

Raven, J. (1994). *Managing Education for Effective Schooling: The Most Important Problem Is to Come to Terms with Values*. Unionville, New York: Trillium Press; Oxford, UK: OPP Ltd.

Now available from the author at 30, Great King Street, Edinburgh EH3 6QH, UK.

## CHAPTER 2

### EDUCATION HAS CENTRALLY TO DO WITH VALUES

As a basis around which to organize a discussion of educational goals and objectives, and in order to establish criteria against which to evaluate the educational system, we began, in the mid 1960s in England and Wales, to undertake what became a series of studies of parents', teachers', pupils', ex-pupils', employees', and employers' priorities in education<sup>2.1</sup>. These surveys have now been replicated (or parallel data have been collected) by researchers in the United States and many other countries such as the Republic of Ireland, Belgium, Scotland and France<sup>2.2</sup>.

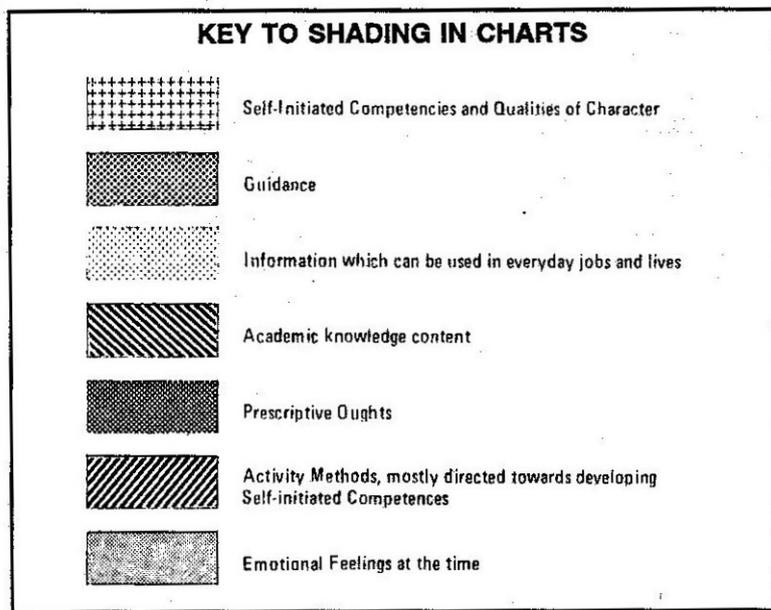
Respondents were asked how important they thought each of a number of possible educational goals or objectives were. Each of the objectives had been stressed by one group or another in the exploratory and pilot stages of the surveys. It should be noted that those who answered our questions were able, if they so wished, to rate some (or none) of the objectives as "Very Important". This procedure differed in two major ways from that adopted by Goodlad<sup>2.3</sup> in America. Goodlad's first obtained ratings of the importance attached to each of four goal areas - "academic" (including critical thinking as well as basic skills), "vocational", "social and civic" (relating to preparation for entry into a complex society), and "personal" (relating to the development of individual responsibility, self-confidence, creativity, and thinking for oneself). This difference in methodology could lead to different conclusions because we found that some goals within each domain were rated "very important" while others were not. Nevertheless, Goodlad did find that pupils, parents, and teachers rated *all four* areas "very important". He declared "most parents want their children to have it all". However he then went on to ask his respondents to select the single goal area they believed to be *most* important. It was on their responses to this forced-choice question that he based the discussions in the later chapters of his book. These proceed on the assumption that most clients of the educational system want schools to focus mainly on "academic" goals. This is, most emphatically, *not* supported by our data. Goodlad's very different conclusions therefore stem, in part, from differences in methodology. Our own conclusions are much closer to those of Flanagan<sup>2.4</sup> and Johnston and Bachman<sup>2.5</sup>.

Table 2.1 shows the objectives arranged in order of the importance that was assigned to them by Irish, adolescent boys<sup>2.6</sup>. Note the first item. It reads "Ensure that you leave school confident, willing, and able to take the initiative in introducing changes". Readers who believe that schools should *not* be seeking to foster the abilities and understandings required to bring about social change should be challenged by these data. In the eyes of the majority of these clients of the educational system, the *primary* objective of education is to foster the qualities required to bring about change. If one reflects for a moment on what these qualities might be, one finds oneself thinking of qualities - like initiative, leadership, and the ability to intervene in political systems - which can only be practiced and displayed in the course of activities which are not characteristic of school tasks: in how many classrooms do pupils display the levels of commitment, energy, and collaboration in forward-looking activity which is conjured up by such a phrase?

There are several other objectives near the top of the pupils' lists which imply similar activities: independence of thought and behavior; applying what one has learned to new problems; making one's own observations; finding information for oneself; being master of one's destiny. One important characteristic of all of these qualities is that they involve a high degree of spontaneity and self-motivation. Yet one has the impression that these activities are rarely called for in schools - and, as we will see in a later chapter, that impression is amply supported by the available evidence. Instead, the activities which dominate most classrooms lead pupils to practice being docile, to tolerate boring and useless activities, and to be dependent rather than independent. They learn to expect to be told what to

learn - and possibly to learn how to pretend to have learned what is put in front of them - instead of learning how to notice new problems, make their own observations, collect their own data, and think for themselves.

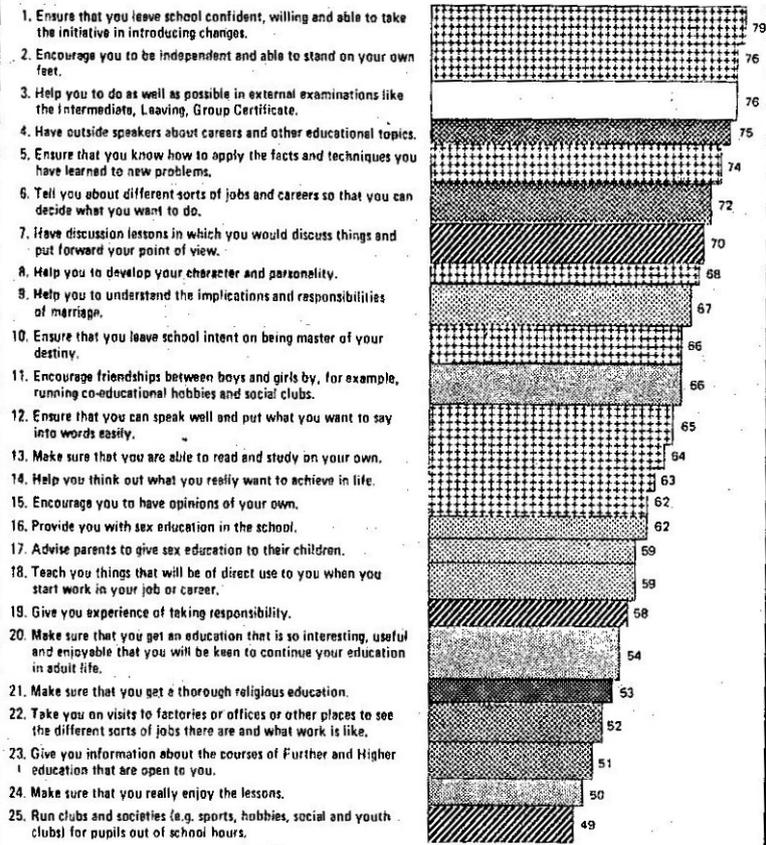
We may next underline the forward-looking nature of many of the qualities which the students thought it was important for schools to foster. The majority of them are saying that they want schools to help them to clarify their life goals and values and then enable them to develop the competencies which are required to achieve them effectively. Again, how many schools make a serious effort to satisfy such needs?



**TABLE 2.1**

**Importance of Objectives: Boys.**

Percentages of boys rating each objective "Very Important."

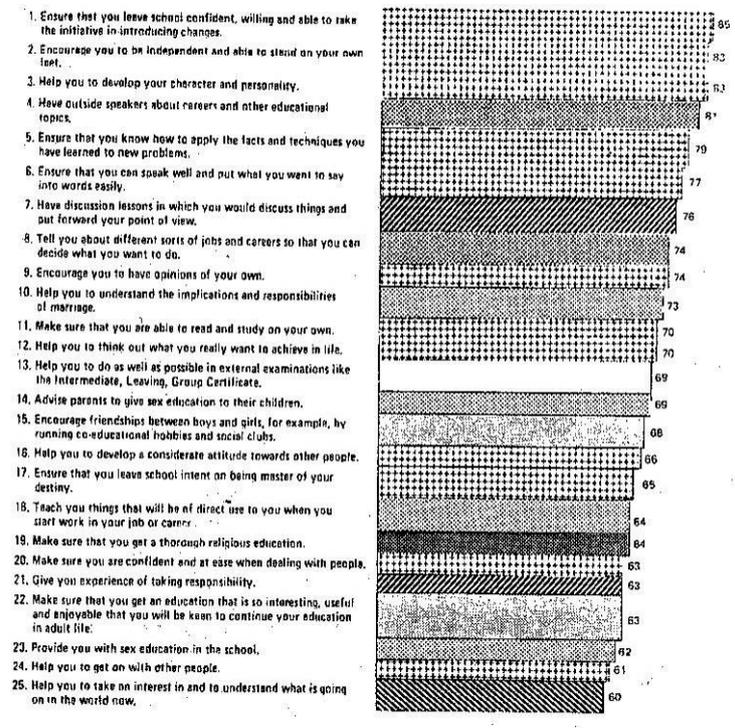


**TABLE 2.1 Contd.**

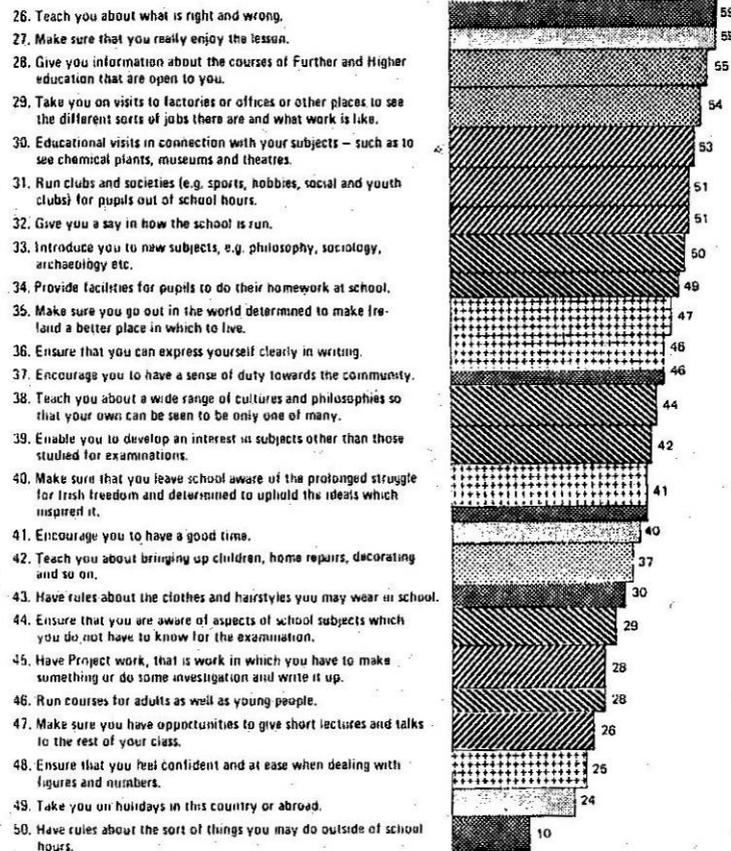
26. Educational visits in connection with your subjects — such as to see chemical plants, museums and theatres.	48
27. Give you a say in how the school is run.	48
28. Make sure you are confident and at ease when dealing with people.	46
29. Ensure that you can express yourself clearly in writing.	45
30. Help you to develop a considerate attitude towards other people.	45
31. Make sure you go out into the world determined to make Ireland a better place in which to live.	44
32. Teach you about what is right and wrong.	44
33. Provide facilities for pupils to do their homework at school.	43
34. Help you to get on with other people.	41
35. Encourage you to have a good time.	40
36. Help you to take an interest in and to understand what is going on in the world now.	39
37. Introduce you to new subjects, e.g. philosophy, sociology, archaeology etc.	38
38. Encourage you to have a sense of duty towards the community.	36
39. Make sure that you leave school aware of the prolonged struggle for Irish freedom and determined to uphold the ideals which inspired it.	33
40. Ensure that you feel confident and at ease when dealing with figures and numbers.	33
41. Enable you to develop an interest in subjects other than those studied for examinations.	33
42. Teach you about a wide range of cultures and philosophies so that your own can be seen to be only one of many.	33
43. Have Project work, that is work in which you have to make something or do some investigation and write it up.	28
44. Make sure you have opportunities to give short lectures and talks to the rest of your class.	27
45. Ensure that you are aware of aspects of school subjects which you do not have to know for the examinations.	27
46. Teach you about bringing up children, home repairs, decorating and so on.	27
47. Take you on holidays in this country or abroad.	25
48. Run courses for adults as well as young people.	24
49. Have rules about the clothes and hairstyles you may wear in school.	14
50. Have rules about the sort of things you may do outside of school hours.	8

**TABLE 2.2**

**Importance of Objectives: Girls.**  
**Percentages of girls rating each objective "Very Important."**



**TABLE 2.2 Contd.**



The items having to do with careers information and helping pupils to think out what they really want to achieve in life deserve special discussion. In addition to asking the pupils how important they thought each of the objectives in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 were, we also asked them how satisfied they were with what their school did to achieve each and how important they thought it was for their school to do more to achieve them. What then emerged was that the careers information and guidance objectives were perceived to be the most neglected and poorly attained of all the objectives that were considered to be very important.

This perception is entirely borne out by Flanagan's<sup>2,7</sup> American data: an enormous amount of time is lost, and a great deal of distress is caused, as people flounder around in the job market until they find a niche which taps their (previously unidentified) personal interests and talents. Guidance is one of the most important and neglected goals of education. Flanagan's data also shows that work is typically the first occasion which people have to discover and develop their true potentials. Bachman's<sup>2,8</sup> work at the Institute of Social Research, Michigan, likewise shows that 83% of young people said they had been better able to both identify and develop their talents at work compared with school. And Csikszentmihalyi and Le Fevre's<sup>2,9</sup> work shows that people's most important life satisfactions come from exercising personally important talents at the borders of their capability.

The interpretation to be placed on these data is, however, not necessarily the obvious one. It may be that, instead of *defining* a problem, the pupils have only *indicated the existence of a problem* by endorsing a widely canvassed possible solution to that problem. It is entirely possible that careers information and guidance would not solve the problem. Several observations support this contention. In the first place, the pupils involved in our own surveys did not find the careers guidance that they were given very helpful. Flanagan's<sup>2,10</sup> attempt to provide what appeared to be the required information by

computer did not prove to be any more satisfactory. And the most expensive project ever commissioned by the Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations in England and Wales failed to solve the problem.

If careers guidance does not solve the problem, perhaps its nature has been mis-defined. On reflection, how *could* any form of conventional careers guidance and information solve it? All occupational groups encompass a wide range of people who have very different motives and talents and who do very different things. Thus the psychological profession includes people who raise research funds, others who generate new ideas and ways of thinking about things, others who invent new ways of doing things, others who edit journals and magazines, others who lecture, others who write books, others who run companies, others who manage personnel within companies, some who study rats, some who study primitive people, some who study nervous systems, some who study organizational structures ... and so on. The same is true of other occupational groups. Consider panel-beaters. The group needs some members who are "good with customers", others who can take an idea and translate it into a workable prototype, others who negotiate the best deal for the group with management, and so on. It therefore seems that what students really mean when they say they want "careers guidance" is some means of identifying their latent motives and incipient talents, a means of linking such information to opportunities to develop those talents and test emergent hypotheses about what might tap their enthusiasm, some way of getting recognition for the talents thus developed, and assistance in finding ways of utilizing, further developing, and being rewarded for utilising, those motives and talents in the workplace.

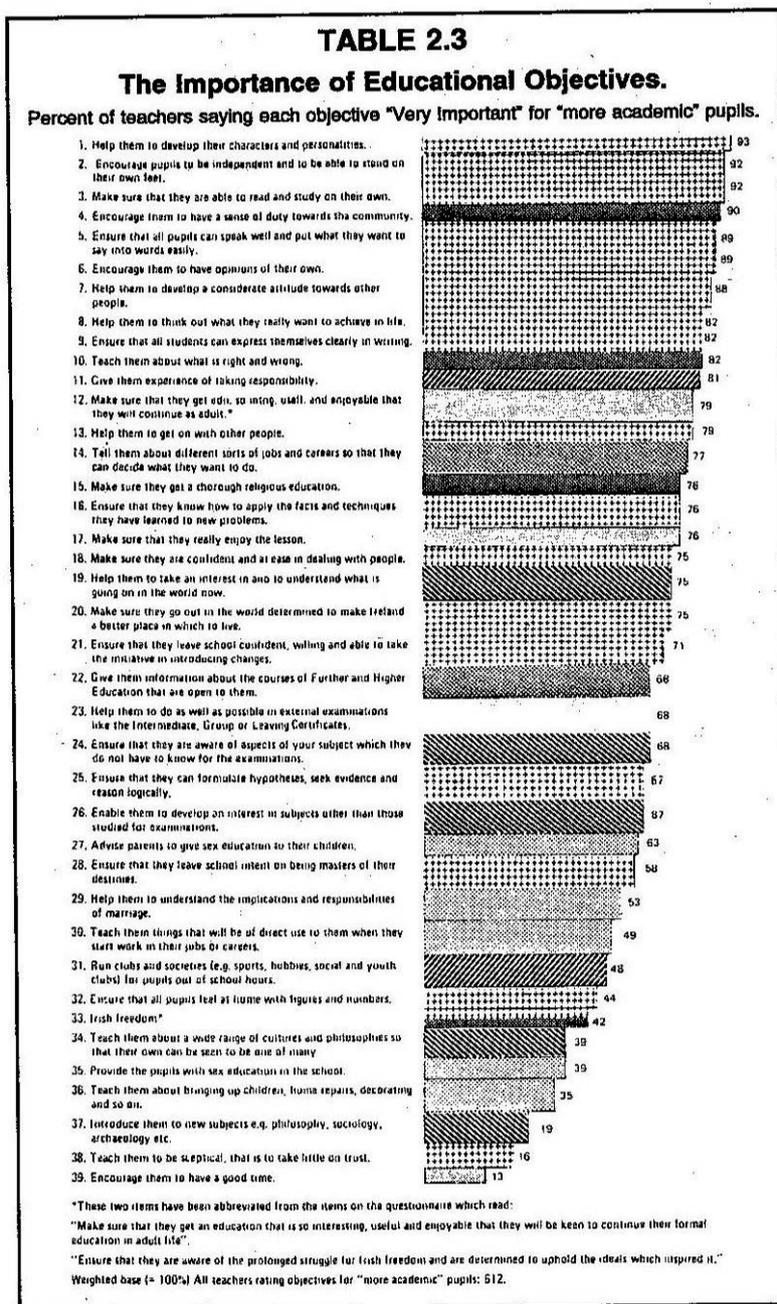
Reverting to our discussion of students' priorities in education, the next point to be noted is that their view of education is distinctly instrumental. They want schools to help them to develop qualities which would enable them to lead their lives effectively, to help them to obtain high grades and therefore get into high status courses or jobs, and to provide the guidance needed to help them to identify and develop talents which will be useful in the future and indicate ways in which it will be possible to further develop and capitalize upon those talents in the workplace. Relatively few of them think it is very important for schools to engage in cultural activities or to inculcate moral values in the more prescriptive way that is, for example, characteristic of many who advocate values education<sup>2,11</sup>.

There is one final, and very important, point to be highlighted from the pupils' responses. Students attach little importance to learning about aspects of school subjects which are not required for examination purposes (ie aspects which do not contribute to obtaining high grades) or to studying non-examined academic subjects. These come in positions 45 and 41, respectively, in the boys' list. This discrepancy between the importance attached to grades and the perceived insignificance of the content, taken together with other information gleaned from our survey - such as the annoyance which pupils report if they are given lessons which are informative and enjoyable but outwith the syllabus on which they are graded - suggests that what they mean when they say - as they did in Goodlad's survey - that they want an academic education is that they want an education which confers good grades. It is not knowledge - or even academic skills - they seek. They want grades because these control access to protected occupations and privileged positions in society. The knowledge on which the grades are based is of scant value in itself. Goodlad's data amply support this conclusion.

Interestingly enough, as we shall soon see more precisely (Table 2.3), this perception is almost shared by their teachers. Teachers do not even include getting pupils through examinations among their top 20 objectives. But they do not discriminate between the grades and the content on which they are based: both are equally important. In rather different ways, therefore, it seems that teachers and pupils spend most of their time working, against their will, toward goals which they do not consider to be of direct educational value. This seems to be the most likely explanation of the widely reported "lack of motivation" among pupils and demoralization among teachers.

It might be possible to reduce this tension if ways could be found to give pupils credit in the certification and placement process - which controls access to jobs and courses of further and higher education - for having developed the qualities which they themselves believe to be most important. This is, however, problematical. One reason for this is that most of the qualities which come high up on the pupils' lists involve values or can only be fostered and displayed whilst pupils are undertaking activities they care about (ie value). Another reason is that any assessment of outcomes in this area would, in current circumstances, expose the inadequacy of the educational system.

Despite these difficulties, it would seem that if anything is to be done about the problems which confront the educational system it will be necessary to find ways of giving pupils and teachers credit for having developed the kinds of quality which pupils (and parents) think are so important. If this is to be done it will be necessary to assess value-laden qualities. This is something which our society has, in the past, been unwilling to do openly and it will therefore be necessary to explore the reasons why this has been the case and seek methods to overcome them. Failure to do so will mean that we will perpetuate both a dysfunctional educational system and inappropriate manpower policies.



### Teachers' Views

Table 2.3 presents teachers' educational priorities. The list has a more prescriptive ring about it than the pupils' list. Whereas many pupils gave priority to developing qualities which were expansive, self-determined, self-motivated, forward-looking, adventurous, and open-ended, the teachers' priorities

include fostering a sense of duty toward the community and teaching about what is right and wrong. Nevertheless, it also includes fostering independence and encouraging pupils to have opinions of their own. The kinds of activities that would be required if teachers were to achieve this kind of objective, would, like those required to achieve the goals at the top of the pupils' list, be a great deal more growth-enhancing than most of what - as we shall see - occupies most of the time of most pupils in most classrooms at the present time. The differences between the teachers' and the pupils' order of priorities, while important, should therefore not be exaggerated. There is a great deal of scope for teachers and pupils to move forward in a common enterprise.

In connection with our earlier discussion of the discrepancy between the importance which pupils attached to grades and the perceived unimportance of the content on which those grades are based, it is significant that getting pupils through examinations comes down in position 23 in the teachers' order of priorities, but is immediately followed by content. Thus, while pupils think that getting high grades is important, but that the content on which they are based is unimportant, teachers do not even think that getting pupils through examinations is all that important compared with other objectives. The irony is that, as we will see, it is the objective which claims the lion's share of their attention.

Table 2.4 shows comparative data obtained in earlier British Surveys for pupils, ex-pupils, and parents on the one hand and teachers and headmasters on the other<sup>2.12</sup>. What these data show is that there are major discrepancies between the first three groups and the others in the importance attached to many of the instrumental goals of education. These include high scores on achievement tests, careers guidance, and things of direct use in a job or career, although the difference is greatest on the careers items. It is difficult to see how *any* real progress can be made in a climate in which there is such a marked conflict in perceptions of what education is about. It is also significant that there is, in this table, *no* evidence to support the view, often expressed by teachers, that pupils will change their minds as they grow up, get jobs, and become parents. There is *no* evidence that pupils will later regret not paying attention to some of the more social and cultural goals that teachers and head teachers are more likely to consider important.

#### The Validity of the Data

How seriously can we take these ratings by teachers, pupils and parents? Are they just window dressing?

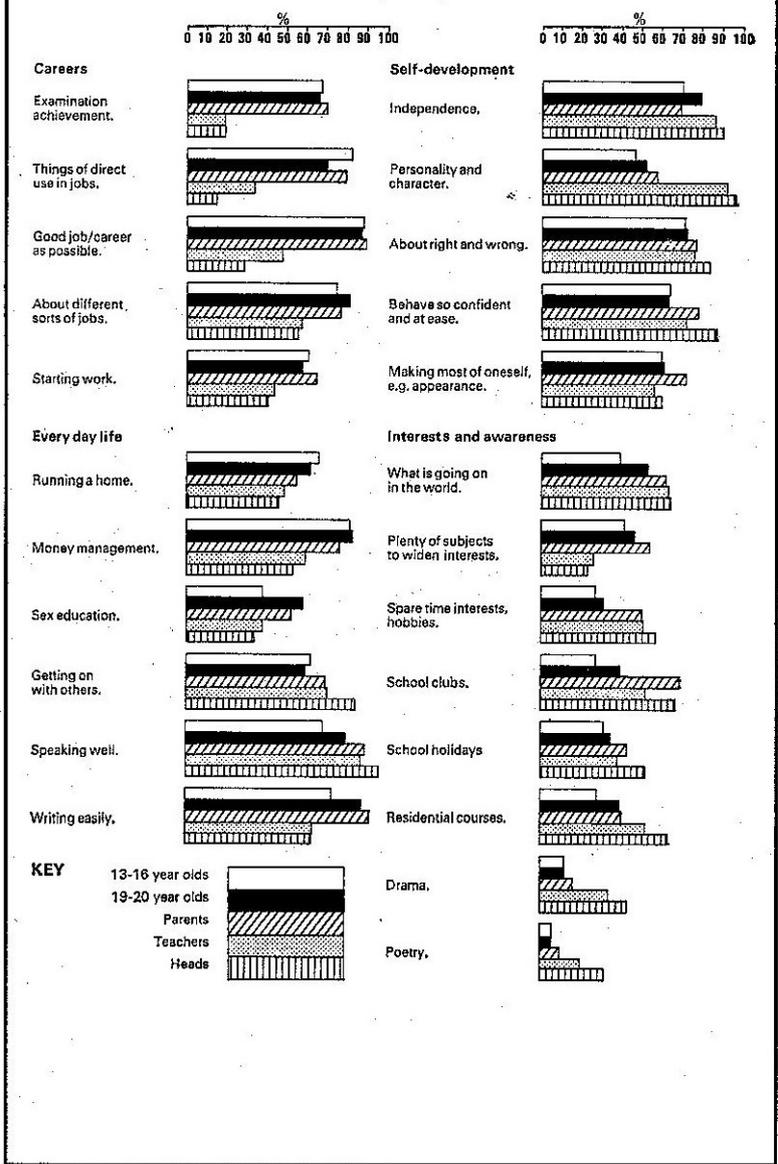
The first point to be made is that we did not dream up the items which were used in our surveys out of the blue. They emerged, and their wording was progressively improved, through a long program of exploratory work (which has been followed by a series of refinements introduced in the course of numerous replications of these surveys). During the exploratory phases of each survey teachers, pupils, parents, ex-pupils, employers and employees, were asked, in an open-ended manner, what they thought the objectives of education were. The items which were finally incorporated into the interview schedules were articulated, in no uncertain terms, by at least some people<sup>2.13</sup>.

The second point is that many of the objectives which came at the top of the teachers' and pupils' lists lie at the heart of many curriculum development programs like Man: A Course of Study in the US and the Nuffield Science and the Schools Council Integrated Science and Humanities Projects<sup>2.14</sup>. Some teachers - and some school systems<sup>2.15</sup> - have believed them to be so important that they have invested billions of dollars and a great deal of time, money, and energy trying to achieve them.

But much more important than any response of this sort is direct evidence that pupils' teachers', parents', ex-pupils' and employers' opinions are correct. The next chapter summarizes such material as we have been able to find.

**TABLE 2.4**

**Proportions of 15-year-old leavers, their parents and teachers saying that various school objectives were very important.**



**Notes**

- 2.1. Morton-Williams, Finch *et al.* (1968); Morton-Williams, Raven and Ritchie (1971); Ritchie and Morton-Williams (1971); Sharp (1972); Raven *et al.* (1975, 1975); Raven (1977); Raven (1980); Raven, Johnstone and Varley (1985)
- 2.2. Bill *et al.* (1974); Johnston and Bachman (1976); CES (1977); DeLandsheere (1977); MacBeath *et al.* (1981); Flanagan and Russ-Eft (1975); Gray *et al.* (1983)
- 2.3. Goodlad (1983)
- 2.4. Flanagan (1978)
- 2.5. Johnston and Bachman (1976)
- 2.6. The objectives were in fact divided into two halves so that no respondent would be confronted by too long a list. For details of sample sizes etc. see Raven, Hannon *et al.* (1975) and for a more detailed discussion see Raven (1977).
- 2.7. Flanagan (1978)

- 2.8. Bachman et al. (1978)
- 2.9. Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre (1989)
- 2.10. Flanagan (1976)
- 2.11. It is important to distinguish this use of the word "values" from the main usage in this book. By and large we will be concerned with *behavior* which the individual finds engaging and motivating and can therefore be said to value. Some behaviors - such as those which conserve resources and preserve the environment may be valued because of their long-term consequences. We will be concerned with ways in which people can be encouraged to develop their own moral codes rather than with ways of inculcating them. Nevertheless we will be unable to entirely avoid the question of *teaching* values because some people *want* to be taught strict rules to apply to the conduct of their lives.
- 2.12. Morton-Williams *et al.* (1968). A more broadly based comparative table, with data from the many populations which had been surveyed by that time appears in Raven (1977). Goodlad's (1984) results confirm the general conclusion, but the results are much less clear cut owing to the methodology adopted.
- 2.13. Wells Foshay has pointed out that the list does not contain many aims dealing with qualities that are required for full self-realisation. For example, few deal with introverted awareness - awareness of the self and being part of a vastly larger sphere of being. Not only do few of the items deal with ensuring that pupils have experience of self-transcendence, few even deal with ensuring that pupils have experience of expressive activities which might engage them and, as one student put it, 'be good for my soul'. One wonders what support there would be for such objectives as: "Ensure that you have experience of the wonder and awe which can come from contemplating nature, music or art"; "Ensure that you have experience of the new lease of life which can arise from musical experience"; "Ensure that you have experience of being part of a process greater than yourself"; "Ensure that you have experience of a range of the emotions which can be evoked by literature"; "Ensure that you have experience of the feelings which are associated with accomplishing something very worthwhile" (Maslow's peak experiences); "Help you to develop the capacity to clarify and express your feelings"; "Help you to learn how to behave in ways which are in accord with, and express, your feelings"; "Put you in touch with your inner needs and feelings and teach you how to express them"; "Enable you to experience feelings and emotions that you have not had before"; "Enable you to experience inner peace and harmony"; "Enable you to experience emotions like hatred, fear, love, and awe"; and "Help you to find ways of expressing your being in science, art, music, words, movement, friendship, and song". One problem with such formulations of objectives having to do with self-awareness and self-transcendence is that they tend to be viewed as relating chiefly to artistic and mystical activities. Students studying the sciences tend to learn to abhor what they regard as "wishy-washy", "arty-crafty", pretentious, artistic material whereas, as Foshay (1991) has shown, competence in dealing with these processes is crucial to the student's ultimate success in scientific or mathematical endeavors. Furthermore, support for such objectives would only exacerbate a problem that will be highlighted later in this book - namely that important feelings and experiences only come into play while people are undertaking activities which are important to them - yet such activities are conspicuous by their absence in most schools and introducing them poses a host of serious dilemmas.
- 2.14. Bruner (1965); Curriculum Development Associates (1989/70); Nuffield Science (1967); Schools Council Integrated Science Project (1970-72); Schools Council Humanities Project (1970-72)
- 2.15. e.g. Newton Public Schools (1972); Wright (1950). See Fraley (1981) for a review of these projects.