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PASTORAL CARE IN SCHOOLS:  
SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER TRAINING

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INTRODUCTION

In Britain, teachers' concern for children as more than "empty buckets to be filled with knowledge" is widely recognised as a professional obligation. It is also legally enshrined in the concept of the teacher *in loco parentis*. There is nothing particularly new about this. Arnold of Rugby placed academic achievement third behind the promotion of Christian values and "gentlemanly conduct" in the priorities he set for his staff, and in public boarding-schools the roles of house master and matron were considered important means by which pupils' personal, physical and (supposedly) moral well-being were protected (Lang, 1983).

What is relatively new is the growth of this concern as an institutionalised feature of state-maintained day schools since the widespread reorganisation of secondary schools along comprehensive lines in the early '70s. This is particularly interesting because neither the physical entities ("houses") nor the custody of the child for 24 hours, waking and sleeping, are features of such schools. Yet pastoral care (as it is widely called) has flourished and diversified in its new environment, and has experienced considerable development and differentiation.

Evidence from abroad (Lang, 1989) indicates comparable developments in countries as diverse as Canada, Denmark and Singapore, while in New South Wales at least "houses" and form tutors (or "class patrons" as they were sometimes called) were features imported from "the old country" and transplanted in state day-schools as long ago as the '50s. The international conference on Pastoral Care held by the International Institute for Policy and Administrative Studies in Perth, Western Australia in April 1990 is evidence that here, also, what has been perhaps implicit in the teacher's role is now drawing the critical attention it deserves. Inevitably, questions are being asked about the implications of these developments for the training of teachers.

This paper attempts three things:

- (1) a description of the place of pastoral care in English state secondary schools
- (2) the presentation of a needs-focused model of pastoral care for the analysis of teacher roles; and

- (3) the proposition of some implications of this model for teacher training.

THE ENGLISH SCENE

The most immediately striking thing about pastoral care in English comprehensive schools is its visibility as a structural phenomenon. Conventional hierarchies of academic or curricular responsibility - heads of subjects/department/faculty - are paralleled by pastoral structures of more or less complexity. These are usually described as "vertical" (houses) or "horizontal" (years), though there are almost as many variants as there are schools. Some combination of vertical and horizontal features in a matrix arrangement is not uncommon (Best et. al, 1983). Nor are divisions into "upper" and "lower" (and sometimes 'middle') schools-within-schools. Idiosyncratic arrangements and historical quirks (e.g. grouping by gender) are also to be found where comprehensives were formed from mergers between distinctly different institutions.

Common to such structures is the role of the form tutor. Sometimes described as "the foundation stone of the pastoral system", it is the form tutor who is charged with day-to-day responsibility for the general well-being of a class of 25 to 30 youngsters. Form tutors are responsible to pastoral middle-managers (Heads of House/Year/"School") who are, in turn, typically responsible to a Deputy Head (Pastoral). Where elaborate systems have been devised, each such role may have a deputy, and/or there may be other posts of responsibility for specific aspects of pastoral work. While full-time trained school counsellors are exceedingly rare, some schools do have a senior person designated as 'counsellor' and expected to provide individual guidance along with other teaching and administrative duties.

From the mid 'seventies, these structures have come under considerable criticism. They have been attacked for disguising social control as care (Best et. al, 1977, Lang, 1977, Williamson 1980); for institutionalising an unhelpful pastoral/academic split (Buckley, 1980); for being unwieldy bureaucracies (Best et. al, 1983); for being at odds with progressive historical developments this century (Hughes, 1980); and for fundamentally misconceiving the nature of education and the role of the teacher in promoting autonomy (Dooley, 1980).

A particularly telling criticism is that these structures have reduced an important part of the educational work to nothing more than "emotional first-aid". (Hamblin, 1978). What has been institutionalised, Hamblin argues, is the "too little, too late" syndrome of crisis counselling: form-tutors and their superiors too often trying to respond on an individual basis to problems which could have been anticipated and avoided. Both Hamblin (1978) and Marland (1980) have argued for planned programmes of learning experiences which would both facilitate and reduce the need for crisis counselling, and contribute positively to the personal and social development of the child.

The pastoral curricula and tutorial programmes which emerged at about this time (e.g. *Active Tutorial Work*, Baldwin and Wells, 1979-81) have led to a growing awareness of the common purpose of pastoral work and such subjects as Health Education, Careers Education, Personal Development and Social Education. By the mid 'eighties, for many schools these concerns have coalesced into a broad concept of Personal and Social Education (P.S.E.), sometimes with Moral and/or Health issues included as PSME or PSHE.

Although since 1981 there has been a National Association for Pastoral Care in Education (NAPCE), there is as yet no consensus as to whether pastoral care is an umbrella term which incorporates curricular provision with the more traditional role of individualised care and counselling, or whether these are both sub-sets of the teacher's broad concern for personal and social development. Despite the fact that "by the late 1980s personal and social education was attracting more political and professional attention than for many years previously" (Galloway, 1990, p.10), this uncertainty in definition remains.

In any event, it is clear that although it is the *structure* which may strike the observer first, it is the *practices* (counselling, guiding, supporting, tutoring, etc.) and the *processes* (communication, liaison, relating, decision-making, etc.) which give pastoral work its character.

These things are fundamentally linked with values and attitudes. Indeed, the 'moral climate' of the school, its 'ethos' or culture, are both outcomes of, and contributing factors to, the effectiveness of teachers' pastoral endeavours.

#### A MODEL

It is apparent that the precise meaning of pastoral care is by no means agreed. Nor are its boundaries. This is perhaps inevitable where the same category is applied to diverse structures, practices, attitudes, values, processes and so on. In this section some attempt at clarification will be made. Our starting point is *needs*.

For purposes of analysis we may think of children in schools as having three types of need.

First, there are those needs which are primarily to do with the fact that they lack maturity and experience. As children - or, at most, in that condition of turmoil we know as "adolescence" - they need security, guidance, moral support, love, forbearance and so on. The unconditional acceptance conventionally associated with the ideal of parental love is important in meeting such needs. The teacher may on two counts be thought to be responsible for providing some comparable (if less intimate) support: as the moral duty of any responsible adult in the company of minors; and, as the professional duty of the teacher *in loco parentis*. Following Watkins (1985), we may call the individualised care provided by the form tutor and pastoral middle manager in getting to know, guiding, supporting, comforting and counselling children *pastoral casework*.

Second, there are those needs which are primarily to do with the role of the child as a learner or pupil. What do pupils need? They need opportunities to acquire concepts, learn facts, practise skills, develop attitudes, explore feelings, reflect on beliefs, and examine values. In short, they need to be provided with meaningful, relevant and appropriate learning experiences, organised and presented in ways which take account of their capabilities and the structure of knowledge, and of the relationships between knowledge, skills and understanding. As Marland (1980) has argued, there is a content to pastoral care as much as there is to any more conventional curriculum subject. That part of the school curriculum which is distinctively to do with the personal and social development of the child - as opposed to her or his purely cognitive or academic development - may be termed the *pastoral curriculum*. In my view, this includes the tutorial programmes provided by form tutors in regular form periods, subjects with a "pastoral flavour" (e.g. Health Education and PSE) and those occasions where issues of personal and social development are considered by more conventional subject departments (sometimes referred to as "PSE across the curriculum").

Third, there are needs which follow from the requirements of social order. Without some order no individual can develop very much, least of all in terms of personal and social development. Since the "self" can only be produced through social interaction (Mead, 1934, Hibberd, 1984), such objectives as self-awareness, self-criticism and, more pointedly, self-control are impossible without a reasonably ordered set of social relationships. There is an aspect of pastoral work which is to do with the provision of such relationships.

All too often, questions of discipline and control are handled by casting the individual in the role of the "deviant" or the "criminal". This is unhelpful for several reasons. For one thing, it confuses the fact of the deviant act with the categorisation of the actor. For another, it ignores the importance of order for members who do *not* commit such acts. It is more helpful to recognise that one can only be deviant, or be a "criminal", within a society which has a set of rules which are widely accepted and institutionally sanctioned. A society is presupposed by deviance. But schools should not be satisfied to meet the minimal conditions of a society; rather, they should aim to be *communities*. We may therefore ask what it is that comprise the needs of the child as a *citizen* in the community of the school. Citizens' needs would include:

Opportunities to engage in corporate activities (including participation in decision-making);

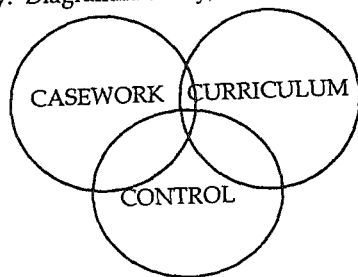
Opportunities to feel a sense of belonging, of common destiny and of mutual concern for the well-being of other members;

A framework of rules to protect the liberty of the individual from the excessive behaviour of others;

A system of sanctions to ensure that rules are followed.

Viewed this way, a preoccupation with the correction of indiscipline can be seen as distracting attention from the wider question of how schools can provide an environment in which citizenship is not merely an objective of the pastoral curriculum but an essential prerequisite for its delivery. We may think of developmental group work (Button, 1974) and collective activities like assemblies and school councils as those parts of pastoral care which are to do with *pastoral control*, and have *self-control* as their ideal.

Although for purposes of analysis it has been possible to distinguish casework, control and curriculum in pastoral work, this does not mean that these are always achieved through distinct and separate activities. Very often it is not possible to say that a particular happening is one or another of these, any more than it is possible to divide the real individual up into child, pupil and citizen. It is even possible that one activity may involve all three, as in responding to an instance of bullying by using a form-period to explore the offending behaviour through role-play. Diagrammatically, the model looks like this:



This analysis should not be taken to imply the different categories of need should be met always by different individuals or that schools need to institutionalise distinct roles for each. However, the matter of their coordination does suggest a need for yet another form of pastoral work. This is different in kind from the other three because it is not concerned to meet the needs of children directly, but to meet the needs of the *teachers* so that *they* can more effectively do their pastoral work.

The administration should meet the needs of staff for curriculum leadership, team building, appraisal and staff development, as well as the more obvious needs for resources, appreciation, guidance and so on. This role is facilitative and supportive of staff. Following Watkins (1985), we may call this *pastoral management*.

### TRAINING FOR PASTORAL ROLES

Since almost all new teachers entering the profession will be form-tutors by their second year in post and many probationers are given this role from the start it is reasonable to expect preparation for pastoral work to be an important part of initial training courses. The universal existence of pastoral bureaucracies and career ladders might be thought to entail a comparable provision of post-experience (inservice) training. This is hardly the case.

A small survey undertaken in England and Wales on behalf of NAPCE (Best and Maher, 1984), showed that few teachers could recall pastoral topics in their initial training and that those who could had more often than not only encountered them in optional subjects (e.g. Special Educational Needs) or as an aside to a foundation subject (e.g. Psychology). Colleges and university departments of teacher training admitted that this was a weakness in their provision. They tended to justify this by pointing to the scarce time available on Post-Graduate Certificate courses, or by suggesting either that pastoral skills were developed implicitly in Education and Professional Studies, or that they were better learned "on the shop floor".

Inservice provision appeared to be rather more satisfactory. Many teachers reported attendance at some time on courses to do with pastoral care, and their evaluations were also rather more positive. However, the pattern of provision was at best patchy. Opportunities depended as much as anything on geography. Some local authorities provided advisory support and others did not. Some colleges provided award-bearing courses (e.g. for Advanced Diplomas and MA degrees) but little or no school-based or school-focussed training. The provision of "flights" of inservice activities catering for those on each rung on the pastoral ladder, and combining skills enhancement with academic credibility, were rare indeed.

In some respects the position in England has improved a little in recent years. The redefinition of teachers' roles in terms of "directed time" - statutory minimum hours of attendance - and the advent of obligatory training days, have provided new opportunities for school-based INSET. My impression is that in many schools teachers who have a particular interest in pastoral work, and have long felt starved of staff development opportunities, are pressuring their administrations for training sessions on pastoral skills. However, this gain has been made at the expense of award-bearing courses, particularly those leading to advanced qualifications and requiring full-time secondment. These have low priority in the Local Education Authority Training Grants Scheme, and in the eyes of schools' senior management to whom the grassroots INSET planning has been delegated.

Significant additions to provision have been the programmes of local, regional and national conferences, seminars and workshops offered by the National Association for Pastoral Care in Education. NAPCE's quarterly journal (*Pastoral Care in Education*) also carries frequent articles reporting professional development projects at school level, and exploring the implications of these for INSET.

In initial teacher education, little seems to have changed. If anything, the criteria of the Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) have further restricted the time available for considering pastoral roles. Yet there can be no denying that there are important skills here for which training should be provided.

## WHAT KIND OF TRAINING?

The model described earlier indicates the kinds of skills which teachers need if they are to perform adequately their pastoral duties.

Although we cannot (and should not?) expect every form-tutor to be a specialist counsellor, **pastoral casework** requires many of the skills associated with counselling. Tutors need observational skills in order to recognise when children need help. They need interpersonal skills of all kinds in order to get to know each child as an individual. They need to be good listeners, able to reflect back, affirm and encourage children in the exploration of their own problems. They need to be able to open up guidance encounters, drawing out the child's developing understanding of its own feelings, needs and attitudes. And they need to be skillful in assessing when a case requires the help of more experienced or more qualified teachers and supporting agencies (e.g. the Educational Psychologist and the Educational Welfare Officer).

The delivery of the **pastoral curriculum** requires teaching skills, and it is tempting to hope that such skills are developed in the training of people to be subject teachers. In some degree this is so. The explanation of concepts, the exposition of a theory and the description of factual knowledge may require similar skills, no matter what the subject taught. Some of the content of the pastoral curriculum is no doubt teachable in the same way. However, since *personal* and *social* development entails processes which are (by definition) *personal* and *social*, in a way which (for example) Physics does not, the pastoral curriculum will require a distinctive pedagogy. Much of it happens through the personal and social processes of the learning experience itself. It can't all be taught; much of it must be *experienced*. Moreover, moral, political and ethical questions are intrinsic to both processes and content, so that teaching here is threatened with controversy at every turn. The same is hardly true of (say) the teaching of Music.

It follows that the pastoral curriculum will require teachers to be competent in setting up and controlling appropriate group activities. It will require teachers to be skilful in handling discussions of such sensitive issues as sexual relations and racial prejudice. Skills in setting up, leading and directing role play, simulations and socio-drama will also be needed. In short, there is (as Button, 1974, termed them) a whole "repertoire of techniques" in developmental group work which an effective pastoral curriculum requires. While some of these techniques might also contribute to the effectiveness of teaching other subjects (e.g. handling controversial issues in History), in the pastoral curriculum they are absolutely essential.

**Pastoral control** is obviously tricky. The frequent coincidence of personal, social and emotional problems with disruptive behaviour means that casework is often concerned with questions of discipline. All the skills of casework are relevant. But there are others. For example, where a child challenges authority, teachers need skills in defusing the situation and in negotiating a resolution of the conflict. Watkins and Wagner (1987) have argued that teachers need training also in analysing the structure and dynamics of the groups within

which disrupting behaviour occurs, and in identifying the "triggers" for particular patterns of behaviour. Moreover, those proactive and developmental aspects of achieving social order - corporate activities, promoting a sense of belonging and mutual respect, community building - clearly entail competencies other than those associated with discipline narrowly conceived as the identification of deviance and the operation of sanctions.

Effective **pastoral management** requires skills of a different order again. Heads of House/Year/Division must be skilful in team building and team leading, in curriculum planning, monitoring and evaluation, in staff appraisal, in delegation, staff counselling and so on (Bell and Maher, 1986). For example, in my experience, educationalists are appallingly bad at planning and accomplishing meetings of any kind. For the pastoral manager, setting up and carrying off successful team meetings for planning tutorial programmes, handling case conferences and structuring staff-development exercises are clearly important. So too are skills in researching need, marshalling resources, communicating, recording developments and negotiating with staff at all levels. Indeed, the ingredients of good management are as important for the Head of House as they ever were for the Head of Faculty.

## CONCLUSIONS

I have argued that pastoral care may be seen to encompass four distinct services, each defined in terms of meeting needs. Three of these - casework, curriculum and control - are aimed at meeting the needs of youngsters as children, learners and citizens. The fourth is facilitative and is oriented towards the needs of staff. Each aspect of pastoral work requires a wide range of skills. Many of these skills may be useful in the other roles teachers play, but for effective pastoral work they are crucial.

**It is by no means certain that the development of these skills is high on the list of priorities of those who control our education systems, nor of those who plan our teacher-training courses.**

Indeed, in England and Wales the advent of the 'National Curriculum' is feared by many as something which will sideline personal and social education and minimise time for effective casework. At the same time, the delegation to schools of responsibility for managing their own finances is likely to put entrepreneurial skills and a head for figures well above the skills of pastoral leadership. The knock-on effects of this for training courses is further to concentrate attention on training for subject teaching. Professions of concern for the "management of behaviour" and for PSE as a "cross curricular theme" betray narrow conceptions of pastoral care and, anyway, are unmatched by the time necessary to deal with them in any depth.

The training of teachers has for too long taken pastoral care for granted, given it low priority or, worse, simply ignored it. If our expressions of commitment to the development and well-being of the "whole person" are to be more than empty rhetoric, this situation is in urgent need of correction.

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