



Philosophy of Education

The Key Concepts

SECOND EDITION

Christopher Winch and John Gingell

ROUTLEDGE



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PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

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Christopher Winch is Professor of Educational Philosophy and Policy at King's College, London.

John Gingell is head of Philosophy programmes at the University of Northampton.

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PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The Key Concepts

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Christopher Winch and John Gingell

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KEY CONCEPTS

aesthetic/artistic education	definition
accountability	democracy
achievement	deschooling
action research	development
advising	discipline
affirmative action	discourse
aims of education	discovery learning
apprenticeship	diversity
assessment	education
attention/attentiveness	effectiveness
authority	elitism
autonomy	emotions
behaviourism	entitlement
<i>Bildung</i>	epistemology
ensorship	equality
citizenship education	erotic
co-education	essentially contested concepts
cognitivism	excellence
common good	existentialism
common sense	experience
communitarianism	experts
compensatory education	expression (free)
competence	faith schools
competition and cooperation	feminism
compulsion	genre
concept formation	giftedness
conservatism	globalisation
constructivism	good practice
creativity	health education
critical thinking	higher education
culture	homosexuality
curriculum	human nature

idealism	play
ideology	pluralism
imagination	political economy
individuality	postmodernism
indoctrination	practical education
inspection	pragmatism
instrumentalism	prefiguration
intelligence	process
judgement	progressivism
justice	psycholinguistics
justification	public schools
knowledge	punishment
leadership	quality
learning	racism
leisure	rationality
liberal education	reading
liberation	reconstructivism
literacy	reductionism
markets	reflective teaching
Marxism	relativism
means and ends	Religious Education
memory	research
metanarratives	rights
metaphysics	rules
mixed ability	schools and schooling
moral education	school choice
motivation	scientific method
multiculturalism	selection
narrative	self-respect
nationalism	sex and gender
nature/nurture	sex education
needs	skills
neutrality	social cohesion
objectivity	socialisation
open learning	sociolinguistics
oppression	sociology of knowledge
paradigm case arguments	special education/learning
parental	disabilities
paternalism	spiritual education
pedagogy	standards
philosophy	stereotypes
physical education	teaching as a practice

teaching (and its relationship with learning)	utilitarianism
theory and practice	utopianism
tolerance	virtue theory
training	vocationalism
transcendental arguments	work
truth	writing

INTRODUCTION

Key Concepts in the Philosophy of Education (2nd edition) is an in-depth glossary which, it is hoped, will provide students and teachers of philosophy of education and other people interested in the subject with a useful reference book on key theoretical terms and, where appropriate, the various debates surrounding them. The glossary also gives historical overviews of key debates. The entries vary in length according to the importance the authors have attached to each topic. They have been selected through the authors' experience of what is needed for a comprehensive course in the philosophy of education, through comments and suggestions from Routledge referees, colleagues and students, and, finally, a careful survey of the literature in the philosophy of education over the past fifty years.

All cross-references are in bold. Sometimes the actual concept referred to may not be in the precise form in the entry. Readers are advised to read an entry that interests them and then to use the cross-references as a means of further exploring the area of controversy that they are interested in. Bibliographical citations within entries actually refer to the bibliography at the end of the book.

Although the book is jointly authored, the final text is the result of close cooperation and discussion between us. However, one author took primary responsibility for each entry and, although (for philosophers) we are in remarkably close agreement on most of the issues discussed in this book, there are inevitably differences in emphasis and outlook, which are reflected in the tone of the entries themselves. We have decided not to eliminate completely the authentic 'authorial voice' of the two authors as we feel that an individual point of view and style of approach are an intrinsic feature of philosophical writing. We do not mean that it is impossible to co-author extended pieces of philosophical writing, since this has been done very successfully by many philosophers. However, given the range of topics

that we discuss, it would have been little short of a miracle for such a commonality of views to have emerged in every entry. What we have striven to do, therefore, is to arrive at entries that both of us are, philosophically speaking, reasonably comfortable with in a small minority of cases and very happy with in the great majority.

Finally, instead of a list of contents in the traditional style, we have provided a list of the concepts dealt with in this book. Cross-references are provided within the text.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The Key Concepts

AESTHETIC/ARTISTIC EDUCATION

On surveying the titles of books and articles within philosophy of education concerned with the topic of aesthetic or artistic **education** there seems to be, initially, a large body of work dealing with this area. There is a series of books by Best (1978, 1985, 1992), a substantial literature on **creativity** and important articles by Hepburn (1960, 1972). However, closer scrutiny of this material shows that very little of it has to do with either aesthetic or artistic education. Rather, it has to do with using the arts as a way of educating something else. Thus, Hepburn argues (1972) that the arts – and especially literature – are of importance in the education of the **emotions**. Best holds that the value of the arts is in their contribution to our understanding of ‘the human condition and other aspects of life’ (1985: 186). The literature concerning creativity, although it may touch upon aesthetic or artistic appreciation, only does so in the context of teaching people to produce works of art. What we have in this literature is either an emphasis on practice or the embodiment of a tradition that goes back at least to Plato which insists that the significance of the arts must be cognitive or moral. And these attitudes are reflected in the **curriculum** in schools. So, for instance, music education is essentially about learning to play an instrument or to sing. Literature functions as a part of learning a language and tends to be approached as if it was essentially didactic, and art history has trouble finding any place on a curriculum. (Before the introduction of the National Curriculum in England and Wales in 1988 there was little, if any, art history taught before children were 16. At present there is some concern to see that children appreciate, say paintings, but it is a concern that looks like vanishing almost before it has been established and it stops far short of offering art history as a distinct subject on the pre-A level curriculum.)

But all of this is terribly odd! Whilst it may be perfectly true that lessons for life may be learned from art – if you want to understand human beings, then reading Jane Austen or Henry James is a better bet than perusing the latest **behaviourist** textbook – it is also true that Austen and James are novelists not psychologists and have to be appreciated as such and that the vast majority of art simply does not have this kind of cognitive or moral loading. It is difficult, for instance, to see what moral messages music is supposed to deliver and the notion that it functions as an articulation of human feelings has been much criticised (Beardsley 1958; Dickie 1997). To see art as simply instructive both makes mysterious our approach to it – the

person listening with rapt attention to a Mozart concerto for the hundredth time must be seriously stupid if they have yet to get the message – and trivialises it – because it treats works of art as if they are simply containers for something else. If we think that the value of Monet is that he enables us to look at the countryside in a different way then we are doing a grave disservice to both Monet in particular and painting in general.

This is not to endorse either a purely formalist view of art – which seems just as open to criticism as a purely expressive or mimetic view of art (see Beardsley 1958; Dickie 1997) – or to hold that art is merely entertainment. It is to insist that art is, in and for itself, serious (so serious that many people can spend their lives concerned with it in various ways) but its seriousness is not as a means to other (e.g. educational) ends, but rather as an end in itself. Artistic achievement is one of the great forms of human achievement – perhaps the greatest and it is as such that it ought to be studied.

ACCOUNTABILITY

‘Accountability’ refers to a moral relationship created when someone gives to someone else an undertaking to do something. This second party is either someone in **authority** who trusts the first party or someone who has committed resources for the act to be carried out. **Education**, whether carried out by the state or privately, fundamentally involves accountability relationships. Resources are committed to build schools, large amounts of time and energy are committed by children and teachers, and promises and contracts are made to provide educational goods and to strive to achieve them. However, unravelling the nature of accountability relationships in education is more difficult than merely stating that they exist.

One problem is the number and variety of interested and involved parties or *stakeholders*. The other is the long-term nature of most educational projects and the consequent difficulty in ascertaining when a promise made has in fact been kept. The difficulty becomes particularly acute in relation to publicly funded education because the stakeholders include: children (who commit trust, time and energy); parents (who are the primary custodians of childrens’ interests); taxpayers both private and corporate (who commit resources); governments (who deploy resources raised from taxation); and teachers (who commit time and energy). It is generally accepted that there is a moral obligation on the part of teachers to be accountable to

the various elements of society who have a stake in **education**, but there is far less agreement as to how that obligation is to be discharged. One extreme view, advocated by Chubb and Moe (1990) and Tooley (1995, 2001) is that market relationships, largely unmediated by the state, can do this job. However, for those for whom this is not an option there are large problems. Partly these consist of the fact that it is difficult to be against accountability, as such, even if you are against some of the present implementations of accountability procedures (Blacker 2003; Biesta 2004). But partly, it is because what some see in almost entirely negative terms, e.g. the audited self-review associated with the British Quality Assurance Agency; others see as the way forward for schools (Davis and White 2001).

Beyond this large dispute there are other issues that publicly funded education systems have to deal with, in ensuring accountability. The first is that of ensuring that the mix of **aims** adopted by the system is actually met and, if so, to what extent. The second is the question of whether one seeks to assess the effectiveness of the system *as a whole* or whether one seeks to assess individual units of educational activity, like schools and teachers. Answers to the first question will be compromised if there are no clear aims for the system, or if the stated aims do not reflect the wishes of some of the stakeholders. Different answers to this latter question will lead to different forms of **assessment**. Pure market-led systems of accountability will mean that the impersonal forces of supply and demand will determine whether schools remain in business. Even market systems need indicators of effectiveness and there is not much consensus as to which are the best. The major alternatives are *customer satisfaction* (raising the question as to who exactly are the customers); *assessment results* (raising issues about whether results reflect effectiveness); *value-added measures* (which have their own epistemic problems); and **inspection** (which poses issues about subjectivity).

ACHIEVEMENT

The outcomes of education are usually characterised as the achievements of those who have been educated. These may be expressed in terms of whether or not the **aims** of education were fulfilled in relation to those individuals and to what degree. In order to find out what has been achieved one requires some form of **assessment**. Most non-educators tend to think of educational achievement in terms of scores achieved in tests or examinations and, maybe, they

wish to compare educational achievement against educational **standards**. Some have argued (e.g. Pring 1992) that, although achievements can be compared, standards cannot. The distinction between the two rests on the observation that in comparing achievements, or in assessing them, one is sometimes comparing them against a standard. Thus, if a student achieves 50 per cent in a test and 50 per cent is the score needed for grade C then that student meets the standard for the award of C.

However, low raw achievement does not necessarily imply a lack of educational success. A student may transform himself educationally to a great extent by starting from a low base and moving to a high one compared to where he was before but a low one compared with, say, national norms. Such a student has, in a real sense, achieved much. It is, however, much easier to assess achievement through the calibration of a test score than it is through a measure of transformation (see **effectiveness**) and measures of transformation are logically dependent on measures of achievement since they measure the gap between two measures of achievement. However, if testing is not adequate then the possibility of assessing achievement is also compromised. The main threat to adequate measures of achievement lies in their providing adequate validity. While this may seem like a technical problem in relation to some subjects like mathematics (but see Davis 1995, 1996) there are more daunting difficulties in measuring the achievement of other, less easily quantifiable, aims, such as **spiritual** awareness. There are further questions concerning the long-term achievements realised by education. Should one, for example, measure pre-school achievement in terms of adult social success and can this be done with any degree of accuracy (Schweinhart and Weikart 1980)?

Other issues arise concerning what is meant by achieving high standards. Is it better to eliminate low achievement than to raise high achievement? If one opts for high achievement does one mean by this that the achievement of some students should meet high standards, or that it is enough that one student meets very high absolute standards (see Cooper 1980; Winch 1996). Or again, does high achievement mean high rates of transformation for the most able students or for all? Is it worthwhile measuring achievement in terms of transformation or should one be more bothered about whether indigenous achievement meets standards accepted internationally? These questions suggest that simply claiming that an education system is achievement-oriented is not claiming very much. Questions about how achievement is to be conceptualised and which conceptualisation

is to be given most weight when evaluating educational activities are not only philosophical matters but political problems of some complexity.

ACTION RESEARCH

It is argued that teachers need research that tells them how to improve their classroom practice. Large-scale projects carried out in contexts remote from their own will not help them. In addition, the invidious model of teacher as practitioner and researcher as dispenser-of-**advice** deprives teachers of professional autonomy. The solution is to empower the teacher as a researcher in her own right (Stenhouse 1975). This entails, not just that teachers carry out research according to the suggestions of others, but that they set the research agenda and determine the methodology. In this way they are fully autonomous in directing the research process towards the resolution of their own professional concerns.

The action researcher will identify an issue that needs to be resolved. She will design an intervention and record the effects of its implementation, review the outcome and disseminate her results. She will carry out her research in her classroom, integrating it into her everyday work. The advantages can be seen in the enhancement of professional power that it gives to teachers together with control over the research agenda. In this respect, teachers are emulating the practice of higher-prestige professions such as medicine.

Potential disadvantages concern possible lack of expertise of the teacher-researcher, the limited validity and reliability of results obtained in such conditions, together with a possible waste of resources. However, a powerful coalition is building up over the years against the perceived irrelevance of much academic educational research (Hargreaves 1996), and some form of action research offers a way of addressing practical concerns.

ADVISING

There are some areas of academic concern which say as much about the context in which they originate as they do about the issues they address. Such is a short paper by Douglas Stewart 'An Analysis of Advising' (1978) which defends the giving of advice – in the particular contexts of counselling, moral education and professional guidance but the list could be much extended – against the charge that advisers are

seeking to control, dominate or manipulate the person being offered the advice or striving to decide, speak for or get such a person to do something. Stewart's analysis owes much to the analytical tradition of Austin and Searle (Austin 1962; Searle 1964) and his solution to the problem turns upon arguing that in giving advice I am aiming for an 'illocutionary' effect, i.e. to have the person being advised recognise and understand what is being said to him, rather than a 'perlocutionary' effect, i.e. having him actually do what he is advised to do. Unfortunately this distinction does not seem to do the trick. When we advise our students, in their own best interests, to read book *X* we want, if we are sincere, not merely that they recognise what is being said to them but that they, in their own best interests, actually do read *X*.

However, the success or failure of the analysis is by the way. Such a defence of such an everyday practice – even when such a practice is extended into professional spheres – is only apposite in a world partly gone mad! Without the giving and taking of advice such practices as child-rearing, education, friendship, training, medicine and much of the everyday commerce between human beings, e.g. 'My sink leaks ...' – 'Ah, what you need for that ...', would become impossible. Therefore, any rejection or resentment of such a practice – in terms of 'personal space', autonomy or what have you, shows a dangerous alienation from the realities of human life. If we have reached a situation in which some people are prepared to countenance such a rejection or harbour such a resentment we have reached a sorry state indeed.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

A strong version of the notion of **equality** of opportunity maintains that it does not obtain unless outcomes of educational processes are roughly the same for all groups. This condition will not obtain so long as they are denied equality of treatment. In order to ensure commensurate treatment it is necessary to change entry conditions so that some groups receive a comparative advantage. Only in this way will historic injustices be righted. Affirmative action could be seen as a group-oriented version of Nozick's (1974) idea of rectificatory **justice**. In addition, it has the advantage of encouraging people to avail themselves of opportunities who would not otherwise have done so, even if they had the potential.

Unfortunately people regard procedural justice as applying to individuals rather than groups and they see affirmative action

programmes as a violation of procedural justice (see Flew 1981). There are also problems with the links between equality of opportunity and outcome. There is no guarantee that equality of treatment will guarantee equality of outcome, given uneven distributions of interest, motivation and ability among individuals. If equality of outcome cannot be secured through changes to entry conditions then there is a temptation to intervene to produce inequalities of treatment within the educational process, in order to secure desired outcomes. But this strategy is likely to provoke further opposition as it can be argued that procedural justice is being further violated. Rectification for past wrongs to groups cannot be settled administratively, as educational outcomes are crucially tied to individual effort and talent.

AIMS OF EDUCATION

The aims of any system of education tell us what it is for. Since they embody the fundamental purposes of **education**, they determine the character of everything else: institutions, **curriculum**, **pedagogy** and **assessment**. To get clear about the aims of education is, therefore, to begin to clarify the rest. Just because aims are not written down, it does not mean that they do not exist. They can be implicit as well as explicit, and can be embodied in the everyday practices of teachers and students, as well as in government documents. Indeed, the printing of aims in a document is neither necessary nor sufficient for education to have aims, since documents can be ignored.

Society consists of different interest groups such as the government, the state apparatus, various groupings of citizens, businesses, children and educational professionals themselves, all of which may have influence over education. Accordingly, aims can be set by different groups within society acting in concert, in conflict, or in a spirit of compromise. The more there is agreement, the more likely that a consensus over aims is likely to be achieved. The less likely there is to be agreement, the more likely it is that aims will either be directly imposed by a powerful group such as the state, or they will in practice be set by those most directly concerned with education, namely teachers.

Education can have more than one aim, so long as aims are not mutually incompatible. It is not possible, for example, to aim to produce citizens who obey the state unquestioningly and at the same time to produce free spirits who are able to question any proposal that they encounter. Many aims are broadly compatible with each other but exist in a certain tension. Partly, this results from the limited

time available in any educational process. Partly, it is because some aims can only be *fully* achieved at the expense of others. A society which agrees on the range of aims it is going to pursue still has to agree on the relative weighting of each aim and the degree to which each should be prioritised.

There are different ways of categorising aims of education. One tradition emphasises the importance of education as an individual, liberal good with intrinsic value. Another tradition sees education as a public, as well as an individual good, with **instrumental**, as well as, or in contrast to, intrinsic value. Broadly speaking, the former tradition is called 'liberal, the latter 'instrumental'. Instrumental aims can be further classified into vocational, societal and personal. Seen in this way, there is no necessary incompatibility of these aims with each other, provided that the place of the others is recognised. It seems, for example, that someone could be educated to be autonomous as an intrinsic good for that individual, and at the same time learn to be a citizen and a productive member of the society. It is often thought, however, that at least some of these aims are incompatible with each other. Some are thought to be aims of **schooling** (Barrow 1981) rather than of education, others again are thought to be excessively favoured at the expense of others, instrumental over liberal, for example (Gray 1993). Writers who adopt either or both of these positions generally wish to homogenise the aims of education in favour of their own views.

Specifying aims of education in contrast to aims of schooling is illegitimate unless there is some independent criterion for distinguishing between education and schooling. To categorise aims as belonging to one rather than the other involves an attempt to define the respective spheres of education and schooling. This means that the distinction cannot be used as a criterion for classifying aims until it is properly sorted out. Attempts to show that education is unduly weighted in favour of some aims rather than others are not necessarily fallacious, but they do require argument and evidence in their support. Such arguments or evidence would need to show either that the favoured aims were unobtainable under the current system or that the weightings of different aims were, in some way, unfair.

It is time to look at major educational aims in more detail. There are three, related ways in which this can be done, as illustrated in Tables 1a, 1b and 1c. The alternative classifications show us: (a) that there is considerable overlap between different aims in terms of the sets of distinctions; (b) that social, instrumental and vocational aims are at least as, if not more, numerous than the intrinsic, individual and

Table 1a *Major educational aims: concern with the needs of society and with the needs of individuals*

<i>Individual needs</i>	<i>Social needs</i>
1 The promotion of autonomy	To promote economic development
2 To give the individual a secure cultural background	To preserve the society's culture
3 To give an individual the ability to take part in society through an occupation	To produce good citizens

Table 1b *Major educational aims: instrumental versus intrinsic aims*

<i>Instrumental</i>	<i>Intrinsic</i>
1 The promotion of autonomy	The promotion of autonomy
2 To give the individual a secure cultural background	To give the individual a secure cultural background
3 To give an individual the ability to take part in society through an occupation	To preserve the society's culture
4 To promote economic development	
5 To preserve the society's culture	
6 To produce good citizens	

Table 1c *Major educational aims: liberal versus vocational aims*

<i>Liberal</i>	<i>Vocational</i>
1 The promotion of autonomy	The promotion of autonomy
2 To give the individual a secure cultural background	To give the individual a secure cultural background
3 To preserve the society's culture	To give the individual the ability to take part in society through an occupation
4 To produce good citizens (?)	To promote economic development
5	To produce good citizens

liberal aims favoured by most philosophers of education; (c) that none of these aims is necessarily incompatible with each other, although the degree to which they can all be jointly implemented is, no doubt, limited; (d) that classification is often difficult.

These reflections suggest that the tendency to dichotomise aims along the lines suggested above is misguided if it is intended to sharply separate out two contrasting philosophies of education concerning aims which are largely incompatible with each other. Attempts to

debate the value of aims which use one-dimensional systems of classification or which see the terms of the debate as *exclusive* rather than *inclusive* either/or are in danger of missing both the diverse interests of those involved in setting educational aims and important philosophical distinctions in their classification.

Although there is a logical link between the aims of education and the curriculum, it does not follow that one can simply prescribe the curriculum having determined aims: first, because aims may be implicit, rather than explicit; second, because there may be more than one way of fulfilling educational aims; third, because one cannot simply dispense with cultural resources such as established subjects without a careful consideration of the gains and losses of such a procedure. Although the inclusion of subjects in the **curriculum** is ultimately justified by their service of educational aims, they do not have to appear like prisoners in the dock to plead for their lives at the tribunal of aims (cf. J. P. White 2007 for more on this).

APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeship is an ancient institution for **teaching** and **learning** in a **vocational** context. Its practical basis is the need for skills in professions, crafts and trades to be passed on from generation to generation. Its moral rationale rests on the need for the values and outlooks of occupations to be passed on. Typically, apprenticeship has involved a close relationship between the apprentice, or aspiring entrant into a craft, and the master, who is not only skilled in the craft, but a custodian of its values and traditions and, importantly, a teacher of those skills and values to the rising generation. Apprenticeship was, in the Middle Ages, the mode of reproduction for those crafts that were practised by associations of tradesmen known as guilds. Some commentators, notably Adam Smith (1981) saw a dark side to apprenticeship, claiming that it was nothing more than a self-serving attempt by guilds to control access to the labour market and to artificially bid up the price of labour.

Unlike the pupil–tutor relationship described in Rousseau (1911a) the apprentice–master relationship relies on the explicit inculcation of values and skills within the customs and rituals of the guild. The development of modern capitalism has undermined the guild system, but the practical and moral advantages of apprenticeship have been thought to be so advantageous to the economy and society in many countries, that apprenticeship has lived on as a means of on-the-job

education and **training** in many countries, achieving perhaps its most highly developed modern form in contemporary Germany (see Streeck 1992). It is important to realise that the apprentice–master relationship as it evolved in Western Europe is not one of ‘learning with Nellie’ or ‘learning by osmosis’ but of structured didacticism within the context of an established curriculum. Attempts by Frank Smith (1985) and others to promote *laissez-faire* methods of learning to read as ‘apprenticeship’ are, therefore, misleading.

ASSESSMENT

Questions about assessment within education typically concern two areas: whether we should have assessment at all within our education system – and, if we are to have it, what type or types we should have. It is *usually* the first type of question that is seen as philosophically interesting, the second being thought of as a technical matter of concern for the practitioners of different subjects.

The idea that we might do away with all assessment within education is likely to be regarded with puzzlement – and perhaps glee – by the average teacher about to mark, say, the maths exercises of a class of thirty pupils. Glee, because this is a tedious task, puzzlement, because it is a task that most teachers would see as a necessary part of the teaching and learning of mathematics.

This common sense reaction is essentially correct. However, from time to time some theorists have suggested that we abolish assessment either within part of the education system or throughout. Lerner has suggested (1972) that it should be possible to do courses at university without being assessed, whilst the group of theorists called the **deschoolers** have wished to abolish all assessment within the education system. Both suggestions have met with vigorous replies. With regard to the first suggestion Flew, in what is perhaps the authoritative text on the purposes of educational assessment, pointed out that education by its very nature involves **teaching** and **learning** and that to be involved in either – in their usual intentional senses – is to be involved in trying to bring about the mastery by someone, i.e. the learner, of some piece of possible **knowledge**. But if someone is *sincerely* trying to learn something or trying to teach someone to learn something then they must, necessarily, be concerned whether, how far, and how well they are succeeding. And they cannot claim to be so concerned unless they take steps to find out the answers to these questions. Such attempts to find out are what we mean by ‘assessment’

(Flew 1976). Flew's point is perfectly general, i.e. it applies to all *sincere* teaching and learning. But it is also open with regard to forms of assessment, i.e. it doesn't imply, for instance, that we must have written, timed examinations. It could be argued that Flew's position can be strengthened here. The sincerity of purpose he bases his argument upon could be thought to justify not merely some form of assessment but some efficient form of assessment that also has as its primary aim the improvement of teaching and learning, what is sometimes known as 'formative assessment'. That is, the form of assessment used has to be shown to be likely – within the limitations of assessment generally – to produce a reasonable answer to the questions posed.

The reply to the deschoolers was mounted by Barrow (1978) who convincingly demonstrated that the main force of their arguments is generated by confusing four distinct elements of assessment. These are, first, grading, which is any attempt to distinguish people's competence in any matter by any means. Second, certification, which is the business of making one's grading public by means of certificates or degrees. Third, the use of examinations as a means to grade. Fourth, the use of other means of assessment, for example, continuous assessment or the intuitive judgement of teachers. And he shows that whilst there may be pertinent questions to be raised with regard to each of these areas individually (for example, is there too much certification in society and is it used in a reasonable manner?) there is a strong case for some forms of grading within education, because education must involve standards of competence and we must have ways of measuring progress with regards to such standards. And he makes a case that some certification is useful within society, so that we do need a system with regard to items as diverse as ability at mathematics and car-driving skills which tells us whether people are basically proficient at such things. This point might be made stronger by the consideration that the public education system within any democratic country should be **accountable** to the public at large, and one of the ways that such accountability most easily operates is by examination of the processes of certification (Barrow 1978).

Recent philosophical writing about assessment has not seemed to have the wide sweep of the issues raised above, but has been both interesting and important. It has been suggested that if we want a school system which imparts 'rich' knowledge to its pupils then the ways we currently use to assess pupils, e.g. the standards and tests associated with the English National Curriculum, are likely to be either valid but not reliable, or reliable but not valid. That is, that such