

Neil Cranston on Revolutionary Leadership

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*This paper takes up Neil Cranston's invitation (in his 2002 paper 'Revolutionary leadership, education systems and new times: More of the same or time for real change?' in *Change: Transformations in Education*, vol. 5, no. 2, 55-64) to debate issues of the leadership, strategy, structure and culture of many of our educational systems*

Neil Cranston (2002, p. 55) says he wishes to stimulate "debate about issues of leadership strategy, structure and culture of many of our education systems in these times of rapid and discontinuous change" (p. 55). He is concerned that "a plethora of past reforms and restructures of education systems, schools and schooling have failed to deliver the needed changes ... " (p. 55). What is needed, he proposes, is not an evolutionary but a revolutionary leadership approach, characterised by new mind-sets in educational leaders that "fundamentally challenge and change the culture, the principles, the values and the power relationships in how education systems have been conceptualised and organised in the past" (p. 55). But what he has written unlikely to promote debate, for two reasons.

The first is the way it is expressed. Plato prescribed for his future philosopher rulers a curriculum which included an intensive study of mathematics (*Resp.* 524d-531c), to provide them with a Vision of the Form of the Good, virtue, excellence (521c). This Vision would enable them to distinguish solid demonstrative argument from the sort of persuasive but shallow spiel that characterised the sophists, and which Plato mocked in his *Euthydemus*. The most elementary techniques for drawing this distinction – the questioning of assumptions and false dichotomies, or the conjugation of irregular verbs, for example – have dramatic effects on Cranston's case.

I take, almost at random, a paragraph on p. 57 from Cranston's paper, in which he asks two rhetorical questions and then supplies an answer to them. Cranston asks, "Are our typically large, essentially conservative bureaucracies in the best position to be making so many decisions for those in schools dealing first-hand with the challenges of these new times?" Should we ask *how many* decisions, or *what kinds* of decisions? Are bureaucracies conservative on all issues, or only on some sorts of issues? Could those dealing with decisions "first-hand" sometimes benefit from a broader perspective? Cranston's first question makes too many tendentious assumptions. Cranston's second question is, "Will educational funding and resources continue to be directed to supporting a potentially increasingly irrelevant bureaucracy away from schools, reverting to a sameness, rather than moving to a learning-centred future characterised by innovation and difference?" (p. 57). Are these the only two possibilities? Is the bureaucracy indeed "potentially increasingly irrelevant"? (Since what is potential is not actual and may develop differently, is the bureaucracy also potentially increasingly relevant?) Would a future characterised by innovation and difference necessarily be learning-centred? What exactly does "learning-centred" mean? (For example, does *what* is learnt matter?) With what can it be contrasted, with perhaps "(development of the whole person) –centred" or "(commercial success) –centred"? Again, tendentious assumptions.

Irregular verbs, in the relevant sense, are those with different roots in the various grammatical persons, as *I am strong-willed, you are stubborn, they are pig-headed*. They enable the marketing consultants of the motor car industry to re-write *has worse fuel economy* as *has more grunt*.¹ Thus when Cranston says (p. 57) that responding to the two questions just discussed "requires something more than *fiddling with* institutional structures and *shuffling* resources" (italics added);² and we replace these third-person (i.e., pejorative) verbs by more neutral ones with the same denotation – "changing institutional structures" and "reallocating resources", perhaps – Cranston's point disappears. Changing institutional structures and reallocating resources often have profound effects, and most changes in policy require doing either or both. When Cranston says that "something more" than either of these two things is required, it is difficult to guess what he has in mind, and unfortunately he does not tell us. Whatever it is, it will make a difference only if it results in acting differently, by changing institutional structures or reallocating resources. The upshot is that we realise that both Cranston's questions are arbitrary, and that we don't know what his answer to them is.

These simple techniques of textual analysis get no clawhold on mathematical argument, as anybody familiar with maths knows. (Plato was right.) Cranston's prose is defenceless against them. Nor do mathematicians rely on generating excitement by affixing exclamation marks (Cranston: "it may not simply be evolutionary, but revolutionary leadership that is required!", p. 58. Gosh.) Debate needs a coherently stated topic.

The second reason Cranston's paper is unlikely to stimulate debate is that the bulk of it consists of a single false dichotomy, presented as a table on 63-5. (The bad side is labelled "Traditional" and the good side, in a wistful revival of the slang fashionable in the 1960s, "Revolutionary".)³ One does not stimulate debate, the critical discussion of options and ideas and evidence, by presenting someone with just two alternatives (the question *Tea or coffee?* rarely leads to much of a debate), still less when the choice is heavily loaded (*Tea or rat poison?*).⁴ Cranston gives a partial and hostile caricature of the present situation, and a single program as the only way "To move forward" (p. 57.)

Some of the bad side of his table is at least open to question. He describes the Traditional culture as characterised by T6: "gender, 'old boys['] clubs' favours, like[-]mindedness and old mind-sets". This does not well describe educational bureaucracies these days. There are offices and whole sections in some places where, if gender has had any effect, it has been to exclude the old, or any, boys. Nor is it quite fair to say that (T7) "radical ideas that depart from past practices [are] discouraged" by the current leadership of schools or educational bureaucracies, or we should not be hearing about "reform fatigue".⁵

A large number of the points on the good side of the table are desirable in themselves, but vacuous, in that Cranston does not suggest any mechanism which might bring them about.

R5: "difference and diversity in thinking, attitudes and ideas are valued and rewarded"

R6: "quality, intellect, leadership, challenge, forward thinking and new mind-sets pervade the culture"

R14: "innovative ideas are welcomed and supported from everywhere, especially schools and their communities"

In all these cases, Cranston does not specify any institutional structures to implement them, and so gives no reason to think they would happen.

The language and categorisations of the table are in some cases misleading. For example:

R10: "school communities determine all operational matters that affect them"
(in contrast to T10: "centre interferes in operational matters for schools".)

The distinction between *operational* and *non-operational* arose in the context of political responsibility for, and journalistic coverage of, military and espionage matters.⁶ The Minister for Defence would be answerable in Question Time on policy and budget, but not on operational matters.⁷ War correspondents accepted a similar restriction, suppressing from their reports anything which dealt with *operational* matters. In both cases the reasons are obvious, to deny intelligence to an enemy. State ministers responsible for police also invoked the distinction and commented only on policy and budget, i.e. on *non-operational* matters: the less said publicly about how the police planned to infiltrate a drug ring or trap burglars, the better. The operational was therefore

contrasted with questions of policy and budget, and in each case the distinction depended on there being an enemy – a nation with whom we were or might soon be at war, a gang of criminals – from whom information must be concealed. If we are to import the word and distinction *operational* into education, we need to remember that when we say “school communities determine all operational matters that affect them” we are excluding questions of policy and budget; and it is intriguing to wonder in the case of schools about the identity of the enemy from whom information must be concealed.

Some of the points on the good side of the table conflict with what Cranston says elsewhere in his paper. For example:

R13: “centre exists only if it can be demonstrated that it value-adds to the work of schools”

The centre must demonstrate or *show* its value to schools. This requirement arises from a suspicion of notions like reserve capacity, corporate memory, and setting something aside for a rainy day: whatever cannot be *shown* to add value should be scrapped. The suspicion is best adapted to stable environments. The more likely the environment is to be subjected to sudden, unpredictable ruptures and shocks, the less wise will the suspicion be.⁸ Cranston’s insistence on demonstrated value adding therefore sits incongruously with his emphasis on the “unprecedented pressures and changing expectations” (p. 56) for schools and the need “to respond adequately to a discontinuously changing world” (p. 67), which describe the environment as far from stable.

According to Cranston,

“Clusters of schools working in alliances with other community organisations (government, non-government and commercial) in meaningful synergetic relationships are much more likely to develop responsive and effective solutions to emerging challenges and problems than another policy developed at the bureaucratic centre with potentially only passing relevance to the specific delivery site” (p. 59).

Of course, anything postulated to be “in meaningful synergetic relationships” will be effective;⁹ but the substantive claim here is that clusters of schools working with other organisations “are much more likely to develop responsive and effective solutions” than policies from the bureaucratic centre. Why should we believe this to be so?¹⁰ Perhaps the bureaucratic policies would turn out to be as good or better, and we should look at the evidence. Perhaps the bureaucratic centre needs to supervise and evaluate local enthusiasms.¹¹ Perhaps some kinds of problems are often solved by alliances with community organisations, and other kinds more usually by policies from the centre. But no; Cranston has dismissed all such possibilities without discussion. Later on the same page (p. 59) Cranston cites Osbourne and Gaebler (1992),¹² but even in their regular outbursts of enthusiasm for “community” and “entrepreneurial spirit” in their hardly authoritative book¹³ they do not assert that central administrations are of their nature likely to be wrong.

Cranston concludes with five dot points (66-7) listing what he calls unresolved tensions. Let us look at these tensions in order: ¹⁴

- C1. The tension between control by the centre versus freedom for individual schools to respond to local needs, due to government setting educational policy directions for the whole society. As he admits, schools' commitment to these priorities is "not always evident in practice". Indeed, that is how this tension is in fact often resolved: the school simply ignores what it has been directed to do. The suppression of local creativity by stifling bureaucratic directives from the centre has always been rather less onerous than Cranston paints it ¹⁵ because of schools' ability to ignore or find ways around central orders.
- C2. "There are considerable benefits and economies of scale to be gained by certain tasks being undertaken just once by one group; and then disseminated among several communities." Just so. Cranston does not discuss which tasks are like this and which are not, nor under what conditions these benefits might outweigh the advantages of "diverse and dispersed local decision-making". The differences that separate policy development and evaluation, let alone research, from decision making are insufficient to attract his attention.
- C3. "Most governments proclaim commitment to social justice and equity." This commitment may conflict with what schools want to do as they "move into more competitive markets". It is instructive to consider how this tension might manifest itself. Cranston's table contains several entries relevant here:

R2: "school community attitudes and values determine what is best for all their students"

R8: "centre engages in strategic policy development around government and essential priorities only; local school community developed policies responding to students' needs take precedence"

R9: "schools challenge the centre's policies if they are inappropriate for their community"

R16: "community determined social justice and equity priorities are embraced and funded"¹⁶

Cranston's position is that the social justice and equity policies of the school are to be decided by the school community, and the centre's proclamations, unless they accord with the community's determinations, are to be ignored.

Here at last we have some indication of what Cranston's Revolutionary mind-set would lead to in practice. Let us consider a couple of possible examples. The community (parents, former pupils, and some teachers) of an academically selective boys' high school may object to selection criteria which admit too many boys of foreign origin, with small physiques and no family or cultural tradition of rugby football, because they

reduce the pool of potential players and thereby weaken the school's reputation as a major rugby power and consequently its competitive position in the market. For Cranston, the school community's pro-rugby values should "determine what is best for all their students", and the school should "challenge the centre's polic[y]" of purely academic, non-racist selection as "inappropriate for their community"; "local school community developed" selection policies should "take precedence". There may be different opinions about whether academically selective schools are compatible with social justice and equity, though in those parts of Australia where the public system provides them they meet Cranston's test by being very popular with parents. But there cannot be different opinions about whether a public school may, in the interests of improving the school's competitiveness, exclude or limit the numbers of academically qualified boys of certain (non-rugby-playing) ethnic backgrounds.¹⁷ Another school community might be strongly opposed to making any concessions at all to the religious requirements of dress, diet, and holy days of a minority culture. For Cranston, that school too should ignore central proclamations of social justice and equity.¹⁸ Like many who work in universities in the great metropolitan cultures, Cranston celebrates the local over the universal and adopts a romantic view of the local and particular against the universal in a way which those who endure local injustices would find difficult to endorse (Young, 2000, p. 302).

- C4. Cranston's fourth point repeats his third. He admits that fears that powerful minority groups may "high-jack" [*sic*; hijack?] the education agenda "may be well-founded", but he is nevertheless concerned that they "do grow out of a mind-set of the centre knowing what is best for schools". Perhaps so. The "mind-set" does have a certain amount of evidence going for it however, in the form of local communities trying to impose racist, sexist, religious, and other prejudices on others through control of schools.
- C5. Governance models of the school "will clearly need to be reconceptualised to fit the new times", with "multiple leadership" replacing the old hierarchical structure headed by a principal. This provision is a very inadequate summary of a chain of ideas which, with a little effort, can be extracted from Cranston's paper. The chain begins with an unsupported postulate:

"What schools most want is greater control over their own resources, human and physical" (p. 61).

One wonders how Cranston or anybody else could know this. Greater control implies diverting more resources to the business of controlling. And this even though he earlier admitted that existing devolutionary measures have "resulted for people in many systems to [*sic*; in?] decreased job satisfaction" (p. 58).

R3: "leadership focus in school and wider communities holds priority, with multiple (shared) leadership encouraged"

So, for all senior staff and not just the principal, school-management responsibilities would take precedence over others, such as teaching. As Cranston says elsewhere, his approach “implies significant challenges for those in educational leadership positions in schools. That is, change will be required of principals, other school leaders, teachers and those in school communities and the wider community ...” (p. 66). Thus the decreased job satisfaction is to be shared more widely. To make up for this, there is a compensating inducement:

R23: “principals, other school administrators, senior teachers attract premium salaries”
(rather than the Traditional T23: “centre senior bureaucrats attract premium salaries”).¹⁹

In practice, not only the principal but now also most of the senior members of the teaching staff of the school are to be involved in “leadership”. And what would the leadership do?

R15: “schools hold clear accountabilities for student outcomes, because they have control over the resources that matter”

R17: “communities hold accountability for public funding of schools”

Thus, the first task for the school leadership would be dealing with funding, which is to be provided not centrally but by the local community. This is fine for those in affluent communities. It is less appealing for those elsewhere.

R22: “schools (individual and clusters) hold control (and accountability) for their human resources”

R24: “human resources characterised by performance and quality”

Public schools in wealthy areas would have more funds than at present, and their teachers would be paid on higher pay scales; schools in less wealthy areas would have less money and their teachers would be paid on a lower scale. This would increase support for public education among the wealthy and comfortable. It would also risk putting the country at a serious competitive disadvantage. An economic resource of increasing national importance is highly trained talent in those fields currently valued by the market. The distribution of raw talent is not at all closely correlated with parents’ socio-economic status, and to focus the best training on those whose parents both have wealth and value education would be to waste much of our national supply of trainable raw talent. It would be limiting economically in the same way that a policy of providing elite sports training only to those whose parents were Olympic medallists would be limiting in sporting terms.

Controlling “their human resources” (R22) means advertising jobs, checking résumés, and interviewing candidates for positions, and so on; and these are time-consuming activities if done properly.²⁰ So too are raising funds, developing and

debating policies, liaising with the community (of which more below), and marketing the school in the “more competitive markets” (p. 66).

R21: “communities determine the on-going viability and operation of schools”

The only mechanism by which a community can determine viability is actual or projected enrolments. Schools with falling enrolments will risk being deemed unviable. School leadership teams will be keen to take over from the centre the job of forecasting regional demographic changes; after all, their jobs may depend on those changes being favourable. Whether this would add to the reliability of the information gathered is open to doubt.

Just what the liaison with the community would involve is let slip in the next paragraph, when Cranston asks “Can we even contemplate a time when schools no longer ‘belong’ to bureaucratically ordered systems but rather may be loosely coupled with other community organisations both local and international with leaders emerging with a variety of backgrounds and experiences?” (p. 67).

Local community organisations, religions, sporting and service clubs, merchants and shopkeepers, are quite familiar; but what does Cranston mean by *international* community organisations? Religions and charities usually interact with a school through their local representatives. Sports also deal with the school through local, or at the widest state, branches. One hardly imagines the International Olympic Committee or the people who run Formula One motor racing getting in touch with an individual school. None of those can be the international community organisations Cranston has in mind. Merchants are a different matter. International forestry, mining, or chemical corporations might well be interested in having a greater role in a particular school, perhaps contributing to the science curriculum, perhaps even subsidising textbooks and software. Naturally, they would prefer to subsidise material that does not denigrate their industry’s environmental impact. Breakfast food manufacturers or international chains of family restaurants could help in a similar way with nutrition education. It is well that Cranston suggests that we should ask, “What are the fundamental principles and values underpinning the changes?” and “Whose interests (students[’]?) will be served by the changes – can this be demonstrated?” (p. 61).

In an episode of *Yes, Prime Minister*, “Sir Humphrey Appleby informs the [P]rime [M]inister that parents are not the best judges of schools” (Cranston, p. 68).²¹ Cranston finds this “chilling”. But here Sir Humphrey was right: parents are often not the best judges of schools. Parents acting as local communities have, in many parts of the English-speaking world over the last century, proved their capacity for judgement in educational matters by trying to exclude members of racial and religious minorities from public schools, by trying to prevent schools providing sex education, by trying to require schools to teach doctrines which have “no scientific merit or educational value as science” (Overton 1982, § IV(D), p. 941a),²² by trying to exclude works of literature which

challenge some people's sensitivities from the syllabus or even from the library, and so forth.²³ Some may find Cranston's undefended and uncritical acceptance of the superiority of the judgements made by parents formed into "school communities" as itself chilling; others will dismiss it as merely ill-considered.

Outside many schools, one now sees a banner proclaiming commitment to education, or a notice board congratulating a sporting team on a recent success. Money is spent on this crude advertising (rather than on, say, materials for the library) because the schools believe that it influences parents' judgements about the quality of the school. The practice suggests that "those in schools dealing first-hand with the challenges of these new times" (Cranston, p. 57) have a fairly low opinion of the processes by which parents form their judgements of schools (see further Symes, 1998).

Every modern industrial state has reservations about parents' judgements in medical matters. The law tightly restricts therapeutic claims in advertising and the distribution of prescription drugs. There are provisions to allow children in certain circumstances to be declared temporary wards of the court so that the authorities can over-rule what parents judge to be appropriate treatment (Macklin, 1988, discusses one class of cases). The medical profession has real expertise in these matters, which can be allowed or even legally required to set aside the treatments parents choose for their children. Can it be that Cranston believes it is so obvious that parents are the best judges of schools because he really thinks that educational expertise, unlike medical expertise, is mere sham?²⁴ Parents and local communities may resemble the crew of the ship Socrates describes, and whom he later compares to the citizens of the Athenian democracy in which he lived:

"They have no idea that the true navigator must study the seasons of the year, the sky, the stars, the winds and all the other subjects appropriate to his profession if he is to be really fit to control a ship; and they think it's impossible to acquire the professional skill needed for such control (whether or not they want it exercised) and that there's no such thing as an art of navigation." (Plato, *Resp.* 488d, e).

If there is a need for a revolutionary mind-set to provide leadership to education systems in new times, it is one which divides issues between those best handled at the school level and those best handled by the central bureaucracy, and which has considered the dangers to which uncritical trust in either of these levels may lead. Cranston is not yet in a position to provide guidance on these matters.²⁵

NOTES

¹ Cranston himself adopts the language of the car showroom, e.g. "re-badging" (p. 61).

² Cranston on p. 57 attributes this to "Latham, 2001, p. 7", but does not indicate where the quotation begins. It actually occurs in Latham's text on p. 3, where Latham is discussing the creation of a learning society. Latham's objection is not to shuffling resources in general, but that just shuffling them "between the public and private sectors" (2001, p. 3) is ineffective, and therefore my criticisms of Cranston's general claim do not affect Latham's argument.

- Many kinds of reallocation would do more than change the balance of resources between the public and private sectors.
- ³ For ease of reference, I have numbered the dot points on Cranston's table with the prefixes T (for Traditional) and R (for Revolutionary).
 - ⁴ As Margaret Thatcher was fond of saying, "There is no alternative", confessing her lack of imagination with admirable frankness.
 - ⁵ Cranston himself uses this phrase on p. 57. For a discussion of some of the issues, see Carpenter, 2000.
 - ⁶ It predates the notorious "*commercial in confidence*" stratagem for attempting to prevent public or parliamentary scrutiny of government activities in which private companies are involved.
 - ⁷ Cranston contrasts "the centre (the steady, stable, slow[-]moving bureaucracy) and the schools (the dynamic 'pointy end' of educational delivery)", p. 58. The phrase "pointy end" comes from, and is least inept in, discussions of military affairs. It is rather surprising he should invoke this imagery, because the military is emphatically hierarchical in its organisational structures and its "pointy end" is strictly controlled from the centre.
 - ⁸ In a town where market gardening and tourism are the main industries, unoccupied beds in the hospital may be a waste of resources. Few people hurt themselves picking lettuces or serving Devonshire teas. In a coal-mining village, where a single spark or a wrongly directed drill stroke may result in scores of miners being seriously injured, the hospital must have beds always available, even if luck held and they were not used during the last financial year.
 - ⁹ Sadly, one cannot know beforehand whether an alliance will result in a meaningful synergetic relationship. Cranston's inclusion of this phrase reduces his statement to the level of advice to punters to bet on the horse which wins the race.
 - ¹⁰ There is a frequent dinner-party conversation which begins with anecdotes about how unresponsive, self-interested, and mindless public service bureaucracies are (the point made at length in episode after episode of *Yes, Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*). Next come very similar anecdotes about the unresponsive, self-serving, and mindless behaviour of banks and other large private corporations, leading to the conclusion that only small businesses run by individual owner-operators, whose business is their livelihood, will pay attention to what the customer wants. Over coffee, somebody asks whether anyone has ever tried to get a plumber, self-employed and customer reliant, on a weekend.
 - ¹¹ This is the approach adopted in medicine, in which central review of tests of new drugs and treatment regimes is required before they can be used on anybody except explicitly informed and consenting experimental volunteers. In Australia, the relevant body is the Therapeutic Goods Administration. Control of this function even at national level is insufficiently centralised, and is gradually being standardised for the whole world by the International Conference on Harmonisation.
 - ¹² Cranston here and in his list of references cites this book as Osborne & Gaebler (1993). Cranston's paper is marred by frequent careless mistakes (other examples: *their* for *there*,

p. 58, line 15; *proscribes* for *prescribes*, dot point T19, p. 65; *exiting* for *existing*, p. 65, line *n* – 9; misuse of apostrophes, *passim*).

- ¹³ Fallows says in his review (1992) of Osborne & Gaebler (1992) that the book “offers a view of government that defines away some of our largest, most difficult political problems” (p. 121b). “[T]he tone of the book often reminded me of an Amway or Dale Carnegie sales pitch, or a TV infomercial” (p. 122c). The book’s defects, according to Fallows, go beyond these matters. He claims that their description of one case he knows about at first hand, Gen. Creech’s reforms of Tactical Air Command, “is both flatly untrue and broadly misleading”, in that they claim Creech accomplished his reforms “with no new money”, suppressing the fact that the TAC budget rose by 44% during Creech’s tenure (p. 123a). This claim was not contested in the very lively correspondence columns of the journal in succeeding issues.
- ¹⁴ I have numbered Cranston’s five concluding dot points, prefixed C.
- ¹⁵ He speaks about “a set of logics” which “are [*sic*] frequently seen to be inflexible, low in responsiveness and time consuming by those at the direct site of service delivery, that is schools” (p. 57).
- ¹⁶ Cranston here exceeds even the Bellman’s immortal test, “What I tell you three times is true” (Carroll, 1876, § 1, line 8, p. 46).
- ¹⁷ The argument does not require that this have ever happened, but only that it be possible.
- ¹⁸ Again, we need only suppose that this could happen, not that it has.
- ¹⁹ The inducement is uncoded; and when we compare the number of principals, school administrators, and senior teachers across a state system with the number of senior bureaucrats at present in the centre, it becomes clear that even if the centre were to be completely abolished very few of those in schools could benefit. To be fair, Cranston does not advocate complete abolition of the centre. His remark, “It might be that ‘new faces’ will be needed to bring [in] the new mind-sets if the challenges of change are not understood by current senior officers” (p. 66), suggests that he is hoping at least one central position will be retained, and will be occupied by somebody with the new, Cranston-like mind-set. Perhaps he has a particular candidate in mind?
- ²⁰ Note Carpenter’s proposed zero-sum principle, “No new duty may be added to practicing teachers’ workloads without eliminating a comparable duty” (2000, p. 388c).
- ²¹ See Hacker, 2024, p. 478. In view of Cranston’s enthusiasm for the idea that local communities should control schools, it is ironic that the situation with which Sir Humphrey and Prime Minister Hacker were dealing was one in which schools were already locally controlled. Sir Humphrey had earlier said of the education system that “It’s a joke. It’s always been a joke. As long as you leave it in the hands of local councillors it will stay a joke” (p. 469).
- ²² From Judge Overton’s decision in the (American) Federal District Court on McLean *versus* Arkansas Board of Education, by which he prevented implementation of Arkansas 1981 Act 590, an Act which mandated equal time for “creation science” and evolution in public schools in that state. Opinion polls before the trial had shown Arkansans “to be overwhelmingly in favor of the teaching of creationism alongside evolution in public schools” (Lewin, 1982, p. 33a). Important evidence was given by Marianne Wilson, who had headed a committee of science teachers

charged to produce a creation science curriculum guide. The committee was unable to find any materials such as research papers dealing scientifically with biological topics from a creationist point of view. Nor did the defendants in the case produce any suitable examples for the court (Overton, 1982, § IV(D), 940a-941a). The Arkansas community had ordered the teachers to teach something for which there were no materials.

²³ Stephen Jay Gould paid tribute to the teachers in Arkansas public schools who stood up in defence of the scientific and educational values which were threatened by community priorities in the McLean *versus* Arkansas Board of Education case: "God bless the dedicated teachers of this world. We who work in unthreatened private colleges and universities often do not adequately appreciate the plight of our colleagues – or their courage in upholding what should be our common goals" (Gould, 1982, p. 289).

²⁴ A referee for the JOURNAL also questioned the claim that teachers have educational expertise. Teachers like those on Marianne Wilson's committee mentioned in note 22 know what kinds of materials are needed for teaching a given course and where to look for those materials. They also know that it is impossible to give equal treatment to two positions if there are no materials dealing with central topics from the point of view of one of those positions. The people of Arkansas, by supporting equal treatment, were showing they had no idea of what teachers must do if they are to be fit to teach a course, and that they thought there is no such thing as an art of teaching.

²⁵ Work for this paper was helped by discussions with Clive Bunn and with Dianne Mackenzie, and hindered by the inadequate funding of Australian academic libraries.

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