

Editorial: Managing Educational Institutions

Charles Dickens's Dotheboys Hall in *Nicholas Nickleby* encapsulated the worst excesses of private, ill-run and uninspected educational establishments in the nineteenth century. The head teacher was the owner, accountable to no-one, and a far cry from what we might perceive as normal educational standards today.

But we must not become complacent about our educational achievements. They were fought for by dedicated pioneers in the nineteenth century and by energetic campaigners and thinkers such as Beatrice Ensor, Jean Piaget and A.S. Neill in the twentieth century. *New Era* and the World Education Fellowship has given voice and support to these and other dedicated people whose goal has been to improve the standards of education throughout the world.

There are excellent head teachers who are able to promote good practice through their leadership and keen educational principles, such as Mark Jones, who has been persuaded against his more modest inclinations, to provide an account of his highly successful school in this issue. It is important for empirical and reflective accounts of good practice to be considered alongside theoretical discussions in an academic context. Mark's paper provides thoughtful analysis of how a positive school ethos can be developed in spite of the logistical constraints on budgets and resources, when the focus is on the common goal of meeting teachers' and pupils' needs.

But it is not an easy task, and the pressures on heads of schools and colleges to fulfil their responsibilities can lead to stress disorder for the individual. Pramila Kudva shows how these pressures are omnipresent even in institutions which are running smoothly. She provides a timely reminder that managing a complex educational institution is a human endeavour with constantly changing requirements that can take a toll on individuals' health. A recent study of women heads battling against the pressures of the 'glass ceiling' is reviewed by Norah Jones in the book review section. But it is not just the heads of institutions for whom the dangers of stress arise. The theme of teacher stress in general is taken up in Sheila Millard's review of a recent book by Denise Carlyle and Peter Woods.

Gina Anderson's research has taken her into areas where many fear to tread, namely the management of higher education. In particular, she records the perceptions of academics surveyed in New South Wales, whose view of managerial interventions to the detriment of staff and students will be widely

recognised, even though they have been pruned of their accompanying expletives. A hundred years ago, F.M. Cornford could make fun of the political power games at Cambridge (in *Microcosmopographia Academica*, 1908), but today's 'managerialism' must be addressed as a more serious matter, with global implications for the whole educational enterprise.

The slide into dysfunctionality begins, as Cornford had humorously suggested, with compromises to proclaimed values and purposes. The contemporary process is tracked in *The Tree of Baboons*, which attempts to explain why post-secondary institutions sometimes fail to carry out their mission statements when the pressures of making ends meet lead their managers into temptation. The need for effective governance of these institutions is overwhelming.

Indeed, the problems of maintaining effective institutional governance as numbers expand was highlighted in *New Era* nearly twenty years ago by Philip Altbach, an extract from whose article is provided as this issue's Last Word. The ideological imperatives and practicalities of the British government's proposed legislation in this area (its White Paper on Higher Education) are subjected to thoughtful and informed scrutiny by Professor G.R. Evans in the final refereed article in this issue.

WEF has always campaigned to improve learning standards (see the inside back cover); its members have been people of the highest principles. So it is particularly sad in this issue to reflect on the passing of Jack Campbell, a man of principle and ability who was a driving force in education in Australia and across the world. The ideals which Jack and others (like Margaret Johnson, who is also remembered in this issue) stood for have not died with them, though. Esther Lucas gives a heartening account of a positive model UN project among children in Israel-Palestine. Trevor Hood goes on to provide an amusing insight into the positive role of school governors.

Mark Twain's popularly misquoted aphorism "God made the Idiot for practice; then He made the School Board" (less clumsy than its original 1897 version) may no longer have universal resonance with people's experience of school governance. But the danger remains that descendants of Wackford Squeers are still involved in educational management. They may have moved from Dotheboys Hall to Dumbemdown University, or, as our Forum contributors suggest, even into the Examination Boards.

Dave Hinton