Brent Council prefers 'bilingual pupils,' a more inclusive term. Moreover, according to Dr. DeSoyza, rather than terms such as ESL or EFL, which may inappropriately privilege or position English, the term EAL (English as an Additional Language) is more appropriate.

"Every school has a variety of needs" says Dr. DeSoyza. The Brent Council tries to assign teachers to schools by 'Stage Needs,' trying to embed good practice into the mainstream with special attention to support access and sound infrastructure support. Joanna Leigh, an award-winning elementary teacher, and Rocky Deans, an Afro-Caribbean who is Head of the Travellers Education Support Team, also spoke with me at length about the position of Travellers and Afro-Britishers (see below).

Muslims and Islamic Education in the United Kingdom

Mohammed Ibrahim, Director, Muslim Educational Trust
East London Mosque – Meeting with the Imam and Prayer Session

Perhaps the single most contentious arena for educational issues for minorities in the United Kingdom revolves around Islamic education and its acceptability as another version of mainstream British education. Strong resistance has been met by the Muslims in their attempts to have nearly sixty schools officially recognized by the central authorities, as explained by Md. Ibrahim and the Imam of the East London mosque, whom

we spoke with at length. Until the end of 1997 not one school had been approved, though that has recently changed with a new state decision to provide such support. Still, for English people, like the French, the Other is increasingly a figure of Islamic religion as much as of color.

There are, however, signs of change. Soon after they took office in 1997 the Labour government quietly decided to allow Muslim schools state funding as 'Voluntary-Aided schools,' on the same basis as Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Jewish schools, as long as they taught the National Curriculum. Like their counterparts these schools were allowed to give time to their religion, in this case Islamic studies. As Professor Sally Tomlinson of Oxford University noted to me in a personal communication, this move was likely due to the influence of Jack Straw (Home Office), a Member of Parliament for Blackburn, an area which has a large Muslim vote. Straw had promised that Muslims would have such funding. Only two schools have taken advantage of this to date, one in Brent and one in Bradford. As Professor Tomlinson said, "Fears of separatist schools and Islamic fundamentalism have so far not materialised! If anything, Muslim parents are more anxious that their daughters go to all-girls schools and support single-sex schooling rather than seeking out voluntary-aided Muslim schools." The changes defused tensions and removed a long-felt grievance by the Muslim community. It remains to be seen to what extent other Muslim schools will apply for this support, how far they will be integrated into British society, and how far British society will be itself transformed by the Islamic presence in the British Isles.

South Asians in the United Kingdom

Professor Jagdish Gundara, Cross-Cultural Education, Institute of Education, University of London and Lakshmi DeSoyza, Director, Brent Language Services, Brent Local Educational Council

Swami Narayan Hindu Temple and Swami Narayan School (Secondary)

For many South Asians in the United Kingdom the best strategy has been one of quiet, if partial, assimilation. Members of these former colonial societies, especially peoples from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, are not becoming English, but they *are* becoming British Indians or British Pakistanis. Different culturally in important ways from their ancestors, they still maintain many of their customs, as indicated by the establishment of the Swami Narayan Temple in West London, the largest Hindu temple outside of India, and its attached Swami Narayan School. During my stay in London I had many occasions to speak with taxi drivers, shop keepers and other locals, both English and non-English, who indicated that this trend towards British Indians or British Pakistanis was widespread and basically acceptable. English people whom I spoke with nearly all felt that these new peoples, too, were considered as insiders, as English or British, too, not as outsiders, as long as there was a basic conformity with British or English customs. That no one spoke of 'Indian British' or 'Pakistani British,' however, indicates the limits of this discourse.

The British Raj, the imperial rule of South Asia when power relationships were well-defined and well-orchestrated, is of course the origin of these many communities in today's United Kingdom. The role of South Asians in today's UK is, however, far from clear. 'Paki-bashing' is the single most powerful expression of violent racism in today's United Kingdom. And yet this racism is laced with ambiguities. The standard idiomatic picture of Britishers is one of UK workers going for a drink, eating curry, and then beating up the South Asian waiter. An informal bilingualism and biculturalism has sprung up in many communities, with whites sharing language, food, and other elements of core lifestyle with South Asians and Others, suggesting that hybridity may be an important direction for this multicultural society.

Being Black in Britain: Anti-Racist Education in British Schools, The Afro-Caribbean Cultural Center and the Brixton Market

Professor David Gillborn, Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, University of London
Mr. Rocky Deans, Head of the Travellers Education Support Team, Brent Local Educational Council
Mr. Kjani, Black Cultural Archives, Brixton

There are different racisms for Blacks, South Asians, Travellers, and other communities. Schools are key contexts in the manufacture of these inequalities. As the sociologist Erving Goffman noted years ago, race and racism are the extreme forms of inequality. And in England it is the Afro-Caribbean community which suffers the most from racism. Definitive work on race and achievement has recently been produced. Much of this work is qualitative, such as a two year study of the ethnography of inner city school. In the work that has been produced social class variation in student-teacher relations is revealed as particularly important in the English setting.

David Gillborn, a Reader in the Sociology of Education at the University of London has drawn attention to the 'marketizing of education' in raising standards in schools, noting that what is actually going on is not revealed merely by testing. Looking at two schools in detail, especially in terms of the views of teachers and students on reforms has revealed much about 'warming up' or 'writing off' kids in relation to perceptions and performances of ability. The market is thus a counter to teachers, especially in the working-through of issues of race, class, and gender. Expulsions from schools often have more to do with racisms than real understandings of achievement and ability.

The point, as Professor Gillborn has noted, is to encourage debate. He often phones up newspapers, particularly Sunday editions, as well as produces press releases such as 'An Exclusive on Racism in Schools.' Journalists have helped him adjust to the idea of telling how and why his ideas are good in two sentences. Two pages of A4 description can summarize key selling points, providing media representatives with quotes for getting a handle on material and packaging it so the ideas can sell.

Identifying journalists who are sympathetic, finding out those you can trust and work with, are key goals of anyone who would be a transformative educator, notes Professor Gillborn. One example is Reba Klein, a journalist with the TES, the Times Educational Supplement. The current media guru on standards in British education is Chris Woodhead, Chief Inspector in OFSTED, the Office of Standards in Education (a 'watchdog' agency) in the DfEE, Department for Education and Employment. Mr. Woodhead is a critic of teachers and researchers alike. He is also a member of an important task force on raising issues from the OFSTED Review.

Other key figures in British debates concerning diversity include Sukhvinder Stubbs, Director of the Runnymede Trust; Rehana Minhas of the Haringey Council, an expert on equality issues and Inspector for Equal Opportunities; Samidha Garg, Principal Officer on Race Equality for the National Union of Teachers; and Tariq Moodod, whose work in color and culture racisms at the Policy Studies Institute has been especially illuminating. Mr. Moodod is a major theorist and writer on ethnicity and policy. Much remains to be done with the education, social opportunities, and social position of Afro-Caribbean British and other people of color.

Travellers and the Irish in the United Kingdom

Mr. Rocky Deans, Head of the Travellers Education Support Team, Brent Local Educational Council

Mr. Rocky Deans, Head of the Travellers Education Support Team of the Brent Local Educational Council, spoke with me at length about another community, Irish 'tinkers' or 'Travellers,' members of itinerant white Irish communities who may appear and disappear in a local area depending on the season. These communities have been among the most, perhaps the most, despised and feared of all minority groups, in all of the British Isles.

As Mr. Deans noted, the first and major point of entry into the community for these Travellers are the local schools. Brent Council has again taken the lead for the whole country in their 'Travellers Teams' project begun by Mr. Deans. This project, which began with three 'gypsy' children now serves 330 students in the Brent area alone and has acted as a model for similar projects throughout the UK. As more and more people are adopting transient lifestyles there will be a correspondingly greater and greater need for programs like Mr. Deans' 'Teams.'

International Schools in the United Kingdom

Mrs. Edna Murphy, Editor, International Schools Journal; Headmaster, Retired, International School Of Belgium; Hampstead International School, London, England

Mr. Milton Toubkin, Headmaster,London Southbank International School

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Pearce, International School of London, International Schools Consultants

Ms. Mary Bradley, Secretary to the Headmaster, London International School Ph.D. Candidate (International Schools), University of Bath

Mr. James Murphy, Retired Diplomat, US Foreign Service

Mr. Richard Pearce, International Schools Educational Consultant

Mr. Thrisos Nadiotis, Head Teacher, Greek School (Supplementary), Pot-

ters Bar

Professor Jeffrey Thompson, University of Bath, International Education Select Member, Advisor to the Secretary of State for Education

International schools in the United Kingdom are many and thriving. These schools give an opportunity to another kind of minority, elite expatriate communities, for education in their own languages and with their own curricula. In the long conversations which I had with these various representatives of international schooling in the United Kingdom it was clear that the demand for international education will continue, both in the forms of regular, daily schooling as well as supplementary schooling for language and culture during evenings and on the weekends. These schools are not touched by national controversies. As institutions and mini-societies isolated from the mainstream, however, they are not a threat to traditional definitions of British identity.

Multicultural Education and Intercultural Education In the United Kingdom in the Late 1990s

Professor Sally Tomlinson, Multicultural Education, Goldsmiths College, University of London

Professor David Gillborn, Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, University of London

Professor Angela Little, Development and International Education, University of London

Professor Atsuko Hashimoto, International Tourism, University of Luton

Professor Jagdish Gundara, Intercultural and Cross-Cultural Education, University of London

Lakshmi DeSoyza, Director, Brent Language Services, Brent Local Educational Council

Rocky Deans, Head, Travellers Education Support Team, Brent Local Educational Council

Swami Narayan Hindu Temple and Swami Narayan School (Secondary)

Mohammed Ibrahim, Director, Muslim Educational Trust

East London Mosque – Meeting with Imam and Prayer Session

It is now a popular position in Great Britain to say publicly that Multicultural Education and Anti-Racist Education have failed. But the situation is, in fact, in flux. In the United Kingdom this education began as Immigrant Education. It then went through many transitions in emphases, including language education, family education, socioeconomic studies, and then research on racism and imperialism. Originally beginning as a deficit model of children, that they were lacking in certain areas, important changes took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s during which time acknowledgment of the contributions of Others to the UK began to be appreciated.

A swell of support and interest in multicultural education and diverse groups in the educational system occurred in the mid-1980s with the publication of the Swann Report. Lord Swann was a liberal aristocrat who championed multicultural issues, especially that they be brought out into the open. He was particularly interested in attacking the widespread Social Darwinist ideas of English society. Such efforts were overwhelmed by the conservative backlash in the late 1980s, culminating in the centralization of curriculum and education by the Thatcher government.

In 1989 the National Curriculum Council was asked by Prime Minister Thatcher's key advisor Kenneth Baker to arrange a committee which would explore multicultural dimensions to be added to the new National Curriculum. The committee, chaired by Duncan Graham, included six minority leaders and a number of head teachers and professors. As what Professor Sally Tomlinson has described as 'an extremely radical commit-

tee,' the members issued a report calling for inclusion of multicultural perspectives. This report was then censored by the government. By 1991 all talk of multicultural or antiracist education had been erased from schooling in the United Kingdom. Educators and schools were not allowed to use the words race or antiracist. Multicultural education was in effect banished from the schools. This is not to say that the issues themselves went away, of course.

An especially worrying trend now is what Dr. Gillborn and others have called 'the new assimilationism' in the U.K. As he notes, 'New Labor' is also associated with a 'New Racism' which seeks to assimilate non-mainstream people through the utilization of 'color-blind rhetoric,' the major premise of which is that all people begin at the same starting line. Moreover, the term 'multicultural' began to be used in reference mainly to immigrants. As Dr. Gundara stated, "If multicultural is only generalizable to immigrants, who are 'not belonging,' then you do not need to do anything."

The discourse in Great Britain today is in fact all about driving up standards, without providing the necessary resources for successful achievement to those who have not had the same opportunities as middle or upper class families. The politics of race have, in fact been silenced. Part of this is the 'fear factor,' that the 'underclass' might get more control. The fear factor can be mobilized by politicians towards redistribution of resources away from those who need it most and towards those who are afraid of the underclass. A pessimistic view shared by many educators in Britain is that education will only change with riots, with a crisis. The government is thus in effect in a total crisis management position, simply waiting to react rather than taking an active and vigorous effort to remedy inequities. Yes, there are many hidden costs of reform when facing issues of race and class.

The Thatcher Revolution of 1988 was 'just a guillotine,' as David Gillborn has put it, which changed the world of education in the U.K.

forever. Race was removed from policy discourse. Chauvinism, ethnocentrism, and simple laziness about attending to other cultures and their needs are, however, major challenges related to school performance. Anti-racism in the U.K. includes activities to counter both color racism and anti-cultural racism (as illustrated by the Rushdie Affair). Now there is a need to pull together the issues.

The Swann Report on multicultural educational needs in Britain was received as discussions about the National Curriculum had gotten underway. After the National Curriculum was in place, the Committee on Multicultural Education worked for one year examining the character of Multicultural Education for the schools. The report was then shredded as the political climate had changed. It was the clearest possible indication in the late 1980s and early 1990s of the status of race, racism, cultural diversity and opportunity in England. From then on, one image of this challenge was presented, an image that was basically of invisibility. The National Curriculum presented a singular, Anglo-white model for how children should be taught and what knowledge they should receive, a model that is neo-assimilationist and that largely ignores the identities and needs of multiple ethnic communities. As Mrs. Ivison and many others noted during my research visits, one of the major problems with the National Curriculum is that it is not just Eurocentric but English-centric. As Professor Gundara has described it, "The National Curriculum is an exclusive, not inclusive, nationalistic, Anglo curriculum."

Conclusions

Learning from Late 20th Century Education in the United Kingdom: Suggestions for the Japanese Educational System and Japanese Educators

Certain themes thus emerged during this research trip, themes for further study. These were principally the following:

1) The English Educational System – Challenging Developments to Human Diversity From the Restructuring of the Thatcher Regime at the End of the 20th Century
2) Characterization of Diversity in English Educational Settings: Diverse Settings, Diverse Communities, Diverse Challenges for the 21st Century
3) Contemporary Controversies and The Other in British Education
4) Future Directions: Scholarly Analyses of Multicultural and Antiracist Education In the British Setting
5) Resources for Further Study: Multicultural, Antiracist, and Cultural Studies

The "Nationalist Curriculum" in the United Kingdom is a great irony in late 20th Century British life. As a number of scholar-educators pointed out, this is about how the governed should be taught, a national curriculum for the masses designed from above, an assimilationist strategy. And it is a strategy fraught with great risks, promoting ethnic enclaves and ethnic divisiveness ("You don't recognize us? We'll have our own ethnic studies and cultures. Separate from you. Separatist, apart... ").

Racism was a very important topic in London in the 1980s, particularly in the ILEA (Inner London Educational Authority) and notably in Brent and north London. Now it is excluded from the agenda, yet, as Professor

Gundara has pointed out, "You cannot have an exclusive educational system and not expect Others to react in a like manner. When in Rome, do as the Romans. But what do the Romans do? You can't steamroller minorities into your value system."

Major educational issues such as standards and equality of opportunity have been, as Dr. Gillborn puts it, 'hijacked by conservatives.' Even the new Labor government and much of the public now sees these issues as purely those of language. Thus, many of the activities of anti-racist and multicultural educators are now subsumed in Language Policy and Language Training sections of local educational authorities when in fact they are multilayered problems which call for multilayered strategies.

What is really needed is to make the educational system more dynamic by interacting with Other cultures. As Dr. Gillborn stated, "You energize your own dynamic by learning from Others in your midst, by developing a meaningful common school, a shared system that works cohesively together. If you go in the opposite direction you develop siege mentalities." And being separatist, as some scholars have pointed out, "is playing the white man's game." As Professor Gundara proposes, "The idea is to try pilot programs. Then you have a way to measure, to see, if it works."

Education and Shared Meaning in the 21st Century

The battle for identity implicit in the Conservative agenda of Neo-Assimilation is the key issue for Late 20th Century society and education in the United Kingdom. It is the key issue to emerge from this study, too, this question of identities, cultures, and assimilations. Who defines these? How? Why? The New Labour government has been more open and flexible regarding questions of cultural pluralism, but the educational system has seen few dramatic curricular or legal changes. Education is at the cen-

ter stage of this drama of culture and identity in the UK.

New forms of racism are now appearing in this drama, too. Philomena Essed, a professor of the University of Amsterdam and authority on this topic, noted when I interviewed her in Amsterdam in February 1997 that these include ethnicized racism, gendered racism, and camouflaged racism. These many new forms of racisms are more complicated and more difficult for teachers to deal with in classrooms. Rising assaults on immigrants throughout Europe, particularly in the U.K., Germany, and France, are reactions to continuing migration and increasingly diverse societies. The question of the erosion of traditional national identities has sparked a backlash against racial and ethnic minorities.

Creating a society in which diversity is accepted, encouraged, and made central to everyday life is an important goal for educators. Rather than a discourse of division and dissension, encouraged by such authors as Huntington who have focused on the so-called 'clash of civilizations,' new directions should focus on an emphasis on sharing: With any change you have to include everyone.

There is a need today for democratic civil societies where all groups feel they have a part in the system. Lakshmi DeSoyza of the Brent Council Language Services has put it succinctly: "There is a need to explore identity. What do we bring to students and how can we share our strengths?"

These are the next steps, what we can learn from the examples of late 20th Century education in the United Kingdom. As in the United Kingdom context, so, too, in the Japanese, American or other contexts. The areas we identify together as shared are the best basis to develop together: across borders and boundaries, for our children and for their futures.

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