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BBC School Broadcasting, Progressivism in Education and Literacy 1957-1979

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PhD Thesis

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<u>Abstract</u>

This thesis accounts for the history of BBC television and radio programmes made for use in schools, their relationship with educational progressivism, and the application of linguistic theory to literacy programmes in the period 1957-1979. School broadcasting has been neglected by the disciplines of education and media history. The thesis uses educational literacy broadcasting as a route to link the history of linguistic theory with media and communications research. A historical documentary and oral interview research method has been used, with the addition of a linguistic theoretical analysis. The thesis finds that BBC school broadcasting played a leading part in curriculum resource development, and was a valuable and unique part of the education system. It was popular with the grassroots of teachers but was overall not well integrated statutorily with the main institutional domains in the education system; teacher training institutions, local education authorities and the government. The orthodoxy in educational theory, progressivism, had an ambivalent attitude towards educational media. School broadcasting changed the education system by leading a system of resource-based schooling. School broadcasting sat uncomfortably in the BBC due to its anomalous format, aims and audience. School radio especially was a gradually declining priority. The system of accompanying publications was vital to the effective functioning of the service, but suffered by competing in a commercial educational book market. Literacy television series began in the 1960s with a collaboration with Joyce Morris, who pioneered phonics as a method of teaching reading. The BBC's series used the strengths of television to lead national provision. Other parts of the literacy provision followed 'real books' methods and commissioned leading writers. Literacy series for the early years were influenced by sociolinguistic theories of class and language and later reflected child-centred methods. The success of BBC school broadcasting depended on its attachment to public service broadcasting and aired of the question of the status of mediated experience.

Declaration

I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.

Acknowledgements

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to Kirsty, Cyd and Ray

Steven Barclay, May 2021

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Glossary

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CCSB	Central Council for School Broadcasting
CEB	Controller Educational Broadcasting
DES	Department for Education and Science
EO	Education Officer
FEAC	Further Education Advisory Council
HCP	Head of Children's Programmes
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HSBTEL	Head of School Broadcasting Television
HSBR	Head of School Broadcasting Radio
IBA	Independent Broadcasting Authority
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
IOE	Institute of Education (formerly London Day Training College (LDTC))
ITA	Independent Television Authority
ITA	Initial Teaching Alphabet
LATE	London Association of Teaching English
LEA	Local Education Authority
LDTC	London Day Training College (later Institute of Education (IOE))
MOE	Ministry of Education
NATE	National Association of Teaching English
NCET	National Council for Educational Technology
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NUT	National Union of Teachers
OU	Open University
SC	Schools Council
SEO	Senior Education Officer
SBC	School Broadcasting Council

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SSBC   Secretary School Broadcasting Council

PART 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a history of BBC school broadcasting and its relationship with educational progressivism through its programming to support literacy in schools. At the peak of BBC school broadcasting in the early 1980s over 200 different series were broadcast, used by over 90% of UK schools. This thesis argues that this formed a de facto national curriculum and played a leading role in curriculum resource development.

BBC school broadcasting comprised radio and television programmes and accompanying publications for the education of school age children. It began on radio in 1924 and on television in 1957 and increased steadily to a peak in range and quantity in the early 1980s. It was governed from 1929 by an advisory body known as the Central Council for School Broadcasting (CCSB), later renamed the School Broadcasting Council (SBC). The BBC distinguished its 'educative' programming, which could be represented by its general output, from its strictly 'educational' programming, (Reith 1924:147, Briggs 1965: 185)) which included school, further education and higher education broadcasting. School broadcasting and the CCSB/SBC were funded entirely by the BBC. School broadcasting declined because of a change of government in 1979, the 1988 Education Act and the 1990 Broadcasting Act, and an increasing marginalisation within the BBC and the educational world.

To understand school broadcasting it is also necessary to understand the leading movement in educational philosophy and pedagogy in the period: progressivism. Progressivism was associated with child-centred and discovery methods and the idea of experience as the foundation of education. It flourished particularly in primary schools between 1944 and the late 1970s and transformed teaching practice, but declined as a result of educational policies from then onwards. Progressivism is associated, though not identical, with another feature of the history of education in the same period: the egalitarian extension of education. BBC Schools had a complex, sometimes contradictory relationship with progressivism due to its institutional, material and technological status.

A key part of BBC Schools' output was series designed to educate for literacy, including reading, writing and to a lesser extent speaking. The principal focus of this thesis is on series which were primarily for reading education. Literacy education is determined by linguistics or theories of language. Literacy is a theoretical tool for exploring the relationship between media and education and examining the status of mediated experience. It is through this concept of experience that the three areas of concern to this thesis: broadcasting, education and language, can be linked.

The core period covered by this thesis is 1957 to 1979, and the extended period covered is 1924 to 1990. Parts 1, 2 and 3 refer to the extended period and Part 4 focuses on the core period

The thesis is principally a historical investigation and follows a methodology based on documentary archive sources, oral interviews, and secondary literature. However because it is a history of the application of theories of language to broadcasting, an engagement with linguistic theory and informal linguistic analysis was also necessary. This has produced a theoretical fusion of historical analyses with linguistic analyses.

Motivation

The motivation for this research is that the 'educate' part of the BBC's traditional roles; to educate, inform and entertain, has been neglected both in scholarship and by the BBC itself. With its very particular audience and aims, educational broadcasting has always sat uneasily within the BBC. In academia it falls between the two stools of media or education studies. This is perhaps why this topic, which is of such far reaching consequence, has not been given the attention it deserves. We no longer presume that broadcasting has any integral role to play in the national education system. Yet at the same time, new electronic and online media are more penetrative in classrooms than broadcasting ever was. What has changed is the ability (or willingness) of the BBC, an institution[1] with the cultural reach and resources necessary to populate these media with what is now almost an anachronism: school broadcasting.[2] The task of education is left almost entirely to schools, colleges and universities.

I argue that this is a mistake for two reasons: firstly history shows that schools and media are not and have never been mutually exclusive. Broadcasting was part of the education system in a significant and undervalued way. The building of a fair, democratic, classless and effective education system and the building of a broadcasting and media sector with the same aims, have been two of the key progressive projects of twentieth century UK history. Despite great efforts they remain works in progress. Many people tried hard to tie the two projects together in mutual aid. Secondly despite the periods of co-development and shared themes, there remains a division of remit between these spheres – and this is a good thing because it represents the existence of alternative means towards education.

Personal Background and Aims

This thesis has two aims: a sketch of a general history of BBC school broadcasting; and specifically a history of the application of linguistics to BBC school literacy broadcasting. My original interest in the topic was sparked by working as an editor of educational films for an independent production company. I became interested in the history of educational films and began researching. In my master's degree in Film Studies I took an extra course in the

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[1] Or institutions –ITV was also important.

[2] After writing this paragraph, the landscape of school broadcasting suddenly changed dramatically and unforeseeably, when an extensive school broadcasting service temporarily returned to the BBC for children who were unable to attend school during the lockdowns of 2020-21. This period is not covered by the thesis but it will suffice to say that the programming which resulted was of a different and more limited character to that which is the subject of this thesis. As of the date of submission, this had ceased and it remains to be seen what its long term legacy will be. The substance of the paragraph remains valid.

department of psychology on educational psychology. The study of language in education inspired me to rediscover the philosophy of language and linguistics I had earlier studied in my undergraduate degree. I realised that linguistics applied to education and to media, and most importantly, that this had a history in the form of literacy school broadcasting. For my MA thesis I performed a linguistic analysis of some school broadcasting programmes and films.

However as I investigated the theory and intentions behind them, it became obvious that the basic historical spadework had not yet been done on the topic. It was an important historical phenomenon that had not been accounted for in either media or education historiography. I realised that this meant that my analysis was in something of a scholarly vacuum and was producing rather esoteric, if interesting results. Prior to beginning this PhD, I shifted my research focus. I did not intend to write a general history of school broadcasting, so I chose a route that could take from both elements. This would be a history of the application of linguistic theory to school broadcasting.

It is not possible to separate the history of literacy programmes from the history of school broadcasting in general. Furthermore the history of the application of linguistic research to school broadcasting only made sense in the context of educational research and theory in general. Therefore I also examined the effects of progressivism, the dominant paradigm for educational theory in the period, on literacy and school broadcasting. It proved decisive in understanding both.

Contribution to Knowledge

Therefore the thesis contributes to knowledge in three broad areas. Firstly it offers a general history of school broadcasting, collected in a single work and with detailed historical and conceptual analysis. It offers the historical investigation of topics that have not been covered elsewhere (in any detail), including the post-1974 period of school broadcasting in general, the role of the SBC, government policy on school broadcasting, school broadcasting's contribution to the school curriculum, the conceptual role of school broadcasting in the education system, the institutional position of school broadcasting in the BBC, school publications and literacy school broadcasting 1957-1979.

Secondly it offers a systematic combination of broadcasting and education history. It offers a conceptualisation of school broadcasting in theory and pedagogy, and a comparison historically and conceptually with the leading educational theory of progressivism.

Thirdly it offers a historical analysis of the role of theories of language in educational media. It offers an examination of how theories of language were expressed through school broadcasting and the BBC more broadly. It offers an examination of how the BBC as a public service broadcaster faced the question of what experiences to mediate as educational.

Exclusions

This not an audience study and does not focus on teachers, school children or educational effects. It is not about ITV even though ITV produced almost as much school television as the BBC in the period. It is not a study of 'media literacy', but of literacy in the normal sense of reading and writing.

Terminology

BBC school broadcasting was a complex phenomenon with various parts. The first distinction to be made is between the School Broadcasting Council (SBC) and the BBC department. The SBC was the advisory body which was not directly involved in programme making. The 'department' was the BBC staff who made the programmes. 'Department' is a misnomer as the schools service comprised two departments; the school television and school radio departments. I usually speak of them together for convenience. I refer to the SBC and the department together as the 'service', or 'BBC Schools' (a useful term but not used consistently by the BBC). 'The output' refers to the broadcasting and publications made by BBC Schools.

The government department responsible for education had several different names during the period; the Board of Education (BOE) (1900-1944), The Ministry of Education (MOE) (1944-1964) and the Department of Education and Science (DES) (1964-92). When referring to this body in the whole period I will use 'DES'. The DES was made up of two elements; Her Majesty's Inspectorate, which consisted of school inspectors, called HMI's, and the department proper. The local government organisations responsible for schools in their areas were called local education authorities (LEAs).

See Glossary for a full list of acronyms.

Overview of Contents

Part 1 covers the Introduction, the Historical Framework, the Theoretical Framework and the Methodology and Research Questions. The fusion of different bodies of theory in the thesis has necessitated a wide-ranging and in-depth theoretical framework.

Parts 2 to 4 comprise the empirical findings and analysis. Part 2, about BBC school broadcasting in the national system of education, comprises four chapters. It is an overview of the major factors of influence, the important features of BBC School Broadcasting as a system and how these changed over time. Its orientation is towards the world outside the BBC. Chapter 1 explains the purpose of CCSB/SBC, how it worked and how it changed over time. Chapter 2 explains the stance of government towards school broadcasting. Chapter 3 explains how school broadcasting related practically to educational theory and practice, through the curriculum. Chapter 4 explains the output of BBC Schools in its own terms, as an alternative or innovation compared to normal education system.

Part 3 is an institutional history of BBC Schools, through different lenses. It comprises two chapters. Chapter 5 concerns the position of BBC Schools within the BBC. Chapter 6 explains the history of school publications.

Part 4 looks at a specific area of BBC Schools, literacy programming. It is a case study of curriculum development and programme production in a specific curriculum area. It examines in detail the application of linguistic theory to school broadcasting. It comprises three chapters. Chapter 7 concerns literacy programmes in the 1960s. Chapter 8 concerns the literacy elements in early years school broadcasting. Chapter 9 gives an account of literacy programmes in the late 1970s, in the context of debates surrounding educational practice and policy in that period.

After this is the Conclusion, which draws together analyses from all preceding chapters. This is followed with Appendices A, B and C with statistical and extra information.

Research Questions and Methodology

Research Questions

1. What factors affected the success of BBC school broadcasting?

2. What role did the School Broadcasting Council play in BBC school broadcasting?

3. What was the relationship between BBC school broadcasting and educational research?

4. How was progressivism in educational theory expressed through BBC school broadcasting literacy programmes?

5. How was linguistic theory expressed through BBC School broadcasting literacy programmes?

These questions are listed in the rough order that they are tackled in the empirical chapters 1-9.

Evidence and Methodology

The methodology for this thesis is qualitative historical research: evaluating primary sources to build a picture of the past. This allows a straightforward way of dealing with a large quantity of material and is appropriate for the mapping of a largely unexplored topic. A part of the thesis, compiling the appendices, used quantitative methods, using figures gathered from archive and secondary sources. I consulted a wide range of secondary sources on UK education and media history and linguistics.

There are two main sources of primary evidence for this thesis – the BBC Written Archive and the oral interviews conducted by the author. The written archive is useful for policy decisions and organisational direction setting and for a chronology of important events and developments in educational broadcasting. The BBC Written Archive is rich and detailed. I saw many files that had previously not been looked at and required vetting. Almost nothing was redacted.

I consulted another archive, The Institute of Education Special Collections archive which contains the Broadcast for Schools publications collection and the Radiovision collection[3]. Unfortunately due to the pandemic I was not able to peruse this as fully as I had intended, nor visit the National Archive which would have been particularly relevant for the chapter on school broadcasting and government.

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[3] Where I also pursued a separate digitisation project.

I conducted oral interviews with 15 former BBC and SBC staff. Oral evidence is good for details of processes that were not recorded (as was the case for most production work), for institutional politics and information about networks outside the BBC. The SBC produced voluminous reports and correspondence whereas department staff left much less archival trace of their work. Two interviewees began their BBC careers in the 1950s, 4 in the 1960s, 8 in the 1970s and 1 in the 1980s. Most ended their careers in the 1990s. The oral evidence was therefore richest for the 1970s and 1980s, whereas archive evidence was evenly spread. The evidence the interviewees offered was invaluable as a check and a corroboration of archival evidence. Oral interviewing brings forth some ethical considerations as inevitably it implicates the interviewee in the research process. As with any historical work which engages with a large institution, there is a danger of adopting an inappropriately defensive or celebratory attitude. I have tried to offer an objective assessment of the failings and achievements of the BBC.

When I began approaching interviewees, I explained that I was looking specifically for information about the SBC or on literacy programmes. At first most contacts, who understandably only wanted to participate in something that was relevant to us both, politely declined. I realised that in order to get useful material, it was necessary to include some people who had not worked on literacy or English series (7/15 interviewees worked on English, literacy or foreign language programmes, 5 on other subjects, 2 for the SBC and 1 on publications). This worked well and enriched the project enormously. I began by asking them about their early life and their experience of education. I then asked them about career prior to joining the BBC, which in most cases was a teaching career. I then asked about their BBC career, addressing the themes of the thesis. What emerged was a set of personal stories which were a fascinating record of the period in their own right and could have formed the basis for a quite different project. Some were reluctant to discuss anything that was not strictly relevant to their BBC career, and those who were, offered personal material on the basis that it was to support the main objectives of the research rather than for itself. Little of these life histories found its way into the thesis, but was invaluable in guiding and framing my conclusions. There was some variance of recollection. I generally did not include details about personalities and relationships, even if interviewees had been happy to put them on record.

A third source of evidence, which could be classed as either secondary or primary was published sources from the period such as reports from educational research institutions. BBC school broadcasting publications also fall into this category. Some theoretical or historical works which were published during the period as secondary, are indicative of attitudes and evidence and thus become primary.

The methodological status of linguistics in this thesis is more difficult to explain. I did not perform formal textual analysis in the manner of linguists or multi-modal analysts (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996, Forceville 2002). Instead I pursued a history of the application of linguistic theory. This required some informal analysis of programmes and publications in a qualitative way. School broadcasts prior to the 1960s were generally not preserved. There is greater survival from the 1960s onwards but the BBC Audio Visual archive is not routinely made available to researchers. However there were enough recordings available to the author informally for research purposes, including the main literacy series examined in Part 4. An

exception was the Radiovision collection, which has been accessible to the author and gave a good overall impression of School Radio output.

The tendency with linguistics is to assume that it stands apart from history, and claim that what is true of it has always been true and always will be. I do not deny that research in that vein worthwhile, as it allows a detailed understanding of concepts. Nonetheless there is a tendency when aiming to describe reality in this way, to identify only general or typical states of affairs. What a historical methodology offers is a view of reality itself, by examining what really has been said and done. Conversely, media history sometimes ignores the importance of linguistic theories in explaining socio-political contexts of communication. Therefore this is a hybrid kind of thesis: it is about language, education and broadcasting, and about the history of these things. Taking them together suggested the research questions posed and provided an effective way of addressing them.

Historical Framework

This framework sets out the timeline of events referred to in the rest of the thesis. Some details are left till the main body Chapters 1-9 for ease of explanation. The histories of relevant theories are mainly dealt with in the Theoretical Framework. This chapter has six parts; 1924-1944, 1944-1957, 1957-1970, 1970-1979, 1979-1990 and 1990-2008. Each covers education history and BBC educational broadcasting history. The first school broadcasts were in 1924, and 2008 is a convenient end point due to the collapse of BBC school broadcasting following the cancellation of BBC Jam. The core period of the thesis is 1957-1979 so this will be covered in greater detail.

1924-1944
Education

Mass state education dates from the 1870 Education Act. This was governed at national level by the government's Board of Education, but schools were managed at local level by local education authorities (LEAs). In the 1920s state education had a roughly dual structure. Elementary schools covered basic schooling up to the age of 14 and were intended for the working class. Secondary schools overlapped with elementaries in age range, but went on higher and could prepare pupils for professional jobs or university. They were mainly the preserve of the middle class. There existed a parallel private school system dominating access to elite roles (which has remained largely untouched by legislation to the present day). Central government had retreated from prescribing the school curriculum by the 1940s and instead placed this in the hands of LEAs (Gordon and Lawton 1978).

Movements for political and social reform focused on the demand for secondary education for all. Movements for reform of pedagogy were largely motivated by philosophical beliefs, recently given some impetus by theorists such as Freud, Piaget and Dewey. The educational theory and practice of 'progressivism' began to spread, as rote learning and the three Rs were replaced with activity methods and a more expansive curriculum. Progressivism could mean many things, but central to it was the idea of allowing the freedom to explore individual interests through discovery, summed up by the characterisation 'child-centred', (contrasted with 'subject-centred'). It also became associated with developmental psychology. The series of government 'Hadow' Reports showed the crossover of progressivism into official circles (Hadow 1926, 1931, 1933). The London Day Training College (LDTC), the largest teacher training institution in Britain (and the host of many prominent educational thinkers), became the Institute of Education (IOE) in 1932.

School Broadcasting

The British Broadcasting Company was formed in 1922. Its National Advisory Committee on Education was formed in 1923. The first school broadcast was in February 1924. JC Stobart,

formerly of the government's Board of Education, was appointed the first BBC Director of Education in May 1924. Mary Somerville was appointed Stobart's assistant in 1925. Both the News and Talks divisions were originally classified under Education, though were later carved off (Briggs 1965: 187). The BBC's royal charter, granted in 1927, did not ask for educational broadcasting specifically but Director General John Reith intended a prominent place for it in the BBC's mission (Reith 1924). The first school broadcasts were not widely regarded as successful. Stobart originally conceived them as "lectures"[4]. Many LEAs were sceptical of the quality of the broadcasts and radio sets were still relatively scarce and difficult to operate. LEAs typically did not prioritise funding the purchase of radios and the Board of Education refused to provide extra money. Somerville led 'The Kent Experiment' in 1927, to investigate what teachers required from the service. This recommended the formation of advisory machinery which became the Central Council for School Broadcasting (CCSB) in 1929. The CCSB helped give the service credibility with the educational world and with government. The Hadow Report on broadcasting and education recommended the expansion of adult educational broadcasting (1928). The education division was separated into an adult section headed by RS Lambert from 1927, and a school section headed by Somerville from 1931.

The 1930s saw steady progress under Somerville. Primary school broadcasting began in 1934 including the innovative, popular and long running *Music and Movement* and a breakthrough in technique was made with Rhoda Power's dramatized history series. The CCSB was given a permanent staff in 1935. During the war the CCSB met less often and publications were suspended. But the lesser reliance on publications caused further improvements in pure programme technique and school broadcasting continued to grow in sophistication and popularity (Bailey 1957: 39).

1944-1957
Education

The 1944 Education Act was of huge significance to the education system. The act can be seen partly in the context of an expanding welfare state. The act abolished elementary schools and introduced primary schools as a distinct stage. It raised the school leaving age to 15 and provided free education for all. However it was in many ways ideologically conservative. Secondary pupils were segregated into a tripartite system based on a test at the age of 11.[5] Technical schools were for children who worked best with "applied sciences and arts"; grammar schools were for those interested in "learning for its own sake, who can grasp an argument or follow a piece of connected reasoning"; and secondary moderns were for those who deal "more easily with concrete things rather than with ideas" (Norwood 1943: 2–3). This was not explicitly intended to be a hierarchical system (the act intended "parity of esteem" for the types of school (Norwood 1943: 14)) but it was widely interpreted this way and arguably this was its implicit motivation. It required LEAs to handle the transition to the new system in their own areas.

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[4] "A Broadcasting University", *Radio Times*, 13 June 1924, 2.
[5] In England and Wales.

The 1950s was characterised by the building of this new system, which was not seriously questioned at first. Britain entered a period of increased social mobility, meritocracy, income equality, and educational opportunity. Opinions varied widely at the time (and have done since) on how far the act can be identified with this (Kynaston 2010, Young 1958). The government struggled with persistent balance of payments deficits to finance post-war reconstruction and the creation of the welfare state. Educational reconstruction, which included an extensive school building programme and the recruitment of more teachers, lagged behind other policy areas.

While the funding for state education came from central government, responsibility for using budgets, and for many other matters including curriculum, lay with LEAs, whose policies differed. Scotland and Northern Ireland each retained separate traditions and systems. Most primaries were 'streamed' (the selection of pupils within schools into separate classes according to ability), to maximise success in the 11+ (Simon 1991: 152). Few technical schools were built.

School Broadcasting

The reform of BBC radio into a tripartite division of Light, Home and Third programmes resembled the tripartite division of secondary schools (Curran and Seaton 2018: 302-306), but school radio was not divided correspondingly. The CCSB was reconstituted as the SBC in 1947 and separate broadcasting councils were set up for Scotland and Wales. John Scupham was appointed head of school broadcasting in 1950. A pilot experiment of school television took place in 1952 but it was not adopted. School broadcasting steadily expanded in range and quantity. The Beveridge Report on Broadcasting of 1951 emphasised its achievements and potential (Beveridge 1951: paras 269-279), and an HMI pamphlet of 1952 further facilitated its acceptance in schools. Production by BBC Schools had recovered its pre-war level by 1949/50, when around 55 separate series being produced received in 23,000 schools, 55 separate pamphlets were produced to sales of 3.1m. By 1956/57, 60 separate pamphlets were produced, to sales of 6.7m, and broadcasts were received by 29,000 schools.

1957-1970
Education

The 1960s saw expansion and innovation in many different areas of education. In the 1960s education was increasingly seen as an instrument of policy in tackling social problems (Jenks 1996: 43). Sociology attained a new authority in political life and was applied in part to educational policy, though results were mixed. The social researchers Jackson and Marsden found "the old purpose of education - the training of a ruling elite - has not collapsed under the new purpose - the training of enough able people to man our technological society." (1966: 249-50).

The most significant development in school education was the questioning of the selective tripartite system and its partial replacement with non-selective 'comprehensive' schools. Sociologists showed that the tripartite system discriminated against the working class (Floud, Halsey and Martin, 1956). Psychologists now questioned the doctrine of inherent intelligence which underpinned the 11+ and instead emphasised environmental and social factors in educational attainment (Vernon 1957). The tipping point in public opinion came in 1963 and is exemplified by the Conservative Minister for Education Edward Boyle's claim that "all children should have an equal opportunity of acquiring intelligence." (Newsom 1963: Foreword). Labour adopted a policy of comprehensivisation. Once in government, this was enacted through an instruction to LEAs to make plans accordingly, Circular 10/65, in 1965. The reform meant a derestriction of class-bound educational opportunity, but was not compulsory or evenly pursued across the country, and again historical opinion is divided.

In primary schools there was an increasing orthodoxy of child-centred progressive education, particularly in Oxfordshire, the West Riding of Yorkshire, Leicestershire, London and Bristol (Simon 1991: 354). Streaming became less popular (Lowe 1997: 48). The Plowden Report of 1967 was a well-publicised official expression of government and establishment approval for progressive methods. Foreign observers saw a "revolution" in British primary schools (Featherstone 1969).

The 1960s saw extensive developments in curriculum theory and practice. The introduction of comprehensives left teachers "free to invent a new curriculum" (Jones 2016: 65). Government partially changed its policy towards the curriculum by founding The Schools Council, an independent body to advise on the curriculum in 1963. Sophisticated advances by other research bodies, such as the Nuffield Foundation's maths and science projects, were broadly in progressive theoretical frameworks. The London Association of the Teaching of English (LATE), which had been founded in 1947 and became the National association (NATE) in 1964, led new ideas in the English curriculum.

There was a new enthusiasm for the potential of technology in education to the extent that "Educational technology was being talked about as part of a general technological panacea" (Cain and Wright 1994: 45). A sign of the change was that the educational publisher Longman set up an audio-visual unit in 1965 equipped to produce slides, filmstrips and audio recordings (Briggs 2008: 450). The DES founded the National Council for Educational Technology (NCET) in 1967. The Open University (OU) was founded in 1969 with the BBC providing production facilities and expertise.

New universities were founded in the 1960s and numbers attending higher education doubled between 1963 and 1973 (Aldrich 2002: 165). Labour also introduced a new class of Higher Education institution, the polytechnic. Victorian school buildings became increasingly replaced with modern open designs. Education overtook defence in total government spending for the first time.

School Broadcasting

ITV launched school television in May 1957 to widespread surprise, prompting the BBC to launch its own service in September. The Pilkington report of 1962 commended both broadcasters for their educational programming, but did not recommend that the third television channel be used exclusively for education, as some had proposed. The Newsom Report of 1963 contained the most enthusiastic endorsement of school broadcasting associated with a government sponsored report to date, partly due to the presence of Scupham on its committee. Its chair John Newsom subsequently became the chairman of the ITA's Educational Advisory Council in 1964 (Sendall 1983: 285). The government expressed an interest in intervening in school television but a proposed scheme for a 'College of the Air' was not pursued. The DES remained interested in school broadcasting refused to fund it directly pending further investigation into effective usage in 1970.

Primary school television began in 1963. Scupham was made first 'controller of educational broadcasting', with jurisdiction over further education broadcasting (which was given its own advisory council, FEAC). He was replaced by Richmond Postgate in 1965. The Radiovision format, involving filmstrips projected simultaneously with radio programmes, began in 1963. School radio moved to Radio 4 in 1967. Recorded use of programmes rather than on-air began to grow in popularity, but copyright restrictions prevented schools from keeping recordings for more than 1 year.

Between 1957 and 1970, the number of producers working in BBC school broadcasting increased from 33 to 69. The number of BBC network hours of school broadcasting increased from 447 to 795. The number of separate publications (including pamphlets and teachers notes) produced increased from 354 to 535 between 1964/65 to 1969/70. The number of school receiving school radio increased to 33,000, with 27,000 receiving school television. School broadcasting publications reached a historical peak of units sold of 12.84m in 1965/66.

1970-1979
Education

Education entered a period of conflict politically. Margaret Thatcher as Education Minister 1970-74 slowed the progress of comprehensivisation. The school leaving age was raised (ROSLA) to 16 in 1972. This disproportionately affected the working class who would otherwise have immediately entered the labour market. The government's 1972 white paper *Education: A Framework for Expansion* contained an extensive programme though not all was enacted. Teacher training colleges were merged with polytechnics and universities. Teacher training, which had expanded steadily in the 1960s, now contracted, partly because a fall in the birth-rate reduced future demand. The Plowden report of 1967 had recommended that the state should provide nursery schools and that these should be targeted at areas of deprivation. The main new measure was the offer of free nursery places to 3 and 4 year olds, for those parents who wanted them. From 1973 the UK entered a period of inflation and economic stagnation which hindered educational expansion and progress.

Sociology of education continued to be actively pursued and in some quarters morphed into a new radicalism towards the treatment of children. A 'de-schooling' movement influenced some in Britain (Ward and Fyson 1973). Research findings in sociology such as Young's *Education and Social Control* (1971) "created a climate of uncertainty about the teacher's role… {suggesting} that either they had little impact on the children's life chances, or that their role was one of oppression" (Cunningham 1988: 226).

Conversely, a right wing reaction was emerging, expressed through The Black Papers, a series of edited collections of articles against progressive education and comprehensive schools. The positions expressed varied from meritocratic to elitist, and championed "discipline and hard work" (Cox Dyson 1969: 2) against "the egalitarian threat" (Maude 1969: 7). Later Black Papers influenced Conservative Party policy once in government in 1979. This policy was partly traditionalist, but also part of an emerging 'new right' which prioritised freedom of choice and marketization.

The public's confidence in the education system became undermined as educational developments began to receive negative publicity. The William Tyndale primary school used radically progressive methods, but met a revolt from parents and some teachers 1974-75. A parliamentary enquiry was highly critical of the Inner London Educational Authority (ILEA), marking "the first great educational scandal of the post-war years" (Jones 2016: 192). Neville Bennet's findings on classroom teaching styles were interpreted as empirical proof of the inadequacy of progressive methods (Bennet 1977). The attitude of the DES was expressed through a leaked report, referred to as the 'Yellow book' (DES 1976a) which criticised the teaching profession and the Schools Council (Plaskow 1985: 3).

There was an increasingly pervasive suspicion of falling standards in education and particularly in literacy. The Bullock report of 1975 did not substantiate these suspicions. The report contained findings on language development in the home and on television as well as in school and was the last in the series of government reports which addressed social class and educational opportunity. The report was criticised by some for the perceived obscurity of its ideas (Chitty 1989).

The year 1976 was a turning point, after which "there was a sharp change in government's understanding of education's priorities and procedures" (Jones 2016: 100). This was expressed by new Prime Minister James Callaghan's speech at Ruskin College which acknowledged some of the criticisms of the education system and called for reform, beginning with a 'Great Debate' over what should be done. Some employers thought that Britain's relative economic decline could be blamed on the education system's failure to train school leavers for the modern economy. Another call was for some form of national curriculum, for which differing plans were drawn up by the DES, HMI and the Schools Council.

School Broadcasting

The BBC began a turbulent period as inflation eroded the value of the licence fee. Strike action was common in production and often led to delays (McNicholas 2013). School broadcasting

continued to grow marginally in output and uptake. A peak in the number of different publications was reached 1972-4, and number of series broadcast, slightly later (see appendices, figures require some interpretation). Early years school broadcasting began in 1974 partly through the influence of *Sesame Street*. Donald Grattan succeeded as CEB in 1972. The Hayter report for the BBC/IBA on usage of school broadcasts was published in 1974, calling for improved training for teachers and conditions in schools. The reduction in spending power of LEAs led to cuts in the output of school publications. BBC Further Education started its Adult Literacy Project in 1975. The school broadcasting council for Northern Ireland was set up in 1978. The Annan report of 1977 declined to recommend any special educational function for the fourth channel (Cain and Wright 1994: 60).

1979 – 1990
Education

The new Conservative government of 1979 began a wide ranging reform of the state system. Keith Joseph, education minister from 1981 until 1986, claimed not to support state education at all:

> I wish we'd taken a different route in 1870. We got the ruddy state involved. I don't want it. I don't think we know how to do it. I certainly don't think Secretaries of State know anything about it. But we're landed with it. (quoted in Ball 1990: 62).

The Schools Council was abolished in 1984 despite an inquiry which assessed it to have performed well. The plans for reform of the exam system, combining a two tier system of GCEs and CSEs into a single GCSE system were carried out by the DES. The 1986 Education act diminished the power of LEAs and gave governing bodies (and through them parents) greater responsibility over curriculum and staffing.

Within the teaching profession, curricular radicalism reached a high-point in the early 1980s and was making significant progress in areas such as addressing racism. A teachers' strike between 1985 and 1987 over pay and conditions failed and led to dwindling public support (Jones 2016: 133-4).

Joseph's successor Kenneth Baker piloted the Education Act 1988 into legislation, to date the most significant since 1944. The act centralised control over the education system to the DES. It gave schools responsibility over their own budgets, removing this power from LEAs. It legislated for a national curriculum, expressed in terms of the "core subjects" of Maths, English and Science and foundation subjects of technology, history, geography, art, music, physical education and a modern foreign language. Despite wide consultation it did not reflect the vanguard of curriculum development in the 1960s and 1970s. It more closely resembled the basic grammar school curriculum which was had been established at the beginning of the century (Aldrich 1988: 23). According to Lowe, from this point "The move towards child-centred approaches to teaching… {was} a thing of the past" (Lowe 1997: 55).

School Broadcasting

The telecommunications industry was the subject of extensive deregulation, seen for example in the relaxation of media ownership laws and in the absence of new regulation for new satellite technology (O'Malley 1994). The BBC itself became involved disputes with government over editorial matters, leading to the dismissal of the director general Alasdair Milne. His successor Michael Checkland was associated with rationalisation and changes to management processes which began the orientation of the BBC towards competition in an international market. This included a new commercial approach to school publications.

Educational broadcasting at the BBC comprised 5 large departments and had reached "optimum size" by the beginning of the 1980s (Cain and Wright 1994: 57). The budget for school broadcasting was cut in 1979 and again, this time more heavily, in 1981. This was a 10% cut to the radio output. (BBC Yearbooks 1979, 1982). School radio suffered from a scheduling demotion to night time block transmission. School television was moved to BBC2 in 1983. A major new initiative was the BBC's involvement with the development of the Microcomputer, which was introduced to schools but was not strictly a school broadcasting venture (Seaton 2015: 51). A charity called the Educational Broadcasting services Trust was set up to deal with public relations in 1983. Sheila Innes was made CEB in 1984. She was replaced with Eurfron Gwynne Jones in 1987. The SBC and FEAC were combined into the Education Broadcasting Council (EBC) in 1987. The School radio department was renamed School, Children and Youth Programmes Radio. School broadcasting radio hours were reduced and it was again moved to the new Radio 5 in 1990.

The 1988 Copyright Patents and Designs Act provided for the introduction of the Educational Recording Agency Licence, transforming the rules regarding retention of recordings by educational establishments and solving a decades old problem.

1990 – 2008
Education

The 1992 Education (Schools) Act transformed HMI into OFSTED, formalising and bureaucratising the inspection process, increasing the frequency of inspections and reducing the discretion and influence of school inspectors. This, and the new publication of inspection results, negatively affected teacher morale.

The national curriculum helped to guide struggling schools and teachers and is likely to have helped raise standards of attainment overall, though this is contested. It is particularly controversial from the perspective of teachers who valued their freedom to teach as they liked. It set the precedent of micro-management and politicisation of schools, which increased from the 1990s.

A prevailing 'back to basics' ethos was exemplified by Chris Woodhead, appointed to head OFSTED in 1994 and retained by the Labour Government in 1997. He framed his approach as a crusade against bad teachers, but in effect it diminished the autonomy of the educational world, which Woodhead called:

> "The Blob… the tribe at its unreconstructed worst: Department for Education and Skills bureaucrats who long ago went native, local education authority politicians and officials, academics in university departments of education, and last but certainly not least, the teacher unions" (Woodhead 2002: 3).

OFSTED's regime contributed to "a new paradigm of research and policy, that of school effectiveness and improvement." (Jones 2016: 145).

The New Labour government of 1997 largely accepted this paradigm (Jones 2016: 160). It also heavily promoted Information Communication Technology in schools, which began to replace broadcasting as the cutting edge of educational technology (Moss 2000). This was provided mainly by private companies.

School Broadcasting

The Broadcasting act of 1990 removed the quality requirement for awarding franchise bids for the ITV regions. ITV school broadcasting had been on Channel 4 from 1987. After 1990, production transitioned to independent production companies, mostly staffed by former ITV and BBC staff. The service reacted to the national curriculum by altering many series. Under Director General John Birt School broadcasting was comprehensively reorganised from 1993, with all education elements placed in a new Education Directorate. Gwynne Jones retired shortly afterwards and was the last CEB. School radio continued to suffer severe cuts to staff airtime and resources. The SBC was disbanded in 2000 (Moss 2000).

The process of change of BBC Schools from broadcast to online provision culminated in a proposal to introduce a service known as the BBC Digital Curriculum, (later called BBC Jam) in 2002. The core of the Digital Curriculum was a virtual learning environment to support individual learning which could be used in schools and homes (BBC 2000). It was a major project and had progressed quite far in commissioning content when a lobby of commercial educational resource providers led by the publisher Pearson protested to the government that it would constitute unfair competition in a potentially lucrative emerging market. This consortium lodged a complaint with the European Commission, which was dismissed, but the Digital Curriculum was approved by the UK government only on the conditions of 'complementarity' and 'distinctiveness', and extensive restrictions set to minimize market impact (EC 2003). After a soft launch in 2006, the service was alleged by a government report and commercial providers to have failed to comply with the regulations. In response, the BBC Trust, the BBC's new governing body, suspended the Digital Curriculum in 2007 and formally closed it down in 2008. This outcome remains contentious among BBC staff and media policy experts (Michalis 2012).

Theoretical Framework

1
Introduction

1.1
Structure of Theoretical Framework

There are three key theoretical areas in this thesis: Education; Language, Linguistics and literacy; and Broadcasting.

This framework has four sections. Section 1 is the introduction. I first shall sketch two broad theoretical approaches to the key areas: the socio-political approach and the cognitive-empirical approach (section 1.1). Then I shall introduce a key concept which will thread through the thesis: experience (1.2).

Section 2 is about education. I shall first explain education history according to the socio-political approach (2.1). I shall then explain the history of progressivism in education and the development of educational theory from the 1920s to the 1970s (2.2). I shall then explain the cognitive-empirical approach to education (2.3), and the issue of educational measurement and its ensuing social consequences (2.4). I shall then explain the debate surrounding pedagogical methods in the 1970s and 1980s (2.5 – 2.6). Finally in this section I shall discuss educational theory in terms of the curriculum, and thereby link and compare progressivism and school broadcasting (2.7).

Section 3 is about language, linguistics and literacy. I shall first explain the relevance of linguistics to media and education. (3). I shall then link linguistics with the cognitive-empirical framework through generative linguistics and constructivism (3.1, 3.3). I shall link linguistics with the socio-political framework through functional linguistics (3.2) and sociolinguistics (3.5). A linking concept with broadcasting is language and recording technology (3.4). I then examine social class and language variation (3.6-3.7), and finally, literacy in theory and practice (3.9 - 3.11).

The final section links broadcasting and media theory to education through the idea of public service (4.1), and then focuses on school broadcasting in theory and in historiography (4.2-4.5).

1.2
The Socio-Political Approach and the Cognitive-Empirical Approach

School broadcasting was embedded in a socio-political structure, and the body of this thesis partly consists of explaining this structure. However socio-political material alone is not sufficient to explain the key areas of this thesis. Research and theory of what I term a cognitive-empirical character are also part of this explanation. This is not an exhaustive overview of possible theoretical approaches to these key areas, nor are the two approaches mutually exclusive. For example socio-political historians might class their work as empirical, and those

whose interest in education pertains to cognitive phenomena would not deny the importance of socio-political factors.

Nevertheless there are useful distinctions to be made between the two approaches. The term 'cognitive-empirical' identifies both a subject matter and a methodology. The term 'cognitive' indicates a difference in subject matter from a socio-political approach: society at the micro-level of people and their minds, rather than at the macro-level of groups and classes. With a cognitive-empirical approach, socio-political phenomena are seen as a consequence of cognitive phenomena, and vice versa with the socio-political approach.

The term 'empirical' is essentially methodological, but gathers a diverse set of methods. The empirical approach can be positivistic, in using scientific or quasi-scientific methodologies to gather quantifiable data, and views its results as valid and applicable as a result. However there is an important complication in that I include in a cognitive-empirical stable the constructivist theory of mind and psychology. This sees the mind as having innate faculties which shape our perceptions of the world. According to constructivism, the data available to our perceptions, which are gathered empirically, are not necessarily real in the scientifically positivistic sense normally associated with empiricism (Chomsky 1975: 10-12). So while it is empirical and more or less scientific in its methodology, it is not necessarily empiricist in its view of knowledge.

To thoroughly examine school broadcasting in a way sympathetic to the aims and methodological assumptions of the original audio-visual media movement in education that grew up in the 1920s to 1970s (although practitioners and theorists did not see themselves as belonging to a movement) is to view audio-visual media in light of its unique inherent properties. While resisting the potential problems of technological determinism, I find when media and education are looked at together through school broadcasting that the 'affordances' of the new media were decisive in shaping this story (Williams 1974, Scannel 2007).

1.3
Experience, Communication and Recording

To link the key areas of broadcasting, education and linguistics, I introduce a key concept: experience. The concept of experience is complex, and it plays a different role in each of the key areas. It also serves as a linking concept between the three and a useful tool to unpack BBC school broadcasting in theory. A fundamental problem of media and communication is the question of the status of mediated experience. How is the witnessing of real events by spectators to be compared with the live or recorded witnessing these events via media? Somewhat incidentally, BBC School Broadcasting was forced to offer an answer to this question because of its aim to educate.

Progressivism in education fundamentally questioned whether experience could be transmitted (communicated) from teacher to pupil. It also questioned the value of recorded experience in media. Instead of these, it introduced the idea of education as activity, discovery and 'direct' unmediated experience. This idea is encapsulated in the proverb 'I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.' It has long been recognised that the best way of learning something is to do it 'in real life' (Krashen 1982), yet traditionally, the point of schools is to allow people to learn something without having to do it in real life. School is fundamentally a series of simulations of real activities. Therefore progressivism was a challenge to traditional formal schooling. As Dewey put it:

> No number of object-lessons for the sake of giving information, can afford even the shadow of a substitute for acquaintance with the plants and animals of the farm and garden, acquired through actual living among them and caring for them. (Dewey 1899, 1957: 36).[6]

The further away the school gets from real experience, the less relevant, engaging and worthwhile it becomes for the learner. But the closer it gets to real experience, the less predictable it becomes.

This problem, which was faced by schools and teachers, was also faced by the BBC. The communication of experience and the recording of experience are both potential affordances of radio and television. The best tool for understanding this is linguistics. Language is also a medium, and is partly the representation of experience. Linguistics offers us the best way of studying this. This thesis examines a period in which for the first time spoken language was recorded and studied, and in which recorded spoken language was used as a tool in education. This came to a head in the broadcasting of BBC school literacy series, because it was necessary for the BBC to decide how best to provide educational resources for the teaching of language to British school children.

2
Education

2.1
Education History - A Socio-Political Approach

To understand BBC School Broadcasting, it is necessary to first understand education history. State education has a contested status in historiography. Until the 1960s an overall liberal approach held sway in which the gradual extension of schooling was seen as politically positive. Since then a more critical attitude has become orthodox (McCulloch 2011). Brian Simon's five volume history (1780 to 1990), whose last volume is the standard work for our period, argues that education is never a politically neutral process. Simon presents a clear overall thesis - that the institutions and law regarding education in the UK were an instrument for maintaining social order and the class system (Simon 1991). The establishment of state schooling during the nineteenth century was a result of fears of disorder among the lower classes and declining imperial efficiency (Simon 1960), its further extension in the mid-20th Century was a way of placating the lower classes while leaving the basic societal condition intact, and the tripartite division of secondary schools was designed to funnel children into economic roles according to class. According to Simon, after 1944 "the mediation of class relations remained the major function of the education system." (Simon 1991: 115). Simon, a British Communist Party member throughout his life, played a role in the public debate on secondary education system in the 1950s, publishing against selection and in favour of comprehensives. He also with his wife Joan Simon led the dissemination among educationists of Soviet psychology in the 1950s (Cunningham and Martin 2004).

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[6] Mcluhan somewhat misreads Dewey as wanting "to restore education to its primitive pre-print phase" (Mcluhan 1962: 144)

For Ken Jones, the question of state education is intimately connected with the question of economic relations, and "The historical deficiencies of state policy – {has been} its toleration of a non-correspondence between education and economic need…" (Jones 1983: 82). By 1964 The Labour party wanted to use comprehensivisation, as a means of modernising the economy and delivering equality of opportunity. However unlike traditional socialist thought, this came without a specific need for the socialisation of society. The issue proved complex, as for example it was never clear whether the culture of the working class pupils was a handicap which needed to be brought up to standard with the rest of society, or whether these pupils should be made conscious and critical of their environment and their own culture recognised (Jones 1983: 44).

When it became clear in the 1970s that the goal of modernisation and egalitarianism was not going to be achieved, and comprehensives had not been the engine of economic development that Labour had intended them to be, the progressive methods supposedly at the heart of the new arrangements, both politically and pedagogically, were seized upon and blamed by opponents. For Jones, the Black Papers were able to set the public agenda in the 1970s by appealing to a popular educational conservatism that had always been latent and which progressivism, the preserve of a narrow social base, had never been able to change.

2.2
Early (1900-1944) and Mid-period (1944-1967) Progressivism

The avant-garde of educational thought in the 1920s when BBC School Broadcasting began was progressivism. Progressivism permanently changed schools. BBC Schools' relationship with progressivism would partly determine how it fared in the education system.

The periods 'early', 'mid-period' and 'late' are coined here as frames for looking at the history of progressivism, though are not in currency in literature on the subject. Indeed the term 'progressive' was not used in a consistent way in the period, even by inarguably 'progressive' organisations like the New Educational Fellowship, in the way that other 'isms' like socialism were used (by for example Crosland: 1956). It is with retrospect that the term has become popular (for example Lowe's 2007 work *The Death of Progressive Education: How Teachers Lost Control of the Classroom),* to the extent that one historian can judge that "Progressive, or 'child-centred', education became the dominant orthodoxy in English primary and secondary modern schools in the post-war period." (Tisdall 2017: 24). There is a danger of the term becoming too general and standing in for all more or less leftish reform in education. One useful distinction is between new educational ideas that were broadly psychological and had implications for pedagogy, and those which were broadly political and had implications for legislation. In practice the two were mixed together in the careers and beliefs of teachers and educationists

Progressivism began as a philosophy of education which borrowed from psychological and biological beliefs. It was expressed in practice rather than in a coherent theoretical way. It had both socio-political and cognitive implications. By the end of the 19th century (though they had many antecedents), pedagogues in the USA and Europe began to argue that children were not passive receptors of input and do not learn from texts or an adult authority imparting truths. Progressives sought a holistic view of the child's own growth and interaction within the school and the world, summed up in the phrase 'child-centred' (opposed to 'subject-centred'). Other guiding keywords were 'freedom', 'individuality', 'inner-growth', 'development' and 'self-

realisation' (Selleck 1972: 58). Progressives opposed traditional classroom methods like rote-learning, copying and strict discipline. There was no dedicated theory of progressivism from which to build a coherent alternative to the old methods, but there were many experiments and a theory of learning emerged, described as the activity or discovery method. One of progressivism's central beliefs was that children learn by doing. The 1933 Hadow Report recommended that: "the curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored" (Hadow 1933: xviii).

The American John Dewey was perhaps the deepest early progressivist thinker and one of the first to form a modern theory of mass state education. Dewey attempted to link the activity method to modern economy and democracy (Dewey 1897, 1957). Dewey's theory of learning was integrated with his conception of the school and the community. It was a social theory, and he emphasised learning as happening through activity and acquaintance with reality, though arguably this came at the expense of a genuinely practicable programme (Jones 1983: 28).

Progressive theory and practice developed and grew throughout the inter-war period. In the UK a central early text was by Percy Nunn (1920), who as the director of the LDTC (later to become the IOE) was influential over British school teaching. Nunn sketched a biological 'growth' metaphor for education; that the child is akin to a plant whose growth the teacher must facilitate. The plant metaphor was often used in progressive literature of the inter-war period (Selleck: 1972).

Some formulations deliberately positioned the new pedagogy in a historical context;

> In the earliest days of popular education children went to school to learn specific things which could not well be taught at home - reading, writing and cyphering. The real business of life was picked up by a child in unregulated play, in casual intercourse with contemporaries and elders, and by a gradual apprenticeship to the discipline of the house, the farm, the workshop. But as industrialisation has transformed the basis of social life, and an organisation… The schools whose first intention was to teach children how to read have thus been compelled to broaden their aims until it might now be said that they have to teach children how to live. (Hadow 1931: 93-94)

Cunningham identifies some key themes in mid-period progressive pedagogy in UK primary schools: A reduction of traditional authoritarianism of the teacher; alternatives to the dominant pedagogical form of the class lesson; removal of harsh punishment and unnecessary drill and discipline with a preference for self-government by pupils, dissolution of a formal timetable and a shift in curriculum emphasis from the routine of the 3 Rs to more creative and expressive activities. In cultural or aesthetic terms there was a powerful strain of ruralism and an antipathy towards consumer culture (Cunningham 1988: 136).

2.3
Education - A Cognitive-Empirical Approach

Progressivism drew its theoretical authority partly through its engagement with the emerging discipline of experimental psychology. Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget began experiments with children in the 1920s. He became best known in educational circles for his theory of development which divided childhood into a series of stages corresponding to the mental

characteristics and capabilities typical of it. Piaget connected physical action and mental activity together into a modern theory of mind. He theorised that people's interaction with the world consists of building and maintaining mental schema or models of its different elements. He theorised that understanding and knowledge consists of these models. Piaget began by observing that an infant first learns by copying the actions it does with its own body involuntarily, and thereby practising them, to transform them into deliberate actions. Knowledge was first experienced as action and only later formalised into ideas. Mental schema are abstract enough to categorise different instances of the same phenomenon together but consistent enough so that incorrect categorisations can be avoided. Yet in cases where the experience of the child does not fit the scheme they already possess, their scheme can be adapted. Life is a series of self-constructions in which one's mind is acted on by experience but can also be acted on or constructed by oneself. Part of the process of forming a mature intelligence is the linking of schema into a pattern of experience in adulthood (Piaget 1955). This theory is called constructivism.

Around the same time, a different, social form of constructivism was being developed in the Soviet Union, but it was not disseminated in the west until the 1950s. The leading innovators were Vygotsky (1962), with his colleagues Luria and Yudovich (1971). They developed a parallel theory of constructivism with two key differences. Firstly, there was more emphasis on the child's interaction with his social world. Later educational researchers would find Piaget's constructivism limited in that it seemed to regard the child as learning without the influence from its environment (Bennet 1977, Thomas 2013). Secondly, the Soviet psychologists privileged the role of language in a child's mental development and thought that the two were practically identifiable with each other, whereas Piaget had no special place for language.

Constructivism interested progressive pedagogues who had hitherto been working mainly from philosophical ideals. It appeared to add some scientific justification to discovery learning and project work in groups. In fact Piaget was not specifically interested in education or schools and although soviet social constructivism was more pertinent to education per se, neither was it essentially a pedagogical movement. Progressivism was a pedagogical movement about how an education system and schools should be organised. Historically speaking, the pedagogy of progressivism was already largely in place in the recommendations of Nunn and his progenitors in the 1920s and in the practice of various experimental progressive schools as the Froebel institute and Summerhill School (Selleck 1972), before Piaget published any findings. While some experts were familiar with his work by the 1930s, Susan Isaacs at the IOE being one (Isaacs 1930), the filter down into orthodox teacher training did not come till the 1950s.

2.4
Measurement

The socio-political side of education and the cognitive-empirical side combine and clash in one of the education system's most important tools: measurement. There are two types of measurement in education: aptitude/intelligence testing (or 'psychometrics'), and attainment or outcome testing.

In the beginning decades of the 20th century the idea emerged that intelligence can be measured through tests such as the IQ test. This has proved a controversial idea and is now considered politically taboo (Flynn 2007). What IQ tests show has been a matter of debate. One debate

concerns whether there is a unitary intelligence which allows us to compare all individuals on the same scale, or whether there are different types of intelligence, among which individuals can vary. A further issue has been the degree to which intelligence is culturally contextualised and not isolatable in a scientific way. Due to political and scientific controversies, IQ is not now typically used as a standard control measure in educational research. The related theory of behaviourism, that the curriculum should be designed as a set of specific inputs and outcomes (Lawton and Gordon 2002: 157-158), has proved more durable.

From the 1920s the IQ test was legitimatised and the IOE became a centre for psychometry with the work of Cyril Burt and PE Vernon. IQ tests were widely accepted by educationists of all stripes, and used as a tool in empirical sociology or psychology, for example at Basil Bernstein's Sociological Research Unit at the IOE in the 1960s (Bernstein 1973). Burt, a prominent public intellectual, advocated their use in the education system (Thomas 2013: 78), and they were a crucial element of the system established by the 1944 Education Act, in the form known as the 11+ exam. The mainstream of progressive educational thought in the UK began to turn against intelligence tests in the 1950s, partly as a result of dissatisfaction with the 1944 Act. Brian and Joan Simon campaigned against the 11+ and in favour of non-selective education. They were joined by PE Vernon who changed his mind when research findings were found to contradict the consistency that Burt had claimed for the tests (Simon 1991).

Initially, progressive pedagogy and psychometrics coexisted in educational practice because of the need for the new pedagogy to ground its philosophy in some empirical findings. This was the first scientific attempt to investigate what was essentially an uncontroversial idea: that individual children differ in their abilities. If the new pedagogy was to be guided by how children learn, then there had to be some data to work from, found with research in a broadly cognitive-empirical framework. Once psychometrics was no longer allied with progressivism, and progressivism began to develop more specific curricular structure in the 1960s, its aims were contrary to the idea of attainment measuring. The curriculum developer Lawrence Stenhouse said that any educational process that had preset outcomes (as in behaviourism) was automatically the opposite of education (Stenhouse 1975: 82). However once this process had begun, it was impossible to stop. While the measure of the potential for attainment was discredited, the concomitant practice of measuring attainment outcomes survived and has become ever more importance as a principle of organisation and administration in UK educational policy (Biesta 2015).

2.5
Educational Research and Late Progressivism

Progressivism began to diverge from the mainstream of cognitive-empirical research in the 1960s. For Burke (in reference to interior design of schools) "the idea that it was vital for children in schools to experience aesthetic pleasure… came to an abrupt end during the 1960s and 1970s when there developed, as a counterpoint, a zealous interest in measuring and evaluating cognitive function" (Burke 2013: 820). In the 1960s and 1970s the volume of formal educational research increased dramatically and progress began to be made in the study of methods and outcomes. Progressivism's status in this new environment was unsure because there was a fundamental vagueness, or complexity, as to what methods certain doctrinal progressive beliefs entailed. A thoroughgoing progressive pedagogy as in the ideal school sketched in the Plowden Report was not common.

Bennet held that the Plowden Report had basically no idea how classroom processes produced outcomes and was essentially the same vague faith that had been around since the early years of the twentieth century, but with some decorative educational psychology. He found that formal or traditional methods were if anything slightly better at producing learning outcomes in mathematics and language (Bennet 1976: 162). Teaching style was not always very important, because pupil behaviour, much more important for determining outcomes, was unpredictable. The most important thing teachers could do was design appropriate tasks within lessons, but this was difficult because pupil aptitude varied widely and it was impossible for a class teacher to differentiate and monitor all the pupils effectively. This could be mitigated either through streaming – separating pupils according to ability – or a massive increase in the number of teachers. The former solution was partially adopted, even though it appeared to replicate the discredited selective system. The latter solution was fiscally difficult, though teacher numbers did rise 1957-1979. Bennet also found that time spent individually on tasks was much more important for outcomes than the Plowden-recommended small-group project work.

Although widely referenced, Piaget's ideas were not necessarily well understood by teacher trainees. Piaget's psychological notion of 'action' was conflated with the pedagogical method of 'activity'; "which in turn led to other false assumptions such as that concepts are automatically and only acquired via the manipulation of concrete objects."(Bennet 1987: 75). Piaget showed that learning in children was always initiated by acting in the world in some way, but he also thought that reflection or more purely mental activity was important in order to produce new constructions. He did not advocate a pedagogical method whereby all school tasks had to involve mainly physical activity.

What relevance the findings of educational research have for pedagogy has been much more difficult to determine. Now we probably know more about the micro-level of learning than we have ever known, but measuring outcomes has diverted attention away from vital questions of overall purpose, methods and content of education, and the theoretical framework surrounding educational discourse has become ever more rigid. One result of the growth in research was to back the efforts of policymakers to prescribe what teachers should do, rather than teachers' freedom to decide this themselves (Thomas 2013).

2.6
Radicalism, De-Schooling and the End of Progressivism?

Progressivism's divergence from measurement in education eventually led to its clash with political authority. Initially, the government used progressivism as the basis for a pedagogical conception of new mass state schooling. Jones (1983) argues that progressivism had just enough credibility as a pedagogic method to be widely accepted, but from the point of view of the ruling classes of the 1930s, did not have troublesome political consequences of a more radically democratic reformist approach. The relationship between the new pedagogy and economic conditions was always ambiguous, and did not necessarily imply a criticism of the prevailing order. However, the rise of testing was arguably part of a political programme of control. Walkerdine sees educational testing as part of the historically situated production of knowledge for ideological ends (Henriques et al 1994).

Radical democratic, egalitarian and anarchistic theories began to influence progressivism in the 1960s and 1970s. With some roots in sociology, this combined the pedagogical and political:

> …post-war changes to the life of the school {meant} For a longer period than before, the student spent the working day in an institution cut off from economic and political activity in a condition of 'infantilisation', deprived of rights and responsibilities (Jones 1983: 48).

According to Cunningham '…in many quarters, anti-school was the orthodoxy'', as a series of works encouraged radical democracy in classrooms and questioned the political status of teachers (Ilich 1971, Freire 1968). According to this 'de-schooling' movement, most of what went on in schools had little to do with education and encouraged children to be conformist and docile. Thomas, summing up a century of growth in compulsory formal education, judged that schools in themselves had little effect on the life chances of those who attended them (Thomas 2013).

The struggle of progressivism to retain prominence in educational practice, was ultimately of tangential relevance to BBC Schools. BBC Schools had little to offer de-schooling and radical progressivism, except in one area: the provision of resources which, deliberately or inadvertently, challenged the power of educational institutions.

2.7
The Curriculum, Educational Theory, and School Broadcasting

The role of BBC school broadcasting in the education system is best seen in the perennial issue of determining the curriculum. Curriculum pertains to both prescriptions of what should happen and descriptions of what does happen in schools. The curriculum is the 'what' and the 'how' of teaching and learning. The mid-century saw a flowering of these questions, publically and academically, as the democratisation of educational opportunity brought them to public prominence. The victory for comprehensive schooling the 1960s can be seen as the end of a long campaign to end the imposition of curricula differentiated by class. During this time, the very deep question of how a population as a whole can be fairly and democratically educated was aired. Efforts such as those by the Schools Council, to research and devise curriculum resources resulted in remarkable intellectual endeavours (and were regarded as the first steps in a much longer programme). Leading UK thinker Lawrence Stenhouse thought a curriculum should be an educational proposal open to scrutiny and translatable into practice, and that any curriculum design must include the development of the teacher (Stenhouse 1975). The professionalism of teachers increased, as did the demands on the average teacher to see their practice as an intellectual and artistic endeavour (Rudduck in Plaskow 1985: 144), a development that was not always seen as fair or productive. It suffices here to sketch some of the debates here as they are relevant to progressivism and school broadcasting.

As progressivism was primarily a movement among school teachers, it was mainly concerned with school and classroom practice. The provision of educational resources, most importantly school books, was the preserve of commercial publishers such as Longman, Macmillan or EJ Arnold. Though teachers were sometimes authors, schools and publishers were institutionally and organisationally separate. Theoretically speaking, progressivism's emphasis on activity and direct experience left little place for educational media and textbooks were considered

guilty "by association with the worst aspects of a reception model of learning {and} the presentation to the pupils of the received wisdom of the author" (Marsden 2001: 55). Throughout the period school broadcasting was also resisted in some quarters of the teaching profession for the same reasons. But decisions about delivery and about content were inseparable due to their nature and to be a resource provider it was necessary for the BBC to take a view.

Marsden offers a definition of school textbooks, which is also useful for considering the relationship between ideas of curriculum in progressivism and those in school broadcasting. Textbooks:

- Comprise a body of *content*
- Embody range of pedagogic *principles and processes*: and
- Reflect external and sometimes imposed sets of *social purposes*
  (Marsden 2001: 8-9)

This reflects a common division of educational theory into three: subject-centred, child-centred and society-centred. Correspondingly three potentially competing elements can be emphasised in curriculum design and policy: product (content); process or method; or social purpose and mission. It is also possible to (loosely) associate these three elements with educational polices, 'product' with the 20th century grammar school; 'process' with the primary school, and 'purpose' with the secondary modern and subsequently comprehensive school. These also correspond to the movements in education we have so far sketched, the first with the transmission pedagogy which progressive reformers sought to reform, the second with the new pedagogy that replaced them in early and mid-period progressivism, and the last with the social activism of late progressivism. Progressive pedagogy was mostly in evidence in primary schools, secondary moderns and comprehensives as they had more room to experiment; grammar and private schools tended to remain more conservative and exam focused.

For progressives, to emphasise product or content was to risk too great a reliance on the transmission method of teaching and learning. What the progressives opposed above all was the idea that teaching and learning was a process of transmitting knowledge from the teacher to the pupil. Transmission teaching made an assumption about content: the existence of an agreed set of facts and skills, expressed through traditional subject distinctions. Instead, progressivism's emphasis on process – discovery or enquiry in general – implied a unity of knowledge in which the investigation of different phenomena, through experience of the world, revealed elements of different subjects mixed together (Lowe 1997: 56, Bruner 1966). This resulted in the 'integrated' or interdisciplinary primary school curriculum.

The relationship of BBC Schools to this issue is illuminated by considering its appearance in the 1920s at a time when progressivism was gaining influence. One of the original key terms of educational progressivism was 'experience'. Dewey's mature thoughts on the nature of the status of real and simulated experiences and how schools ought to relate to the social world were in a book called *Education and Experience*. BBC Schools was at first "an enrichment service"[7], in which the enrichment offered was said to be either identifiable with, or a substitute for 'experience'. The claim of providing 'experience' recurred frequently in early attempts by the BBC to associate school broadcasting with modern methods and curriculum reform. Producer Richard Palmer's 1947 book *School Broadcasting in Britain*, for example, referred

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[7] WAC, R143/112/1 Scupham, John; Cain, John, Interviewer, 24 October 1984.

to school radio as "an experience for the children on which the teacher can build", and "an extension and enrichment of experience" (Palmer 1947: 42, 18). Somerville linked school broadcasting to "guidance in the acquiring not of knowledge split up into subjects, but of experience." The "aims or content" of some series (*Watch!* and *Merry-go-Round*) were still being given as "Extension of experience" in the BBC Handbook in 1978 (BBC 1978: 136). As long as school broadcasting was pitched this way, it could be slipped into the progressive framework as an alternative to subject transmission. It suffered from the association with transmission less than school textbooks, whose roots were in a much earlier phase of education and which unlike broadcasts could be used to cram for the exams on which they were sometimes based. In a brief period in the 1960s, when some school series were explicitly 'lessons' (called 'direct teaching'), because they were used as a cost effective substitute for trained teachers, school broadcasting most resembled subject transmission.

Where school broadcasting was less compatible with progressivism was in the practicalities of the progressive alternative to transmission teaching, which crystallised around activity or discovery methods and group work. It was unavoidable that using school broadcasting involved sitting quietly in the classroom and 'receiving', education, at least for the duration of the broadcast. The BBC addressed this by claiming, especially in its early period, to offer a stimulus to activity. During the revolution in curriculum resource development in the 1960s, BBC Schools developed a 'learning resources' approach, which allowed greater flexibility for users (see Chapter 3).

The BBC/SBC also had a significant relevance to the social purpose with in education. Interestingly, the BBC general service, after beginning with a Reithian view of universal culture, later reflected a kind of tripartitism from 1946-47 by operating on radio a 'pyramid' service of Light, Home and Third programmes. The SBC/BBC retained a unilateral or comprehensive (in the educational sense) conception of education and never attempted distinct secondary modern, technical and grammar school programmes.[8] It was known that school broadcasting was most popular in primaries and less popular in grammar and public schools, partly because they were exam-focused and didn't want or need enrichment. Some producers worked with a social purpose in mind and later series like *Scene* took a certain 'social' stance. But the BBC's political status meant its capacity for social activism was limited.

In significant ways, BBC school broadcasting was compatible with progressivism in education, and in some ways was part of the progressive movement itself. What this thesis will also go on to argue is that in other ways, BBC School broadcasting offered an alternative conception of school education, due to its place as an educational resource provider, rather than an education provider as such.

3
Language, Linguistics and Literacy

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[8] Carter (2021) claims that "programmes for less academic pupils, most likely those attending secondary modern schools, aired on the Home Service, whilst more advanced programming was offered for older, grammar school pupils on the Third Programme." To the author's knowledge, all school radio series were on the Home service throughout the 'pyramid' period of radio programming (*Radio Times* 1947-1967 passim). The Third Programme was an inappropriate venue for school broadcasting because it did not begin until 6pm.

Language, the spoken and written word, is key to understanding the role of BBC School Broadcasting in education, because it is the main way that education is mediated. The most direct way of examining this is through literacy, defined here as the ability to read and write. Linguistics theorises knowledge of language, how language is acquired and what language is for. Literacy education is partly determined by linguistic theories. The most important distinction in linguistics is between theories which take language as a principally cognitive phenomenon, with internal psychology as the most relevant factor; and those which take language as a system of communication in which the relevant factor is people and society. By the mid-20th century, it was possible to specialise in one of the various separate branches of linguistics, such as generative, functional, and phonetics, while maintaining only cursory interest in the others. All had potential implications for language teaching at schools, in different ways. I argue that the BBC's principal school literacy series: *Look and Read* and *Words and Pictures* are best understood within the paradigm of constructivism and cognitive linguistic theory. However their development had its roots in a quite different branch of linguistics: phonetics. Furthermore, other prominent parts of its literacy output took functional or socio-linguistic approaches, as this was the dominant theory of language in progressivism.

3.1
Language and Cognition - Generative Linguistics

The corresponding linguistic theory to the cognitive theory of constructivism is generative linguistics. Both are philosophically rationalist, viewing the mind as having certain innate faculties which determine perception and mental activity. Generative linguistics holds that the human mind is naturally endowed with the propensity to generate language in a particular way. There are universal rules that govern this which correspond on a surface level to grammar and syntax (sentences and their structure) (Chomsky 1957). Generative linguistics was originally a theory of language acquisition at the pre-literate stage (Chomsky 1959). The idea of the existence of generative rules emphasises the basic similarity of all people and their minds. Cognitive development is partly pre-determined, but given rise to through interacting with the world (Chomsky 1975: 7).

Generative linguistics does not see language as primarily a means of communication, but rather as a means of expressing and representing thought. It also deprioritises any factors that originate outside the mind, such as society, and the great variation that comes in actual instances of language use (Chomsky: 1965 3–4). One problem with the theory of generative grammar is that it has proved difficult to get any clarity on what the generative rules are or if they are discoverable at all. The main value in the theory remains the idea that there are such rules (Sampson 1980).

3.2
Language and Society - Functional Linguistics

Functional linguistics takes the social as the starting point for its description of language. It describes language as a system or set of systems for performing different functions. It is particularly useful for explaining the difference between different sorts of text and speech styles appropriate for different contexts. It allows a role for social and political factors in explaining language (Sampson 1980: 126-127). In the UK J.R. Firth investigated the influence of context on word meaning and influenced M.A.K. Halliday who became the UK's best known

functional linguist. Halliday identified three meta-functions for language; the 'Experiential' (talking about the world), 'Interpersonal' (interacting with other people) and 'Textual' (organising language) (Thompson 2014: 34).

Functional linguistics offers a workable theory of how and why written texts differ from each other. For example it examines ideas like register and genre. It is interested in the fact that similar ideas can be expressed using quite different linguistic constructions, but be equally appropriate depending on the situation. According to the theory, functional choices govern the generation of syntax. Anyone in a situation where one can use language is faced with a set of options to use to cope with the situation linguistically. As with generative linguistics this still leaves the problem of defining these rules, which has proved difficult to solve.

When linguistics entered UK thinking on child language development and literacy, in the 1950s and 1960s, it was of a broadly functional character. For example Britton's carefully considered *Language and Learning* incorporates thoughts on Vygotsky, Luria, Bernstein, Piaget, Firth and Halliday and sketches a broadly contra-Chomskyan account of language acquisition (1970: 22-58). The teaching of English literature in UK schools nowadays follows a broadly functionalist programme "by making the generic features of any given form explicit rather than implicit." (Marshall 2003: 92).

3.3
Phonetics and Phonology

The BBC's literacy consultant Joyce Morris had been mentored by the prominent phonetician Fry (Morris 1984b). Phonetics is the study of speech sounds phonology is the study of sound structure of language. It is not necessary for the purposes of the thesis to go into further depth, except to point out in the linguistic research tradition of the UK, phonetics was unusually strong compared to other countries, (Sampson 1980: 209-213, Fry 1976).

3.4
Language and Recording Technology

The same technology that transformed communication, and allowed the emergence of broadcasting, also profoundly changed linguistics. Saussure had moved the subject matter of linguistics away from languages as expressed in texts to language itself. This left linguists with the problem of identifying a reliable alternative source of data. To some linguists the question was relatively unimportant, because for the purposes of describing a language in its abstract form every speaker of it was a 'competent' speaker, able to generate admissible data automatically through introspection. But arguably this resulted in "the tendency for ordinary language descriptions to gloss or idealize the specifics of what they depict" (Heritage 1984: 234). Any linguistic analysis made from introspection had only a vague relationship with real events. In fact there was a glaring gap in our knowledge of language. Real instances of language are almost always spoken, yet linguists tend to ignore spoken language as chaotic and indescribable.

Partly the problem was the lack of a reliable and practical recording method. This changed with the invention of audiotape and recorders in the 1930s. Audio recorders became portable and widely available in the 1960s, which allowed spoken language to be studied empirically. Far

from being chaotic, it was found to involve rich, subtle and complex structures and consistent rules (Sacks, Shegloff and Jefferson 1978).

3.5
Sociolinguistics and Language Variation

Although audio recording technology was profoundly important to linguists and broadcasters, the type of audio which either group recorded was quite different. The data which linguists were most interested in was real instances of language use in social contexts. This allowed the development of sociolinguistics, which deals specifically with "language in its social context.", and with the relationship between language and society (Fairclough 1989: 1) and therefore has more in common with functional rather than with generative linguistics. One of its key subjects is language variation – how language use varies between different groups and contexts (Wardaugh 2011). Sociolinguists demonstrated that this was predictable in relatively straightforward, empirically verifiable ways. For example, it was proven that by and large, the degree of pronunciation variation within languages correlates with geographical distance (Trudgill 1974).

There is a distinction between different versions of sociolinguistics. For some sociolinguists, because people construct a shared understanding of reality through language, to study it is to investigate reality and society (Cameron 2001: 17), sometimes called ethnomethodology. Language happens because people need to communicate with each other and achieve things in the world and always accompanies some kind of activity or event. Language is a part of these tasks and changes accordingly (Gee 2007). Other sociolinguists do not attempt to investigate the extra-linguistic reality. They search for strictly linguistic reasons for variation such as differing uses of vocabulary, pronunciation etc.

This latter type of sociolinguistics is particularly associated with an empirical methodology. William Labov and his English follower Peter Trudgill sought to take as random and representative a sample as possible of a whole population (this was quite different to previous dialect research which had normally used only one 'expert' informant). They were careful to elicit relatively natural speech from their informants, which they tape-recorded and transcribed. They noted features of the speaker including social class. In analysing this data, they looked for obvious variables. For example they looked at the voicing of the letter /r/ after vowel sounds, as in the word 'car', pronounced variably /car/ or /cah/. In the UK, an unvoiced /r/ correlated with higher social class, whereas in the East Coast of the USA, it correlated with lower social class. Trudgill completed the first sociolinguistic urban dialect study in the UK in 1974.

3.6
Language Variation and Class

Broadcasting brought language variation prominently to public attention and the BBC as a public body had an important stake in it. It established an Advisory Committee on Spoken English in 1926 (Clarke 1999: 110). A key cause of language variation is social class. In the UK there is and was throughout the 20th century a perceived and identifiable difference between working class and middle class language. It is difficult to trace the origin of this phenomenon in the historical record because for most of history written language was typically aimed at the

relatively small and elite section of society that was literate. Authentic printed representations of speech were relatively rare. The rise of mass literacy and the expansion of the book buying public in the late 19th century slowly laid the ground for non-prestige varieties to make it to publication. It was not until the invention of audio recording that oral language of any kind was recorded and studied.

Insofar as the difference had been theorised, it was usually said to be that working class language was an impoverished or incorrect version of a standard variety – the variety adopted by the middle class who replicated it across the UK. Sometimes such claims drew on grammatical conventions. One of the achievements of sociolinguistics has been to banish the idea of the grammatical incorrectness of variant forms (such as the double negative "I ain't got none"). In fact variants are regular, historically attested and legitimate (Trudgill 1978).

The difference between middle class and working class language use came into focus as a subject of enquiry in the UK after the Second World War. This period saw a movement into literary and academic society of working class voices, such as Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams, who wrote about class in terms of literature, culture and language. Hoggart was an early populariser of the idea of a distinctive and describable working class language form. In describing this, he largely meant oral culture (1957, 72-101). He described working class culture as a legitimate element of culture as a whole. Williams expressed a more theoretically ambitious programme and appears to have viewed language in a functional or sociolinguistic framework: "it would seem that in practice, language does operate as a form of social organisation in that what it represents is an activity…" (1958: 267).

3.7
Language Acquisition, Education and Class

The social reforms of the 1940s-1960s meant that one of the main ways that questions of language and class were aired publicly was in the context of debates around educational policy, specifically literacy education. It was evident that the differences between the way that middle class and working class people spoke were a consequence of the way they acquired language in early childhood. Because language acquisition was thought to also determine literacy acquisition, and the early years stage straddled home and school, it had far reaching implications for educational policy. These theories influenced the BBC's development of early years literacy series.

There were two separate but linked interpretations of the role of language acquisition in literacy education for the early years. The first followed from a cognitive developmental claim: that the development of higher cognitive faculties was dependent on language development to a certain standard; first in speech, and then in reading and writing. This was prepared by the constructivism of Piaget and was supplemented with the social constructivism of the Soviet psychologists, who linked the development of cognition directly to the development of language (Vygotsky 1962: 99, Luria and Yudovich 1971: 24). Their work emphasised the role of collaborative talk, including the role of adults as guides, in building cognitive faculties in young children.

The second interpretation followed from a sociological claim: that because schools favoured middle class language, working class children were at a disadvantage at school because of the way they spoke. The sociological interpretation was partly prepared for by this social version

of constructivism, but also came from a somewhat different direction. Basil Bernstein theorised that spoken language use could be divided into one of two codes, 'elaborated' or 'restricted'. His theory is difficult to explain concisely (See Wardaugh 2011: 336-340, and Lawton 1968: 77-102 for discussion.) His ideas changed over the course of the 1960s, but his earliest work (1960-64) was the most influential. For present purposes some short quotes are appropriate to indicate what aspects had the most effect on its subsequent interpretation.

In the restricted code speech: "content is likely… to be concrete, narrative and descriptive, rather than analytical and abstract" (Bernstein 1964: 62). The elaborated code on the other hand could handle "a complex conceptual hierarchy for the organization of experience." (Bernstein 1960: 271). This was interpreted as meaning that the restricted code was for concrete language, the elaborated code for conceptual. Furthermore;

> …restricted speech variants are context-dependent, {and} give rise to particularistic orders of meaning, where principles are verbally implicit or simply announced; whereas elaborated speech variants are context-independent, give rise to universalistic orders of meaning, where principles are made verbally explicit and elaborated. (Bernstein 1971: 11)

This was interpreted as meaning that the meaning of restricted code utterances depended on the immediate context of the speakers, whereas elaborated code meanings were universal.

Bernstein, who was from a working class background himself, consistently maintained that "one code is not better than the other" (1964: 66) and that most people knew and used both in different circumstances regardless of their class. He hypothesised that the codes were used in different circumstances depending on function: what the participants were doing and their relationship with each other. The restricted code characterised situations where the speakers were intimately known to each other, like friends or married couples, but also situations of strict hierarchy such as the army. The elaborated code could be found between speakers of equal status who might not know each other's background. However he also maintained that "class is an extremely crude index for the codes" (1964: 66) and that the lower working class specifically, through custom and culture, did not learn ("have access to") the elaborated code. Crucially, Bernstein also made the ingenious step of using the codes as a premise in a broader theory of social control exercised through formal education.

> As a child progresses through school it becomes critical for him to possess or at least be orientated toward an elaborated code if he is to succeed… The relative backwardness of some working class children may be culturally induced by the linguistic process (1964: 67).

The theory was influential in the educational world to the extent that the terms "'restricted and 'elaborated' codes… entered the folklore of classroom teachers." (Rosen 1972). The theory appeared to provide an explanation and possibly a remedy for entrenched educational divides. Essentially Bernstein's theory was a sociological claim about the functions that different social classes perform, with potential implications about the organisation of education. It was not at its basis a cognitive claim about mental processes – but it appeared to be – and this was the element that was subsequently emphasised in its interpretation, bringing with it problematic and prejudicial notions. R.S. Peters, the prominent philosopher of education and Bernstein's colleague at the IOE claimed:

> The homes of a large percentage of the population are so drab and cramped that the child is not provided with a rich and varied enough environment for the required early development. Above all, the language of their inmates, as Bernstein (1961) has shown, is so restricted that the necessary conceptual apparatus simply cannot be acquired. (Peters 1966: 77)

It is easy to see why the supposed difference between the codes gave rise to a belief in linguistic deprivation. Strikingly, it appeared to imply that restricted code users (hence, the working class) had difficulty in using abstract concepts.

One of the weakest elements of the theory was that the codes were not adequately defined in strictly linguistic terms (Trudgill 2013). One set of criteria that supposedly distinguished the elaborated from the restricted code was the greater incidence of "Subordinations, Complex verbal stems, Passive voice, Total adjectives…, 'I' as a proportion of all personal pronouns (etc.) (Bernstein 1971: 90)". Experimental data seemed to show the greater incidence of these features in the speech of middle class children. It was to be one of the most misleading elements in the interpretation and influence of the work. Because the definition of the codes was vague, it was impossible to test Bernstein's idea that the language forms of speech samples generated by situations would be predictable (Lawton 1968: 98-101). But a more precise definition of the codes was precluded by the complexity of the syntactical variables the theory attempted to explain. As in functional linguistics, the codes broadly pertained to the type of functions they were appropriate for, but as mentioned above, functional linguistics is quite lax about the syntactical realisation of functions. Practically almost any word and grammar choices are permissible for any broad function, and the interpretation of what was operative in any given situation was subjective. Linguists who did attempt to get into the fine details of syntactical form and how it was generated, especially following Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (1957), found that the matter was extraordinarily complex.

A substantial refutation came from the emerging practice of empirical sociolinguistics. Bernstein had formed his theory prior to testing it. He then tested it experimentally with the Sociological Research Unit at the IOE (Bernstein 1969), with small handpicked samples controlled for social class. By contrast, Labov and Trudgill used randomised large-scale methods and avoided the problem of syntax by identifying much simpler variables such as word choice and pronunciation. This allowed them to build large data sets quickly and simply and make observations with solid empirical foundations. Labov set out to prove wrong the idea that 'working class' (in the USA a euphemism for African American) language, was deficient (Labov 1972). His criticism was actually aimed at Bereiter and Engelmann, who had used Bernstein's code theory as a premise for their plan for 'compensatory' kindergartens (1966: 32-37), and Labov somewhat replicated their misinterpretation of Bernstein's aims. In a series of ingeniously analysed examples he showed that the spoken discourse of his working class African American informants dealt imaginatively and deftly with abstract concepts. Labov analysed certain 'restricted code' linguistic phenomena such as insults, in a sympathetic and detailed way. He also denied that language categorised as elaborated code had the power Bernstein claimed;

> …technical and scientific books are written in a style which is markedly middle-class. But unfortunately, we often fail to achieve the explicitness and precision which we look for in such writing, and the speech of many middle-class people departs maximally from this target. All too often, standard English is represented by a style that is simultaneously overparticular and vague (Labov 1972: 222)

Labov argued that it was pointless to attempt to teach a standard variety of English to non-standard speakers, as their own variety was a perfectly viable alternative. The apparent failure of these children at school had nothing to do with any inability to perform the tasks set, but rather an understandable suspicion and opposition to an institutional context which was systematically unfair. It is perhaps significant that the first methodologically successful attempt to legitimise working class language came from the USA rather than the UK. It was always possible for the British working class to 'become' middle class, (in fact it was seen as natural that they should aspire to).

Trudgill thought that all Bernstein had established was that people are liable to speak differently to people whom they know compared to people whom they do not know (Trudgill 2012). The reason that middle class people were better, or appeared to be better at avoiding the assumption of shared knowledge, i.e. at making their meaning 'explicit', was that they were used to moving in circles that were more mobile, professionally, socially and geographically.

During the 1960s Bernstein altered his theory away from a class-based interpretation towards an analysis of family structure, though this did not deflect all criticism (Rosen and Rosen 1973: 263). The idea that going to school involves code switching had a fruitful subsequent life, and is now largely accepted, if not in the form the Bernstein first presented it. Bernstein's work should probably be seen more in the context of sociology (he held this chair at the IOE), rather than linguistics. While Bernstein's code theory is no longer widely held, his ideas still have relevance. He was to some extent influenced by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf and the tradition of linguistic relativism, which has

> …held a perennial fascination for linguists of diverse schools, and indeed for many people who have never been students of language in a formal sense… that a man's language moulds his perception of reality, or that the world a man inhabits is a linguistic construct. (Sampson 1980: 81).

The degree to which "the social experience the child already possesses is valid and significant and… should be reflected back at him as being valid and significant" (Bernstein 1969: 120), is still a very live problem, and one faced by the BBC's literacy broadcasting.

3.8
Discourse Analysis in Education

Audio recording was also used for the discourse analysis of language in education itself and to investigate progressive methods. By the 1967 Plowden Report, still little was known on the theoretical level about language in classrooms (Wilkinson 1987: 114). Increasingly, researchers turned their attention directly to the talk that went on in classrooms. Barnes used tape recordings to explore how teaching and learning happened in the classroom through language, and found among other things what appeared to be instances of transmission teaching, when a pupil:

> …is explaining this to a teacher who already knows it, and for an unstated purpose, so he can only construct a criterion for choosing items by projecting himself into

the teacher's mind, partly in response to her signals of acceptance or rejection.
(Barnes, Britton and Rosen 1969: 34)

The theoretical foundation of this work was Vygotskian social constructivism: "the failure to demand active involvement of the pupils has gone hand in hand with a failure to demand that they verbalize their learning… as an active instrument for reorganising their perceptions" (Barnes, Britton and Rosen 1969: 66). Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) identified the predominance of 'IRF' (Initiation-Response-Feedback) exchanges between teachers and pupils, (e.g. Teacher: What is the capital of Peru? (Initiation). Student: Lima (Response) Teacher: Yes, well done (Feedback) as "a vehicle for 'closed' questioning." (Mercer and Dawes 2014: 432). Edwards and Furlong found that most teacher talk represented 'transmission teaching': "Differences in the surface style of individual teachers seem to leave unaltered a basic structure of centrally controlled interactions and centrally managed meanings' (1978: 147). One of the things that this research showed, among other things, that progressive ideals of pedagogy were rarely operative in schools.

3.9
Literacy in Theory

The main site in which linguistics comes into educational practice is in the teaching of literacy. The concept of 'literacy' is powerful. The term has lately undergone a great expansion in meaning (Vincent 2009). This thesis mostly follows the standard historical definition: facility with written and spoken language. Literacy is a political issue because it is partly a condition of the organisation of society and the state. It has a special status within education as it is a core subject of the school curriculum.

Contemporary literacy scholarship is divided. One tradition foregrounds "the forms of literacy associated with schooling (which) led to the dominance of cognitive science and psychological approaches to education.", and "particular kinds of social organisation and cognitive development, a sort of literacy as technological determinacy" (Rowsell and Pahl 2015: 1-5),. The alternative, 'New literacy', sees literacy as "primarily a sociocultural phenomenon, rather than a mental phenomenon." (Gee in Rowsell and Pahl 2015: 35) and a "diverse sets of contextualised practices and events" (Rowsell and Pahl 2015: 5).

The traditional view of literacy shares foundations with media studies of the 'Toronto School'. In the late 1950s and 1960s a series of scholarly works argued that the ability to read and write has had a profound effect on human history, and on the human mind itself. Havelock theorised that the change from a predominately oral culture to a literate culture in classical Greece allowed a rational scientific culture to develop (1963). Ong expanded the idea into a comprehensive theory of historical change, to argue that there were basic differences in the way that people from literate societies perceived the world compared to those from non-literate societies (1976). Mcluhan linked the theory to the new media of television and film and argued that they would cause a further change in human perception, restoring some of what had been lost from the previous oral culture, which Mcluhan believed print had undermined (Mcluhan and Fiore 1967). The idea that literacy itself has an effect on human mental faculties may be called the essentialist thesis, and its most considered version, in cultural historical form, is probably Olson (1994).

Discoveries in neuroscience have added to the cognitive-empirical framework of the essentialist view of literacy. Maryanne Wolf has studied reading and writing attainment disorders (often referred to as dyslexia). She holds that the ability to read and write changes individual brains at a neuronal level. The ability to 'deep read' allows certain characteristics of conceptual thought and social behaviour. Wolf synthesises neurological evidence, linguistics, cognitive science surrounding learning in general, reading comprehension and literature. She shares with the Toronto School the view that literacy changes the brain, but does not go into historical cultural analysis (Wolf 2016).

However the modern political implications of the essentialist thesis area are politically sensitive, and some research into the difference in mental faculties between literate and non-literate people has been criticised methodologically (Scribner and Cole 1981). Arnove and Graff (1987) argue that literacy education in history has always served particular political ends like state building programmes. In this interpretation, literacy education like education in general, has the goal of enhancing the power of the state, and maintain social order: "historically, schools have a social control function that forms the framework in which they transmit and knowledge, including reading and writing." (Limage 1987: 295).

'New literacy' is partly a response to these concerns. Gee holds that there are countless different types of language use linked to social practices (or codes) and he calls these discourses. Gee (2007) shares Bernstein's belief that the 'discourse' of school favours some groups more than others. The language and behaviour we learn in our home community is our 'primary discourse'. When we move around in society, for example in entering school, we have to become proficient in one or more 'secondary discourses' in order to be accepted. Therefore for Gee, literacy is simply the mastery of a secondary discourse, '(involving print)'.

A genuinely compelling historical framework for literacy remains to be developed. A soft version of the essentialist view has some place in it, but what else to include remains an open question.

3.10
Literacy in Practice

When BBC Schools entered literacy teaching, it had to grapple with not only a complex body of theory, but also a variety of its applications in practice. The history of literacy teaching in the UK in the twentieth century is not a straightforward matter. Many people learned to read and write over the period, at a considerable distance from formal theory or research. Generalised schools of thought can only be distinguished for purposes of argument. One useful division is between approaches specifically to learning and teaching processes for acquiring the cognitive 'skill' of literacy, and approaches which place literacy within a broader framework of language use. A corresponding distinction is between 'formal' and 'informal' methods. If literacy is basically a cognitive ability, then formal methods such as phonics are advisable. On the other hand, if literacy has significance only within social practices, it ought to be taught in an informal holistic way integrated with broader culture.

Reading pedagogy was in a state of change by the 1960s. The previous 30 years had seen the gradual development of a debate over the best methods of teaching reading. Reading had a difficult relationship to progressivism because it was traditionally taught with formal methods.

It is often suggested that the essence of progressive pedagogy, the discovery method, was not conducive to the acquisition of basic skills including reading. The Hadow reports reflect the search for a sound reading pedagogy and in part the rejection of the idea that the solution would be a formal procedure: "In the past attention has been focused too exclusively on reading, writing and arithmetic… the Froebelian doctrine of the sufficiency of self-activity has led many to doubt the wisdom of… formal instruction.", at least before the age of 6. Instead it was better for reading to "come about incidentally as a part of widening interests and appear natural both to child and teacher" (Hadow 1933: 132-133).

According to Joyce Morris, in the 1930s;

> The ideas of Decroly, Dewey and Froebel etc. {progressive theorists} began to have an increasing influence on educational practice. Student teachers were advised to consider meaning as almost the only factor in word perception, and reading as an integral, but small part of a child's total growth. Courses in child psychology and development started to take much of the time previously allotted to studying reading methods and materials (1972: 9).

Informal reading teaching methods grew in popularity among many teachers after the war, and appeared to be supported by some research (Gardner 1950). Books that were popular among teacher trainers with a more or less progressive orientation such as MV Daniel's *Activity in the Primary School* did not contain specific advice on reading teaching, but recommended ventures such as setting up a school library (1947: 156-172). Meanwhile, Ministry of Education studies of national reading attainment in 1948 and 1956 produced worrying results (Morris 1972: 12).

Initial literacy came in two different types; infant and junior. Juniors (7 year olds and upwards) who had not learned to read lost out most from the absence of a systematic reading-teaching method because they would no longer receive any reading instruction at all. They were called at the time 'backward' readers (a phrase no longer current) (Hadow 1931: 158). They were not necessarily dyslexic, a condition which was not well understood. Most teacher training did not distinguish between reading backwardness and general backwardness and did not give instructions on how to teach children who showed signs of the first but not the second. The work of Joyce Morris, which she explicitly defined as a solution to a national attainment problem, addressed these cases.

Theorists and researchers in the progressive tradition think that direct methods like phonics fail to capture the complexity of literacy. Barrs et al divide views of reading into "simple" and "complex" (2008). Research on reading and writing began to argue for the complex view in the 1950s and 1960s. Britton viewed readers and writers as "a highly complicated collection(s) of on-going processes" and reading as "an interaction between those processes and those… of the writer" (1970: 160). To Barrs, the simple view of reading is an easily testable relation of sign to referant, a process of decoding and comprehension. The complex view reading is "a complex transaction whereby reciprocity is subtly negotiated among text, context and reader" which invokes "unfathomable reservoirs of knowledge and experience" However, the simple view of reading is "now firmly embedded in UK government policy". Barrs et al view the political implications as ultimately very serious: "to turn off a reader can be tantamount to breeding a disengaged citizenry, one well able to decode messages but never involved enough to critique the possible flaws these messages contain in the first place." (2008: 57).

3.11
Literacy Teaching in Late Progressivism

By the end of the core period of this thesis 1957-1979, literacy teaching was complex. One ingredient in this complexity was that it had begun to incorporate oral language pedagogy. Traditionally, English "classrooms were… expected to be silent." (Shayer 1971:74). The recent avant-garde of educational thought had come to think with the soviet psychologists that language ability virtually determined thought and that "the infant learns by talking" (Britton 1970: 129). Some theorists combined literacy and oral language into a new concept: oracy (Wilkinson and Stratta 1976). Other researchers pursued the idea that talk could be developed and appraised in schools, with an active approach from teachers (Tough 1976, Richmond and Eyers 1982). The issue was further complicated by the new importance of black and minority ethnic children in broader culture, some of whom spoke English as a second language or with a dialect.

Innovation in the English curriculum became politically more controversial by the late 1970s. The part of 'The Great Debate' devoted to literacy was eventually reduced, rather misleadingly, to a binary division between 'phonics' or 'direct instruction' on one side, and 'real books', or 'whole language' on the other (Smith 1971/2004: ix). The 'real books' method was associated with the philosophy of language common to late progressivism, emphasising personal expression, aesthetic pleasure, and meaning making. Real books was a complex view of literacy teaching, and consequently involved some complexity as to what it entailed in practical terms. It meant more reliance on whole-word and context checking, (Lawton and Gordon 2002: 161, Farrington 2007), but was sometimes rendered somewhat vaguely as following automatically through exposure to interesting books and language. The approach did not suggest a specific procedure, or a simple way of assessing progress. National assessments seemed to show that reading ability had not increased between 1952 and 1987. Whetton argues that this failure may have been because the tests typically used had originated in the 1920s and 1930s before primary schools began using real books methods (Whetton 2008: 107).

Phonics implied a specific procedure, though schemes varied as research developed. According to Lawton, the position: "sometimes reinforced by psychological research owing something to behaviourism, was that children needed to be taught 'phonics' in order to crack the reading code." (Lawton and Gordon 2002: 161). Joyce Morris, who co-founded the National Reading Association in 1961, was one of its strongest advocates. Morris became strongly insistent on phonics and intolerant of new approaches such as psycholinguistics (Morris 1974: 20). She was dissatisfied with the attitudes of teachers and teacher trainers, thinking that "most publicized theories about teaching beginning reading in English-speaking countries have tended to be "anti-phonic" (1986: 42). She was still arguing for "explicit, comprehensive information about phonics based on a thorough exposition of the nature of English in spoken and written form." by the 1980s. She argued:

> Naturally, most teacher are happier to be considered 'progressive' than 'reactionary'. But it does mean that in so-called 'progressive' primary schools, phonic instruction is often conducted like a clandestine affair, with red faces all round when a compromising situation is disclosed. (1983: 132)

In the debates leading up to the development of the national curriculum, the assessment of reading was a particular "bone of contention". The Rose report of 2006 later recommended

phonics, though its validity was questioned (Wyse, Styles 2007). Phonics was legislated by the government as compulsory in primary schools.[9]

4
Broadcasting and Education

4.1
Broadcasting as a Public Service of Education

In this final section of the theoretical framework, I examine theories of the BBC's educational service. Public service broadcasting and state education can both be considered public services, but in different ways and for different reasons. The term 'public service' is not normally applied to state education in the way that it has traditionally been to (a particular type of) broadcasting. I apply it here in order to draw out the similarities and differences between these two conceptual histories. These two different spheres, with very different social and technological bases, have shared an aim: to educate, since the 1920s.

State education is a public service provided mainly by teachers within schools. In the 1920s, the degree to which education ought to be provided by the state as a universal right of every citizen was an ongoing controversy in UK society, finally settled with the 1944 Education Act and subsequent policy revisions into the 1960s. An apparently separate question arose over the jurisdiction of radio waves. Curran and Seaton position this as part of an age of the notionally disinterested public servant who sought to harness public assets for the common good (2018: 195-205). Broadcasting was managed by a public corporation with a royal charter, out of government and party political control. Public service broadcasting can be seen as akin to state education: both were publicly owned, and both had responsibilities to serve the public.

The BBC's duty to provide a public service of education was not defined specifically at the time and has not been since. Broadcasters have been left to decide this themselves. Reith intended the BBC to educate but his ideas about education were part of a general cultural (Christian) mission rather than a specific plan. He delegated the task to producers and collaborating educationists, who established fairly extensive services for adults and schools by the end of the 1930s. In principle BBC could have produced educational broadcasting for school age children outside the school system, but in practice it was politically and organisationally impossible because all children were obliged to attend school. The success of the BBC in providing school education depended on the cooperation of the state education system.

The BBC made a distinction between its output which was 'educative', and that which was 'educational'. [10] It considered its general output both as a whole and in particular strands or series as 'educative', in the broad cultural sense. 'Educational' broadcasting was of a particular type and came from specific departments. However the educative/educational distinction was only made consistently by those in the educational departments: it suited those in the general departments that the distinction be kept vague. Most BBC employees and spokespeople were

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[9] *The Daily Telegraph* 'Phonics to be Compulsory in Schools' 6th April 2006
[10] E.g. WAC R103/200/1 The Educational Broadcasting Services of the BBC GAC 390

liable to see the BBC as offering "an educational service for the listener irrespective of what education policy was offering in terms of formal education." (Hoare 2017b: 29). BBC Schools staff on the other hand were pressed by circumstances to define their role, and in doing so specifically avoided claiming to 'educate' (as in the classic trinary description), 'teach' or even 'provide education'. Instead, school broadcasts were described in terms like "a specialised educational service"[11], a "systematic contribution to formal education" (BBC Yearbook 1967: 53) or "an aid to teaching". (BBC Yearbook 1952: 138). Most often the precise nature of the role was left undefined and Schools series were simply referred to as being "for schools" (E.g. BBC Yearbook 1976: 37, *Radio Times* passim).

Schools and teachers naturally had no qualms about claiming 'to educate' or teach. During the twentieth century, the definition of educating and teaching in one sense broadened, as progressives developed the curriculum, but in another sense narrowed, as educational research sought scientifically verifiable outcomes. Educational research and theory developed along a path that diverged from the old BBC conception of the broad cultural 'educative' general service. In the absence of learning goals or task design (from which corresponding learning gains could be measured), even impeccably public service 'educative' series in the general output like *Life on Earth* or *Play for Today* were of no interest to educational researchers. As Langham puts it "The increasing professionalization of both teachers and broadcasters had driven a wedge between the two in outlook and experience." (Langham 1990: 10).

Another key difference between the BBC and schools and teachers also had its roots in the way public service broadcasting had been founded. Unlike the content of another medium, the telephone network, which was also publicly owned, the content of broadcasting had to be managed by an institution with a permanent staff. Broadcasting's mass audience implied that this content be designed with maximum quality and expertise. This created a new, small but powerful social group – the broadcasters. The BBC did not develop distinctive regional centres although that was allowed for by the nature of the technological infrastructure. Reith led a deliberate policy of centralisation from the 1920s (Scannell and Cardiff 1991: 304-333). One of the reasons why ITV was a positive development in the British broadcasting landscape was that its franchises were set up regionally, with obligations to provide local services. The invention of ITV created a new set of people who could now join the broadcasting class and increased representation of the public at least within this class. Professional broadcasters reached extraordinary cultural pre-eminence by the 1960s by giving the people (mostly) what they wanted and needed from their broadcasting. For Tracey, public service broadcasting reached its "high water mark" in the early 1960s (1998: 19). However, it consequently suffered from the same radical critique of schools which emerged in the late 1960s: it was being undemocratic and (sometimes unwittingly) subservient to elite interests. In fact broadcasting, as the preserve of a much narrower social base than the teaching profession, was more vulnerable to this critique.

By the 1970s, academic work was beginning to describe the existence of broadcasters as a separate class as a potential problem (Tunstall 1974, Burns 1977, Born 2005). Radical critiques began to recognise that the ideology of power structures could be exercised through broadcasting, even if this occurred relatively inadvertently (Glasgow Media Group 1976, Hall 1986c). In fact, though it was hardly noticed at the time, school broadcasting was an exception to broadcasters' normal practices. Groombridge (1972) head of education programmes for schools and adults at the IBA, proposed a radical vision of how television could help Britain

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[11] WAC R103/200/1 The Educational Broadcasting Services of the BBC GAC 390

from representative to participatory democracy, and thought that the consultation and feedback mechanisms established for educational broadcasting provided a model, but his ideas were not influential. The separateness of the BBC from the general public was a consistent problem with the BBC's legitimacy, and hampered its status as a provider of education.

4.2
School Broadcasting Research

School broadcasting research has formed a small section of media research. Media research was founded in two main centres in the 1930s. In the USA it was broadly empirical and positivistic and attempted to study effects of media. In Germany it was broadly critical and attempted to devise a theory of how power was exercised over societies through the media. Media research did not take off in the UK until the 1960s. The empirical and positivistic tradition was represented by the Leicester Centre for Mass Communications Research, headed in 1966 by James Halloran. The competing critical tradition was represented by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies (CCCS), led by Stuart Hall. Hall's 'Encoding-Decoding' model was originally intended as a critique of the methodology of the Leicester centre (Scannell 2007: 206). The Leicester Centre did produce research on educational broadcasting, and Halloran's *The Effects of Television* (1970) had a chapter on 'Television and Education' by D. Mcquail which was photocopied and filed by the dept. The theoretical framework of Hall and CCCS appealed very little to educational producers and seemed to imply the superiority of the media academic to the media professional (Scannell 1989: 156). Media and communications research in general was not well regarded by the traditional conservative universities in the UK and struggled for funding.

The peak of school broadcasting internationally came between the mid-1960s and late 1980s. Many countries developed extensive industries, including Japan, France, West Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA. The Japan Prize was founded in 1965 to recognise excellence internationally. Educational broadcasting was also used strategically in developing countries such as the Ivory Coast (Bates 1984: 32). As it spread, it attracted academic research including Schramm (1977), Arnove (1976) and Hawkridge and Robinson (1982). Assessments differ on whether this output represented a sufficient quantity in absolute terms. Robinson judged that "probably no educational method was more fully researched and evaluated during this decade {the 1970s} than educational broadcasting" (1982: 208). However Robinson made this claim in response to a specific statement in the Annan Report to the effect that there was "little validated evidence that broadcasting was an effective educational medium". As the BBC's Further Education Liaison officer he had a vested interest in claiming the opposite. Bates (1984), and Langham (1990: 54) on the other hand, both judge that there was little relevant research and much of it of questionable value.

Most educational broadcasting research falls into two broad types; studies of cognitive psychological effects on learners, and those that look at organisational arrangements of broadcasters or in educational settings. Either type can be accompanied by an attempt to measure effects on attainment, as is the case with mainstream educational research. This thesis does not attempt to directly address the effectiveness of school broadcasting, but certain trends in the research can be outlined.

A pioneer of the first type of research in the UK was Joseph Trenaman. Trenaman conducted some of the earliest mass communications research in the UK, into the response to the forces

educational broadcasts by the BBC from 1945-1947 (Cain and Wright 1994: 37). The studies found that half comprehended nothing at all of what they had heard. It was the first strong evidence for a long held intuition among educationists and teachers: that presenting facts by way of a broadcast does not work well as a method of teaching and learning. Trenaman later studied the effects of broadcasting on the election of 1959 (Trenaman and Mcquail 1961), and his later work attempted to go into more detail about what in radio and television broadcasts promoted or hindered "communication and comprehension" (1968). Trenaman attempted to measure empirically the effects of educational broadcasting in a positivist cognitive framework. He played his subjects programmes and afterwards asked them questions in order for them to test their "comprehension" the "main points" of what they had witnessed. Trenaman was working at a primitive stage in the development of televisual techniques (one of the TV programmes he used was simply a video of a lecture). Trenaman's research design and aims can be seen as inadequate. In the particular context of educational broadcasting research, the methodological problems relate to the expectation that broadcasting can impart facts (Trenaman's "main points") that can be adequately rendered and repeated in language. This ignores the kind of knowledge that television or film is best at imparting – how things appear. Trenaman was to some extent aware of the issue, and called for more research into this difficult problem.

Bates' (1984) work remains probably the most comprehensive book-length treatment of educational broadcasting in theory and practice. He takes a sober look at broadcasting in education at the historical high point of the movement worldwide, and doubts its success, except for specific projects such as the Adult Literacy campaign in the UK. Overall, Bates thought that broadcasting was "a weak instructional medium", and was poorly run by broadcasters who "flouted the principles of education", preferring a documentary form to an instructional form even though it had been proven to be less effective, because it had greater professional prestige. Another prominent UK researcher from the period, Robin Moss criticised Bates for being "very tough on the broadcasters {without }… similar critique of the teachers with whom education broadcasters try to work." (Moss 1985: 71) Moss as head of education at the IBA had worked with both, and his dichotomy of who was responsible for educational broadcasting's success or failure is useful. He went on to publish more defences of educational broadcasting (2000).

Dedicated educational broadcasting research declined along with the decline of educational broadcasting itself, and The *Journal of Educational Television* (1975 - 1995) changed its remit to become the *Journal of Educational Media* from 1996. Educational broadcasting research morphed into research into educational media in general.

4.3
School Broadcasting Theory

There have been few attempts to conceptualise educational broadcasting in a comprehensive way. Most published works on school broadcasting by practitioners are studies of conditions around the time of writing, with a brief history (Bailey 1957, Palmer 1948, Fawdry 1974). Scupham's 1967 work is perhaps the most committed effort to propose a broad theoretical framework. Scupham contributed to the international committee which decided in 1967 that for broadcasts to be educational:

> Their purpose must be to contribute to the systematic growth of knowledge; they must form part of a continuous provision and be so planned so that their effect is progressive; they must be accompanied by supporting documents; and whether they are received individually or collectively, under supervision or by home listeners or viewers, there must be an active response from the audience, and the impact of the programmes must be supervised and checked. (Scupham 1967: 160).

By "continuous" and "progressive" it was meant that there must be some organisation and systematisation to the material presented which corresponded to an order by which it may be learned. The requirement for an "active response" was a link to the contemporary orthodoxy that learning came through activity. The broadcast was supposed to be integrated with a much larger set of activities associated with learning and practising the target knowledge or skills.

Scupham gives an extended gloss on contemporary psychological and linguistic theory of learning, relating television and radio to the schemas in the work of Bruner and Piaget. Scupham was aware the findings of Trenaman on the limitations of broadcasting as producing retention of facts. The alternative justification that he sought attempted to ground the status of mediated experience conceptually. He thought that "Words are symbolic, pictures are representative" (1967: 112), but that pictures needed words in order to makes sense.

> The interpretation of still and moving images is a skill… commonly learnt in early childhood, and rarely thereafter calls for conscious effort…. {tv images} impose no single image on their viewers. The relationship that they bear to reality is, however, much more direct than that of words… what they show is accepted as… a straightforward extension of experience. (1967: 114)

This conjecture that educational broadcasting represents a special relationship between the moving image and reality got lost in the history of a service trying to adapt and make its way in complex political and social conditions. Scupham was one of the few to explore the connection and his discussion pointed out many paths which were not subsequently followed.

There have been some attempts to conceptualise educational film. Masson, drawing on and reacting to Jacquinot (1977) in her study of classroom films in the Netherlands, has provided the most thorough modern assessment, using the notion of 'rhetoric' which is "a basic textual function that gets activated under a given set of circumstances" (2012: 129). Masson ends her analysis with the beginning of Dutch educational television and observes rightly that the cultural, institutional and distribution frameworks of educational broadcasting were quite different to film.

4.4
Educational Film History

Educational broadcasting and educational film had little crossover in practice and it is therefore difficult to incorporate their histories. Educational Film has been studied in recent years partly in a move within film studies towards 'utility' or 'non-theatrical film', rather than feature or auteur film (Elsaesser 1990, Fuchs Bruchs Annegarn-Gläß 2016, Masson 2012). Some brief points about its history will suffice here.

The early, pre-war period of educational film is remarkable for its international character. The movement internationally was stymied by the Second World War. Its period of peak expansion preceded the era of the mass uptake of television. Later, educational film was largely replaced by educational television, at which point scholarly coverage ceases. Low argues that in the UK, the educational film industry suffered from a vicious circle in that it could never produce enough good product to persuade schools to invest in equipment and training, and the subsequent lack of demand reinforced the unwillingness of production companies to make more films. Educational broadcasting had the great advantage of the protection, resources and coordination of the BBC: "compared with broadcasting, which was easy for the teachers, organised centrally with full back up services and advance information – educational film world was chaos and expensive chaos." (Low 1979: 42.)

However during the war the Central Office of Information had some success in communicating ideas to the public with film and building a non-theatrical distribution network. The Ministry of Education subsequently sponsored an experiment in producing classroom films between 1946 and 1952. The experiment suffered from lack of clear objectives, planning or evaluation and was abandoned as a failure (Southern 2016). An overall history of UK educational film has not yet been attempted and the genre typically plays only a small part in general histories of British documentary (e.g. Chapman 2015).

4.5
School Broadcasting Historiography

There is little work which attempts to assess and analyse educational broadcasting as part of education or broadcasting history. The history of educational resources has been largely ignored by general educational histories, perhaps because their development seems incidental to the narrative of political struggle between progressivism and reaction. General histories of broadcasting typically have not paid detailed attention to school broadcasting. The most notable exceptions are Briggs's five volumes (1961, 1965, 1970, 1979, 1995). These stop in 1974, an inconvenient moment in that educational broadcasting was then at its height and factors of decline were not yet in evidence. Cain and Wright (1994) and Langham (1990) offer useful, but brief summaries of BBC and ITV services respectively. Robinson (1982) is perhaps the most detailed monograph on BBC educational broadcasting, but is focused on adult education. All these works suffer the handicap of prematurity – they do not offer overall assessments of the history of school broadcasting with the knowledge of its drastic decline following 2008. Shorter pieces in recent years have focused on subject areas and do not attempt overall assessments (Cox 1996, Bignell 2017, Parker 2017).

Carter (2021) has expressed a recent judgement specifically on BBC School Broadcasting overall for the 1920s to 1950s period. In an account of the career of early producer Rhoda Power, Carter judges that

> …during the mid-twentieth century the BBC was closely aligned with mainstream educational thinking, and… its broadcasting structures and practices largely reproduced the stratification of social knowledge seen in Britain's evolving secondary school system between the 1920s and the 1950s… Schools broadcasting subtly adapted and responded to this new system {the tripartite secondary school system} in light of the BBC's new structures.

In this thesis I argue that BBC Schools had a complex and sometimes contradictory relationship with educational thinking, mainstream or otherwise. I also argue that BBC's output was only loosely connected to organisational reform in secondary or primary schools either before or after 1944. Carter points out correctly that the BBC often addressed non-elite audiences and sometimes claimed that school broadcasting was more appropriate for them, (2021: 9) but it is arguable whether this led to the reproduction of the stratification of knowledge, or was counter to it.

The main way that school broadcasting lives on in contemporary scholarship is in the field of educational technology (Selwyn 2011, Mayes 1995, Cuban 1986, 2001). This field has required an historical premise on which to assess the present situation. Opinion has coalesced around a judgement of the history of educational broadcasting as overall one of failure: "…generally seen by the 1980s to have failed to impact on school, college and university education in the ways that its supporters had anticipated." (Selwyn 2011: 52) This judgement is partly determined by being contained in an analysis of 'technology' in general: "none of these technologies {film, radio, television and microcomputing} could be said to have 'caused' or generated any widespread change or systemic improvement {to education}" (Selwyn 2011: 60). This view is valid in the context that educational technology theorists are working, but I offer three main reasons for coming to a different conclusion.

Firstly the tendency to internationalise and generalise ignores local and contingent historical processes. Cuban's (1986, 2001) historical analysis of American educational broadcasting, which Selwyn follows (understandably given the lack of UK-specific historical work), cannot be straightforwardly mapped onto the UK, where educational and broadcasting policy were quite different. Selwyn argues rightly that social and political situations of schools have tended to frustrate any transformative effects from the integration of technology, and that determining factors on its effects were "the ways in which a technology is appropriated within the social relations that surround any educational context." (Selwyn 2011: 60). This thesis examines the specific historical local and contingent processes behind our present situation in the UK and argues that by the 1980s, despite setbacks, school broadcasting and educational publishing were still growing more effective. According to some, by 1989/90, school broadcasting had "never been more widely used and firmly rooted in good teaching practice." (Moses Croll 1991: 2). It was specific political changes regarding broadcasting and education policy which upset this process.

Secondly the emphasis on the general social relations surrounding broadcasting as technology de-emphasises the contents of various media products and the characteristics of content producers. The voluminous production of school broadcasting encompassed series which differed widely in a myriad of ways. This thesis argues that some series were successful and others not because of their particular role, format, content and theoretical background.

Thirdly there is some conflation between the views of advocates and those of practitioners. Mayes' analysis sees the development of school broadcasting as a wave or cycle common to other educational technologies – first adopted with enthusiasm, but soon dropped in favour of the next fashion: "We can point to several previous cycles of high expectation about an emerging technology, followed by proportionate disappointment, with radio, film, television, teaching machines and artificial intelligence." (Mayes 1995: 1). Similarly, Cuban begins with the premise that advocates of technologies intended to use them to "Transform teaching and learning into an engaging and active process connected to real life." and prepare students for the workforce (Cuban 2001: 12-15), and shows that these have not been realised. The problem

is that evidence of "high expectations" in sources from the period, though striking when it does occur, was not widespread or typical. The mid 1960s to early 1970s was a notable period of optimism, later called "Audio-visual euphoria" (Escoffey 1980), of which Manoury (1972) is an example, but such expressions belonged mainly to the academic and the marketing fields. They are not separable from radical or utopian educational thought in general, and stood rather apart from the concerns of practitioners (broadcasters) and users (teachers). I have not found radical reformist intentions among the practitioners either in archival evidence or oral interviews. Overall, practitioners were modest and realistic. Some of those who worked in academic contexts such as Maclean (1968) were carefully measured.

The significance of the changes which media technology brought to school education between the 1920s and 2000 is arguable – it depends on how you define significant, and it depends which technology you focus on. The overall sceptical judgement of educational technology theorists is most applicable to the history of computers, a technology that has expanded in schools as school broadcasting has declined (Moss 2000). This thesis argues that there is a crucial difference in that school broadcasting was always backed by a large and powerful public service content creation organisation in a way that school computing has not been. The hope that independent commercial providers would step in to provide content of comparable quality for computers has so far largely not been realised (Michalis 2012). The far reaching effects of technology are clearer if one does not focus on cutting edge technologies. For example printing technology was not new. Schools had books in the 1920s but the books they had in the 1980s were quite different, because of technological advances. As I argue in this thesis, schools are hardly operable without media, and that responsibly produced content vastly enhances what schools can do. Just as progressivism and its legacy (broadly defined) transformed teaching practice and schools in the twentieth century, the technological complex that makes schools and classrooms possible has also been transformed.

Part 2
BBC School Broadcasting and the National System of Education

Chapter 1

<u>The School Broadcasting Council and the Educational World[12]</u>

This part of this thesis explores the place of BBC school broadcasting in the national system of education. It is appropriate to begin with the advisory body whose job was to represent both the educational world to the BBC and the BBC to the educational world.

The Central Council for School Broadcasting/School Broadcasting Council, (CCSB/SBC), was a panel founded by the BBC in 1929 to advise its school broadcasting service. Members were appointed by a range of educational institutions and by the BBC. The CCSB comprised a main council and a set of sub-committees on particular subjects, composed of a mixture of teachers and subject experts. In a significant revision in 1947, the CCSB was renamed the SBC and the sub-committees were re-founded based on age-ranges instead of subjects. The CCSB/SBC was intended to formulate educational policy in general, as well as for individual series, while the BBC produced series according to these policies. The CCSB/SBC had an unusual power among the BBC's advisory bodies in that it was in some sense a commissioner, as its approval was required for a series to be produced, though beyond this approval it had no input over practical production measures such as budgets.

The SBC offered BBC Schools an effective feedback and evaluation structure and in the initial period (1924-1957), helped broadcasting to become accepted in schools. However, the SBC had limitations which negatively affected its ability to promote the role of school broadcasting in the long term. Firstly I shall set out some of the conditions in which school broadcasting was founded which were to lead to the creation of the CCSB, and the influence of progressivism on the educational world. Then I shall examine the internal relationship between the CCSB/SBC and the BBC, and the balance between educationist advice and broadcaster production. I shall then look at the CCSB/SBC's relationship with the rest of the educational world, and its attempts to promote the use of broadcasting among educationists.

The Foundation of School Broadcasting

In the 1920s the BBC was born into a developing statutory and theoretical framework for education. Although Reith intended the BBC to provide education (including at school), (Reith 1924: 150) he formulated no precise plans, and employed J.C. Stobart from the Board of

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[12] Material from this chapter, and the following chapter was used in the article 'The BBC School Broadcasting Council and the National System of Education' (Barclay 2021).

Education to oversee its development. A Radio Times article of 1924 announcing Stobart's appointment, headed "A Broadcasting University", stated "The BBC is not content to be regarded as merely an entertainer. It is deeply conscious of possessing a medium of communication which improves upon print as much as print improved upon writing… a new era of civilisation has begun."[13], and Stobart wrote to Reith outlining plans for a "Wireless University" (Briggs 1965: 188). For education beyond the school stage, through access to households, broadcasting had implications for the institutional gatekeeping of education – eventually enacted with the Open University. But for school broadcasting to be successful it would be necessary for the institutions and professionals with jurisdiction over schools to agree to use it.

Stobart did not specify what he wanted from school broadcasting except "lectures" by "some eminent scholar", or propose practical courses of action to promote usage. Mary Somerville, who was subsequently became head of school broadcasting, judged that at first "there was too much missionary zeal altogether" but managed to flesh out some aims, linking broadcasting to "equality of educational opportunity, and… guidance in the acquiring not of knowledge split up into subjects, but of experience."(Palmer, 1947: 10-11.) Somerville led the 'Kent Experiment', a pilot study whose report endorsed the creation of advisory machinery in 1929. It showed that the lecture approach was unsuitable and that more was needed to engage the school audience.

The progressive trend of pedagogy did not help the acceptance of broadcasting in schools. Progressives understandably saw education as fundamentally a matter of teachers teaching. Interest among the educational world in what were referred to as 'aural and visual aids' was not mainstream. As Cunningham notes, progressivism's interest in ruralism, handicrafts and nature study was at best ambivalent to any new technology (Cunningham 1988: 83). Perhaps the closest analogue that broadcasting had in schools was books, but unlike the BBC, educational publishers such as Longman had been catering to school and teacher needs for a long time.

The BBC often repeated that broadcasting could not and would not attempt to replace the teacher.[14] What lay behind the need for the assurance was the fear that broadcasters were attempting to take over the curriculum, which ran counter to the progressive trend of a teacher's control over his or her pupils' learning. There was no national curriculum and no obvious framework for the BBC to provide curriculum content, and some resistance among teachers to the idea of a set curriculum at all. (Gordon and Lawton 1978: 69-72). Many LEAs, including London County Council were resistant, partly because radio sets were expensive, but also because the quality of broadcasts and their usefulness to teaching seemed dubious. It was partly these difficulties that the CCSB was supposed to overcome. (Cain and Wright 1994: 19, Briggs 1965: 189) The presence of eminent educationists leant the CCSB credibility and connections, and LEA staff and practising teachers provided wide relevant opinion.[15]

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[13] 'A Broadcasting University', *Radio Times.* 13th June 1924.
[14] For example BBC Yearbook 1939: 75
[15] The inaugural CCSB included HAL Fisher, former president of the Board of Education, Percy Nunn, head of the London Day Training College, and Cyril Burt the prominent psychologist.

The CCSB/SBC's Relationship with the BBC

The "Composition, Powers and Procedures" of the CCSB were set out in 1928.[16] These were replaced by a "constitution" in 1947 which defined the SBC as having "the duty of guiding the Corporation in the provision of its educational service to schools" and made it "sponsor for this service vis-à-vis the educational world."[17] This relationship was described in terms such as "cooperation", "a formal joining" or "a partnership." (Bailey 1957: 30, 33; Fawdry 1974: 106)

In the first few years after the foundation of the CCSB, the relationship was collaborative in that the sub-committees were in some cases the originator of programme ideas and commented on scripts and printed materials. But the origination of programmes also came from producers, sometimes through freelancers (Palmer 1947: 76-97). Two of the principal successful innovations, *Stories from World History* and *Music and Movement*, grew from the practice of freelancers Rhoda Power and Ann Driver respectively. The CCSB was not involved in production, and as broadcasting technique developed in the 1930s, the department grew more, and the committees less, responsible for the output. Briefing the Director General in 1943, R,N, Armfelt, Assistant Controller (Home) observed,

> Before 1935 programmes were in fact planned in the fullest sense by the committees of the Council… By 1935 it had become clear that the academic content of a series could not satisfactorily be laid down in any detail round a committee table and handed over to Schools department to turn into a broadcast series… the conception of a schools series had to be a broadcasting conception.[18]

By 1935 the collaborative process had begun to rankle among producers; Somerville later saying that it was "not easy for the creative spirit to be bound by specifications" (Palmer 1947: 16). The problem was partly practical. The department had limited staff and resources and school broadcasting was no less difficult to produce than other types. The Council and the sub-committees met 70 times in 1935, which meant a lot of time was spent by producers preparing, submitting and revising programme plans. Somerville herself was badly overworked and collapsed from stress in 1934 (Murphy 2016: 163).

In order to separate advice and production (and remove pressure from Somerville) the CCSB was made more autonomous from the department. It was given it its own staff, a secretary and a force of Education Officers (EOs) who liaised with schools. However according to Somerville by 1943:

> …the original terms of the reorganisation have never so far as I know been formally implemented… with the result that the differentiation of function is clear neither to the educational world, including newcomers to the committees…(or) people in the corporation.

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[16] WAC R16/213, CCSB Composition Powers Procedures, 1928.
[17] WAC R78/2738/1 School Broadcasting Council Constitution and Terms of Reference.
[18] WAC R16/213, R.N. Armfelt, School Broadcasting Post-war, 2nd February, 1945.
Roger Noel Armfelt had been Secretary to the Education Committee in Devon in the 1930s (Hoare 2020). He was one of several educational administrators who worked or broadcast for the BBC.

A further revision in 1947 was required. The basic council committee was renamed the SBC and the number of sub-committees was reduced to five, which each met twice a year. To rectify the CCSB's "spasmodic fluctuations in policy"[19] and "… to protect producers from possibly arbitrary judgements on programme plans", the commissioning procedure was simplified to "terms which laid down broad objectives only." (Fawdry 1974: 108.) Another important effect was the diminution of the Council's powers over publications. The 1928 CCSB "power" over "supervision and content of school pamphlets" was changed in the new SBC constitution to "Formulate the general educational policy of… associated materials". The effect of these changes was to diminish the collaborative elements of the early CCSB.

A further problem with the CCSB was that it was not able to bring a focus of overall educational opinion on any particular subject. In so small a body the nature of the expertise had to be partial and particular. Armfelt found;

> …few HM Inspectors and fewer experts ever found time to listen to the broadcasts… Moreover, the experts had a tendency to be guided more by their interests as experts than as members of a sub-Committee concerned with broadcasts. The sub-Committees could not themselves be regarded as focal points of educational opinion...

Therefore the subject sub-committees were abolished and replaced by sub-committees based on age groups; Primary sub-committees I (5-7) and II (7-11), and Secondary sub-committees I (11-13), II (13-15), and III (15 and older). This has generally been linked to both the 1944 Education Act and the growing popularity of progressive pedagogy (Cain and Wright 1994: 41, Briggs 1979: 752, Bailey 1957: 43). The new SBC committee structure reflected child-centred and developmental educational psychology in that it recognised formally the difference between the cognitive capacities of different age-groups. Numerous SBC minutes dwelt on what might be considered appropriate for the average child of a particular age.[20]

The link between the change and the secondary school provisions of the 1944 act were less clear. The new secondary sub-committees largely did not address the new tripartite division of secondary schools in any concerted way through policy; instead they aimed to find series that would appeal widely. What had changed was that the expertise now sought was not in subjects or the teaching of subjects but instead in teaching children of a particular age-group. This did not result in a wholesale change to the output; series remained subject-based. Of the UK-wide series provided in the school year 1947/1948, 16 out of 31 were still in production in 1964/65; and all output was still schematised by subject in the annual programme sent to schools. The post-1947 Council's influence could be seen in a partial drift away from subject-specific series. For example when the expansion of school television in 1961 led to Primary Sub-committee II being asked for recommendations, the outcome was the 'miscellany' series *Merry-go-Round* (see chapter 3 for more on the curriculum). The change to 'developmental' committees should be seen in the context of a further increase of control over school broadcasting by the BBC at the expense of the educational world, as the advice of specialists was replaced with that of

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[19] WAC R99/53/1 Report of the Machinery Revision Sub-Committee, 21st October 1946.
[20] E.g. WAC R98/11, 11th November 1963.

much more amenable generalists, and producers, who were usually subject specialists, consolidated control over broadcasts.

The change to the 'developmental' sub-committee format in 1947 may have degraded decision making by the SBC and the lack of ready subject expertise was intermittently lamented in the new regime. As early as 1953, Primary sub-committee II worried about this and suggested consulting experts by post.[21] The EO force was revised in 1969 so that 6 became centrally based subject specialists.[22] A specialist foreign languages sub-committee existed throughout the 1970s, shared with FEAC. But in 1978 SBC chairman Harry Judge was still questioning the developmental sub-committee structure "Does it make sense to order by age? ... perhaps… subject based programmes or proposals are not subjected – within the council framework that is – to a very careful scrutiny."[23] Partly to address the lack of subject expertise, the 1981 constitution revision allowed for ad hoc advisory panels for different educational issues, such as special needs, or post-16 education.[24] But the SBC remained developmentally structured. This was later to have repercussions when the tide of political thought on the curriculum turned back towards subject specificity in the late 1980s.

Council Membership

Between 1947 and 1970 the SBC had up to 59 members at a time and was larger than any of the BBC's other advisory councils including the General Advisory Council. The bodies who appointed members to the CCSB/SBC were allowed one appointee each except for a few such as the BOE/MOE/DES (3) and the National Union of Teachers (4). [25] LEA management was represented through the Association of Chief Education officers. The largest contributor of appointees was the BBC itself at twenty,[26] from among whose appointees the Chairman and Vice-chairman were drawn. The BBC normally appointed some working school teachers as well as prominent national figures. The list is notable for who was excluded: educational resource providers such as publishers, or anyone with audio-visual expertise. As one producer put it "They weren't appointed as ideas people."[27]

The SBC had eight chairmen (no women)[28] between 1947 and 1989. The length of tenure of chairmen varied, the longest being Charles Morris who was in office from 1953 to 1965. There was a change after Thomas (1974-77) from chairmen whose careers began before the Second World War and who had standing in the educational world by dint of their position (Richards, Gater, Morris, Carter and Thomas) to the last three chairmen who were professional writers and thinkers on education (Judge, Wragg and Newsam). Judge's chairmanship began with a fundamental questioning of the status and role of the SBC which led to a reinvigorated SBC in the 1980s.

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[21] WAC R98/12/1, SBC Primary Committee II Minutes,10th February 1953
[22] WAC R16/1410/2, SBC Executive Committee Minutes 26th September 1969. See also Fawdry 1974: 127.
[23] WAC R78/2738/1 School Broadcasting Council Constitution and Terms of Reference
[24] WAC Microfilm Education Advisory Council Documents, SBC for UK Council Minutes, 2nd July 1981
[25] See Appendix for a full list of appointing organisations.
[26] Reduced to 10 in 1970.
[27] Griffths, Joan, interview with the author 3rd March 2021.
[28] See Appendix for a list of chairmen from 1929.

Council and committee members were generally of "Long service, experience and status in the educational world." (Cunningham 1988:117). Appointees normally served for a five year term and their attendance was voluntary. The BBC used its patronage to invite figures of national standing. For example Margaret Miles, a leading figure in the campaign for comprehensive schools (and alongside Brian Simon and Caroline Benn on the Comprehensive Schools Committee) served 1962-1971.[29] Some were practising school teachers. For example in 1971 the DES, asked to suggest a teacher member for the BBC to appoint, put forward Frank Mitson as "a man who is making something of a mark nationally… building up an effective resource centre in his school including quite a bit of BBC material."[30] Members did not always take a very active part and each meeting began with a long list of apologies for absence. RS Peters, the prominent philosopher of education, was appointed by the BBC in 1972, but resigned two years later pleading pressure of work, having rarely attended.

The membership over the years included many who could be described as progressive, including nationally prominent figures. Cunningham (1988: 115-121) detects evidence of progressive attitudes in records of SBC discussions in the 1940s and 1950s. He focuses on the contribution of Christian Schiller, who served on Programme Committee II from 1947-55 as an MOE representative. Schiller was HMI Staff inspector for Junior Education 1944-1956 and gave in-service courses, "at the centre of a most influential network of 'promoters of progressivism'" (Cunningham 1988: 58.) His pupils included many important educationists, including Connie Rosen, writer on children's language later of the Schools Council. Schiller's influence could be seen in the committee's urging that series for primary children be supplementary to the teacher's work, with plenty of practical follow-up work. Edith Moorhouse, the primary adviser in Oxfordshire LEA, which was at the vanguard of progressivism in the 1950s, served on Primary Programme Committee I 1959 - 1963. Other prominent progressives who served on the SBC included Alec Clegg, from 1957 till 1962. Clegg was the Chief of West Riding LEA, a national public speaker and writer (Burke, Cunningham Hoare 2020). Molly Brearley, Principal of Froebel College and Plowden report committee member, served on the SBC and Primary Programme Committee I 1963-1969. MV Daniel, principal of Hereford Training College and author of *Activity in the Primary School* (Daniel 1947) served on Primary Programme Committee II 1959 -1964. Her book, along with Brearley's *Fundamentals in the First School* (Brearley and Bott, 1969), were prominent in teacher training college reading lists (Cunningham 1988: 16-18).

The Permanent Staff of the SBC

The SBC's permanent staff were employees of the BBC but were seconded to the SBC for duties. The Secretary of the SBC was responsible for day-to day affairs and acted together with the Chairman and Vice-chairman as the heads of the SBC. There was also a Senior Education Officer (SEO), an Assistant SEO, a Research Officer and around fourteen[31] Education Officers

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[29] Miles also joined the BBC General Advisory Council and reflected of the SBC that it had "pioneered ideas, such as consumer consultation and the feed-back of information, which were now very much in vogue." WAC R78/1181/1 General Advisory Council Minutes 4th April 1973.

[30] R99/186/1, Beaver to Robson, 19th October 1971

[31] In 1960 (BBC yearbook 1960). Numbers fluctuated.

(EOs) who were normally former teachers. The EOs visited schools to observe broadcasts being used and gauge teacher and pupil opinions, attended education related events and kept abreast of contemporary educational thought. These activities were organised into projects on a termly basis. Several EOs went on to prominent positions in the service and the BBC.[32] The EOs were stationed regionally whereas the SEO was headquartered in London.

The words of EOs are highly visible in the archive due to their frequent reports. These give often vivid pictures of life at the 'chalkface', so often missed in the bureaucratic back and forth of much of what makes up institutional archives. Writing in February 1976 about a school visit to a "Nursery Unit set in a heavily industrialised Leeds suburb", EO John Rawnsley reported:

> They view seated on either the carpeted area, or on padded benches in a spacious room – plenty of room to dance to *You and Me* music, which they do. The large screen monochrome set gave an excellent picture. The staff actively participate with them during the viewing.[33]

In another school, where the "Proportion of one parent family backgrounds is considerable", the children were "cheerful, noisy, exuberant youngsters craving affection, not far off unmanageable".[34] Other reports are testament to teachers:

> The school itself is old and inconvenient in every way. The district is one of mean streets and small, fly-blown shops. There is not a blade of grass in sight… but in this desert roses bloom – at least in Mr. Mckie's class… The children are of average ability (only about 6 children a year transfer to grammar Schools at 11+), friendly, lively and resilient. Every child in the class (40 odd) writes poetry – both individual and communal – even the toughest looking boys.[35]

These reports were presented to SBC and sub-committee meetings, used by department members as guidance or feedback or used to compile longer documents relating to SBC policy or research.

EOs worked for the SBC rather than to dept. orders and the relationship between their research and programme production varied and could be remote; "those who were good were respected by the producers who responded to them and those who were not tended to be ignored."[36] Producers also stayed in touch with developments in their field and to some degree replicated EO work. Producers who worked in a subject area in which they had some prior experience had less need of EOs,[37] while those who acquired a subject specialism found EO support more important. In some cases EOs "got identified with programmes" and their reports could be used

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[32] Including John Scupham, Kenneth Fawdry, head of School Broadcasting Television, and John McCormick, future secretary of the BBC and Controller of BBC Scotland

[33] R103/305/1, Primary English Project 27, John Rawnsley, 16th February 1976.

[34] R103/305/1, Primary English Project 27, John Rawnsley, 12th February 1976.

[35] R16/903/1, Poetry in the Junior School, 23rd July 1957.

[36] BBC Oral History Archive, Gwynne Jones, Eurfron; Gillard, Frank, Interviewer, 19th February 1997.

[37] Pat Farrington, interview with the author, 30th April 2019

to make changes to subsequent series. [38] EOs could also be difficult for producers to get hold of as they were stationed regionally and had large workloads.

An alternative aid to programme development was specialist freelance consultants, often from academia. Consultants worked directly with department producers and were not involved with the SBC. It is unclear if all series had a specific attached consultant, and most consultation is not preserved in the archive. Consultants were most important in the development of programme proposals; once a series was up and running there was less need for their input. Producers give varying accounts of the importance of consultants to their work. In some cases they were significantly involved in the design of the programme, for example Joyce Morris for *Look and Read* and Ted Neather for *Tout Compris*, but this was not always the case. Engaging and using consultants followed no standardised procedure and varied from project to project.

LEAs also employed permanent 'advisers' for curriculum areas (Bolam 1979). They were often also authors of textbooks and therefore in some sense rivals with the BBC. Some producers had networks among the LEAs and sometimes consulted their advisers. There is some evidence of a negative attitude by LEA advisers towards the BBC in some cases. In the beginnings of science teaching broadcasting, LEA advisers resented the BBC's 'direct teaching' approach (see Chapter 3) because they were trying to get teachers to learn how to teach science themselves.[39]

In practice the autonomy intended for the SBC and its staff (for example by Reith) was limited; the staff worked closely with the BBC and former EO's moved easily into the department. When secretary of state for education Margaret Thatcher chose the film director Bryan Forbes for a position on the SBC in 1971, the SBC's vice chairman Lincoln Ralphs did not oppose the nomination despite its irregularity, for the reason that "we must not appear to be trying to control appointments to the Council". Senior department and SBC staff were free to make suggestions about the BBC's appointees to the SBC, always the largest contingent. Kenneth Bailey, Senior Education Officer, judged Hilde Himmelweit, a pioneer researcher on the effects of television on children, too "individualistic and stormy… really to be a committee type".[40] It was in interest of the department and SBC staff, who long outlasted committee members, to exert some control over the SBC so that it provide useful feedback, without rocking the boat.

The SBC as an Educational Research Institution

The SBC was an educational research institution. It was comparable to the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), which specialised in large scale quantitative research, or the Nuffield Foundation, which funded curriculum material development. In chartering the BBC the government had inadvertently created a publicly funded educational resource provider– though it was not seen in these terms at the time. A comparable organisation emerged in the 1960s: the Schools Council (SC). It was set up by the DES in 1964, a time of great public and

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[38] John Prescott Thomas, interview with the author, 15th March 2019.
[39] BBC Oral History Archive, Gwynne Jones, Eurfron; Gillard, Frank, Interviewer, 19th February 1997.
[40] R99/186/1, Retirements from the Council under Rota 27, January 1971.

intellectual interest in the school curriculum, and was well publicised (Cunningham 1988: 104). It had responsibility for advising on curricula and examinations.

The SC was not explicitly aligned with progressivism and it sometimes expressed doubt over "Plowdenism" (Cunningham 1988: 105). Yet frequently its products, such as the pamphlet series *British Primary Schools Today*, contained progressive rhetoric.[41] Educational publishers were at first wary of the SC as state intervention, but cooperated (Mumby Norrie 1982 216). Opinion was mixed among educationists. Some progressivists – those 'in the 'Schiller-mould'' (Cunningham 1988: 105) – disliked what appeared to be a top-down bureaucratic system of curriculum development. But there was general approval among teachers for an organisation that seemed to further their interests (Lowe 2007: 89).

There were some personnel connections between the SC and the SBC.[42] Maurice Plaskow was an EO before he moved to the SC's Humanities Curriculum Project in 1967 and joined the SC permanent staff as a curriculum officer in 1970. The SBC sometimes reacted to research by the SC and there was some small scale collaboration, for example the SC project *English for Immigrant Children* (1966-1971) was supported by the BBC series *Hello Hello!*[43] and occasional expressions of interest in further collaboration,[44] but in effect there was little crossover between the two organisations.

Like the BBC/SBC the SC was a publicly funded educational resource developer (The NFER and Nuffield Foundation were charities), independent of government. However it sponsored publishers to produce materials on its behalf, whereas the BBC/SBC was a developer and producer combined. SC research projects were more ambitious than the SBC's and took place over many years. One SC employee described its early years (1964-1970) as "the golden period of… high-cost, high-risk projects." (Rudduck in Plaskow 1985: 143). Almost all were located in universities and led by distinguished academics (Breakell 2002: 48; DES 1976: appendix 5). The SC, like the SBC, relied on teacher training colleges to encourage usage of its products (Plaskow 1985: 7), and suffered (to a lesser extent) from lack of presence in them.

Unlike the SC, the SBC was not geared towards research and development in a pure sense. EO projects were always directly related to BBC Schools' output, though within that frame there was flexibility in what kind of research could ensue. In some ways this practical orientation was a strength. The structure allowed BBC producers to be resource developer practitioners, with EOs evaluating and analysing series as they were being used. The sub-committees had to approve practical changes to the output such as scheduling and number of programmes in a series. They monitored usage and requests from schools through the feedback gathered by the EOs and their own professional experience. They had no involvement in actual production. The SBC functioned as a long term reliable feedback and response culture which kept the output popular and relevant and prevented outright flops. The SC had no equivalent to the EOs and

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[41] E.g. Probert and Jarman 1971. Another in the series was written by Richard Palmer who had been a BBC Schools producer, but was then Staff Inspector at ILEA (Palmer 1971).

[42] The headquarters of the SC was on Great Portland Street, a short walk away from the SBC at the Langham on Portland Place.

[43] WAC R99/101/1 Policy Paper Programme Committee I 15th June 1979 ASEO SBC.15/70

[44] E.g. WAC R99/48/1 Establishing Priorities in Educational Broadcasting JF Mann to John Bell 12 September 1980.

no standard means of continuous evaluation of its work. The relative sophistication of their project's theoretical framework made evaluation of their effects difficult (Schools Council 1973). Researchers typically worked for the SC on a project by project basis. The lack of an effective evaluation system was a flaw that handicapped the organisation throughout its life.

The BBC/SBC's greater longevity was partly an accident of historical contingency. Like the early CCSB, the SC's structure prioritised discussion by committee, rather than decision (Plaskow 1985: 4) and suffered from a mismatch between policy and production. The CCSB/SBC predated the SC by some 35 years, had time to undergo periodic reforms, and thus evolve while the political climate was still favourable in a way the SC never did. Though the SC's decision making structure improved after structural reform in 1977, the climate of public and political opinion had turned against curriculum innovation by then. The SC was controversially abolished in 1985.

The SBC's Relationship with the Educational World

The SBC's permanent staff was intended to manage and improve external relations with Government, LEAs and teacher training colleges. This helped lead to a widespread acceptance among teachers by the end of the 1950s, when certain series, such as *Music and Movement* and *Singing Together* were very widely used. However according to Kenneth Fawdry, head of school television in the 1960s, the SBC:

> Was more effective at representing educational world to the BBC than the BBC to educational world… The voice of broadcasting has always been more muted than it deserved compared to the Ministry and the LEA's, despite its relevance to practicalities of education, and its following with the grass-roots. (Fawdry 1974: 115).

Uptake figures continued to grow steadily through the 1960s and reports on schools by EOs repeatedly proved wide popularity at the 'chalkface', but also some disturbing trends. Use of broadcasts was stigmatised as a substitute for proper teaching, and teacher trainers had little interest in school broadcasting (Grant 1976).

The status of the BBC/SBC in the most influential parts of the educational world is illustrated by the reports of the Central Advisory Council on Education (CACE), a body set up by the government after the 1944 Education Act and composed of members appointed on a report-by report basis. In 1967 Elaine Mee, the SBC's research officer, assessed the reports' views on school broadcasting, finding them highly unsatisfactory.[45] She was scathing about the Plowden Report, (Plowden 1967) in which references to school broadcasting were "brief, marginal and out of date", showed "ignorance and prejudice" and regarded broadcasting as "peripheral and not integral to education." According to Mee, the authors of these reports (CACE members), many of whom were unfamiliar with contemporary schools, were shielded by head teachers from the extent of the use of broadcasting in them, because it was not considered normal or best practice and worth showing when they visited. This lack of status became a self-fulfilling

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[45] WAC R16/643/2, DES Publications and Broadcasting: A survey. Elaine Mee, 25th October 1967.
 The Newsom Report (1963) was an exception.

prophecy. School broadcasting was more popular in secondary modern schools than in grammar schools. Yet teachers, even those in secondary moderns, were normally grammar school educated themselves, and had little experience of school broadcasts.[46] For those who progressed to university and from there to the higher professions and positions of influence in the educational world, a grammar or private education was practically a prerequisite.

The most efficient way for the SBC to increase the integration of school broadcasting into schools was to convince teacher training institutions to make it a part of their curriculum. However teacher training colleges and universities remained largely uninterested and undertook no large research projects involving it. At the Institute of Education (IOE) in London, most research money in the 1960s went to sociology and child development, (Aldrich 2002) in a progressive tradition that was then widening and politicising. From the late 1950s the SBC held annual summer schools and occasional high level conferences, (for example at the University of Sussex in 1966) but these were expensive and did not produce reliable results. The EOs also doubted the usefulness of giving introductory talks to first year college education students, "because colleges do not follow up any stimulus we have provided."[47]

The SBC had no statutory relation to other significant bodies in the educational world, except for having their representatives on its Council. Off-air and on the ground it did not have the resources to operate at the national level, and it was a stretch to hold events like conferences. EOs never numbered more than 20 and teachers could go their whole careers without meeting one. The SBC came through as something of a remote voice, yet one that spoke to many, as uptake figures show. The problem was that its lack of presence in practical control structures meant that this voice was not appreciated for the importance it had. Having been set up and funded by the BBC, its staff were assumed by those who came across them to be BBC employees, which for all practicalities they were.[48]

The SBC and Progressivists

The opinions expressed at a conference held by the SBC in 1967 at the IOE show the difficulties that it faced. What was then becoming orthodox theory held that media would get in the way of activity and experience. Through the necessity for media to be standardised from a remote central source, it supposedly prevent the individualisation thought to be fundamental to a child-centred pedagogy. An EO commented of one attendee;

> …here was a man basically in favour of the use of broadcasting in teaching maths but unwilling to say so unequivocally to his colleagues because one can only be with it {considered knowledgeable about contemporary practice} if one preaches first-hand experience as the sole basis of primary education.[49]

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[46] WAC Film 17, 13, 14 Joint Standing Committee of the ATCDE and SBC. Joint Standing Committee of the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education and the School Broadcasting Council for the United Kingdom. Memorandum. A Shimeld. 15th October 1959.

[47] WAC R16/629/1, SBC's work with Colleges of Education: Specialist Conferences, 27th September 1966.

[48] WAC R16/213, R.N. Armfelt, School Broadcasting Post-war, 2nd February, 1945

[49] WAC R16/629/1, LA Gilbert, Plowden & School Broadcasting Conferences – the "Science" day. 3rd April 1967

Another EO doubted that the Plowden message was relevant to the majority of primary schools;

> We must certainly be careful not to be dominated by the "first-hand experience"
> catchphrase which is fashionable but by no means new… Are we to bar from the
> classroom books, micro-scopes, telescopes, pictures, filmstrips and so on because
> all information about the environment must reach the child's senses directly,
> without the intervention of mediators?…

The grounds of this conflict were not precisely formulated. School broadcasting was certainly not the 'transmission teaching' that the progressives reacted against, but neither was it obviously compatible with (a strict interpretation of) 'discovery' and 'activity' methods. While school broadcasting claimed to offer mainly 'experience' it could sit comfortably alongside a progressive theoretical framework. As it moved to a more central curriculum role in the 1960s, with expansion on television and wider reaching resources for subjects like literacy, it had increasing implications for the practicalities of school education at all levels, for which it required the protection of a powerful liaison body.

Cunningham notes that "A preference for the rural over the urban was a theme which recurred frequently in progressive primary texts, where the ideal was often expressed of transferring the best values and practices of the village schools to their urban counterparts." (Cunningham 1988: 18). Notionally, the countryside offered a more authentic encounter with experience and activity compared to the city. Ironically country schools were heavier users of broadcasts than urban schools, because smaller schools needed the cheap and effective resources which the BBC provided. [50] Christian Schiller was said to have been "no great enthusiast for school broadcasting" Cunningham (1988: 115-121), but generally there was no consistent progressivist stance towards school broadcasting, partly because there was little of consistency about progressivism, and partly because the BBC tried hard to court and integrate with progressive opinion. Progressive educationists are notable for the absence of an attitude towards broadcasting, unless this absence be accepted as evidence of a negative attitude.

Decision-making by the SBC

Eurfron Gwynne Jones gave an impression of how SBC meetings appeared to producers:

> You then met them in very large rooms. The Council… had about 50 people on it and
> again it was very male dominated in those days and had very, very lofty discussions…
> which if you were a producer and you were wheeled in, it seemed so far removed from
> the things that day by day were affecting you.[51]

This distance was comparable to the BBC's relationship with other 'institutional domains' (Jones 2014: 720). Though unlike for example the BBC's Science Consultative Group, the SBC

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[50] R103/271/1, The Ordering and Use of School Publications as Related to SBC Policies SEO Kenneth Bailey 3rd December 1970
[51] BBC Oral History Archive, Gwynne Jones, Eurfron; Gillard, Frank, Interviewer, 19th February 1997.

was a 'commissioner'. The term was used by the BBC and the SBC though it never had the definition in practical terms of normal commissioning and in 1981 the DG expressed surprise when CEB Donald Grattan said that he did not think it mattered whether the SBC was described as 'mandatory' or 'advisory'.[52] Part 4 of this thesis contains more detailed accounts of the SBC's role in the development of particular series, but it is appropriate here to explain the factors that affected this overall. Three main areas can be discerned: the opportunities for the SBC to discuss series policy; the internal committee structure; and the degree of executive power over school broadcasting as a whole.

At the basis of BBC school broadcasting was a commissioning procedure. A normal development cycle began with the relevant sub-committee suggesting an educational area for attention. SBC staff would investigate the area and draft a commission for the SBC's approval. Producers would respond with a proposal (returning series also needed proposals) which was then 'commissioned' (or rejected), and a series was produced accordingly. The SBC was not adapted to buy in programmes and almost never previewed the programmes it had commissioned before broadcast. The SBC occasionally rejected proposals or made modifications but normally approved them. The most important element: the details of format and execution were generated by producers. The SBC was in some respects a "mere rubber stamping body".[53]

The change from the CCSB subject committees to the SBC 'developmental' sub-committees has been described above as being part of an increase in control on the part of the BBC at the SBC's expense. This underlined a basic practical division of responsibility and activity between the SBC and the department. To most producers the Council was remote from the practicalities of their jobs, and they tended "to see the Council and its officers as semi-hostile and 'interfering' agents…"[54]

Between 1948 and 1976 the number of series produced by BBC Schools increased from 31 to 132. Despite this, over the same period, the number of council members and the number of committees decreased. In 1970 the SBC's constitution was revised so that the five programme sub-committees were collapsed into three (Primary I, Primary II and Secondary), and the SBC membership was reduced to 40.[55] The Executive Committee was renamed the Steering Committee (and again renamed the Business Committee in 1979[56]). In 1981 there was a further reduction in the sub-committees to just two, Primary and Secondary. The SBC itself was reconstituted as the Educational Broadcasting Council by combining it with the Further Education Advisory Council in 1987.[57] The effect of these changes were to reduce the SBC's oversight by reducing time it spent on each series. At the inaugural meeting of the Primary I sub-committee (5-7 year olds) in 1947, there were only 2 series within its jurisdiction to discuss. By 1981, its equivalent, Primary Committee (5-11 year olds), was responsible for 55

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[52] WAC R78/2738/1, Board of Management minutes, 23rd Feb 1981.
[53] As Bryan Forbes complained after his first SBC meeting. WAC R99/53/1, Memorandum by Robson 9th December 1971
[54] WAC R99/101/1, Kenneth Bailey, Notes on questions relating to the future of the SBC and its role in the development of school broadcasting. 6th March 1972
[55] WAC R78/2738/1, Constitution of the School Broadcasting Councils, 1970.
[56] WAC Film 17, 13, 14, Business Committee minutes, 26th June 1979.
[57] WAC R98/6/1, Educational Broadcasting Council Minutes, 3rd April 1987.

(Yearbook 1981). These circumstances severely limited the possibility for detailed discussion on policy for a particular series.

The commissioning system front-loaded policy discussion to before new series were produced – once a series was up and running, it was generally left alone. However this meant that the role of the SBC changed historically. In times of expansion of the output, roughly 1947-70, and especially 1962-70, the SBC had the opportunity for positive discussion which could result in new series. But with the retrenchment of the service after the early 1970s, and budgetary problems from 1974, the SBC was left with the negative and more frustrating role of recommending cuts and replacements.

Despite the revisions of the SBC structure, apparently no wholly satisfactory division of responsibility was found. The other committees complained that the Executive/Steering/Business committee had too much power. It was appointed by the SBC and took decisions about the SBC itself, but also had a hand in "major issues of policy", and strategic measures such as the Schools TV experiment.[58] The SBC main council lamented that too much policy over series was devolved to the sub-committees – which in turn occasionally complained that the SBC was too powerful over overall policy.[59] These disputes reflect the problems with any committee decision making structure.

The SBC's advisory power over overall educational policy for school broadcasting was limited partly due to its lack of executive power within the BBC. One critical restriction that that it had no budgetary jurisdiction – indeed the sums available were not even made known to the SBC.[60] There were numerous instances where committee discussion mooted expansion of a particular programme area, only to be told that in current conditions it was not feasible. The new chairman in 1978, Harry Judge identified its basic lack of power, especially if a "redeployment of resources is required".[61] The BBC's position was that it was impractical for an advisory body which met at most three times per year to control budgets[62] – but this was a contingent fact related to how the SBC was set up and how the BBC dealt with it.

An illustrative period came in the later 1970s, also a turbulent period in the educational world. The relative importance of the BBC's internal priorities compared to the SBC's was made obvious when the BBC managing director of radio announced his intention to move school radio to night time transmission, without consulting the SBC - to the outrage of council members. The new chairman of the SBC, Harry Judge, expressed his dismay that "the job… did not seem to have much authority and that the politics of England, Wales, Scotland and N.I. were exhausting and non-productive…[63] consultation in the generally accepted meaning of the term, was non-existent and SBC sponsorship irrelevant."[64] In discussing the problems, CEB Donald Grattan recognised that

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[58] WAC R98/4, School Broadcasting Council Minutes, 24th April 1953.
[59] WAC Films 11 12 SBC Minutes 1972 – 1982, SBC Minutes, 20th October 1977.
[60] E.g. WAC Film 17, 13, 14 SBC Steering Committee Minutes, 24th February 1978
[61] WAC R78/2738/1, Council and Committee Structures, Harry Judge, February 1978.
[62] WAC Film 17, 13, 14 SBC Steering Committee Minutes 24th February 1978
[63] Northern Irish representatives had recently argued for and got a Northern Irish SBC.
[64] WAC R78/2738/1, Some Personal Comments Made by CEB to DPA on Harry Judge's Paper, February 1981

> Any friction between us and the SBC arises… from our willingness or otherwise to display a modest measure of accountability… both heads of school broadcasting currently in post will tell you that they would not advise any young person to enter BBC School broadcasting now… heads are tired, lacking vision for the future and battle weary.[65]

The Board of Management was alerted to the problem and decided to deal with it carefully. The Director General Trethowan admitted that the BBC had "hidden behind the SBC too often" and should reform it gradually to make it definitely "advisory", rather than "mandatory", a distinction Judge queried.[66] But Trethowan warned that "A confrontation with the educational establishment (i.e. the SBC) would cause more trouble than it was worth."[67] Judge left in 1981 and was replaced by Ted Wragg. The SBC under Wragg was characterised by greater invigoration and political engagement ("He banged the table!"[68]). But arguably the politics of education and broadcasting were already pointing towards a long-term decline in school broadcasting. A detailed account of this lies outside the topic of this thesis.

Conclusion

The creation of the CCSB/SBC had three main motivations: firstly to make sure that broadcasts would be sound as educational resources; secondly, to persuade teachers to use them; and thirdly, to improve the BBC's relations with the educational world. This was necessary because of the particular character of the audience for school broadcasting. Ultimately the broadcasts had to appeal to schoolchildren, but more importantly they needed the approval of the teachers who controlled their use. However, a third audience existed: of educationists, decision makers and opinion formers at higher levels of status and power, such as LEAs, teacher training colleges and, ultimately, the central government. That audience was never addressed by school broadcasts, but its approval was the most important in the long-term.

To secure these objectives, the CCSB was given an unusual power among advisory bodies – a (diluted) commissioning role. But a truly collaborative relationship between the CCSB/SBC and BBC producers proved not to (or was seen not to) function effectively, and producers assumed real control. Therefore, the CCSB/SBC influenced BBC policy in a broad way, but shaped its programmes in only a narrow way. Where the CCSB/SBC went beyond providing advice, through the permanent staff, it ceased to be part of the educational world and instead became a liaison body, essentially part of the BBC. Among the audiences mentioned above, there was wide acceptance and use by teachers and schoolchildren by 1971. But the higher echelons, particularly the crucial audience of teacher trainers, were largely uninterested and unaware. The prevailing orthodoxy of progressivism, which filtered down to practising teachers, deprioritised educational media, especially broadcasting. The relative success and longevity of BBC School broadcasting are testament to the durability and effectiveness of the advisory structure. Yet the increasingly limited opportunities for the SBC to discuss series

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[65] WAC R78/2738/1, Some Personal Comments Made by CEB to DPA on Harry Judge's Paper, February 1981
[66] WAC R78/2738/1 BOM minutes Feb 1981
[67] WAC R78/2738/1 BOM minutes March 1981
[68] Johnstone, Jacqueline interview with the author 2nd December 2017.

policy; the internal committee structure; and the limited degree of executive power the SBC wielded over school broadcasting as a whole meant that its work was often only vaguely effective over what the BBC actually did. The SBC's relationship with government policy will be addressed in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

<u>Government Policy on School Broadcasting</u>

Government policy potentially applied to school broadcasting in two fields – broadcasting policy and education policy. This policy towards school broadcasting was light to non-existent in 1947, but there was an upsurge in interest in the period after school television began in 1957, which continued in the immediate post-Pilkington period after 1962.

By the 1960s, school broadcasting was an international phenomenon and several different possible models of school broadcasting sectors existed. The BBC had a counterpart in Japan's NHK, a broadcasting corporation with a school broadcasting division, financed by a license fee. Other services were run by broadcasting corporations but with a special government grant, for example in Sweden. In France and in most developing countries it was run by a state institution, effectively part of their Ministries of Education, (Scupham: 1969, Bonah and Danet: 2021). Most USA educational broadcasting was run locally, directly from educational institutions including universities (*Sesame Street* became a notable exception). Several DGs including Reith (Briggs 1963: 201), Haley and Trethowan are known to have hoped that government would provide at least partial funding directly to educational broadcasting. But the structure in which this might take place was unclear, especially after the coming of ITV.

In this chapter I shall briefly examine the school broadcasting sector after the coming of ITV school television in 1957. Following this I will look at the subsequent possibility of fundamental reform through government intervention in the sector. Finally I will cover the decline of government interest in school broadcasting during the 1970s.

The School Broadcasting Sector: ITV and BBC

As has been explained in Chapter 1, BBC school broadcasting and the SBC did not emerge through the initiative of government or the educational world, and had no statutory responsibility or rights in their position, except those pertaining to the BBC's monopoly position in broadcasting in general. This meant that when the monopoly was broken, there was no obstacle to another broadcaster launching its own educational service. The landscape of educational broadcasting was duly transformed in 1957 by the simultaneous appearance of ITV as a new school broadcaster and by its launch of school television (STV) in the UK. Educationists already deplored young people's preference for ITV's Anglo-American adventure serials and American cartoons in the late 1950s (Jones 2016: 40). The educational world's antipathy towards "vulgar" commercial broadcasting meant that the surprise announcement by Associated Rediffusion was "widely regarded as outrageous" (Langham 1990: 35). However this had largely dissipated by the time of the Pilkington report, which while critical of the ITA, was broadly in favour of the STV produced by both providers so far (Langham 1990: 55).

The BBC and ITV quickly realised that competition made little sense in this arena and began an informal and rough policy of avoiding obvious duplication in series and scheduling,[69] which was negotiated in thrice yearly meetings.[70] There was not much contact between the services beyond this. Some element of competition remained, for example history producer Nicholas Whines was asked by the BBC to counter ITV Yorkshire's successful dramatized history series *How We Used To Live*.[71] Liaison never went as far as a combined annual programme, even though this would have made teachers' planning much easier (Moss 2000). Many teachers did not remember or know which series were produced by which broadcaster.

The semi-competitive structure was in some ways beneficial to the UK's school broadcasting sector, as it was in other public service areas like news (Barnett 2011), because having two highly skilled broadcasters added to the total stock of quality material and probably promoted innovation. However the existence of this dual structure inevitably changed the nature of school broadcasting as a national venture. In the monopoly days the SBC could "speak with one voice, as a unique national institution, for the world it represented. The entry of independent television into the field has (meant)… there is no longer an effective overall policy" (Scupham 1969: 186). Apparently this was never quite accepted by the SBC, which long after the ITV had established its own school service with its own advisory body, continued to style itself "The School Broadcasting Council for the United Kingdom" including on BBC school publications and publicity.

The Possibility of Fundamental Reform of School Broadcasting

The 1960s was a time when technological solutions were sought for educational problems, which sometimes led to over-confidence or "audio-visual euphoria" (Escoffey 1980: 61, Briggs 1995: 826). The decade saw the highpoint of the idea that broadcasting had a role to play in education. SBC Chairman Charles Carter wrote in 1965 that "Broadcasting and television open up possibilities in education which are as exciting as anything since the arrival of the cheap printed book." (Scupham 1965: Preface). Two possibilities emerged that could fundamentally reform the pattern of school broadcasting. One was that a new (third) television channel would be used for purely educational purposes. A second was that it would be removed from the jurisdiction of either BBC or ITV and placed in some other independent authority. Either eventuality would require positive government intervention. Potentially there would be a publicly funded educational resource provider with a statutory role to produce educational broadcasting.

The idea of an educational channel was suggested before the 1960s. In 1958 Robert Fraser, director general of the Independent Television Authority (ITA), had argued that

> We need not two but four television services; and of these one, nation-wide and transmitting for at least five or six hours a day, ought to be a strictly educational service…

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[69] WAC R98/4 SBC Minutes 10th November 1961
[70] WAC R78/2549/1 School Broadcasting BBC/ITV liaison
[71] Whines, Nicholas. Interview with Susan Nicholls February 2010.

a serious teaching programme… that will be as public in in its purposes as the system of public education… for every age and class.[72]

National interest in school broadcasting gathered pace after the introduction of school television. The SBC established a standing committee with the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education in 1959, the memorandum on the founding of which stated "broadcasting was now of such importance as a medium of communication, as a distributor of educational material and as a social factor conditioning much of education, that some understanding of it had become a 'must' for every teacher."[73]

The terms of the Pilkington committee on Broadcasting (1960-62) included recommending on a third television channel. The evidence to Pilkington given by Pye, a television manufacturer under David Hardman, included the recommendation that the third channel be used for education. Hardman subsequently established, along with the Earl of Bessborough (a Director of Associated TeleVision Ltd), John Wolfenden (Vice Chancellor of the University of Reading) and the Countess of Albermarle, among others, 'The Institute for Educational Television' in 1960. They announced their intention in a letter to *The Times* of 30th November 1961, "to set out to convince the Ministry of Education and local authorities that a big expansion of television as an aid to all forms of teaching is overdue", to "provide a clearing house for information" and "initiate and encourage experimental work…" and specifically associated the Institute with a separate educational channel.[74]

Senior figures at the BBC interpreted the possibility in terms of the politics of broadcasting. The DG Hugh Carleton Greene was suspicious, seeing ITV's educational broadcasting, as "a smoke-screen"[75]; an attempt to deflect attention away from profiteering. Harman Grisewood, chief assistant to the DG, spoke of relying on "…antagonists of the educational world towards commercial television… (and their) instinctive repulsion to hold Bessborough at arm's length." John Scupham was cautious and content to play the BBC's strong hand carefully. He argued that "…any refusal of ours to cooperate on reasonable terms with the ITA and the commercial companies will only bring discredit on us. The educational world owes us no house loyalty."[76]

The SBC, which faced disbandment, was also keen to defend its territory and resist major change. The secretary of the SBC argued that since 80% of school broadcasting was then still on radio, over which the BBC had a monopoly, there was little need for coordination between the BBC and ITV. As the Institute's proposals stated that it would commission programmes from the BBC and ITV, the SBC also argued that establishing it "would already be to return half-way to a dual system." The SBC pointed out that there had not been a strong demand from teachers for an educational channel, and certainly not for a direct teaching service. Therefore "To use it even so would be extravagant unless the educational world has reached some

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[72] WAC R31/101/2 Speech by Robert Fraser 1958.

[73] WAC Film 17, 13, 14 Joint Standing Committee of the ATCDE and SBC. Joint Standing Committee of the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education and the School Broadcasting Council for the United Kingdom. Memorandum. RC Steele.

[74] WAC R16/667/1 Leaflet released by the Institute of Educational Television, December 1961.

[75] WAC R31/101/2 Greene to Marcus Lipton MP, 1st January 1962.

[76] WAC R16/667 Memo on 'Educational Publicity' John Scupham 6th November 1962

radically new ideas in the context about the function of the teacher and the instruments of his teaching."[77] The SBC was not in favour of the radical change suggested by Fraser in 1958.

The SBC's evidence also showed awareness that, now that school broadcasting might be the subject of government legislation, the issue of funding became more important. The secretary went on to quote from the evidence given to the Pilkington committee by the Association of Education Committees;

> It is neither dignified nor healthy that the much needed extension of television broadcasting to schools should depend… (on) commercial companies… The schools in the national system are not financed out of the profits from advertising. There is no reason why such an essential service to them as school broadcasting should be so financed.[78]

In other words the SBC believed that the BBC as a public body was the natural home of educational broadcasting.

Yet this argument against commercial provision of education was rather more complicated than the SBC may have wished. A relatively small but disproportionately powerful private school sector continued to exist, but was patronised by those who could afford to pay its fees, and was thus protected from the 'vulgarity' of advertising. While education in general was established as a state service, the provision of educational resources was not. Schoolbooks were normally produced by commercial publishers and paid for by schools from their own budgets.

This situation was changing. The BBC was already a contradiction of political precedent in that it was a public body providing educational resources for free. The BBC was now arguably also operating in the (commercial) school book market through its school publications. The Ministry of Education had conducted an unsuccessful experiment in the production of educational films 1946-1952 (Southern 2016). The government began public funding for research and development of curriculum materials by setting up the Schools Council in 1963. A year earlier the MOE had set up a research and intelligence branch which was in favour of an educational channel. By the time the Labour government came to power in 1964, the branch had come down "flatly and uncompromisingly on the side of the BBC" to run the channel and wanted to start a pilot.[79]

The College of the Air

In 1963/64, directly before the launch of BBC2, school broadcasting made up a peak of 8.9% of total BBC network TV hours (see Appendix A). Discussions between the DES and the BBC in 1964 resulted in outlines for a "College of the Air." Robinson and Briggs report this to have been essentially an adult or further education initiative (Robinson 1982: 166-169, Briggs 1995, 483-486) but as Scupham recalled "…the College of the Air would have addressed school age

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[77] WAC R16/1408/1, Memorandum by the Secretary, 10 March 1961.
[78] WAC R16/1408/1, Memorandum by the Secretary 10th March 1961
[79] WAC R31/101/4, Kenneth Adam, Meeting with Jack Embling, 13 November 1964.

people in technical college as well as Adult audiences." For this reason the opinion of the SBC was relevant – but it was not sought. Chairman Charles Carter was aware of the plan and disliked it because he expected that the DES would want its own plans implemented without interference, bypassing the SBC.[80] The DES would provide funding and it was agreed with the Board of Governors and the DG.

> … We worked out the curricula details in evening sessions down in the basement of Broadcasting House, with a team representing the Department of Education…. We had all the outline complete. We worked out costs and it was agreed… that the Corporation for the first time in its history should accept a direct subsidy from the Department of Education for an extension of its own home services… it was agreed right up to the Director General and the Governors…. and it was ready to go to cabinet within a week.[81]

The new postmaster general under Labour from October 1964 was Tony Benn. Benn disliked the BBC and saw Lord Normanbrook, chairman of the Board of Governors 1964-1967, as "…at the very centre of the establishment. I think he's a stupid man…"[82] (Benn 2012: 215). Benn also thought Greene was more interested in preserving the BBC than in regarding it "…as a public enterprise which should be growing and developing." (Benn 2012: 410) According to Benn, it was on his intervention that the College of the Air scheme was dropped:

> A meeting at the treasury …Reg Prentice presenting his plan that BBC be given money to carry a few hours of genuine educational broadcasting on BBC2 at night, starting in September…. When I was asked for my comments I said I thought it would be much better to give the money to an educational committee and let them spend it, commissioning programmes from the BBC or the ITA to get them on the air.[83] If all programmes were repeated by the ITA during the daytime they would get a far bigger audience than on BBC2 at night. The intervention more or less killed the existing proposal stone dead, as it clearly showed the possibility of something that was quite different from just an extension of the BBC empire. (Benn 2012: 222)

According to Scupham, once Jenny Lee took charge of developing the Open University (initially referred to as the 'University of the Air'), she dismissed all existing schemes including the College of the Air, as there was probably only room for one new institution and universities were more prestigious politically. The possibility of fundamental reform of school broadcasting passed for political reasons, and the SBC was side-lined throughout.

Nevertheless the DES, subsequently under Antony Crosland, remained supportive of educational broadcasting, and prepared a circular to LEAs expressing this. Crosland addressed a conference at Sussex University in May 1966 which aired many proposals for its

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[80] WAC, R143/112/1 Scupham, John; Cain, John, Interviewer, 24 October 1984.
[81] WAC, R143/112/1 Scupham, John; Cain, John, Interviewer, 24 October 1984.
[82] An interpretation at odds with that of Briggs, and Robinson (1982: 146).
[83] Benn later chaired a Labour party committee which published a report recommending a similar scheme to govern all broadcasting (and abolishing both the BBC and the IBA) (Labour Party 1974). Raymond Williams had advocated a comparable plan (1966: 146-149).

development.[84] HMIs, who shared with EOs the task of touring schools, were aware of the popularity and importance of broadcasts. Officials at the DES organised informal meetings with the SEO and SSBC. In March of 1966 LJ Burrows, an HMI, told the SBC that:

> …there has never been a time, I think, when HMI could render more service by giving realistic appraisals where they are needed and in the ferment of curriculum and reorganisation which is going on. I am sure that in the next few years this will remain profoundly true.[85]

Communication between the DES and the SBC was not always successful. In 1966 SBC Secretary Steele wrote to the Senior Chief Inspector of the DES to complain that recent DES publications had failed to mention BBC education programmes despite their obvious relevance.[86] The same year, Bailey recorded his exasperation at having to give information on new broadcasts to a DES official urgently and over the phone, for inclusion in the DES annual report, because the official responsible had been so far behind in preparation for its publication that he had neglected to ask for the information earlier.[87]

By the end of the 1960s government interest was waning, and an SBC request for a 'grant-in-aid', much discussed by senior figures in the service, was met with rejection.[88] The reason given was that better utilisation of the existing service was more important than its extension. Better utilisation was a perennial goal, in this instance leading to the joint ITA/SBC research project published as *Using Broadcasts in Schools* (Hayter 1974). The idea of a unified BBC and ITV Educational service, and an educational channel remained in the air, but had lost momentum and was later rejected again by the Annan Committee 1974-77, for the reason that the status quo was satisfactory (Potter 1990: 258).

Margaret Thatcher as Education Secretary 1970-74

The Conservative Government of 1970-74 spelt the end of constructive intervention in school broadcasting. Margaret Thatcher's tenure as Education Minister was marked by some inquiries that amounted to interference, motivated from her suspicion that there were subversive tendencies among producers and the SBC, and that "…broadcasts were sometimes allowed to challenge the fundamental bases of society that should not be challenged."[89] Thatcher raised an objection to a proposal for a programme (*Prospect*) for sixth formers about Chairman Mao in 1971. Programme Committee III stood by the proposal.[90] It seems that Thatcher was influenced by correspondence with the National Viewer and Listener's Association (NVLA), a well-publicised conservative pressure group. Its president Mary Whitehouse wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* criticising the political stance of BBC Schools' current affairs and geography

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[84] WAC R16/631/1, Conference Programme, 13th May 1966.
[85] WAC R16/643/2 Burrows to Mee 23rd March 1966
[86] WAC R16/643/2 Steele to English 3rd October 1966
[87] WAC R16/643/2 Communication to DES, KV Bailey 18th November 1966
[88] WAC R99/227/1, The Next Few Years in Educational Broadcasting, 21st September 1970.
[89] WAC R99/53/1, Meeting of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary of the SBC with the Secretary of State for Education and Science and Sir William Pile, 11th February 1972.
[90] WAC R99/143/1 Robson to Carter 15th June 1971.

series.[91] The NVLA published a report on its school broadcasting monitoring project which criticised "the impression that established morality, and in particular Christian morality, is largely irrelevant."[92] Curran replied in the *Telegraph* defending the BBC with reference to the SBC's sponsorship. Thatcher also complained about the series *History, 1917-71*, for which received a non-committal reply from Curran (Briggs 1995: 936).

Most controversially, Thatcher took personal control over the appointments by the DES to the SBC. In a twisting and semi-farcical series of events, the SBC senior staff attempted to block her appointment of the film director Bryan Forbes, mainly because he was not a member of the DES (as all previous such appointments had been). Ultimately Forbes did join, but resigned after two meetings (with no recorded contributions), partly in order to join a commercial radio bid consortium, but also because he had been frustrated with what he saw as "merely a rubber-stamping body''[93] and "an unwieldy body that pontificated at length and achieved very little." (Forbes 1993: 121). Forbes was also of the opinion that the real power lay with the Steering Committee (Barclay 2019).

There was unease at this intervention among DES officials and HMIs, some of whom were long standing collaborators with the SBC. Thatcher herself later recalled that DES officials were not on her side;

> My difficulties with the department, however, were not essentially about… my own executive style of decision-making and the more consultative style to which they were accustomed... The real problem was – in the widest sense – one of politics. The ethos of the DES was self-righteously socialist… on the whole I was not among friends. (Thatcher 1995: Chapter VI)

Thatcher lacked detailed knowledge of school broadcasting, and in a meeting with senior SBC staff, her objections were batted away quite smoothly.[94] Grattan later recalled that her other appointees to the sub-committees were within a year "fully paid up members and thoroughly enjoying themselves…"[95]

After 1974

No subsequent Secretaries of state, despite (or perhaps because of) their routine hosting at Broadcasting House by CEB and the secretary of the SBC, developed any interventionist policies.[96] These meetings appear to have revealed little of practical use (to the BBC at least – secretaries were typically amazed at the extent of the operation). Government money did come in the 1980s, for specific projects and purposes. The amounts were relatively small, for example

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[91] WAC R78/2549/1 Board of Management Minutes 22nd February 1971. Whitehouse also complained about BBC Schools' sex education programmes for 8-9 year olds. *The Times* 'Attack on TV Sex' Jan. 14, 1970

[92] Mary Whitehouse letter to TES 13/8/71

[93] WAC R99/53/1 John Robson, 9th December 1971

[94] WAC R99/53/1, Meeting of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary of the SBC with the Secretary of State for Education and Science and Sir William Pile, 11th February 1972.

[95] BBC Oral History Archive, Grattan, Donald; Gillard, Frank, Interviewer, 24th October 1990.

[96] WAC R78/2425/1 "DG lunch with Williams" 1st March 1977.

£19,000 from the DES Microelectronics Programme for the computer literacy project and £15,400 from the Department of Industry for publications for school leavers.[97]

Conclusion

The nature of cooperation and alignment between the BBC and the government was always determined by the BBC's status as a chartered public body, which (unlike the civil service) isolated the BBC from government policy. School broadcasting was considered by the government to be a part of broadcasting, not to be a part of the education system as it pertained to the government's responsibilities. The government did not consider itself – and in the circumstances was not – responsible for school broadcasting and this fact largely determined its involvement and input.

The SBC's rejection of the idea of an Institute of Educational Television may be partly taken as the opinion of the educational world that they did not want to argue for a separate educational channel – perhaps a surprising oversight given the extra power this could potentially confer on education. But the politics of the time, the aversion towards ITV and the SBC's instinct for self-preservation meant that the moment was not right. The statutory weakness of the SBC meant it was not able to operate on the level of strategic national policy and a brief moment of great possibility in the 1960s passed without fundamental reform.

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[97] WAC R99/94/1 Projects Involving Funding from Governmental or Official Agencies 1981

Chapter 3

School Broadcasting and the Curriculum

The following two chapters look at school broadcasting's effect on educational practice, and its conceptual relationship to the education system. School broadcasting had material, conceptual and procedural effects on schooling. It also offered a challenge and an alternative to schooling. To understand how requires recognising a dichotomy. On one hand, school broadcasting was a phenomenon independent from schools and teachers and relied on their acceptance for its success. But at the same time, because it was successful and useful, and partly due to its unique characteristics, it became part of this overall system and altered it as it evolved. It was both separate to and a part of the education system. One area where this effect can be observed is in the curriculum: the 'what' and the 'how' of education.

Firstly I will look at the attitudes of school teachers and how they used broadcasts. Next I examine conceptions of how school broadcasting fitted into the curriculum changed over time. Next I examine how conceptions of school broadcasting were expressed through series in several subject areas. Next I will see how the BBC took initiative in curriculum design, had an innovating and campaigning role, and partly by liaising with outside institutions, including museums and libraries, it operated an organising and coordinating role nationally.

Enrichment, Direct Teaching and Learning Resources

The relationship between school broadcasts and the curriculum was conceived in three different ways between 1924 and 1990. The conceptions were 'enrichment', 'direct teaching' and 'learning resources'.

An enrichment approach avoided anything that teachers and schools could do by themselves. Enrichment was intended to supplement the normal curriculum, and to stimulate further learning beyond the broadcasts. Enrichment characterised the output from the 1920s to 1950s and continued to be a strong but lesser part of it from the 1960s onwards. Direct teaching was the opposite of enrichment: a broadcast lesson. It meant direct curriculum provision, delivering need-to-know learning to classes, by-passing the school teacher. Direct teaching had a short life in its pure form – being mainly associated with attempts to compensate for a national shortage of trained teachers in science and maths in the early 1960s[98] - but arguably many series had direct teaching elements to some extent. The learning resource approach made broadcasts akin to traditional resources like textbooks, and usually depended on a coordinated broadcast/publication and the use of broadcasts in recorded form. It could mean direct curriculum provision in that what pupils were expected to learn depended on the content of the resources, but also depended on the usage decisions made by the teacher. A learning resources

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[98] There were more international examples, especially in developing countries (Arnove 1976).

conception was orthodox from the late 1960s onwards. John Scupham summarised the changes up till his retirement in 1965:

> (school broadcasting) had been developed as… an enrichment service, indeed someone had once talked about school broadcasts as memorable interruption to the curriculum. It was supposed to illustrate the teachers' work in ways that were appropriate to the medium and never to take his place. I suppose the triumph of that sort of mode was Rhoda Power's work in writing dramatic reconstructions of history for children… But as time went on, as the medium came to be accepted by teachers and they weren't afraid of it in the classroom we began to develop broadcasting in some contexts as a basis for the teachers' work, supported by pamphlets. There was a shortage of teachers of science, a of teachers of mathematics, a shortage of teachers of singing and in those fields we moved into something very like direct teaching in partnership with the classroom teacher who was helped with teachers' notes and so on. There was some resistance to that by the old guard but we never forsook their kind of broadcasting in any way.[99]

While school broadcasting was developing and its place in schools was still uncertain, the BBC attempted to ally itself with the emerging doctrine of progressivism to win support. School broadcasting and progressivism in education were largely compatible on questions about the curriculum. The key point of difference was the place and nature of activity in education but this was a complex issue. In a book written by department members in 1947, teachers were told that "Listening is an activity…" and, "A broadcast is… an experience for the children on which the teacher can build" (Palmer 1947: 42, 18). As we have seen, 'activity' and 'experience' were keywords in the progressive movement. The BBC consistently emphasized the role of the teacher in adapting and drawing out the full use of the broadcasts.

On several occasions in the 1950s, the SBC intervened to resist too 'direct' a method. In 1952 *Nature Study* was criticised for replicating what the teacher could do, and recommended to be more supplementary in character.[100] In 1954 when the series *For Country Schools* included a play by schoolchildren as a model for follow-up work, it was criticised for influencing what should be "a spontaneous dramatic activity."[101] The planning of a new science series for primary school children in 1962 also occasioned discussion on the proper place of broadcasts. FF Blackwell worried that the proposed *Junior Science* would be too "illustrative" and not promote discovery methods.[102] Grattan asked "In terms of television could you present visual material to children at the primary stage and leave it to them to work out its significance?" and "…agreed that the problem of activity stimulated by the broadcasts is fundamental to television." MV Daniel suggested that "it was the aim of much science teaching at the primary level to get children to use their natural curiosity in a scientific way."[103] Eurfron Gwynne Jones later recalled that LEA advisers disapproved of the resulting series, because it gave too much help to teachers whom they wished would learn how to teach science by themselves.[104]

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[99] WAC, R143/112/1 Scupham, John; Cain, John, Interviewer, 24 October 1984.
[100] WAC R98/12/1 SBC Primary Programme Committee II Minutes, 3rd October 1952.
[101] WAC R98/12/1 SBC Primary Programme Committee II Minutes, 9th February 1954.
[102] WAC R98/12/1 SBC Primary Programme Committee II Minutes 4th October 1962. Blackwell was a Headmaster and author of school science books.
[103] WAC R98/12/1 SBC Primary Programme Committee II Minutes 4th October 1962
[104] BBC Oral History Archive, Gwynne Jones, Eurfron; Gillard, Frank, Interviewer, 19th February 1997.

The distinction between the different conceptions was not necessarily straightforward. None was ever explicitly defined by those working in school broadcasting. Direct teaching did not have to mean 'chalk and talk': *Sesame Street* showed aesthetically satisfying ways of presenting target learning material, the basics of literacy and numeracy, 'directly'. Different subjects leant themselves to different approaches because each subject has its own curriculum traditions and requirements. History for example fitted a learning resources approach because broadcasting was the only way that archive footage was easily available. The vast quantity of different series necessitated a wide variety of formats and approaches, and usage depended partly on the individual teacher's approach. For example a report on the secondary English series *Speak* related that it was used:

> …in extremely imaginative ways, often by Heads of Department or enthusiastic specialist English Staff…. adapting the suggestions for the three main oral follow-up activities – discuss, play, tell, to their own needs…. There has been good response to the varied presentation styles, especially the anthology-type programmes such as Possessions, Bread of Life and Christmas Present. The introduction programmes inviting exploration of historical parallels has also proved successful.

According to Bates, a learning resources approach to programme design was overall the most effective way of producing educational benefits, but that it was also more demanding of classroom approach, and therefore also more liable to fail altogether (Bates 1984: 46).

The design of broadcasts combined Educational decisions with aesthetic decisions. The issue of pacing, for example; a recurring comment in teachers' feedback was that series might present information too quickly or too slowly. It was a consequence of the 'one-way problem': a broadcast could not assess whether it was being understood by a class, and modify its presentation like a teacher could. Producers were aware of the problem and attempted to design programmes with "peaks and troughs" of pace and intensity of information presentation with space for the viewer or listener's attention to wax and wane.[105]

The Subjects Covered

The CCSB sub-committees appointed to oversee production in 1929 were Geography, History, Modern Languages, English Literature, and Music.[106] These reflected the subject divisions common in school curricula of the 1920s and 1930s which were considered amenable to broadcasting. The SBC did not remove these divisions in the output even after the 1947 change to a developmental sub-committee format. Producers normally specialised in a particular subject, for either primary or secondary. The subject provision gradually expanded and some areas like initial literacy and maths were not included until the 1960s.

One trend in curriculum innovation, particularly from the 1960s onwards, was towards 'integrated', interdisciplinary studies, combining subjects together into headings such as

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[105] WAC Films 11 12 SBC Programme Committee I Minutes 17th June 1977.
[106] BBC Yearbook 1930, 227-8.

'Environmental studies', or 'Urban studies' (from the OU).[107] For example the Humanities Curriculum Project, funded by the Schools Council and the Nuffield Foundation 1967-72, (Schools Council 1983) cut across the subject boundaries of English, History, Geography, Religious Studies and Social Studies. The BBC/SBC followed the trend to some extent. Briggs, who argued for an interdisciplinary curriculum as Dean of Social Studies at Sussex University (Briggs 1962: 20), judged that; "Long before the Schools Council was set up by the Government to consider teaching fields and methods the BBC's School Broadcasting Council was considering Social Studies as a 'field'". However Briggs thought it was not easy "to say whether the BBC through the School Broadcasting Council was reflecting new tendencies in teaching or whether it was itself initiating them." (Briggs 1979: 755-756). An idea of the subjects offered between 1957 and 1979 can be seen in Appendix B comparing lists in the 1964/65 and 1974/75 annual programmes sent to schools. There was expansion and change in the subjects listed. Several of the categories added between 1964/65 and 1974/75 have an interdisciplinary theme.

The BBC/SBC found that secondary schools had difficulty adapting integrated studies series into their work. The SBC's evidence to the Bullock Report in 1973 stated:

> …the further a series has gone in pioneering new methods or in involving teachers in inter-subject planning, the lower the audience has tended to be. Thus the pioneering *Art and Humanities* was used by only 3.2% of its potential school audience and *Drama Workshop* by only 11%.[108]

In 1977 the 'Combined studies' elements in *For the Middle Years* and *Scan* were reported to have not been a success, though SBC members warned that "it would be a pity to retreat from innovatory broadcast provision."[109] The situation was the opposite in primary schools, where inter-disciplinary miscellany series like *Merry-Go-Round* and *Watch!* were very popular.

Expressing Curriculum Change in Programme Design

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to give a comprehensive overview of how programme design changed in each subject area. Two overall trends between 1957 and 1979 are highlighted below, taking examples from history, modern languages and geography.[110] Literacy series will be covered in detail in chapters 10-12. First is the trend from enrichment to learning resources, mentioned above. Secondly is a move from dramatization to 'child-centred' material, which in some cases meant the use of more or less real or actuality material.

Dramatization was the most important early breakthrough in the development of programme technique. A narrative format was subsequently used as a basis for many subjects. It worked to the strengths of radio by using professional actors and sound effects, presented information in

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[107] Farrington, Pat, interview with the author, 30th April 2019
[108] WAC R103/322/1, Evidence about BBC Educational Broadcasting to the Committee of Inquiry into Reading and the Use of English October 1972 p13.
[109] WAC Films 11 12 SBC Primary II Programme Sub Committee 1969 – 1981, Minutes, 27th June 1977.
[110] See Parker 2017 for religion, and Cox 1996 and Bignell 2017 for music.

an exciting way, and offered something different from classroom teacher presentation. The school radio department kept a small repertory company of actors who acted in dramatized productions.

A revolution in style occurred during the 1960s and early 1970s (Fawdry 1974: 83). Fawdry explains this change as being away from the idea of broadcasting as taking the class on a journey away from the classroom, to the classroom as a creative space in itself with more relation to the child's own interests and experience. There was a parallel move away from dramatization. In a departmental meeting in May 1965 Langdon, a Senior Producer held a discussion about dramatization in programmes. He judged that "…techniques and conventions in scriptwriting had over the years hardened into clichés… (dramatization) had been devised in the pioneering days of School Broadcasting and could still… be very effective.." But he wondered "whether it was the ideal or most effective vehicle for conveying knowledge and experience to the contemporary child…"[111] Moira Doolan, an English specialist, agreed that too heavily scripted narration indicated that "we are going to make things easy for you".[112]

In modern languages, the STV department avoided dramatizations partly because this approach had already been taken extensively on radio. Instead came a documentary-like series about the lives of real French teenagers in *Tout Compris*. Producers were also motivated by ROSLA. Due to the introduction of comprehensive secondary schools there was much wider teaching of modern languages in the 1960s. Previously, languages were taught with an emphasis on reading, writing and grammar to relatively willing pupils in grammar and private schools. According to Prescott Thomas, who joined the STV department in 1963, things began to change during this period:

> …the raising of the school leaving age… and 'languages across the ability range'… (meant that) kids of fourteen plus in comprehensive schools who previously hadn't necessarily learned languages at all, became part of the game. And teachers were frequently quite pressed because they hadn't really taught this kind of clientele before… (and) were still working from inheritance of the older method.[113]

Prescott Thomas, advised by Ted Neather, emphasised the grounding of language in real life in order to address the new range of abilities: "It was trying to get over the fact that the language you were learning… was a tool which kids just like you used to live their lives".[114] The series featured real French teenagers going about their normal activities, and talking about them.

ROSLA led to another notable schools series; *Scene*. It was aimed at less academic pupils who were probably not going on to higher education. Produced by Ron Smedley, it was a mixture of documentaries and plays on social themes. An account by Smedley of visiting a school evokes the sense of mission some producers had to extend education with broadcasting:

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[111] R16/744/2 School Broadcasting Department Meeting Minutes, 26th May 1965
[112] Parentheses in original.
[113] Prescott Thomas, John, interview with the author 15th March 2019
[114] Prescott Thomas, John, interview with the author 15th March 2019

> The headmaster… said "I'm going to put you with the worst boys in the school." I said "Excellent". I went and met the teacher. He was like (a joke version of) a clergyman. And I thought 'this is going to be dreadful'. It was about 6 or 7 seven boys. They had coats and heavy boots. I thought 'oh my goodness'. And we saw the programme… the 'clergyman' asked for an opinion and the boy who was obviously in charge said "Nuffink. It's worth nuffink" – I said "Oh really?" And we talked for an hour and a half... It got them. They could relate to this issue in the play.[115]

STV geography producer Len Brown completely revised previous practice. He replaced the previous secondary geography series *People of Many Lands* with more child-centred series:

> (*People of Many Lands)* was driven by commentary, somebody telling them a story about a place. We changed it to kids. Brazilian slum. African savannah. Japanese rice farm. We changed it families and kids telling the story… So the kids were always the centre of the programme.[116]

The series were welcomed by geography teachers, who began to use them as an opportunity to expand the geographical scope of their teaching. There was a broader move in the geography curriculum away from regional geography towards a more scientific methodology and an interest in how people interacted with their environments (Lowe 1997: 62).

It also reflected a broader change in society towards ordinary people as a legitimate object of interest. Geoffrey Sherlock, School radio geography producer from 1964 replaced *Travel Talks* (1925-1965), which mainly featured travellers from abroad giving in-studio talks on their experiences, with *Exploration Earth*, (1965-1982) with more emphasis on projects that pupils could be expected to carry out in their own areas. New audio recording technology was important in allowing this. Producer Mike Howarth who joined the department in 1974 had learned how to use portable tape recorders before joining the BBC and was 'parachuted' (see Chapter 4) directly as a geography producer.[117] He avoided dramatization and instead used his own existing practice of location sound recording, and photography for the pamphlets.

However some forms of dramatization remained useful, especially at primary level. Producer Peter Ward, who after being trained as a teacher using the Nuffield Science Project materials, joined BBC Radio and produced *Nature*, a long running natural history and biology series. He introduced dramatization to a series that had been primarily a lecture type format.

> (The previous format was) twenty years out of date. It was almost talk radio. I didn't feel that children were being engaged. Some of the scripts started 'Hello schools! Today we're going to talk about blackbirds.' You know. Well *we're* not going to talk about blackbirds because *I'm* going to talk about blackbirds. And you're going to listen. Which in the 70s I didn't think was on.[118]

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[115] Smedley, Ron, interview with the author 8th May 2019
[116] Brown, Len, interview with the author, 7th October 2020.
[117] Howarth, Mike, interview with the author, 7th June 2019.
[118] Ward, Peter, interview with the author, 15th December 2020

Other series could be improved in different ways. The long radio running series *Stories from World History/World History* (1940-1972) was replaced by new producer Nicholas Whines with *History Long Ago* and *History Not So Long Ago* in 1973. Whines kept a narrative or dramatized format, resisting pressure from advisers, but introduced a chronological ordering, rather than a different time and place each episode, which made more sense to listeners.[119] The new series also marked a change to a learning resources format, with longer units covering the same period.

As the learning resources approach developed, a sequential approach gave way to a modular approach in which teachers could select and use when they chose, making broadcasts much more adaptable to class needs. This was facilitated by the wider use of recording in schools;

> Recording changed everything… it meant that you could design programmes differently. So that instead of being a continuous thing with a beginning middle and an end, you could divide it up into little modules which were designed for a particular purpose. And teachers could deploy these when they were doing that particular… activity.[120]

Some series were designed with recording in mind as early as 1967.[121]

Curriculum Planning and Campaigning

By 1970 the BBC had a record of curriculum innovation. Kenneth Bailey wondered:

> To what extent should school broadcasting …"lead" more strongly in areas of educational innovation? Traditionally… we offer material which can be used flexibly and adapted to a variety of contexts and individual uses; and we have been at some pains to say that we are contributing to the curriculum, or to movements for curriculum reform, rather than innovating… but it is noticeable that recent bodies of comment… (make) the assumption that the BBC has a viable innovating role.[122]

Bailey was referring partly to the recent sex education programmes for 8-10 year olds broadcast as part of the science series *Nature,* which though intended to "contribute to developing practice" had actually transformed many schools' policies on the subject – i.e. encouraged them to begin teaching it at all. Bailey continued;

> In a whole range of music and science programmes, which have in fact offered and sometimes achieved something of a break-through, we have, by virtue of their being

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[119] Whines, Nicholas. Interview with the author May 2021.

[120] Prescott Thomas, John, interview with the author 15th March 2019

[121] WAC R98/11, SBC Primary I Sub Committee Minutes, 13th November 1967

[122] WAC R16/672/2, The Pitman Issue, with Further Thoughts on Literacy, Broadcasting and Basic Educational Projects. Kenneth Bailey, 16th February 1970.

> more or less earmarked for the 'rabbit' teacher appeared to be lagging in the rear of the van: that is to the uninformed but often influential eye.[123]

Bailey was referring to the fact that the use of broadcasts had become associated with less confident, less proficient, and less influential teachers. This had meant its innovatory successes to be missed by the more influential sections of the educational world. Bailey proposed that "in future new provision is more likely to get the attention, prestige and use it deserves if BBC/SBC launches series… in a semi-campaigning spirit." Bailey that the BBC/SBC deliberately address areas of educational need that were not being addressed by other means. It was an approach exemplified by *Middle School Mathematics* (which introduced the 'new maths' to many schools), radio's *French for Beginners*, and later the further education department's Adult Literacy Project (see Chapter 9).

A National Focus: Liaison with Institutions, Museums, Libraries

BBC School broadcasting began to impact on the structure of education in the UK by using its power to focus attention and resources nationally, a role that no other organisation filled. *Watch* (1967-2009), is a particularly important case. In the 1980s it was the most popular programme nationally, with 73% of primary schools taking the series by 1987 (BBC yearbook 1987: 33).[124] It was a miscellany series which could cover any topic and slotted into a key role in the primary school curriculum – prompting and giving structure to project work. Project work, which grew in popularity in the 1960s and 1970s, allowed a variety of curricular activities centred on a broad topic, and flexibility in methods, including excursions and arts and crafts, but could also incorporate basic skills and knowledge. However it required considerable planning by teachers to work well, and here BBC Schools was of help. Stanier recalled "…it got to the stage that in March we would tell teachers what we were doing in the autumn term. And the teachers had not planned until they'd found what we were doing."[125] The flexibility of the primary school curriculum meant that Stanier and his team had a blank canvas. Historical topics were often favoured, though the project basis meant that other subject areas were built in. *Watch!* attained a preeminent place in the national primary curriculum, and as another producer recalled: "It used to be said that if you walked past a primary school, and saw dinosaurs in the window, you could be sure it was because *Watch!* was doing a series on dinosaurs."[126]

Watch! was also associated with involving museums and libraries in series content. Stanier liaised with local and national museums to inform them of upcoming units in *Watch!* Cooperation extended to some museums holding teaching weekends, to which teachers were invited to view and learn about series and how they could be combined with museum resources. One EO gives a first-hand account of such an event.

> I had to go to one of the big museums in Glasgow, (Kelvingrove)… because of the (*Watch!*) series on the North American Indians, they had produced a huge exhibit,

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[123] WAC R16/672/2, The Pitman Issue, with Further Thoughts on Literacy, Broadcasting and Basic Educational Projects. Kenneth Bailey, 16th February 1970.

[124] The producer recalls a peak figure of 80% (Stanier, Tom, Personal Communication).

[125] Stanier, Tom, interview with the author 4th April 2019

[126] Prescott Thomas, John, interview with the author 15th March 2019.

a whole hall on the North American Indians, as a result of them knowing that schools everywhere would be… following the BBC programme…I turned up and there was 400 teachers - can you believe it? And I gave them a preview of the series… (and) the support materials… And then of course what happened was as they were using these programmes they would come with their pupils and visit the museum.[127]

The relationship worked for both parties; "The museums loved it because they were doubling their numbers"[128], and the integration added to the value of the programmes. Museums often had education services of their own who would use *Watch!* to design their own programmes of work. Stanier also arranged with libraries to source and display relevant books on the topic. *Watch!* was reported to have been viewed by "over a million home-viewing 'eavesdroppers'" (Yearbook 1984: 28) in addition to its school audience. Overall, *Watch!* was an example of how school broadcasting became integrated with school and teaching practice, and acted as a link between different institutions and providers, and [129]provided a national focus for curriculum setting.

Other examples exist of school broadcasting offering a national focus for the curriculum. This is an underexplored area and was manifested in different ways for different series and subjects. For example *Singing Together*, the widely popular music series which ran from 1939 until the mid-1990s and was said to have 80% of primary schools listening at its peak, (BBC 2014) was presented in the 1950s by William Appleby, director of music at Doncaster LEA. The profile of the series helped Appleby organise national choir competitions.[130] The 1980s radio series *In the News* offered a news and current affairs to children and was an attempt to involve children in citizenship and democracy in a very direct way, which invited their participation, including letters from children on both sides (miners and policemen) of the Miners' strike. The effect of literacy series on national concerns over literacy education is addressed in Part 4.

Providing a National Curriculum

Throughout the extended period of this thesis, the BBC schools service was conceived on a project by project basis and each series was designed separately. The radio and television departments had little to do with each other. Series were graded for age, but neither the SBC nor the department was organised and managed in such a way that they could systematically map series together sequentially, or coordinate planning of subject coverage, so that the service would add up to a complete offer. Yet despite this, especially by the mid-1970s the service did approach a comprehensive curriculum coverage, and fitted together in a relatively rough way. The overall effect of the provision amounted to a form of national curriculum where none yet existed.

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[127] Johnstone, Jacqueline interview with the author 2nd December 2017.
[128] Stanier, Tom, interview with the author 4th April 2019
[129] Whines, Nick, interview with the author, 14th May 2021
[130] Ward, Peter, interview with the author, 15th December 2020

BBC School broadcasting could be used to make lesson provision very much easier and made a substantial national contribution to alleviating teacher's workload. Despite the high cost of the service per programme, it represented a vastly higher saving in teacher work time. This service was almost too successful: as one producer recalled head teachers as telling him

> I can't have year 5 taking *History Long Ago*, *Exploration Earth*, *Nature*, *Stories and Rhymes*, *Music Box* and a couple of telly series… otherwise (the teacher) will never be a teacher, she'll just be sitting there listening to radio programmes.[131]

During the 1960s the SBC frequently received letters from schools saying that they could not afford to buy all the publications for the series they wanted to use.[132] Broadcasting worked best when teachers used a handful of broadcasts per class, as the basis of a variety of other activities.

When an official national curriculum came into public discussion during the period of the 'Great Debate', the SBC considered whether it should make more effort to integrate the BBC's by now very extensive school output into a whole. The SBC rejected the suggestion of constructing "an overall curriculum structure into which the shape, purpose and continuity of all school broadcasting would be incorporated" in 1977, partly because the BBC had never been conferred the legitimacy to do this and partly because broadcasting was probably not the best vehicle for such an effort.[133]

By the 1980s, when government was beginning to plan the national curriculum (NC), BBC Schools was arguably already providing many relevant elements, despite this never having been an intention.

> …we weren't setting out to be a curriculum although in some instances we did provide a curriculum, I mean we did in music for example, for primary schools… so a small school with no music teacher could still do a great deal of music, put on an opera, teach the children to sing, have a band, and it was all done through the radio. So we were undoubtedly a curriculum there. With the history… that was a curriculum, there's no doubt about that. You could use all of it and nothing else and you'd have covered any history requirement quite adequately.[134]

The legislation made schools much less likely to use resources that were not directly relevant to the NC. The BBC soon realised that there was no point going outside the NC.[135]

The legislation stifled the rich tradition of curriculum innovation by resource providers, including the BBC. Inter-disciplinary or 'miscellany' programmes like *Watch!* were particularly badly affected because they were designed to be flexible in a way that was no longer useful (Yearbook 1990: 60). Miscellany series had performed another useful function for the BBC by allowing the pilot of experiments (like the one that resulted in *Look and Read*,

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[131] Ward, Peter, interview with the author, 15th December 2020
[132] WAC R103/271/1 Publications. Chief Assistant Publications. 10th November 1967
[133] WAC Film 17, 13, 14 SBC Steering Committee Minutes 30th September 1977
[134] Whines, Nicholas. Interview with Susan Nicholls February 2010.
[135] BBC Oral History Archive, Gwynne Jones, Eurfron; Gillard, Frank, Interviewer, 19th February 1997.

see Part 4). Programmes with an enrichment style also suffered because there was less point in this now. As Whines recalled:

> I never really felt that anyone who was responsible for the National Curriculum knew what a programme was… a programme which as it were tries to convey what it was like to be on the Jarrow March and to… do all the empathetic stuff… that somehow sort of slipped off the radar.[136]

Conclusion

School broadcasting achieved a position of importance in the education system, while the ideas behind it were evolving, by providing curriculum resources that shaped these ideas. School broadcasting changed in ways that reflected both broader ideas about education, and changing ideas among producers about how to design broadcasts to appeal to school children. Between 1957 and 1979 BBC Schools moved from an 'enrichment' conception of its output towards a 'learning resources' conception. The BBC and SBC were not dedicated to research and innovation in education in general, like the Schools Council. Only through careful management of resources was it able to provide most subjects at most age levels. Therefore a 'campaigning' curriculum role was pragmatic for an organisation which wanted the "attention, prestige and use it deserves" without having to cover everything. The BBC did not set out for the comprehensiveness of the National Curriculum, and did not attempt to knit all its own provision together, but through its national prestige and reach, to some degree it offered a de facto national curriculum. When the NC was defined by government, the BBC lost its key leading creative role and had to adapt to a new more subservient role.

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[136] Whines, Nicholas. Interview with Susan Nicholls February 2010.

Chapter 4

The Provision of Education by BBC Schools: School Broadcasting and Educational Practice

As was explained in the Theoretical Framework (4.1), BBC Schools did not claim to provide 'education' per se. Instead it described itself with formulations along the line that it provided resources which could be used for education. This claim was in a sense rhetorical – as this chapter argues, these two functions cannot really be separated. At its basis, school broadcasting in use was a particular system of distribution and reception involving an interplay of technological and organisational requirements. The broader environment of these requirements are what make up the education system. The technological affordances of broadcasting: recording (at the production and reception end) and playback were key to school broadcasting's effects. Most of these effects concerned activities well within the frame of normal schooling, but in some ways also challenged and offered an alternative to that frame. A key term is coined here: the 'resource-based classroom' to characterise the change that school broadcasting made to educational practice as part of a broader movement of educational media.

In this chapter I firstly quantify the production and reception of BBC School broadcasting roughly between 1957 and 1979 and make some estimate of its effect and value. Secondly I examine the practicalities of the use of school broadcasting in schools. Following this I look at the consequences for educational space. Following this I look at the history and practicalities of recording. Finally I address the idea of school broadcasting as an 'open' alternative to school education.

How Much School Broadcasting was Produced?

There are several ways of quantifying the output of BBC Schools, each with attendant problems of interpretation (See Appendix A). These figures can give an idea of trends. What can be seen are steady increases in both production and reception from the 1920s until the mid-1970s, and then marginal increases until the early 1980s, and after this a plateau.

There are four basic ways to measure production;

    1) Number of different series produced per year.

    There were 39 series per year in 1950. By 1980 this had risen to 145.[137] This measure is complicated by the fact that series could be of different lengths depending on how many terms they ran for and how many episodes were broadcast per week.

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[137] For radio: 69 UK-wide series, 4 for Northern Ireland, 15 for Scotland and 12 for Wales, and for TV: 38 UK series, 2 for Northern Ireland, 4 for Scotland and 5 for Wales.

2) Number of hours broadcast.

In 1955/56, the first year that the total hours of school broadcasting was published, 409 radio hours were broadcast, around 3% of total BBC network radio hours. This had increased to 487 in 1972/73, though the proportion of network radio hours had fallen to 1.6%. Television hours rose rapidly from 41 in 1957/58 to 313 in 1963/64, which at that time, just before the launch of BBC2, represented a remarkable 8.9% of total network television hours. By 1979/80 there were 409 hours of television, 4.3% of network television hours.[138] This measure is complicated by the fact that some hours were repeats, somewhere between 31% and 83% per year. Programmes were usually ten or twenty minutes long. In 1951 there were 8 UK programmes per school day on radio, with another 1 each for the national regions. In 1971 there were 10 each for radio and television each school day (*Radio Times*, passim).

3) The number of different publications produced.

In 1955/56 there were 65 different pamphlets produced. There were probably around 130 different publications total, rising to 679 in 1972/73, and then falling to 356 in 1979/80. Not all series had publications. This measure is complicated by the fact that publications were of different paginations and sizes, and like series, could be termly or annual, therefore implying single or multiple editions. Publications produced and sold did not correlate to hours broadcast and received, for reasons explained in Chapter 6.

4) The number of producers working in SR and STV.

This increased from around 33 in 1957 to around 68 in 1979.

How Much School Broadcasting was Received?

Reception can also be measured in several different ways. The figures quoted by the BBC were: the total number of schools using broadcasts (at least one per school)[139], and/or this figure as a percentage of total schools. Certain other reception statistics were collected on an ad hoc basis and are not available for collation and analysis. These included; how many series were being used by each school, which series, how many episodes per series, or how many episodes total (including multiple classes taking the same episode). The figures the BBC chose to report were not consistent throughout the extended period, making comparisons over time difficult. The following figures are given as a rough guide.

In 1956-57, 28,000 schools received one or more series, representing 74% of UK schools (BBC Yearbook 1957: 89). By 1980 the published figure was divided by type of school; for primary schools as 95% for radio and 92% for television, and for secondary schools as 72% for radio

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[138] The peak of hours of educational broadcasting (including Schools, FE and OU) in 1979, represented 21% of all BBCTV time, and 9% of radio BBC Radio time (Cain and Wright 1994: 59).

[139] Which was assumed to be equal to the number of schools registered to receive the annual programme.

and 83% for television. (Yearbook 1980: 188). In 1970 a study showed junior schools to be the heaviest users, with between 10.7 and 13 series used per school. Grammar schools were the lightest users but only marginally. In 1981 99% of Primary and middle schools used BBC School broadcasting of some kind, with an average of 10.5 series per user school. The figures for secondary schools were 90% and 9.2 respectively.[140] In a further granular level of research, this could even be broken down by the 'streams' within secondary schools.[141]

In contrast to normal practice for programmes in the general service, the BBC did not systematically collect the number of listeners/viewers for individual schools series. One source shows that the estimated average live audience for a school broadcast in 1981 was for primary radio 140,000, and secondary radio 3,000. For primary TV it was 350,000, and for secondary TV 7,000. The actual audience was an unknown amount higher due to recorded use. Because of the unusual aims and audience of school broadcasting, it arguably made little sense to compare it with other programming areas in terms of raw audience figures. Unlike the general service, 'reception' of school programmes did not end when the set was switched off. From an educational perspective, it was arguably as important to measure the 'use' put to the broadcast and its publications after the viewing and listening was over – but this was problematic and difficult given the SBC's resources. Occasional outside research such as Moses and Croll (1991) helped fill some gaps. Recorded use of programmes further complicated matters. Recording was vastly more common for school broadcasting than it was for the general service. However the lack of a straightforward comparator may have contributed to an impression among some at the BBC that school broadcasting was less valuable than other programming areas.

Another measure of reception, publications sold, will be examined in Chapter 6.

Teachers and School Broadcasting

In 1946 there were 175,275 teachers in all state primary and secondary schools, rising to 420,900 in 1979 (Simon 1991: 581[142]). Nearly all schools featured a mixture of teaching methods (Cunningham 1988: 52), and the attitudes of teachers towards the use of school broadcasting varied widely. Some teachers did not use broadcasts at all. However, uptake figures are strong evidence for an overall positive attitude, and increasingly so, among the teaching profession 1947-90. The effectiveness of broadcasts depended partly on teachers' ability to use them constructively in their own practice and this also varied widely. For example an EO report of 1974 referred to a teacher as "a selective user of broadcasts, creative in his approach – not simply a series depender."[143], suggesting the existence of a rough division between user types. Some in the educational world stigmatised broadcasts as "earmarked for the 'rabbit teacher'"[144]. It was perhaps the immersive form of address contained in broadcasts that gave a false impression of completeness compared to for example the use of a textbook,

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[140] WAC R99/323/1 A Study by the Future Policy Group May 1981
[141] WAC R16/903/2 Meeting to Discuss English Programmes Friday 6th May 1960.
[142] Not counting private schools, whose proportion of teachers overall was between 5-8%.
[143] WAC R103/303/1 Secondary English (Radio) Project II – Use of Speak, John Rawnsley, 10th May 1974
[144] WAC R16/672/2, The Pitman Issue, with Further Thoughts on Literacy, Broadcasting and Basic Educational Projects. Kenneth Bailey, 16th February 1970.

but broadcasts and their materials were not in themselves lessons. Like any educational resource they were designed to be an aid and a component of lesson planning. Preparation and follow-up work were necessary to use broadcasts effectively within an overall teaching and learning process.

While it was impractical for most teachers to be directly involved in broadcasting, teachers were invited to send the BBC feedback about broadcasts and were in some cases in personal contact with producers. The secondary French series *Tout Compris* was partly inspired by discussions with teachers, and liaison with teachers was key to the inspiration and success of *Watch*! Its producer Tom Stanier set up twice yearly brainstorming meetings with a group of teachers whose work he particularly admired.[145]

Hayter's 1974 study summarised why teachers used broadcasts into ten main reasons, (Hayter 1974: 13); to provide a unique (AV) resource, to stimulate, to bring the outside world into the classroom, the particular appeal of dramatization, direct specialist help in subjects to non-specialist teachers, to provide an alternative teacher voice, as an aid to small schools with limited resources, cheapness compared to other resources and to develop listening and viewing techniques, and the most important reason: "to provide information not readily available to the teacher in a form that cannot be matched in the classroom… the consideration and use of some broadcast series and their accompanying literature can provide a valuable framework for curricular developments." In other words, school broadcasts at their best both set the curriculum and provided a unique means of delivering it. Williams (1979) also found that teachers mainly decided to use broadcasts because of their curricular role.

Effect and Value

School broadcasting specifically addressed only school teachers and pupils. It divided this audience by age and subject area. Nevertheless the potential total audience for school broadcasting was substantial in absolute terms. In 1950 there were 6,523,085 state school pupils, in a UK population of around 48.9 million. In 1980 there were 8,601,141 state pupils in a UK population of 54.3m (1981) (Richards Hunt 1983). All children aged 4/5 – 15/16 spent around 39 weeks a year in school.[146] The central government expenditure in education in 1972-3 was £67bn (Simon 1991). The proportion of this spent on school broadcasting (including reception equipment and publications) is unknown.

The budget for BBC schools was in the region of £5m in 1972.[147] It is problematic to make a comparison of productivity between what are two very different domains of work. Both schools producers and teachers relied on a substantial hinterland of additional professionals and infrastructure to deliver their work. But it is nevertheless interesting to note that there was a (remarkably constant) ratio of around 7,245 teachers per BBC schools producer 1950-1980. While these figures require interpretation, it seems likely that school broadcasting was an economical way of providing educational resources. A

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[145] Stanier, Tom, interview with the author 4th April 2019
[146] Plus 592,000 private pupils in 1950, and 525,195 in 1981, with an unknown number of teachers.
[147] WAC R78/1181/1 General Advisory Council minutes 4th April 1973.

worthwhile comparison would be with the staff and output of an educational publisher, but work has not yet been done that would allow this (Chapter 6 gathers some relevant material.)

Practicalities in Schools

Use was predicated on the availability to schools of radios and televisions, preferably in sufficient numbers to be used in several classrooms simultaneously. Purchasing, maintaining and using reception, playback and recording technology placed demands on staff, embedding media practice into educational practice.

School series were broadcast during school term time in a morning and afternoon slot. Until the 1960s, viewing and listening was almost entirely on-air. This meant that secondary teachers had to arrange their timetable in order for a lesson to coincide with a broadcast they wanted to use. In primary schools this was less of a problem because primary teachers usually taught the same class all day. For Langham, the invention of primary programming was the "breakthrough" (Langham 1990: 64) of educational television for this reason. Timetabling was also complicated by the limited availability of sets and so teachers might have to negotiate ("coax, wheedle and cajole" (Escoffey 1980: 62)) with colleagues for access at the appropriate time. To use programmes off-air schools required recording and playback equipment, but this came in gradually, and by 1990 some viewing (not listening) was still done on-air (Sharp 1995: 17). By 1970 tape recording had virtually eliminated timetable difficulties for radio but tape recording for television was then still in its infancy.

The spread of reception equipment in schools was gradual. By the 1960s, radios were common in schools, though televisions were still spreading. By the 1980s both technologies were common, but had changed. All new school TV was broadcast in colour from 1974 and school radio was moved from AM frequency to VHF in 1972, necessitating VHF capable radios. These and other changes led to a perpetual residue of old and unused technology, and insufficient experience or training with new. For example the Radiovision system, which the BBC produced between 1965 and 1986, was not very difficult to use, but inconvenient enough to deter some teachers. By 1980, 97% of primary schools had radios, with an average of 2.2 per school, with the figures for TVs 96% and 1.9 respectively. 92% of secondaries had radios, at an average of 2.8 per school, and 98% had TVs, at an average of 3.3 per school.[148] Of the schools that had televisions in 1977, 25% of primaries and 40% of secondaries had colour TVs.[149] This lagged behind the population as a whole, for whom in 1977 slightly over 50% of television licences issued were for colour televisions.[150] The spread of recording equipment is dealt with separately below.

Unlike broadcasts, which were received for free, the publications which accompanied some school series had to be purchased. In primary schools decisions on purchasing were made mainly by the head, in consultation with the teachers, and depended on factors such as staffing

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[148] WAC R99/323/1. BBC Educational Broadcasting – A Study by the Future Policy Group 1981, Annex B.
[149] WAC Films 11 12 SBC Minutes 1972 – 1982, SBC Minutes 17th March 1977.
[150] BBC Yearbook 1977

plans, and availability of viewing rooms, TV sets and tape recorders. Small rural schools were particularly high users of broadcasts, but their lower budgets meant they couldn't afford to buy many publications.[151] Yet, during the 1960s, the proportion of series which had 'essential' (necessary to have to use the broadcast) publications grew. BBC School publications were said to take up as much as a quarter of some primary schools' budgets.[152] Secondaries had comparatively easy finances compared to primaries, and could afford to buy much more – but in fact bought less because they used fewer broadcasts. Secondary schools were typically larger than primaries, and purchasing decisions were more distributed among staff. Larger schools also had greater staff unpredictability – important for publications because they had to be ordered prior to the start of the school year, when the staff who might use them had not been employed yet.

Concerns about effectiveness of usage were never far from the SBC and the department's mind. Common problems proved difficult to solve and in 1969 prompted a joint SBC/IBA investigation (Hayter 1974). Little in its findings were new – it drew attention to the need for proper pre-service and in-service training, the importance of adequate provision of equipment, the need for technical assistance, and the limitations of existing copyright regulations. An IBA fellowship report by Michael T Williams from 1978 on the practical reasons why broadcasting was used in schools to greater or lesser extents is revealing of the position in the mid-1970s (Langham 1990: 150-151). LEAs and schools sometimes appointed staff with responsibility for resources, sometimes specifically for AV resources, but their effectiveness was complicated in that they were more interested in equipment and its maintenance and repair, rather than programme content which was of interest to teachers. Purchasing decisions were the responsibility of heads, who were generally content with a relatively low level of uptake. Once equipment was purchased, there was rarely a policy surrounding it, and members of staff given this responsibility had little power across the school. Heads of departments, who were usually in control of materials purchasing, often viewed and retained publicity materials exclusively, and had extensive power over their respective curricula, including whether broadcasts were used. Williams concluded that publicity had to be sent to department heads directly to have any impact. Publicity was a significant problem for the BBC/SBC, and will be referred to further in Chapter 6. Research like this showed how procedures and policy had the potential to improve. However still by 1990, the lack of a "systematic and internally coherent approach to school television" in typical schools was judged likely to negatively affect their ability to adapt their usage of it to the national curriculum (Moses and Croll 1991: 88).

Educational Space

Educational space – general aspects of architecture, place and environment has been a neglected aspect of educational theory and history, yet is arguably a key part of the subject (Burke, Cunningham and Grosvenor 2010). Greater use of media had architectural implications, and there are parallels between the history of broadcasting and the modern

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[151] WACR103/271/1, The Ordering and Use of School Publications as Related to SBC Policies SEO Kenneth Bailey 3rd December 1970.
[152] Ward, Peter, interview with the author, 15th December 2020

movement in architecture, in that developments gathered pace in the 1930s and were affected by the war.[153] A particular form of modernist planning drastically altered the fabric of many British cities at the same time as new mediatised communication affected social and professional life. But the way people thought about education, generally and in official terms, was largely disengaged from the developments in the audio-visual world, both broadcasting and film. Due to the tradition of a basic separation of domains and responsibilities it is not surprising that the post-war school building programme proceeded with little consideration of the place broadcasting played, or could play, in the education system.

In the post-war period, many school buildings were built or rebuilt as part of a broader trend of reconstruction, though school building lagged behind other priorities. The core of school building stock was Victorian, and the typical 'triple-decker' schools of inner cities contained multiple flights of stairs, hindering transportation of television sets which were often mounted on trolleys. Often pupils were moved rather than the equipment, to a specific room which could be the school hall (Hayter 1974: 26).There was new building in the 1950s and 1960s, some of which took into account new technological demands. Some schools built had speakers built into walls, which could be used to pipe radio in from a central source.[154] New primaries were typically built single-storey (Saint 1987: 88), but this was to maximise daylight penetration.

Both school broadcasting and progressive methods such as discovery and group methods implied new principles of educational space and school architecture, but in somewhat different ways. In 1973, Head of SR Charles Armour hoped that the next wave of school building would "give opportunity for the provision of facilities in the buildings and equipment for tape playback to individuals or groups."[155] Fawdry spoke of "ideal conditions of the exploitation of broadcasts inspired by the more forward looking and sophisticated educational ideas" which had implications for scheduling and structure of series (1974: 119). The open-plan classroom envisaged by progressives in favour of the 'integrated day' involved a fluid classroom structure, with a class having a main 'home base' classroom, but with semi-detached 'resource' and 'practical' spaces (Schools Council 1971). This was not necessarily ideal for the use of broadcasting, which instead required, ideally, closed-off spaces, for good viewing and listening conditions. An EO report described a situation where "a number of small TV sets have been put to use in an open plan school where pupils themselves will decide when to dip in and out of programmes" The Hayter report describes a group of seven children in an open plan building following *Listening and Reading I* seated in a "home bay partitioned off by double-layered curtains for quietness… around the cassette player with the story on their laps." (Hayter 1974: 40) However open plan schools were also found to "affect the quality of radio use detrimentally… Headphone sets and listening corners are not well-developed facilities in the open plan school."

Building new schools was expensive and difficult and new school building was curtailed following economic difficulties in the mid-1970s. Classrooms remained adhesive to traditional models, and ambitious visions such as that expressed at an SBC conference by a teacher trainer,

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[153] Coincidentally, Reith was briefly minister-designate of Works between 1940 and 1942, but was forced out by Churchill (Saint 1987: 24).
[154] WAC R99/101/1 Chief Education Officer Radio in the 80's June 1980
[155] WAC R99/101/1 Your Paper – Current and Projected Areas of Programme Development, Charles Armour, 29th January 1973.

that one day pupils would have independent access to television terminals within schools, did not become practice.[156] This is an underexplored area and perhaps as much as can be said at the present moment of research is that in principle the school necessitated a spatial confinement and hierarchy and attendance at school was compulsory. The form of these sites both dictated and was dictated by what activities were possible there. Media offers an alternative, but the spatial aspect remains relatively unexplored.

Recording

The ability to record broadcasts was the most significant technological development in educational broadcasting. Recording was a procedure in both production and reception. In all broadcast production, the ability to record and edit video and audiotape prior to broadcast allowed greater sophistication in programme design. It gradually became standard practice for the BBC to pre-record both radio and television programmes between the 1930s to the 1970s, though some genres remained live. This was no different in Schools, though school broadcasting was unusual in that it could feature a wide variety of genres and formats including presenter-led, drama, studio and location work, music and documentary.

What made recording of unique and crucial importance to school broadcasting was the extent of its use at the reception end as well. This was the case well before domestic recording of general programmes became common in the 1980s. The BBC never sold ready-made copies to schools; [157] recording was done by educational establishments onto their own tape stock. The practice greatly increased the utility of school broadcasting, as classes no longer had to tune in to a broadcast at the correct time of day, listen to it the whole way through without pausing, and perhaps never again. Now the teacher could pick a tape 'off the shelf', preview it, play it at the desired time, with the ability to pause and rewind etc.

This change occurred gradually as recording and playback technology spread. By the end of the 1960s the SBC was well aware of the utility that recordings could bring and that schools wanted them.[158] From the early 1970s the SBC found that recording from radio was widespread and questioned whether repeats of radio broadcasts were still needed.[159] Video recording was more difficult. In 1980, still only 9% of primary schools, and 83% of secondary schools had video recorders, with an average of 1.2 and 2.0 per school respectively.[160] In 1992, 21% of primary TV viewing was still live, though no secondary TV viewing was. By 1994 almost all primary schools had video recorders, but only an average of 1.7 per school.[161]

Another key problem with recording was copyright. Any third party material, including sound and images and performances by actors was licensed for broadcast only. For most of the period, the law stated that tapes could be kept in schools for one year, and then had to be deleted. The

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[156] WAC R16/629/1 Conference at the Institute of Education 10th March 1967
[157] Except in isolated cases (Cain and Wright 1994: 64).
[158] WAC R98/4 SBC Minutes, 2nd December 1966.
[159] WAC Films 11 12 SBC Minutes 16th October 1975
[160] WAC R99/323/1. BBC Educational Broadcasting – A Study by the Future Policy Group 1981, Annex B
[161] BBC Oral History Archive, Gwynne Jones, Eurfron; Gillard, Frank, Interviewer, 19th February 1997.

problem was brought up regularly in SBC discussions yet progress was slow.[162] In 1979, an agreement was reached for the period to be extended to three years.[163] Only in 1988 were educational institutions allowed unlimited retention of recordings, by purchasing a licence from the newly founded Educational Recordings Agency (Sharp 1995: 1).

Recording and storing broadcasts required a relatively sophisticated system of integrated technology and practice for schools and LEAs. Tape was expensive and had to be reused to be economical.[164] Practices varied. In some schools one member of staff was nominated to do the recording for the use of the whole school. In some cases this was a specialist, in others it might be a secretary or receptionist.[165] All ILEA secondary schools had an AV officer by 1980, though this was rare in other LEAs (HMI 1980: 79). An EO report of 1977 gives a snapshot of practice in one primary school class. The venue is described as "A slum clearance primary school in Exeter." which contained (the EO alleged) "Numerous cases of baby battering (usually by Mum's boyfriend)." The EO related:

> On arriving we found that most listening was individual or in small groups, with headsets from a bank of cassettes… the young enthusiastic teacher in charge of broadcasting, Mr Dark, thought children had to be "taught to listen"… The ideal usage was by individuals rather than small groups, and he reckons every child in the school hears at least one broadcast a week on his own or as one of a pair…. The programmes are first recorded onto large reels of tape. They are then edited and transferred to cassettes, catalogued and stored by an infant helper. Only one programme is on each cassette to facilitate both easy retrieval and to prevent rival demands for the same cassette. Mr. Dark said it would be much easier for him if a whole series were broadcast as one block… a still better solution would be for the BBC or a regional resources centre to supply the tapes, since a 20 minute programme takes only two minutes to copy with a high speed copier… He felt that in this country an enormous amount of man hours went into the reproduction of tapes. Mr. Dark's views were visionary… the avant-garde in recording broadcasts are found even in First Schools….

By the late 1960s some LEAs were developing resource centres, which recorded on cassettes centrally, and sent them to schools on request. Bailey in 1973 thought this practice would be widespread by the 1990s, and it was recommended in the 1975 Bullock Report (305) (in the context of a discussion of school libraries). Some, including ILEA, Glasgow City[166] and Hull operated their own school television studios which transmitted to schools live on CCTV (Hayter 1974: 33; Radford 2009: 48,85; HMI 1980: 114), though later switched to pre-recording and sending tapes. This system of resource-based schooling continued to develop in several ways. The idea had been the subject of a Schools Council project (Schools Council 1972). The Nuffield Foundation had sponsored a *Resources for Learning* Project in 1966. Audio-visual recording can be seen in the context of other comparable technologies like

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[162] E.g. WAC R98/4 SBC Minutes 2nd December 1966
[163] WAC Films 11 12 SBC Minutes 3rd July 1979
[164] WAC Films 11 12 SBC Minutes 12th October 1978
[165] Ward, Peter, interview with the author, 15th December 2020
[166] McCormick, John, interview with the author, 10th May 2018.

reprographics (Bullock 1975: 320) which was becoming more widespread in the later 1970s and which were mentioned by the SBC in connection with the future of pamphlets.[167] With remarkable foresight, Bailey thought that by the 1990s, the output could be electronically distributed and received: "resource material… will be related first to resource libraries and by the 1990's, in the case of larger schools and colleges, I would imagine to (various forms of) electronic distribution and retrieval systems." The system of resource centres, like other innovations in curriculum resource provision, declined after the 1970s. In 1980 the dedicated resource technician was "a fast declining breed as cuts bite… many LEAs have maintained their local centre recording facilities despite financial difficulties. However many teachers' centres have been axed… use of centrally held audio recording is often apparently confined to resource enthusiasts."[168]

Radicalism and Expansion – The Open School

In the late 1960s and early 1970s atmosphere of radicalism it seemed possible for a while that the institution of the school could be fundamentally reformed. The most radical potential effect school broadcasting was to become an 'open school' by bypassing traditional institutions and providing opportunities for teaching and learning freely to children. What suggested the idea that broadcasting could be the vehicle for this was that it had 'Trojan horse' access to children's homes.

Department members and SBC staff kept abreast of contemporary educational developments and were aware of the de-schooling notion. As a national institution with establishment links, and an eye always on its own self-preservation, the BBC was in no position to take part in radical politics. However, in the early 1970s the service was successful and confident and still interested in an independent zone of operation. This was partly because it was becoming clear that problems of utilisation were persistent and there was a sense that the service was not achieving its full potential.

The output of adult or further education (FE) which developed during the 1970s and 1980s showed how the BBC could operate independently. FE was typically received by individuals in their homes without an intermediary institution. Notable successes included cookery, foreign languages and the Adult Literacy Project (Jones 2021). In some cases, including the Adult Literacy Project, the BBC did set up relationships with local authorities and local institutions to deliver accompanying lessons.[169]

In early 1973 John Cain, then Head of Further Education Television, admitting to "rather heady thoughts", began a discussion among senior education staff of the recent white paper 'Education, a Framework for Expansion' (DES 1973) with a paper proposing an "Open College."[170] This was largely a recapitulation of the idea that had preceded the Open University (see Chapter 2), but his paper also asked "Should we be thinking of an Open School and extend

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[167] WAC R103/304/1 Secondary English Series SEO June 1975
[168] WAC R99/101/1 Chief Education Officer Radio in the 80's June 1980
[169] Innes, Sheila, interview with the author 6th February 2018
[170] WAC R99/48/1 Future Developments in Educational Broadcasting Adult Education John Cain 9th January 1973.

the age limit from 16 downwards?" Peter Montagnon, who had previously worked in school television and was then Head of Open University Productions, observed that the OU proved that it was possible to invent a new fully-articulated educational system to serve the home-based student, in which broadcasting played the major role. SEO Bailey contributed further thoughts:

> 'Open School' in current educational thinking can mean the modification of 'imposed' structures and disciplines with the objectives of (a) providing a wider range of options for the pupil; (b) establishing livelier relationships between the processes of cultural acquisition and experience of contemporary life; and (c) encouraging individual initiative and group cooperation.[171]

However, Bailey disagreed with a suggestion by Michael Stephens, Head of Further Education Radio, that the SBC hindered the BBC's association with outside individuals and agencies.

> … for the most part, SBC asks for broadcasts to be provided for use in the environment of school… but within that functional parameter it gives producers wide choice of association at the production end and encourages diversity of utilisation at the receiving end. …it places the teacher in an experimental context and in an 'open' situation in relation to the various kinds of work the pupils may be led to do.[172]

Bailey thought that, school broadcasting was therefore already 'open' to a significant degree.

Bailey then took the question "of the media in relation to 'open schooling'" further with a quote from a recent article by the Swiss academic J.M. Manoury, entitled *Media and School Systems, The Trojan Horse at School?* (Manoury 1972: 10-15). Manoury linked educational broadcasting to de-schooling;

> The media (any technical means of communication; books, comic strips, photographs, films, radio, gramophone records, television, computer terminals, tape recordings etc.) will make no headway in education until they are understood as creators of specific networks of cultural communication, and not, as is now the case, simply as aids or palliatives in the traditional teacher-pupil relationship… One of the fundamental causes of the present educational crisis… (is) the compulsory aspect of schooling.

For Manoury, television was central to an approach to education that foregrounded children's engagement with mediated knowledge, and the school, the teacher and the class were outdated hindrances.

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[171], [171]WAC R99/48/1 Future Developments in Educational Broadcasting: School Broadcasting, Kenneth Bailey, 15th March 1973

Bailey's reference to Manoury was not an explicit advocacy. He admitted "school broadcasting has no brief to contribute to the overthrow of existing pedagogic structures." and warned against beginning anything without "appropriate advisory and sponsoring machinery" being instituted, as any move away from the structures currently acceptable to schools would have difficulty building audiences. But Bailey seems to have cautiously believed in a Manoury-type programme. He agreed that "the compulsory aspect of schooling… (was) imposed at the cost of intellectual curiosity" and that pre-school broadcasting could act as a bridge between the home where information and culture were mediated by broadcasting, and the school where knowledge was mediated by pedagogical structures. In this way *You and Me* (see Chapter 8) and other preschool programming was the thin end of the wedge for the Trojan Horse. "Television is… for better or worse a factor tending to defeat the school as a 'closed' and conservatively based institution."

On a different occasion, Bailey had put the idea another way:

> "Moira Doolan (a radio producer) used to consider broadcasts as something which, with luck, could by-pass the teacher and be of value to the pupils in spite of the unproductive and ill-devised educational impediments to creative experience which – as she saw it- the teacher might put in their way. Without going so far as this, and without moving into to 'de-schooling' camp, there is an element in school broadcasting, of identity with the contemporary world – the world of ideas and experiences which, for better or worse, and maybe for worse, don't have much of a place in the school curriculum. 'Immediacy' doesn't mean topical, nor does it mean non-recorded. It can mean 'on the nerve' of what is happening and what is important and what is relevant to children's environment."[173]

Interest in the idea went as far as a mention from a Professor Aaron, on GAC.[174]

In his contribution to the discussion, CEB Donald Grattan judged that "there are unlikely to be fundamental developments in broadcasting technology for the next ten years… we are over the worst/best of the multi-media syndrome" and that complex multi-media systems were not feasible at the present state of knowledge and organisation.[175] From the mid-1970s school broadcasting was affected by economic difficulties which curtailed any further radicalism, however tentative.

Conclusion

By the late 1970s BBC Schools was approaching its zenith in production and reception. The period of maximum interest by the government in school broadcasting had passed during the 1960s. The BBC itself was not prepared to re-allocate the resources it already had away from other areas in favour of building up its educational arm, or even to pay more to obtain improved

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[173] WAC R99/101/1, Kenneth Bailey, Notes on questions relating to the future of the SBC and its role in the development of school broadcasting. 6th March 1972
[174] R78/1181/1 General Advisory Council Minutes 4th April 1973.
[175] WAC R99/48/1 Broadcasting and Adult Education, Donald Grattan, 2nd March 1973.

rights in the field of off-air recording and distribution. The BBC was in a constant state of uncertainty over the licence fee in the 1970s and was juggling many other commitments. BBC Schools would continue roughly on established lines.

However, the use of recording was transforming the effectiveness and the nature of school broadcasting. It also changed the importance of the BBC in the education system: the value of its school broadcasting arm was now much greater. To keep it operable it required a complex system, involving broadcasters and schools. By the 1980s the system was working reasonably well in that some LEAs had centralised distribution centres and most schools had serviceable, if unsophisticated, recording and sharing policies. School broadcasting was part of, and relied on a hinterland of institutional networks, support services, and in-service training that existed outside the classroom walls and outside a framework of measurable outcomes.

Part 3
BBC Schools and the BBC

Chapter 5

Producers, Production, Scheduling

This chapter examines the School Television and School Radio Departments within the institutional context of the BBC. An account of how programmes were produced is distributed over this chapter and the following chapter on publications. This chapter will first look at the BBC personnel with responsibility for school broadcasting, including directors general, controllers of educational broadcasting, department staff and freelancers. Next I will look at the perception of BBC Schools by other parts of the BBC. Finally I will examine the allocation of resources and scheduling to Schools in the BBC's overall strategy.

Directors General

Directors General never made direct decisions about school broadcasting, but their strategic decisions about the BBC overall could have consequences for it. Most DGs in the extended period, from Reith (1922-1938) up to and including Michael Checkland (1987-1992), are either recorded as having a generally positive attitude towards school broadcasting, or as having little defined opinion. The exceptions are Charles Curran (1969-1977) who was recorded as having an actively positive attitude (Briggs 1995: 932), supported by chairman Michael Swann (1973-1980), a distinguished academic. His successor Ian Trethowan (1977-1952) "had a far more sceptical approach than Curran" (Cain and Wright 1994: 59).[176] While managing director of Radio in 1971, in reference to a school programme on Mao Zedong, Trethowan declared himself "astonished that this exercise was ever permitted."[177] His attitude may have contributed to the diminution of school radio during his tenure.

Controllers of Educational Broadcasting

The job title of the figure with overall responsibility for school broadcasting changed over the period from 'head' to 'director' to 'controller'. For convenience I will refer to this position only as 'controller'. JC Stobart began as director of education in 1924, but the Schools part was not differentiated until 1931, with Somerville as head. The rest of educational broadcasting, i.e. Further and Higher, was reunited, under the controllership created in 1963. The controller

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[176] Supported by oral testimony (Ward, Peter, interview with the author, 15th December 2020)
[177] WAC R78/2549/1 Trethowan, Ian. Mao Tse-Tung 8th February 1971

of educational broadcasting (CEB) had at the height of their responsibility from 1969, authority over the two school departments, their further education equivalents and the BBC's share of the OU. There were six different controllers up to the end of the period. These were Mary Somerville (1931-1947), Richmond Postgate (1947-1950), John Scupham (1950-1965), Richmond Postgate (again)[178] (1965-1972), Donald Grattan (1972-1984), Sheila Innes (1984-1987) and Eurfron Gwynne Jones (1987-1994).

Of the six, four began their careers as school teachers (not Postgate or Innes). This reflects the overall mixture in the Schools departments of those with previous teaching experience and those without.[179] The first three were never producers,[180] whereas the last three came up through the departments as producers. This indicates that there was increasing specialisation and professionalization in educational broadcasting and that experience as a producer came to be regarded as necessary to oversee production. This has had consequences particularly for the separation between the fields of education and broadcasting.

Excluding Somerville, whose reign falls outside the key period of this thesis, Scupham was perhaps the most important. The hike in responsibility that occurred after the invention of the STV, Further Education Television and Further Education Radio departments in the late 1950s/early 1960s gave him comparable power to the tier of senior figures in the BBC directly below the DG (Briggs 1995: 464-482). One contemporary who did not share Scupham's commitment to educational broadcasting was Stuart Hood, who was controller of BBC television when Scupham was made CEB. After leaving the BBC, he wrote;

> … Schools Television is in the tight grip of educational advisory committees… amateurs with little knowledge of powers and limitations of television and little ability to judge the professional standards…. Educational television is too often an area in which old-fashioned techniques are preserved long after they have been abandoned elsewhere. The staff are at worst either old horses put to grass or young men who quite cynically (and who is to blame them) use it as a means of learning the trade. A head of schools television is less likely to be a creator of programmes than a committee man (Hood 1967: 124).

This indicates that disagreements had been acrimonious – but also that CEB was now sitting at the top table and worth targeting.

Briggs, who knew Scupham and his colleagues, and served on the Further Education Advisory Council, alludes somewhat cryptically to the distrust of Scupham at the top: "Inside Television Centre, the language the Scupham spoke, still common language at the time in most educational circles, was thought to belong already to the past." (Briggs 1995: 469). Scupham was older than the new generation making its way at the BBC under Greene. What Briggs means by the "language of the past", is suggested by Scupham's *Broadcasting in the Community* which

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[178] Postgate went first to Children's as Joint Acting Head in 1950 and then moved to Nigeria to become director general of its broadcasting corporation. He then returned as Scupham's deputy, before succeeding Scupham.
[179] New producers who had not taught before were sent to teach in a school for a term as part of their training (Prescott Thomas, John, interview with the author 15th March 2019).
[180] Somerville began with management responsibilities in a nascent department, Scupham began as an education officer, and Postgate as an adult education liaison officer.

shows the influence of Victorians such as Arnold and Ruskin (1967: 90, 79), whose work may have seemed old-fashioned compared to recent educational sociology and psychology. Robinson who had worked with Scupham as Further Education Liaison officer, judged him to have the "wisdom and strength of a great leader" and attributed the secure position of educational broadcasting by his retirement to his guidance (Robinson 1982: 138).

The empire of CEB ceased to grow with the resolution of the status of the Open University shortly after Scupham's retirement. CEB was given oversight of OU programme production but the OU as an institution was separate from the BBC. FE programming did expand in quantity but was not strategically promoted within the BBC. No CEB was ever promoted further and the post was not regarded, as others were, as suitable training to become Director General (Seaton 2015: 44). No controller after Scupham had as high a profile within the BBC or was as well connected in educational circles (Hoare 2019).

Richmond Postgate continued the policies of Scupham, and commented that like him, his predecessors (presumably meaning Scupham and Somerville) "came to deep disagreement with the Corporation's management as to the importance which should be accorded to educational broadcasting".[181] After Postgate came the three 'producer-controllers'. Grattan had been one of the first producers in school television before founding and heading the FETV service. He was more hands-on than Scupham or Postgate had been and liked to keep a close eye on production.[182] His successor Sheila Innes had been a producer in FETV, reflecting the success of this department in the 1970s. The reign of Eurfron Gwynne Jones falls at the very end of the extended period of this thesis. Unusually, she had been a producer in several different departments; SR, STV, and FETV.

The duties of the controller were in the field of policy rather than programme making. The controller worked between the SBC, senior BBC management and the heads of department. They were also responsible for publicity and kept an eye on the press and the House of Commons for important developments.[183] Most producers noticed little difference between reigns and had little or no contact with the controller, who seemed remote and "Olympian"[184].

Heads of Department, Senior Producers and Producers

Normally producers worked to the instructions of their respective department heads. Below the heads were senior/chief/executive producers usually with responsibility over primary or secondary series. Producers working either alone or in small teams made almost all decisions on particular series. Counting producers is therefore a rough measure of production effort. Under the term I include programme assistants, assistant producers, producers, senior producers and executive or chief producers.

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[181] WAC R78/636/1 Postgate, Richmond Education, Educational Technology and the BBC. A Valedictory Note. November 1971
[182] Prescott Thomas, John, interview with the author 15th March 2019
[183] Innes, Sheila, interview with the author 6th February 2018
[184] Stanier, Tom, interview with the author 4th April 2019

There was an overall rise in producer numbers between 1947 and 1969 from 22 to 71, followed by a plateau, a temporary drop in 1974, then a recovery and plateau until 1990. The peak was reached in 1969 with 32 radio producers, and 39 television producers, making a total of 71. There were 22 radio producers in 1947, rising steadily to 31 in 1954, with a drop in 1955 to 26, which can be explained by the migration of staff to the newly founded Further Education Radio Department. Numbers fluctuated between 24 and 31 until 1990. The growth in the total number during the 1960s was mainly accounted for by new STV producers. In 1956 there were 4 STV producers, which rose to 23 by 1960. Television overtook radio in number of producers in 1962 and reached a peak of 40 in 1970. Radio had fewer producers but made more series and hours of output.

The route to becoming a schools producer varied from person to person. In some cases producers joined the BBC as general trainees, received general training in programme making and then applied to work in a schools department. In some cases they moved to Schools from a different part of the BBC. In other cases they joined the BBC directly (were 'parachuted in') as producers, in which case it was common to have been a school teacher beforehand. Grattan was said to have "gone for brains" rather than expertise when selecting new staff, expecting that the details of programme making techniques could be learned on the job.[185] There was a "cult of the amateur" at the BBC.[186] Those parachuted in were expected to adapt to huge complexity of the role despite receiving little training before starting production.

Once in post, producers had "immense power", and ruled what were described as "medieval baronies"[187] or "samurai fiefdoms".[188] Once a producer was given a brief they had extensive control over the ensuing production and the senior/chief/executive producer would interfere only if they were seriously unhappy about a project. Producers were relatively isolated individuals on relatively isolated projects. Occasionally, successful series were dropped because the producer who had managed the programme moved to other things and there was no one else able to take it on.[189] In other cases series were transferred to new production teams, which could result in new approaches. Working relationships between producers within the same department were not necessarily cooperative. There was only vague coordination between different series or sense of an overall offering. Grattan commented in 1973: "When you study our output, to be frank it still looks as if, after the semblance of participation and committee and managerial consultation, many producers go on doing their own thing."[190] As discussed in Chapter 3, this was partly the consequence of the lack of a policy by the SBC and BBC to develop an overall integrated curriculum. Another result was that there was little practical relationship between the schools radio and television production departments. The two were housed in different buildings and producers typically had little contact (see also Burns 1977: 82). According to some sources relations could be tense and the departments regarded each other as rivals for money and resources. Several interviewees also spoke about their departments in terms of generational divides, at different times in the 1960s and 1970s.

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[185] Innes, Sheila, interview with the author 6th February 2018

[186] Farrington, Pat, interview with the author, 30th April 2019

[187] Farrington, Pat, interview with the author, 30th April 2019

[188] Howarth, Mike, interview with the author, 7th June 2019.

[189] Smedley, Ron, interview with the author 8th May 2019

[190] WAC R99/48/1 Broadcasting and Adult Education Donald Grattan 2nd March 1973

During the 1960s and 1970s the atmosphere in the department was described as "Full of smoke… like an old fashioned grammar school staff room."[191] Most producers describe an overall supportive and creative ethos, but this was a time when inequality between men and women in the workplace was taken for granted. At the BBC there was a "blokes at the bar in the Langham at lunchtime"[192] atmosphere of internal networking. There was an overwhelming under representation of women at management level (Franks 2011). Claire Chovil who succeeded Charles Armour as HSBR in 1981, may have been less well treated by management and thereby less able to resist the diminution in importance that SR suffered during her tenure, due to being female. Majority male boards (recruitment panels) had to be persuaded to look favourably on female applicants.[193] There was also a gendering of roles: primary series were typically considered more appropriate for women, and secondary series for men.[194] This had further consequences as the secondary producer was typically regarded as the more senior, even though primary series were far more popular.

Other Production Staff and Freelancers

The production process involved a number of roles in addition to producers. Presenters were often also important to the success of programmes. Scriptwriting was often farmed out to professional writers. It was said that writers and actors liked working for Schools because of the repeat fees and because they knew that schools audiences, although limited, were still large. However the work was considered less prestigious than other genres. Publications also used freelance illustrators, with considerable crossover with the children's book publishing industry.

Perception of the Schools Departments within the BBC

Some in the rest of the BBC viewed Schools and its output as inferior to other programme areas and accorded a lower status to its staff. Most interviewees expressed this opinion and there is documentary evidence in support. This perception mattered because different departments were in competition with each other for resources and airtime. This led to a notorious incident – though it related to FETV, not Schools – which was felt by several sources to be symptomatic of attitudes towards education programmes. Scheduling pressure was greater on FETV than it was on STV because it was broadcast in the evenings. On one occasion, the head of FETV, Sheila Innes, was asked by the controller of BBC 2, Brian Wenham, "What have you got for me today that's going to silt up my network?"[195] Another occasion Innes described, was a discussion with Wenham of her recent programme *Telejournal*, which had been a big success with adult learners of French;

> He said, "I like *Telejournal*." I said, "Well I'm so glad, I think it's useful for
> the following reasons, and the producer has done his nut to get all that

[191] Whines, Nick, interview with the author, 14th May 2021
[192] Howarth, Mike, interview with the author, 7th June 2019.
[193] Innes, Sheila, interview with the author 6th February 2018. Innes was at one point told unofficially that her failure at the board for controller of BBC2 was because the management "wanted a man".
[194] Griffths, Joan, interview with the author 3rd March 2021
[195] Innes, Sheila, interview with the author 6th February 2018.

> material." "Yes", he said, "I call it on my channel, my *success d'estime*, and
> I'm sure all three viewers love it." That's how rude they were.

Wenham's view that educational programmes were a waste of valuable airtime was apparently shared by others. On producer recalled: "We were second to the bottom, only community programmes had less esteem. Children's were above us as they had a bigger budget and more airtime."[196] Many interviewees reported anecdotal slights by other BBC staff. However it is perhaps inappropriate to place too much weight on the evidence of education staff alone on this matter. A similar perception of condescension was found in other parts of the BBC, according John McCormick who began his career as an EO and later became controller of BBC Scotland.[197] Some interviewees thought that an element of competition was inevitable in a large diverse organisation which harboured many different objectives.[198]

It is possible that in some cases Schools was used by BBC staff as a 'stepping stone' to a career in other departments (Hood 1967: 124, Bates 1984: 182). It appears that it was more common for producers to move from Schools to other departments rather than vice versa, but this is probably because of the unusually vocational nature of the service; outsiders testified to the unique commitment of Schools staff to their work.[199] For those without a vocation, a rational reason to move on was that Schools programmes were shorter (typically 20 mins) than the "bigger canvas" offered by other programme areas.[200] As with Children's, Schools replicated many genres, like drama and documentary, that were produced in other departments with higher budgets and audiences. For that reason Schools could provide a valuable training ground for staff at all levels, but this unfortunately translated into a perception among some that this was its chief value.

The question of technical and professional standards – whether school programmes were better or worse than other types – is a subjective one and is not relevant for present purposes. Instead I can make a set of relevant observations. There is some testimony from non-producers to the high quality of producers' work.[201] Some, like Ron Smedley were awarded by the Royal Television Society, or Sony awards.[202] However interviewees admitted that some programmes were bad,[203] but this was said to be no worse than in other departments. It would arguably be unfair to judge programmes which set out to educate by the same standards as those which set out to entertain or inform. Producers sometimes sought to replicate the tokens of quality of the general output in order to gain kudos among their peers, which could run counter to educational imperatives (Bates 1984: 182, Cain and Wright 1994: 84). Television production was still a relatively young discipline even by the 1970s. School television was no cheaper or easier to make than normal television. Even if it is accepted that school broadcasting was lacking in technical and professional standards, whether they be pure broadcasting or educational, this may be attributed to the difficulty of the task. Very little research on how to make good

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[196] Farrington, Pat, interview with the author, 30th April 2019
[197] McCormick, John, interview with the author, 10th May 2018.
[198] Griffiths, Joan, interview with the author 3rd March 2021
[199] WAC R78/2856/1 Report by Frank Hodson
[200] McCormick, John, interview with the author, 10th May 2018.
[201] Johnstone, Jacqueline 2nd December 2017, McCormick, John, interview with the author, 10th May 2018.
[202] Smedley later moved to Children's to become a successful executive producer on *Grange Hill* – but then moved back to school television in the independent sector.
[203] Innes, Sheila, interview with the author 6th February 2018

educational broadcasting existed, and though the SBC provided some, this never translated into a set of agreed skills and knowledge. Each new producer learned largely on the job. Nevertheless particular series and genres improved over time through either iterative research on usage or with changes of approach associated with a new producer with new ideas (see Chapter 3).

By the beginning of the 1980s the decline in the status of the school departments had become clear. The new chairman of the SBC in 1981 wrote that he had;

> …the sense that the BBC (and for all I know that may mean the Managing Directors) are not 'proud of' their schools broadcasts – in spite of the fact that they are probably the best in the world…. There is the prevailing impression that some in the BBC regard them as being peripheral or even 'in the way.'[204]

Schools within BBC Strategy: Finance and Scheduling

The issue of the finance of BBC School broadcasting is not well understood as the figures are not readily available – there was no specific budget and the issue rarely surfaces in archival documents. The total budget was the result of a series of separate negotiations by CEB with the television and radio directorates.[205] At different times, Education (including Schools) was said to account for roughly 5% of the BBC's annual budget. This proportion does not seem to have changed throughout the core period of this thesis. In 1971 -1972 it was in the region of £4.5m, around £2.5m of which was spent on schools and around £2m on FE, although Schools produced substantially more hours.[206] [207] From the little that is known of relative budgets, it seems that schools compared fairly to other programmes areas in cost per hour. In 1980 cuts were made to the Schools budget which were broadly in line with budget cuts that also affected other areas of the BBC, except educational radio: it suffered a 10% rather than a 5% cut.[208] An internal report described morale after the cuts as not "all that it should be", and Schools staff as looking "at other departments as the ugly sisters who go to the ball."[209]

Perhaps the strongest indicator of Schools' relative status in the BBC can be judged by its scheduling. As part of the output of a large and diverse broadcaster, Schools had to negotiate for its place in the BBC broadcast schedules. Before consumer recording, school programmes had to be broadcast during school hours to reach their target audience. The departments had ring-fenced transmission slots in the morning and afternoon. School broadcasting had always been an exception to a government restriction on television broadcasting hours. This restriction ended in 1972 but there was no change in the scheduling of STV until it moved from BBC1 to BBC2 in 1982.

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[204] WAC R78/2738/1 The School Broadcasting Council Harry Judge 1981
[205] WAC R78/2738/1 Council and Committee Structures A paper by the Chairman, Harry Judge 24th February 1978
[206] WAC R78/1181/1 GAC minutes 4th April 1973.
[207] WAC R78/1181/1 Bates, RH Educational Broadcasting Summary of Expenditure 1971-72. 19th July 1972
[208] WAC R99/101/1 Swann to Judge 5th March 1980
[209] WAC R99/323/1 BBC Educational Broadcasting – A Study by the Future Policy Group. May 1981.

School radio was first on the Home service, and on Radio 4 from 1967. Radio 4 had a full daytime schedule, meaning that Schools was in direct competition with other programme areas for airtime. When the government released VHF (FM) wavelengths in 1972, the BBC was given in effect an extra channel. It was used for 'overspill' of long programmes like cricket test matches. Schools, with its specific segregated audience, was another obvious candidate for the move (Hendy 2008: 53). The SBC resisted. SBC members were worried that the move would mean a big drop in listening figures because schools would require new radio sets and VHF did not have full coverage of the UK.[210] A study found that the interruption was likely to be minimal. To the SR department it seemed like a demotion and a demonstration of their lack of prestige within the BBC. Furthermore the casual listener would now seldom hear a Schools programme, even by accident, and could fail to realise how valuable the service was:

> "I immediately lost all my mums doing the ironing listeners… it effectively ghettoised us on VHF… I thought the parent listening at home should be able to listen to the programmes so that when the child comes home they've got something to talk about and that adds value to making the programme."[211]

School radio was moved from Radio 4 AM to VHF in 1972.

There was an unintended consequence once it became clear that VHF capable radio sets would become the consumer standard. Other BBC departments began to covet transmission on VHF, because it had increased sound quality and stereo capabilities that AM did not have.[212] This in part led to the next, and more serious change to SR scheduling - its move to night time transmission in 1984. The idea was championed by Aubrey Singer, who was made managing director of Radio in 1978 and publicly floated it in a press conference shortly afterwards. This was the first the SBC heard of it – much to their annoyance. Singer was invited to the Council, where he admitted that he had been "flying a kite" at the press conference and explained that he wanted to give the airtime to other programming areas with "larger audiences".[213] Singer had an excuse: many schools were by then recording most of their programmes off-air and theoretically all programmes could simply be broadcast during the night (beginning at 12.30am) for block recording using time-switches, a technology that was available on the market. Singer claimed to have received "between five and fifteen letters a day from listeners who had bought expensive VHF equipment and who objected to school and Open University programmes being transmitted on this frequency".

SBC members reacted strongly, predicting accurately that schools would protest at the new costs of the time switches. Singer expected schools to buy time-switches in addition to the VHF receivers they had been obliged to buy only a few years earlier. One council member, Frank Mitson went further, to argue for more air time for day-time educational broadcasting, commenting; "in a society with structural unemployment, there was a need for access by young people to education through the media."[214] The matter was put to a 'feasibility study' whose

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[210] WAC Film 17, 13, 14 SBC Steering Committee 70 – 78 Steering Committee Minutes 20th September 1972
[211] Whines, Nick, interview with the author, 14th May 2021
[212] Ward, Peter, interview with the author, 15th December 2020
[213] WAC Films 11 12 SBC Minutes 1972 – 1982 SBC Minutes 12th October 1978
[214] WAC Films 11 12 SBC Minutes 1972 – 1982 SBC Minutes 12th October 1978

results were predictable.[215] SBC chairman Harry Judge wrote to the BBC chairman Michael Swann, who replied in sympathy:

> Many will now believe, and I shall not find it easy to dissuade them, that the Managing Director Radio has taken advantage of financial problems to achieve an objective to which he was already assertively committed… I do not believe that the current management is distinguished by its sympathy to the cause of educational broadcasting.

Ultimately, the SBC found, schools bought the time switches and adjusted as they were forced, to the practice of night time recording.

Singer had been careful to make his justification in terms of listener demand - but for SR producers, it was a process of attrition borne of the contempt that the rest of the BBC felt for school radio, and jealousy of its resources and airtime. The SR audience was schoolchildren, who could not defend their own interests, and whom Singer was apparently willing to de-prioritise.

School radio was finally moved to Radio 5 in 1988, but this development falls out the period of this thesis. Each change to the scheduling of school radio was accompanied by an assurance to the SBC and the department that it reflected no change in the commitment of the BBC to educational broadcasting. In retrospect, this was untrue: school radio was a diminishing priority.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the issue of the production of programmes, with regard to personnel, the position of BBC Schools within the rest of the BBC, and the developing policy on scheduling, between the early 1960s and the late 1980s.

From 1957, there was an expansion in the power and remit of educational broadcasting, reflected in the creation of the controllership in 1963, and the apogee of this position under John Scupham. The role then moved away from centrality to the BBC command structure. Producers had great freedom but a corresponding lack of support. Producers were increasingly professionalized as broadcasters rather than educationists. BBC Schools differed from the rest of the BBC in its audience and aims. Yet for matters of production it was largely treated the same way, sharing resources and airtime. Schools drifted away from prioritisation within the BBC's overall strategy over the extended period. This was reflected in developments in scheduling and resource allocation, particularly to the detriment of School Radio.

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[215] WAC Films 17, 13, 14 SBC Business Committee Minutes 27th November 1981

Chapter 6

<u>BBC School Publications</u>

Publications, including books, periodicals and other printed material, had been part of the BBC since the 1920s. By the early 1970s they were a strong and growing part of its output. The largest part of this was school publications. Publications accompanied most school broadcasts, but unlike them, had to be paid for by schools. This chapter examines school publications between the 1960s and mid-1980s.

I shall first look at BBC publications in general, before giving an overview of school publications, including the stages of production; finance, commissioning, editorial and production, printing and distribution and usage in schools. It is easiest to look at this system in the context of changes and problems, beginning with the expansion of the output of publications in the mid-1960s, as it was only in such contexts that procedures were properly documented. After that I will examine financial problems of the early 1970s onwards which resulted in a major reduction in output. Following this will be an explanation of the licensing of publishing, sales and distribution to commercial firms. Lastly I will look at the run-up to the merging of BBC Publications with BBC Enterprises and the consequences of its jurisdiction over school publications, particularly their being put on a commercial footing – a comprehensive change to their original principles.

BBC Publications in General

The BBC was a relatively large publisher. Its publishing, sales and distribution was handled by a department called Publications. There were many differences between the BBC and normal publishing firms. Commercial publishing houses like Penguin, newspaper groups such as The Times, and periodical groups such as IPC normally owned and controlled the entire publishing process from editorial to printing and distribution. As a broadcaster, the BBC owned and maintained transmitters across the UK, but for its publishing activity, actual printing was tendered to outside firms. In some cases BBC publications were authored by permanent staff whereas most authors for large publishers were freelance.[216]

BBC publications were not covered by the licence fee; they were sold more or less commercially. The BBC was covered from objections to this additional income generation by the terms of its charter, which defined as one of the objects of the Corporation: "To compile and prepare, print, publish, issue, circulate and distribute, with or without charge, such papers, magazines, periodicals, books, circulars and other matter as may be conducive to any of the objects of the Corporation"[217] since the first charter of 1927 and remained in place virtually unchanged in the charter of 1981. It was interpreted as meaning that what the BBC published

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[216] Some schools producer had earlier careers in publishing, such as Rhoda Power (Murphy 2016: 135) and Pat Farrington (interview with the author, 30th April 2019).

[217] BBC Charters 1927, 1964, 1981.

should "stem from or be related to BBC broadcasting" and "be made available to the largest number of people at the lowest economic price consistent with a reasonable financial return."[218]

There were three basic types of BBC publication; periodicals, general books and school publications.[219] They were "a valuable source of supplementary income" by 1973 (except *The Listener*, which often lost money).[220] Sales of the *Radio Times* were enormous and it had exceptionally strong advertising sales in addition. The general book sales growth was encouraging. By far the most widely read was the *Radio Times*, a weekly digest of radio and television schedules, with articles on programming related topics. The BBC's other periodical was *The Listener*, which was created to provide radio talks in printed form but developed into a general highbrow periodical. Both had dedicated editorial staffs within Publications. They were typically sold in newsagents. *The Radio Times* was the largest selling weekly periodical in the country, with all-time record sales of 9.7m for the Christmas 1955 issue, and an estimated readership second only the *News of the World*. By the late 1960s this had settled around 4m per week. *The Listener* had net sales in 1963 of around 90,000 per week. [221]

'General' books were those related to particular broadcast series. They were not numerous but grew in importance during the 1960s. They were sold in bookshops. Alongside them were CE (Continuing Education) books, which were different to general books in that they were considered integral to broadcasts (like Schools publications) but looked similar to general books and were sold the same way. General books could be written a number of different ways, including by their corresponding series' teams or its presenter. Books attached to successful series could be big sellers, including *Civilisation* (1969) and *Life on Earth* (1979). In 1969, the *Blue Peter Annual* was "probably the biggest selling children's annual."[222] General books benefited from what was in effect a nationwide hour long weekly advertising slot, somewhat to commercial publisher's chagrin (Mumby and Norrie 1982: 142).

School Publications: An Overview of Production and Sales

The other part of BBC's publishing output was school publications. It was realised early on in the history of school broadcasting that it would be more effective if accompanied by teachers' notes (TNs) and pupils' pamphlets (PPs). School publications were commissioned by the SBC. Editorial and production was mainly by the producers of their attached series, sometimes in collaboration with programme advisers. Picture research was by producers in collaboration with Publications. Illustration was always farmed out to freelancers, as was writing occasionally. For publishing and distribution Publications had an Assistant in-Chief, Educational Publications Editorial,[223] who managed a number of production assistants. Registered schools were sent an order form with the annual programme each March which was the BBC's main instrument of publicity. This listed the schedules for the coming year and what

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[218] WAC R78/525/1 Report to the GAC, 30th August 1973
[219] Excluding annual reports, publicity and research outputs.
[220] WAC R78/525/1 Report to the GAC, 30th August 1973
[221] WAC R78/525/1 History of BBC Publications 18th June 1964
[222] WAC R78/525/1 Publications Management Report to June 1970.
The UK had a long tradition of hardback children's annuals (Cave and Ayad 2017: 244-5).
[223] WAC R78/525/1 Publications management: Organisation and management structure 3rd June 1971

publications were available. Once this had been returned, distribution was thrice yearly (once per school term).

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to attempt a formal analysis of the publications but it is necessary to explain roughly what they were like. It is difficult to convey their look and feel, just as it is for the programmes. They had aesthetic quality in their own right. TNs were mostly text only. They contained a guide to the series and suggestions for further work. There was great formal variation in PPs, for reasons including age group, subject matter and authorship. PPs were usually extensively illustrated with photographs, drawings and maps. There was a change over the course of the 1960s towards more use of colour. There was also variation in length, from roughly ten pages for the shortest, to the longest (known to the author) of 64 pages.[224] They could rival or surpass school books that were produced by commercial publishers in length, quality and depth of content.

No school publications were produced during The Second World War. This caused an improvement in programme technique as producers could no longer rely on publications to carry some of the weight of explanation that should properly be in broadcasts (Bailey 1957: 39). After the war publications fell back into their indispensable supporting role. It was not until later in the 1970s when this indispensability was seriously questioned again.

Production and sales can be measured by the number of separate publications and the number sold (see Appendix A). Figures are difficult to compile because of discrepancies between sources, but it can be said that growth accompanied general growth in output during the 1950s and early 1960s. There was a disproportionate growth in number of separate publications relative to number of separate series from 1960 onwards and possibly earlier. In 1960/61, 88 different PPs were produced (and an unknown number of different TNs). By 1964/65 the figure was between 131 and 143. In that year, the total number of different publications produced was 390. By 1972/73, the total number reached a peak of between 595 and 679. In the same period, the number of separate series was around 75 in 1960/61, rising to 107 in 1964/65, and 119 in 1972/73. The reason that the number of different publications is far higher than the number of different series is that a single series could potentially generate six publications; one TN and one PP for each of the three school terms, and occasional extra publications. The reason for the increase in the number of different publications relative to the number of different series is the increasing tendency of the SBC to recommend publications for new series and to add publications to series that had not previously had them.

The TN was bought as a single item per class. The PP was bought in multiple copies. The increase in the number of different publications was not matched by numbers sold, which increased from 10.02m in 1960/61 to a high of 12.84m in 1965/66 but then declined to 11.44m in 1972/73. The absolute volume of sales is significant by any measure, though there were great variations between the different items. In 1966/67 the pamphlets for one of the most popular primary series, *Nature.* were reported to have sold just over 1 million copies (including all of the three terms).[225] Some figures are available for commercial educational publishers but are

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[224] *Speak* 1970-71, BBC 1970
[225] WAC R103/271/1 The Ordering and Use of School Publications as Related to BBC Policies Kenneth Bailey 3rd December 1970

not directly comparable.[226] BBC school publications are difficult to compare with many commercial publications in value or price due to conceptual differences. In 1955 the Educational Publishers Council believed they "sold between £33m and £34m worth of books to schools in 1955, including children's books and text books, encyclopaedias etc." BBC Schools' turnover of £1.5m represented 4% of this.[227]

Despite dramatic fall in sales from the mid-1970s, some items remained very popular. Throughout the period, the number sold to primary schools was vastly higher than that to secondary despite the fact that there were slightly more titles available for secondary.[228] The autumn 1981 term of *Time and Tune* sold 333,000 copies.[229] In 1970 the equivalent figure had been 528,790 (and 1.66m for all three terms in 1971-2).[230] [231]

Finance

The imperatives on the production of schools publications were educational, not profit seeking. Recommendations by the SBC for publications were restricted only by what the BBC and schools could afford. The department aimed to strike a balance between publications that were low cost, but accurate, up to date and well designed. Until 1965, TNs were provided for free. The 1960s saw rapid growth in the number of different publications. Assistant general manager of publications Maurice Webb reported in 1965 that "Costs of production and distribution are rising, the number and variety of publications is, of course, increasing very substantially, overhead costs are increasing…"[232] Pressures on costs came internally, from the expansion of the service, and externally, from the demands of the wider educational and economic environment. Another tendency which increased costs was for more elaborate illustrations, graphics and colour, and more content.[233] This led to the decision that from 1965 there would be a charge for TNs[234]. Subsequently both TNs and PPs were paid for. All publications were sold at the same price, adjusted each year. The production budget was drawn from the School Publications Trading Account, and aimed to break even at first over 1 year, and after 1972 over 5 years. Therefore items that had low sales were subsidised by popular, profitable items. All the national regional schools publications, (those for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales) made losses. Cover price for a particular item had no relation to its cost of production or estimated revenue.[235]

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[226] For example OUP, an exclusively educational publisher, published 850 new titles a year c1970, but also handled 600-700 titles originated by other university presses (Mumby 1982: 144). In 1968 there were 650 books published with the Longman imprint, 538 by Macmillan and 450 by Penguin (Briggs 2009: 451).

[227] WAC R103/270/1 Schools' Expenditure on BBC Publications as Percentage of their Expenditure on Books etc. Barbara Crispin. 11th October 1976.

[228] WAC R103/271/1, The Ordering and Use of School Publications as Related to SBC Policies SEO Kenneth Bailey 3rd December 1970.

[229] WAC R99/95/1 BBC School Publications. July 1981.

[230] WAC R102/225/1 Publications Statistics: Autumn Term 1970. 29th January 1971.

[231] WAC R103/271/1 Accompanying Publications: Future Policy: Relevant Statistics. Barbara Crispin. 18th April 1974.

[232] WAC R103/271/1 Schools' Right to Keep Tapes of Radiovision Programmes, Maurice Webb 21st July 1965

[233] WAC R103/271/1 Memorandum on publications accompanying school broadcasts 20th November 1964

[234] WAC R103/167/1 Board of Governors Minute 973 1964

[235] WAC R16/693/1 Report of Study Group 1972

A 1972 SBC Steering Committee report recommended that the Schools Publications Trading Account be balanced over 5 years rather than 1, which would allow for more flexibility in planning, and that all publications be produced to a standard page size and orientation. The report also recommended a high priority on negotiating off-air recording rights and to find a way of selling their back catalogue, neither of which was within the SBC's control and came largely to nothing.

Commissioning

Publications were commissioned by the SBC at the same time as the series they accompanied. No publications were commissioned that did not accompany a broadcast series. By the 1970s almost all series were commissioned with TNs and most with PPs. Series which had no PP were usually so for an obvious reason - such as *Music and Movement*, which involved children listening while moving. If a PP was commissioned, it was classified 'desirable' or 'essential' and marked as such in the annual programme. A 'desirable' classification was an instruction to the producer to design the broadcast so that it could potentially be used standalone. An 'essential' classification meant that the two be designed to be integral to each other. Usually PPs were classified 'essential'.

Editorial and Production

The procedure for producing publications was tied to the SBC's commissioning procedure and the school year. For example an SBC sub-committee could approve a programme proposal in February, initiating the production process. In July producers would be told their publications' pagination, and could start work in earnest. However the series would not be broadcast until the following school year. At the earliest this would mean the following August (in the next calendar year), but for the spring and summer terms, not until the calendar year after that – two years after work had begun. The annual programme and order form was sent to schools in March. It covered the whole school year, whose three terms began in August, January and April. Therefore series which were broadcast in the summer term would have been commissioned over two years previously and been in production for 22 months at least.

Little more can be generalised about the production of publications beyond this schedule. According to a department report from 1972, "how publications ideas arise, are brought forward, evaluated and subsequently dealt with… (was) … as varied as the publications themselves." Once a publication had been approved by the SBC, "The finer details of a publication (were) almost entirely in the hands of the producer." Furthermore, "Virtually no routines are applied in coming to decisions about publications: each one is considered individually. In many cases thinking will continue up to the deadlines set by planning and production – and even beyond." [236]

The producer was at the centre of the system of producing publications and it took expert and meticulous work. Paddy Becheley, a producer of English programmes on SR, gave careful

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[236] WAC R16/693/1 A Preliminary Paper by SBD Tel 1972

instructions to illustrators and was prepared to reject their work if it was not to her standards.[237] Yet producers were given no set procedure on how to do this and there was a perception that it was considered as "extra to producers' real job" of broadcast making.[238] They were assigned a design assistant, from Publications, but they came in relatively late in the process. In cases of continuing series, the producer had a precedent to work from but for brand new publications the workload was formidable. In the late 1970s it was still the case that publications were written "in producers' spare time".[239] Producers spent between 3.4% and 16% of their time on publications.[240] The system was uncoordinated: "…Individual producers would negotiate with BBC publications rather than the department overall. Everything was done on a project basis."[241]

Senior department staff wondered whether it would be better to have all aspects of school publishing within the department. Radio producer Charles Armour expressed this opinion in 1965,[242] and HSBR Norman Williams later claimed "the satisfactory development of school radio requires in house publications staff… there has never been sufficient or sufficiently stable staff in the relevant Publications unit."[243] Ivan Gilman, chief assistant to CEB, commented on how impressed he had been by the Swedish educational broadcaster, where "publications assistants (are) regarded as an integral part of the production team from the beginning."[244] The consultants Mckinsey, who produced the report *Broadcasting in the 70s* observed in 1970 that educational publications could be improved. The DG Curran commissioned a report on the matter. This concluded that separating school publications from Publications and putting it under the jurisdiction of CEB would not mean greater efficiency and economy, unless Schools was given greater powers and resources – but these were not on offer.[245]

The demands of new educational methods and resources had obliged the BBC Schools to improve and expand – but the BBC was not really set up for an extensive publications operation. HSBTel reckoned that the system was invented when broadcasts were "a memorable intervention, and publications a little extra to go with them", but now "Concepts of education, and the role of broadcasts in education have all changed a lot…"[246] while this system had remained the same. No significant reforms were made at this stage.[247]

Printing and Distribution

The distribution process was precarious and tightly scheduled. The annual programme with the order form for publications was sent to schools in March. In 1971 the total number of schools

[237] WAC R16/1322/1 Paddy Becheley to Mr. Burrows 11th August 1971
[238] Howarth, Mike, interview with the author, 7th June 2019.
[239] WAC R103/305/1 Report on English and Reading in the Primary School Claire Chovil 5th April 1976
[240] WAC R103/271/1 Amount of Staff Time spent of Publications 29th April 1972.
[241] Prescott Thomas, John, interview with the author 15th March 2019
[242] WAC R103/271/1 Planning and Timing of Publications Charles Armour 26th November 1965
[243] WAC R103/271/1 Publications Norman Lloyd Williams 5th September 1968
[244] WAC R103/271/1 Relations between Publications and School Broadcasting Staff Ivan Gilman 7th October 1968
[245] WAC R78/2856/1 Educational Publications A report by Donald Hodson 21st December 1970.
[246] WAC R16/693/1 A Preliminary Paper by SBD Tel 1972
[247] WAC R78/2856/1 Curran to Hodson 13th January 1971.

sent the programme was 33,000. Schools were expected to have returned the order forms by the beginning of June so that Publications could finalise the print order. Late orders were common. Subsequently 60 or 70 printing firms were subcontracted to produce roughly 12 million copies of roughly 600 different titles. These had to be packed and despatched in three seven to eight week periods to reach schools in time for the beginning of each term. [248] This was a tight time schedule with many potential hazards. A series of supply mishaps led to late deliveries in 1972 and complaints from schools.[249] Those series that had publications usually had multiple separate publications. This entailed a large total number of relatively small items whose longevity was limited to the duration of the broadcast series and its repeats. The system of distribution of broadcasts – through transmission on strict schedules – governed the distribution of publications. Apart from repeats, if a scheduled broadcast was missed, the publication's value diminished. This elaborate and difficult system was unique to school broadcasting.

School publications had some other curious characteristics that affected distribution. BBC Schools had no specialists in publishing, nor did it have separate finances for different spending areas. A notable absence was in the area of publicity, promotion and information. This made it hard to communicate properly with users. Officially the department produced only TNs, PPs, and the annual programme. Other items such as notices of content, feedback, instructions, letters to heads of schools, termly briefing letters to teachers, thankyou letters etc., which Grattan called "underground literature." [250], were necessary for a well-functioning service. HSBTel, Geoffrey Hall commented that:

> We do face a communications problem - it's almost a psychological problem – in overcoming our perceived 'remoteness'… The teacher has a right to a contact with the producers of schools programmes – because he is not just going to view the programmes, he is going to use them! In the British educational system we have to carry information about our output to every individual teacher, and persuade every individual teacher.[251]

The lack of proper information and promotion meant that TNs were often the only channel of communication between producer and teacher.

Usage in Schools

The 1960s had seen great increases in usage of materials of all kinds in schools. Between 1957/58 and 1963/64 expenditure on books, stationary and materials had increased across all schools on average 38.4% and spending on school books had increased an average of 15%.[252] Expenditure on education by central government was increasing as a proportion of GDP

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[248] WAC R78/2856/1 Educational Publications A report by Donald Hodson 21st December 1970.

[249] WAC R98/4 SBC Minutes 12th October 1972

[250] WAC R99/146/1 Print Support Material for Educational Broadcasting Projects Donald Grattan 20th December 1974

[251] WAC R99/146/1 Ad Hoc Publications: School Television Geoffrey Hall 16th January 1975

[252] WAC R103/271/1 School Publications 1966/67 J. Mcknight 15th November 1965

(Simon 1991: 599).[253] Scupham later recalled; "The operation was wonderfully straightforward. That is to say the local education authorities had enough money."[254] It seems likely that the ensuing atmosphere of relative plenty caused some laxity in production. The SBC's chief researcher, Elaine Mee judged in 1965 that the term 'necessary' was very loosely applied.[255] All educational imperatives tended towards more production and more elaboration.

The BBC had a reputation for expertise and its publications were regarded as cheap and high quality. However the best commercially available products were on an equal footing in this regard.[256] To schools deciding where to spend money, the two were in competition, and school publications had drawbacks. The restrictions on off-air recording gave publications limited shelf-life. Education officers found that "the tendency is to regard pamphlets as consumable", and PPs were even sometimes given to pupils or cut up at the end of the year.[257] Teachers expected school books to last 5-6 years (Educational Publisher's Council 1969: 11). Therefore it seems school publications were regarded as relative luxuries of little lasting value, not long term investments. Increased numbers of 'essential' publications did not suit schools with smaller budgets as they increased the cost of using broadcasts, while reducing flexibility. These factors meant that the demand for publications was strong, but elastic - vulnerable to cutbacks in schools' spending.

The Crisis in School Publications

Two developments caused big falls in both production and sales. Firstly there was a world-wide paper shortage in 1974, sharply increasing the cost of printing. A shortage in world-wide paper supply had been impending for some time due to rising demand. The average cost of paper doubled between 1973 and 1976.[258] The effects were far more serious on organisations whose core business was print sales. Penguin axed its educational division, which had only recently been founded.[259] Some educational publishers such as Longman, had a useful refuge – the booming overseas trade (Pederson 2019), which the BBC could not enter.[260] Secondly, inflation affected purchasing power and costs. UK inflation spiked between 1973 and 1977 and again in 1978 to well above its 1960s levels (Floud Humphries and Johnson 2008: 460). To some extent the BBC was well placed to weather inflation because it did not rely on sales for its income (except for its publications: the *Radio Times* and the *Listener* had their prices increased by 1/3)[261]. But the licence fee, which was normally fixed for ten year periods, quickly declined in value (Seaton 2015: 33-36).

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[253] Though it still lagged behind other developed nations. (Educational Publisher's Council 1969)

[254] WAC, R143/112/1 Scupham, John; Cain, John, Interviewer, 24 October 1984.

[255] WAC R103/271/1 Pamphlets Elaine Mee 1965

[256] WAC R16/693/1 Report of Study Group 30th June 1972

[257] WAC R103/271/1 The Ordering and Use of School Publications as Related to BBC Policies Kenneth Bailey 3rd December 1970

[258] WAC R103/270/1 BBC School Publications. January 1977.

[259] This was also related to its merger and rationalisation with Pearson, who had also recently acquired Longman with its successful educational publishing line (Briggs 2008: 450). Penguin educational books had been largely unprofitable since their foundation in 1969 despite high quality and innovation (Farrington, Pat, interview with the author, 30th April 2019).

[260] The Chief Executive of Longman received the Queen's Award for Export Achievement in 1979, a time when BBC school publications were in deep crisis (Briggs 2008: 509).

[261] WAC R78/525/1 Publications Profits John Holmes 20th August 1974

Schools were also badly affected and in 1974 reported shortages of exercise books and paper towels. [262] In response to a suggestion that the BBC ought to defer increasing the price of Schools publications in order to benefit cash-strapped schools, the Director of Finance Paul Hughes commented that he saw "no compelling reason to subsidise Local Education Authorities…"[263] By 1975 there had been losses in the School Publications Trading Account in the previous three school years and it was forecast to be £0.6m in deficit over 1975/76 if production continued at the present rate. The department and SBC decided to make a dramatic cut in output. 26 radio TNs and 7 TV TNs were cut, along with 50 radio PPs and 25 TV PPs. 28 publications were rationalised by combining TN and PP. Prices were increased by 75%.[264] For the first time since the war, the output of BBC Schools contracted. There was a dramatic drop in sales: from just under 9m items to 5.7m.

Problems continued in the School Publications Trading Account. The 1980/81 year saw a loss of £157,000. An SBC steering group set up to look at the problems reported that the BBC had cut its expenditure on publications by 50% in real terms over the previous ten years, but still financial considerations meant the department was "facing the total collapse of schools publications within two years"[265] unless savings could be made or income increased. "The economic climate" was still identified as "the overriding factor causing our difficulties."[266] rather than internal weaknesses in the system.

Government expenditure on education began to fall from a high of 6.3% of GDP in 1975/6 to 4.9% in 1986/7 (Simon 1991: 601). Gradually falling school rolls meant falling demand for publications. The number of pupils in state schools fell from a high of 8,983,870 in 1976 to 7,133,151 in 1988 in England and Wales. (Simon 1991: 576-590). Policies of the Conservative Government after 1979 meant that severe cuts were approaching to the budgets of LEAs (Simon 1991: 479). Schools by 1981 had less money for buying publications than in the past and the situation was likely to get worse. Therefore BBC Schools had little prospect of increased income. Many items were still sold at a loss, but even for the popular items, it seemed that "if our goods are not seen as essential (as alas frequently appears to be the case), the teachers won't buy."[267] There was a 'ceiling' of the expenditure that schools were prepared to make – if the loss making items were increased in price, schools would buy fewer.

One way of saving money was to change the style of publications. A 1980 report questioned the need for high quality: "One must ask whether such excellence (for excellence it is) is really needed. Perhaps a much more standard routine type of output is needed as in France, Germany and Sweden." Straightforward text-based publications were much cheaper to produce than ones with maps, pictures, and multi-colour. The SBC was unwilling to sanction such a policy and teachers had always been clear that publications should "maintain their traditional quantity and quality."[268] It was still the case that making publications was detailed and complicated and that

[262] *Times Educational Supplement* 14th November 1974
[263] WAC R78/525/1 Publications Profits John Holmes 13th August 1974
[264] WAC R103/270/1 School Publications Barbara Crispin 11th October 1976.
[265] WAC R103/167/1 School Radio in the 80s Raymond Escoffey March 1980
[266] WAC R103/136/1 Report of School Publications Steering Group 12th March 1981
[267] WAC R103/136/1 Report of School Publications Steering Group 12th March 1981
[268] WAC R78/2856/1 John Robson January 1977

deadlines were not rigidly enforced. The publications division had repeatedly been unwilling to appoint editorial support beyond its system of assistants.

The simplest way to address the deficit was to drastically reduce the number of separate publications. In 1980 Michael Tree, deputy manager of Publications called for a "radical re-think now rather than wait for the dying fall" by reducing the output to the most profitable items. Tree suggested that this would include abandoning or reducing all STV publications, most of which lost money, retaining only a few SR publications, and targeting materials for the upcoming GCE qualification.[269] Rather than face reductions, recently appointed HSBR Chovil negotiated a corporate sponsorship deal with National Westminster bank, according to which they would offer £100,000 a year in return for a printed sponsorship credit.[270] Chovil pressed forward with the plan despite Grattan's misgivings,[271] and got as far as an agreement of terms, only for the Board of Governors to block it at the last minute, because although "the proposal was legally permissible, it sailed too close to the wind as far as the BBC's own policies towards sponsorship were concerned."[272] Several members of the department suggested creative solutions. John Chapple, a producer, suggested an "Educational Radio Times", basically a huge combined TN.[273] This and other ideas foundered partly on the predictable opposition of the other parts of the BBC or the simple weight of inertia in a system that was by then decades old.

Licensing to Commercial Publishers

A sensible plan from a commercial point of view was to move this loss-making operation out of the BBC. A 1980 steering group report suggested licensing production to commercial educational publishers, to take advantage of their superior marketing and sales operations. In some individual cases during the 1970s this had already occurred, such as the foreign language STV programmes of the 1970s:

> …BBC publications couldn't afford it…there were often slight tensions on that…We wanted to do things like this ('modular' pamphlets), and BBC Publications would say "I'm sorry but we just don't believe it's credible. Because there's a limited amount of money that schools have to spend, we think that we're doing as much as we can, it's serving the programmes perfectly well," which it was. Whereas EJ Arnold and Longmans were able to take a commercial risk[274]

The BBC attracted commercial publishers due to its reach and popularity. The BBC could gain from the extra investment but were wary of losing out from such deals. Tree wrote to Chovil to complain;

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[269] WAC R103/169/1 Future of School Publications Michael Tree 29th February 1980

[270] WAC R78/4202/1 Chovil to Green 1st October 1981

[271] WAC R78/4202/1 Grattan to John Cain, undated

[272] WAC R78/4202/1 Singer to Green, 7th January 1982

[273] WAC R103/270/1 Publications 1982-3 Onwards John Chapple 5th December 1980

[274] Prescott Thomas, John, interview with the author 15th March 2019

> I was quite astonished to discover that you have apparently done a deal without our agreement to give Longman 27 filmstrips in 1984/85... you have now put us in a position where an outside publisher is creaming off new material from the Schools trading account.[275]

Chovil replied that she expected "to be able to have discussion with a publisher and arrive at an agreed list without harassment and recrimination."[276] Such cases show how uncomfortably jurisdiction over editorial, sales and distribution sat between Schools and Publications.

Publications Merges with Enterprises

BBC Publications was merged with BBC Enterprises in 1986. The expansion in power and remit of Enterprises was part of a drive led by Michael Checkland in response to pressure on the BBC to be seen to make the most of its resources (Seaton 2015: 49-51). In the commercial sector even impeccably academic educational publishers like Cambridge University Press had developed professionalised modern businesses. The BBC attempted to copy this model. Enterprises fundamentally changed school publications by abandoning the break-even principle. The budget for Schools publicity, including the annual programme, was a hole in the School Publications Trading Account which Publications had always refused to cover. Enterprises agreed to, but insisted on changes in return. James Arnold-Baker wrote

> We expect all Schools' publishing to make a profit – and our agreement to increase investment must be seen in that light. The former break-even position is not sustainable if we are to generate funds for re-investment into programmes, and compete effectively with profit-making companies such as Longmans.[277]

Robert Seatter, a newcomer from Oxford University Press, was baffled by what he found in BBC Education. At his interview "They gave me a piece of publicity to look at and asked how I would change it. It was brown I remember. And I said 'well I'd never print it in brown.'"[278] Seatter began printing the annual programme in colour. Arnold-Baker recommended reviewing "the many small and unprofitable leaflets which are really information, not saleable products..." and that the ""nice to have" category should be dropped altogether."

CEB Eurfron Gwynne Jones, sensing an imminent diminution in Schools' power, fought back, arguing "the policy decisions of what we should do educationally must rest with the departments and myself... this "core" part of our work cannot be made a commercial decision within Enterprises."[279] Ken Wright, Finance Director of Enterprises refused: "Otherwise there would have been no logic in this piece of business moving to Enterprises."[280] The implications were significant. It was predicted that "the pressure for profit will push out individually

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[275] WAC R103/139/1 Tree to Chovil 1st November 1983
[276] WAC R103/139/1 Chovil to Tree 11th November 1983
[277] WAC R78/4213/1 Television Investment James Arnold Baker School 17th August 1988
[278] Seatter Robert, interview with the author 16th December 2019
[279] WAC R78/4213/1 School Television Investment Eurfron Gwynne Jones 1st September 1988
[280] WAC R78/4213/1 Schools Trading Ken Wright 10th August 1988

unprofitable items from the Schools list and will therefore decimate ½ to 1/3 of it."[281] Even for the items which sold well there was no immediate prospect of good profits as there had been a steady decline in all domestic educational sales in the previous few years.

Enterprises intended school publications to compete in the commercial book trade. The trade had two relevant sections – general (or 'trade') books and educational books. There was a clear difference in booksellers' practices (for example bookshop shelving plans), publisher's marketing and sales operations, and public perceptions, between the educational market and the trade market (though schools did also buy trade books for their libraries). The general public perceived any books marked as 'educational' as being exclusively for use in schools and colleges etc. However according to a BBC source:

> The brilliance of (BBC) CE publishing (and the envy of many of its competitors in educational publishing) over the immediate past years has been that it has moved from being recognisably educational and therefore "good for you" and "just like school" to being indistinguishable from any other well produced, interesting and enjoyable book – this has of course reflected the same sort of moves in broadcast output.

The author is referring to the great success titles like *Delia Smith's Cookery Course*, which was a 30 part CE series with 3 books of which the first sold nearly 200,000 copies.[282] The series had entered the national consciousness at a general cultural, rather than a strictly educational level. The source recommended that school publications attempt to do the same: "… My goal would be to have Schools books indistinguishable from CE or General ones – just a list of attractive, saleable, good books." The BBC was "a valuable brand name in the book trade with a good image" with the Publishers Association and booksellers, and was primed to enter this market successfully.[283]

Educational Publications Manager Nigel Bradley commissioned a report from Sheila Elkin on what the future might hold. Elkin was a writer and editor on books for BBC Children's (Elkin et al 1981). Elkin did not believe that there was a large untapped market for trade books based on schools output. One reason was that adults were largely unaware of school broadcasting and would not purchase its publications through association, as they might the *Blue Peter Annual*. Children were often making their own decisions on what books to buy by the 1980s and would shun anything associated with school.

A few publications did have potential. *Look and Read* and *Words and Pictures* were good prospects as there was a long-standing home market for reading 'primers' (see Chapter 7). These were exceptions. *Watch!*, among the most popular Schools series, was already producing longer books in two different types; 'Project' and 'Workshop', which had been welcomed by schools. Elkin thought they would struggle in the trade market, where there were already many similar books. In the educational book market, teachers wanted publications which would endure for several years' use in classrooms. This meant a flexible 'off-the-shelf'

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[281] WAC R103/170/1 Schools Publishing unsigned and undated, but probably from late 1984/early 1985
[282] WAC R99/165/1 CEB Annual Report to the Board Sheila Innes September 1979
[283] WAC R103/170/1 Schools Publishing unsigned and undated, but probably from late 1984/early 1985.

purchasing system, not "the traditional BBC way of supplying through a schools order form (which was) unique to broadcasting and not really suitable for books with a potential long life." [284]

There was also a deeper issue: the BBC couldn't do what commercial publishers did: "Children's books are a long-term investment for publishers, who build up an author's following over a period of years: an impossibility when the majority of TV-related books are a one-off." The commercial trade also meant a different way of marketing: "It is the specialised sales distribution which gets the results… {but} It would be quite uneconomic for BBC Publications to set up a schools marketing department." Elkin argued that co-publishing worked well in arrangements over BBC Children's paperbacks and recommended long-term arrangements for co-publishing with educational publishers. Editorial work would be the BBC's responsibility, design jointly agreed, and production by the publisher.

Conclusion

School publications and school broadcasting were two parts of a whole. However they sat together incongruously within the BBC: they had very different methods of production, distribution, use, and payment. The production of publications was mismanaged and inefficient. Too much responsibility was in the hands of producers without the oversight or standardisation of procedures which could have kept costs and prices low. However that was arguably also true of broadcast production. As with broadcasts, the overall quality of publications was high. Several drawbacks made publications by far the weaker and more fragile element.

Firstly, publications and were distributed with a cumbersome and precarious method, whereas broadcasts could be received with relative ease. Secondly and most importantly, publications had to be paid for whereas broadcasts were free. The way of financing production, the School Publications Trading account, proved crippling in the long run. In boom years it ticked over well, but when sales contracted, the BBC was left with an unwieldy system and no management competence to reform it. This policy was not common to other educational broadcasters including ITV and France's Radio Television Scolaire, who subsidised their publications through other means without attempting to break even. [285] This raises the question of whether the shortfall in the finance of school publications could have been subsidised with licence fee income. The deficit was tiny compared to the BBC's overall budget and could easily have been met had the will been present.

Three factors intervened. Firstly the deficit emerged in a time of economic difficulties at the BBC and more widely in the UK. A change may have worked earlier, but by the time it was needed there was no appetite for any new financial burdens. Secondly the political climate at the BBC was turning away from its school broadcasting arm, away from a public service-at-any-cost attitude, and towards an accommodation with commercial principles. Thirdly it was fundamentally questionable whether the BBC should be subsidising operations in a commercial

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[284] WAC R103/170/1 Schools/Trade Publications Sheila Elkin November 1985.
[285] WAC R103/136/1 Report of School Publications Steering Group 12th March 1981

market. Unlike in educational broadcasting, in the field of publishing there was no public service regime. The BBC became a large publisher almost incidentally, without a sophisticated commercial operation, and competed there with commercial firms. Arguably this was an untenable position. The move to a profit motive for school publications, under the commercial know-how of BBC Enterprises was inevitable in this sense.

It is worth looking at the issue in some perspective. In significant changes to media ownership from the 1970s onwards, resulting partly from rationalisation in the industry, some commercial firms produced both print and other media, including broadcasters. Conglomerates like News Corporation, which owned the Fox Broadcasting Company, bought publishers Harper & Row and Collins between 1987 and 1989. The corporate governance structure in such cases was quite different to that in the BBC, with each component managed separately, while still allowing for economies of scale overall. By the 1990s, the positive political attitude towards public service media that had allowed the BBC to publish originally, was now reversed.

The issue had a significant effect that was not felt until many years later, in the new media landscape of the internet which emerged during the 1990s. The BBC withdrew its proposal to effectively move its school broadcasting online in 2008, partly due to objections from commercial educational publishers who successfully lobbied the government and the European Commission (Michalis 2012). To return to our initial observations about the BBC in the national education system in Part 1, we can see that the BBC's problems in this regard stemmed from its ambiguous institutional position. BBC was a public broadcaster, not a public publisher. What remit it had to provide education or educational resources applied certainly to broadcasting, but only ambiguously to print or online.

Part 4

School Broadcasting, Progressivism and Literacy

Chapter 7
<u>Literacy Broadcasting in the 1960s</u>

This chapter begins the examination of school broadcasting series specifically for the teaching and learning of literacy. The development of *Look and Read* (*LR*) (1967 – 2004) and *Words and Pictures* (*WP*) (1970 – 95) was a collaboration between the producer Claire Chovil, who wanted a new venture for primary school television, and the consultant Dr Joyce Morris who wanted to use linguistics to transform literacy teaching. The series were important in the history of the dissemination of phonics as a reading teaching method, but also used the powers of television to forge a new pedagogic method which linked reading, writing and speaking. There was a long-standing disagreement among teachers over the proper method for teaching reading and the school radio department followed a different strategy with the series *Listening and Reading*.

I first look at the provision of BBC general English school broadcasting at the beginning of the 1960s. In the next section I look at the context of research into the teaching of reading. I then look in detail at the development of *Look and Read*, *Words and Pictures* and *Listening and Reading*. The series along with their accompanying pamphlets are akin to 'primers', texts designed to aid learning to read. In the following section I will describe the context of research into literacy teaching and other approaches to the application of linguistics to literacy teaching in the 1960s when *LR* was first planned. The different reading-teaching methods that were available in the 1960s, and their associated reading schemes, were the products of different conceptions of linguistics.

English School Broadcasting before *Look and Read*

By the time school television was being developed, BBC school radio broadcasting had many series for use in general English teaching (see table below). These series varied in format but their basis was the adaptation to radio of literature of various kinds, including dramatizations. Sometimes this was specially commissioned and in the lower age ranges it was often traditional or folkloric stories. The amount of 'active' response asked for in the programmes lessened as the target age increased. As all general English series were concerned with language, all could be called literacy series in the broad sense of the term. As we have seen (see Theoretical Framework), the development of literacy is considered by many to be a life-long dynamic process. Most of these series were designed to be flexible as to use and could be used as a

stimulus to reading and writing, but none was designed for the teaching and learning of reading and writing in the narrow sense.

As in other subject areas, there was a transition during the 1950s and 1960s in English school broadcasting, and as can be seen in the table, the main series for each age range was reformed and renamed. These changes were associated with Moira Doolan and Philippa Pearce, who both joined the department in 1947 as programme assistants (producers). Pearce was made Scriptwriter/Producer in 1950. While working at the BBC she became a successful children's author, publishing *Minnow on the Say* in 1955 and *Tom's Midnight Garden* 1958. She left in 1959 to become children's editor at publishers OUP and later André Deutsch. Doolan stayed and was made Chief Assistant School Broadcasting Sound (II) in 1966. She commissioned original work from writers including Seamus Heaney (later Nobel Prize winner) and Ted Hughes (later Poet Laureate), who were then beginning their careers. The BBC was a significant patron of authors and illustrators in school broadcasting as it was in the general service.

Table: English Series on Radio 1947-1970.

Age Range	Series as of 1947	Replaced by	Additions
5-7	*Let's Join in* (1940-1990)		*Poetry Corner* (1966-1996)
7-9	*English for Under-nines* (1939-1951)	*Stories and Rhymes* (1951-1983)	
9-11	*Junior English* (1936-1951)	*Adventures in English* (1951-1965), *Living Language* (1965-1990)	*Prose and Verse Readings* (1949-1966)
11-13	*Senior English I* (1937-1961)	*Listening and Writing* (1961-1981)	
13-15/16	*Senior English II* (1939-1961)	*Books, Plays, Poems* (1961-1990)	*Speak* (1966-1982)

The influence of progressive English pedagogy was visible in the department's general English series. One trend in the 'New English' was towards the importance of self-expression, and took "the lives and experiences of… pupils as material for English lessons." (Hardcastle 2013: 124). It was discussed in the meetings of The London and National Associations for the Teaching of English (LATE/NATE). Innovating English teachers began to see English as having a special importance in offering pupils the tools to explore the world and their relation to it. James Britton, head of the English department at the IOE, was a prominent theorist of creative expression as the basis for English teaching and learning, as were Nancy Martin, Harold and Connie Rosen and Geoffrey Summerfield.

Doolan was part of a network of prominent English educationists and asked Britton and Summerfield to choose poetry, as consultants, for *Adventures in English*. Doolan explained

that (with reference to *Listening and Writing*), she sought to broadcast work chosen for "truth and tension of expression and closeness to the listener's experience, for that shock of recognition that may disturb the listener, and make him search within, and draw out." (Fawdry 1974: 86). Joan Griffiths joined the department in 1965, having been an English and drama teacher at schools including Mayfield, the comprehensive school headed by Margaret Miles. She was a keen member of LATE and had used *Listening and Writing*, which was well regarded at LATE, while she was a teacher. Another LATE member who joined BBC Schools was John Kerry, who went on to produce *Listening and Writing*. Griffiths took over *Living Language* in 1965. She engaged Connie Rosen, whom she had met through LATE, as a consultant.

School Television and the Initial Development of *Look and Read*

When school television began in 1957, English was not among the debut series. However a series of dramatizations of plays and novels for 14-16 year olds called *Drama* was added in 1958 (Wrigley 2018). Educational television of any kind was still relatively new and experimental. By 1960/61 still only 3,389 schools were using television, which was to expand to 30,456 (85%) by 1971/72. By 1962 and the Pilkington Report, it had not yet featured any primary school series; the SBC planned to begin this as soon as possible. One of the first primary school television series was *Merry-Go-Round*, a 'miscellany' series which could feature any subject matter or format. It offered producers a platform to get new ideas to an audience relatively quickly without the pressure of a full commission and was used for experiments such as sex education for primary schools in the later 1960s.[286]

While working temporarily in a primary school in 1962, new STV producer Claire Chovil found that a prominent area of concern was the teaching of readers who were falling behind their peers (SBC 1967, 6). In 1964 Chovil proposed for the next series of *Merry-Go-Round*:

> Four experimental programmes designed to give extra practice to those children who find reading difficult. This is an undertaking with obvious hazards, but we believe it is strongly advisable to use the opportunity presented by the expansion of the series to break completely new ground [287]

The proposal features a description of the kind of televisual methods she was considering;

> Each programme would consist of a simple story which would be told twice. The first time it would be seen in dramatized form. An unseen story teller would narrate, the characters would have occasional lines of dialogue, but much of the action would be mime. The second time through, the story would appear on the screen in written form, accompanied sometimes by stills from the original. In addition, specific words could be shown with the appropriate visual image (where possible), and the resources of television screen could be used to project words in varying sizes, to emphasise words, to make them appear and disappear, and, in short, to do

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[286] WAC R98/12/1 SBC Primary Programme Committee II 27th June 1969
[287] WAC R98/3/18 Proposal for Merry-go-Round 1964-5 SBC.7/64

all that is possible to train the eyes and the memory of those children who find it difficult to apply themselves to reading.

Some of these ideas survived into the production of *LR*. However at that stage a specialist consultant not been sought yet.

Primary sub-committee II responded to Chovil's proposal with reservations. M.V. Daniel, author of the influential book *Activity in the Primary School* thought it seemed like "old-fashioned speech training". Chairman Lincoln Ralphs suggested that she "should take care to keep herself fully informed about progress in the experiments in using the new augmented Roman alphabet",[288] by which he almost certainly meant the 'Initial Teaching Alphabet' (ITA) then being marketed by Sir James Pitman, who was a member of the House of Lords and owner of a publishing firm producing materials using the ITA. ITA was based on a modified English alphabet with a set of alternative graphemes for particular sounds that were inconsistently represented in English spelling. Partly with Pitman's persuasion, the DES agreed to study the ITA and commissioned a report which gave broad approval (Downing: 1968). ITA was the focus of the IOE's Reading Research Unit and was advocated by its leader Dr John Downing (Aldrich 2002: 178). Pitman lobbied the department hard, to Grattan and Postgate's exasperation, [289] but won Scupham and Ralphs' support.[290]

Reading Research in the 1960s and Joyce Morris

Joyce Morris taught in primary schools for ten years, completed a PhD at the IOE and joined the National Foundation of Educational Research (NFER) as a research officer in 1953. The NFER was a body partly funded by LEAs which focused on post-hoc evaluation rather than exploratory research (Annett and Duke, 1970). Morris and led a major research programme and produced a series of reports on the reading ability of school children (Morris 1984a: 5). The NFER report of 1959 contained shocking findings of attainment among seven year olds and was well publicised. 45% had not mastered the mechanics of reading by this age and 19% had barely begun to read at all (Morris 1959).

In the late 1950s there was growing debate over reading teaching methods. In response to suspicions that informal progressive methods were not working, there was a new wave of development in systematic approaches to reading-teaching materials. This included experiments in the modified alphabet of Sir James Pitman (ITA), and Gattegno's 'words in colour.' The foundation of phonics was the idea that reading can be taught and learned through patterns in the correspondence of written letters (graphemes) to sounds (phonemes). Among teachers, at this stage 'phonics' could mean any method which related sound to symbol in a relatively systematic way and there was vagueness over what a phonic approach to reading teaching entailed. But among some educational researchers it was becoming more accepted that recommendations be based on scientifically collected data. An important research

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[288] WAC R98/12/1, SBC Primary Committee II Minutes 7th February 1964.
[289] WAC R16/672/2 Sir James Pitman RS Postgate 23rd January 1969, WAC R16/672/2 Initial Teaching Alphabet, Donald Grattan 8th January 1969
[290] WAC R16/672/1 Initial Teaching Alphabet John Scupham 7th May 1964

contribution in the UK was the 'phonic word' approach of Daniels/Diack. In fact none of these ideas was really new, but with new research and publishing, there was a greater availability of well-designed schemes.

Morris wanted to use empirical research methods to develop a 'scientific' method of teaching reading. In Morris's view "ongoing investigations at the NFER… and experimentation with the initial teaching alphabet… indicated that there was an urgent need for a new kind of phonics based on linguistic scholarship." (1983: 133). Morris began researching phonics in earnest, and was aided and encouraged by Professor DB Fry, Head of the Department of Phonetics and Linguistics at University College London.[291] Fry's specialism was experimental phonetics. His research focused on how speech sounds were identified and discriminated by hearers (Fry 1962). Morris found "there was a system of to sound-symbol correspondence – even though it often seemed very obscure due to what appeared to be many irregularities – which could be abstracted into a learning scheme" (1984b: 13-18). Previous phonics systems and modified alphabet type systems were not based "on all the necessary facts about sound-symbol correspondence and word structure." In the 1960s linguistic research into phonetics (sound systems) and orthography (writing systems) began to provide the relevant information for a modern form of phonics.

The method of phonics devised by Morris, later codified and published as *Phonics 44* (Morris 1984b), involved learning and differentiating a sequence of word families. It began with simple short vowel sounds as in cat, hen, pig, dog, sun etc. and proceeded to more complex and irregular sounds such as oil, food, and so on. It taught a reader to break a word down into its component graphemes, and repeat them in order to utter the word. The strengths of phonics were clear; it was simple to understand and easy to use at the teaching level, it allowed children to make rapid progress, and it was an accurate diagnostic tool. Its weaknesses were that it could be too systematic and inflexible and bore an inorganic relationship with the goals and experience of reading. When translated into reading schemes, phonics tended to result in banal and unnatural sentences and subject matter.

The Development of *Look and Read*

Chovil, with support from Mee, rejected Ralphs' recommendation of ITA and approached Morris in the summer term of 1964. This proved prudent as while ITA was enjoying some success in primary schools, Morris's phonics scheme proved to have far greater longevity.

Morris was just at that moment exceptionally keen to press forward; she had already made a lot of progress in her own research and her involvement with the series afforded an opportunity to expand it further. Morris had a clear goal: "an instant and widespread contribution to the necessary speeding-up of improvements in the national reading situation". The programme would also indirectly "improve the quality of teacher training" by demonstrating phonics methods and "favourably influence children's attitudes to the learning task." (Morris 1971: 126).

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[291] Fry's junior colleague at that time, working separately, was MAK Halliday

In 1965 Morris went on a lecture and study tour of the USA to collect data to use in her proposal for a national reading institute. She also visited educational producers in television networks. She found that their restricted budgets prevented them making the best use of television for reading development, and they "longed for the day when animations and other expensive but more appropriate techniques could be employed."[292] She reported to Chovil that "the BBC series would be a pioneer project in a wider context than we imagined." (Morris 1971: 128).

Elaine Mee participated in research for the production. In her account the role of Morris was crucial:

> …it was natural and fortunate that from the beginning she should have been sought as the consultant advising on the programmes… the planning and content of the programmes were closely responsive to what Dr Morris and other researchers were finding to be necessary. (SBC 1967: 7)

The first experimental unit, *Fishing for Fivers*, was broadcast in spring 1965. Each episode was made up of two segments; a filmed drama serial which ran at either end of each episode, and a 'teaching middle', of studio material with presenters and animations. The SBC commissioned a report which recommended further experiments.[293] SEO Bailey commissioned four EOs to carry out an observation and survey of cooperating teachers and Morris organised her own assessments to test the effects of the intervention. There was considerable interest among schools and Chovil and Morris gained confidence that their design and pedagogic strategy for the programmes had been right. A second experimental unit, *Tom, Pat and Friday,* followed, this time with the important addition of a pupils' pamphlet. The next step was a commission for a full series – this was *Look and Read.*

The first serial in the series, *Bob and Carol Look for Treasure,* was broadcast in the spring term of 1967. The pamphlet for each series comprised one book with ten chapters which told the story of the drama segments. The drama segments were in the style of a normal children's adventure serial, but were also a component of the series' literacy pedagogy. The story was presented in several different forms – through written text, spoken language (these were near identical in the accompanying reading books and the scripts of the programmes) and moving image. The stories and scripts were commissioned with instructions to the authors to use a restricted vocabulary. The authors were allowed to select freely from the most common 200 words encountered by children, plus a selection of special words needed for that particular story (BBC 1967: 3).

In May of 1967 the SBC made *LR* the subject of a bulletin (occasional information documents about the work of the service). There had been a lot of relevant feedback from the EOs and interest in the series had been high, having been well prepared by the experimental units and the previous bulletin. (SBC 1967: Preface). The bulletin made little mention of the term 'phonics' even though it was then current and Morris would presumably have used it. It did mention Morris's role, but mainly in her selecting of vocabulary (SBC 1967: 10-11). This may have been to avoid association with the controversy associated with the method. However any

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[292] Morris's visit predated the Children's Television Workshop development of *Sesame Street*.
[293] WAC R98/12/2 SBC Programme Committee II Minutes 25th June 1965 SBC. 69/65

informed reader would quickly realise that phonics was involved and the teacher's notes were clearly within a phonic framework:

> Sound families were suggested, always arising from the story, e.g. "oa" from "goat", "ee" from feet, "ss" from across. Words with "magic 'e'" ending which "makes the letter say its name", some words with double letters… (etc) were broken up and re-assembled, repeated and re-shown with an ingenious variety of presentation and often with an element of surprise (SBC 1967: 12).

The series was immediately popular and successful and became a fixture, with new productions every two or three years until the early 2000s. An unintended consequence of its popularity was that *LR* was regularly used with whole classes rather than with particular groups as had been intended.[294]

The series was conceived in ambitious terms, but despite its use of the phonics method, its aims did not explicitly include the direct teaching of reading. The aims were as much about motivating children to learn to read. Mee emphasised that the series was for "stimulating an interest in reading among backward pupils and in bringing about (directly or indirectly) an improvement in their reading skill." (SBC 1967: 8). However in effect *LR* did use relatively direct methods in the teaching middles, somewhat in the way that *Sesame Street* did later, with on-screen moving text and animations. The series was designed for the novel and exciting medium of school television, whose possibilities were still very much open, and proved to fulfil these aims extremely well. The other crucial fact about *LR* was that it was not aimed at all children but only lower-achieving readers. This permitted it a smoother passage into the hands of teachers who may not have needed or wanted help with normal cases but were happy for assistance with the more difficult ones.

Look and Read was a bold venture. It contradicted The Beveridge Report on school broadcasting of 1951 which had stated that school broadcasting "will never teach reading and writing in the narrowest sense of those words" (Beveridge 1951.) By the 1960s ambitious and creative producers like Claire Chovil were expanding the possibilities of school broadcasting: "She thought it up. People said 'Oh of course you can't teach reading on the television.' And she said 'Yes you can.' And that was amazing. She was a very brave woman actually."[295]

Words and Pictures

Programme Committee Primary II requested a sister series to *LR* for younger children, which became *Words and Pictures*, approved in November of 1968 and also produced by Chovil with Morris advising. The first series *Up in the Attic* was broadcast in the summer term of 1970. It followed a similar format to *LR* except it used animation instead of live action for the 'drama' segments. For the second series, Chovil engaged Oliver Postgate and Peter Firmin of Smallfilms, who had produced series for BBC Children's (Postgate was also the nephew of CEB Richmond Postgate). The script for the first series, *Sam on Boff's Island,* was written by

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[294] WAC R103/305/1 Primary English and Reading A note to the report Alan Jamieson 11th March 1976
[295] Griffths, Joan, interview with the author 3rd March 2021

Michael Rosen, then a staff trainee, adapted by Smallfilms into a stop-frame animated story and presented by Tony Robinson.[296] Subsequent series of *WP*, produced by Moyra Gambleton, featured a mixture of adapted and commissioned stories with one per episode. The reading sections used a phonics basis and reading from the screen, and had a pamphlet which was more like a workbook than a story book.

Listening and Reading

After these series began on school television, school radio began a reading series with a different ethos. Less can be discerned about its development as it less well documented in the archive. The author interviewed producer Joan Griffiths, who took over the series after it had been set up by Moira Doolan, and was able to relate much of the background. *Listening and Reading* was a set of radio series which originally came in three different levels. *Listening and Reading I* (age 6-7) was for normal readers. *Listening and Reading II*, was for normal readers aged 8 and "older slow or backward readers". *Listening and Reading* III (age 11-13) was only for "slow" readers.[297] The series was Moira Doolan's idea but had to wait until tape recorders were widespread in primary schools because it was designed to be used with small groups.

Doolan aimed to replicate a progressive approach to reading, which she explained in terms which recall the work of Margaret Meek, who was then a teacher in the English department of the IOE:

> The basic idea is that reading, like talking, is something we pick up gradually. We learn to talk against a background of chat, none of which we understand… Reading, I believe, is best picked up in the same way, intuitively, against a background of reading aloud (Doolan 1972: 11).

Doolan's rationale suggests some dissent from the ethos that had led to systematic methods; "education believes that everything must be split up into its component parts and taught piecemeal; letters and words, symbols and concepts. This is a difficult way to learn and a slow way. It separates reading from meaning." (Doolan 1972: 11).

Griffiths also suggests a difference in ethos: "(Moira Doolan) was not looking at the problems with reading: she was looking at the pleasures of reading…Everybody was trying to do clever things with reading and she was trying to do something very very simple with reading." In explaining the rationale behind the series to Griffiths, Doolan said:

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[296]*Sam on Boff's Island* was one of Smallfilms' last stop-frame productions, produced in between now recognised classics of children's television, *The Clangers* and *Bagpuss*. It was through this production that Postgate became aware of the songwriters and performers Sandra Kerr and John Faulkner who he subsequently hired on *Bagpuss* (WAC T16/45/1 undated letter Postgate to Chovil). They may have been suggested by Rosen, who like them was involved with the folk music circle The Critics Group (Rosen 2017: 255). Another stop-motion animating partnership, Bura and Hardwick, famous for the *Trumptonshire* series, was also engaged on a later *Words and Pictures* series, the first series of *You and Me*, and other schools productions such as *Storytime* into the 1980s.

[297] WAC R103/322/2 First Draft of the Bulletin on the Bullock Report's Recommendations in Relation to the BBC's Output and Ideas

How do people who grow up to have pleasure in reading learn to read? Well they learn at their mother's knee or their father's knee… there's a book in front of them and a voice in their ear, a loved voice, tells them the story and there they go. They grow up to be happy readers. And why not reproduce this on radio?

Doolan engaged Pearce, who knew many other children's authors, as a consultant. The format of *Listening and Reading* was simple: each episode featured a narrated story, which children could read along (or later) with the pamphlet. Many stories were specially commissioned, including some by Pearce. "The stories were supposed to be exciting and interesting... (not an) everyday experience of shopping or gardening or something. It was to be something really exciting." Myra Barrs and Sue Ellis, who were in charge of the Centre for Language in Primary Education in London were the consultants later on. However the series was not conceived as a competitor to *LR* and *WP*, The annual programme made clear "The series does not attempt to teach reading techniques, and therefore can be used as a support to any teaching method." (BBC 1974: 20). The stories were not written with any systematic orthological strategy. There were no illustrations and therefore no possibility for 'Look and Say'. They were like real books and Griffiths referred to the series as "a real books series".

Reading-Teaching Methods in the 1960s and 1970s

In some ways, the pamphlets of *LR/WP* and *Listening and Reading* were unusual examples of 'primers' - texts designed as aids to learning to read. They can therefore be compared with notable contemporary examples such as Penguin's *Key Words to Reading*, (Murray 1964), the Schools Council's *Breakthrough to Literacy* (Mackay, Thompson and Schaub, 1970), Macmillan's *Nippers* and *Little Nippers (*Various 1969-1972*)*, and Morris's own *Language in Action,* also published by Macmillan (Morris, 1974). These were 'graded' schemes; sets of books at increasing levels of difficulty.

In 1975 the SBC conducted a survey into the use of reading schemes in primary and middle schools, surveying 482 classes. This found that 'Ladybird', (*Keywords to Reading*), was by far the most popular, being used in 40% of all classes. *Breakthrough to Literacy* was the seventh most popular, being used in 9% of classes. Leila Berg's *Nippers* series was being used in 5% of classes. The Morris designed *Language in Action* was being used in 3% of classes, as was *ITA*.

The survey also looked at the use of the BBC's English and reading programmes. It divided this output into three types; seven 'General English" series,[298] five 'Miscellany series',[299] which included some language content, and five 'Reading series'[300] (SBC 1975). The most

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[298] *Let's Join In* (radio, infants), *Poetry Corner* (radio infants), *Stories and Rhymes* (Radio, age 7-9), *Living Language* (radio, age 9-11), *Web of Language* (radio age 10-12), *Inside Pages* (radio, age 10-12), *Hello! Hello!* (radio, age 8-11).

[299] *You and Me* (TV age 4 and 5), *Playtime* (radio, age 4 and 5), *Watch!* (TV, older infants), *Merry-go-round* (TV, age 7-9) and *Springboard* (radio 7-9).

[300] *Words and Pictures* (TV 6-7), *Listening and Reading I* (radio, older infants), *Listening and Reading II* (radio, age 8), *Look and Read* (TV, age 7-9), *The Electric Company* (TV, age 10-16). While these were produced for

popular series overall was *Watch!* used in 64% of classes within its age range and 40% of all classes. *Merry-go-Round* was being used between 19% and 62% (the figure is unclear due to collecting and reporting methods) of classes in its age range and in 33% overall; *WP* in 40% of classes within its age range (27% overall) and *LR* in between 19 and 45% (25% overall). *Listening and Reading I* and *II* were less popular, being used in 5% and 4% of all classes overall (*III* was not surveyed). Therefore primary school classes had as much or more exposure to some BBC reading series as they did to many of the published schemes. The *LR* pupil's pamphlet sold 307,000 copies in 1972/1973, the first broadcast of the fourth serial[301], though this fell (commensurate with falls in sales of all publications) to 165,000 in 1980/81, the year of the first broadcast of the ninth serial.[302] Their popularity continued. By 1989/90, *WP* was used by 88% of primary schools, with audience of "perhaps two million children and perhaps another 750,000 viewing at home" and 26.2% of all teachers who used school television, (*LR* by 20.8%) (Moses and Croll 1991: 3, 61).

'Look and Say': Ladybird's *Keywords to Reading*

The publishing firm Wills and Hepworth, known popularly by their imprint *Ladybird*, introduced its *Keywords to Reading* scheme in 1964. The authors of *Keywords to Reading* did not explicitly ground their scheme in linguistics in the way that Morris and Mackay, Thomson and Schaub did. Nevertheless the scheme was based informally in a kind of corpus linguistics. William Murray had researched the words most frequently encountered in print by children and published this in the pamphlet *Key Words to Literacy* (Mcnally Murray 1962). Murray subsequently used this research to help Ladybird develop *Keywords to Reading.*[303] The scheme was also based informally in psychology. According to the 'Look and Say' method, children learn how to read by associating printed words with pictures. Gradually they build up a memory of what letters made what sounds based on their familiarity with simple words, elaborated into longer phrases. The method is very old, and can be seen in as the first known primer *Orbis Pictus* (1658). Look and Say was broadly recommended by one of the most widely read works on the pedagogy of reading in the UK in the post-war period, *The Psychology and Teaching of Reading* (Schonell 1945: 44-65).

The books featured the systematic page by page introduction of the most simple, most common 'key words' (Johnson and Alderson 2014: 108) alongside an illustration of the text. The scheme did incorporate some phonic content in the later sets as phonics was thought to be more useful when the process of decoding words with more variant spellings became more difficult.

The limitations of the Look and Say method came when dealing with more complex words and sentences, for two reasons. Firstly, if a child encountered a picture of an object he or she could not identify, the process did not work. Secondly, pictures depicting events often have no single definite interpretation in written language. Therefore a child could never be sure that what they

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different age groups and levels of ability, there was no graded progression. Each was conceived and designed separately.

[301] WAC R99/95/1 BBC School Publications. July 1981.

[302] WAC R103/271/1 Accompanying Publications: Future Policy: Relevant Statistics. Barbara Crispin. 18th April 1974

[303] Murray's later work used by the BBC to limit the vocabulary for *LR* (BBC 1967b: 3).

thought they saw in the picture was the same as what was written down on the page. Both problems were dealt with specifically by phonics. Another limitation of the method was that it necessitated extensive repetition, leading to the somewhat dull character of the primers that might deter young readers at the very point of their introduction to books (Johnson and Alderson 2014: 111). It was possible to approach the principle of repetition creatively, as shown by as Geisel's *The Cat in the Hat* (1957), which was intended as a primer though was not part of a scheme, but arguably this is not true of *Keywords to Reading* which chronicles the very straightforward activities of siblings Peter and Jane.

Sociolinguistics and Functional Linguistics: *Nippers* and *Breakthrough to Literacy*

As the sociology of education and linguistics progressed in the 1960s, others saw a representation problem in schemes such as *Keywords to Reading*. Writer and teacher Leila Berg expressed de-schooling sentiments and saw her books as an antidote to the conformity imposed on children by school.

> …with very few exceptions, the children who exist in books are middle-class children… (working-class children) see no recognition, no reflection of themselves, nothing that tells them they belong in this world; they grow up feeling they have no right to exist… We must write about our children in primary readers as they really are (Berg 1977).

Leila Berg's *Nippers* (and *Little Nippers*) series (1969-72) showed a much broader range of social situations, and language use. *Nippers* was not a reading scheme per se as Berg opposed the idea, but was "broadly graded" (Johnson and Alderson 2014: 106).

A research and development project on the teaching of English in schools known as 'Linguistics and English Teaching' was a contemporary project somewhat in sympathy with Berg's. It was financed first by the Nuffield Foundation and subsequently by the Schools Council and led by Michael Halliday between 1964 and 1970 at the department of General Linguistics, University College London. It resulted in The *Breakthrough to Literacy* reading scheme and associated materials. These also included social themes, but were deliberately and explicitly based in linguistic theory.

The investigating team surveyed the whole school process on the teaching of English from 5 to 18 and sought to deliberately revise look and say and phonics, which Halliday thought were misguided;

> …various techniques, such as vocabulary limitation, whereby the total number of new words that is introduced in each of a series of reading primers is carefully controlled; or the techniques of selecting words, on the basis of their relative frequency, or on the principle of phonic-graphic regularity… (leads to) starting on page one with See Spot Run, Spot, run! … (or) Pick the thick stick off the brick, Chick!'…Such techniques… do not… constitute what I would call a "linguistic approach"…That is to say, they do not derive from any general consideration of

> what language is, of what it means to learn a language, or… what we do with language, as individuals and as social beings. (Halliday 1971: 38)

Halliday provided a foreword to the second collection of Basil Bernstein's work, and saw a clear connection between Bernstein's work and his own.

> What Bernstein's work suggests is that there may be differences in the relative orientation of different social groups towards the various functions of language in given contexts and towards the different areas of meaning that may be explored within a given function. (Bernstein 1973: foreword)

For both Bernstein and Halliday, sociological and political factors were relevant to the linguistics which ought to determine the teaching of reading in schools.

Sets of materials for three different school levels were eventually produced. The early years set, *Breakthrough to Literacy* (1970) featured both a reading-teaching method and a writing-teaching method. The graded reading scheme did not in fact depart obviously from a Look and Say type format, but had a less controlled vocabulary, and realistic social themes. The authors explained that the scheme was:

> related to the life and interests of the five-year-old… relevant to the lives and needs of children… sentences should look and sound natural when read aloud…most of the Breakthrough books are based on conversations with five-year-old children… each story attempts to reveal the child's view of the world. (Mackay Thomson and Schaub 1970: 141-142)

The writing-teaching method involved sets of cards which children could select from and mount on to boards, allowing them to 'write' what they wanted before learning how to write them down. This represented a functional linguistic approach in that their first experience of writing found would be rooted in their own experiential and social worlds, and their desire and ability to perform tasks with language.

Morris also thought that teaching aids ought to be designed by teachers with a sound knowledge of linguistics and she therefore praised *Breakthrough to Literacy*, because it came from a ''linguistics stable'. She judged that the teacher's book was "virtually a textbook on initial literacy." Morris's praise for *Breakthrough to Literacy* may appear slightly surprising given that its method was not phonics based, but a strength of phonics was that it was not all-encompassing. Those with a firm grasp of phonics never promoted it as the only worthwhile reading-teaching method.

The fundamental reason for the difference in the character of the method of reading-teaching materials of *Breakthrough to Literacy*, and those of *LR*, is their expression of different types of linguistics. Phonics was an expression of a kind of practical phonetics, with roots in constructivism, whereas the techniques of Breakthrough to Literacy were an expression of sociolinguistics and functional linguistics.

Phonics and *Look and Read* as a Primer

A limitation of phonics as a reading-teaching method was the style of primers it entailed. Phonics solved the problem of a purely look and say approach, by providing a way of decoding text without the aid of a picture, but replaced it with a new set of problems. Any text specifically designed to demonstrate patterns in orthographic and phonetic regularity would tend to result in a text lacking sense.

Look and Read offered a huge advantage over print-only schemes by offering the literal information in two additional ways: the soundtrack and the moving image. The ability to incorporate the sounds of spoken language made it particularly suited to the use of phonics, a method deriving from the sound of spoken language. With a more detailed, but still wholly comprehensible visual guide, the text could afford to be much more complex. *Look and Read* scripts and books did not have to be written with any phonics bias. The phonics teaching material was extracted from the texts after the fact. The text could include much more complex relations between elements, spatially, temporally etc., and it could be much longer.

Even allowing for the difference in format or mode between television and illustrated book, there is a stark difference between *LR* as a primer and contemporary comparable printed primers. The drama segments of *LR* are in the tradition of children's adventure serial, and in children's fiction. Yet they are also a component of the series' literacy pedagogy. The 'dramatic method' was common in BBC Schools (see Chapter 3), though it was used somewhat differently in *LR*. The drama segments were in effect pure drama rather than drama that illustrated didactic material. The *LR* serials and accompanying books were written by dramatic writers and designed as normal dramas were – with action, characterisation and plot as the motivating elements, and especially with cliff-hanger endings.

During the 1960s the depth, complexity and quality of the BBC's children's drama evolved considerably (Doherty and Mcgown 2003). Television studio techniques and expertise for videotaped drama were steadily improving. Film cameras were more mobile and were normally used for outdoor scenes in television dramas. Film was expensive, but some productions were considered important enough to be shot all on film. The volume of output of the British film industry was declining and many film directors moved into television. London Weekend Television (LWT), the ITV franchise holder for London weekends, hired film industry personnel such as Charles Crichton[304] and Freddie Francis[305] to make their children's drama *The Adventures of Black Beauty* (1971-4), all on colour film, helping make the serial a successful export. One of the writers, Richard Carpenter, who had also written another successful colour film LWT children's drama, *Catweazle* (1969), was hired to write the third *Look and Read* serial, *The Boy from Space* (1971), and two further serials, *Cloudburst* (1973) and *The King's Dragon* (1977). The BBC shot *The Boy from Space* on colour film and kept the film elements (as they had not done for the previous two *LR's*, which are now lost).

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[304] Director of e.g. *Titfield Thunderbolt* (1953),
[305] Cinematographer of e.g. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960)

The Boy from Space departed from the previous two *LR* series by including science fiction, fantasy and horror elements, which some children found frightening.[306] These developing televisual genres were novel in didactic texts of any kind, and outline the novelty of *LR*, and its contrast with *Listening and Reading* which drew its material from contemporary literary writers rather than screen writers. Highly successful as drama, *The Boy from Space* Was judged "the most engaging of the Look and Read series to date, both in story content and the choice of reading devices." and has to date been the only *LR* serial (or Schools production of any sort) to have been re-released on DVD (BFI 2014). Later *LR* serials were written by writers who went on to distinguished careers, notably Andrew Davies, (*Dark Towers 1981*).

Conclusion

Both *Words and Pictures* and *Look and Read* became huge successes for the BBC, popular with teachers and children, and among their longest running series. Several factors led to its success. The department was able to devise an experimental unit and pilot it to large audiences early in its development. This allowed the wide feedback gathered in the research project and relatively rapid development into the finished series. Chovil's close collaboration with Morris brought cutting edge linguistics research into BBC Schools' production. The cultivation of talented scriptwriters and film makers brought real quality to the drama segments. The method solved the problems of phonics primers and made a powerful alternative to print only methods. *LR* is an example of what the BBC could achieve – a ground breaking new method, and a response to a real problem. *Listening and Reading*, though a lesser success, also used the radio medium in an imaginative and constructive way, used the BBC's strength to attract real quality writers, and added another option for teachers looking for a variety of reading development methods.

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[306] Farrington, Pat, interview with the author, 30th April 2019

Chapter 8

<u>Early Years Literacy Series</u>

The next significant development in BBC literacy school broadcasting was a series for the 'early years': an age group including preschool and the first one or two years of school. It was influenced by progressive educational child-centred methods and drew on the new field of sociolinguistics, including Basil Bernstein's theory of restricted and elaborated codes. The literacy elements of the series *You and Me* (1974-1995) aimed to develop "speech and vocabulary" (BBC 1974a: 5), based on the premise that "skills in reading and writing develop from skills in speaking" (BBC 1973), and involved stimulus for discussion, particularly between adults and children. *You and Me* was designed around the same time as *Sesame Street* and shared with it an orientation towards the educationally disadvantaged.

This chapter firstly clarifies the difference between the relationships of *Play School* and *You and Me* to *Sesame Street*. Secondly I set out the political and theoretical background to the beginning of early years literacy broadcasting. I then return to the influence that *Sesame Street* had on the development of *You and Me*. Following this I explain how the sociolinguistics of Basil Bernstein came to influence the development of *You and Me*. Finally I explain the outcome when *You and Me* was broadcast.

Sesame Street and Play School

The BBC series *Play School* (1964 -1988), is sometimes discussed with reference to and in comparison with *Sesame Street* in the historiography of the two series (Bates 1984; Davies 1995; Steemers 2010: 27-32). The assumption of the equivalence *Play School* and *Sesame Street* may have arisen because of the circumstances around the BBC's rejection of the offer to buy *Sesame Street* from the Children's Television Workshop (CTW) in 1970. *Sesame Street* was offered to the BBC through Head of Children's Broadcasting Television Monica Sims, rather than Controller of Educational Broadcasting Richmond Postgate. One reason that Sims gave for her rejection of it was that the BBC already produced sufficient preschool programming, such as *Play School*.[307] The equivalence of the two was thereby implied by Sims, was assumed at the time by commentators, and has since stuck.

However there was in an important difference between the two. *Sesame Street* was intended to be educational television. *Play School* was produced by the BBC's Children's department and was therefore, in the BBC's terms, a children's series not an educational series. *Play School* was a ground-breaking series in many ways, was aware of developmental psychology and included some educative items on topics such as hygiene (Home 1993: 75). However it had no sequential structure or supporting documents and its impact was not supervised and checked,

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[307] 'Viewpoint' *The Times* July 12, 1971

as were thought at the time to be among the defining elements of educational broadcasting (Scupham 1967: 160), and as was the case with *Sesame Street.*

BBC Schools did not produce any preschool educational television in 1970. Were *Sesame Street* to have been accepted and broadcast by the BBC as the educational television it was, it would properly have had to have been approved by the SBC. A potential complication in the case of *Sesame Street* was that it was arguably outside the jurisdiction of the SBC, which had always dealt with broadcasting for use in schools, not preschool. However in the USA where *Sesame Street* originated, the term 'preschool' referred to an age under 6, whereas in the UK children started primary school at 4 or 5. In any case, by the time *Sesame Street* was offered to the BBC in 1970, the BBC and SBC had been planning a distinctively educational series for the preschool stage for four years. The as yet unnamed *You and Me* (1974-1995)[308] was to be aimed at children in the first year of school, those at nurseries and preschool children watching at home.

The Background to Early Years Literacy Broadcasting

There were three strands of influence in the background to early years literacy broadcasting. Firstly the development of government education policy 1967-74 towards early years care and education. Preschool provision had been in the intention of the 1944 Education Act but it had always lagged behind other priorities. Research that showed that inequality of educational outcomes was exacerbated by school and particularly the selective secondary school system, but originated in the earliest years of life. The situation demanded that educational policy towards early years care carry with it some degree of social reform. The Government signalled that state nursery care was to be expanded. The formal expansion of the education system into the preschool coincided with the BBC/SBC's initiative in this area.

Secondly, the influence of progressivism in education. The classic child-centred progressive idea was a gradual extension of experience, guided but not unduly interfered with by adults "in which the child, under the sympathetic care of his teacher, may cultivate his own garden." (Hadow 1933: xviii). Piagetian developmental psychology, spread in the UK through works like Isaacs (1961), appeared to broadly support this by proving in a scientific way that the development of cognitive faculties in young children was a process of "maturation". It suggested that certain phenomena would be incomprehensible to children until they had reached the requisite cognitive development "stage" (Piaget 1955). This left the educator to reconcile the contradictory imperatives of extending the child's experience into new areas ('leading out'), while still presenting them with material they would be able to understand.

At the same time, psychoanalyts such as Donald Winnicott and John Bowlby advised parents and teachers that children were egocentric in a way that could lead to aggression and social maladjustment – indicating that children did need careful guidance. This favoured the middle class, who typically had more time and resources for child-rearing (Tisdall 2017). Worries that new parents would not have the required expert knowledge to raise their children properly led to a new professionalization and psychologisation of childcare. The perceived problem was

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[308] *Playtime* was the equivalent school radio series.

also connected to a shortage of trained teachers of all kinds, especially nursery teachers, during the 1960s.[309] When the progressive concern for the relationship between experience and the development of cognition was mixed with sociological investigation, the result was the idea of cultural deprivation. The Plowden report related;

> Cultural deprivation can… have disastrous results. A child brought up in a family which, because of poverty, missing parents, or the low intelligence of parents, cannot provide security or sufficient emotional and intellectual stimulation, may miss a significant stage in his early social development… (and lack) motive for learning in school (Plowden 1967: 24)

Therefore the basic task of preschool education was to provide the 'correct' experiences and environment for children's development.

The third trend was the development during the 1960s and 1970s of sociological and cognitive theories of the importance of language in education. Language was clearly central to education because a basic goal of organised schooling was the successful inculcation of reading and writing abilities to a certain functional standard by age 7. The status of spoken language was much less clear – it was of course used in schools, but was acquired in homes and communities by preschool children. Therefore it was of special interest how the formally instructed skill was related to the apparently natural skill, and the early years was the intersection of these. Interest in the difference between language-use based on class lines was then entering national consciousness, and broadcasting was heavily implicated.

Sesame Street and the Development of Early Years Educational Broadcasting at the BBC

The BBC began developing a preschool educational series in 1966.[310] The SBC's research found that some nurseries and playgroups watched *Play School* but nursery teachers found it inadequate for educational use.[311] SBC Senior Education Officer Kenneth Bailey characterised *Play School* as an "entertainment orientated series" which was used in nurseries as "a "relaxer" and not generally a starting point for fresh activity".[312] By this he meant that it was not being used in a sufficiently educationally manner, because educational broadcasting was designed to prompt activity. The Schools Council Compensatory Education project researchers referred to *Play School* as "basically an enrichment series" (Schools Council 1971). 'Enrichment' was a term routinely used to characterise schools programmes, but in this case was meant in the negative sense that *Play School* was not educational enough. As one director of a later version of *You and Me* remarked "it wasn't much of a school."[313] Nursery teachers were open to the idea of an alternative, educational series, and they wanted "material to stimulate activity in young children"[314] which would "…quicken perception of and interest in everyday things and

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[309] Several Schools series were intended to compensate for teacher shortages. WAC R98/11/1SBC Programme committee I minutes 9th November 1964

[310] WAC R103/225/1 Television Programmes for Infants, Kenneth Fawdry 12th January 1966

[311] WAC R103/225/1 Broadcasts for Children Aged Five and Under Elaine Mee May 3rd 1971, p6

[312] WAC R103/225/1 Nursery Schools and Play Groups Kenneth Bailey 24th Feb 1970

[313] Farrington, Pat, interview with the author, 30th April 2019

[314] WAC R98/14/1 SBC Programme Committee I Minutes 13th November 1970

incidents…stimulate closer looking, hearing and tactile sensation… the language element should be stressed."[315]

The new TV series was first discussed by Sub Committee I of the SBC in June 1970. In addition to recommending the now well established requirement for "activity", members suggested "children at this stage did not need programmes to broaden their experience, but to give them an awareness of their own environment". The key terms 'experience' and 'awareness' are mentioned without reference to sociological factors – and implied to be common to all children. Linguistic and cognitive pointers were also recommended, such as "…a visual demonstration of concepts such as 'above, 'below', 'behind', 'in front'." The main recommendations were for "stimulus and language development."[316] What remained to be defined was what 'language development' was needed. Before the committee discussed the provision further, *Sesame Street* was offered to the BBC and an important precedent was set for preschool television.

The progenitor of *Sesame Street*, Joan Ganz Cooney, researched and wrote *The Potential Uses of Television in Preschool Education* in 1966. The school television department and the SBC saw a copy of this in 1968, through a contact in the Nuffield Foundation, but did not think it was a suitable guide to the series they were developing.[317] Acting on Cooney's recommendations, CTW began developing *Sesame Street* in summer of 1968 and it was broadcast in the USA in November 1969. The conditions in the USA which had prepared the ground for the series were connected to the Johnson administration's policy of addressing disadvantage through the *Headstart* initiative (Morrow 2007). *Sesame Street* was aimed at children who could not got to a preschool (kindergarten) and its production design attempted to imitate the milieu of the inner-city child. *Sesame Street* was designed according to a set of learning goals, including initial literacy and numeracy, and evaluated according to "… a battery of tests to assess the status of 3 through 5-year-old children in those goal areas." (Bogatz Ball 1971: 1). The results indicated to the researchers that *Sesame Street* was effective in teaching its goals, and thereby reducing "the educational gap that usually separates advantaged and disadvantaged children even by the time they enter first grade." (Bogatz and Ball 1970: 4-5). Such a programme of evaluation was foreign to the SBC, who had never attempted either to formulate such specific goals or to test for them.

The CTW sought overseas sales which resulted in exports to over fifty countries by 1971 and provoked comment and debate at the European Broadcasting Union's (EBU) Working Group for Children and Young People (Jensen 2018). *Sesame Street* was offered to the BBC in August 1970. Sims turned it down partly due to its excessive length and the price.[318] The best remembered reason and the one subsequently stressed by Sims was its supposed incompatibility with the British educational ethos (see also Dunn 1977[319]). Sims was identified at the time as the figurehead of the BBC's opposition to *Sesame Street*.[320] In forming her

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[315] WAC R103/225/1 Broadcasts for Children Aged Five and Under Elaine Mee May 3rd 1971, p8
[316] WAC R98/14/1 SBC Programme Committee I Minutes 15th June 1970 PCI.
[317] WAC R103/225/1 Mee Observations on Joan Cooney's Report 25th September 1968
[318] Sims's objections were only partial. She had been on the panel which had awarded the Prix de Jeunesse to Sesame Street in May 1970. She had requested to buy only the segments of Sesame Street featuring the 'Muppets' – which CTW had refused (Jensen 2018)
[319] Teacher and author Gwenn Dunn was on the General Advisory Council from 1972.
[320] *The Times* 'Children's TV Policy' Barry Norman 9th November, 1971

opinion she drew not only on her own views but also those of the SBC and school broadcasting colleagues. The SBC's research officer Elaine Mee attended a viewing at Harlech TV's (who along with London Weekend Television and Grampian had been authorised by the ITA's Schools Committee to screen a limited run of the series (Potter 1990: 256)) studio in March 1971 along with a specially invited class of children. Her reaction, recorded in a report which Sims saw, was highly critical;

> Method entirely authoritarian. The child in the film never asks a question, he is told and then answers the adult… The child is not invited to find out anything for himself… There is very little time to look or observe. "Reinforcement" is done by repetition, sometimes so rapid as to suggest 'subliminal' methods… The hard artificiality and scintillating brittleness positively hurt before the end.[321]

Mee thought the children had not been impressed either, showing "signs of boredom and irritation".

As discussion of the series in the press progressed, Sims justified herself publicly, and wrote a long article for the *New York Times* detailing her views.[322] She asked the Head of Further Education Television Donald Grattan and Head of School Television Kenneth Fawdry to check the article before she submitted it. Both approved, and sympathised that Sims had been "catching it in the neck" unfairly.[323] In the article Sims accused *Sesame Street* of "indoctrination" and "brain-washing" and quoted disparagingly from its evaluation report: "A basic question for all was what changes in the children's behaviour do we want to effect." This was anathema to the British progressive tradition of learning through discovery. Sims also recorded her surprise that when Cooney was asked: "…why it did not include movement items in which the audience could physically participate", she replied that it was because "…the children might wander away or get out of hand." Sims inferred that "The intention of Sesame Street is clearly to keep the eyes of the 3 year old glued to the television screen for an hour." Instead, thought Sims, children's television should encourage children to engage in activity, where the real learning was thought to occur.

Class and Language in *You and Me*

Meanwhile, the BBC's development of *You and Me* was taking a sociolinguistic turn. Sims had portrayed *Play School* as classless, and criticised *Sesame Street's* "dirty walls and dustbins" as a "self-conscious sop to the other half" She thought that by comparison, *Play School* offered "to all children encouragement to that valuable questioning awareness of their surroundings which is inborn in every child whatever its economic or cultural inheritance." But this view was not necessarily shared by the education professionals the SBC had consulted. Some early years teachers thought *Play School* was "too middle-class", and was "not catering for children

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[321] WAC R103/225/1 Sesame Street Elaine Mee April 1971.

[322] The piece appears not to have been published. It is preserved in the BBC WAC (R103/225/1) and described as an "article" both there and in Home (1993: 43). Some quotes were picked from it for a news item; 'BBC Orders Ban on Sesame Street', *New York Times* September 8th 1971.

[323] WAC R103/225/1 Grattan to Sims 14th September 1971, Fawdry to Sims 6th October 1971

in the lower middle-class."[324] Therefore while the kinetic style of *Sesame Street* and the eagerness of its producers to evaluate learning gain from it were alarming to the BBC, its own early years educational series originally shared with it an address to the 'disadvantaged'.

As explained in the Theoretical Framework, there were two separate but linked interpretations of the role of language in literacy education for the early years: a cognitive developmental interpretation and a sociological interpretation. Both were visible in the planning for early years literacy broadcasting.

The influence of the work of Basil Bernstein in educational circles was well established by 1970. It can be seen in the CACE's 1963 Newsom report, convened to advise "on the education of pupils aged 13 to 16 of average and less than average ability". Although phrased in terms of "ability", the report was arguably really concerned with pupils of the lower social classes who were now in secondary education, and whose manpower potential, it was feared, would be wasted. It shows the contemporary attitudes in influential educationist circles towards such pupils, and the role of language in their education;

> There is a gulf between those who have, and the many who have not, sufficient command of words to be able to listen and discuss rationally; to express ideas and feelings clearly; and even to have any ideas at all. (Newsom 1963: 49)

Bernstein gave evidence to the committee as a witness, and partly as a result of recommendations of the report, received funding from the Ministry of Education for further research (Lawton 1968: 152, Aldrich 2002: 150). Controller of Educational Broadcasting at John Scupham was a member of the CACE during the inquiry and was probably responsible for the report's unusually strong recommendation of the use of school broadcasting (Newsom 1963: 79). He later included an interpretation of Bernstein's work in his book *Broadcasting and the Community*:

> Working-class language … operates largely though simple concrete statements linked by coordinating conjunctions. … The language of educated people uses the subordinate clause as an instrument for making distinctions and as a mean towards a synthesis. … anyone who has not learnt to use it is debarred from the stricter and more complex modes of conceptual thinking (Scupham 1967 110).

The appearance of these linguistic terms, whose use by Bernstein to define the 'restricted and elaborated codes' was later criticised on methodological and theoretical grounds (see Theoretical Framework) can also be seen in Elaine Mee's report about her viewing of *Sesame Street* viewing in March 1971;

> It struck me that the language used (in *Sesame Street*)… is in structure much simpler than what we use. Without doing a strict analysis, I believe it is mainly simple sentences with very few subordinate clauses… without a more developed language can a more related type of thinking and communication be developed?[325]

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[324] WAC R103/225/1 Broadcasts for Children Aged Five and Under Elaine Mee May 3rd 1971, p6

[325] WAC R103/225/1 Sesame Street Elaine Mee March 1971

In the USA Bernstein's work was cited by Carl Bereiter and Siegfried Engelmann in their plan for "compensatory education" in "a new kind of preschool" for "culturally deprived" children (1964: 19, 32, 37). In turn, Bereiter and Engelmann were cited approvingly by Cooney in her plan for the contribution the series which would become *Sesame Street* could make to the same group (Cooney 1966: 4). This plan attracted the Ford Foundation, who had funded Bernstein's research and subsequently also funded the production of *Sesame Street*.

In early 1969, Elaine Mee undertook a project for the National Council of Educational Technology on "the contribution audio-visual media could make to the education of culturally deprived children" (Mee 1970). It linked the elements which were to guide the SBC's thinking on the new preschool series: the progressivist notion of 'experience', the development of cognition; deprivation and initial literacy. On the next occasion that SBC sub-committee I discussed the new provision, in June 1971, Mee presented her research. In the discussion she raised the:

> …frequent criticism that radio and television programmes for children were "too middle class"… as Dr Bernstein has pointed out, the… difference between working and middle-class homes was not only difference in the kind but in the functioning of language.[326]

The ensuing discussion of the committee revealed a mixture of opinion. One committee member suggested "Not all working class children from lower income groups were culturally deprived." Whereas another suggested "There was a tremendous gap between the underprivileged child and the rest, and educationists had so far underestimated what was needed to bring the experience of all one to five year olds up to what was desirable." The Chairman "referred to reports of work in priority areas which had drawn attention to the need for help not only with language but with such things as talk about feelings, the ability to hold things in mind, the sequencing of events… and here broadcasting could be of help." Mee argued that language was the key to the issue and drew on Bernstein's work which had included grammatical subordination as a marker of the elaborated code: "…teachers helped children in these areas by accustoming them to more complex language structures than they heard in their homes… for instance the use of subordinate clauses." The committee agreed that Mee's presentation should inform the new series.

Bernstein's influence remained in Chovil's presentation to the committee of her proposal, in June 1972, for the series that would become *You and Me*. At the meeting:

> Chovil said she was particularly interested in trying to create a situation where oral language development would be possible, e.g. short films presenting experiences shared by a child and adult. The aim would be to provide for children with a restricted code of communication.[327]

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[326] WAC R98/14/1 SBC Programme Committee I Minutes 11th June 1971
[327] WAC R98/14/1 SBC Programme Committee I Minutes 19th June 1972

Little documentation of the production of *You and Me* survives in the BBC Written Archive, but Fawdry's 1974 book, written as *You and Me* was being produced, includes extracts from a diary which he asked Chovil to keep about it. One of the plans for *You and Me* was that it would involve documentary sequences in which adults interact with children and ask them questions. Chovil recorded;

> Questions that have the answer 'yes' or 'no' stop any attempt at self-expression. Questions that ask for factual information or recall are not much better. We're told by the consultant that children won't respond to that kind of bombardment (Fawdry 1974: 102)

The identity of this consultant was not recorded, but their feedback suggests that they had read or were aware of the work of Barnes, Britton and Rosen, which used tape recording to look at the forms of questions asked by teachers of school pupils (1969: 30-46).[328] Another possible influence is work on the discourse analysis of classroom talk then underway at Birmingham University by Sinclair and Coulthard and published in 1975.

Chovil's diary entries also reveal her unease over the task of deliberately addressing the "disadvantaged", and indicate the fine subjective gradations of class distinction in the period;

> Everyone said that of course the programmes must not be middle class. As easy as that. No posh voices no smart surroundings, no experiences that might be beyond the understanding of a deprived city child… Actors with good diction and southern voices are out… children should only be called Billy, Tom and Anne, not Jason, Julian and Nicola. Woods are outside the experience of some children, so woods are middle-class.

You and Me episodes were twelve minutes long and broadcast three days per week. The Monday episode contained a story illustrated by drawings "built around a simple idea about size, number, distance and so on." (BBC 1974b: 3). This was to illustrate pre-mathematics and pre-reading concepts.[329] The Wednesday episode contained film of visits and activities outside the home. These sequences were filmed with real 4 year olds in an actuality style, once it was found that "plotty stories proved too difficult to make with young children."(Fawdry 1974: 102). This was referred to as a "'planned ad lib' situation in which the adult knew what was expected but the child being filmed did not." (Chovil 1975: 25) The sequences were based on simple situations like "Cleaning Windows", "Round the Supermarket" and "A flat tyre." The Friday programme included play activities. The publication accompanying the series contained the instructions: "After the programmes… Go on talking about the programme with the children."(BBC 1973). It was explicitly offered as a stimulus for (the right sort of) talk between adults and children.

Apparently the actuality sequences were a little too actual for some teachers who complained about the "ungrammatical speech of some of the parents and children shown in the

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[328] Published as a Penguin Education Special in 1969 and later an OU 'set book'
[329] WAC Films 11 12 SBC Programme Committee I minutes 17th June 1977

programmes".[330] An EO investigation revealed a mixture of opinions on what was an emotive and controversial subject. One EO reported a head of English at a school referring to the BBC's English output for less able children as "A bit middle class."[331] Viewing this report, another EO responded that he had been frustrated by attitudes like this for some time.

> Does he want us to broadcast lower class language? I know we should try to begin where the child is, but should we not be aiming from there at offering some lift, extension, challenge, revelation? Otherwise we would be perpetuating or even increasing the degenerative trends (linguistic in this case) of society?[332]

Many teachers doubted that there was any worth in pursuing anything other than a standard variety. One teacher "saw the widespread view that correct English was "middle class" as politically inspired."[333] Another EO, John Robottom, mused on his findings on interpretations of 'disadvantaged' among education professionals, and found that there was little consistency in its application. "What these teachers are regretting is not disadvantage but simply non-advantage, the existence of average children of average parents."[334]

A Compensatory Education?

In 1972, the SBC evidence to the Bullock inquiry detailed that the BBC wanted *You and Me* to:

> …enrich language and stimulate communication at the earliest age at which children enter school… at the same time appeal to some less advantaged children not yet at school…. {and assist} In closing the gap between home and school that still exists in some areas and in breaking what has been described as 'the pervasive pattern of disadvantage…[335]

But in 1974 in the annual programme sent to teachers in advance of the series' broadcast, any reference to deprivation, or the restricted code, was absent. The reasons that *You and Me* lost its compensatory character were not openly discussed, but by 1974 compensatory education was beginning to become discredited politically (Hendershot 1999). Bernstein regretted that he had been misunderstood, particularly in the USA, and he opposed the interventionist compensatory schemes (Bernstein 1971: 147-154). Viewing of *You and Me* cut across class lines and the programmes were widely popular. In educational circles, a reaction had begun which would lead to a call for a return to 'standards', and the gradual denigration of the progressive tradition (Lowe 2007).

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[330] WAC R99/101/1 Grattan, Donald Television Forward Thinking 10th February 1975.

[331] WAC R103/304/1 Project II: Some General Visits to Schools Gwynn C. Griffith 6th Feb 1975

[332] WAC R103/304/1 Secondary English Project II Middle Class Language Mr. Brook 24th March 1975

[333] WAC R103/305/1 Project Report No.14 Oral Language Don Steel 28th March 1978

[334] WAC R103/305/1 Project Report No.14 Oral Language and the Disadvantaged Child John Robottom 16th February 1978

[335] WAC R103/322/1 Evidence about BBC Educational Broadcasting to the Committee of Inquiry into Reading and the Use of English October 1972

These debates surrounding the proper policy for early years educational broadcasting took place at some remove from the lived experience of the programme. It is worth remembering the excitement created in schools by the introduction of television, which was then still relatively new to schools and nursery schools especially. EO reports show how once broadcast, *You and Me* took on a significance of its own;

> The school view T.V. on a large screen, hooded, pedestalled, monochrome receiver situated in the hall for large group viewing… up to 90 children… Supportive queries and comments were fed in while the children viewed… The Hub-bub of noise vanished as soon as the You and Me title sequence began… The surgery visited fascinated them… Oral participation grew as the sequence progressed… (the teachers) welcome showing one parent family situations both where only one parent is ever there and situations where either mum or dad is away temporarily etc.[336]

By 1976 EOs judged *You and Me* "A regular and valued feature of nursery and reception class life."[337] And by 1985 it "often reached a home audience of more than a million" in addition to its audience in schools etc. (BBC Yearbook 1984: 27)

Conclusion

There was a mixture of influences on literacy teaching for early years in the 1960s and early 1970s. Progressivism in education promoted activity and discovery but had not developed a systematic literacy teaching method. It embraced developmental psychology and a particular, supporting, role for adults in education. Education policy change involved a move of government into preschool provision with a prioritisation for the disadvantaged. A new interest in the role of language in education took two forms: a cognitive developmental claim in which language acquisition facilitated cognitive development; and a sociological claim in which the lower working class used language differently in a functional way. These influences filtered through the BBC and SBC.

The form that literacy education took in *You and Me* was influenced by the SBC's reading of contemporary literacy theory, sociolinguistic and cognitive. The code theory of Basil Bernstein was particularly important in setting the agenda. However *You and Me* also suffered from the compensatory fallacy that affected *Sesame Street*, and its supposed address to the disadvantaged was later watered down.

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[336] WAC R103/305/1 Primary English Project 27 – You and Me John Rawnsley 11th February 1976
[337] WAC R103/41/1 Programme Committee I and II paper on Primary English. SEO June 1976. SBC.33/76

CHAPTER 9

Literacy Broadcasting in Late Progressivism 1975-1979

This chapter will look at developments in literacy broadcasting in the late 1970s. In the late progressive period, educational thought and practice surrounding literacy was sophisticated and complex. In the previous chapters we have seen how a new validation of children's self-expression and individual voice was accompanied by a recognition of a diversity of register. Two relevant strands of thought in literacy teaching emerged. One was the interest in oral language as a legitimate object of study for English. The other was the idea of a general language development in which reading, writing and speaking blended together as part of communication and cognition development. Yet accompanying this, and to some extent contradictory to it, relatively direct and systematic approaches to teaching reading remained in use and continued to be developed. At the same time, a tradition of literary English, which could be but was not necessarily conservative in nature, prioritised 'standards'.

Firstly I shall examine the discussions on literacy teaching at school surrounding the Bullock Report and their effects on the BBC. Secondly I shall look at a new wave of literacy programming in the post-Bullock period and briefly describe these series. After this I shall look at reforms to *You and Me* and *Look and Read* informed by developments in the 1970s. Lastly I shall consider the effects of late progressive educational research on the BBC's output.

The Bullock Report

An inquiry into the teaching of English was announced in June 1972 chaired by the historian Alan Bullock. It was widely regarded as an enquiry into reading, and had been prompted by the NFER report *The Trend of Reading Standards,* but the committee interpreted their brief as comprising all language in education, including at home and preschool. Several much publicised and discussed 'Black papers' had already been published, including Bantock's cry against the recent trend towards self-expression (Shayer 1971: 152). This new conservatism was reflected in the popular opinion that standards of English and literacy were falling. The report was influenced by late progressive educational thought perhaps as much, though in a more critical way, as the Plowden Report had been. The committee included James Britton of the IOE, and David Mackay of the ILEA who had worked on the *Breakthrough to Literacy* project.

The SBC was already preparing its evidence for the committee when Bullock asked for it in August 1972. SBC Secretary Robson hosted some members of the committee at Broadcasting House for viewings and discussion in March 1973. This patronage and close networking connections helped the SBC influence the inquiry even after it submitted its evidence. SEO Bailey was confidentially shown two draft chapters on broadcasting in April 1974 and again in August through HMI Maurice Edmundson. As *You and Me* and *Playtime* were still in development in 1972, Bailey was able to update the inquiry on these and on proposals for the

new literacy series purchased from CTW, *The Electric Company*, and the Further Education Departments' adult literacy project.[338]

The Bullock Report was published in January of 1975 as *A Language for Life*. It was the first major government enquiry of its kind since the Newbolt Report of 1921 and understandably revised the thinking in Newbolt extensively. The report was a detailed and thoughtful consideration of its topic, reflecting the wealth of evidence it considered and the fact that there was wide interest in English teaching at school in the 1970s. Among a large number of recommendations, it is perhaps best remembered for calling for "language across the curriculum" (Bullock 1975: 188-192), the observation that the teaching and learning of all school subjects relies on a linguistic process, and that schools and teachers should develop a policy towards it. It also argued for a "wider and more demanding definition of literacy", that "steps should be taken to develop the language ability of children in the pre-school and nursery and infant years" and that "every school should devise a systematic policy for the development of reading competence in pupils of all ages and ability levels" (Bullock 1975: 513-515). The report stated that "reading must be seen as part of a child's general language development and not as a discrete skill which can be considered in isolation from it." (Bullock 1975: xxxi) The report did not substantiate the claims of falling standards in reading. It also made recommendations for deliberate development of talking and listening, (Bullock 1975: 526-527) including the observation that tape recorders were essential. (Bullock 1975: 151)

The Bullock Report far surpassed Plowden in its understanding and recognition of school broadcasting. It acknowledged the attempts by *Playtime* and *You and Me* (and ITV's *Rainbow* and *Mr. Trimble)* in "… attempting to involve adults and children in a common experience and provide opportunities for talk." But also reflected contemporary concerns that excessive television watching was harming children; "the habit of passive viewing needs to be broken and parents made aware of their role in using television constructively, not merely as a means of keeping children out of mischief." (Bullock 1975: 326). The report recommended more research, better utilisation, better training for teachers, facilities for recording and storing tapes, an expansion of preschool educational broadcasting, and programmes "to help the language interaction of parent and child" (Bullock 1975: 548).

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[338] The Adult Literacy project falls outside the subject matter of this thesis as it was not school broadcasting. Robinson (1982) and Hargreaves (1980) provide accounts. It is worth explaining briefly as it was perhaps the BBC's most notable new literacy initiative of the 1970s. The BBC provided the main drive and motivation but it collaborated with other education bodies to plan a three year series of programmes and publications. Outside funding was sought and obtained for the practical parts of the scheme including a phone line and the development of the print material, including £1m from the DES (Limage 1987: 302). The project ran from 1975-1978 and was "believed to be the first attempt to use broadcasting on a massive scale in conjunction with other media to discover the extent of the literacy problem in an industrialised society and to contribute towards its alleviation." 70,00 people volunteered to learn to read, and 30,000 to help within the first 6 months of the scheme. *On the Move* was a series of 50 ten minute programmes transmitted at the advantageous times of 6.05pm three times per week from November 1975 produced by David Hargreaves. It contained drama sections starring Bob Hoskins as a truck driver who had decided to take part in the scheme. Like *Look and Read* it included animations on a roughly phonics basis. A big part of the aim was the 'slow breaking down of pride and fear', and to address people who were embarrassed by their illiteracy. The phone-in service, manned partly by education officers, was inundated with calls. LEAs provided the premises and facilities for the classes.

Although the response was favourable, the BBC was later criticised for emphasising the shame of the lead illiterate character, and for using animations that more properly belonged in children's literacy programmes (Limage 1987: 303). The BBC altered subsequent series. Limage also thought that the scheme was of limited success in tackling the problem, partly because of a lack of interest by government.

Bullock had two important implications for literacy school broadcasting. Firstly it explicitly recommended deliberate language development in the early years, (see previous chapter). Secondly its expanded definition of literacy, to encompass virtually all 'language development' throughout life, entailed an expanded definition of reading and the explicit inclusion of oral work. The SBC was well aware of "The huge philosophical and political debate which swarms around the teaching of English in the primary schools today"[339], and responded to the report on a large scale. In 1975/6 the SBC held conferences at Leeds and London universities on its implications. Programme Committee I decided to "Keep output under review in light to public disquiet about standards of written English"[340] and education officers conducted a review of broadcasts for English.

Oral Literacy Broadcasting

Bullock did not cause a wholesale change to the output and many series continued along the same lines as before. Encouraging concentration in listening and a variety of oral work had always been a strength of school broadcasting, particularly radio. As we have seen, general English school broadcasting already had sympathy with progressive ideas about literacy. For example, one term of *Living Language,* was poems, including some poems that children listening had sent in. They were read out by actors at first and later by the children themselves. It was an example of how children's voices were valued.[341]

In its evidence to Bullock, the SBC envisaged a move towards oral language pedagogy, including diversity of genres: "…more actuality recordings, e.g. *Web of Language,* radio will be used to explore such topics as regional speech, forms of usage found in special situations, e.g. sports commentaries, advertising, and the changes in language through time."

In preparing a bulletin in response to the Bullock Report, the SBC stated

> Important questions have been raised about the balance of emphasis between literature and language content. The familiar range of language use close to pupils' own experience will be more strongly reflected in programmes in *Springboard, Web of Language, Living Language, Listening and Writing* and *Speak* from 1975/76 onwards [342]

The SBC approved a new range of material for oral work or 'language development.' Some were dedicated new series and some additions to existing series. *Wordplay: That'd be Telling* was proposed in November 1975 as a direct response to Bullock. A collaboration between producer Joan Griffiths and Michael Rosen, it was an English series for 8-12 year olds to encourage spoken language development featuring the oral tradition in poetry. Rosen as

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[339] WAC R103/304/1 Fieldwork Note – Project 27: Primary English ASEO May 1975
[340] WAC Films 11 12 Programme committee I 6th June 1975
[341] Griffiths, Joan, interview with the author 3rd March 2021
[342] WAC R103/322/2 First Draft of the Bulletin on the Bullock Report's Recommendations in Relation to the BBC's Output and Ideas. p12

presenter introduced stories from around the world, including some told by Alex Pascall and James Berry. It was connected to multi-culturalism which was then becoming felt in UK schools. Griffiths had met Michael Rosen through Connie and Harold Rosen and some of Michael's poems, which Griffiths described as "completely different from anything that I had ever put on the radio"[343] were used for *Living Language* and *Stories and Rhymes*. *Wordplay: That'd be Telling* was transmitted in 1976/77. SBC minutes show that the proposals for the second series included a reference to "linguistically inexperienced" listeners, but this was not recalled by the producer as being a main motivation behind the series.

You and Me had been specifically designed for promoting oral language among early years, and was reported to have been successful in this. In one school, which had

> …just acquired a monochrome television … *You and Me* morning programmes are highly valued. They provide general interest and material for language development through children's talk… ''Me and My Family' (a *YM* episode) was a winner. They talked eagerly about their own families and where they fitted in. the questions posed by the narrator are just sufficient to set up brief oral participation during broadcasts and lead into more developed talk afterwards.[344]

Following their investigation into English broadcasts in schools, EOs suggested that a priority for development should be a language series for linguistically or educationally deprived children in 5-8 age group.[345] There were then three Schools TV series for this age group which showed "…some awareness of language in their planning and their published aims, whether oral language, written language, or a bit of both". Which were *You and Me*, *Words and Pictures* and *Watch!*.[346] However Robottom found that "for some children they appear not to provide what is needed." The report went on to describe inner city schools in Glasgow and Manchester which faced "above average language problems." In the Glasgow school many children were "very disturbed, not treated as people at home: no toys. On arrival at school, the children have to learn to be intelligible, to understand the teachers' code… they remember aggressive incidents on television better than most other things."[347] Robottom suggested that the new series "… be advertised, quite specifically, as a series for linguistically deprived children in inner-city schools".

However like *You and Me*, when this series was eventually commissioned (*Talkabout)* it seems to have lost its socially activist programme and did not contain any specific address to the "linguistically deprived". It was "planned to accommodate the wide-ranging linguistics needs of children of mixed abilities, varied life-styles, experiences and consequently different rates of language acquisition." [348] Though it did reflect a new trend towards multi-cultural representation. The producer Moyra Gambleton told Programme Committee I that she hoped "to include in the programme black faces and stories which would give status and self-regard

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[343] Griffiths, Joan, interview with the author 3rd March 2021

[344] WAC R103/305/1 Primary English Project 27 John Rawnsley 10th February 1976

[345] WAC R103/41/1 Discussion Paper on Infant Language John Alexander 12 June 1978

[346] And on ITV: *My World*, *Reading with Lenny*, *Seeing and Doing*, *Finding Out* and *Picture Box*.

[347] WAC R103/304/1 Discussion Paper on Infant Language John Alexander 12 June 1978

[348] WAC R99/216/1 Programme proposals for Talkabout, 26th October 1979

to pupils of minority ethnic origin."[349] The series was transmitted in 1979 and apparently "had begun to make a considerable mark in establishing heard and spoken language as a central feature (in classrooms)",[350] but only a single series was recorded, and repeated (with modifications) until 1984.

Reporting on how oral language was taught in schools, EO John Robottom found that teachers were divided on whether it was important or not. Tape recording was found to be essential to give the work status, and as a teaching aid. Robottom thought that the recent upsurge of interest in oral work lay on 2 principles; that education is learning to communicate; and that children assimilate knowledge by recoding it. He thought oral work was then in fashion in a way that individualised learning had been in the 1960s, and that this fashion would play out in the same way, with a prophecy stage (prophets of oral work had been Barnes, Rosen, Britton etc.), then a mass movement (extolled by Bullock) followed by a reaction. In policy terms, Robottom was not sure whether BBC Schools should lead, wait until mass conversion, or wait until only experts are interested.[351]

Reading Series Post-Bullock

It seems likely that Chovil realised that a purely phonics approach for *Look and Read* was now under more criticism from teachers. Morris ceased to be the consultant, and was replaced with Mary Hoffman. Hoffman, soon to become a successful children's author, was less involved than Morris had been. Soon afterwards, new producer Pat Farrington was employed partly to reform the teaching middle sections of *Look and Read*. Farrington had worked in educational publishing and as a primary school teacher, and was expert in current reading research having been part of the development team for the OU's *Reading Development* course materials. Farrington introduced new techniques into the teaching middles which supplemented pure phonics with psycholinguistic procedures, like context, syntactic and semantic cues. In these strategies the process of understanding and predicting meaning was blended with the process of understanding orthography.[352]

After Chovil left *You and Me*, it was taken on by Barbara Parker, who introduced different puppet characters. In 1980 the programme was again revised, this time comprehensively, with a new team including led by Richard Callanan and Nicci Crowther, who again with Farrington attempted to update and improve the programme according to new research and principles. Farrington explains this in terms of a new generation of producers who sought to bring radically child-centred and active learning principles to bear on school broadcasting. "It was very important to us in the early 80s that we give children a voice in the programme… We did vox pops with very young children."[353]

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[349] WAC Films 11 12 Programme committee I minutes 10th November 1978

[350] WAC Films 11 12 Programme committee I 8th February 1980.

[351] WAC R103/305/1 Project Report No.14 Oral Language and the Disadvantaged Child John Robottom 16th February 1978

[352] The extant version of *The Boy from Space* (1971) contains teaching middles remade in the new style in 1980.

[353] Farrington, Pat, interview with the author, 30th April 2019

Crowther also explained some of the changes to the literacy component of *You and Me* in terms of a stricter adherence to Piagetian developmental theory ''One of the problems with the old *You and Me* was that, if children weren't ready for the letter 'p' or matching one-to-one, there was no way that twelve minutes of it was going to teach them it' (quoted in Buckingham 1987b). For Buckingham, "…this progressivist emphasis… has increasingly (if somewhat belatedly) come to influence educational broadcasting in Britain…" This thesis argues that progressivism had influenced school broadcasting from the 1930s, but by the 1980s when Buckingham was researching *You and Me*, the interpretation of 'progressivism' was narrowing (Cunningham 1988: 1). Farrington had also been influenced by the latest research on *Sesame Street*. CTW had over the 1970s continued to evaluate its techniques, and recently introduced a new socially based curriculum.

Radio producer Sarah Mcneill proposed *Radio Thin King*, which was "designed for children of seven to nine with reading difficulties" (BBC Yearbook 1981: 24). She used a mixed phonics approach and asked writer Derek Farmer, later a producer with the department, to write and help develop it. Farmer had trained as a primary school teacher in the early 1970s and related a remarkably similar story to that told by Joyce Morris of the 1940s. Morris wrote:

> (On) my first day as a qualified teacher in a large primary school… it was the shock of finding that my class consisted of 40 non-readers aged seven to eleven which initially determined that my professional career should be devoted mainly to the cause of literacy. The size of the problem was far greater than my college course had led me to believe. (1972: 10)

Farmer recalled:

> I remember the very first day I started teaching, it was a class of seven year olds… I'd got them to put their names on a strip of paper and a child called Nicholas came up to me and said 'Look I've finished'. And it said 'Nicloes'. And it hit me in the face like a wet fish as people used to say… During my teacher trading no-one had ever said that children could go through the infant school and still get their name wrong.[354]

Farmer later worked in schools specifically with children who were struggling with reading. He researched methods, finding that phonic based methods often worked well. He used this knowledge in *Radio Thin King*, whose episodes were based around word sounds (but with the emphasis on an entertaining script), featuring three main characters who each represented a different reading strategy. Mcneill also arranged with the educational publisher Longman to release a reading scheme (Farmer 1982) based on the series. However this clashed with a new popularity of 'real books' as a literacy ideology, and was neglected particularly at ILEA.

Assessment, Testing and Educational Research in Late Progressivism

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[354] Farmer, Derek, interview with the author, 28th April 2021

The green paper on education in 1979 showed a concern among the government about 'basic skills' in literacy and numeracy. The BBC was in many ways in a good position to respond to this new direction, because series on all aspects of English were perhaps the most numerous and mathematics was by then also well-covered.

Educational research in the 1960s and 1970s had attained a new level of rigour and validity. Part of this had been the rise of quantitative methods including testing and assessment. Bates observed that *Sesame Street* and the Adult Literacy project were among the most successful examples of educational broadcasting, partly because they involved pretesting and the development of specific curricula (Bates 1984: 113). Bates criticised the methodology Bogatz and Ball used to test attainment from *Sesame Street* (1984: 103-104), but what mattered was that it had been tested at all, and that such testing should be methodologically valid was increasingly an expectation of educational research. Meanwhile a critical strain of academic work held that "simply measuring outcomes against intentions precludes the critical evaluation of those intentions themselves." (Buckingham 1987a: 140).

The SBC did not make any attempt to test attainment gains from its programmes except in isolated cases. Morris herself led a small project for *Look and Read* during its initial development. In 1973 Grattan observed that the dept. was already "spread too thin in policy terms" for a *Sesame Street* type research programme and the BBC was unlikely to give more resources to educational broadcasting without an increase in the licence fee (The Children's Television Workshop had far greater financial and staffing resources than the BBC/SBC). Farrington recalled members of the *Sesame Street* production team visiting the BBCSTV offices (around 1980): "there were 2 people in the office and they said 'Where are all the others?'". Occasionally research came from outside. In 1978/79 Angela Hobsbaum, a lecturer in child development at the IOE, researched reception of *You and Me* quantitatively, finding educational gains by the viewing children against the non-viewing children.[355]

Broadly speaking, those who were sympathetic to progressive goals, saw educational research as the chance to improve progressive methods. Others who wanted to return to a traditional 'transmission' conception of education saw it as showing the way to replace progressivism with a new research-informed basic skills pedagogy. This was particularly relevant to initial literacy teaching, which emerged as one of the key battlegrounds of the curriculum debate.

By the late 1970s there was considerable public debate about whether contemporary integrated progressive methods like project work were producing sufficient standards of literacy or whether "a more structured approach" was appropriate.[356] EOs found two conflicting lines among producers about what the BBC could do. Some thought "Standards of language use are in decline…it is not enough to present good literature in the hope that it will automatically improve language. There might be another role for the media which would involve a very direct approach to sentence construction (etc.)…" Whereas others thought that "direct language teaching is a matter for individual teachers with individual children rather than a mass medium"[357]

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[355] WAC Films 11 12 SBC Programme Committee I Minutes 9th February 1979.
[356] WAC R99/48/1 Educational Developments Alan Jamieson Feb 1977
[357] WAC R103/304/1 Project 27: Primary English TJ Lambert 25th September 1975

The debate ought not to be divided into a simple progressive/conservative dichotomy. Most people working in education held a mixture of views on different issues. The producer Colin Smith, in charge of *Speak* and *Let's Join in* in this period, attributed his success at the panel to appoint him a producer in 1972 to the fact that "I told them I was a pronounced Reithian, which went down well with most of them I think who weren't too progressive, fortunately." and prefaced all his teachers' notes for *Let's Join In* with a quote from Samuel Johnson (1709-1784); "Babies do not want to hear about babies; they like to be told of giants and castles" (BBC 1981) contra the everyday material in *You and Me* or *Nippers*. Yet Smith described his own politics as left wing, and had chosen to work for years in a comprehensive school. Smith recalled the great degree to which English teaching had changed, but not in the same terms that were in vogue the "then very flourishing NATE":

> A lot of these things (like 'self-expression') are slogans. I wasn't repressing it in any way. I think I opened things up a bit. In the first school I worked in, we inherited two thick books called *An English Grammar of Function*[358], which my predecessor worked through year by year. I remember page 67, 'retained accusative'… There were kids chewing this stuff which was absolute nonsense, academic rubbish. So we got away from all that. A long way away.[359]

Conclusion

This ends our survey of BBC school literacy broadcasting 1957-1979. The Bullock Report and its aftermath demonstrated the sophistication and complexity that literacy in theory and practice had reached by the late 1970s. As the national debate over literacy methods was still very much alive at the end of this period, it is not possible to come to a strong narrative conclusion. What is clear is that BBC Schools had been able to negotiate these currents and continued to produce a set of series that featured a range of approaches to literacy teaching.

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[358] This was probably Mason 1939 (not connected to Halliday's functional linguistics).
[359] Smith, Colin, interview with the author 6th April 2021

CONCLUSION

In concluding this thesis, we can first recall the research questions that are addressed in the empirical chapters 1-9;

1. What factors affected the success of BBC school broadcasting?

2. What role did the School Broadcasting Council play in BBC school broadcasting?

3. What was the relationship between BBC school broadcasting and educational research?

4. How was progressivism in educational theory expressed through BBC school broadcasting literacy programmes?

5. How was linguistic theory expressed through BBC school broadcasting literacy programmes?

This conclusion has five sections. In section 1 address research questions 1 and 2 together for ease of explanation. I explain what general factors affected the success of BBC school broadcasting; technological conditions, the separation of the 'domains' in the education system, and school broadcasting's lack of prestige compared to its popularity. I then explain factors specific to the SBC and to the BBC, the question of educational value, and sum up the role of BBC school broadcasting in the national education system.

In section 2 I address research question 3, explaining the relationship between BBC Schools and educational research. Following this in section 3 I address research question 4 and explain how progressivism was expressed through literacy programmes. Section 4 addresses research question 5, explaining how linguistic theory was expressed through BBC literacy programmes. The final section 5 makes some concluding remarks on education, broadcasting and experience.

1
What Factors Affected the Success of BBC School Broadcasting and what Role Did the School Broadcasting Council Play?

Technological Conditions

The importance of technological conditions as a factor in historical events must be assessed with some care. Firstly, we must bear in mind that to some extent technologies are motivated by historically situated priorities (Williams, 1974: 10–15), and therefore determined by social and political decisions. Secondly it is misleading to label certain states of affairs as

technological and others as social or political – in fact technologies have little meaning beyond the circumstances of their use, which they come to define and are defined by.

It is true that social and political conditions ultimately determined certain bases of the technological conditions of school broadcasting. BBC school broadcasting was a national venture and required national infrastructure. An important factor in the success of school broadcasting was the degree of spread of reception technology (radio and television sets). From the point of view of the SBC and BBC, an ideal situation would have been at least one television and radio set per class, to allow near automatic access whenever a teacher desired it. Over the extended period 1924-1990, this was achieved for radios but not for televisions. Recording and playback equipment was scarcer still. To have addressed this discrepancy would have required a large commitment of resources at national and local levels, but the political will was lacking. The government never made any specific grant or provision for the provision of reception or recording equipment during the period. The educational value of school broadcasting remained in question (see below) compared with more tangible spending demands such as new school buildings and teacher salaries. Furthermore the government's capacity for direct intervention in this vein was limited by the structure of education governance, whereby most spending was devolved to LEAs. The particular characteristics of the structure of education governance limited the technological conditions for the uptake of school broadcasting.

This was a contingent historical factor. Later as a result of a government initiative to put ICT in schools, an equivalent achievement was made with digital technology. Now all UK primary classrooms are now equipped with computers with digital video storage capability, projectors and interactive whiteboards (Becta 2006). In the mid-2000s internet streaming began to furnish schools with the potential for near automatic access to audio-visual resources, including broadcasting. But at this point the BBC retreated from school broadcasting for what were arguably political reasons. Therefore most direct practical limitation on the uptake of audio-visual resources in education was not resolved until after the peak period of the political acceptance of school broadcasting.

However we should not entirely reduce the technological to the social. The invention of broadcasting technology and the organisation of its production, came from quite different parts of society than the institutions which had developed to govern education. The emergence of phenomenon in question, school broadcasting, involved a new technology being applied to an existing form of social organisation. Technological conditions afforded this emergence and partially determined its character. School broadcasting depended on radio and television production, transmission and reception technology. Its key characteristic was that there was no limit to the quantity of broadcasting that could be received to any one receiver. Once a school possessed one, marginal costs were very low. By way of contrast, for its closest comparator, educational film, possession of a projector was not enough – the continuous purchase or rental of more films was also necessary. Broadcasting's technological characteristics allowed the BBC to achieve penetration to schools relatively easily. This was an affordance of the technology that was not socially or politically determined.

Separation of Domains

On a different level of analysis we can see a social, practical and political separation of the BBC from the domains in the education system.

Two broad groups had authority over the education system; (1) politicians and administrators who controlled overall policy through governance and regulation; and (2) teachers and educationists who operated schools and determined pedagogy. These can be referred to as the political domain and the pedagogical domain. There was a third group which had no authority, but was vital for the operation of the system: educational resource providers who were largely responsible for the content of media through which curricula could be communicated.

There was an inherent ambiguity in the BBC's status within this system. In some ways the BBC appeared to be in the first group. It was a national public body almost like a civil service department and like other public bodies it possessed an exclusive (until ITV) statutory authority and responsibility in a certain area: broadcasting. However in effect it behaved differently from and independently of the government and civil service. Any responsibility and authority it had in any particular area of public life, whether broadcasting had potential relevance to it or not, were never strictly defined in legislation. Its role in the education system was only a presumption, by itself and others, with no statutory status. The BBC also had some of the appearance of the second group. It was widely regarded as having the imperative 'to educate', it employed schools producers to be in effect professional educators, and the form of school broadcasting, particularly when it addressed learners directly, gave it the semblance of a surrogate teacher. But again this was deceptive, with surprisingly few consequences in practical or official terms. When the BBC 'informed' and 'entertained' in its general programming, it in a sense replicated alternative institutional providers of these things such as newspapers or cinemas. But conversely, while the BBC was also said to 'educate', it did not attempt to replicate the role of the school. It relied on and served school teachers, rather than school pupils. Unlike other forms of broadcasting, it needed the approval of a gatekeeper audience who controlled its use. Therefore, ultimately the BBC was most akin to the third group, the educational resource providers. But again the BBC was highly anomalous in this group of mainly commercial educational publishers; it was principally a broadcaster, and its public rather than commercial status meant that it had quite different legal opportunities and limitations.

The BBC's interaction with these groups, and its status in these domains would determine how BBC Schools would fare in the education system.

The Political Domain: Government and Regulation

At the level of government legislation, the regulatory conditions of broadcasting permitted the relatively free development of school broadcasting in the extended period. The government did not specifically oblige the BBC to produce school broadcasting, but did not interfere when the

BBC interpreted its public service responsibilities as entailing a relatively comprehensive school broadcasting service. ITV also interpreted its remit this way, providing school television from 1957, even before the Pilkington Report. ITV's healthy advertising income and the BBC's monopoly and licence fee income ensured that ventures like school broadcasting were financially viable. By way of comparison, in the largely non-public service broadcasting environment of the USA, school broadcasting was the preserve of local public stations, which produced relatively low quality product, (until the independently funded *Sesame Street)*. The USA never developed a school broadcasting sector in the way that nations with extensive PSB regimes did.

However while the government did not hinder school broadcasting, neither did it offer help. Of the potential areas in which active policies towards school broadcasting may have been formed; broadcasting content, the provision of educational resources, or prescription of the curriculum; none were traditionally directly subject to central government. Consequently it largely ignored school broadcasting. Despite perennial hope and occasional inquiries by the BBC/SBC, the government never provided any general funding for the production of school broadcasting, excepting small scale specific projects in the 1980s. A grant-in-aid akin to that provided for the World Service was asked for but rejected. This possibility emerged in the 1960s, but resulted only in government funding for higher education broadcasting through the Open University. The watershed reforms at the end of the 1980s in education (1988) and broadcasting (1990) gave no impetus to build or perpetuate public service broadcasting as an instrument of education.

The question of whether school broadcasting had any status at the strategic level of national educational policy was not in the BBC's power to determine: it was a government question. In effect it was still moot while broadcasting was still in its relative infancy. Between the Second World War and the end of the 1960s, the national education and broadcasting systems developed technologically and organisationally to the point that there was now good reason to form a positive national policy. The logic of this was arguably that school broadcasting be moved out of the BBC altogether, and some including John Scupham thought that this was inevitable. The question came to a head in the 1960s when after Pilkington the BBC approached the height of its power and authority, and there was a vogue for the possibilities of technology in education. For various reasons, including the fact that the BBC had already built a highly effective service in effect by itself, this moment passed without fundamental reform. However in fact the BBC was reaching the practical limit of what it could achieve in schools without some kind of other change in the education system, whether this was at the level of legislation or practice.

This change began to happen in practice but not legislation. The flourishing of creative curriculum resource development of which the BBC was a leading part, and which was slowly transforming schools, had actually been made possible by the absence of government intervention in the school curriculum. This also meant that when the government reversed this policy in the late 1980s, the newly prescriptive national curriculum limited the creative possibilities for school broadcasting. School broadcasting became less like the other parts of the BBC where producers were able and expected to create and enact new ideas, and as a consequence of less interest to producers. Furthermore, some of the BBC's most popular and

successful programmes were also the ones which were the least appropriate to the new conditions of the national curriculum. Miscellany series like *Watch!*, which supported curriculum flexible project work, special activities supported by series like *Music Movement and Mime* which were tangential to basic skills, and enrichment series with no specific and measurable learning goals, were all now in terminally declining demand. The national curriculum did not destroy the value of the audio-visual in education or in schools but in the circumstances was an important factor in the decline of BBC school broadcasting.

The Pedagogical Domain: Teachers, Schools and LEAs

At the practical end of the education system were teachers, classrooms and pupils. The status of BBC Schools in the education system depended partly on its appeal in this arena, and also somewhat on its involvement with it. The nature of school broadcasting meant that its production and its use were intertwined in a way anomalous with other broadcast genres. Because it was a tool to be used, its design required a great deal of reciprocation and cooperation on the part of the users. BBC Schools shared some of the authority of school teachers in determining the curriculum and Schools producers shared time and space in the teacher's domain, albeit in an abstract and remote way.

In many ways their worlds were separate. This was most obvious in the early days of broadcasting when radio was a novel and rarefied technology about which the public knew little. This was to some extent exacerbated by the monolithic character of the BBC and the professionalization and mystification of the production process. The discrepancy in numbers involved was vast – a handful of broadcasters and SBC staff serving thousands of teachers and pupils. Increasing professionalization and complexification in their required skillsets tended to move them still further apart from each other.

In some cases producers did form meaningful relationships with groups of teachers. The SBC involved teachers in its own activities as representatives on its committees, and EOs consulted teachers and monitored their use of broadcasts. In the cases of particular series with important followings and curricular roles, such as *Singing Together* or *Watch!*, a more organic relationship between the domains grew up. In the 1960s there was a softening of the division between the domains of broadcaster and school teacher. Consumer recording technology allowed a more ergonomic relationship between teacher and material. New developments such as the CCTV experiments by some LEAs and universities and schools meant that audio-visual technology was adopted by more groups. To some extent ITV's more regional basis gave it at least the potential for a more democratic relationship to its audience. The extensive consultation involved in school broadcasting was even seen by one practitioner-theorist as a model for a democratic television (Groombridge 1972). But this was more aspiration than reality. It was only rarely and slightly that teachers were meaningfully involved in the world of school broadcasting. Neither of the big broadcasting organisations proved amenable to participation in the democratic sense.

Educationists comprise an overlapping but subtly separate category to school teachers. They include teacher trainers, academics, prominent administrators such as LEA chiefs and

independent writers and thinkers. They shared with government the status and power to make decisions and lead opinions in the education system, ultimately determining the course that school broadcasting would take. That audience was never addressed by school broadcasts (indeed rarely heard or saw it), but its approval was most important in the long-term. While there was great variation within this group, arguably the most important movement in educational theory and practice among them was progressivism. It is a vague term, but certain common beliefs were widely held. Several were or seemed to be antithetical to the use of broadcasting in education. One belief was the deleterious effect of the modern media in general. Another was the idea that first-hand (unmediated) experience and activity were the foundation of all learning. The effect of this is difficult to detect because it is manifested by the absence of positive expressions of opinion. But there is evidence that does demonstrate progressivists' negative attitude towards school broadcasting at the highest levels. It has to be counted as a limiting factor on what would otherwise have been greater uptake in education at all levels.

Popularity without Prestige

Uptake figures prove that school broadcasting was popular with practising school teachers. Before the national curriculum, they generally had great freedom over their methods, resources and curricula, and the BBC offered cheap, effective and attractive resources. However this popularity was chiefly with the teachers, types of school and practice which themselves held lower prestige.

While school broadcasting expanded From the 1930s to 1960s, older teachers who had already found their own curricula and resources could continue their practice without it. Younger teachers with a still developing practice were more amenable, but they had lower prestige within schools. However even by the 1970s and 1980s, once school broadcasting had a track record and a history, it remained stigmatised as a substitution for a teacher's proper command of his or her own lesson planning. The legacy of a segregated school system of state and private schools, the tripartite settlement of 1944, and comprehensivisation meant that prestige also pertained to some types of school more than others. School broadcasting was favoured by the newer, experimental and innovative forms of school and teacher, in primaries, comprehensives and secondary moderns. They had more interest in new methods than the exam-focused, resource-rich, established, conservative grammar and private schools.

This situation was somewhat exacerbated as the BBC, following its audience, deliberately catered for these constituencies. For the sake of efficiency and to reach the largest audience it was prudent to aim for the middle ground, which in statistical terms meant average pupils in secondary moderns and comprehensives. On top of this, broadcasting was thought by some, including senior figures like John Scupham, to have inherently greater appeal and usefulness for lower achievers in general. Lower achievers were thought to prefer 'concrete' experience, and broadcasting was thought to be ideal at presenting this. Some of BBC Schools' most successful programmes, such as *Scene*, and *Look and Read*, were addressed to lower achievers. Broadcasts were widely used with all ability groups, but were more associated with the lower achieving group than the higher, especially in the early years of school television. This situation had a negative effect on the prestige of the service. Those in the higher professions or

government, who were in a position to take decisions or form opinions which affected school broadcasting on a national level, were drawn disproportionately from grammar and private schools and were less likely to have ever seen or heard it while at school, or be aware of its importance.

This aspect of school broadcasting history mirrors that of curriculum innovation in general as demonstrated by the history of the Schools Council. During the curriculum debates following 1976, popular political opinion turned away from innovation in the curriculum towards basic skills, and dependable testable outcomes. The national curriculum which emerged was similar to the classic grammar school curriculum that innovators had attempted to move away from. School broadcasting's vivid alternative methods also fell from favour.

Factors Specific to the SBC

The BBC created the advisory machinery of the CCSB/SBC for three main reasons: firstly to make sure that broadcasts would be sound as educational resources; secondly, to persuade teachers to use them; and thirdly, to improve the BBC's relationship with the educational world. To make its power real, it was given a (diluted) commissioning role. It could be said that BBC Schools used the CCSB/SBC to stake its territory in the political and pedagogical domains.

In many ways the SBC was a great asset to BBC Schools. The long perpetuation of both organisations is prima facie evidence of the relationship's success, and to the SBC's ability to guide policy. The SBC provided contacts and network for department staff, acted as a legitimiser and a shield from controversy and provided an effective feedback service, serving the BBC and its audience well. At their best, EO reports are studied, informed and considered expressions of educational research, well-informed on theory and practice. The practical orientation of this research helped the BBC to express theory through practice. Looking beyond the extended period of this thesis, it is unlikely to be a coincidence that the disbandment of the SBC in 2000 preceded the eventual disaster for BBC Schools over the Digital Curriculum or BBC Jam in 2008.

However examples of SBC opinion affecting output in a direct or comprehensive way are hard to identify: it was called with some justification, a 'rubber-stamping body'. The SBC became increasingly streamlined, and especially after the output ceased to expand, SBC committee activity became somewhat listless. The SBC had great apparent constitutional power over the output, and this had certain effects, but these were procedural rather than substantive. In fact the extended development and production process entailed by the committee decision making structure negated one advantage that broadcasting had over publishing: immediacy. School broadcasting was prevented from commenting on or cover real world events as they happened like normal broadcasting could.

In several ways the advisory machinery was ultimately a weak stake in the education system. It was not integrated with the real power structures in education and its voice did not have sufficient authority at national level. What is key to the issue is the way that the SBC was set

up: it was a BBC initiative. The SBC had no official authority with the government or the educational world, except for featuring its representatives on its committees. Consequently, at a crucial moment when the government attempted to move into school broadcasting in the 1960s, it was not necessary to consult or involve the SBC. While the SBC could be said to represent the educational world, it had little power to act upon school broadcasting on the educational world's behalf. Had the educational world in any sense attempted to influence school broadcasting as it were from the outside, through the SBC, this could be easily blocked by the BBC, who ultimately held the power over what was produced. What control the SBC had over school broadcasting was over content policy, not at the strategic level. In any case 'the educational world' was diverse, and did not have a coherent policy, or even necessarily a consistent interest in school broadcasting.

As a BBC initiative, the CCSB/SBC served BBC interests. The original collaborative conception of the advisory machinery of the CCSB was diluted relatively soon after its foundation, to tip the balance back towards department control. Further revisions to the SBC further streamlined the decision making process and it remained side-lined by producers who exercised the real control over broadcasts. The SBC never acted as an effective mandatory body of the producers in the department, as it had no strategic powers over issues like budgets. Independently of the regularly revolving committee membership, the SBC had a permanent staff and was a kind of educational research body with some identity of its own. But in this it was essentially part of the BBC. Compared to dedicated research institutions, it had little pure research capacity, and curriculum resource development essentially relied on producers.

Factors Specific to the BBC

As school broadcasting was tied to the educational world it is a part of education history. But because for purposes of management, design, governance and funding, it was part of the BBC (and later ITV), it is part of broadcasting history. Mostly, changes in school broadcasting tended to follow changes in broadcasting rather than in education and schools.

That school broadcasting began on the BBC is a contingent historical fact. As a working group of BBC radio staff later observed "Broadcasting to schools was accepted from the beginning under Reith as a BBC responsibility because there was no one else then able to do it" (Briggs 1995: 740). In fact Schools production always sat uncomfortably in a BBC otherwise directed towards informing and entertaining. One question which had been left unresolved from the founding of the BBC was whether school broadcasting was ultimately a special and separate function, with its own status and privileges, or ultimately a normal department and therefore working alongside and in competition with others for resources and airtime. The fact that the production process, objectives and audience of Schools series were very different to those in other departments indicated the former situation. Yet the way that the BBC was organised, and its programmes distributed – a unified staff and limited menu of channels – meant that pressure was greater towards the latter.

At the beginning of the Reithian BBC, education (in some sense) was at the top of the BBC's priorities. But this priority was very broadly conceived, and as the BBC took on its modern

form, and its opportunities, limitations and audiences became clearer, it allocated resources to school broadcasting accordingly. Educationally speaking, there was no practical limit to the amount of school broadcasting that would be useful and the SBC often asked for developments that could not be afforded. The potential audiences, especially for the more minority series, were low compared to general broadcasting. The task of the unified and universalist BBC was to allow for adequate and reasonable expansion given the available resources.

Being part of the BBC (leaving aside ITV) was beneficial to school broadcasting, because it meant access to huge technical resources and personnel, and cultural cachet. One way of telling broadcasting history is through the professional and social phenomenon of the producer. The circumstances of the BBC allowed the development of a cadre of professional school broadcasters who largely worked together to achieve a common goal, using technology. Many series were aimed at kids who were not being reached in other ways, and in this way the BBC was part of the extension of education and educational change. School producers were more like craftspeople than educationists, and were in effect research practitioners. Therefore their best ideas were technical audio-visual solutions, matching form to content.

Being part of the BBC also hindered school broadcasting in some ways. The organisation of school broadcasting in the BBC meant that its control was divided. All planning and production was by the schools departments, but budgets, resources and much of the manpower was drawn from the television and radio directorates. The school radio and school television departments were unhelpfully isolated from each other. The corporate memory of production was locked up in individuals and did not necessarily translate into procedures that could be perpetuated. Ultimately, neither the BBC nor the SBC was designed or equipped to operate as a truly coherent educational broadcasting institution, indeed what this might mean in practical and statutory terms was and has never been settled. After the 1960s, school broadcasting was arguably a gradually decreasing priority for the BBC. Both school production departments were condescended upon by others, and the differences inherent to them were viewed as inconvenient. School radio was allowed to wither by senior management.

Another negative consequence of being attached to the BBC can be seen in the cumbersome system of publication distribution. This was built with impeccable public service principles – not for profit and on educational rather than commercial imperatives. But it also meant that the BBC had little room or incentive to match the professionalism of the commercial publishers in market research, publicity and distribution. The market for audio-visual educational resources was dominated by a duopoly of BBC and ITV. As these were both free at the point of use, in a sense only a tiny real commercial market existed, for films and audio tapes by educational publishers. For printed materials there was a real market, and here the BBC was overtaken by commercial educational publishers to the point that co-publishing became the only option by the 1980s. Public service principles and public ownership had prevented the BBC from competing in this market effectively – but it was precisely this coexistence of distinct statuses that made the educational resource market how it was. To rationalise the situation (in legislative terms) would have been to make educational resource provision either wholly commercial and private, or wholly public. By the 2000s only the former option was politically possible.

Educational Value

This thesis has not defined educational effectiveness in the relatively narrow sense of directly causing or facilitating teaching and learning. The definition hinges on the perpetual ambiguity of what function school broadcasting was supposed to perform. The service changed its conception of its output from being 'enrichment' to 'learning resources', with occasional attempts to offer 'direct teaching'. This last one was the only one which aimed to directly cause learning – but of the three it was the least often claimed to be the function of school broadcasting.

A great advance in educational theory was the discovery of the constructivist basis of learning. Interaction and activity are essential to learning, and it is on the face of it, plausible to argue that these are antithetical to school broadcasting. The BBC's response was to insist that broadcasts were compatible with interaction and discovery, if at a point removed from the viewing and listening stage, or that the activity that took place was mental and imaginative – something like that which occurs when reading a book. If school broadcasting is conceived as a learning resource, which can be used to support a variety of educational activities, its educational value becomes easier to recognise. It also makes it much harder to measure. Quantitative testing methods have rarely been used to assess school broadcasting and are methodologically problematic.

The value of some series is certainly suggested by their extraordinary popularity. However regardless of the intrinsic value of school broadcasting in general, it remained true that programmes could be well made or badly made. Some programmes did not work because they were either boring "wallpaper"[360] or interesting as broadcasts but not useful as education (producers "pleasing themselves"[361]). School broadcasts were no less difficult to produce than other kinds, indeed arguably the specific demands on them to precipitate certain practical situations and effects made them more difficult. Failure mattered because of the stakes involved. Due to the expense of creating a series and the policy of non-replication with ITV, there was generally only one school broadcast option available to a teacher for a particular subject and level in a given year. If it was good then it could be very widely used among teachers, but if not then it could mean a lot of wasted effort until that programme was reformed. Meanwhile, educational publishers provided multiple competing textbooks to choose from. To some extent, when school broadcasts were shunned it was because they were, or were perceived to be, lacking in usefulness as educational resources.

Role at National Level

What then, with these factors in play, was the role that BBC Schools played in the education system? Three potential conceptions existed. The first was the least viable. Compared directly to schools themselves, BBC Schools had no licence to take a central and comprehensive role as a provider of education and it was not seen this way.

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[360] Innes, Sheila, interview with the author 6th February 2018
[361] BBC Oral History Archive, Gwynne Jones, Eurfron; Gillard, Frank, Interviewer, 19th February 1997.

A second conception was as a comprehensive provider of educational resources. In theory, BBC Schools had extraordinary potential power. As part of a royally chartered public service broadcaster, it had greater reach, authority and financial resources than any other educational resource provider. Of the public organisations with comparable authority; LEAs did not operate on a national level, the DES was not in the business of curriculum provision, and neither actually produced educational resources. The Schools Council was similar in some ways, but it only sponsored research and again did not produce resources itself. In chartering the BBC the government had inadvertently created a national public educational resource provider. However, the BBC was not seen in this way either; it always co-existed with a commercial educational resource market, and was only permitted to operate in it at all only while broadcasting was not yet converged with other media.

A third, yet more modest conception was as a kind of campaigning leader, where the BBC would try to solve contingent problems with specific audiences and goals. Short term projects like the direct teaching of science and maths in the 1960s can be seen in this light, as can the Adult Literacy Project. The BBC was good at this, and politically it helpfully avoided encroaching on commercial territory, but in the long run, this function worked against the BBC on a strategic level. A series with a temporary campaigning aspect was soon forgotten.

Ultimately BBC Schools was most suited to a modified version of the second conception: taking a leading but not monopoly role in national resource provision. As the service expanded the range of the subjects it covered and moved towards a 'learning resources' conception, its importance in the education system increased and it improved its coordinating function. The example of *Watch!* is important. It was not a campaigning leader – it did not solve contingent problems, but in the context of the flexible, project-based primary curriculum it was at its best a focus, a concentration of expertise and good material, for teachers to build around. The coordination with museums and libraries added value, and needed the focus of the broadcast to work.

Certain series became entrenched, long-running and popular because they were indispensable excellent resources. Series like *Look and Read*, *Music and Movement*, *Singing Together,* and *A Service for Schools* identified gaps in education provision and dealt with them in broadcasting specific ways, using the medium intelligently and creatively, a quality Scupham called the "boldness of the main design" (1967: 165). In these cases the BBC used its independence and strengths to solve problems and fill gaps, and its help was gladly accepted.

By the mid-1970s this was an increase in quality rather than quantity of output. The service was reaching saturation point in several respects. Publications in particular suffered from economic conditions. The BBC did not increase expenditure on school broadcasting because it was no longer a strategic priority. Curriculum coverage and teacher uptake were already high and any increase in output would likely only produce marginal gains. Because broadcasts were designed to be immensely generative of additional school time it was not practical for teachers to use much more than one or two series per teacher per week. The obvious major remaining barrier was the insufficient spread of recording and playback equipment. By the end of the

1980s this had largely been overcome, and BBC Schools' role at national level as a leading educational resource provider was at its height.

Its success in playing this role meant that it changed the education system itself. In certain ways school broadcasting fundamentally didn't fit the school system. Teachers were always uncomfortable delegating their role as mediators. School broadcasting was relatively 'open', in that it was potentially not tied to the institutional framework of the school, and therefore tentatively offered a radical alternative to school. It did so in a way that was different to the radically democratic or anarchistic 'de-schooling' movement, but suffered from the same reaction. Gradually from the 1980s the school system became more controlled by central government and more tied to standardised curriculum and testing regimes.

On one hand school broadcasting can be seen as part of the curriculum development movement that included the innovative materials sponsored by the Nuffield Foundation or the Schools Council. Ideas about what a curriculum should be were closely tied to what methods of delivery should be. After 1988 the opportunity for curriculum innovation was removed from BBC Schools and the wind fell out of this movement. The department could not play to its strength of enrichment because anything that was not relevant to the national curriculum would have a very limited audience. Instead Schools output became tied to a curriculum defined elsewhere, and lost its native appeal. The removal of responsibility from these resource providers was a mistake, if only because broadcasters continued to exert cultural influence informally outside of schools, but now did so without any obligation to educate. Meanwhile the government was now the grand arbiter of educational content.

On the other hand school broadcasting was different from other curriculum development schemes in that it had no remit to change classroom practices and procedures, or to consider organisational reforms in education. The BBC was necessarily excluded from issues like the development of new examinations, with which The Schools Council was tasked. The effects of school broadcasting on classroom practice were implied rather than argued for. Its activity was focused on the nature of communication and the intrinsic properties of educational resources. It is best seen alongside developments in educational publishing, as part of the stream of mediated communication that flowed into schools during the 20th century.

2
What Was the Relationship between BBC Schools and Educational Research?

Educational research was relatively undeveloped as an academic discipline in early period of school broadcasting in the 1920s and 1930s. Most educational theorising was the legacy of philosophical thought, which was a very rich tradition, but only a vague basis for curriculum resource development. School broadcasting was a startling innovation and the BBC had an opportunity to align with the cutting edge of educational theory, but what this meant in practice was at first an open question. One prominent strain of empirical research that did exist, psychometrics, was at first widely accepted, but in fact it signified little for educational reform, and was misused. The theoretical backing that progressivism drew on, partly from the

psychology of Freud, James, and later Piaget, was not necessarily educational in character, though it had implications for education. Attempts to turn progressive ideas into practical schemes, for example by Montessori or the Froebel Society were based on principles rather than research, and proved difficult to replicate beyond their founders. Neither was educational publishing a useful guide, as textbooks – traditionally an aid to memorising facts – were tied to classroom practices that were changing as progressivism won mainstream acceptance.

Educational research improved gradually. Organisations like the Schools Council, the Nuffield Foundation, the National Foundation for Educational Research and the National Council for Educational technology made strides in curriculum resource development in the 1960s. Colleges of Education and Universities expanded their research capacity and began ambitious programmes of research in sociology and child development. During the 1970s educational research in the empirical positivist sense, into testing attainment and outcomes of classroom methods, began to bear useful fruit. In the event this produced results that stimulated what became a heated debate over progressive methods. A new critical sociology and psychology doubted whether empiricism and positivism was a valid methodology at all, due to its implication in power structures. While this critique may have been valid, it was of questionable relevance for educational broadcasters.

The SBC/BBC was caught between a number of different research agendas and traditions. It had been born in the world of early, broad-church progressivism and developed its own practice tradition of enrichment and mediated experience, basically within a progressive theoretical framework – but with an entirely separate and alternative practical framework. It was interested in the empirical media effects tradition, but unable to take advantage of it because there were little results of direct relevance. It existed at some remove from academics' social, professional and practical worlds.

The BBC/SBC was not designed or equipped for educational research in the way that university departments, or researchers funded by foundations were. Yet it had research capacity and an immediate conduit for its development through practice in the design and qualitative testing of broadcast series. Education officers did not study attainment by pupils. As the assessment of attainment grew in importance in the political narrative of educational research, and began to influence government policy, the importance of school broadcasting diminished.

3
How Was Progressivism Expressed through BBC School Broadcasting Literacy Programmes?

Trends in literacy research followed those of educational research in general in that outcomes-based empirical research developed in the mid-twentieth century. NFER-funded research into literacy attainment showed a surprisingly low rate of literacy 1945-1970. Joyce Morris's involvement in this research led to her development and promotion of phonics and her involvement with the BBC. Therefore there was a direct link between empirical outcomes-

based research, the development of phonics and its dissemination by BBC Schools through its literacy programmes.

Early progressivism had little developed theory on literacy, and what it had tended to emphasise literacy as a component of a child's 'growth' in general. It incorporated the idea of a dedicated reading-teaching method only reluctantly. It was partly this laxity that frustrated Morris as she campaigned to drive up literacy rates by improving teaching methods. Therefore phonics was not a progressive method – it contradicted some progressive principles and it was shunned by some progressive teachers. That the BBC and the SBC adopted phonics for *Look and Read* and *Words and Pictures* was indicative of its independence from the progressive movement. As literacy theory in a progressive framework developed, attaining considerable complexity by the 1970s, it emphasised a rich text environmental approach, reading for meaning, and real books. BBC School radio followed this path with *Listening and Reading*.

One of the reasons why they differed was that *Look and Read* was specifically designed for lower achieving readers. Given favourable circumstances, opportunity to practise and some motivation, most children learn to read without the need for systematic methods like phonics. Systematic methods become more important for children who have not been able to learn to read in the normal way or at a normal speed. One of the most unfortunate features of organised schooling, the class system, necessitates that all members of a class make progress at roughly the same rate. If a child falls behind, there is little opportunity to catch up. In cases where learning is not achieved at first input, one way of speeding up the process is to simplify or systematise the target learning to make it easier to comprehend. This is a subset of the refinement of pedagogy in the 20th century – the devising of simplified systems or models of more complex processes, designed to appeal to human perceptive and cognitive faculties. Teachers need a model of the written language to demonstrate in a clear and simple way how to read.

The use of phonics in itself was not crucial to the success of *Look and Read*. It was the combination of phonics with looking, hearing and reading, and reading for meaning which was implied through the use of the dramas and their attached primer story books. *Look and Read* as a whole used a range of methods which added up to a method all of its own. *Look and Read* was an elaborate model of learning to read through its courting of psychological mechanism of the cliff-hanger drama, phonics, and the audio-visual, and was in this way a constructivist project.

It is in these circumstances that the development of phonics should be seen. Morris was working at a time when it ceased to be considered acceptable for even a small minority of citizens to be illiterate. She wanted to devise a method of teaching and learning reading that was almost guaranteed to work, and her efforts had a very democratic and egalitarian aspect, as had the BBC's. In *Look and Read*, the BBC identified a blind spot for schools and progressivists, and resources on a national level. Because of the conditions relating to the position of the BBC in the education system described above, when phonics eventually attained a hegemonic position in schools with the Rose Report of 2006, it was noticed by few that this situation had been prepared by the BBC's producing a world-class resource supporting the method for the previous 40 years.

4

How Was Linguistic Theory Expressed through BBC School Broadcasting Literacy Programmes?

For broad historical reasons there are differences in the way people use language in the UK which vary most noticeably along class lines. Due to Britain's transition to social democracy, and particular developments like universal secondary education and expansion in higher education, these differences became a matter of keen public interest in the 1950s and 1960s. The other reason was that the emergence of audio broadcasting, and more importantly, recording technology had foregrounded the form, previously neglected, in which class differences were most noticeable: talk. Now researchers, linguists and teachers began to pay detailed attention to spoken language, and found that it was rich and complex. Working class language had always been mostly limited to expression through talk, but now this had its own arena. The uncovering of the vast complexity of linguistic phenomena by the great expansion in linguistic research at that time showed that the significance of linguistic differences was by no means a straightforward matter, and suggested that it was not amenable to understanding, still less solving, even if solution was a desirable outcome. What prompted the search for a position of some concreteness on the issue was that state schooling, and nursery schooling, necessitated some kind of educational policy for literacy teaching. Therefore literacy school broadcasting was at the crux of fundamental questions about communication, media, education and democracy.

Some language, the normal language of talk, storytelling, day-to-day transactional language, etc., is learned automatically from wider culture. Reading and writing falls into another category and is learned through more or less formal teaching and learning – one of the principal functions of modern schooling. What is striking in the debates over what form literacy teaching ought to take is that even those who thought that the teaching of literacy could be isolated from the rest of learning and the rest of life, did not think that literacy itself could. More or less everyone agrees that what it means to be literate entails a full and rich engagement with life and learning. What is in question is what it means to become literate. The problem is that once the responsibility for learning about language is in a sense taken out of normal culture, and put into school, linguistic forms associated with high prestige social activities: literary, legalistic, academic etc. are at the top of the ensuing hierarchy of genres that schools perpetuate. This objective, academic and impersonal language, Basil Bernstein called the elaborated code.

For some, it was the fact of the indivisible link between literacy and life which was most important in determining its pedagogy. This is why functional linguistics and sociolinguistics seem to offer guidance as to the form literacy education ought to take. One of the characteristics of functional linguistics was that it offers a way of understanding and classifying real instances of language use in the world. The functionalists attempted to codify all the panoply of normal language culture into genres and functions, negating the hierarchy of genres and bringing normal culture into literacy learning. For functional linguistics, there was no right or wrong grammar, only appropriate or inappropriate grammar. Functional linguistics was not aligned

with progressivism in the classic sense, but can be seen alongside the movement, as a literacy theory in progressive shape. In its foregrounding of real texts, motivated expression and the whole language approach, and its social orientation, functional linguistics had much sympathy with late progressivism.

By extension, to the 'new literacists', literacy has no relevance outside specific social and economic contexts. They doubt that becoming literate in the classic sense (a state they dismiss as fiction) confers 'autonomous' powers, either in cultural historical terms or in cognitive psychological terms. Written language can do a few things – it allows structure and subdivision, complexity, and putting things in order of importance. But schools are wrong to valorise these, as they result only in the extemporisation and equivocation which characterises middle class speech – and by extension conduct as well.

This functionalist and sociolinguistic view of literacy inevitably has an uneasy relationship with broadcasting. The political, social and cultural reasons which cause schools to perpetuate certain standard language forms, also affect national cultural organisations like the BBC. Language use on the BBC by its nature had to be in the elaborated code and automatically remove words and their meanings from incidental contexts into a general universal realm. As Seaton observes, the BBC as a public body could never do "the expressive politics of the street" (Curran and Seaton 2018: 213). Going further, we might say that the BBC struggled to do the expressive anything of the street, because it did not operate on street level. The restricted code works in dialogue, which as the conversation analysts found, contained a rich subtlety. Its unscripted, unobserved, unrecorded nature made it incompatible with broadcasting, as did its reality – utilised in the moment of real actions. It is the essence of it that it cannot be codified and taught, it is of the moment and is creative, contingent, temporal and phenomenal.

Yet gradually, and increasingly from the 1960s, some version of restricted code language was broadcast more frequently. To Groombridge, television "established the public use of oral speech". This can be seen most obviously in developments like observational documentaries and radio phone-ins. It was reflected by some school programmes which began to feature children's real voices. But the BBC faced a dilemma when it attempted to address rather than simply reflect class differences in its literacy programming of the 1970s. Feedback and theory gave the message that the language used ought not to be middle class. But the implications of this were unclear – surely it was both dishonest and difficult to deliberately use language in a way that went against the training and instincts of producers, all of whom had been to university and often grammar school before that.

In fact this dilemma masked another deeper problem. The linguistics of Bernstein and Halliday theorised that the fundamental character of class variations in language were due to the functions their speakers used language to perform. What made this controversial – and powerful – was that it contained a social critique. The working class were restricted to language forms and functions because of their structural class position. Bernstein maintained that the orientation towards the restricted code was not the result of a cognitive deficit, but of a socio-economic deficit. This forced sociologists like him into a precarious position. If the difference in the material conditions of the classes was unfair, as it clearly was, then this unfairness must be manifest in an inferiority of working class life and culture. But when sociologists examined

this life and culture, they sought not its suppression but instead its validation, which had the opposite effect of arguing that working class experience was not in fact inferior. To get any further with the matter, we must examine the relationship between education and experience, and the unique role that broadcasting plays in this.

5
Education, Broadcasting and Experience

The classic conception of school broadcasting was 'enrichment'. The term's vagueness usefully captured the great diversity of what the BBC could broadcast for schools, while helping identify it with the classic progressive notion of education. Educational writing of the mid-20th century, including that by BBC Schools staff, was the product of what Langham refers to as Britain's "articulate, non-specialist, educated class (what a later commentator called the "moralizing literati" (Halloran 1964)), who were accustomed by their education to think in broad cultural, philosophical and historical terms" (Langham 1990: 54). It was a milieu in which educationists were happy to couch their thoughts about education in rich, subjective, literary – we might today say 'qualitative' – prose, and a report (by Kenneth Fawdry, while still SEO, on a *Senior English II* excerpt from *Hamlet*) which included the "opinion… (that) I don't think these girls will read Shakespeare when they leave school, but three or four may well queue for the gallery"[362] could be viewed as valid educational research. The term 'enrichment', along with the broad style of educational thought, has fallen out of fashion in the contemporary era of definable and measurable outcomes in education.

Curiously, the term's opposite, presumably; 'impoverishment', had a rich significance in the emerging discipline of sociology. In this discourse it was usually meant in the material sense of economic poverty, but in classic educational progressivism, 'enrichment' could be applied to a person's 'experience'. Our use of the word 'experience' masks the fact that as a concept it is a bewilderingly complex problem of philosophy, psychology and neuroscience, yet it is perhaps its breadth of meaning that makes it useful. Progressive educational theorists like Dewey concluded that the deepest form of learning was that which affected one's own life as experience. In this sense education was part of real life – one learnt by seeing and doing. Therefore one part of the progressive project was to make education as much like real life as possible, and to put the school in the real world. But to have predictable and controllable outcomes schools were typically closed off and separated from the real world. Therefore the compromise solution was to make school experience into a model of real experience. Schools were made to match the constructivist conception of what learning is – considering models and constructing models in minds.

However the progressivist notion of education as the enrichment of experience had an uncomfortable corollary. The experience of a child which had not been progressively 'enriched' would be therefore presumably remain 'impoverished'. It is no surprise that it was in the lives and the language of the working class, that the still patrician and class-bound milieu of the mid-century British establishment, even in its progressive guise as represented by the

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[362] WAC R16/903/1 Senior English II, Kenneth Fawdry, 13th May 1958

Plowden Report, saw the most impoverished experience. Concurrently, broadcasting was said to be able to 'extend experience'. Therefore both progressivism and BBC school broadcasting addressed one of the fundamental questions of modern society – an individual's rights to and the status of his or her own experience. Enrichment had no learning goals or procedure, but addressed a much more important and interesting educational question than attainment, outcomes and driving up 'standards' – whether educators should aim to curate experience, and if so, how?

The term 'experience' appears frequently in BBC Schools discourse, as in the two following examples, (my italics). Claire Chovil said that the basis of *You and Me* was

> …to get children to put ideas into words… the environment of many children… was insufficient for their reading development. The programme aimed to present *experiences* of everyday life to help the child to form concepts and to encourage questions while viewing it with an adult (Chovil 1975: 25).

Morris, who was so important in forming *Look and Read*, wrote;

> …the narrative mode provides children of all ages with the strongest motivation to read books. Yet, in most primary schools, narrative books are substantially outnumbered by non-fiction owing to an increased emphasis on learning through discovery and personal interests. Moreover, modern theories about 'relevance' in terms of children's first-hand *experience* have tended to obscure the equally important role of fantasy in their lives. (Morris 1975: 28)

The two statements show two different conceptions of literacy media for children. In the first, the experiences of young children should be depicted, recorded, and reflected back at them. The protagonists talk like children talk, or simply are real children talking. This was the route taken by *You and Me*, perhaps the most 'child centred' literacy series. Arguably the legacy of the child-centred tradition in children's programming is very visible today, particularly in popular Cbeebies series such as *Topsy and Tim* (2013-15) or *Bing* (2014-), in which the lives of young children are reflected back to them with only very light dramatization.

The other route is to attempt to avoid real language and real life altogether. *The Boy from Space*, and Richard Carpenter's other *Look and Read* serials, take place in richly fantastical imaginative worlds, where the avoidance of any attempt at social realism leaves the issue of class largely untouched. *Listening and Reading*, was of a different production style and format but it also hinged on the importance of narrative. The drama element of *Look and Read* was like enrichment: it presented its learning material as drama, and was supposed to be enjoyed as such.

But was enrichment experience? Does experience have to be direct, or is mediation, through for example radio or television, allowed? The status of mediated experience is a question fundamental to media studies, and it was illustrated graphically in the debate over how literacy ought to be taught that emerged during the 1960s. Broadcasting universalised meaning automatically and par excellence. The conditions and circumstances of particular human lives,

and individual experiences were impossible to replicate or depict. Indeed classrooms were themselves largely impermeable to individual experience – and broadcasting was blunter still. School broadcasting had a 'one-way' problem, in that it was unable to interact with pupils, and was therefore pedagogically unsatisfactory. Conversely, schools had the opposite problem – the language communities which working class children came from, did interact with schools, but were not valued - a 'two-way' problem. When one enters a speech or learning community, one does not simply slot in, one also has to fit within it and changes through doing so. In this case, 'two-way' interaction is not necessarily a help – if it leads to rejection. But conversely one-way broadcasting (and other recorded media like books) doesn't have that problem because it doesn't interact. It speaks to you from a culture, doesn't interact with you, and doesn't know what class you are.

Yet, vague and complex though the term may be, the twin and contradictory imperatives of either extending, or reflecting back 'experience' remain provocative for public service broadcasting in general and for educational broadcasting in particular. Ultimately, the BBC through its school broadcasting, offered mediated experience, and by doing so formed part of the education of many children during the 20th century.

Appendix A: Statistical Tables

Table 1: Number of Schools producers 1947-1990.
Tables 2 and 2.1. Publications. Number of Separate Schools Publications Produced and Sold, 1960/61 – 1983/84.
Table 3. Number of Separate Series Broadcast 1938/39 - 1989/90
Table 4. School Broadcasting Hours 1955/56 – 1997/98
Table 5. Schools Receiving/Using Broadcasts. 1938/39 - 1990/91

Table 1: *Number of Schools producers 1947-1990.*

Year	Number of Radio Producers	Number of Television Producers	Total
1947	22	NA	22
1948	29	NA	29
1949	29	NA	29
1950	29	NA	29
1951	31	NA	31
1952	31	NA	31
1953	31	NA	31
1954	-	NA	-
1955*	26*	NA	26*
1956	32	NA	32
1957	27	6	33
1958	25	9	34
1959	26	14	40
1960	26	23	49
1961	27	23	53 including vacancies
1962	26	27	53
1963	30	30	53 including vacancies
1964	31	33	64
1965	30	36	66
1966**	31	39	70
1967	31	37	68
1968	29	32	61
1969	35	39	71
1970	32	40	69
1971	29 (31****)	33 (39****)	59
1972	32	30	59
1973	31	32	60
1974	30	23	50
1975	30	28	55
1976	31	35	63
1977	32	37	66
1978	32	37	66
1979	32	39	68
1980	30	35	62
1981	-	37	-

1982	29	39	65
1983	30	42	69
1984	27	42	66
1985	NA	NA	NA
1986	NA	NA	NA
1987***	31	46	74
1988	NA	NA	NA
1989	NA	NA	NA
1990	36	46	79

Notes on Table 1

Figures taken mainly from BBC Staff Lists 1947 – 1990. See Key below.

The Schools Radio department was reformed into the Schools, Children and Youth Programmes Radio department in 1990.

This table counts all staff described as producers. Jobs were described differently in radio and television departments. From 1968, the schools radio department reorganised itself. From 1960 there was a 'senior producer' in each department. Thereafter the departments had 'heads of department'. By 1969 radio had a 'senior producer' and three 'chief assistants'. These were effectively executive producers.[363] Meanwhile, television adopted a similar structure, but these were called 'chief producers'.

Key to Table 1

NA – Not applicable. School Television did not start until 1957

- Not available

*The fall is explained by the redeployment of Schools producers to FE.

** From 1966 onwards there was a change in the way that Schools TV Staff are listed in the BBC Staff Lists. Prior to this year, programme assistants were listed below producers. After this year, they are not listed at all. I have adjusted for this by taking the ratio of producers to programme assistants, 20:16 as roughly 4:3, and multiplying the subsequent STV staff totals by 1.75, thereby achieving a rough figure for total TV staff production numbers, including producers and programme assistants.

*** The apparent increase in forces from c1987 is more likely to reflect grading and job description changes rather than genuine increase in producer numbers.

**** R78/2549/1 Educational Broadcasting Departments Appendix C

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[363] Prescott Thomas, John, interview with the author 15th March 2019

Table 2. *Number of Separate Schools Pamphlets Produced and Sold, 1960/61 – 1964/65.*

Year	Number of separate pamphlets produced	Number of publications sold
1938/39*	46	2,325,133
1946/47*	23	472,500
1947/48*	27	767,182
1948/49*	38	1,783,780
1949/50*	55	3,104,983
1950/51*	56	3,749,250
1951/52*	60	4,304,279
1952/53*	58	4,736,737
1953/54*	59	5,187,093
1954/55*	63	5,788,044
1955/56*	65	6,602,441
1956/57*	60	6.85m
1957/58*	70	7.78m
1958/59*	72	8.10m
1959/60*	72	8.31m
1960/61*	86 (88**)	9.60m
1961/62*	107	10.49m
1962/63*	116	10.78m
1963/64*	132	11.39m
1964/65*	131 (143~~) (354~~)	11.49m

Table 2.1 *Number of Separate Schools Publications Produced and Sold, 1964/65 – 1983/84.*

Year	Number of separate publications produced	Number of publications sold
1964/65*	131 (143~~) (354~~)	11.49m
1965/66**	390~~	12.84m
1966/67~~	-	12.67m
1967/68~~	-	12.47m
1968/69~~	-	12.47m
1969/1970^^	535 (132, 405~~)	12.76m~~
1970/71**	620 (552^^) (552~)	12.16m
1971/72	575^^ (565~~~)	-
1972/73***	679 (595****) (658^^) (604~) (595~~~)	11.44m
1973/74	624~	-
1974/75^^	638 (704^) (638~)	8.98m
1975/76^^	510 (583^) (583^^^) (513~)	5.74m
1976/77^^ ~	482 (564^) (564^^^) (482~)	6.69m
1977/78^^	410 (412^) (412^^^) (396~)	5.74m
1978/79^^	356 (373^) (373^^^)	6.06m
1979/80^^	403 (411^) (411^^^)	5.96m
1980/81^^^	365 (365^) (365^^^)	4.7m
1981/82^^^	257 (274^) (257^^^)	4.4m
1982/83^^^	257 (116^) (257^^^)	3.9m
1983/84	308^^^	-

Notes to Tables 2 and 2.1

The term 'publications' includes all items offered for sale.

Figures were not available beyond 1983/84.

Figures taken from a mixture of sources, see Key below.

There is difficulty in compiling these figures because of variance between sources. No single source covered the whole period. Several were at variance for a given year. The sources are listed below with a key.

The most obvious discrepancy is between the years 1964/65 and 1965/66, when the figure in column 2 jumps from 131 to 390. While the number of separate items produced per year did increase in the 1960s this was likely a steady increase and did not involve such a large jump in on year. The discrepancy is more likely due to a difference in compiling methods. The appearance of the discrepancy here is the result of a difference in source material. Prior to the years 1965/66, figures are taken from BBC Yearbooks. After this year the yearbooks cease to include the number of "pamphlets" and their "sales". After 1964/65 I have used other archive sources. These generally do not give details prior to this year which could be used for comparison, except for the year 1964/65 where the different pamphlets produced is quoted as

131 in the yearbook, and 143 in the archive source. The archive source quotes the total number of different items as 354. The most obvious reason for the discrepancy is that until 1965/66 there was no charge for the teacher's notes and they were not included in the total quoted. However the absence of this addition to the total does not fully account for the degree of discrepancy so it is not possible to explain.

The biggest discrepancy apart from this is in the year 1972/73 when the figures quoted range from 595 to 679.

The yearbooks 1960-1963 quote separate figures for number of radio series with pamphlets and notes (but not the total number of notes, and there are no figures for TV series). The figures could be calibrated by estimating the number of teachers' notes per year as a proportion of pamphlets. The number of radio series with pamphlets compared to the number with notes between 1958/59 and 1962/63) was: 26-20, 26-20, 37-31, 37-31, 47-41) In 1972/73 (see **** below), there were roughly twice as many teachers notes as there were pamphlets. This changing proportion means there is not enough evidence to perform this calibration.

Key to Tables 2 and 2.1

- Not available

*BBC Yearbooks 1958-1965.
Category is: "Pupils Pamphlets (meaning separate pamphlets)".

** WAC R16/693/1 BBC Schools Publications Comparative statistic and Financial Figures 1960/61, 1965/66 and 1970/71. 7th March 1972.
Category is: Pamphlets, Notes, Miscellaneous and Radiovision offered for sale.

***WAC R16/693/1 BBC Schools Publications Comparative statistic and Financial Figures, 1965/66 and 1972/73. 13th March 1972.
Category is: Pamphlets, Notes, Miscellaneous and Radiovision offered for sale.

**** WAC R78/2549/1 Educational Publications and BBC Enterprises. Appendix D.
Categories are: "326 Teacher's Notes, 145 Pupil's pamphlets, 22 Pupil's packages, worksheets, workbooks, 12 Folders of resource material, 49 Filmstrips for Radiovision, 27 8mm Film loops, 4 Hymnbooks and leaflets, 2 sets of wall pictures, 3 Long-playing records, 5 tapes"

^ WAC R99/95/1 BBC School Publications. July 1981.
Category is "Items".

^^ WAC R103/136/1 BBC School Publications Service 1982-3 onwards A Joint Study by ACEB and Ed Sec
Category is "Items".

^^^ WAC R103/167/1 BBC Schools Publications. February 1984.

Category is "Items".

~ WAC R103/270/1 BBC School Publications. January 1977.
Categories include Teachers notes, Booklets, Pupils' Pamphlets, Radiovision and notes and other items.

~~ WAC R103/271/1 The Ordering and Use of School Publications as Related to BBC Policies.
Categories include Pupil's Pamphlets, Teachers Notes, Wallpictures, maps folders, class packages and tapes, Filmstrips and slides, Film loops.
Lists sales figures. 1966/67 – 1969/70.
Also breaks down sales of pamphlets, teachers notes and filmstrips. I have included in brackets the figure of pamphlets for comparison with *, and secondly the total of pamphlets notes and filmstrips.

~~~ Yearbooks 1972-73
Yearbook 1972, p77
Category is: "309 Teacher's Notes, 154 Pupil's pamphlets, 15 Pupil's packages, worksheets, workbooks, 11 Folders of resource material, 40 Filmstrips for Radiovision, 27 8mm Film loops, 5 Hymnbooks and leaflets, 2 sets of wall pictures, 2 Long-playing records"

Yearbook 1973, p87
Category is: "326 Teacher's Notes, 145 Pupil's pamphlets, 22 Pupil's packages, worksheets, workbooks, 12 Folders of resource material, 49 Filmstrips for Radiovision, 27 8mm Film loops, 4 Hymnbooks and leaflets, 2 sets of wall pictures, 3 Long-playing records, 5 tapes"

Table 3. *Number of Separate Series Broadcast 1946-1990.*

Year	UK Radio Series	UK TV Series	Total UK Series	Scottish series	Welsh series	Northern Irish series	Total series
1938-39	24	NA	24	13	4	NA	41
1945/46	34	NA	34	2	3	NA	39
1946/47	36	NA	36	4	6	NA	46
1947/48	36	NA	36	5	6	NA	47
1948/49	36	NA	36	5	6	NA	47
1949/50	41	NA	41	6	8	NA	55
1950/51	41	NA	41	6	8	NA	55
1951/52	43	NA	43	6	8	NA	57
1952/53	41	NA	41	7	8	NA	56
1953/54	39	NA	39	7	8	NA	54
1954/55	-	NA	-	-	-	NA	-
1955/56	-	NA	-	-	-	NA	-
1956/57	-	NA	-	-	-	NA	-
1957/58	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-
1958/59	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-
1959/60	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-
1960/61	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-
1961/62	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-
1962/63	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-
1963/64	56	-	-	-	-	NA	-
1964/65	58	26	84	10	12	1	107
1965/66	59	-	-	-	-	-	-
1966/67	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1967/68	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1968/69	71	-	-	-	-	-	-
1969/70	69	-	-	-	-	-	-
1970/71	55	28	83	9	17	5	114
1971/72	59 (61*)	29 (30*)	88 (91*)	11	15	5	119 (122*)
1972/73	61	28	89	11	13	5	118
1973/74	62	28	90	12	13	5	121
1974/75	68	30	98	12	17	5	132
1975/76	67	31	98	16	14	5	133
1976/77	72	34	106	15	17	6	144
1977/78**	73 (66^)	34 (33^)	107 (99^)	16 (16^)	18 (19^)	6 (6^)	147 (140^)
1978/79	68	38	106	19	18	6	149
1979/80	76	47	123	21	16	7	167
1980/81	65	51	116	23	21	7	167
1981/82	77	59	136	23	20	7	186
1982/83	97	63	160	21	5	7	193
1983/84	104	74	178	19	20	7	224
1984/85	115	66	181	22	22	9	234
1985/86	119	70	189	20	22	11	244

Notes to Table 3

Figures taken unless otherwise stated from yearbooks/handbooks/annual reports 1945-1990, in some cases from reported figures and in other cases by counting series listed. Figures are not available after 1985/86.

The sharp rises from 1981/82 in both number of separate series and broadcast hours may be due partly to changes in categorisation rather than genuine increases in output.

The figure for each year does not distinguish between repeats and new productions. The number of newly produced series in any given year is not available to the author, though isolated evidence suggests a typical percentage per year. In 1971/72 the school television output was said to be "Series 30 (9 newly produced and 9 at least held newly produced material)" The School Radio output was said to be "Series 61 (36 completely new or almost completely new produced)" (WAC R78/2549/1 Educational Broadcasting Departments Appendix C). This would mean 30% originations and 70% repeats in television and 52% origination, 48% repeats in radio. However a different source for the same year, relates that in school television, "originations" were said to be 20% of output and repeats 80%. The figures for School radio were 65% originations and 35% repeats. (WAC R78/1181/1 RH Bates to AO Carter. 21st September 1972). In 1975-76, "Live" (presumed to have the same connotation as 'origination') output was said to be 86 ½ for school television with 350 ½ hrs for repeats, and the figures for school radio 561 and 246 respectively. (These do not square with the published figures for output hours in the yearbooks (see below)). This would mean again 20% originations and 80% repeats for television, and 69% originations and 31% repeats for radio. In 1977 Head of School Broadcasting Television said that there were around 1000 repeat transmission and 200 originations that year. (Microfilm minutes SBC Primary Committee II 14th February 1977.) This would mean 17% originations and 83% repeats for school television.

Therefore evidence suggests that in the 1970s, between 17% and 30% of school television was originations and between 70% and 83% repeats, and between 52% and 69% of school radio was originations and between 31% and 48% repeats. A final assumption is that the proportions of originations/repeats of separate series are roughly the same as proportions of originations/repeats of broadcast hours.

Key to Table 3

-       Not available
NA   Not applicable

* WAC R78/2549/1 Educational Broadcasting Departments Appendix C

^ SBC An Introduction to School Broadcasting. 1977.

**Figures taken from 1979 yearbook 118-120 listed as being for year 1976-77. Assumed to be a typo.

Table 4. *School Radio and Television Broadcast Hours*

Year	School radio hrs	% Total BBC Network Radio hours	School TV Hrs	% Total BBC Network TV hours	Total hours
1955/56	409	3%	NA	NA	409
1956/57	447	3.2%	NA	NA	447
1957/58	423	3.0%	41	1.4%	464
1958/59	397	2.8%	74	2.3%	471
1959/60	409	3%	92	2.9%	501
1960/61	382	3%	177	5.3%	559
1961/62	437	3%	212	6.3%	649
1962/63	441	3%	270	8.1%	711
1963/64	-	-	313	8.9%	-
1964/65	410	2%	359	6.6%	769
1965/66	372	2%	385	6.6%	747
1966/67	404	2%	375	6.2%	779
1967/68	479	2%	386	6.3%	865
1968/69	433	2%	367	5.8%	799
1969/70	419	2%	376	5.7%	795
1970/71	447	1.9%	366	5.7%	813
1971/72	451	1.9%	363	5.3%	814
1972/73	451	1.8%	374	4.7%	825
1973/74	444	1.7%	360	4.4%	804
1974/75	446	1.7%	339	4.0%	785
1975/76	469	1.9%	359	4.2%	828
1976/77	458	1.9%	384	4.4%	842
1977/78	466	1.9%	365	4.1%	831
1978/79	474	1.7%	368	4.0%	842
1979/80	487	1.6%	409	4.3%	896
1980/81	431	1.4%	411	4.3%	842
1981/82	432	1.5%	398	4.1%	840
1982/83	491	1.7%	426	4.2%	915
1983/84	534	1.8%	483	4.5%	1017
1984/85	486	-	456	-	942
1985/86	521	-	512	4.8%	1033
1986/87	-	-	-	-	-
1987/88	-	-	-	-	-
1988/89	-	-	-	-	-
1989/90	-	-	-	-	-
1990/91	-	-	-	-	-
1991/92	-	-	-	-	-
1992/93	-	-	530	-	-
1993/94	-	-	531	-	-
1994/95	-	-	-	-	-
1995/96	-	-	-	-	-
1996/97	403	-	561	-	964
1997/98	390	-	435 (68*)	-	825

Notes to Table 4

All figures taken from Yearbooks/Handbooks/Annual Reports. Some are rounded to 1 digit, as recorded.
Figures prior to 1955/56 are not known.

For figures of origination hours compared to repeat hours, see notes to Table 3.

For the rise in broadcast hours in the 1980s, see notes to Table 3.

Key to Table 4

-        Not Available

NA   Not applicable

*excluding repeats.

Table 5. Reception. *Schools Receiving/Using Broadcasts*.

Year	Radio	% of all primary Radio	% of all secondary Radio	TV	% of all primary TV	% of all secondary TV	Radio and/or TV	% of all primary Radio and/or TV	% of all secondary Radio and/or TV
1938/39	11,170	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1945/46	14,794	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1946/47	16,790	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1947/48	18,596	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1948/49	20,192	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1949/50	22,599	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1950/51	24,573	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1951/52	25,590	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1952/53	26,778	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1953/54	27,918	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1954/55	29,007	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1955/56	28,971	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1956/57	28,689	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1957/58	28,875	-	-	1,309	-	-	-	-	-
1958/59	29,195	-	-	2,445	-	-	-	-	-
1959/60	29,430	-	-	2,890	-	-	-	-	-
1960/61	29,075	-	-	3,839	-	-	-	-	-
1961/62	30,556	-	-	4,941	-	-	-	-	-
1962/63	31,068	-	-	6,784	-	-	-	-	-
1963/64	-	-	-	9,157	-	-	-	-	-
1964/65	29,228[364]	-	-	13,732	-	-	-	-	-
1965/66	31,873	-	-	18,215	-	-	-	-	-
1966/67	31,000	-	-	20,506	-	-	-	-	-
1967/68	31,419	-	-	21,578	-	-	-	-	-
1968/69	32,589	-	-	25,241	-	-	-	-	-
1969/70	32,951	-	-	26,549	-	-	-	-	-
1970/71	32,600	-	-	28,577	-	-	-	-	-
1971/72	33,029	-	-	30,456	-	85%	-	-	-
1973/74	-	97%	64%	-	84%	64%	-	-	-
1974/75	30,300	97%	60%	29,194	88%	62%	-	-	-
1975/76	31,492	98%	68%	-	90%	68%	-	-	-
1976/77	30,445	96%	69%	32,270	90%	76%	-	-	-
1977/78	31,057	96%	68%	29,666	68%	77%	-	-	-
1978/79	34,446	-	-	34,466	-	-	-	-	-
1979/80	31,300	-	-	31,300	-	-	-	-	-
1980/81	31,036	-	-	31,036	92%***	83%***	-	99%***	90%***
1981/82	29,741	-	-	29,741	-	-	-	-	-
1982/83	30,137	-	-	30,137	-	-	-	-	-
1983/84	29,969	-	-	29,976	-	-	-	-	-
1984/85	-	-	-	-	-	-	32,968	98%	97%

[364] 58 -83/84 Yearbook 1985. Figure for 1965/66 known to be incomplete

1985/86	-	-	-	-	-	-	32,530	97%	93%
1986/87	-	92%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1987/88	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1988/89	-	93%	70%	-	-	-	-	-	-
1989/90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1990/91	-	-	-	-	98%	93%	-	-	-

Notes

Figures taken from Yearbooks/Handbooks/Annual Reports unless otherwise stated. The figures are normally given as the number or percentage of schools buying television and radio publications, because "the figures derived from the sales of publications may be regarded as a broad indication of the number of schools using the School Broadcasting Service" (Yearbook 1985: 160).

Key

-        Not Available

NA   Not applicable

*** WAC R99/323/1 BBC Educational Broadcasting – A Study by the Future Policy Group. May 1981.

Appendix B

List of Subject Categories from Annual Programmes in 1964/65 and 1974/75

Categories Listed in 1964/65	Categories Listed in 1974/75
English	English and Drama
	English
	English: Reading Series
Geography	Geography and Environmental Studies
History and Current Affairs	History
Mathematics	Mathematics
Modern Languages	Modern Languages: French
	Modern Languages: German, Russian Spanish
Music and Movement	Movement and Dance
Music	Music
Religion	Religion
Science	Science
Sixth Forms	
Miscellaneous	Junior Miscellanies
	For the Middle Years 10-12
From School to Work	Careers 14-17
Technical Colleges[365]	
	For Infants and Young Children
	European Studies
	Art and Humanities
	Home Economics
	For the Less Able (Secondary)
	Humanities 14-16
	General Studies 16-18

The lists are compared with equivalent categories side by side, as far as possible. 1974/75 categories which had no 1964/65 equivalent are listed at the end. There were some reclassifications, for example *Television Club* in 1964/65 was categorised as 'Miscellaneous', but in 1974/75 was 'For the Less Able (Secondary)'.

Three categories: Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (and in The 1974/75 list 'Radiovision' and 'Special Programmes') were not subject divisions, strictly speaking and have therefore not been included. Each could include a mixture of the previous subjects within them.

European Studies (1974/75) had no dedicated series, just a list of 'Relevant series and Programmes' drawn from the other categories.

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[365] Some of the programmes in this category had also been counted in the previous categories in the annual programme

Appendix C. The Compositions of the Central Council for School Broadcasting and the School Broadcasting Council

List of appointing organisations to the CCSB in 1946
1 each unless otherwise stated.

BBC   (18)
Board of Education   (3)
Scottish Education Department
Ministry of Education for Northern Ireland
Association of Directors and Secretaries for Education
County Councils Association
Association of Municipal Corporations
London County Council
Association of Directors of Education Scotland
Association of County Councils in Scotland
Federation of Education Committees (Wales and Monmouth)
Association of Education Committees in Northern Ireland
National Union of Teachers   (4)
Federal Council of Teachers in Northern Ireland
Incorporated Association of Head Masters
Incorporated Association of Head Mistresses
Incorporated Association of Assistant Mistresses
Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters
Joint Committee of the Three Technical and Art Associations: Association of Teachers in Technical Institutes, Association of Principals in Technical Institutes, National Society of Art Masters
Independent Schools' Association
Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools
Education Institute of Scotland
Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education   (2)
Association of Counties of Cities in Scotland
Training College Association.

List of appointing organisations to the SBC as of 1947

BBC   (9)
Ministry of Education   (2)
Association of Education Committees
County Councils Association
Association of Municipal Corporations
London County Council
Association of Education Officers   (2)
Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education (2)
National Union of Teachers   (4)

Incorporated Association of Headmasters
Incorporated Association of Headmistresses
Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters
Association of Assistant Mistresses
Independent Schools Association
Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools
Joint Committee for the Technical and Art Associations
Ministry of Education for Northern Ireland
Association of Northern Ireland Education Committees
Federal Council of Teachers in Northern Ireland
School Broadcasting Council for Scotland   (6)
School Broadcasting Council for Wales   (3)

List of appointing organisations to the SBC as of 1971

BBC   (7)
Department of Education and Science   (2)
Association of Education Committees
Association of Municipal Corporations
Association of Northern Ireland Education Committees
Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education
County Councils Association
Society of Education Officers
Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters
Incorporated Association of Assistant Mistresses
Incorporated Association of Headmasters
Incorporated Association of Headmistresses
Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools
Independent Schools Association
Inner London Education Authority
Ministry of Education, Northern Ireland
National Association of Head Teachers
National Association of Inspectors of Schools and Educational Organisers
National Association of Schoolmasters
National Union of Teachers   (3)
School Broadcasting Council for Scotland   (5)
School Broadcasting for Wales   (3)

List of Chairmen of the CCSB/SBC

Year Appointed	Name	Life	Profession and Career
1930	H.A.L. Fisher	1865-1940	Formerly President of the Board of Education
1933	Lord Eustace Percy	1887-1958	Formerly President of the Board of Education
1937	W.W. Vaughan	1867-1938	Headmaster
1939	Henry Richards, C.B.		Chief Inspector, Board of Education
1949	George Gater	1886-1963	Director of Education at Lancashire and London, later Civil servant
1953	Charles Morris, LL.D.	1898-1990	Vice Chancellor Leeds University
1965	Charles Carter	1919-2002	Founding Vice Chancellor of Lancaster University in 1965
1972	Elfed Thomas	1907-1984	Director of Education for Leicester
1973	G. Reith, CBE		
1974	Elfed Thomas	1911-1984	Director of Education for Leicester
1977	H. G. Judge	1928-2019	Professorial fellow of Brasenose College and Director of Oxford University Department of Educational Studies
1982	E.C. Wragg	1938-2005	Professor of Education at the University of Exeter
1988	Peter Newsam	1928-	Director of the Institute of Education.

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Innes, Sheila, interview with the author 6th February 2018

McCormick, John, interview with the author, 10th May 2018.

Prescott Thomas, John, interview with the author 15th March 2019

Farmer, Derek, interview with the author, 28th April 2021

Farrington, Pat, interview with the author, 30th April 2019

Howarth, Mike, interview with the author, 7th June 2019.

Smedley, Ron, interview with the author 8th May 2019

Stanier, Tom, interview with the author 4th April 2019

Seatter Robert, interview with the author 16th December 2019

Smith, Colin, interview with the author 6th April 2021

Ward, Peter, interview with the author, 15th December 2020

Whines, Nick, interview with the author, 14th May 2021

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BBC

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