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8 Geography and values education

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> 'If I had my chance now, in terms of a curriculum project for the seventies, it would be to find a means whereby we could bring society back to its sense of values and priorities in life.'
> JEROME BRUNER[1]

By the time *New Directions in Geography Teaching* was published in 1973, at least one founding father of the curriculum reform movement had become disenchanted with its early products. Geographical education in Britain was however to overlook such warnings, and enjoy a romance with science and logical curriculum planning which fundamentally changed the professional outlooks of geography teachers. This chapter will suggest that many of these teachers now enter the 1980s in much the same spirit as that expressed by Bruner in 1971. They are aware of the gains brought by the reformed geography of the 1970s, but sense that we must now restore the balance between the cognitive and affective in geography classrooms. Before outlining some developments which can assist us in this task, it is necessary to examine the origins of our new concern for values.

Value trends in the 1970s

The decline of traditional cultural and religious values is a long established trend in society related to the far-reaching processes of modernisation. Changes in economic and social structure, often justified now in terms of the requirements of technology and bureaucracy, cause modern man to adopt a belief system which is more concerned with means than ends, and promotes such instrumental values as efficiency, materialism and individualism, at the expense of such absolute values as human dignity, social justice and environmental well being. Our dominant style of thought has become so objective and reductionist that it often causes us to overlook the quality of human and man–environment relationships, while our political awareness has been so deadened that we fail to recognise situations in which economic interests now dominate over human needs. The neglect of feelings and emotions in a cultural climate of political apathy and pragma-

tism causes us to become estranged from ourselves and the world in which we live. Once lost and alienated, many are seduced into the belief that values are just a matter of opinion and retreat to a state of moral relativism or cultural nihilism[2] – 'it's good if I like it, if it's novel, or if it pays'. Crawford summarises the sense of loss which prompts others to oppose such cultural trends:

> '... the loss of a sense of dignity and significance of self and others, the loss of an ability to communicate deeply and personally with one another, the loss of relatedness to nature ... we have lost the sense of the tragic significance of life.'
> TERRAYNE CRAWFORD[3]

During the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, this opposition found expression in both popular and academic movements which challenged the central values of industrial society. The optimism of the 1960s gradually changed to pessimism, with the growing realisation that man on 'spaceship earth' faced mounting problems of environmental, economic and political instability. For some, the increasing personal, social and environmental costs of technological progress were symptoms of a crisis in personal consciousness and lifestyles,[4] while for others, they were the related symptoms of a predicted crisis in advanced capitalism.[5] A counter-culture of hippies, mystics and communards, attracted the many idealists who sought subjectivity, spontaneity and community in alternative lifestyles, while various left-wing groups catered for radicals who demanded a more active role in overthrowing the *status quo*. Environmentalism and women's liberation are examples of social movements which have drawn on such utopian and radical thought in the past fifteen years, and aspects of their thought and behaviour are now widely diffused in society. Education did not escape the attention of libertarians and radicals in the 1970s. Renewed attention was given to notions of progressive and community education, free schooling and de-schooling were hotly debated, and the radical school movement[6] alerted us to the de-humanising effects and social control functions of much that passed for teaching and learning.

Academic communities in the 1970s were also characterised by self-doubt and fierce debates on social responsibility. The rationalism which dominated geography and curriculum studies at the start of the decade was gradually challenged by humanists who perceived their new or rediscovered approaches to be of greater relevance to man's true needs, and the reform of an unjust world. While behavioural, humanistic and welfare geographies posed liberal or reformist challenges to the subject's new establishment, radical geography offered a more far-reaching critique by emphasising the ideological nature of much that was now accepted as geographical science.[7] Similarly, phenomenological and neo-Marxist approaches in education challenged the new tenets of curriculum planning

by stressing the relativity of school knowledge, and initiating a vigorous debate on the role of schooling in maintaining and reproducing the existing social order.[8] Both geography and curriculum studies became characterised by a plurality of viewpoints and the task of designing a school curriculum became ever more problematic. Above all, it was no longer possible to ignore values.

Values and schooling

> 'We don't need no education,
> We don't need no thought control,
> ---
> Hey teacher, leave those kids alone,
> All in all, you're just another brick in the wall.'
>
> PINK FLOYD, 1980

The sounds I heard on the car radio while travelling home from Charney Manor in 1980 remind us of an adolescent culture which expresses the impossibility of establishing meaning in a world which increasingly denies its existence. Confused values, abundant choice and worsening social problems challenge schools to assist pupils in rediscovering and recreating absolute values, and in discarding those dysfunctional norms which currently contribute to relativism and nihilism. As geography teachers, we must seriously question whether our curriculum is just 'another brick in the wall', or whether it enables pupils to derive, clarify and apply values in such a way as to counter confusion, guide choice and contribute to the solution of problems which threaten our very survival. In a multi-ethnic society with high levels of youth unemployment, the plight of many youngsters is not unrelated to that of others in places near and far. A relevant school geography will not only offer a range of explanations of such an unjust world, but will provide pupils with some prospect of its reform.

The positions which schools and teachers currently adopt with regard to values education are determined by the educational ideologies (Ch. 14) which legitimate their activity. While a *conservative* ideology leads to attempts to inculcate 'right' values via approaches and rituals which are rarely free from elements of indoctrination, a more liberal approach employs the risk of indoctrination to justify a 'neutral' curriculum. *Liberals* see education as a neutral instrument of social policy and claim that it can pursue personal, social and economic aims without irreconcilable tensions developing. *Progressive*, or *child-centred*, teachers are more prepared to foster affectivity, but their preoccupation with personal morality, aesthetics and creativity means that lessons often fail to connect with issues in the real world. During the 1970s, an interpretative sociology of education

revealed the differing ways in which conservative, liberal and progressive ideologies sustain prevailing patterns of injustice, and enable schools to reproduce inequality.[9] It prompted much critical evaluation of existing overt and hidden curricula, and focused attention on *radical* or *reconstructional* ideology which, by employing recent advances in moral and political education, enables a more justifiable approach to values education in schools.

Reconstructionism stems from a conviction that all is not well with the world, and that education should be a force for planned democratic change within the community. Teachers are to adopt a critical attitude towards contemporary social change, and make their curriculum relevant to the wider debate on alternative futures. By developing rationality, problem-solving ability, sensitivity and feeling, they are to cultivate autonomous individuals who are capable of making their own judgements and defending them rationally, emotionally and aesthetically. Autonomy, in such areas as morality and politics, provides a ready defence against the frequent charge of indoctrination which reconstructionists face, and ensures that pupils can recognise and attack bias wherever it is experienced. Reconstructionism requires a commitment to social justice and the community, and a great respect for procedural openness and creativity in the classroom. While its literature is now extensive,[10] there appear to have been few geography teachers amongst its recent advocates. Our failure to engage and develop such viewpoints is perhaps a symptom of other preoccupations during recent years.

Values in geographical education

At Charney Manor in 1970, there was clearly an acknowledgement of affective objectives, and the fact that many issues dealt with in the geography curriculum could engage the pupil's values. Geography's contribution to citizenship education was discussed, and both role play and decision-making exercises were mentioned in the context of affective outcomes. The papers from the conference[11] do however reflect a genuine uncertainty about values education and the teacher's responsibility in this area:

> 'The aims implicit in the affective domain receive only lip service in geography.'
>
> DAVID GOWING, p. 155
>
> 'At present our work rarely demands attitudes, values, and emotions.'
>
> DAVID GOWING, p. 156
>
> 'The various objectives I have linked together under the heading of citizenship present very considerable problems, mainly because they are concerned with attitudes as much as with understanding, and we know very little about the type of teaching most likely to bring about adherence to value systems and forms of behaviour that we may strongly approve of'
>
> TREVOR BENNETTS, p. 170
>
> 'The problems of the desirability or otherwise of teaching attitudes and values ... are not easy to resolve.'
>
> REX BEDDIS, p. 179

Reform of geographical education in the 1970s was essentially a reform of its cognitive curriculum in which values were overlooked to a considerable extent. In 1970, curriculum developers were preoccupied with new ideas, theories and skills, and the rational planning models they employed reinforced the separation of knowledge and values implicit within their new content. The reformed curriculum fitted well with the needs of a technological society and teacher professionalism,[12] and although the two 14–16 Schools Council projects recognised values and attitudes, they appear to have been of secondary importance from the start, and were further relegated as teachers adapted the materials to their own classroom needs.[13] While geographers were engaged in reform, others were planning and implementing courses which may be seen as more realistic and responsible reactions to mounting social and environmental problems.[14]

By the end of the decade, there were signs that the renewed attention to values in academic geography had prompted a recognition of their neglect in schools. While some[15] continued the debate on a suitable rationale and approach, others[16] provided clear evidence that considered approaches existed and merely needed wider dissemination. A consideration of these approaches must begin with an account of the function of values within the individual's personality.

Psychological approaches to the person

If it is the pupil's affective life which connects him to the facts and ideas presented in geography lessons, the teacher must base his pedagogy on models of the person which explain the interaction of thought and feelings, and allow for such differing dimensions of affect as attitudes, values, and emotions. Figure 26 represents one such model of the way in which the individual's behaviour is shaped by his beliefs and values. At the 'heart' of the individual are his terminal values, the fundamental principles such as social justice or environmental well being on which he is rarely willing to compromise. He also holds instrumental values which suggest appropriate modes of conduct to attain these terminal goals. Terminal and instrumental values are linked in complex ways and serve to develop and maintain the attitudes which govern our day-to-day behaviour. Faced

Table 15. *Values education approaches*

Approach	*Purposes*	*Methods*	*Useful texts*	
Analysis	To help students use logical thinking and scientific investigation to decide value issues and questions To help students use rational, analytical processes in interrelating and conceptualising their values	Structured rational discussion that demands application of reasons as well as evidence; testing principles; analysing analogous cases; debate; research	*Values Education* *Practical Methods of Moral Education* *Political Education and Political Literacy* *Debate and Decision*	Metcalf, 1971 Wilson, 1972 Crick & Porter, 1978 World Studies Project, 1980
Moral development	To help students develop more complex moral reasoning patterns based on a higher set of values To urge students to discuss the reasons for their value choices and positions, not merely to share with others, but to foster change in the stages of reasoning of students	Moral dilemma episodes with small-group discussion relatively structured and argumentative	*Startline* and *Lifeline* *Teaching for Empathy* *Promoting Moral Growth*	Schools Council/Longman Schools Council/Collins 1976 Hersh et al, 1979
Clarification	To help students become aware of and identify their own values and those of others To help students communicate openly and honestly with others about their values To help students use both rational thinking and emotional awareness to examine their personal feelings, values and behaviour patterns	Role-playing games; simulations; contrived or real value-laden situations; in-depth self-analysis exercises; sensitivity activities out-of-class activities; small group discussion	*Values and Teaching* *Values Clarification* *Advanced Value Clarification* *Meeting yourself halfway*	Raths, 1966 Simon et al 1972 Kirschenbaum, 1977 Simon, 1974
Action learning	These purposes listed for analysis and clarification To provide students with opportunities for personal and social action based on their values To encourage students to view themselves as personal–social interactive beings, not fully autonomous, but members of a community or social system	The methods listed for analysis and clarification as well as action projects within the school and community and skill practice in group organising and interpersonal relations	*Organising Community Service* *Education for a Change* *Community Service in Education* *Ideas into Action*	C.S.V., 1972 Ball & Ball, 1973 D.E.S., 1974 World Studies Project, 1980

Based on Superka et al., 1976 (19)

GEOGRAPHY AND VALUES EDUCATION

1 Values analysis

This approach to values education emphasises that moral judgements are based on facts and values, and that reason is the foundation of values analysis in education. The role of the teacher is to teach the decision-making process while leaving the pupil free to arrive at his own independent judgement. Faced with an issue such as the siting of a reservoir, or the suitability of an aid programme, the pupil is to assess the factual evidence he considers relevant in the light of his values, and arrive at a tentative judgement. By studying relevant knowledge, clarifying appropriate values, and assessing the possible consequences of alternative policies, he is to engage, at his own level, in the type of decision making carried out by planners and others. This approach fits well with recent reforms in geographical education, for the pupil is to generate value principles by methods which resemble hypothesis testing.

Tentative judgements are refined by subjecting them to tests of logical and ethical acceptability; processes in which group discussion plays a crucial role. While decision-making exercises, often in the form of role play, have become a familiar element of geography teaching in the past decade, the literature suggests a low state of awareness of values education developments within the American social studies curriculum.

A review of the American literature[21] reveals that approaches to values analysis are more thoroughly developed than in Britain, since there has been greater attention to those cognitive and affective abilities which contribute to sound decision making and moral autonomy. A range of process models are available, together with curriculum materials which give equal attention to knowledge and values. The '16–19' project in geography has clearly benefited from a limited exposure to this literature, and its route for enquiry (similar to Banks's value inquiry model shown as Fig. 27) promises to reinforce a cautious move into values analysis begun by the two earlier projects. Teachers wishing for a more accessible source of insights than the American texts should talk to colleagues teaching moral education. John Wilson's work attempts to demonstrate how the components of moral autonomy may be taught and assessed in the classroom, and I have modified these elsewhere in discussing the cultivation of an environmental ethic within geographical education.[22]

The major weaknesses of values analysis relate to its readiness to cling to what some consider a debased form of rationality, and to continue to promote knowledge above values. Inglis[23] accuses such curriculum buildings as the geography project teams of promoting ideas and cognitive skills at the expense of values and feelings, and so relegating these to an afterthought. He suggests that approaches to rational decision making in the classroom are often so dominated by the desire for balance and consensus, that rationality becomes mere judicious moderation. In the search for consensus, respect for absolute truth and values is likely to be com-

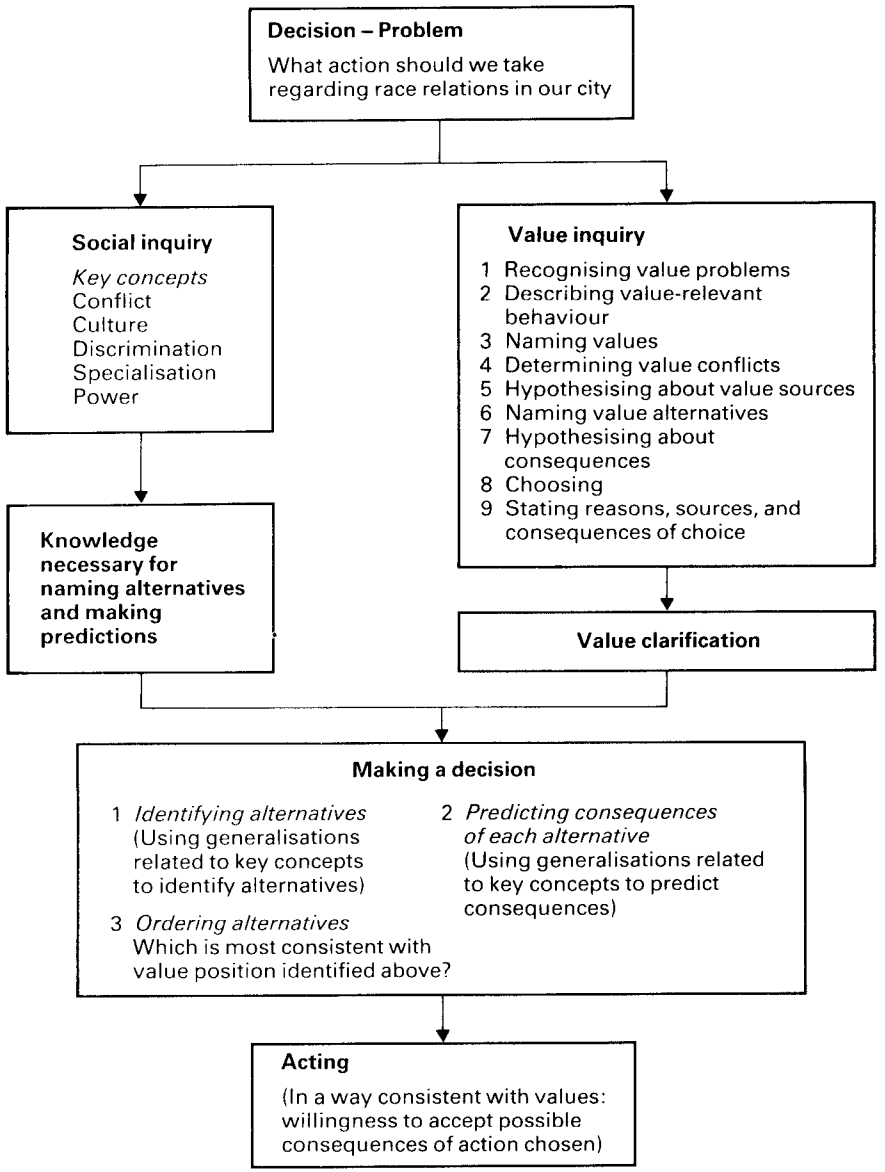

Fig. 27 *The decision-making process* (Banks and Clegg, *Teaching Strategies for the Social Studies: Inquiry, Valuing and Decision Making*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Inc, 1977)

promised, and the pupil gains a view of society in which fundamental change and conflict are denied. If reduced to such liberal discussion and debate, values analysis may merely reinforce the status quo.

Allen[24] reinforces these criticisms by suggesting that the knowledge, values and alternatives considered in values analysis are likely to be too limited. The teacher will rarely relate the short- or medium-term goals and values under consideration to ultimate concerns, and will fail to realise that if such analysis is to promote autonomy, it should often depart from the rather superficial level of immediate costs and benefits in order to connect with deeper aspirations and commitments. Our decision-making exercises in geography rarely allow for a fundamental questioning of the need for reservoirs, or explain why governments are so mean with their aid giving that choice between programmes may involve leaving millions in extreme poverty.

In addition to limiting the parameters of decision making, values analysis reinforces the myth of enlightenment man contained within positivist thought. Man is regarded as an active, determining, calculating individual, whereas in the modern world he is more likely to be passive, confused, ineffectual and dominated by routine. Values analysis creates a false confidence in democratic society which is likely to be frustrated in later life; a fact which a related programme of political education can begin to reveal.

2 Moral development

While supporters of conservative and liberal ideologists in education are likely to find acceptable methods of values education within the proposals of the rationalists, more progressive teachers may find the approaches of the developmentalists more appealing. These are based on theories of the child's developing ability in moral reasoning which generally recognise a series of stages through which he passes before attaining moral autonomy. As he passes through the successive stages outlined in Table 16,[25] the pupil will be able to take account of a growing amount of situational evidence, and empathise with an expanding reference group. In the secondary school, where pupils will offer value statements characteristic of stages two, three and four, the teacher's task is to prompt pupils away from relativism or conformity to perceived social norms, towards a principled morality in which decisions result from a considered respect for terminal values. To do this, the teacher will expose the pupils to moral reasoning typical of the higher stage, generally by discussing moral dilemmas in small group situations. Such discussion requires pupils to acknowledge the nature of their reasoning and its deficiencies, and provides an opportunity for exposing them to more autonomous thought. The texts listed in Table 15 give advice on both the construction and presentation of moral dilemmas in the classroom, and many of the case studies used in geography provide suitable content for adaptation.

Table 16 *Definition of moral stages*

I Preconventional level

At this level, the child is responsive to cultural rules and labels of good and bad, right or wrong, but interprets these labels either in terms of the physical or the hedonistic consequences of action or in terms of the physical power of those who enunciate the rules and labels.

Stage 1: The punishment and obedience orientation. The physical consequences of action determine its goodness or badness, regardless of the human meaning or value of these consequences.

Stage 2: The instrumental–relativist orientation. Right action consists of that which instrumentally satisfies one's own needs and occasionally the needs of others.

II Conventional level

At this level, maintaining the expectations of the individual's family, group or nation is perceived as valuable in its own right, regardless of immediate and obvious consequences.

Stage 3: The interpersonal concordance of 'good boy–nice girl' orientation. Good behaviour is that which pleases or helps others and is approved by them.

Stage 4: The 'law and order' orientation. There is orientation toward authority, fixed rules and the maintenance of the social order.

III Postconventional, autonomous or principled level

At this level, there is a clear effort to define moral values and principles that have validity and application apart from the authority of the groups of persons holding these principles and apart from the individual's own identification with these groups.

Stage 5: The social – contract, legalistic orientation, generally with utilitarian overtones. Right action tends to be defined in terms of general individual rights and standards which have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society.

Stage 6: The universal ethical principle orientation. Right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality and consistency.

KOHLBERG[25]

3 Values clarification

A third approach to values education, which is very popular in America, is values clarification. This is based on a simple model of the valuing process which suggests that valuing involves free choice from considered alternatives, and that having made a choice, the pupil should be pleased to both publicly affirm it, and repeatedly act in accordance with his decision. The techniques developed to enable pupils to act out their choices, affirmations and behaviours in the classroom are very novel, and have a strong appeal

to the teacher seeking ready-made exercises. Some are best regarded as starters or summaries to more lengthy pieces of work, for the main weakness of the approach is that it can encourage moral relativism by suggesting that one's values are one's own concern and that, provided one is happy with one's choice, all is well. Values education will generally go beyond awareness and clarification, and this approach will need to be complemented by others. Examples of values clarification in geography are not that plentiful,[26] but at least one curriculum project in environmental education has employed the approach.[27]

Aesthetic support. While affective education draws upon all the approaches considered so far, we have yet to identify approaches which fully reflect the phenomenological view of man outlined above. There can be little doubt that recent changes in academic geography have caused us to re-examine the manner in which we experience place. That contact with local and distant environments and their inhabitants can lead to consciousness expansion is a phenomena of which we have long been aware, but the cultivation of the affective aspects of such experience in our classrooms must be rediscovered and developed. If school geography is to foster intuition, fantasy and feeling, then we will need to make far more use of aesthetic support to our teaching.[28] Music, art and literature of all kinds must be used to evoke the subjective meanings of place and counter the cold objectivity of much that currently takes place in classrooms. Teachers who have come through the reforms of the past decade may find the prospect of a humanistic revolution rather daunting, but the discovery of landscape through painting, poetry and music should be more enjoyable to some than was its investigation via spatial analysis and statistics.

Again American educators appear to have gone further than their British counterparts in applying humanistic psychology to the classroom. British readers may find some discussions of humanistic and transpersonal education[29] so far removed from current practice in schools as to be irrelevant, but it is likely that such theories of education provide the frameworks into which the new humanistic geography can be absorbed. It is fascinating to speculate that geographers could at last find a philosophical rationale for the humanities, and help create an integrated curriculum which would function as a true vehicle for self discovery.

Political education. If values education is to contribute to both the development of the individual and the reshaping of society, the pupil must be shown how his individual decision and commitment to action can find expression in the wider community. Fortunately the past decade has seen the reform of political education which has now rejected approaches to the teaching of civics and government based on the inculcation of values, in favour of the pursuit of political literacy. The Programme for Political Literacy has carried out an analysis of the knowledge, skills and values

needed by the individual who is capable of understanding and participating in political issues, and its classroom approaches may be seen as a necessary extension to values analysis.

> 'A politically literate person will then know what the main political disputes are about; what beliefs the main contestants have of them; how they are likely to affect him, and he will have a predisposition to try to do something about it in a manner at once effective and respectful of the sincerity of others.'
>
> BERNARD CRICK AND IAN LISTER[30]

Many topics in geography have a political dimension in that they can only be understood by reference to the processes which determine the distribution of power and resources in society. If the pupil is to recognise such political dimensions, and contemplate strategies of influence in a rational and tolerant way, the teacher will need to make use of such checklists as those outlined by Stradling.[31] These emphasise the scope for values analysis and clarification within political education, and alert the teacher to the wide range of relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes and values required. Whether the dispute is about North Sea fisheries, boundaries within the Middle East or the local council's reluctance to reclaim derelict land, this checklist suggests what is minimally necessary before a class can realistically discuss the issue. In addition to such checklists, the Programme for Political Literacy provides an account of the key political concepts such as natural rights, welfare and justice, which should be constant reference points in political education. While the output of welfare and radical geographers has clearly added a new political dimension to the subject, due attention to the tenets of political education should ensure that their methodology and content can be adapted to the classroom in a defensible way.

While political education has not gone unnoticed by geographers, it has perhaps had a greater impact in the general field of environmental education[32] where planners have acknowledged it as a vehicle for fostering greater public participation, and certain Urban Studies Centres have combined it with community action.[33]

4 Action learning

Our success with values education will ultimately be judged by the behaviour of our pupils and their contributions to social reconstruction. Since both teachers and pupils are trapped within prevailing social norms and habit patterns, they may find it very difficult to change their behaviour despite a disparity between their declared and lived values. In such a situation, the teacher should try to show his pupils examples of behaviour

which are more in keeping with his value principles, and help him to recognise the social and environmental constraints which prevent him translating concern into action. While there is frequently much scope within the school for creating a more just and caring community, the geographer will need to search for community service projects which take him and his pupils into the wider environment. Work with a local conservation corps or for the local Oxfam shop are concrete ways of improving the environment and the plight of the poor overseas, while a half day set aside for litter collection would be one way of ensuring that a field party contributed to the aesthetics of its host environment. Some would regard such action as rather distant from the realities of power, and would suggest that older pupils, who are particularly incensed about an issue, should become more directly involved in the political process. The teacher considering overtly political action should remember that schools are communities of children whose parent's wishes should be respected, and that there are generally sufficient opportunities to engage in responsible action without attracting accusation of professional irresponsibility.

Tasks for the 1980s

> The teaching of geography must thus pursue a treble aim; it must awaken in our children the taste for natural science altogether; it must teach them that all men are brethren, whatever be their nationality; and it must teach them to respect the 'lower races'. Thus understood, the reform of geographical education is immense: it is nothing less than a complete reform of the whole system of teaching in our schools.
>
> PETER KROPOTKIN[34]

There has been a considerable progress in geographical education since Kropotkin issued his challenge almost 100 years ago. The present need is to acknowledge the costs and benefits of recent reform, and realise that newly acquired ideas and skills must be supplemented by values education if our classrooms activity is to contribute to the pupil's sense of identity, and greater justice in the world in which we live. Equipped with a wider range of geographies and approaches to curriculum planning, we are in a strong position to enter a new phase of curriculum development. The initial and in-service education of geography teachers in the 1980s must regard values education as a priority, and we must establish a dialogue with moral and political educators which prompts extra effort and resources being devoted to the development of suitable classroom activities. The task is at least as demanding as that which was discussed at Charney Manor in 1970, but the potential rewards? . . . they, as both Kropotkin and Bruner realised, are far greater.

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9 Progression in the geography curriculum

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During the last decade many geography teachers have been involved in the introduction of new courses or the substantial modification of old ones. Although the patterns which have emerged are varied, the general trend has been towards a greater emphasis on understanding ideas, on applying more sophisticated techniques of enquiry and on the consideration of social and environmental issues. Whilst in the 1960s geography teachers, in the main, attempted to accommodate new ideas and methods within existing course frameworks, in the 1970s many of them engaged in more radical restructuring of their teaching programme. In some schools the task of redesigning geography programmes has been complicated by the introduction, in the lower school, of some form of combined studies within which geography is a component. But even within single-subject courses restructuring has been widespread, with a conspicuous shift away from regionally based courses towards a systematic arrangement of topics. There is no reason to suppose that the processes which lead to the need for curricular changes will somehow come to an end. As geography teachers respond to the variety of influences which help to shape the curriculum, including the stream of educational opportunities flowing from their parent discipline, they continually face the task of adjusting their programmes and evaluating course structures. It is, therefore, important that teachers acquire the knowledge and skills required to plan and design effective courses.

This paper is concerned with progression, an element in the structure of courses which has received rather less attention than it deserves. Such neglect is understandable. Textbook writers are rarely explicit about the principles they use to select and organise content, and most teachers have probably relied more on tradition, experience and an intuitive feel for what is appropriate for each stage of a course, than on any explicit recognition of principles concerned with the process of learning. Even the Schools Council curriculum projects have made only a limited contribution to this problem, probably because the three major geography projects are each concerned with pupils of a limited age span. Not surprisingly, therefore, it is the History, Geography and Social Science 8–13 project which has given most attention in sequence and progression (Blyth et al[1]), although, from a geographical point of view its treatment appears to be of a rather general nature. However, the current interest in geographical ideas and skills provides an opportunity to improve the ways in which we structure progression in the learning of ideas in geography, and the extent