TEACHERS FOR THE INNER CITY

The work of the Urban Studies Centre
by John Raynor

CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION

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Foreword

In June 1981 the Interim Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups (the Rampton Report), gave as an example of good practice in preparing teachers to work in inner city schools, 'a college which has established a residential urban studies centre to enable students to forge strong links with ethnic minority groups in the area where they do their teaching practice'. (Chap.3 para 5.iii p61) Elaborating this point, Ken Millins in the *Times Educational Supplement* of 26.6.81 described how:

> 'since 1973, one college has set up, far from its main campus, an urban studies centre in the East End of London. Here some of its BEd and PGCE students spend 13 weeks and others up to five months. During this time they teach for three days a week in a local multi-racial school and for the other two they are engaged, wherever possible, in school-related social or community work. As an external examiner, I have seen some of these students in action and witnessed the resilience and the growth of awareness shown by virtually everyone. Many of the former students who stayed at the centre are now teaching in the area. This is perhaps the most thorough attempt to date to come to deeper terms with attitude formation in this field, among both staff and students'.

This book is the story of this experiment. The experiment is not aimed specifically at work with ethnic minority groups but seeks to prepare teachers to face and overcome the difficulties of all kinds of work in inner city schools, including multi-cultural education. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation first agreed to support the project in 1973 with a grant of '£10,000 over two years towards the cost of an Urban Studies Centre in East London to provide specialised courses for students in the problems facing teachers in inner city areas'. In 1975 the Foundation gave a further grant of £2,700 to help the Centre complete its experimental period, from which emerged the institution described here. This support was part of the beginning of the Foundation's commitment to inner city education. Since then the commitment has grown and spread to embrace other inner city problems.

We publish this account, therefore, as a contribution to today's national discussions about teacher training and inner city regeneration, particularly in relation to two events which have focused on the inner city discussion during 1981. The first is the European Campaign for Urban Renaissance which ends in December 1981; the second is the national conference 'Community Challenge', sponsored by the Gulbenkian Foundation and *The Guardian*, held in Liverpool 16-19 September. 'Community Challenge' is listed as one of the important events of the European Campaign and, like the European Campaign, will stimulate initiatives of many kinds long after it is over. Some of these initiatives, no doubt, will relate to the work of the Urban Studies Centre and draw on its experiences. Besides this, however, an Urban Studies Centre has its own validity in the present situation because, as Frank Coles says in a passage which is the nub of the study, 'the gaps ... between colleges of education and the community have widened rather than narrowed'. Reasons for this lie in the formidable changes which have taken place in teacher training and the inner city since 1973. The inner city's situation has become worse; the teacher's situation has become worse. Ways to support and improve both are needed even more urgently in the 1980s than in the 1970s. After all, neither inner city specialists, teachers, nor their students envisaged in 1973 that school leavers would be the worst hit group of unemployed by 1981, roughly double the national average! Nor were the consequences foreseen of a trend already visible in 1973 showing that the needs of the less academically gifted young person were largely being ignored among national education priorities. Today, youth unemployment and the disadvantage

of the unskilled are most visible in areas of urban deprivation, contributing substantially to the problems of inner city education, the difficulties of teachers and students and the work of the Urban Studies Centre. How the Centre can respond to this worsening situation depends largely on its experience thus far. This is why the experience is worth studying.

First, though, it is necessary to describe the current position in teacher training. There are now, after all the changes which have taken place since 1973, just over 100 institutions concerned with teacher training in England and Wales: 76 are in the public sector, 30 are in the universities. These institutions range in size from about 100 student places to over 1,000. Guiding and assessing the institutions are about 25 awarding bodies with cross validation as a complicating factor because universities are still validating 30-40 institutions in the public sector. This system has been placed under vast strain during the last 20 years not only socially (reflected in the study) but politically and economically as a result of government action—first in the public sector, now in the universities. Student numbers rose and fell from 30,000 in 1957 to about 110,000 in 1971 to some 46,700 places in 1981. The number of public sector institutions involved rose and fell from 134 in 1957 to 160 in 1971 to about 76 in 1981. Parallel with this have gone many structural changes. Two year certificate courses became three year courses in 1960. BEd was introduced in 1964, then a new BEd and DipHE in 1974. There remain many routes into teaching influenced by many bodies from central and local government and HM Inspectorate to the churches, validating bodies, subject associations and others. In sum, there is great complexity and variety coupled with deep loyalties and unachieved aspirations. The main objectives of the James Report and the 1972 White Paper remain largely unrealised. This was the last major government policy statement on teacher training. Since then neither Labour nor Conservative administrations have produced any clear statement of policies or priorities for teacher education and training, either about basic elements like overall structure and governance, or about conceptual and philosophical matters like the place of teacher education and training within education as a whole. Thus this essential and immensely valuable resource is finding difficulty in retaining the social and political recognition and esteem it deserves.

Within this context of confusion the Rampton Interim Report argued the need to change attitudes in British education, particularly by improving links between schools and the communities they serve. It also emphasised that the examination system is not as suitable as it might be for a multi-racial school population and called for a systematic review of syllabuses by examination boards. This surely reflects the reality behind all inner city education and all inner city life today, a profound need to come to terms with the changes which have taken place and a profound questioning of solutions advanced out of traditional attitudes. Change is happening, particularly in ideas of partnership. It is accepted, for example, that regeneration depends upon a partnership between small business and local authority, private money and public money. Small should balance large so that communities are not dependent on single industries and there is flexibility in creating work on scales appropriate to communities. Similarly, there needs to be a partnership between past and present, reviving and restoring buildings, not destroying them, so as to retain or stimulate wholesome communities of small industry and commerce, housing and leisure facilities under the guidance of local government backed by central funds and legislative muscle. Other conceptions of partnership argue that cultural regeneration needs to balance economic and social regeneration, that more generously funded welfare projects, environmental improvement, better recreational facilities, changed methods of policing and greater de-centralisation to community projects and councils all depend on better direct liaison with young and old and each of the voluntary groupings which make up a community. In the last analysis local government should be community partnership government.

The Guardian articles building up to the Community Challenge conference, especially the contributions of Malcolm Dean, were particularly telling for the light they shone into the darkness of local relations and local administration. They revealed failures of officials at all levels, of administrators, of the local government bureaucracy, to

implement policies agreed by elected representatives; or to identify priorities of need in their localities, rather than to continue traditional formulae which serve the greatest number. Today, surely, changing circumstances (especially economic cutbacks) require that emphasis should be placed on the greatest needs. Local government has failed, on the whole, to draw local initiative and the voluntary sector into the process of government. There is palpable inertia or deliberate evasion of some of the most pressing social problems such as race relations. What is needed in this case is honest recognition that racism and communal violence really do infect our society and are fuelled very often by the myth that alien minorities are responsible for unemployment and urban deprivation. Such acknowledgement should stir an equally honest determination to combat both myth and evil by finding out the truth; establishing statistics and hard facts as a basis for policies which can involve communities in deciding realistic priorities to guide communal developments in overcoming racism. Here, and in other cases, many vested interests have grown up shrouded in too much local bureaucracy. This prevents the alliance between people and government which alone can regenerate the declining areas of British life. The greatest need, therefore, is for councils to restore or strengthen links with communities; for councils to trust and listen to community opinion.

To achieve such objectives involves a change of attitudes on all sides. In education it is not only the majority who should understand minority cultures, but the minority who should understand the majority culture. This raises the issue of ideological approach to which John Raynor refers. At once the problem of inner city education becomes not one of schools alone, but of educating communities, administrators and administered, parents and children, teachers and taught. The inner city is seen to be a microcosm (not so micro!) of the problems of advanced industrial societies everywhere. In turn the educational problem for which the Urban Studies Centre was created in 1973 is seen to be governed by factors far removed from any Centre's control. Many of the factors have emerged only during the last few years since the Centre was established. Under the impact of these changes ideological conceptions also change or are modified. Initially some attitudes towards the Centre were guided by no more than exasperation with conventional methods of teacher training. A few brought to it a strongly held commitment to informal education as the partner of formal education. Some saw, or came to see, in education, a primary engine of social action for social reform. Certainly education, in the context of all else that is happening in inner cities today, can provide important guidance in extending the democratic process.

The work of the Urban Studies Centre today touches all these aspects, but points particularly to the special needs and problems of students in Britain's decaying inner cities. These problems are the fault neither of students nor teachers but of Britain's past. Hence they create a priority need for Britain's present which is the subject of this study and of the experience which John Raynor has assembled out of the records and recollections of those who played principal parts in the enterprise. The peculiar feature which John Raynor had to address was expressed particularly by Frank Coles:

> 'In the inner city areas there is growing up, outside the schools but with their knowledge and sometimes with their co-operation, an infra-structure of educational and para-educational activities which, unlike the social services, do have roots in the community. Their direction is still uncertain, but they endeavour to combine some of the best features of home and school in an informal and relaxed way of life which will encourage the rebirth of interest in the traditional preoccupations of schooling. These activities are consciously designed to avoid those features of institutionalised education which are thought to provoke resistance. Sometimes they are led or supported by disenchanted or frustrated teachers; sometimes they are funded or provided with other resources by the local authorities themselves.'

John Raynor picks up this challenge in Part Four by identifying four particularly significant questions emerging from the experience of the Urban Studies Centre. They

embrace the relationship between urban policy and educational policy; the role of the inner city school; the relationship between teacher education as it is now and the needs of the inner city school; and ideological approaches to these problems. The answers cannot avoid being influenced by what is happening today in the economic, social and cultural life of Britain as it wrestles with a double legacy of the first industrial revolution and the end of an empire. Our history now affects every aspect of British life, but the nature of the legacy can be seen and felt most vividly at the grass roots of national life among the individuals, families and communities who make up our inner cities and the other areas of rural and urban decline throughout the country.

Peter Brinson
Director
UK and Commonwealth Branch
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation July 1981

Author's note

The part to be played by education in the strategies for renewal of the inner cities has always been less than clear. The White Paper of 1977, *Policies for the Inner City*, for example, went no further than calling for wider use of school buildings as a community resource. Yet schools, teachers, children and their parents are a positive resource from which a quality contribution to the revitalising of the inner city communities can be made. Teachers may not always be too clear in their wider understanding of urban policies but many are dedicated to working in the schools of the inner city and find unacceptable the levels of inequality, underprivilege and racism that are so often present.

That there are such teachers owes little to the training that they have received. Many young teachers have been thrown into inner city schools hopelessly unprepared for such work. Until relatively recently, University departments of education, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education offered little by way of experience, ideas or systematic courses of study to prepare them for such a teaching experience. In some respects the picture today is even gloomier than it was a decade ago with the decline of teachers in training, the rising levels of unemployment among them and the cutting of resources to schools. The circumstances of today, with growing unemployment and the lack of skills of many school leavers as well as the incipient racism in the communities, call both for greater experiment in initial teacher education and for improved in-service training for the teachers 'in post' in order to help them cope better with the difficulties being faced.

The Urban Studies Centre is one such experiment in teacher education. It owes everything to the vision of two men. Frank Coles was the first Director of the Centre and a man who inspired a whole generation of teachers by his dedication and vision. The second person is John Anderson, the Principal of the College of St Mark and St John, who supported Frank Coles and kept faith with the project in the difficult times as well as the good.

I was asked by the Gulbenkian Foundation to evaluate the work of the Urban Studies Centre in the late 1970s. What follows is a joint contribution by some of the main participants.

I would like to thank Peter Brinson and Millicent Bowerman of the Gulbenkian Foundation, Frank Coles from whom I have learned so much over a period of 30 years, John and Jean Anderson, Roger Tingle and David Green. My thanks also to Dominic Newbould for his help in editing the manuscript.

John Raynor is Dean and Director of Studies in the Faculty of Educational Studies at the Open University. He has taught widely in schools, further education and in Colleges of Education. His special interest is in the fields of Curriculum Studies and Urban and Multi-Ethnic Education.

Introduction

The story of the Centre which follows needs to be viewed against the background of widespread upheaval in Colleges of Education during the extensive restructuring of teacher education which took place during the 1970s. The national decline in the birth-rate had the effect of reducing numbers admitted to train for teaching. Closures and amalgamations inevitably followed. The insecurity and fall in morale among staff is a consequence that has yet to be fully explored. Certainly, creative thinking about the content of teacher education had to be conducted in an atmosphere of great uncertainty. In more ways than one, it was an unpropitious time to innovate.

In 1972, the College of St Mark and St John, one of the oldest and most prestigious voluntary colleges for teacher training in the country, established an Urban Studies Centre in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The intention was to provide an effective professional preparation for those students who were likely to take up first teaching appointments in inner city schools. During the short period students spent at the Centre (some 13 weeks), their time would be divided between teaching at local schools and working with neighbourhood and community groups.

The Urban Studies Centre has to be assessed on a variety of grounds. To begin with, how did the Centre meet one of the main criticisms levelled at Colleges of Education during the 1960s and early 1970s? Namely, that such Colleges were signally failing to prepare students for their changing professional task in classroom and school. Second, by its conscious rejection of the distinction between education and schooling, the Centre involved the young teacher in work not only in schools, but also in local neighbourhood and community organisations. How was this received? And third, it is necessary to ask if such an innovatory scheme could, or should, have been embarked upon at a time when circumstances were least favourable.

In spite of these, and other practical and social problems, the Centre and its work have survived to make an impact on teacher education in this country. Today, some ten years after its inception, the project can be examined with the advantages of hindsight and the evidence of its achievements. It is a project that can best be understood as a story of interaction between institutions, individuals and ideas.

Part One
The development of the Centre

1 The College of St Mark and St John

In 1967 the College of St Mark and St John was given notice by the Greater London Council (GLC) to quit its premises in the Kings Road, Chelsea. Some effort was made to discover other sites in the London area before deciding to move to the provinces. Eventually Plymouth was chosen as the new home for the College. In January 1969 an advance post of the College was set up in Devonport, offering a two year shortened course for the Certificate of Education of the University of Exeter.

Not surprisingly, the decision of the Governors to move to Plymouth had a mixed reception from the College staff. Some were keen to go, some could not for domestic reasons, while others took the opportunity either to retire or to find themselves new jobs in the London area. Within the College there appears to have been a small group, wholly opposed to the move, who believed that in moving away from London the College was turning its back on its professional obligation to prepare teachers for city schools.

In 1971 the Principal of the College, the Rev W H Mawson, suffered a severe heart attack, brought on it was believed by preparing for the move to Plymouth. The College was effectively without a principal until his retirement in 1972. Communications within the College were already weak and the absence of a principal led to a rapid deterioration in College morale.

The new Principal appointed was John Anderson, a man with considerable teaching experience in Africa but with no experience of English Colleges of Education or recent experience of schooling in England. Before taking up the post he had been a Research Fellow at the University of Sussex. Anderson's position on becoming Principal was, to say the least, difficult. He was not from an acknowledged background in teacher training and was regarded with suspicion by many of the staff. He found the College in a profoundly depressed state and he was under constraints from the Governing body who had certain ideas about what the College should become. As he describes it:

> 'Certainly the College was a very worrying sort of place when I got there. As I talked to the staff and got to know them I realized that a core group of the Governors had taken the opportunity to move the College because they saw troubled times ahead. Their idea was to build a much purer church college away from the nasty problems of the city, hoping to keep out non-Christian influences. As far as I could see no one had made any kind of assessment of what was actually needed down here (in Plymouth) or what was to be lost in the move.'

2 The promoters

The impending move to Plymouth and the retirement of the Principal allowed a power vacuum to develop in the College. Those members of staff who had consistently argued for the more effective professional preparation of teachers as being the College's main concern, were able to grasp an opportunity denied them over the years. The foremost spokesman for that view was Frank Coles who had worked at the College since shortly after the war. He had been steadfast in his view about what was needed to prepare and train young teachers. As Coles saw it, the dominance of the academic interests of the College, supported by an authoritarian power structure, had led to a situation where:

> '... the structure of the teaching staff was such that the people who were saddled with the responsibility of professional preparation were always in a minority. When the BEd degree came along they were a minority within a minority because of the exultation of studies of psychology, sociology and philosophy. The education lecturers either had to equip themselves to teach those subjects to university degree standards or be replaced by those who could. In the 1960s most of the recruits to the London College staffs seemed to be able young academics with little interest or experience or acquaintance with ordinary schools or the kind of community that surrounds urban schools.'

It was Coles' responsibility to organise the work in schools. He had great experience of the conditions and understood the needs of London schools; he was also deeply sceptical of the academic pretensions of the College. In the 1950s and 1960s he proposed a number of innovations to help professionally prepare the young student, all of which received nominal support initially but were then (he claims) successfully sabotaged.

As for practical experience in schools, he sums up the trend as follows:

> 'There was a general training college practice of moving their practising schools further and further from the centre, so that as an examiner for 20 years I found the journey I had to make to where the students were to be examined getting longer and longer. One found oneself in Esher and Kingston and Surbiton where once one found oneself in Battersea, Wandsworth and Islington.'

In 1972 Coles was one year from retirement and was hoping to spend it on sabbatical leave. He had no intention of moving to Plymouth. It was the arrival of the new Principal, John Anderson, who favoured the kind of innovation and commitment Coles had been arguing for over the years that gave him cause for hope.

Coles and Anderson met in August 1972 (before Anderson had taken up his post) and reached agreement on setting up a London outpost. Here is how Anderson describes it:

> 'The idea of the Centre was hatched one morning very quickly by Frank Coles in his study whilst talking over where the College was going and what it was doing. Frank was arguing that the College should have gone to the East End—it was a marvellous opportunity. He knew the East End, and had contact with the community there. We both said "Why haven't we taken advantage of this? We ought to. Let's cook up a scheme." So we had a go at it and fortunately a contact came along in the East End who provided us with a base, and it took off from there.'

Why did a young principal like Anderson agree so quickly to establish the Urban Studies Centre? Here, one has to look at his experience in Africa:

> 'My view is that education has to go beyond the classroom if it is going to make any sense. It has to be involved with the whole range of informal education experiences, such as African children have, if formal education is to make any impact on them. I tried to argue for this while at Sussex, with students being involved in the same community as the children they would teach—they would have a shared experience. It did not get very far.'

Was Coles surprised? Was he suspicious that a new principal was making an innovatory gesture—an occupational danger most of them suffer from at the beginning of their term of office?

> 'No. I was quite convinced that John Anderson was interested in it. Indeed, I think it was the only thing going on at the time with which he felt a personal sympathy and enthusiasm. There was no doubt that his personal style was very much affected by his long period in Africa. His mode of address, his social service training made him suspicious of the traditional academic departments from the first. He had considerable difficulties in getting himself accepted. Fortunately for him, most of the old gang either remained in London, retired or found niches in other more conventional training colleges. He did not have to take many with him to Plymouth.'

At first sight the connection between Coles and Anderson was unlikely. One was an 'éminence grise' in the College, every bit his own man, and steadfast in his belief about what had to be done. The other was young, sharp, relaxed and unconventional. Whatever the connection, the chemistry seems to have worked. Coles agreed to stay on and initiate the experiment, more or less dictating his own terms. Anderson, realising this, was able to concentrate his energies on the transfer to Plymouth.

The College was in fact turned upside-down. Authoritarian leadership gave way to a more relaxed and unconventional style and the academic party, already dispirited by the impending move, was replaced in influence for a time by the 'professional' party inside the College. The Management Council of the College gave its approval to the scheme, and so later did the Academic Board of the College. As Anderson puts it:

> 'It was railroaded. There was a certain amount of resistance and, initially, some questions asked by the Governors, but Frank and I are both reasonably articulate and were able to sell it to them.'

As Coles saw it there were two reasons why it was accepted by the Academic Board:

> 'The majority, particularly the senior members, were not interested—things had gone too far in the College. It was too near dissolution to organise any active reasoned opposition. I would say there was mild indifference.'

The other reason is interesting and bears out Anderson's claim that the move to Plymouth was not based on any assessment of needs or resources in the area. Here is Coles again:

> 'One of the chief worries of the College was that it would not be able to provide the statutory requirements for teaching practice in the schools of South West England, and that a case could be made for trying to retain some base in London. This undoubtedly influenced that section of staff going to Plymouth and was used as an argument to support the urban studies project. Indeed, I think it was the only argument to appeal to other members of staff with the exception of one or two younger members.'

There was, then, in the Urban Studies Centre, a mixture of idealism and opportunism. The staff of the College were distracted by the considerable personal and professional consequences of the impending move to Plymouth. The establishment of the Urban Studies Centre in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets was of marginal interest to them. It is clear that without the steadfastness of Coles and the sympathy and enthusiasm of Anderson the Centre would not have been established. It is also likely that if the College had tried this innovation from Chelsea it would have run into obstacles from the London Institute of Education. The fact that the College was leaving London meant that the Institute of Education could safely ignore the proposal, while Exeter University, not knowing anything about the College, was prepared to accept the innovation on the recommendation of the Principal. It was ironic that a London college, part of whose tradition was educating teachers to work in the city with the under-privileged, chose to move away when it did. As Anderson comments:

> 'We were moving away at the very moment when everyone was becoming seriously aware of what was happening to the inner cities and what had happened to the schools and to the communities they served.'

3 Tower Hamlets

The Borough of Tower Hamlets in London's East End has all the classic characteristics of inner city areas. The Borough, abutting the City of London, was formed in 1965 by the amalgamation of the former metropolitan Boroughs of Stepney, Poplar and Bethnal Green. In the nineteenth century it was London's workshop, with the docks and the clothing trade in Stepney. In the north of the Borough, in Bethnal Green, were the trades catering for the commercial needs of the City—furniture, printing, paper-making.

In 1901 there were 600,000 people living in the area; by 1921 the population stood at 529,000 and in 1976 only 150,000 were left. What had once been the closely knit, warm, cockney neighbourhoods of the East End had disappeared giving way to a high concentration of disadvantaged people—isolated and elderly in Bethnal Green, rent arrears in the Isle of Dogs, high unemployment in Poplar—in a run-down and decaying environment.

The most significant change in the Borough has been the loss of jobs. The docks have closed or moved down river; the small workshops finding themselves in redevelopment areas have either shut up shop or moved away; large employers have been persuaded to move out of London to 'green-field' sites and, as work has gone, so have the young and most energetic groups in the population. The result is that Tower Hamlets is an area without work or the prospects of work, with a high proportion of children of school age, a decreasing number of people in the family-rearing groups and an increasing number of people on low incomes searching for unskilled jobs for their livelihood.

Culturally the East End has witnessed over the years a complex process of ethnic succession. As one minority group has moved up socially and geographically, its vacated place has been filled by another group.

The East End has always been a place in which the middle classes could ease their conscience. It has been the hunting ground of the social arithmetician and the sociologist, and it became a home for the 'good works' of the missions and settlements which still linger on in the area. Today it serves all manner of purposes for those who come from outside to 'try to do something about it'. It is a place over which politicians scheme and planners draw up their blue-prints; which sociologists dissect and where television cameras can always find an easy story. Little wonder that the people of the area are resentful of outside interference.

Politically, too, the East End has always been a militant place for both left and right wing politics. The Match Girls' strikes, the various dockers' strikes, the sending of the whole Council of Poplar to jail in 1921, are all now part of labour history. But in 1936 there was the Battle of Cable Street and in 1937 the votes cast for the British Union of Fascists in the municipal elections; both testament to the militancy of the area on the right wing of politics. Today sees the National Front active in the area and Jew has been replaced by Asian as the object of attack.

Tower Hamlets is a solidly working-class area with less than 5% of the homes owner-occupied. Slum clearance started slowly between the wars and accelerated during the first blitz when over 17,000 houses were destroyed and a further 7,000 made uninhabitable. The second 'blitz' came in the 1950s and 1960s when, under redevelopment plans, a wholesale clearance took place. In 1972 alone, 1,500 dwellings were demolished. Even now, 40% of the homes are classified as being in 'fair' or 'poor' condition. The waiting list for houses stands at 5,000. The East End has seen the physical destruction of its communities, the break up of its social groups and the

generation of a sense of insecurity among its residents. A Congregational minister who has lived in the area for 18 years describes it:

> 'Tower Hamlets is a municipal ghetto; its problems solidified in concrete. Everything is constantly being renewed and there is a tremendous need for roots. The old culture was centred around little streets, many of them dead ends by the railway lines ... each street helped its own, taking a quart of ale to old people on Saturday night, signalling with closed shutters when there was a death. Now people don't even know when old people die.'

Population has been falling in the Borough for many years and the extent can be seen in the declining birth-rate. Whereas in 1961 there were about 19 live births to 1,000 population, today sees the figure falling to 12 per 1,000. Though the birth-rate continues to fall and though there is quite generous provision for nursery schools and nursery classes, day-care and child-minders, there was, nevertheless, in August 1976, a waiting list of 250 children for such facilities.

There has been a fall in the school population throughout the country in recent years and the Borough of Tower Hamlets is no exception. The number of primary school children in the Borough fell from 17,801 in 1964 to 12,770 in 1975 with a further 20% fall to 10,522 by 1980. The secondary school population remained fairly steady at around the 12,800 mark between 1964 and 1975. This was due to the time-lag factor coupled with the raising of the school leaving age. However, by 1980 the figure had fallen to 11,643 and this trend is likely to continue for some time ahead.* The school buildings in the Borough show that, while the distribution of primary schools is good, the age of the buildings is less so. In 1975 around 36% of all primary schools were in nineteenth century buildings and 22% of secondary schools too. This was well above the national average of 20% and 5% respectively for all primary and secondary schools.

As far as educational attainment of the children in the schools of the Borough is concerned, these have to be compared with that of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) as a whole. In the Literacy Surveys of 1968, 1971 and 1973/4, taken by the ILEA, it was revealed that, taking the national average literacy as 100, the average of all London pupils was 94.2. The significant correlations shown for this attainment were with parental occupation, teacher turnover, and family size and income. In Tower Hamlets there are a high proportion of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, and a greater number of children at both primary and secondary level receiving free school meals than anywhere else in the ILEA area. There seems little alternative explanation than to conclude that a combination of the massive emigration of skilled workers, urban stress and, to *some* degree, an influx of immigrants, have led to these depressed scores. At the other end of schooling, in January 1975 Tower Hamlets had only some 656 children, or 5.2% of its school population staying on at school beyond 16 compared with an ILEA average of 9.8%.

In 1973 when the Urban Studies Centre opened, many of London's schools were, to say the least, unhappy places. Truancy rates were high and truancy 'in the head' higher still. Attainment was falling and teacher morale was low. As the school rolls fell there was a deep uncertainty as to the schools' purposes. ILEA Division 5 (Tower Hamlets and the City of London) found it particularly difficult to recruit teachers. In 1973 a Department of Education and Science (DES) survey estimated that, in the years 1972/3, gross turnover of ILEA staff was 50% above the national average. This high mobility among teachers led to certain ILEA divisions (particularly Division 5) recruiting a high number of inexperienced teachers. In 1974, for example, Division 5 recruited 168 London first appointments with 118 going to primary schools and 50 to secondary. Of the 71 primary schools and 17 secondary schools in the Borough, 29 primary and seven secondary were titled 'Social Priority Schools' by the ILEA. This concentration

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* The Education Research and Statistics Group, ILEA June 1981

of 'problem' schools, plus high teacher turnover and a high proportion of young and inexperienced teachers, led to that phenomenon of those years, the 'truant teacher'. This was a reflection of the strain faced by schools and teachers trying to teach defiant pupils for small reward and little respect.

These of course were particular problems at a moment of time. There were also those more serious endemic problems schools faced in dealing with the different or contradictory demands placed upon them. As Frank Coles, the first Director of the Urban Studies Centre, put it:

> '... over a period of 25 years I had seen the schools going on the defensive. They were increasingly insulating themselves from the neighbourhood in which they stood. Confrontation was characteristic of secondary schools in Inner London. The gulf between those who live and work outside the schools and those who work within was widening all the time.'

The reasons for this defensiveness and uncertainty in the schools arose from the contradictory demands made upon them. Up until the 1950s, in the traditional working class areas of the East End, and in any large city for that matter, the school had been a part of the environment of the urban working class communities. Consequently it was moderately in tune and aware of the values and lifestyles of these people. However, the school never 'belonged' to the community because of the formal links it had with the wider social structure. The school has always stood for values, for kinds of learning, for types of discipline and authority which were at odds with the community. Through its selection mechanisms, by streaming and grading according to examination results, it connected the working class child to the wider structure but disconnected the able young from their community and home.

When the environment around the school is changed and the community dislocated through vast redevelopment schemes for housing, then the whole position and logic of the school is exposed to public view as never before. It was into such an area and climate that the Urban Studies Centre opened in 1973.

Part Two
Personal accounts

1 Frank Coles

Senior Tutor at St Mark and St John until the move to Plymouth in 1973.
Founder of the Urban Studies Centre in Tower Hamlets, London.

Introduction

Teaching, though not the oldest, is the most conservative profession. Trailing in the wake of HM Inspectorate in the late nineteen forties as they performed the obsolete ritual of the final examination of student teachers, I remembered what Matthew Arnold had said about it in 1870: "It is a long tedious business hearing the students give specimen lessons ... there is little real utility in it and a great deal of clap-trap." Thirty years later, in the 1970s, it was still going on; the only discernible change was that the Inspectorate had been replaced by the teacher trainers themselves. The changes recommended in the McNair Report of 1944, the promise of a serious professional education for teachers, had not taken place. Only the superstructure had made its appearance. Colleges and Departments of Education had multiplied; chairs had proliferated and, with them, the research and higher degrees needed to justify them. Overnight the new Institutes of Education had spun an intricate web of panels, committees, sub-committees and boards to which teacher trainers were expected to devote an inordinate amount of time in the belief that they were participating in an academic democracy. Meanwhile the basic features of the student apprenticeship to teaching were little changed; in some colleges they actually dwindled. False dawn succeeded false dawn; not merely the McNair Report but the three-year course, the Newsom Report of 1963, the introduction of the BEd degree and the James Report all provided opportunities which were ignored.

The teachers in the schools, so often contemptuous of what they saw going on in the colleges of education, continued nevertheless to endorse the programme followed by their apprentices even after the system began to show signs of breaking down. The system was certainly showing signs of breaking down in inner city areas: pupils were refusing to accept their role as pupils and their teachers in consequence were unable to sustain theirs. It was this threatened breakdown which gave a project like the Urban Studies Centre, primarily an overdue attempt to modify the pattern of teacher education generally, a chance to get off the ground. Earlier attempts had been frustrated by the obsessive concern with relations between colleges and universities and by the former's strenuous efforts to overturn an earlier verdict that the training colleges, academically speaking, were a 'byword for futility'.

It is important to recall what was happening in the schools during this period. In 1947, by a wave of a wand, all pupils between the ages of 11 and 15 were deemed to be enjoying a secondary education. For this there had been no serious preparation: there were no buildings, no teachers, no curriculum; nothing more than an admirable statement of principles in the 1944 Act. There was only one model for a secondary school in existence at that time: the grammar school. The new secondary schools either adopted this model or soldiered on as senior elementary schools with an extra year. Fortunately there had survived from the inter-war years, in the Hadow and Spens Reports, useful indications as to how the grammar school could be diluted to serve the 75% of the secondary population for whom there would never be places in the authentic grammar schools. There was, it is true, talk of a different method of organising secondary schooling. But comprehensive schools, favoured by a few local authorities, developed very slowly; the notion that they would offer a very different kind of education developed even more slowly. It is also true that, here and there, individual secondary schools developed highly idiosyncratic solutions and were quickly labelled progressive schools; they attracted little support from the profession or from the population as a whole. Progressive education had always been a middle class fad whose success depended upon a close understanding between the staff of these schools and the

parents of their pupils. When colleges of education got to know of these 'experiments' they would use them occasionally to add piquancy to their somewhat dreary conventional fare.

For more than 20 years the grammar school continued to serve as the model for nearly all secondary schools. That it was an unsatisfactory model is clear from the endless debates about parity of esteem (between the authentic grammar schools and the rest) and selection (for the authentic grammar schools). But the debates did little to prevent the gradual assimilation of the schools to a single pattern. Where the grammar school objectives, O and A levels, were clearly unattainable, CSE was introduced as a stop-gap (now being removed). The belief that there has been a revolution in the curriculum of the secondary school is largely illusory; the content of the curriculum as well as the methods of teaching it are little changed and well-nigh universal. The developments in curricular theory have not been accompanied by developments in practice. Pupils still take examinations by proxy as they have been doing since the 19th century when written examinations became recognised qualifications for a wide range of employment and for entry into the universities and the professions. Recently I heard a very senior inspector of schools say that he rarely saw anything going on in secondary schools which could not have gone on in the conventional grammar school he attended in the early 30s.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the persistence of the grammar school model. It has hampered the disappearance of the old selection procedures as well as the development of comprehensive education; it still dominates the activities and thinking of the colleges of education; it provides the only perspective on schooling known to the universities; it is in danger of enslaving the newest comers to teacher education—the polytechnics and the CNAA; and it sustains a still powerful political lobby.

The grammar school succeeded for as long as it did because of its capacity to attract lively, intelligent, enthusiastic young men and women to provide vigorous leadership in the schools' activities. When secondary schooling began to expand it soon became clear that the supply of these enthusiastic amateurs would not suffice; a thorough apprenticeship must supplement it. It is difficult for those of us who have been through the grammar school experience to realise just how bizarre that experience must seem to youngsters who have not been prepared for it by their parents. The school seeks to take full possession of you by robbing you of your identity; it even thrusts you into uniform and cuts off your hair like the army. While you are in school all links with the outside world are severed and something is radically wrong if during school time anything happens to restore them. It is operated by adult eccentrics whose behaviour is utterly unlike adult behaviour in the outside world. True, other professions have their eccentricities but none is so exposed and so continuously exposed to youngsters as the teaching profession. There is the arbitrary division of the day into 'subjects' and the interminable game of guessing what the teacher is thinking, called getting the right answer. It is in many ways a prison and used to look like one; nowadays it has lost most of its Benthamite features but an open prison is still a prison. It is still surrounded by a wide (though invisible) moat which separates it from the neighbourhood where it stands; the drawbridge is still lowered only at specified times.

The colleges of education recruit most of their staff and a large proportion of their students from grammar schools; the horizons of both are therefore bounded by this experience. Thus the three and four year courses offered by the colleges tend to be prolongations of the grammar school experience. Once upon a time, before the students were recruited from these schools, these courses represented the desired minimum attainment for teachers in elementary schools. The level of attainment is undoubtedly higher today but the experience still resembles the grammar school too closely. Inevitably for many of these students, their assumptions are confirmed and their expectations too narrowly defined.

The young teacher, therefore, with an uninterrupted sheltered life, first in a selective secondary school and then in a university, polytechnic or college of education, will almost certainly make assumptions which, valid or not for the institutions in which he has spent a decade or more, he will take with him, unchallenged and unquestioned, into his first appointment. He will soon discover that these assumptions about motives, attitudes, objectives, curriculum and attainment are not necessarily shared by his pupils. This belated discovery can have disastrous consequences. It is therefore of great importance that these consequences should be avoided and that a much fuller knowledge of the state of affairs in many schools, especially inner city schools, should be accessible to the young teacher before he takes up an appointment. The opportunity to acquire this knowledge should be an essential part of his professional training. But it cannot be acquired in institutions and from institutionalised programmes based on the very assumptions it is necessary to question. Hence the Urban Studies Centre.

The foundation of the Centre

In 1972 the College of St Mark and St John was in poor shape. The College had been in the throes of moving for five years—ever since its expulsion from Chelsea to make way for a motorway. Those members of staff who were committed to this move were no longer much interested in the Chelsea scene; the rest were feverishly seeking new posts or exploring the possibilities of early retirement and redundancy. The students, diminished in numbers by the uncertainties surrounding the move, were unsettled and dissatisfied; they were led at this time by a forceful sabbatical president, a man tempered and hardened in the fires of two university campuses. Further stresses were caused by the staff having to duplicate their teaching to meet the needs of students preparing for the examinations of the University of Exeter as well as those of the University of London; and the external degree courses still dragged on. The Principal, the Rev W H Mawson, who had been ill for some months, resigned.

I had begun to regard myself as a spent force; with only one more year to serve it seemed frivolous to move with the College to Plymouth. I had long relinquished my responsibility for the College's relations with the schools and I contributed very little to education studies. During the illness of the Principal I had been invited to join a caretaker government as Acting Vice-Principal; in this capacity I could be usefully occupied until the move. I hoped too to be allowed to spend my last year on sabbatical leave, during which I would write something about overdue changes in teacher education. It did not, however, turn out quite like this.

It was not easy to find a new Principal to re-establish, or re-create rather, a new college in Plymouth. At the time of his appointment, John Anderson was enjoying the lush pastures of a university campus on the South Downs. He was, as he needed to be, fighting fit. Briefed about the College by a colleague who had once been a student in Chelsea, he had decided, among other things, to persuade me to abandon my plan for a sabbatical year.

A recent survey of the facilities for students of the College among the schools of the South West had given cause for alarm. In the circumstances it was suggested that a way might be found to retain a connection with some of the London schools. Perhaps a unit could be established, a sort of outpost, which would enable some students from Plymouth to have their school practices in London?

John Anderson was aware of the difficulty and it was in this connection that he first invited me to stay on for my last year. We agreed to meet early in the long vacation. Meanwhile, I sent him a letter containing draft proposals for what became the Urban Studies Centre.

The origin of these proposals is not to be found, as has been suggested, among the numerous educational heresies of the early 1970s: de-schooling, free-schooling, alternative schooling, community schooling. On the contrary it is to be found in the earliest

critique of institutionalised teacher training. It comes from the pen of the architect of the first national school system in this country, Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, who had also, for good measure, been the original principal of what was to become the College of St Mark and St John. This is what he wrote in 1843:

> 'For the tranquil and eventless life of a master of a rural school, such training is not an unfit preparation. His resources are not taxed by the necessity for inventing new means to meet the novel combinations which arise in a more active state of society ... But we are also led by our own experience to say that such a noviciate does not prepare a youth of tender age to encounter the responsibilities of a large town or village school in a manufacturing or mining district. He exchanges the comparative seclusion of his residence in a training college for the difficult position of a public instructor on whom jealous eyes are fixed. For the first time he is alone in his profession ... he has left the training college for the rude contact of a coarse, selfish and immoral populace whose gross appetites and manners render the narrow streets in his neighbourhood scenes of impurity. He is at once brought face to face with an ignorant and corrupt multitude, to whose children he is to prove a leader and a guide.'

Only the idiom is unfamiliar; the conditions and problems are immediately familiar. What is more, since this was written the gaps between school and community, and between college of education and the community, have widened rather than narrowed. The aim of the Urban Studies Centre has been, by heeding these comments, to contribute to a solution of the problems to which they refer, problems which persist in spite of the educational and social changes which have occurred since 1843.

The question of origins did not of course assume any importance at the time; it was the question of feasibility. My letter to John Anderson attempted to adapt Kay-Shuttleworth's comments to the contemporary scene and to employ a more familiar idiom. This is the gist of it:

Assumptions

a) school in some inner city areas is dying

b) too many students in colleges of education find their courses intellectually unexciting and socially uninvolving and so are for much of their time bored

c) the fierce moral sanctions which formerly buttressed academic studies (and athletic activities) are not now effective

d) students still have inordinate appetites and inexhaustible vitality, they require to be 'turned on'

e) it is desirable to prepare teachers who will have a different approach to their work and to the people with whom they work

f) in these circumstances it is possible to conceive of a Centre (in an inner city area) continuously in operation throughout the year, demanding from relays of students a six or seven day week for 13 weeks in succession

Aims

a) to complement activities and studies of the College in Plymouth

b) to supplement resources for school-based studies in the South West

c) to provide an all the year round supplementary service in an inner city area which will link the activities of the schools with the life of the neighbourhood and with other social activities and will develop new forms of activity

d) to give teachers in training (and others) experience of educational fieldwork in the form of a sandwich course

e) to provide, eventually, opportunities for research related to, and facilitated by, the work of the Centre

Method

a) students and their course leaders spend 14 weeks engaged in fieldwork

b) they teach in schools half-time and engage in other (community) activities for the remainder of the week

c) during fieldwork periods no formal classes are offered and no formal assignments are required

d) groups and individual students meet course leaders (tutors) as required, to prepare programmes, to discuss difficulties, to plan new departures

e) after the fieldwork is over, time is set aside (in Plymouth) for students to translate their experiences into more permanent, academically acceptable forms

f) at intervals a Development Council will meet to consider the general direction of the Centre's work, its future needs and overall questions of collaboration. Students would attend these meetings.

When we met to discuss these proposals John Anderson was as enthusiastic about them as I was. He agreed to support them and we began a new discussion immediately on ways and means. But first I must complete the rationale.

Schoolchildren spend 16 or 17 hours a day outside school in the vast limbo we call the community. Here their experiences go far towards determining their lifestyle and are, in effect, as educative as those they have in school. In the inner city this lifestyle is often socially unacceptable and tends to be described as deviant. Sooner or later this behaviour is brought to the attention of elaborate and bureaucratic social services, statutory and voluntary, a complex structure which serves as a monument to successive eras of urban colonialism. These services operate in innumerable ways to bring support to the community, not least to the children. Whether their aims and principles derive from religious conviction, from the social sciences or whether they operate pragmatically, they are always interventionist (like the schools); their activities do not in any way emanate from the community itself, whose members, when they become involved, do so invariably as clients. These services deal, often ineffectively, with problems of deep concern to the schools, notably truancy. Proceeding from different principles, utilising different techniques, their contributions to hoped for solutions are often unintelligible to the schools and often seem only to be consolidating opposition to the established order of things. It would not help to transform teachers into social workers or social workers into teachers. Nothing of the sort is intended, but a common language could be developed as a result of closer co-operation and shared experiences. It is intended that the Urban Studies Centre should contribute to the development of such a language.

In the inner city areas there is growing up, outside the schools but with their knowledge and sometimes with their co-operation, an infrastructure of educational and para-educational activities which, unlike the social services, do have roots in the community. Their direction is still uncertain but they endeavour to combine some of the best features of home and school in an informal and relaxed way of life which will encourage

the re-birth of interest in the traditional pre-occupations of schooling. These activities are consciously designed to avoid those features of institutionalised education which are thought to provoke resistance. Sometimes they are led or supported by disenchanted or frustrated teachers; sometimes they are funded or provided with other resources by the local authorities themselves.

It must be admitted that the inspiration for some of these community activities owes a lot to radical gurus who preach seductive alternatives to schooling. Their ideology is very confused at present and threatens to widen, as well as narrow, the gap between their own activities and institutionalised education. But, as long as they concentrate on supplying, with varying degrees of success, what is deficient in the institutional pattern, they deserve study and support. The Urban Studies Centre, therefore, would hope to collaborate with many of them.

But why go to the East End of London? The East End was defiantly maintaining its position at the head of the league of twilight areas, an arid waste all but abandoned by the commercial democracy that once breathed a kind of life into it. Housing developments were dotted about like tall weeds; road improvements had been carried out on a vast scale with a callous disregard for the inhabitants. The threat to transform the Isle of Dogs into a northern Corfu and to line the banks of the Thames with a series of marinas did not seem an immediate one. The Hawksmoor churches, brave survivors of another world, still looked down disdainfully at the wretchedness surrounding them. There were fewer people but their character was even more mixed than it used to be. The prospects of employment were bleaker and the school refusal rate was higher than anywhere else. More than ever the area was seen as the ideal bait for urban rehabilitators, social engineers and community projectors. The latest comers would have to pick their way gingerly among the countless ruins of the efforts of their predecessors. In spite of all this, it was the area I knew better than any other and, even more important, my wife was familiar with much that was going on there: she had, for a number of years, been closely associated with many of the activities to which I have been referring.

The ways and means discussion began with the realisation that I had been much too optimistic in supposing that the College's existing grants could cover the expenses of the Centre. John Anderson was advised that the Gulbenkian Foundation, with its fast growing reputation for an imaginative understanding of inner city problems, should be approached. The Foundation responded immediately with support generous enough to enable us to vindicate some of the claims we were making for our project.

Another important consideration was the attitude of the schools to students who would spend only half their time in the classroom and, what was worse, the other half working with the enemy beyond the walls. We thought their attitude would be more favourable if we undertook not merely to maintain the student presence throughout the school year but to accept responsibility for teaching a small part of the school curriculum; this group of students would be involved along with a tutor from the Centre and a member of the school staff. The leadership and support would continue although membership of the student group would necessarily change every three months as long as we were limited to courses lasting three months.

In the event all the schools approached, without for a moment committing themselves to an endorsement of our plans as a whole, were interested and co-operative. In 1972-3 the recruitment of teachers for these schools was still an acknowledged problem. The schools might well have felt, some actually said so, that our students, after prolonged exposure to the special conditions of the area, would be suitable recruits.

Indifference, rather than opposition, was anticipated from within the College itself. The Education Department, which had immediate responsibility for the students' professional preparation, raised no objection so long as the students only attended the Centre at times when they would be scheduled for school practice anyway. This concession would enable us to keep the Centre going from July to the following April, if

post-graduate students were included, but not from April to July. Thus, long before it began, we knew we should have to find students from outside the College itself and so broaden our foundations. The Academic Board was understandably eager to indulge the Principal-elect and without delay gave its conditional approval of our plans; it was also felt by some members to be a reasonable price to pay for an easing of the shortage of teaching practice places in South West England. Though its approval was conditional, the Board did not spell out any conditions. The Governing Body, never very closely involved in what actually went on in the College, made no objection. Everyone seemed satisfied that our activities would not have much effect on the real work of the College except for a tiny minority who suspected it might develop into a serious challenge to that work.

We needed the consent of a number of local authorities: the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), the Area Training Organization (ATO) and the Tower Hamlets Social Services Department. Only the ILEA was interested. Two meetings with senior officials sufficed to win their approval. They, more than anyone, except the community workers, understood what we were trying to do. They gave us a friendly warning not to allow our flirtation with the more dubious community activities to go too far and a hint that it might be possible to give us some financial assistance. Their warm encouragement continued throughout our first two years. The ATO, on the other hand, was completely uninterested and even reluctant to allow us the use of a few East London schools. Summoned to plead our case before the appropriate committee, it was the local authority representatives not the teacher trainers who supported our request. Some of the local authority representatives followed us from the meeting to invite us to extend our activities to their areas. Meanwhile the goodwill of the Social Services Department of Tower Hamlets had been secured from within.

The individual social service agencies and community projects with whom we hoped to work received our proposals with enthusiasm but also with caution. They were already fully stretched by their responsibility for training community workers without the additional burden of a share in teacher training. They were right to point out that, whatever we might say, some degree of responsibility for the development of students who worked with them would be theirs. Their insistence on this was a little ominous but it did not prevent any of them from promising to collaborate with us.

The accommodation of the students working at the Centre was solved almost miraculously. They must live in their working area otherwise they could have occupied one of the vacated hostels on the Chelsea site. Ideally they should live with families in the neighbourhood but such short-lived tenants (changing every three months) would soon create additional difficulties for the Centre.

The Centre would have no supporting services to relieve us of such difficulties. There was an equally strong objection to creating a mini-college which would serve to distract students from their life and work in the community. Then, out of the blue, a letter arrived from the East End Mission in the Commercial Road offering us accommodation in their hostel in return for our contribution to a number of social and educational activities the Mission was running at the time. Preliminary investigations suggested that this form of co-operation was compatible with our project and a bargain was struck. Subsequently we were never able to satisfy the Mission's demand for our services and, from time to time, there were to be accusations of bad faith.

Staffing the Centre was a formidable task. Six years of agonising uncertainty meant that my own colleagues were in no mood for quixotic adventures. For what had we to offer? Conditions of service in institutions of higher education were enviable at that time and were not to be exchanged lightly for a job with unsocial hours, irregular holidays and doubtful security. Most of the younger and more suitable ones had in any case settled for Plymouth; the rest, who were anxious to stay in London, feared they might end up in Plymouth anyway if the Centre folded up at the end of a year, as well it might. It was no easier to attract community workers on to our staff. Their

objections were of a quite different kind. Even when they displayed enthusiasm for the project itself they were suspicious of the College's reputation as the most orthodox and, from their point of view, most unenterprising of the London colleges of education.

They would co-operate with us as long as our activities seemed worthwhile but they would not throw in their lot with us. Eventually we secured the services not of a community worker but a case-worker with substantial experience of our area and some first-hand knowledge of inner city problems in the United States. From the College staff there emerged a most unexpected last minute volunteer. A senior member, a philosopher, who could not for family reasons go to Plymouth and who had begun to despair of another appropriate London area appointment. A man of considerable ability and great industry, he pleaded to be taken on. Although he had no real sympathy with the aims and methods of the project, we agreed to accept his offer to work with us for a year during which time we expected he would secure the sort of job he really wanted. In the event he stayed until December 1974. The other members of staff were part-time. One was the Director of the East End Mission; partly because of his many other commitments and partly because he had his own ideas of how the Centre should develop he proved difficult to programme. The other was an experienced primary teacher, well known to me personally, who was seconded by the ILEA for an indefinite period; he had also worked in community schools in California. I had to admit to myself that this oddly assorted team was likely to generate tensions among themselves and to exacerbate those already existing between school and community. Nor was it easy to find students willing to entrust themselves to the Centre for the first few months.

As has been said, the morale of the College was not high at this time and the lack of confidence in the College authorities was fully reflected in the tardy response to our campaign for recruits. Once again what we were offering seemed an austere alternative to the attractions of Plymouth and its delightful environment. It would mean, too, sacrificing opportunities for vacation employment (this was in 1973) in return for a tiny compensatory grant. The current mythology suggested that they would be submitting themselves to a disagreeable ordeal. Fortunately there were students who had good personal reasons for wanting to remain in London for as long as possible and a very few who were genuinely persuaded that the new course offered an exciting alternative to their experience of teacher training hitherto. My philosopher colleague worked on his own students with considerable success so that by the beginning of July, when our programme was due to start, we had just enough recruits to man the schools and community projects until the following January.

In July 1973 the students of the Centre entered a new world, a world about which they had been misled by the media and somewhat confused by their previous education studies. This world was inhabited by children and adolescents who seemed to the students to be more mature, self-reliant and independent than they themselves had ever been. The students encountered an unfamiliar social morality, which had positive characteristics, and a coherence, both of which were quite incompatible with the established social order with which they were familiar. They became aware of new attitudes to school, to the police, to parents, in an atmosphere of relaxation free from the elements of aggression and confrontation which would have been present in the school situation. Most of the students absorbed these experiences, grappled with them and, splendidly supported by the community workers, embarked bravely on the task of reconciling them with the exercise of their traditional role as teachers. One or two rejected the experience altogether, remained blinkered throughout, and then retreated to realms where the established order of things unequivocally held sway. The majority was soon pre-occupied with the question of how school could play a more constructive part in the lives of these youngsters; how they themselves would need to modify their attitudes and behaviour. The assimilation of these experiences soon became a way of life but the prospect of teaching these same youngsters in school in September, at the beginning of what was to be their final qualifying practice, became not so much exciting as daunting. Our hopes for the Centre were being dangerously fulfilled.

I did not expect progress through our first year to be smooth and, in retrospect, I would say this was just as well. We were soon beset by domestic difficulties. Our students had highly individualised programmes; they seldom fitted in with the somewhat inflexible routines of the Mission which, in relation to its own students, was as institutionalised as any college of education. As early as August there began a gradual withdrawal from the life of the Mission and a home of our own became an urgent requirement. As the gap between the Mission's view of our function and our own developed, it became necessary to establish a separate identity, clearly recognisable by all concerned. This would be easily achievable if we could transfer our headquarters to another location. There was no question of reverting to our plan of boarding the students with East London residents. Very early on we learned that the students wanted to be, and needed to be, in close contact to provide the mutual support which they felt to be an essential ingredient of their success. Though the search for a new home began then it was not completed in my time.

In less than six months the Centre was facing a much more serious challenge to our efforts to reconcile the educational experiences both in school and in the neighbourhood beyond. Predictably the students, who were teachers in the making, felt strongly that, where there was a conflict of loyalties, their work in school must have priority over their work outside. They found it hard at times to avoid total immersion in their school activities. The community workers resented and resisted this. Indeed, they had invested more thought and energy in our course than had the schools: their claims on the students' time should therefore be met in full. Their case was unanswerable. Nevertheless, the students were facing a final examination in teaching which would grade them and give them a market value. The schools, with exceptions, inclined to the students' view. Schools and community agencies both came forward with the unacceptable solution to the problem. Why not make the work inside and outside school consecutive instead of concurrent? The community workers wanted to go a step further by asserting that the course was in any case too short to achieve the agreed aims.

John Anderson and I agreed to resist these counter-proposals to the last ditch. We urged that if the Centre took the easy way out of an acknowledged difficulty, the impact of the two forms of educational experience on the students would be dangerously reduced. All concerned would be tempted to regard them as completely distinct activities, not necessarily related to one another. The students would operate their two roles quite separately and would soon cease to be aware of any need for a common language. Slowly, very slowly, for not all our colleagues on the staff of the Centre were convinced, John Anderson's and my view prevailed.

This controversy about the shape of the course had one beneficial result. This was the decision to strengthen the links between the Centre and the community projects in which we were involved. We could help to fund these projects in return for the supervision of the students by the community workers who worked with them. This would amount to a formal recognition of what they were doing anyway. Henceforth the community workers would be regarded as associate members of the Centre's staff and would, it was hoped, so regard themselves. The Gulbenkian Foundation raised no objection to this modified use of their grant. We dispensed with the services of our full-time case-worker who had only accepted the appointment for one year. The Centre benefited enormously from this change which made co-operation smooth as well as wholehearted.

We learned another lesson when the first graduate course was in progress. It was uncomfortably apparent that these students were totally unprepared for the experiences awaiting them at the Centre. They anticipated a normal school practice but in an inner city school and some were seriously disconcerted by what they were expected to do. Obviously there was need to ensure that all who came to the Centre were in a better state of readiness. So we planned an introductory course, with the enthusiastic collaboration of a small group of the Plymouth staff, for students proposing to come to the

Centre; it was agreed that, in addition to tutors from the Centre and from Plymouth, a liaison officer should be appointed who would maintain communication between East London and Plymouth and so facilitate the organisation at the Plymouth end of the Centre's work. Later, when a second Urban Studies programme was started in Plymouth, the Liaison Officer would foster interaction between the two Centres for their mutual benefit. The fruits of this last step did not ripen in my time.

The College in Plymouth was never able to provide enough students to sustain the activities of the Centre for a whole year. The course remained strictly voluntary and no machinery to aid recruitment was developed; the introductory course preached to the converted. Moreover considerable opposition to the Centre as an unprofitable distraction grew up as the College settled in its new home and began to assume a regional character in place of its traditional metropolitan or national character.

The activities in London became very remote. We were saved by the students themselves who, almost unaided, ensured that they would have successors and that the work in London would go on. But even they could not provide recruits for the whole year. The gap between April and July would always have to be filled from elsewhere. For a while a sympathetic London college, Whitelands, came to our rescue. Their help was supplemented by a Derbyshire college, Matlock, whose Principal had long been thinking along similar lines to ours. There was, too, a promise from one university that was not to be redeemed for some time. As we entered the second year of life, the task of convincing our contemporaries that all students who intended to teach should take an Urban Studies Course was not making lightning progress.

This brings me to the question of public relations. The Centre has been criticised for keeping too low a profile; for putting too few of its cards on the table. We should have announced more boldly and more specifically our aims and our hopes. But we could not put cards on the table which we did not yet hold in our hands. Nor should we have been welcome if we had announced, in advance, solutions for the problems which, in the same breath, we said we had come to study.

We hoped to be judged, in the words of the late G M Young, by the difference we made rather than by the noises we made. We certainly had no wish to be identified with any educational, political or religious lobby, with any reformist or pseudo-revolutionary rostrum. The boldest claim we were prepared to make at the time was that, by offering first-hand acquaintance with conditions most student teachers would eventually meet, we could improve the quality of their apprenticeship. Our starting point should be a respectful curiosity about what was happening both inside and outside the schools in our area. I suspect that had we hinted that we thought we had solutions to the problems of the teachers and community workers who collaborated with us, our bluff would have been called and we should all have been back in Plymouth in a few weeks.

Although we did not cover the hoardings in Tower Hamlets with our manifesto we did not remain entirely mute. We approached numerous colleges with a clear statement of our purpose and an invitation to join us before ever we started work. As soon as we had anything to report we bombarded every government agency in any way connected with the inner city with an account of our activities. Although there was a change of government during this period, the only response we ever got from either side was a formal acknowledgement of our communication. We had a taste of success; the educational press surveyed our first year very sympathetically in a two page feature. In 1974 I was invited by the Inner London Education Authority to give the keynote address to the Conference of London Comprehensive School headteachers. As a result of this I was convinced that the Authority's proclamation in favour of 'community education' was issued with a political rather than a professional blessing. Other invitations were received to speak at conferences in Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds and all were accepted. Four conferences were arranged especially to consider the merits of our project. By the end of my term of office I was much better pleased by the attention we were receiving than by the support we were getting.

If we did not court publicity neither did we evade criticism. At the meetings of our Development Council, students on the receiving end jostled senior officers responsible for the administration of London schools, farouche and insatiable community workers jostled our bland and remote cousins from Plymouth (who nevertheless had made the journey especially); teachers and curious visitors from other London colleges were present; John Anderson never failed to take the chair. The meetings were lively, critical, sometimes explosive and always encouraging. It was to them that I looked for signs of progress, for hints of danger, for future possibilities. It was the Development Council which nourished the Centre (although the diet prescribed was not always appetising).

In the past, few writers have been more effective than Montaigne in discouraging educational complacency. His gentle scepticism once prompted this observation, in Cicero's rather than his own words: 'The chief obstacle in the path of anyone who wants to learn is the teacher'. In the inner city schools (or many of them) this observation can no longer be dismissed as a mischievous provocation; it has become a prophetic warning. The Urban Studies Centre endeavours to heed this warning. But it cannot stop here. For the overwhelming majority of youngsters in this country, schooling takes place in an urban setting and the experience offered by such a Centre should be incorporated (in the form of a sandwich course) in the training programme of students who are preparing to become teachers. Alternatively, in the absence of any response to the recommendations of the James Report, it could become a model for the young teacher's probationary year. But these developments are the subject matter of other chapters of this book. After two years I handed the Centre over to a younger and more vigorous mind. My wife and I, a little shame-facedly, abandoned Spitalfields and Shadwell for the Wiltshire Downs. Here, almost the first thing we noticed was that much more care and attention are given to the horses in our village than were given to many of the children we had left behind in East London.

2 John Anderson

Principal of the College of St Mark and St John.
The College moved from London to Plymouth in 1973.

On the face of it the project was a very simple and obvious development in teacher training, designed to give teachers a better understanding of the lives their pupils live outside the classroom. My own views of the need for such first-hand practical experience hark back to a university course which included such practical involvement,* teaching in Birmingham and later the opportunity to see the development of community self-help in Kenya. To arrive at St Mark and St John and talk with Frank Coles was to put this firmly into the perspective of contemporary teacher education in Britain. Frank has exceptional knowledge of and sympathy for schools of inner city London. For years he had tried to hold the tiller while he saw teacher education in general and the work at St Mark and St John in particular, veer towards the academicism which followed the McNair Report and away from the urgent needs of contemporary urban society.

Our ideas gelled quickly. Indeed, as Frank has explained, the concept, and the commitment to go ahead, were put together in an 'inspired' half-an-hour in his office. Such conversations take place very often, but in this case we had a practical base to work from. The College had contacts in East London which Frank had carefully developed over the years. He was prepared to become Director of the Centre and was backed firmly by his wife, Vera, who at that time was a community worker in Tower Hamlets. Frank has explained much of the history and it must be clear how much it owes to his remarkable talents and foresight.

Next there was the question of fitting the innovation into the course structure. To some extent faith in the old regime with its heavy academic emphasis had begun to crack, for the College itself had become the victim of the pressures of urban life. The Centre offered us a chance to respond and to look again at teacher education in the inner cities where, at that time, teachers were so urgently needed. It is ironic that the very fact that the College was moving emphasised this point; suddenly the value of being able to offer students experience both in East London and the South West became very clear.

Relationships with the main College inevitably involved the questions of communication and resources. It was necessary to give the Centre as much freedom of action as possible for, from the start, it was important to experiment to find the best way to meet the demands of trying to work with a wide range of agencies; to keep their confidence and yet give the right level of support to students. Of course, in a small unit, both staff and students are required to accept quite exceptional demands upon time and energy. Commitment and continuity are vital; given the problems of health, staff turnover and cutbacks in teacher education, it has been quite a balancing act to maintain even the necessary minimum.

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* The BSocSci Course (Social Studies) at Birmingham University in 1954 included, as a compulsory part of the course, practical experience in industry during the first vacation, one evening a week placement in youth work during the first year of the course, one term secondment to a Social Services Department during the second year, one secondment to a residential institution during the second vacation. Practical work was built into the course which was pioneered by Dr Winifred Cavanagh and Mrs Barbara Shenfield.

Naturally, the principle was established that the Centre should be part of the community in which it was based. It was the staff and students who had come to the East End to learn. Thus they should respect the help they were being given by making a commitment to both projects and schools. This policy posed considerable difficulties for the College as a whole, particularly in terms of resources and course structures. Whilst we have not maintained the ideal, the importance of trying has been made clear by local residents in their willingness to accept and support placements. Initially students worked mostly with the statutory social service agencies and the established voluntary bodies, but, over time, contacts have been made with a number of the growing indigenous community projects – tenants' associations, playgroups, adventure playgrounds.

Students are now placed across a very interesting spectrum of urban life enabling them to build up a range of contacts and knowledge which, when shared and discussed, offer exceptional insight into the realities of life in the less privileged areas of our society. On the one hand it gives first-hand experience of the declining quality of inner city life, cramped housing conditions, poor employment prospects, the run-down nature of amenities and services and, in consequence, the suspicion with which many people quite reasonably view the public services. On the other it involves students in the various reactions to this decline, both official and unofficial. Areas such as the East End have long demonstrated the social pollution which industrial society has created and the many attempts to prescribe for this. Broadly speaking, there are three interacting layers. First, the voluntary initiatives of the nineteenth century: the Church, the charities and the self-helpers. Second, the growth of statutory provision which expanded so rapidly in the post-war period. Third, the early signs now of more powerful community action, protests and pressure groups. Schools reflect this pattern: the older Church foundations and the historical range of local authority provision are now paralleled by new ventures in alternative education arising both from local authority, and voluntary community, focused initiatives.

Schools have become increasingly caught up in the tensions of declining inner city life. They offer children a traditional escape route, and yet, against the general breakdown of amenities and the changing pattern of values, they are still expected to educate those left behind to be good workers and citizens. In such areas teachers take the strain for a social system that espouses justice but, as yet, has neither the wherewithal nor political will to put it fully into practice. The comprehensive school rhetoric offers each pupil an education to fulfil his potential and to prepare him to take his place in society. In practice, comprehensive school teachers have to sort pupils into different academic pathways related to formal examinations which very clearly define chances in later life. Pupils and their parents know what is happening and many, quite rationally, see school as a confidence trick because, whatever teachers may say, school for them leads almost inevitably to dead-end jobs, or currently to unemployment, with the poverty, drudgery and frustration that these entail. When schools are criticised for the backwash of frustration this system creates – as in the 'Great Debate' – it is only too easy for both sides to make teachers into scapegoats. As pressure mounts for greater accountability in a divided and uncertain society, teachers are left more and more exposed.

Two polarised patterns of response are now appearing. One is to withdraw – to drop the longstanding concerns about children's welfare and health, which is now, theoretically, the responsibility of other agencies; to reduce extra-curricular activities and to focus upon the purely educational needs of 'those who want to learn', and thus to narrow professional obligations. The other is to enlarge the scope of the teacher by investigating how schools can serve their catchment areas better. Central to this is the simple idea of bringing schools and the communities together so that teachers, community residents and parents can understand and appreciate each other's point of view.

It is this second approach to which the Urban Studies Centre is committed. But the very idea of such a commitment raises important questions. The implications of community action have begun to create a highly charged atmosphere in inner city areas

not only affecting residents but also politically minded observers, both those concerned about possible disruptive effects and those who see it obscuring the underlying causes of poverty and inequality. Teachers, and teacher trainees, need to be sensitive to this in terms of immediate pressures as well as long-term implications. To what extent should teachers in training spend valuable practical time outside classrooms? How useful is such experience in the more normal school situations? As a 'professional', just how far can or should one go in trying to understand the world of one's 'clients'? What are the implications for the teaching profession as a whole or indeed professions in general?

In one respect the experience at the Urban Studies Centre offers to students, many of whom come from middle class backgrounds, the opportunity to see and appreciate another type of life. This may challenge their suppositions, but gives them the opportunity to make friends across the barriers of suspicion and misunderstanding which so hinder social cohesion in our society. As one helper at the Centre put it: 'What really upsets me is the potential wastage. I see this in all the children I have under my wing. If only the strengths of East End kids could be understood'. In another respect, it takes teacher training to the frontier of the most difficult practical problems which teachers face. In a society increasingly prepared to question 'officialdom' and 'management', teachers can rely less and less upon the old conventions about pupils simply doing what they are told. They have to be able to talk freely with, and gain the confidence of, pupils and their parents as well.

This confrontation between teachers and the local community highlights the effects of poverty, ignorance and disillusion. These symptoms are found in other places as well, most significantly perhaps on big, anonymous housing estates. The extent to which particular schools are affected and teachers are involved differs markedly, but it is fair to say that nearly every school faces the problem of pupils and parents who seem to reject what schools are all about. This occurs predominantly in the marginal and non-examination streams and becomes more acute where the school's catchment area is increasingly under-privileged. Despite all the past hopes for education, a mutual suspicion remains, making heavy demands upon teachers, not just upon their skills, but upon their capacity to empathise and upon their emotional commitment as well. Sadly this rejection by the community is almost certainly on the increase, particularly in the face of such problems as growing unemployment, racial inequality and intolerance, and cuts in public expenditure.

Working together, teachers, pupils and parents can do much to improve the facilities and provision which schools offer, not just to their pupils but to the neighbouring community as well. In many forms this is now happening, from the self-help efforts of Parent/Teacher Associations (PTAs) to attempts to establish 'community schools'. Given sufficient support by local authorities, trade unions and professional bodies, these developments offer new and positive dimensions for schools and teachers.

Reactions to the Centre at the main College have been somewhat incidental to a preoccupation with the new establishment and re-organisation to meet cutbacks. Although we did not realise this at the time, it has given the College a continuing opportunity to participate in active experimentation which would otherwise not have been possible during the settling-in period in a new environment.

The College has been through the validation mixer more than most. First the replanning of degrees at London, then changing to Exeter just in time to plan again, and now, for most courses, working with the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). This has left little time for reflection and kept us continually alert to the emphasis on academic conventions and disciplinary concerns which universities and CNAA panels tend to have.

The Centre exists to provide *practical* experience of the day-to-day problems teachers have to face. Tension is created by the need to satisfy the external demand for *academic* 'respectability'. Naturally, tutors' reactions to the Centre reflect this tension. Active

support is counterbalanced by a tacit scepticism often conveyed to students when there are clashes in timetables or resource allocations. In professional terms, there have been the inevitable concerns about supervision at a distance, the problems of materials for teaching practice, the loss of classroom time in school. But, amongst those who have first-hand experience of the scheme, there is growing acceptance of the value to professional understanding, although more tensions arise if the close planning needed goes wrong. In educational studies the Centre aims to help students use, and think about, their experience as openly as possible, but the issues involved raise sensitive ideological and methodological questions which are not easily covered to everyone's satisfaction. It is arguable, for instance, that practical involvement in inner city life may do more to create stereotypes and reinforce deficit theories than give personal meaning to valid social scientific analysis. Since the early days of Floud and Halsey the hope for equity, if not equality, of education provision, and eventually outcome, has figured large in the theoretical aspect of teacher education.

The experience offered at the Urban Studies Centre aims to complement this, giving students a feeling for what is happening, as well as a set of statistics, and to help them visualise the changing context in which the present school system has been shaped, and the forces that work upon it.

There is now a need to stabilise the Centre and find ways to build on achievements. Problems of finance loom large. The College Council of Management has offered considerable support and this is now being followed by the DES and the Church Board of Education. In the end, however, dissemination and further experimentation, not just the growth of one centre, will demonstrate the extent of its impact. A number of other colleges and university departments have used the Centre and some are now contemplating schemes of their own; we ourselves have begun the experiment in the South West.

The early developments have taught us new lessons, not least that the poorer housing estates and dockland areas of Plymouth, and towns like Redruth, suffer from a dearth of resources and have nothing like the level of voluntary action or Social Service provision there is in the East End of London. There are village communities struggling for survival; these lie beneath the veneer of prosperity often associated with the South West. Community consciousness is there but, as yet, tends to remain dormant despite the obvious lack of amenities. The pattern of activities is thus more limited but, in West Devon, the Social Services have made a dramatic impact in recent years and there is increasing interest in community work by the police. We are trying to relate the experience of our students to this pattern. Valuable co-operation has been built with the other agencies; we have been able to contribute to inter-professional understanding leading to a recognition among the agents of welfare and order, as well as voluntary bodies, of our mutual interest in the potential of community experience.

All this implies the need for a critique, certainly of teacher training, and perhaps of the training for other professions. There is a need to find a new balance of theory and experience which will better meet the growing demands of the job. To some extent we have tried to respond but we have moved very tentatively. In doing so, perhaps we demonstrate, not only our own caution, but that of a profession caught by the need to achieve status in conventional academic terms on the one hand and, on the other, by the need to redesign its practical understanding and skills as they become stretched across a society increasingly conscious of social and economic divisions.

As yet, many teachers and lecturers do not see the need for change, or else believe that it is only necessary at the margin. Thus experimental training programmes need to be developed cautiously and sensitively. The Urban Studies Centre is one simple attempt amongst a growing number of experiments now being developed both in colleges and schools. As yet it raises problems rather than providing solutions. Does its voluntary basis make it self-selecting? To what extent can it affect the curriculum schools offer? Is there sufficient agreement, even amongst its own staff and supporters, about its

purposes and possible future developments? What are the underlying ideological complications?

Quoting from J Kay-Shuttleworth, the founding Principal of St John's College, Frank Coles makes it clear that the Urban Studies Centre is not a new idea. In Shuttleworth's terms, however, it had the prescriptive confidence of the past. The other founding Principal (of St Mark's), Derwent Coleridge, took a different view. He recognised the largely urban working-class background from which many pupil-teachers came at that time and sought to offer them an academic education to enable them to think critically, and respond effectively, to change.

Times, and the background of students, have changed but the task of relating theory to practice in order to create an open and sensitive concern for pupils and parents still remains the central task for teacher training. The Urban Studies Centre offers one more approach to be explored in achieving a better balance and, thus, better equipped teachers for today's society.

3 Roger Tingle

Director of the Urban Studies Centre,* College of St Mark and St John, since 1975.

Courses for students at the Urban Studies Centre are designed to provide first-hand practical experience through a concurrent placement in a school and a non-school setting. The ratio of work is generally equivalent to three days teaching practice in school and two days on an alternative placement during each working week. Inevitably this kind of concurrent programme creates tensions and uncertainties for students which extend far beyond the initial problems of organising a split timetable. It is the responsibility of the staff at the Centre not to minimise the extent of these tensions, which reflect the nature of the relationship between school and community as it exists. They should assist students to understand their experiences more fully in order that they may be better able to perceive how this relationship can be improved. All teacher training students on the basic sandwich course spend three months at the Centre. The original pattern consisted of four consecutive sessions of three months each: July to October; October to January; January to April; April to July. This programme has proved difficult to sustain and has been modified from time to time. The overall course pattern has drawn students on a voluntary basis not only from our own College of St Mark and St John but from five other institutions engaged in teacher training. Links have also been developed with certain social work courses.

For most students the East End provides an experience which is quite different from their own home, school or college background. The majority come from small towns, semi-rural or suburban environments and, not surprisingly, Tower Hamlets can prove to be something of a culture shock.

At the heart of this experience, then, are a group of young people living and working together in unfamiliar surroundings, who are gradually coming towards a deeper understanding of themselves as individuals and of the institutions or organisations of which they are temporarily a part. On the basic three-month course no formal assignments are required, other than keeping a written record, and the student group meets regularly to discuss issues arising from their experiences. The Centre itself, however, is not a static institution but a focus for the ever-changing relationships between the staff, the students and the people who live and work in the East End of London. Its position is unique; it touches many worlds – higher education, schools, alternative education, young children and their families, the voluntary and statutory agencies, community groups – but it belongs exclusively to none.

The day-to-day management of the Centre is in the hands of the Director who has to report to at least three groups. The first is the College's Academic Board and there is, for this purpose, a liaison officer within the College who can report on behalf of the Centre. Secondly, the Director has to report to the Council of Management of the College and this he does through the Principal. Thirdly, he has to give an account of the work of the Centre to the University of Exeter in the assessment of students, this is done through the Chief External Examiner appointed by the University. In 1973/4 a Development Council was established with the Principal of the College, the staff of the Centre and representatives of teachers, community workers and local residents. It was the College's original intention that the Centre should have four full-time members of staff in order that the work should continue for 52 weeks of the year. This figure has always been difficult to achieve but, with other institutions continuing to use the Centre on a 'buy in' basis and with continuing support from the DES, it is possible for

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* The address of the Urban Studies Centre is Frank Coles House, 75 Morpeth Street, Bethnal Green, London E2. Telephone: (01) 980 3457.

this to be done. The Inner London Education Authority and the London Borough of Newham have each seconded one of their teachers to the Centre for 1979/80 and this has enabled us to increase the number of school placements. Outside supervisors are called in from time to time to assist with school-based placements and we have recently begun to operate a teacher-tutor scheme in some of the Tower Hamlets secondary schools in collaboration with local teachers. As the administrative work-load has increased it has been necessary to employ full-time secretarial help and we are rapidly approaching the point where we shall need to consider carefully the staffing implications of developing inter-professional courses.

The following report of the year 1978-9 gives a picture of the activities of the Centre:

The students

By June 1979 six sandwich courses for teacher training students had been completed during the academic year. The first courses, which began at the end of July 1978, were completed satisfactorily by 17 third year BEd students from St Mark and St John's (SSMJ) and four third year BEd students from St Martin's College, Lancaster. Two BEd students from SSMJ failed to complete the course satisfactorily and two BEd students from St Martin's College withdrew before completion and were given a deferred teaching practice. Between January and June 1979 a total of 28 students will have completed courses: 11 post-graduates from SSMJ; five post-graduates from St Martin's College; six second year BEd students from SSMJ; three second year Certificate students from Matlock College, Derbyshire and three post-graduate students from Sussex University. In addition five students from the Social Work Course at Plymouth Polytechnic have been in attendance and we have maintained our links with the Polytechnic of North London's School of Town Planning who have sent five students to do fieldwork in the area. Altogether 68 students have been in attendance over the year.

The schools

The following schools have taken part in the activities of the Centre:

Robert Montefiore Junior, Spitalfields
Prior Weston Primary, Finsbury
Culloden Primary, Poplar
St Luke's Primary, Isle of Dogs
Caley Junior School, Stepney
Manorfield Junior School, Poplar
Harry Gosling Junior School, Whitechapel
Mayflower Junior School, Poplar
Robert Montefiore Secondary, Spitalfields
Tower Hamlets Girls' School, Stepney
Central Foundation Girls' School, Bow
Raine's Foundation School, Bow
Stepney Green Boys' School, Stepney
Sir John Cass Foundation, Stepney
George Green's School, Isle of Dogs
Morpeth School, Bethnal Green
Greenwich Park School
Brampton Manor School, Newham
Langdon School, Newham
Langdon Park School, Poplar

The community

The following agencies and community groups have participated in the scheme this year:

a) Community based projects

Spitalfields Urban Farm
Coventry Cross Estate, Bow
Teviot Estate Committee's Activities, Poplar
Globe Town Community Association, Bethnal Green
Island Resource Centre and Mudchute Farm, Isle of Dogs
Kingsbridge Tenants' Association, Isle of Dogs
Aberfeldy Tenants' Association, Poplar

b) Youth centres and other activities

Brampton Youth Centre, Newham
St Paul's with St Stephen's Youth Club, Bethnal Green
Vallence Road Youth Club, Spitalfields
Shadwell Basin
The Gateway Club, Spitalfields

c) Education projects

Intermediate Education Centre at the Basement
Christchurch Gardens Education Project
Intermediate Education Centre at Bethnal Green
Sanctuary Unit at Langdon Park School
Poplar Intermediate Education Centre
Greenwich Park Withdrawl Unit
Newham Parents' Centre

d) Adventure playgrounds

Glamis Road Adventure Playground, Shadwell

e) Others

Avenues Unlimited, Spitalfields
Tower Hamlets Women's Aid Centre
Tower Hamlets Arts Project
Newham Playscheme Association

Whilst there has been a gradual shift in emphasis away from work with agency inspired and supported projects and towards closer collaboration with the activities of local neighbourhood groups, the character of the students non-school placements has varied tremendously. Throughout the year the Centre has been able to:

- provide an all-the-year round supplementary service in an urban area linking the activities of the schools with the life of the neighbourhood and with other social activities and institutions;
- provide support for 'grass roots' activities and make modest financial contribution to community development in the area;
- create jobs for local people involved with community development.

Frank Coles House

It was in 1977 that I found a building in the Globe Town area of Bethnal Green which would serve as a home of our own. The property was a former vicarage, built in 1850 and situated next to a newly formed community association which had a membership of 800 local people. Since purchase, we have over the past 12 months restored and renovated the property to provide accommodation for 12-14 students, two offices and a common room/resource room in the basement. The work has been very competently undertaken by Community Industry – a government scheme for 16-19 year old, unemployed school leavers. In the next door community association we have the option

on a flat for six people which gives us a total capacity on site of 18-20 places. The Council of Management of the College have agreed to call the building 'Frank Coles House' in recognition of the first Director's achievement in establishing the project in 1972/3. We have the exciting prospect of developing, with this association, a community/ education resource which could be of mutual benefit to the students and local people alike.

The staff and their activities

At the beginning of the year there were three full-time members of staff employed at the Centre, including a community worker, whose salary was supported mainly by other institutions who continued to place students on a 'buy in' basis. In September David Green (a senior lecturer who had been on leave for a year) returned to the team and we were maintaining secretarial assistance for 35 hours a week. The community projects themselves took a measure of responsibility for student supervision but no Gulbenkian Foundation funds were available for this purpose. However for the first time since 1974/5 we were able to field a full team of four members of staff which we now know is necessary if the Centre is to operate a year-round programme and to develop the courses offered. The emphasis of the work in the recent past had been almost entirely upon survival and 'systems' maintenance. Now we were able to examine more closely the nature of the link which had been sustained between the Centre, the schools, and the community; between the Centre and other institutions and between the Centre and the main College courses. Jean Anderson agreed to act as the College's liaison officer for the year. Although the move from the East End Mission to Frank Coles House in Bethnal Green, which took place during the summer, absorbed much of our energies we have been able to look more critically at the work in progress and plan for the future.

The relationship between the Centre and main College courses

This was the first time we were able to offer students the opportunity to visit the Centre during the summer term prior to their final practice. It proved most valuable for the group – particularly for those who had never been to London before. We believe it essential to maintain this arrangement. It should be easier and cheaper to arrange now that we have our own premises and a College mini-bus. In the spring of 1979, also for the first time, a selected group of second year BEd students undertook an Urban Studies course. Although certain problems arose which we discussed at some length, the overall impression we formed of the students' contribution to school and community work is a positive one. We were even able, eventually, to persuade some local education authorities (LEAs) to recognise this course for the purpose of granting a London Allowance and to recommend that it now becomes a regular option for second year students. The course is an ideal introduction to a final teaching practice in London and was viewed as just that by the participants – they all wish to return next year.

Of the 25 students who attended between July and December 1978, two were able to live and work in the area for almost the whole of that period of time – a total of about 22 weeks. It is difficult to over-estimate the advantage this experience has for the student teacher. It is of vital importance to recognise that, for students and staff alike engaged in a realistic inner city training programme, there must be long periods when they are able to immerse themselves, not only in the day-to-day problems of the schools, but also in the largely uncharted depths of local community activities and the educational infrastructure of adventure playgrounds, youth clubs and truancy provision, where the real lives of the children and young people can best be touched and understood. Unfortunately it is precisely at those times when the formal processes of education close down (in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays) when the life of the neighbourhood is most accessible.

The consequences of this have been disastrous. As the community life of families living in these urban areas have been systematically undermined, and finally all but destroyed,

by successive social, economic and political factors since 1944, little first-hand knowledge of this has filtered through to the school teacher. The gaps which always existed between the values and attitudes of these families and the values and attitudes held by the schools have widened and deepened. Whilst it is still possible to assume a degree of coherence between the values of the institution and the values which the pupils bring with them from their own backgrounds at a suburban comprehensive school, we make such assumptions about schools in the inner city at our peril. Faced with the problems of growing truancy, disruptive behaviour, general dissatisfaction and underachievement, the teachers have turned desperately to re-examine their traditional stock-in-trade: the curriculum, classroom management techniques and discipline, and the structure of the school day. All these are important areas for consideration but they are not fundamental to the problems which beset the schools. For no amount of internal adjustments to the mechanics of the schooling process are likely to make a significant difference at this point. What is needed is a fundamental reappraisal of what it means to be a professional in the field of education at a time when the fierce moral sanctions which once buttressed academic studies and the social codes of behaviour which held urban communities together, have been eroded. This reappraisal must begin by examining the relationship between school and the community.

We will therefore continue to try to extend the length of the courses offered in any way we can. To this end I have recently had discussions with the ILEA Youth Office who have agreed to make available funds from their summer playscheme allocation which can be used by the Urban Studies Centre for the purpose of providing a 'maintenance grant' for students who might wish to undertake a 22 week course. These funds can be supplemented by summer lettings at the Centre to provide an additional grant for a group of six students during the month of August. We hope that we can repeat this successful experience for a group this summer (1979). We shall continue to offer courses to the BEd students which run from July-October and from September-December as in the past.

For the post-graduate students we would hope to explore the possibility of certain selected individuals from both SSMJ and St Martin's College completing their Graduate Certificate at the Centre during the summer term. We feel that this could be of particular benefit to students who have applied for or who have received offers of jobs from the ILEA or one of the outer London boroughs and seek the School of Education's agreement to open discussions with the staff of the Post-Graduate Course on this matter. Both SSMJ and St Martin's College have in part considered this proposal feasible as a one-off venture and we have experience of four groups of students from the graduate course at Sussex University completing their assessments here since 1976.

Relations with other institutions and agencies

It is appropriate to mention our relations with other institutions and agencies involved in teacher education and in the inner city. Contact has been maintained throughout the year with the Faculty of Educational Studies at The Open University. In September the Centre hosted a planning meeting for the CED (Centre for Educational Disadvantage) (DES) whose Deputy Director, Roger Watkins, had responded to the suggestion that CED organise a conference on the preparation for teaching in urban areas. The conference took place at Stoke Rochford Hall in November and was attended by three members of staff from SSMJ and the Principal. The Centre submitted a paper on the conference theme and proposed that a working party be established which would consider, amongst other issues, the Secretary of State's proposal to foster the

> '... growth of a network of centres of scholarship and professional expertise within the reorganised teacher training system ... some of which might make their special contribution in areas of concern to teachers generally, such as the problems of inner city schools or children suffering deprivation or education for life in a multi-cultural society.'

This idea was accepted and a working party met for the first time in January. We look forward to the positive implementation of some ideas from this meeting.

In addition to visitors from Plymouth, we have received visits from the Principal of St Martin's College, Lancaster and five members of his staff, the Principal of Christ Church College, Canterbury and the Director of the Post-Graduate Course at Sussex University. We have tried to keep the activities of the Centre in the public eye at a local level and have regularly invited outside visitors to our course meetings. These have included: Colin Ward, Education Officer of the Town and Country Planning Association; Henderson Clark, Director of the ILEA Whole School Project in Lambeth; James Learmonth, Principal George Green's School; Ted Johns from the Island Resource Centre; Terry Buckland from Glamis Road Adventure Playground and many others.

Conclusion

This report is submitted in the belief that six years' work have fully justified the decision of the College to establish the Centre in a home of its own. Although, as Frank Coles has remarked somewhat wryly, 'the task of convincing your contemporaries that all students who intend to teach should take an Urban Studies Course, or one like it, has not made lightning progress'. Disappointing though this may be, it is hardly surprising in view of the Centre's development against a backcloth of national reorganisation and the emergence of what *The Times Higher Education Supplement* has described as the 'smell of decay' in the professional education of teachers.

It is our hope that the immediate future will see students at the Centre who are engaged in other areas of training social workers, community workers, youth workers, town planners and so on. We are beginning to build links with other institutions in an attempt to develop a unified approach from the different professions concerned with the problems of urban areas. Discussions are also under way with the Inner London Education Authority which could link the Centre to a part-time Diploma in Urban Education for teachers in local schools. In the longer term I would hope that those of our colleagues in other institutions engaged, or interested, in the professional education of teachers (and others) for work in urban areas, might consider establishing a national network of centres along the lines proposed by the previous Secretary of State. Various strategies need to be examined, existing models and course structures need to be reviewed, interested parties identified, private foundations and central and local government approached. We already have close links with other Colleges out of which a permanent partnership might come. As part of the original brief from the Gulbenkian Foundation it was intended that we should try to advance a more general understanding of the principles and practices of the Urban Studies Centre if they appeared successful. Six years' experience suggests that this is no longer just desirable, it is a priority.

Course patterns over the past years have varied according to the number of students willing to undertake the experience and the constraints imposed by courses at the parent institutions. The pattern from 1973 to 1978 looked like this:

1973/4

Course 1	13 weeks Total student numbers 21 July to October 3rd year SSMJ BEd/Cert Ed
Course 2	13 weeks Total student numbers 19 October to January 3rd year SSMJ BEd/Cert Ed/Post-Grad Cert Ed (PGCE)
Course 3	13 weeks Total student numbers 13 January to April SSMJ PGCE

Course 4	13 weeks Total student numbers 18 April to July Whitelands BEd SSMJ BEd

A total of 72 students attended courses that year

1974/5

Course 1	13 weeks Total student numbers 18 July to October 3rd year SSMJ BEd/Cert Ed
Course 2	13 weeks Total student numbers 18 October to January 3rd year SSMJ BEd/Cert Ed
Course 3	13 weeks Total student numbers 20 January to April SSMJ PGCE
Course 4	13 weeks Total student numbers 17 April to July Whitelands BEd SSMJ PGCE 2nd year Cert Ed Matlock College

A total of 73 students attended courses that year, four SSMJ Post-Graduates completed their PGCE in London

1975/6

Course 1	13 weeks Total student numbers 19 July to October 3rd year SSMJ BEd/Cert Ed
Course 2	13 weeks Total student numbers 22 October to January 3rd year BEd/Cert Ed SSMJ and Whitelands
Course 3	13 weeks Total student numbers 29 January to April PGCE SSMJ 2nd year Matlock College Cert Ed
Course 4	13 weeks Total student numbers 20 April to July PGCE SSMJ and Sussex University 3rd year BEd Whitelands College

A total of 90 students attended courses this year, three SSMJ Post-Graduates completed their PGCE in London

1976/7

Course 1	13 weeks Total number of students 24 July to October 3rd year BEd/Cert Ed SSMJ and Bede Hild College
Course 2	1 year Total student numbers 6 A year long PGCE Course SSMJ
Course 3	13 weeks Total student numbers 19 October to January 3rd year BEd/Cert Ed SSMJ
Course 4	13 weeks Total student numbers 30 January to April PGCE SSMJ and St Martin's College 2nd year Matlock College Cert Ed

Course 5	13 weeks Total student numbers 11 April to July PGCE Sussex University and 3rd year Whitelands BEd

There was a one year PGCE course based at the Urban Studies Centre for the whole year, a total of 90 students attended courses

1977/8

Course 1	13 weeks Total student numbers 10 July to October 3rd year BEd/Cert Ed SSMJ
Course 2	13 weeks Total student numbers 25 September to December 3rd year BEd/Cert Ed SSMJ 3rd year BEd St Martin's
Course 3	13 weeks Total student numbers 20 January to April PGCE, SSMJ and St Martin's College 2nd year Cert Ed Matlock College
Course 4	10 weeks Total student numbers 6 April to July PGCE Sussex University

A total of 61 students attended courses this year. The Urban Studies Centre moved from Stepney to Bethnal Green between April and July 1978.

Finally, since the 1977-78 annual report was submitted a further 74 students have successfully completed their courses with us and by Easter 1980 over 520 students will have attended the Urban Studies Centre.

So what of the future? In spite of the increasingly difficult financial climate I believe we must think in terms of extending this work into other areas of the inner city where the need is greatest. I have recently been encouraged by the response of the Director of Education for the London Borough of Newham to a proposal to locate a permanent fieldwork centre replicating our own activities within that Borough. I think my letter to Rhodes Boyson would suggest that when the next round of college closures are being considered at least some of those resources should be re-allocated to urban areas for the purpose of establishing this kind of training facility. The cost of such projects is relatively modest; the potential gain enormous. There are so few ideas in teacher education which actually work at a practical day-to-day level. When we discover one that does, we really ought to make the most of it.

Part Three
The reception of the ideas

1 Teachers' and students' views

Teachers' views

Many schools in East London in 1973 were characterised by low morale, high teacher turnover and isolation from the communities they served – failing in their academic aspirations, and saddled with an uncertainty about what they should be doing. It was a worrying time to start a venture like the Urban Studies Centre. How then was the work of the Urban Studies Centre received? To answer this we have to examine its reception by the schools, by the community workers and, most important, by the students themselves. Here is Frank Coles on the attitudes of local headmasters:

> 'Their attitudes varied from school to school. It is no secret that the most difficult school in East London had provided the Conservative party with its spokesman on education. But there are other schools who shared those views – seeing themselves as oases of middle class culture and fortresses of law and order – assailed by a flood of rabble rousers, Marxists and anarchists who came into the area with the object of making things more difficult.'

In a very real sense the heads of schools were trapped because they could hardly refuse to co-operate. Most headteachers constantly bemoaned the lack of realistic preparation of teachers so that when the Centre asked for their co-operation to improve this they were not in any position to refuse. At a simple level of self-interest, it was better for the school to have a USC student for 13 weeks, instead of five or six as was customary from the other colleges of education. It is unlikely that they were too enthusiastic about a scheme which led to crossing professional boundaries, implied a developing association between the young teacher and the members of the community and which held out the danger of importing a radical critique into schools. Undoubtedly, there must have been some heads who saw the work of the Centre as one more piece of fashionable radicalism, challenging the unexpressed views of themselves as bastions of culture against an advancing horde.

Whether or not this is a fair description of attitudes in 1973, the heads I interviewed in 1977 had developed more positive attitudes. The following is a selection of their views on the contribution to professional training:

> 'I think that being in the school for part of the week and in the community for the rest is of great value in an area such as inner London – working in different places helps bridge the gap between the school and the community.
>
> By coming to understand something of the community, students become more aware of the pressures of urban life.'

> 'Traditional teaching practices are too short to allow students to form relationships with pupils and get involved with the syllabus.
>
> The Urban Studies Centre offers the opportunity for the students to be part of the team, working alongside teachers in partnership rather than as replacements for teachers which tends to happen in a traditional teaching practice.'

On the difficulties encountered by students:

> 'Quite early on there are signs of stress and strain among students. They are trying to take on a very heavy load. But as they get more into the swing of things, I think the school gains. The reason is that they are beginning to understand more about the local environment and its complexities – in some cases to understand more than the teachers.'

'There is, I think, a danger that the student, in identifying with the child and his neighbourhood, will come to think of himself as a social worker.'

'Working in school and in the community imposes some strains on the students because they have one role for the classroom and another for the youth centre or adventure playground or wherever it is they are working. But I think this is good experience for them and of great value in their preparation as teachers.'

Does involvement in the community create difficulties in the classroom for the young teacher?

'I believe it eases the problem. I think children in this particular area, and perhaps other inner city areas, appreciate the fact that the person they may come across in school is also interested in them as people outside school. They respond positively to that interest rather than abuse it.'

Finally on the scheme as a whole:

'All the positive things I felt about the scheme at the beginning I still feel.'

'No doubts at all about it. It has worked out very well.'

'I am worried that we shall come to take it for granted. I think it needs to be continually reinforced and new directions taken.'

'If the staff of the Centre are really to be involved in the schools they are going to need a considerable increase in the number of staff.'

It is difficult to say if the attitudes of a selection of headmasters in 1977 are in any way representative of headteachers in schools in the Borough. My impression is that, in the years since the Centre opened, a number of factors have appeared which have changed the thinking about the relationship of schools to the community. It may not have gone very far as yet, and it certainly does not embrace all the elements of a genuine community education movement. Nevertheless, at a simple level, the rhetoric has been learned by the schools and in some cases practice has followed. It may be that the ILEA policy document *An Education Service for the Whole Community* (1973) has helped or it may be that simple recognition of facts has made schools more responsive to community and to parents.

Involvement with community groups

Involvement with community groups presented different problems from those found in the schools. First, the schools had been used to receiving students over the years and they knew to a degree what to expect. With the exception of Youth Work Studies, which were taught in only a handful of colleges, there was no knowledge of giving teacher-trainees community work experience. As for the professional community workers, they also had little experience of helping train future teachers. The second difficulty lay in the fact that Tower Hamlets had become identified in the public mind as a laboratory in which any idea, good or bad, could be tried out. However, there was the danger of hostility from the various community groups who had been massaged by too many well-meaning people and projects over the years. The third difficulty lay in the possibility that the students, through their community experience, would come to be associated with, and share the views of the young and politically active teachers and community workers who lived and worked in the area, and who were identifying with community needs in ways undreamed of even a few years earlier. While this is what the staff of the Centre may have been hoping for, the danger was that it could have repercussions in the schools and for the project as a whole.

A serious difficulty from the outset in the eyes of some community workers was that the students lived in the East End Mission and it was felt that the Centre was likely to be one more form of 'crust and Christianity' with the College extending the settlement mentality through a course for training teachers. As one community worker put it:

> 'The fact that the students did not really live in the community bugged me a lot in the early days. They lived in a colonial outpost in the area and this put a lot of pressure upon them.'

There is a rich irony in this view: what was a perceived problem for the community workers was something of a relief for the schools. As Coles put it:

> 'The schools saw themselves as being assailed by a flood of rabble rousers who had come into the district to make things more difficult. This certainly influenced some of the attitudes towards us although, of course, we enjoyed an effective disguise with being a Church of England College with headquarters in Plymouth.'

But this fear was not one held by the schools alone:

> '... the ILEA, too, were worried about the colour and character of the social and community enterprises ... I was gently warned about being careful who I linked up with and worked with.'

It would seem that, in engaging the students in community experience and exploring with them the complementary nature of teaching, social work and community work, the Centre was open to suspicion from all sides. The peculiar political culture of the East End, the Byzantine relationships of social and community work provision in the area, the appearance of maverick individuals in community work (often following their own agendas and having prickly relationships with each other) – all of this must have made negotiation difficult. In helping to gain acceptance of the Centre, the first Director's wife became deeply involved. As a community worker in the area she knew the people and she knew her way around. Her contribution was vital.

Over the period there has been a change in the attachments of students. From the beginning, the emphasis was on attachment to community workers rather than to case-workers. As the years have passed, the reliance on the statutory community workers has declined, with more responsibility being placed for supervision on the different community groups.

Some community workers were keen to be involved in the experiment and others less so. Most of them felt there was something to be gained:

> 'We felt we would get a great deal of return from involving teachers in training in the same way as we involved students, community workers or student social workers on placement. It would be the same kind of exercise. Quite crudely, we would gain in terms of labour and they would gain in terms of experience and supervision ... We also thought that we may get resources available in the way of group activity, but that has never happened.'

One of the suspicions entertained by anyone involved in training is that the process will come to distort what the full-time professional is trying to achieve. Teachers in schools face this dilemma and the full-time community workers had their doubts, too:

> 'Our emphasis is on making use of the resources of the whole community instead of doing it all ourselves. That is the goal and it does not always happen but it is that much harder to be finding help outside if you have got a readily available group of students wanting to do something – it can easily distort a community programme and this is a major reservation I have about the involvement of student help of any sort (not just this lot).'

'Social work students or community work students come with ideas which are reinforced or modified by experience. But then they know they are going to be community workers or social workers or whatever. There is the view, rightly or wrongly held, that this lot are going to be teachers so that this is only an experience of passing interest. This attitude is partly changing because student attitudes are modifying. Now they realise that there may not be teaching jobs for them and they can look at community work as the kind of job they may be engaged in.'

It is the relationship between the community experience and the teaching experience which is the key. In my estimation, the exposure of the student to a community experience will have many consequences of which I choose two for mention. It offers a challenge to restricted professionality by widening the teacher's responsibility in ways not normally accepted by helping to break down the old Victorian legacy of the professional-lay distinction. The young student's experience is going to give him a more vivid consumer view of education. It holds out hope that the student can enter school with a 'critical discontent' with the situation outside which community involvement has engendered, so that what goes on in school as part of its evolving policies could become more sensitively tuned to the community needs.

The students' experience

What then have been the students' experiences while attending the Urban Studies Centre? Let them speak for themselves.

a) On Tower Hamlets

For the majority of students, Tower Hamlets provides an environment quite different from their own home background. Of all the students I interviewed only two came from anywhere remotely like the East End. The majority were from small towns, semi-rural areas or from the suburbs of London. Not surprisingly therefore the East End provided both a shock of unfamiliarity and the need to adjust in order to communicate:

'To be absolutely honest the Commercial Road strikes me as one of the noisiest and most dilapidated areas I have ever seen. The traffic can be as heavy at four in the morning as at four in the afternoon ... the dirtiness of the area strikes me as amazing while the air itself even feels dirty ... the whole environment is one of rush, noise and activity rather than peacefulness.'

'The noise of the traffic. I didn't think I was ever going to get used to it.'

'The dirt and the amount of rubbish on the streets. It must have something to do with the amount of traffic because the dust is always being whipped around.'

'The sights I almost expected. But the amount of empty and derelict land surprised me.'

'For a poor area there are a surprising number of flash cars around.'

'Why do they keep labelling this as a problem area as though nothing good comes from it? They are not that different from the kids at home in Plymouth.'

'It is not all poverty, depression, poor housing and crime. A lot of it exists but so do a lot of normal things too – reasonable housing, families with fathers, skilled and semi-skilled work.'

b) On the children

What comes across is how surprised the students often were about the children they met on the streets, in their community projects and in schools. There is a touching feeling of young teachers struggling through a set of assumptions and stereotypes about the children, learning to accept them as they are, and realising that the children have their own strengths which can be drawn on.

> 'Prior to the course I had been totally unaware of the difficulties they have to face in the jungle which is their life. I was overwhelmed by their candour and their total lack of hypocrisy, which I felt refreshing; I felt a sincere desire to be accepted by them.'
>
> 'The children are mature in ways that I had not expected. They are aware of social problems within the area but they seem immature in terms of responsibility and care ... on the whole the East End children are not the terrors they are made out to be.'
>
> 'They have such a lot to offer if you can tap their resources in an appropriate manner ... you must have a reason for what you are doing – not for yourself – but in the children's eyes, for whatever it is you say and do.'
>
> 'The children are remarkably more easy to get on with and much more open than Plymouth kids. London kids have a reputation for disruptiveness but I doubt if anyone on our course realised what this meant ... their major response is to do what is expected of them. Their attitudes towards school are completely different from Plymouth kids in that they do not fear punishment and are so much more difficult to control.'
>
> 'These children grow up so much quicker than those in areas such as Plymouth.'
>
> 'Everyone hears about the East End of London but when you get up here you realise that it is not as bad as everyone makes out ... you only hear the bad stories.'
>
> 'Of course the kids are noisy but then there are not many tranquil places in the East End.'

c) On the children in the schools

> '... control is always a problem in ---- with the first two years – there are classes which are outlawed by all the staff and the worst kids are swapped from class to class in efforts to keep them under control. The overall teaching these children are getting must be very unsatisfactory ... I found it essential to have very structured lessons with a good deal of writing ... you get to realise in time that you are in charge.'
>
> '... I had a lot of tips from friends who are teachers in Newham. By just talking it over with them I learned quite a lot about how to handle noisy classes ... I am making a great effort not to raise my voice ... today it worked very well – about the quietest lesson I have had actually.'
>
> 'On my preliminary visit I went into a classroom with the Head of Department. There were two classes in there, about 60 kids – as there were two teachers away. The Head of Department asked me to look after them while he went out and, of course, there

was a fight between two coloured lads at the back. I always wondered what I would do in that situation. I just sort of pulled them apart and sat them down. It turned out that one kid had said the other lad's father was a squatter ... I suppose you don't really learn how to teach until you are in the classroom yourself with the kids.'

'Control of the children: control within the classroom, that was my main problem.'

'I worked in two schools which were quite different. In - - - - the challenge was to control the class. In - - - - the challenge was at a 'content of teaching' level.'

'I would have had a lot of anxiety, an awful lot, but I was lucky and saw a lot of the kids on my Community Project. I began to see what made them tick, why they were so boisterous, why they vandalised things. But I realised that they were not unreasonable. I have had no problems but I would have done if I had come into school without this community experience.'

'I did not know how to approach the children at first – I was a bit frightened. I went away with them for a week and they felt freer and opened up a bit. It was easier after that.'

'The children seem hostile on the face of it, but they are extremely warm and friendly. Give them a chance and they have a lot to offer.'

'I think I have found out that you can be a good disciplinarian and have good relationships with the children.'

d) On community experience

'Through the contact with the children at the Truancy Centre I have been able to make contact with the children. I have been helped to understand them and this helps in sorting situations in the classroom. It has been very valuable ...'

'... I can adapt quite well within the week from being at the Truancy Centre and then going to school. There is no great change in my attitude and the way I approach children. I am just the same kind of person and not putting on another hat or another face.'

'I was attached to - - - - in a detached-worker role with kids in Spitalfields. There were no premises and I started in the main offices working with the kids. We started making candles, which was the kids' idea not mine, and then we were chucked out of there because the other workers could not stand the racket. So what I did was to find premises. I felt very alone and it was different from anything I had done before. I did not know what to do. It would have been alright if I had had a co-worker.'

'In the summer I did two main things. First, I took a group of kids to Mersea camping and then I took a group of children down to Brockenhurst camping and later we went to Sawbridgeworth on a canal trip on a narrow boat. The camping in the New Forest I organised myself and was responsible for finances, meals, tents – all of it. We had a few hassles at the camp but we came through strong. It was a nice way to get to know the kids.'

'When you are in school they sometimes forget and say "Hello Brian". You stop and think should they have done that? But what the hell so long as they are respectful.'

'One boy called Lee, who used to attend the Adventure Playground where I worked in the Summer, was in one of my first-year classes. I was giving papers out and he said "Thanks Tim – oops sorry!" It was a genuine mistake. He always makes a bit point of calling me "Sir" on the bus. It's now a bit of a joke, but he likes it.'

'The summer holiday commitment enabled me to "get to know" the kids. It is a vague term but for me it means learning to understand their background, values and problems and frustrations. I valued talking to the parents and it helped me to understand how they regarded the schools their children go to and how they regard the teachers who teach their children.'

'For the first time I was helped to understand a community whose lifestyles, values, aspirations were different from my own. In short, for the first time in my life I felt very middle class but I don't think I felt critical of what I was growing to understand.'

'Without doubt, these experiences helped me no end when I began teaching. Any reputation East End schools had with me was dispelled. If nothing else, it brought home to me that the classes I would be teaching were not an "educable commodity" but a group of individual children who had homes, parents and their own individual personalities.'

'You don't necessarily see your own school classes in a different environment in the evening, in fact it was rare for this to happen ... What did happen was by a kind of osmosis you ended up with a few more insights into the lives of children and teenagers in the area than by daily bus-ing in to do some prepared turns in the classroom.'

'For the community work element of the course I worked through a Community Worker with some families from Bangladesh. I worked principally with three families – all poor and two experiencing great hardship, each with a handicapped child. I attempted to teach the mother English – not an easy task unless you have been trained in English as a Foreign Language.'

'I worked in a neighbourhood Law Centre. I met them when they came in, took down details, decided which solicitor was best for their needs. Problems? Work 30%, housing 30%, and the rest split between matrimonial and crime. One evening some people came in complaining about their landlord. There were three children and two parents living in one room and a kitchen. One of the kids was in one of my classes. I think I saw then why he wasn't able to work.'

e) On schools and teachers

A theme running through all the student-teacher interviews was a real concern about their school experience. Obviously, these students were spread across so many schools over several weeks and in different years. I have not tried to separate primary from secondary, or St Mark and St John students from other students, or for that matter, the years in which they were at the Centre. It is not possible to generalise from such an array of experience but certain common themes stand out.

'The problem is to come to some agreement about what the schools can do and can become in the East End. Some schools have tremendous community contact, in others little goes on. If they want schools to become community schools they have to change the structure to really fulfil those tasks.'

'They kind of built it, and said, "here's your community school, get on with it". I am sure it was not what the local people wanted ... if they had asked them what they wanted it would have been more of a success. It shouldn't be a building at the end of the estate where the parents creep in once a year.'

'Our parents are fairly free to come in and they are keeping up our parent/teacher association which they found difficult in the past, because the image of the people around here was that it was a place that they were frightened to go into. At other parents' evenings, you see them sitting timidly on the edge of their chairs. They're not relaxed at all and they really are frightened to go into the building, which is wrong, it should be far more open. I think the people should get far more involved in the school. They should be allowed to come in and out and to help in school activities. Maybe the school should extend its activities as well – involve the community more.'

'It is quite a good school in some respects and there are good teachers there but the direction isn't coming from the Head and there isn't much discussion within the school about what it is trying to achieve and the sorts of methods that teachers ought to be using; in that, I suppose, it is like most schools. There is a basic acceptance that the class teacher will have the decision-making power about how she or he teaches and there is no question of that and there is no questioning of the purpose of the school as a whole.'

'I think that the main problem facing anyone going into a school like - - - - particularly if he is known to be a student, is that of status. Status is a very large part of success there. When one is seen to be new and not to have any particular status one's easy game for the kids. Because teacher turnover has been very high there, they are extremely resentful of new teachers because they expect you to be going again in a few weeks, or a few months or a few terms, and they more or less test you out, to see if they can put you off earlier so that you'll leave – then, in a sense, they have succeeded. What they are really looking for is a teacher who can show them that he's going to actually stay there and, once they get some degree of feeling of permanency, I think the discipline problems will be only the same as one would encounter in any school, in any classes; they stem only from one's own personal ability to teach.'

f) The curriculum

'It comes fairly heavily down to political analysis, I think, in that what the school should be doing is bringing the kids in it to an understanding of why their situation is like it is in the framework of the whole society and what they can do about it ... the tendency in school is to tell most of the kids in the East End that they are less intelligent and are going to do less well in school and they're going to get the most boring jobs in society at large. And they *are*: statistically, that happens. What schools should

be doing is telling them that that isn't necessarily so, that it doesn't have to be so. Just talking to the people I work with in my Tenants' Association, so many of them will say things like: "We're a bit thick in the East End" or, if there's any sort of reading or writing to do, they say to me: "You do it, because you can do it better", which I probably can but alongside that is the idea: "You're more educated, and we're less well educated because we're from the East End". And that's our fault, that's what the schools have done. They've individualised it, they've said: "It's your fault, you're thick", and that is what really annoys me, that's what hurts.'

'The children here respond a lot better to non-academic work. For example, in our school, we've got this London Youth Dance Theatre which the girls are half-participating in, in which they're doing really well. Sadlers Wells was last week, Queen Elizabeth Hall tomorrow. These are all girls from Stepney. Something like that they will excel in. Some of the more practical subjects – art over at - - - - for all its failings – does very good work indeed. I'm not saying that children from East London should be born to become dancers or carpenters, but they do excel in that. I find to get children motivated in academic subjects can be very hard indeed, simply because of their background. They are working people, a lot of whom have had no education and can see no point in education such as geography, history or whatever. I find it very difficult to interest children in these subjects.

They can express themselves, but not in the Queen's English. Their vocabulary is probably very expressive, more expressive than the average child. Unfortunately it isn't accepted by examination boards. Certainly I don't think the school should knock a child because he can't write Queen's English. They can express themselves. They might not be able to put it in nice, neat little sentences with correct spelling.'

'I think the children, the kids who attend the school, have got to live there and they have got to come to appreciate what their situation means in some way, and I usually went through an historical approach to that. I just said: "Well, this place exists", and I tried to trace some development of the area and give the kids an idea that this place was changing now and had changed in the past, and tried to trace them through the development. But equally others, the geographers, could study the particular problems of such areas, like traffic noise, pollution, etc. The scientists could do some other things. There's a lot of scope for understanding very basic things.'

'I wasn't confronted with different approaches that I could be using. Because this course makes the students rely on what the school provides, they do not show the student a wide range of methods. I wasn't being confronted with those at all, so I sort of got stuck, as it were, and I was scared to try out things because there was always somebody behind me saying, "Well, you are being very unrealistic about this", "these kids can't do this", or "you haven't got enough experience to do such and such".'

'I don't think I ever appreciated the extent to which the teaching of a subject is dictated by the internal politics of the school. My Head of Department did not see eye to eye with higher authorities in the school and had lost power. His subject had come to be treated as a second class subject in the school.'

'I was never invited to any department meetings. There weren't any. One of the difficulties in the school is that they are so disunited it is difficult to get people together and talk things through.'

g) On teaching and teachers

'I think the teachers often ignore just how much responsibility the children in these areas do have. They are experienced in the world and able to fend for themselves, they look after younger brothers and sisters. It must irk them not being allowed to take responsibility for what they are doing at school – being told all the time.'

'Why do teachers tend to isolate the school from the environment? You always get a standard curriculum which is often totally inappropriate.'

'How can teachers remain neutral in this area? If it is going to be part of the community it is going to take on the character of the community. And if it is going to have to face the problems that the community faces it is going to have to take some sort of position.'

'In - - - - School there seemed to be about two or three teachers who really involved themselves and who were alert to the real needs of the kids. The rest were all subject to the examination system. It was a strange school – an upside-down school for its neighbourhood. They wanted the school to be isolated; it was not to be integrated. Of course, the kids received little support from their parents and that made it all worse . . .'

'I went in fairly naievely thinking, if you treat them fairly they will treat you fairly too. I came down with quite a bump. In effect, I am a student when it suits the staff and a teacher when it suits them too.'

'At - - - - School it was difficult. The children I found hardest to teach were the Asian children. I was not sufficiently well organised to pick out the ones with severe language problems and those with medium problems and to provide stimulating and taxing work for each of these groups. I am afraid I was doing what I should not have been doing – catering for the white children.'

'. . . the teacher whose class I took over was, in fact, one of the worst teachers. I shouldn't probably be saying this but she wasn't inspiring or inspired herself. She wasn't being stimulated at all by those kids, she thought of it as a job in a very boring way. She had been teaching for ten years and she wasn't going to change her methods. She should be getting out of teaching and having a rest.'

'In my opinion, at - - - - School the teacher is simply not given enough information about the children he is working with. Apart from his knowledge as a class tutor for a small group there seems to be no available information on any of the other kids they teach.'

'What after-school activities? They had all left by 4.00 pm.'

h) On the relationship between theory and practice

'The course at the Urban Studies Centre is proving to be more useful to me as a probationary teacher than much of what I learned at College ... I am enjoying my teaching and certainly finding it less of a strain as a result of my experience in East London.'

'Having spent two years at College and having done limited teaching practice, most of what we had learnt was quite abstract – purely theoretical. To go to the Urban Studies Centre and to be submerged in the situation – not outside it, but inside it – was so very different.'

'Anne and Roger were there with the benefit of their knowledge and experience to help you to think through your particular problem and to introduce appropriate theoretical knowledge. The alternative in Plymouth is that you have no reference at all. That is the sort of situation where you go blindly through your teaching practice and you don't really consider anything really happening within it.'

'The College course in Plymouth equips you to a certain extent. It is a talking shop. It prepares you in a certain way but I would have thought without the practical experience here it would be just so much theory – another set of notes to write up. There is nothing we can do in Plymouth that can compare with what we do here.'

'The Urban Studies "elective" prepares you in a certain way but there is no substitute for experience.'

'I learnt far more than any teacher-training course I know that exists because it's not just putting me in front of a load of kids, and teaching me how to keep control for 40 minutes by bringing with me some skill I thought up the previous night. It means that I was able to get to know the people that I am teaching, not just the children. The people of the district I am teaching in.'

i) On support and supervision

'I did not feel that the tutors were there to examine you but to advise and help you – different from Plymouth. I had a tutor in Cornwall who came to see me teach twice in six weeks and I got a written report at the end. I had not spoken to him.'

'My tutor was very supporting ... she came very often to lessons but I never felt that I was being assessed by her ... she made me assess myself and was really constructive. We always met in the evening to discuss our work and sometimes with the Head of Department responsible for the Environmental Studies Course. We talked about practical problems as well as those concerning content.'

'I think supervision will have to be improved. I did not feel that I had been seen enough ... what has happened is that "A" has been offered money by the Centre for doing work herself. She says she does not want the money. It seems that they are paying to cover up their own inadequacies.'

'For me, working closely with an actual teacher in the department and going through the same situations that they face seems preferable.'

'Well "H" is my Supervisor in school. He is a bit naughty about it but he really is a busy man – fantastic teacher.'

'"R" comes in from the Centre. She used to come in every week. She has been very helpful and critical which sometimes pissed me off. Most of the time I would have appreciated it but sometimes I was not in the mood for being criticised after a heavy day. "B" comes in every now and again and I feel I can sort of phone up and spend an hour or two with him.'

'I felt at my school that I was being used as a supply teacher. I did not mind having a regular member of the History Department watching my lesson but I got irritated when a supply teacher who did not know the kids, did not know the work they were doing, started interfering in my work because they were asked to stay in the classroom with me. It is unfortunate that any student is going to be placed in a department that is constantly under-strength. If the school is going to take responsibility, it should do it properly and not take the opportunity of giving over-worked heads of department and teachers periods off.'

'My school has one of the Deputy Heads in charge. But we really have not seen very much of him. He comes along and says is everything alright and that is as far as the conversation goes. I have always had support from the Head of Department though. I felt neglected by the Centre but the school has fulfilled its obligations.'

Politics of the Urban Studies Centre

How do staff at the Urban Studies Centre respond to these criticisms from the students? There is adverse criticism as well as praise – staff at the Urban Studies Centre are certainly not complacent.

'To get some idea of the USC we need to look at the wider community, and the predominant problems of the East End. One of the major problems in this area is that it is inundated with "professionals" and "professionals-to-be" (research students, teacher trainees, social surveyors and statisticians, social work trainees, etc) who come here to find out what the East End is all about without putting anything back into the community. As community workers and local people have said, they are fed up with the East End being used as a "training ground" and "jumping-off point" for people who then move elsewhere. What the East End needs is stability, and we, as students on this course, should be aware that we add to that problem, and attempt *not* to do so.'

'We also need to look at whether this sort of school/community link simply equips us to be more efficient teachers in terms of controlling children in the more difficult and frustrating classroom situation of the urban areas. Or should we be using that knowledge *for* the kids, rather than against them or for the system? That is, should we use education in order to make children aware of the nature of the class-ridden and exploitative world they live in, and encourage them to act in order to change that system?'

'We have found that the USC fits into the wider framework of socialisation agencies at work in the East End. We feel that all these agencies (including the schools) and nearly all who staff them, encourage the attitudes of apathy, despair and fatalism

which are the universal characteristics of the very poor, deprived, urban areas.'

'We feel that the recent moves to make the USC into an independent Urban Education Centre, and the introduction of one-year (as opposed to the current one-term) courses, reflect the Centre's growing concern with becoming an established academic institution, rather than with the values endemic to what this process of "institutionalisation" involves. This has been reflected in the attitudes of the staff who have been more concerned about the image of the course as a "respectable" (ie pro the status-quo) institution rather than using the urban experience in order to make students more critical of their role within "the system".'

'We have also found a general atmosphere of paternalism amongst the USC staff, community workers, social work "professionals" and teachers. This has been daunting, demoralising and difficult to counter.'

'We hope that students coming here will do so out of a commitment to the intention of working in an urban area or have some real interest in gaining an insight into "urban education" in its widest sense.'

'Above all, we hope that future students will not only become more aware of the social functions of the USC but also of their own role within the school hierarchy and the class conflicts of the wider society.'

And a last word from a student:

'I think that this Centre has to sit down and evaluate itself, and decide what the hell it is doing, because I don't think it knows. At the moment they are working a sort of liberal ticket and they have got to work out what their aims are. I don't think they have really done that apart from in a wishy-washy way of saying, "Well, the home and school have to be linked". I don't really think that's good enough.'

2 Further developments in Plymouth

by Jean Anderson, Senior Lecturer, Community Studies,
at the College of St Mark and St John

The rationale underpinning the establishment of the London Urban Studies Centre and its subsequent organisation have been considered in earlier sections. This section looks at the main college in Plymouth, how it nurtured its East End baby and how it eventually produced a further offspring, the Plymouth Community Studies Course. The section concludes with an analysis of these developments in terms of teacher education, not only in urban areas, but in the wider context of community orientated education.

Apart from a somewhat indifferent acceptance of the Urban Studies Centre, the College as a whole in Plymouth, concerned with establishing itself in the South West, did not really take very much account of developments in the East End during the first year or so of operation. There was no overt opposition to students undertaking a teaching practice in London, provided that practices meshed with course work in Plymouth.

However, as students began to return from courses at the USC and to talk about their experiences there, perhaps even more than interested members of the College staff, they began to make the presence of the Centre in London felt in Plymouth. Many openly expressed the view that their experiences in London, working in both schools and community, was the only valid way to train teachers. You may recall this student's view (quoted in an earlier section):

> 'Without doubt, these experiences (community project) helped me no end when I began teaching ... if nothing else it brought home to me that the classes I would be teaching were not an "educable commodity" but a group of individual children who had homes, parents and their own individual personalities.'

At about the same time the staff in London, together with the Principal and a small interested group of tutors in Plymouth who were conscious of the culture shock likely to be encountered by many students embarking on a course in London, agreed to set up a preparatory course in the second year for intending USC students. A Liaison Officer was appointed, whose function was to maintain and strengthen links between the East End and Plymouth.

This course commenced in October 1975 as part of the second-year programme and ran as an elective for 15 weeks prior to the second-year teaching practice. Its emphasis was on the work of the social services and community development officers in inner city areas. This course initially faced two problems. First, it was voluntary, so in one sense it only 'preached' to those who had already decided to take up an urban studies placement. Second, it lacked cohesion, as it relied very heavily on a series of lectures/ seminars by visiting speakers loosely co-ordinated by a Plymouth based tutor.

However, by 1976, an Urban Studies course had been established as an integral part of the second-year programme. This course was one of a group of second-year options. Students contemplating a course at the London Urban Studies Centre were advised to opt for this course, but it was not mandatory. In fact about 70% of the students who eventually took up an urban placement for their final teaching practice did attend the course and also a number of students who, for various reasons, were unable to go to London but were interested in the problems of inner city areas. By 1978 the course, although still not mandatory, was timetabled to allow all second-year students to follow the programme and this has meant that, when selection and recruitment for courses takes place, account is taken of the fact that a student has shown interest in the problems

of working in inner city areas. In addition, with the establishment of a Community Studies Course in Plymouth, the content of the course has been broadened to take account of the situation there.

The course has three phases, with a contact time of two hours per week. The first term looks at urban communities, with case-study material related to the East End of London and the Stonehouse area of Plymouth. The second term, prior to the second-year teaching practice, examines urban schools, and the third term focuses on curriculum for urban schools. The course is co-ordinated by the Urban Studies Liaison tutor and includes contributions from USC tutors and community workers in London and Plymouth. An outline of the 1978/79 programme is included in Appendix 1. In addition to this taught course, one-day induction programmes organised by the USC staff are run in the third term of the second year and a two-day visit to the Centre prior to students taking up placements there. In 1979 one lecture was given on the Urban Studies programme to all first-year students as part of their education course, and the recent completion of a film about the Urban Studies Centre by the Education Technology department should enable the work of the Centre to be more fully understood by both staff and students in Plymouth.

1979 saw a further innovation on the BEd programme, as a small group of six second-year students, working on the Community Studies elective, undertook their second-year practice at the London USC. Their course lasted ten weeks and during term time their school/community ratio was 4:1 with a full-time community project during the Easter vacation. Some of these students went on to take a third, final practice in London, in different schools yet still maintaining the link with their community placement.

The second area of course development on the BEd programme, where the establishment of the USC can be identified as having an influence, is the fourth paper of the BEd Hons programme which was set up in 1977. At that time the then three constituent colleges of the University of Exeter were asked to set up a fourth interdisciplinary paper on the BEd Honours course. The College established a 'School and Community' programme, which runs throughout the third and fourth years of the Honours programme. This course considers the notions of community, the formation of communities, the effects of planning, community schools, power, control and accountability, and multi-cultural issues, and provides an opportunity to carry out a small-scale project in the second term. Students who have taken up an urban studies placement can relate their particular experiences to the issues raised on this course. A programme of 1977/79 is included at Appendix 2. Thus it is now possible to trace a fairly clear pathway on the College BEd programme for students with a particular interest in urban education and the establishment of stronger links between school and community:

Second-year elective		Community Studies
Third-year		Teaching Practice (TP) at London USC or Plymouth Community Studies
3/4 years	a)	BEd Hons School and Community programme
	b)	Project and/or dissertation with an emphasis on urban problems

It is certainly true to say that in designing and setting up the School and Community programme in the third year, tutors responsible for this programme were influenced by the experiences of students who had taken up placements in London. It was felt that the opportunity to design a fourth paper should take account of one significant area of College innovation. Although the course is still only in its second year of operation, it is generally agreed, by the team of tutors responsible for its operation, that the course is undoubtedly strengthened both by students who have been to

London and by the links established through the USC. It must also be noted that both the courses discussed, the second-year elective and the Honours paper are set up and run by education tutors who do have a particular interest. When considering courses overall in the College – main study, professional method and education studies – the effect of the USC programme is much less apparent.

The course in London has been described in *The Guardian* as 'an exciting innovation in teacher education'. Yet as a significant experiment in teacher education its successes – and its problems – have often seemed unimportant to many staff and students at Plymouth. It is arguable that a college situated in the South West of England will tend to attract students who will not necessarily wish to teach in inner city areas. At the same time the issues raised by the problems of urban areas and the form of teaching practice organised in London (and now in Plymouth) are surely too significant to be regarded merely as 'options' on the college course. This point will be dealt with more fully at the end of this section.

In January 1977 the Plymouth Community Studies was established modelled on the London Centre. The course was started for two main reasons. First, it was an endeavour to extend the concept established in Stepney in the belief that this form of teacher education was successful and therefore could be used as a model for other areas, not just the inner city. Second, the course was a response to requests from students who were unable to travel to London for the three-month course, yet were keen to undertake this kind of teaching practice.

By March 1979 five courses had been completed, two on the BEd programme and three on the graduate programme, with a total of 55 students completing courses in the West Country.

In order to establish such a course and set up a programme in Plymouth, contacts had to be made with schools and other agencies. It is worth noting certain features of the Plymouth education system as this is where the first placements were made; either in the inner city schools or in schools on a new housing estate near to the College. Plymouth still has a selective 11+ exam and has several small secondary schools, many of which are housed in inadequate buildings. It is also a very conservative area: curriculum innovation does not feature largely on its school timetables and its turnover of staff tends to be low, resulting in many schools having a fairly large percentage of staff having served in one school, and certainly in the local authority, for 20 years or more. Innovation in terms of teacher training was not therefore necessarily an attractive proposition, particularly as many schools were only just getting used to the idea of having a college on their doorstep and students practising in their classrooms. Fortunately, sufficient schools were interested enough to participate in the first programme, for ten graduates, and one or two positively welcomed the idea. Links with other agencies were easier to establish. By the time the first programme was set up the in-service training group for the social services in West Devon was operating on the College campus and the training team there, together with the Area Community Development Officer and the Area Social Services Director, were enthusiastic about the idea of training social workers and teachers alongside each other. Consequently the goodwill of the social services has resulted in a number of placements being made through them.

In recruiting students for the Plymouth-based programme, only those who complete satisfactory teaching practices are accepted. This is because the College felt the course should not be seen to flounder through inadequacy in the classroom, and that this course was more demanding than a traditional teaching practice. Individual work programmes vary, but, in general, students work a 50% timetable in school, usually spread over four days. For some, one day a week is spent attached to the social services team whose 'patch' includes the neighbourhood of the school, together with one/two evenings per week on a community placement such as a youth club, community centre, community home or physically handicapped group. In many instances placements

enable a student teacher to meet children and parents in a more informal setting. Feedback seminars are held, both during the courses and at the end, when social workers, teachers, youth club leaders, college tutors and students meet informally to discuss the programme – usually over lunch – which seems more appropriate than a formal meeting.

By the end of the first year, certain features were becoming clear. With regard to schools, reaction varied. Schools in Educational Priority Areas (EPAs) welcomed the concept of involving the students with other statutory agencies and work in a youth club which enabled them to meet young people outside school.

The following is in response to a questionnaire asking teachers for their reactions to the course:

> 'I consider it most necessary that teachers in EPA areas should gain a thorough background knowledge of their pupils' immediate environment ... it must be brought home to student teachers that they are dealing with human beings in their classrooms, not just supposed absorbers of knowledge. This experience helps to achieve this.' (i)

There were also those who agreed with the contact with the local community but had reservations about the concurrent nature of the course. One or two asked for 'proper' students who would spend five days a week in school and not have 'days off' with the social services. The latter view was sad for the College, as it was expressed by two schools on a new housing estate near to the College. The students who had completed the course there had learned a tremendous amount about the problems confronting the residents of the new estate. The social services supported the cause from the outset and welcomed any programme which might bring school and welfare agencies closer together.

> 'I welcome any moves to help social workers and teachers to move towards greater mutual understanding of aims, objectives and functions.' (ii)

> 'West Devon Social Services Department is pleased to be associated with this project. Students have sat alongside social workers and together have looked at the community resources available to help meet clients' needs, and have begun to look at the gaps which exist in the provision of necessary services within individual communities.' (iii)

Reactions of students have been similar to those who work at the London USC.

> 'Judging by the attitudes of most teachers, it would be useful for all students to do a similar programme to this, to make them aware of the importance of the home and community environment of pupils, and to encourage more community participation on the part of schools.' (iv)

This was a particularly illuminating comment when it is realised that this student worked in the school which asked for 'proper' students for teaching practice.

> 'I feel sure I would have been totally unprepared to teach effectively in an urban school such as Oxford Street Primary School had the practice not been concurrent with the Social Services scheme and my work in the Youth Club ... we may read in all the best sociology books and lecturers' handouts about the different cultures within society, but just how different is something that needs to be experienced, it cannot be book-learned. The US experience gives a student an opportunity to do this ... I was lucky, I had total support from my class teacher, it is most important that the class teacher be involved and the Head understand.' (v)

At the end of three courses, two graduate and one third-year group, it seemed appropriate to make an initial evaluation of the programme. Tutors felt that they had been justified in transplanting the Stepney model to the West Country, for no matter where students taught the value of the wider experience contributed to their view of the world as prospective teachers. It was also felt that the links already established with other agencies could only be strengthened through further working contact.

Tutors in Plymouth also looked to future developments based on one of the aims originally stated when the London USC was set up:

> 'to provide an apprenticeship for teaching in a community school' (vi)

It was therefore felt that placements in the South West should not be confined to those schools and areas of the City frequently labelled as 'deprived' and that as Devon had a policy of community colleges, based loosely on the Henry Morris model, placements might be made in these institutions. Consequently 1978/79 saw a pilot programme in Barnstaple (an area of high unemployment) at a community college with both a rural and town catchment area and at a community primary school in the town. At the community college, students taught partly in the school and were also attached to the youth/community tutor based in the school. They worked one/two evenings a week on the programmes run by this tutor, and either were attached to a social work team in Barnstaple one day a week or lived at a local community home whose children attended the school. The link between this home and the primary school was also established as the student on teaching practice at the school lived at the home where he also worked as a volunteer three evenings per week. This pilot programme has worked very successfully both in terms of student experience and the relationships established with a number of other agencies and it is hoped to develop this kind of placement further at other community colleges in Devon and Cornwall. An interesting sideline however is that unlike some community colleges, Devon has virtually no teacher appointments which involve responsibilities other than those of educating the 11-18 year olds so perhaps at this point in time we are training teachers for job specifications yet to be designated – at least in this part of the country!

There are aspects of the Plymouth-based programme which highlight the problems of teacher training innovation. First, courses do not run all the year round, as in London, so inevitably a continuous commitment in terms of community placement is lost. The courses now run for a minimum ten-week period, in the Autumn and Spring terms of the College year, and overlap 'normal' teaching practice periods. Attempts to extend courses beyond this period at the present time will involve grant awards and, although it has been just possible to achieve this with USC London students, in the present economic climate it is unlikely that authorities will be able to react favourably to such requests, particularly when it is noted that a fair proportion of the Plymouth students do receive their grants from Devon LEA. Second, the course operates from the main College so students do not come together in the evening, as many of the London based students do, although seminars are held mid-course for an exchange of views. At one time a USC in Plymouth was mooted but it seems that this is unlikely to develop, partly because a number of students have family commitments and partly because of the increasingly scattered nature of placements which would make commuting from a residential centre impracticable. It is seen as more valuable here to make arrangements for students to live and work in their school catchment area, as did the students who have been based in Barnstaple. Third, it can be seen that the Plymouth course has relied fairly heavily on statutory agencies for placements. This is because grass roots community development has been relatively slow to get off the ground in the South West and consequently placements have been made at centres which are either local authority controlled or have been developed by charities such as Dr Barnardo's and the Sentinels (a Roman Catholic group). As local community action groups develop it is envisaged that placements will be made with such groups, and already the work developed by a local community arts workshop on a housing estate near to the College receives College support.

Nevertheless, the course in Plymouth is firmly based on the aims first conceived for the work of the London USC, adapting the model to meet the needs and circumstances of Plymouth and West Country schools and communities. Two ideals are adhered to:

- that student teachers spend part of their working week in school and part in the community from which their pupils come, these two parts of the course to run concurrently;
- that a common language be established through closer co-operation, between schools, statutory and voluntary social services and the neighbourhood which all such agencies serve.

It is also appropriate to comment on the post-graduate course at the College and the impact of the Urban Studies Centre on this programme. At the recruitment level the USC courses in both London and Plymouth receive publicity and all prospective graduate students are asked at interview if they are interested in the programmes. The graduate booklet (on courses) issued to all post-graduate students contains a fairly substantial account of the work at the London centre and induction courses are held during the Autumn Term for students intending to spend the second term of their course in London. With the establishment of the Plymouth-based course this now means that upwards of 40% of the graduates undertake an Urban Studies or community studies course as their final teaching practice and there is increasing evidence that a number of students are attracted to the College because of these programmes.

In terms of course work, the effect of such programmes is discernible in the same way as the third and fourth year courses on the BEd programme. The final term's education programme takes as its theme 'School and Community'. During the last three weeks of the post-graduate course, when students have a free choice of experience, there is the opportunity to take up a community placement.

Whether or not this type of teacher training programme, both theory and practice, should be an integral part of the College programme remains unanswered. At the present time the College is involved in re-planning the structure of its BEd and developing a new degree in 'Recreational and Community Studies'. There is no doubt that the impact of the Urban Studies Centre, whilst possibly less dramatic than some of its keenest proponents would wish, has, by stealth, influenced the thinking of those planning education courses at the College. Whether such thinking can break through the constraints facing those who plan main study and professional courses, both within the College and within the system at large, and whether they will also consider their courses in terms of the community orientation at present being given to education, is still a matter for the debating table. However, the author would suggest that as so many students argue strongly for this type of training course, their voices should undoubtedly be heard in corridors of planning at all levels.

Notes

(i) Mr C Rowe, Headmaster, Secondary EPA School, Plymouth December 1977

(ii) Social Worker, Plymouth December 1977

(iii) John Montgomery, Area Community Development Officer, interviewed by post-graduate student, Larry Thompson March 1977

(iv) Sally Whittall, post-graduate student, evaluation of her course March 1977

(v) Christine Norris, part of her evaluation essay December 1977

(vi) Extract from Urban Studies Centre aims

Part Four
An overview

The work of the Urban Studies Centre throws up a number of questions of which four are selected for further discussion.

1 What is the relationship between urban policy and educational policy?

2 What is the role of the inner city school?

3 What is the relationship between teacher education and the needs of the inner city school?

4 What are the principles that have guided the Urban Studies Centre?

1 Urban policy and educational policy

The relationship between urban policy and educational policy in this country has always been unclear. However, as urban and inner city policies have themselves been less than integrated, it is little wonder that educational policy has found it difficult to locate itself. The general urban policies pursued by successive governments since the war in areas such as population dispersal, industrial relocation, rehousing, and transport have all had considerable consequences for the inner cities. It is no exaggeration to say that the plight of the inner city today rests to a large degree on the pursuit of national urban goals.

Policies for the inner city have had a variety of origins. It was the Plowden Report that led directly to the Educational Priority Area Programme of the later 1960s and early 1970s sponsored by the Department of Education and Science. It was the Home Office which gave us the Urban Programme and the Community Development Projects, while from the Department of the Environment came the Inner City Partnership Scheme. There has been no shortage of policies to tackle inner city problems but the potential of education has never been an integrated element in a comprehensive strategy. Indeed the 1977 *White Paper Policies for the Inner City* scarcely mentions education at all beyond the suggestion for the joint use of school premises. It is hardly surprising that schools feel uninvolved in the wider issues which affect their areas. Teacher education, even further removed, has been able to ignore the problem.

2 Dilemmas for the schools

In a graphic passage on inner city schools, Stuart Hall writes:

> 'the movement of population to the suburbs, the closing down of traditional occupations in the inner urban zones, the pattern of post-war development and rehousing, above all the penetration of those areas by speculative development and the private property market, have seriously disrupted the organic life and "natural economy" of the urban working class neighbourhood. This process has left the urban school visibly stranded – beached – above the retreating social landscape. The position and logic of these schools have been ruthlessly exposed as never before. What after all are these schools doing there?'

As we know, the schools of the inner cities face many difficulties. In the early 1970s the schools provided cheap copy for the media with the difficulties of high staff turnover, absenteeism, falling standards, organisational problems and charges of lack of educational leadership. More recently have come the difficulties of falling rolls, school closure and the cutback in resources for the schools. At the moment, they are faced with the dispiriting fact that many of the young school leavers will be unable to find a job.

Some of these problems are temporary, others are longer term. The central concern for schools is to be clear what their duty is towards the young people in their charge. The inner city school is connected through a series of networks to the local community, while independently directing its outside efforts to the wider social structure. Do schools educate in order to help the young to live full and satisfactory lives within their neighbourhoods, or do they educate them to get on, seek success and lead their lives elsewhere?

The harsher problems faced by the inner city schools in the early 1970s have been ameliorated – absenteeism appears not to be so high, staff turnover has stabilised and achievement standards are slowly rising. Professor Rutter's Study, *15,000 hours*, brings some comfort, and the worrying question whether schools do make a difference has been partly answered. Nevertheless, Hall's question remains and deserves answering; what are these schools doing?

3 Teacher education

Schools in the inner city cannot isolate themselves from the problems of their environment; teacher training has done just that. In their leafy rural and suburban retreats, the colleges could safely play a passive, uncritical and uncommitted role. For many years there has been a lack of realism and commitment in the preparation of teachers to work in inner city schools. Indeed it was common advice to the young teacher about to take up his first appointment in such schools to 'give it a couple of years and then find a pleasanter suburban school'.

The paradoxes in teacher education are caught well in the case of the College of St Mark and St John. How strange for a college founded in the nineteenth century to train teachers for city schools to rediscover that commitment over 150 years later. The internal divisions in the College (which were not unusual) allowed the question 'how do you educate city children' to go untackled until comparatively late. What was offered to students was a set of values, not in themselves unworthy, which were often at odds with those present in the city schools. Added to that was the lack of an effective preparation for the task of teaching. The gap between the reality of such schools and the expectations of the newly trained teacher became wider than ever. Though there were some young teachers who adopted what might be termed a 'working-class perspective', the bulk of them went into teaching with unrealistic assumptions and values. Little attention was given to devising a process by which the connections could be made.

The further question of why schools were failing working-class children was not posed until comparatively late. Until that moment education had been 'taken for granted'. The difficulties schools were facing could be explained in terms of the unsuitability of the school system, or of too slender resources, or of deprivation and disadvantage and so on. But it was a question that focused attention on the curriculum, teaching methods and school organisation. Clearly, in the context of teacher education, the problem led to self-examination and a greater concentration on the more professional aspects of teaching; it led to the realisation that teachers had to know more about working-class life and culture if they were to avoid assumptions and stereotypes.

In the colleges there is now a new vocationalism which can be seen in the re-shaped curriculum of the Colleges of Higher Education and their 'community' type courses. The reason is not far away. Faced with a decline in numbers in teacher education and stiff competition from polytechnics and universities, but unable to become recognised as places of training for social work or for other related professions, they are seeking a pathway through 'community-related courses'. By its very nature this is an experimental approach and it is difficult to assess whether or not it is a genuine and long lasting move towards meeting the needs of urban schools, and, through that, creating a better teacher, more aware of his role and its contemporary context.

4 Guiding principles

At one level the Urban Studies Centre can be seen simply as a consequence of the sheer exasperation and frustration with conventional teacher education since the war, and a determination to try to put the College's contribution on to a realistic basis. Accompanying this view was the strongly held belief that dismisses any distinction between education and schooling and between educational action and social action. Education, in John Anderson's view, has to incorporate informal experiences if formal education is to have any impact at all. The work of the Centre and the programme for the students, which embraces both formal work in schools and informal work in the community, brings teacher education into social action and is more or less effective according to the uses made of its opportunities.

At another level one can see the work of the Urban Studies Centre as part of the 'reconstructivist' tradition in education where teachers are encouraged to think constructively about, to criticise, and to act directly upon, social institutions and processes. Within the broad set of ideas, Community Education is most important as it combines the interests of schools, community and parents.

Conclusions

The Urban Studies Centre is a limited but important innovation in teacher education. It offers students the opportunity to live and work in an inner city community where they are able to gain some understanding of people's lives, needs and aspirations. Through this work in a variety of community settings, as well as in the schools of the area, it provides a more realistic basis for the training of the young teacher who wishes to work in inner city schools. The innovation is cheap, replicable and offers the opportunity (if a network of such mini-centres were provided) for a wide variety of experiment.

Institutions involved in teacher education have a clear responsibility to prepare students adequately for work in our inner city schools. Some colleges already have, but few have organised their work as positively as has the College of St Mark and St John.

There is a need for a network of Urban Studies Centres, located in our large cities and based on colleges who want to 'buy in' opportunity for experience in different types of teacher education.

The Gulbenkian Foundation has helped to support this prototype; it is for others to capitalise on their investment.

Appendices

Community Studies – 2nd year elective 1978/9

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the problems confronting urban communities, the effect of these problems on schools in urban areas, and to suggest ways in which schools might operate successfully in such areas.

The lecture programme includes a number of guest lecturers who have been asked to talk about their work in urban areas. In order to derive maximum benefit from these lectures students are strongly recommended to read up appropriate background material *before* the lecture. The design of the bibliography helps you to do this.

Term 1	**The urban community**	
Week 1	Community – an interpretation Urbanisation – the development of urban communities	Jean Anderson
Week 2	The East End of London – an historical/ geographical approach	Dr R Allison
Week 3	Urban renewal Development in Plymouth since second world war with reference to Stonehouse and Estover	Ken Dean
Week 4	Social problems: their concentration in urban areas	Jean Anderson
Week 5	Minority groups in urban communities Trends in immigration patterns since second world war	Jean Anderson
Week 6	Minority groups in East London The political context	Natasha Sivanandan (Langdon Park School, Poplar)
Week 7	Community development The role of the social services	John Montgomery Area Comm Dev Officer West Devon
Week 8	Community projects in Tower Hamlets a Dan Jones, Youth and Community worker b Tunde's film – a community project	Dan Jones
Week 9	Community projects in Stonehouse, Plymouth A visit to Frederick St Community Centre and community arts project	Will Fitzgerald, Community work Tutor, Dartington
Week 10	The urban child	Roger Tingle
Term 2	**The urban school**	
Week 1	Education in the city	Jean Anderson

Week 2	Urban studies in London Film and discussion with 3rd year students who worked at London USC last term	
Week 3	Community education in urban areas EPAs and after	Jean Anderson
Week 4	The multi-cultural school Implications for the curriculum	Jean Anderson

2nd Year Teaching Practice

Term 3	**Curriculum for the urban school**	
Week 1	The concept of an urban curriculum	Jean Anderson
Week 2 and 3	Environmental studies in the City A workshop: first week in College, second week in Stonehouse, urban trail	Pat Coleman (Field Officer, Schools Council)
Week 4	Community studies for urban areas	Jean Anderson
Week 5	Community Service work – visit to St Peter's School, Stonehouse	Jean Anderson
Weeks 6, 7, 8	Project work	
Week 9	Two day visit to London USC for intending students Visit to school/community project for Plymouth-based students	
Week 10	Evaluation of course	

Assignments

1	Essay, based on first four weeks of course	(2,000 words)
2	Essay on first and second terms' work	(3,000 words)
3	Teaching pack of curriculum materials for an urban school May be submitted as a joint project	
4	Evaluation Students will be asked to make an evaluation of: i another student's curriculum pack or ii a commercially produced pack	

Education and the Community – BEd (Honours) 1978/9

The aim of this course is to explore relations between schools, colleges and the communities in which they are located. Schools may be more or less involved in the local area and teachers may have different ideas about what their relations with it ought to be. Such relations are also affected by the decisions of politicians, the ideas of local interest groups and by the particular characteristics of the neighbourhoods which serve: for instance, the social context of an inner city school makes different demands from that of a Devon village school. These different contexts influence what goes on inside the school, the kind of learning situation it provides, pupil/teacher relationships, and its provision for special needs.

Term 1 Spring 1978 Perspectives on school and community

This term's work examines notions of 'community' and 'community school'

Topics:

1 An analysis of community and of the ways it has been used in social and education policy

2 The concept of community in town planning

3 The socialising influence of institutions and groups within the community

4 Community Studies and their educational implications

5 The concept of the community school

6 Educational policy and the local community

Lectures: 8 hours Seminars: 10 hours Tutorials: 2 hours

Term 2 Summer 1978 Options

During this term students work with a tutor on a project of their choice. This is completed by and discussed with the group, during the second week of the 4th year programme.

Example from last year's programme:

Group topic – Urban schools and community development

Individual topics:

1 Urban renewal in Stonehouse – the effects on primary and secondary schools in the area

2 Community service programme in two schools – an evaluation

3 Secondary school reorganisation in Plymouth – the implications for two urban communities: Prince Rock and Sutton, Plymouth

4 Sanctuary units – a comparison between the aims and objectives of a unit in Tower Hamlets and one in Plymouth

5 Youth and community tutors – their role in new development areas
Case studies of Estover and Crowhill

6 Community studies in urban areas
A policy for social control Reference – Stonehouse, Plymouth

7 An EPA secondary school and its relations with the local community –
Trelawney School case study, Plymouth

8 The Frederick Street Centre
An evaluation of a community centre in an urban area in Plymouth

"Since 1973, one college has set up, far from its main campus, an urban studies centre in the East End of London. Here some of its BEd and PGCE students spend 13 weeks and others up to five months. During this time they teach for three days a week in a local multi-racial school and for the other two they are engaged, wherever possible, in school-related social or community work. As an external examiner, I have seen some of these students in action and witnessed the resilience and the growth of awareness shown by virtually everyone. Many of the former students who stayed at the centre are now teaching in the area. This is perhaps the most thorough attempt to date to come to deeper terms with attitude formation in this field, among both staff and students".

Ken Millins, *Times Educational Supplement*, June 1981

Teachers for the Inner City is the story of this experiment.