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## *THE SOCIAL PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT*

This chapter and the next are devoted to an elaboration of the central argument on which this book is based, that historical and contemporary developments in assessment policy and practice may be understood in terms of the interplay between the themes of competence, competition and control and the different priority accorded to each of them in the education system as social, economic and political factors dictate. To justify the assertion that this analytical framework is applicable to industrial societies in general, it is necessary to review historical and contemporary trends in assessment, evaluation and accountability procedures from a broad empirical base. Such a review has a second equally important function of providing a more general context within which the two case studies which provide the bulk of the empirical evidence in the book may be located.

Although the so-called founding fathers of sociology – notably Marx, Durkheim and Weber – stressed the importance of studying social phenomena in their historical and international context, it is perhaps only with the recent growth in prominence of international issues generally that the importance of recognizing both national cultural traditions and more general international currents in the

generation of educational policies has been recognized (Phillips 1989). Certainly, as far as assessment is concerned – whether of individuals, institutions or systems as a whole – a study of both historical and international contexts shows clearly the dilemmas inherent in its social role, for the issues that have dominated the debates on educational assessment appear to be common to most of the industrial and industrializing countries of the world (Ottobre 1978; Heyneman 1988). In any country with mass and extended education, the same dilemmas are apparent. In developing countries, which have typically modelled their education systems on those of the developed world, such dilemmas tend to be even more acute since selection and its legitimation are the crucial mechanisms for regulating the aspirations of the masses for the very few openings in the modern employment sector.

Assessment practices reflect and reinforce the often conflicting values embodied in education systems. Debates over the reform of assessment procedures frequently illustrate the tension that exists between, for example, educational goals defined by industry and those of teachers, or the conflicts between a market perspective and a more egalitarian one. It is clear that the degree of influence which various bodies associated with the education system are able to exert at any one time – itself a product of oscillations in the social, economic and political climate – is reflected in the kind of emphasis embodied in the assessment procedures adopted. To the extent that assessment practices are similar in different countries, they reinforce the importance of understanding education and, by definition, educational assessment procedures, in relation to the wider societal and indeed inter-societal forces acting upon it, and hence of not overestimating the internal autonomy and scope for change of any one educational system.

The pages that follow explore the sociological rationale for the emergence of assessment procedures as part of the development of formal educational provision. In attempting to map broad historical and contemporary trends in assessment policy and practice, this chapter and the next will emphasize the importance of seeking to understand the relationship between changes in the socio-economic context and the ways in which these are reflected in changing assessment practices as one of the main sources of leverage on the education system itself. Central to such an exploration, however, is a commitment to respecting the integrity of a given social context so

that explanations reflect the mediation of common pressures and trends by the idiosyncratic culture and traditions of particular systems. The first part of the chapter addresses developments in assessment at the level of the individual, whereas the second part pursues its role in society more generally. This distinction is more arbitrary than real, however, for in practice the ebb and flow of different policies and the practices to which they lead is a complex compilation of a variety of tools and strategies in which, like the pieces on a chessboard, each has its scope and enforced limitations and must, therefore, be used in conjunction with other pieces with different powers and constraints to achieve the desired goal.

In Chapter 1 it was argued that as far as assessment is concerned, the enduring purposes are to promote and accredit competence, which in turn serves to influence the content of education; to manage the inevitable competition for limited rewards; and to control the priorities and operation of one of the principal state apparatuses. Building on the dynamic metaphor of the pieces on a chessboard, Chapter 2 explores each of these social imperatives in turn, showing how a varying pattern of checks and balances operating in different times and places nevertheless provides for the same result – the fulfilment of these three broad social imperatives through the manipulation of assessment policy.

### **The assessment of competence**

Even in the most simple societies, children must be trained and subsequently demonstrate competence in the appropriate forms of behaviour and skills required by all members of that society. In some societies, competencies which are the result of such ‘primary’ socialization will be extended by means of ‘secondary socialization’ to include preparation for different roles in society. These are societies which are sufficiently complex to allow, and indeed require, their members to pursue a much greater variety of interests and to develop specific talents and skills. The inculcation of both general and specific competencies is increasingly provided for through the mechanism of formal schooling.

Whether education consists simply of the passing on of the unified body of skills necessary for survival, or is transmitted through the highly bureaucratized, elaborate and costly systems which complex

industrialized societies have typically evolved to provide for the wide range of specialist skills they require, some kind of assessment of competence will be necessary, not least because the willingness of individuals to submit to such evaluation reflects and reinforces their commitment to joining that particular society. Many commentators have equated the public examinations of contemporary society with the 'rites of passage' of simple societies when a child is able and expected to take on the full obligations of an adult member of society. Such 'rites of passage' are essentially 'qualifying' tests; the time at which youngsters can demonstrate their mastery of the norms and skills necessary for effective participation in that society, thereby allowing the existing members of that society to judge their fitness to belong to it. Candidates cannot fail, however, since they are already destined for their future social roles from birth. Rather, the assessment constitutes a target for teachers and students alike to strive towards, in their efforts to ensure the possession of the necessary social competencies.

In such societies, the assessment procedures may well be undifferentiated, reflecting a society where there is little or no division of labour, except perhaps between boys and girls. All aspirant members will be adjudged at the same stage of their life, on the same relevant criteria of basic competence in necessary skills, in order to ensure the continued survival of the society. The emphasis of the test will be on validity; that is, that the skills assessed match as closely as possible the potential real life requirements. The emphasis is on competence; on qualifying, not on selection.

By contrast, the *rites de passage* (Firth 1969) of complex societies are typically highly differentiated, reflecting the range of competencies that are sought and the need to provide for successive stages of sorting and selection for different social roles.

### **The content of assessment**

In simple societies, the content of assessment is largely determined by the competencies required. There is likely to be little discussion about the desirable content of 'education', and little need to discriminate between the members of a society in terms of their mastery of it. In more complex societies, these basic competencies may be comparatively insignificant compared to other criteria which

define more specialized competencies. Still other criteria, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1977; Bourdieu *et al.* 1994) has pointed out, may be quite arbitrary, reflecting the cultural characteristics of dominant groups on which their power is based. Typically implicit rather than explicit, such criteria often constitute a considerable handicap to the success of children from other social groups in the educational system.

As the advent of capitalism began to break down the existing bases for social divisions and the expanding economy of subsequent industrialization created an unprecedented degree of social mobility in the early nineteenth century, the idea of competition for the more desirable social roles became an increasingly significant theme in assessment procedures. Clearly nepotism and wealth are incompatible as selection criteria with the more rationalist concerns embodied in the attestation of competence and open competition. Thus, as the creation of wealth is more and more associated with the recruitment and fostering of talent on a large scale, competition becomes ever more important. The basis of this competition, however – the form and content of assessment – has arguably been determined not so much by what the competition is *for* but rather by how such competition can best be *controlled*. That is to say, as the competitive element of assessment has increasingly come to predominate over its role in the attestation of competence, content has tended to be determined by its legitimacy power rather than its relevance to specific tasks. Or, in more psychometric terms, the preoccupation with the reliability of assessments has tended to eclipse concern with validity (Nuttall 1987).

Although such choices are never clear-cut in their origins, it will be argued that the predominance of formal written examinations and intelligence tests (including the other, later forms of standardized test modelled on them) in the recent history of education owes far more to the power of such devices to legitimate selection than it does to their content or predictive validity. Apart from the degree of irrationality this injects into the selection process, and hence into that of occupational allocation, the content of schooling is itself closely affected. It is a common assertion that the ‘assessment tail tends to wag the curriculum dog’ (Wilson 1975). Thus the content of assessment procedures is also very significant for the way in which it is likely to affect the entire teaching–learning process in both form and substance. Ironically, this relationship is now being explicitly capitalized upon in the measurement-driven instruction (MDI)

movement, in which the 'washback effect' of assessment procedures is deliberately manipulated to encourage emphasis on particular learning outcomes. Public examinations are also used in the same way to effect changes in pedagogy (Airasian 1988; Kellaghan and Greaney 1992).

Following Foucault, Bernstein (1982, 1988) suggests that contemporary societies are characterized by a deep cultural 'fault'. This fault is the division between mental and manual labour, which is a product of an equivalent division between those who produce and those who reproduce forms of knowledge in society. One illustration of this 'fault' is the distinction between 'primary contextualizing' – that is, the creation of knowledge – the 'recontextualizing' of public examiners and curriculum planners in the form of school subjects, and the final stage of 'secondary contextualizing' carried out by teachers at various levels.

Those who control the process by which knowledge is 'recontextualized' into the particular versions of knowledge which become characterized in school subjects, curricula and textbooks are in a powerful position to determine what kinds of intellectual activity are the basis for high status. Thus the assessment procedures used may reflect and, in turn, reinforce not the knowledge and skills that the contemporary economy would appear to require, but rather an essentially arbitrary way of representing knowledge which happened to characterize elite culture in a number of countries when the force of the industrial revolution was being felt in the need for new work skills and new forms of social control.

As other countries became caught up in similar movements – through colonialism, through trade, through various kinds of international contact and competition – they were not slow to recognize the utility of formal schooling and formal assessment procedures, not least as an acceptable means of regulating entry to different levels of job. In so doing, they helped to preserve and disseminate an approach to learning and curriculum organization based on the traditions and conditions of a very different age and newly forced into the divisions of school subjects by the exigencies of the assessment system (Eggleston 1977; Hammersley and Hargreaves 1983). The persistent inability of many developing countries to realize a curriculum centred on relevant and useful practical skills, rather than high-status academic knowledge, provides clear testimony for this tendency. Even in highly developed societies there

has been, at least until recently, the persistence of what is essentially a nineteenth-century elite school curriculum embodied in highly competitive academic examinations. Hargreaves (1982a) argues that this mismatch between what is provided and what adolescents need can only grow worse as the pace of social change accelerates. Although radical challenges to existing definitions of curriculum content and organization are currently being mounted in many developed countries in the form of negotiated programmes of study, cross-curricular skills and broadly based records of achievement, such challenges have as yet done little to erode the power of the status quo as embodied in formal, subject-based and examination-oriented curricula (Broadfoot 1991).

Assessment criteria within education still tend to be based on certain academic and particularly linguistic achievements, although in the wider world they may often still include the traditional status criteria of speech, dress and other social behaviour as well. The difficulty of making any sustained assault on the dominance of formal academic assessment and certification, rather than, for example, achievement in personal and social skills<sup>1</sup> – ostensibly at least as relevant to the majority of prospective members of society and to employers as academic skills – shows the relative insignificance of moves to foster more competency-oriented assessment compared to the political fear which is typically associated with any move to change existing ideas about ‘standards’ and equally the mechanisms concerned with controlling and legitimating competition.

To understand how this emphasis on academic knowledge at the expense of skills and on regulating competition rather than attesting to the possession of competence came about, it is necessary to consider the early history of the mass use of educational assessment procedures. It has been suggested (Broadfoot 1979a) that the institution of formal assessment procedures in education tended to be contemporaneous with the institution of mass educational provision *per se*, itself associated with the social changes brought about by industrialization. Indeed, it may be argued that assessment procedures have typically been directly instrumental in rationalizing educational provision into a system. So comprehensive has this process been that it now seems scarcely credible that the type of national educational provision and organization characteristic of developed societies and aspired to by developing countries is little older than the memory of the oldest members of such societies.



It is now as difficult to imagine schooling without assessment as it is to imagine society without the state-provided, compulsory, mass education it heralded. It would have been equally difficult for pre-nineteenth-century society to have envisaged these developments, for apart from isolated historical examples – such as the civil service entrance examinations instituted in Imperial China and the widespread vocational assessments used to regulate access to particular craft guilds – the notion of specifically educational assessment and, hence, educational qualifications on a mass scale finds its roots in the combined growth of political democracy and industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century.

One of the most important influences on the development of assessment procedures in the nineteenth century was a new concern with competence. In England, for example, this concern was reflected in the institution of qualifying examinations for entry to particular professions or institutions at this time. The pressure of numbers, together with the need for comparability (Hoskin 1979), meant that such examinations were normally formal written tests. But the effects of the institution of such assessment procedures went much further than straightforward quality control. In the first place, the use of a written, theoretical test for entry into high status professions invested the assessment technique itself with a similar high status – a status it still retains.

Second, the institution of formal examinations reflected a more profound change: the notion of a syllabus or curriculum; the systematization of a body of knowledge and its rationalization into a form which made it at least partly susceptible to teaching and learning in the classroom, thereby greatly enhancing the importance of schooling.

Third, it signalled the decline of the almost feudal 'whole man' concept of apprenticeship (Montgomery 1965) in favour of an increasing emphasis on educational qualifications and a change to contractual and impersonal employment. Studies of apprenticeship (for example, Ryrle and Weir 1978; Gleeson and Mardle 1980), as well as the rapidly increasing significance of national vocational qualifications in many countries at the present time (Broadfoot 1992), confirm this trend away from 'on the job' training in favour of the acquisition of more adaptable and 'portable' qualifications in educational institutions of various kinds (Ball 1992). This formalization of training provision masks a major break with the interpersonal

contract associated with traditional apprenticeships and is a powerful expression of the increasing dominance of formal certification in hitherto less formal realms of educational provision. Fourth, examinations embody the idea of merit and the movement to a situation in which the allocation of occupational roles was ostensibly at least more the result of individual achievement.

As Chapter 4 sets out, this move away from the simple ascription of occupational roles was made possible by the earlier major social upheavals in religion, knowledge and politics which found expression in the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, for in these three movements can be traced new rational, egalitarian, meritocratic and individualistic ideologies which, incubated in the industrial revolution, soon found their expression in the explosion of practices requiring formal demonstrations of competence, and thus paved the way for the kind of relationship between education and society, mediated by assessment, which has now become the norm.

### **Assessment for regulating competition**

Certification and the associated process of selection has arguably long been the most commonly recognized function of educational assessment, since it involves students demonstrating their achievements in relation to the goals of the educational system. Their performance in apparently fair and objective tests is more or less formally evaluated by 'experts'. The subsequent ranking of candidates in comparison with their fellow competitors against predetermined criteria allows further and higher educational institutions and employers to select those whom they consider to have 'performed' the best.

Such performance thus involves elements of both competence and competition. The extreme importance of certification as an influence both on educational practice and on the wider society emerges from this 'gate-keeping' role, by which it can open and close doors for individuals to future life chances. The certification process is indeed the epitome of the apparently meritocratic basis of contemporary society, since in theory it allows free competition based on academic ability and industry and thus is regarded as the fairest basis for the allocation of opportunities for high status or remunerative careers.

Although there is considerable evidence that such a measure cannot be a neutral measure of 'merit' alone, there is still no obvious alternative which seems likely to be more fair.

One of the reasons why the domination of examinations has not been seriously challenged is their association with the crucial concept of 'innate ability', which came to dominate educational thinking during the period when the use of examinations was developing rapidly. As the idea that individuals are born with a given level of ability of 'intelligence' came to be widely accepted in many countries in the early part of the twentieth century, so the burgeoning apparatus of certification and selection devices acquired what was to prove a profoundly significant legitimating ideology. Not only were such devices taken to be a measure of a particular performance on a particular day. Their results also came to be interpreted more generally as a reflection of an individual's innate intellectual capacity. It thus became acceptable to use such results to predict likely future performance and, hence, to legitimate selection. In this respect, the concept of intelligence and the tests which were developed to measure it provided for a fourth and crucial role for assessment – that of controlling individual aspirations.

#### **Assessment for individual control**

No other assessment technique so far devised has so perfectly combined the two principal legitimating ideologies of industrial societies: the liberal democratic principle of fair competition and the belief in scientific progress. Yet, just because for many decades such tests were believed to be the most accurate way of measuring innate intellectual capacity, this need not in itself have led to a policy of educational provision based on such different capacities. The explanation of the commitment to providing different educational routes for different sorts of children which dominated educational policy in most European countries at least from the 1920s until the early 1960s can only be found in the social pressures which prevailed at the time such tests were first devised.

So great were the social and economic changes of the nineteenth century and the associated developments of social and geographic mobility, urbanization, bureaucratization and economic expansion in many of the industrialized countries that pressure on all the

various rungs of the educational ladder increased rapidly. The scholarship and certification systems based on selection alone would very soon have ceased to be an adequate way of regulating access to educational and vocational opportunity, had not another mechanism of legitimating selection been found to disperse the accumulating popular frustration.

The pressure from those anxious to climb the rungs of the ladder was reinforced by pressure from those espousing the developing educational ideologies at the time. In England, for example, Williams (1961) has identified the differing perspectives of the 'industrial trainers', the 'old humanists' and the 'public educators', but whether their concern was to make the maximum use of 'the pool of ability' by the institution of what Beatrice and Sidney Webb termed a 'capacity catching' machine or whether it was to promote social justice and social order, the effects were the same – a search for an apparently accurate and thus fair way of identifying talent and of discriminating among pupils on purely educational, rather than, as had previously been the case, social grounds. Above all, there was a need for a procedure which would be widely acceptable.

Such ideological and pragmatic pressures rapidly elevated the notion of 'ability' or 'intelligence' to a position where it came to dominate educational thinking at all levels. For teachers, the process of categorizing their pupils into 'bright' and 'dull', 'able' and 'less able' became and remains a taken-for-granted feature of professional discourse even though it cannot be linked with any objective evidence of performance (Claxton 1994).

The search for some means of measuring 'intelligence' fairly was not a protracted one. The solution, like the problem, was found in the new individualist emphasis in education. A growing interest in individual achievement had led many nineteenth-century psychologists to study the determinants of various personal characteristics. Gradually, there developed a conviction among psychologists that the determining factor in an individual's scholastic achievement was his or her innate ability or 'intelligence' – a quality that was both fixed and measurable. In addition, studies arising out of Binet's early twentieth-century work in France with 'slow learners', such as Burt's (1912) article in England, 'The inheritance of mental characteristics', and the widespread and apparently effective use of such tests by the United States Army in 1918, quickly convinced academics and lay people alike not only that it was possible to measure 'intellectual

ability' objectively, but that from these measurements future academic and occupational performance could be accurately predicted.

By the mid-twentieth century, so firmly established had 'intelligence' testing become that it dominated educational thinking. Sir Cyril Burt was for many people merely stating the obvious when in 1933 he wrote:

By intelligence the psychologist understands inborn, all round, intellectual ability. It is inherited, or at least innate, not due to teaching or training; it is intellectual, not emotional or moral, and remains uninfluenced by industry or zeal; it is general, not specific, i.e. it is not limited to any particular kind of work, but enters into all we do or say or think. Of all our mental qualities, it is the most far-reaching; fortunately it can be measured with accuracy and ease.

(Burt 1933: 28–9)

It is not hard to account for the rapid establishment of intelligence testing. It must indeed have been seen as an answer to a prayer that, by means of a simple test, children could be readily and justly identified as 'bright' or 'dull'; their future could be predicted and, on this basis, they could be categorized into different channels of the educational system. Not only that, but the scientific, 'objective' nature of such tests, their proven predictive power (Kamin 1974) and their measurement of a characteristic believed to be as inborn as eye colour, meant it was almost impossible for the recipient to reject the diagnosis. Thus intelligence testing, as a mechanism of social control, was unsurpassed in teaching the doomed majority that their failure was the result of their own inbuilt inadequacy.

The significance of this now almost intuitive discourse is well illustrated by contrasting those countries where it prevails, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, with a country like Japan where it does not. Arguably, the Japanese assumption that achievement is the result of *persistence* rather than innate ability, and hence that *all* can succeed if they try, is one of the secrets of the phenomenal success of its education system (White 1987).

However, the concept of 'merit' involved another dimension as well. In his famous equation

$$\text{ability} + \text{effort} = \text{merit}$$

Young (1971) highlighted a second crucial dimension in the

legitimizing ideology of assessment – that of motivation. Another major reason for the proliferation of assessment procedures as a means of individual control is their capacity to motivate pupils. While the constraining effects of selection and certification examinations on the educational process itself may have been deplored, such examinations and the less significant tests and assessments associated with them are widely welcomed as an important source of motivation, and thus of control. Today, for many pupils, passing examinations is the only purpose of being in school (Broadfoot 1979b; Buswell 1983; Turner 1984). Any proposal to abandon competitive assessment meets with an outcry among politicians and even parents, who fear that standards will fall as a result. The converse of this situation is, of course, also true: the increasing lack of motivation among those pupils who are not taking external examinations, whose assessments are rarely positive enough to motivate them to try harder, and for whom no very tempting bait can be offered in an educational system that recognizes in its assessment procedures only one kind of ability – the kind which, by definition, they do not have. It is this problem, and the need to ‘warm up’ potential students to carry on learning rather than ‘cool out’ the majority as in the past when the economy did not need such a highly educated workforce, that partly underlies the growing tendency at the present time to make formal assessment more comprehensive.

In the earlier stages of the development of mass educational provision, many pupils were typically denied even the opportunity to participate in educational competition, since they could not pass beyond primary or elementary schooling and had no ‘ladder’ to the opportunities provided by extended secondary education (Higginson 1981). But in developed countries the enormous expansion of educational provision at all levels during recent decades has resulted from a widespread belief in ‘human capital’ theory combined with popular demand for greater equality of educational opportunity, and has led to a situation in which forms of control based on exclusion have operated at successively later stages.

The consistent trend for the number of statutory years of schooling to be extended has meant that more and more of what were previously ‘elite’ examinations for a minority of the age cohort at the end of compulsory schooling or for university entrance are becoming the target for the majority of pupils – this trend is well

illustrated in France where there is a very public commitment that 80 per cent of the age cohort should achieve the baccalaureate university entrance qualification.

### **Assessment for system control**

Before the institution of state-funded education, schools played little part in the lives of the majority of the population and so the issue of control hardly arose. In many countries the church's influence was virtually unassailable. With the advent of industrialization and its associated political and social upheavals, governments were typically unwilling to rely on voluntary agencies, and in particular the church, to provide schooling in societies in which so many of the old social codes have been swept away and in which new employment skills were needed. Indeed, many such tensions are still to be found in developing countries. Industrialization also led to privileged sections of society being more and more forced to resort to schooling as the new means of perpetuating the elite status that land and money could no longer ensure. Thus it was necessary that a means be found of carefully controlling the nature of an ever-expanding state educational provision, and of regulating the newly emerging basis for social differentiation.

Perhaps one of the earliest, and certainly one of the clearest, examples of the combined need to control the content of mass education and to ensure standards which reflect a good return on investment was the nineteenth-century payment by results system in England, in which school grants, and indeed teachers' salaries, depended on the standards achieved by their pupils in certain basic curricular areas as measured by HMI (see Chapter 7). However, recently, equally telling and crude attempts to use testing to ensure school and teacher quality as well as minimum competencies among pupils have been widely introduced in the United States (Stake 1991). Though it has long been normal for education systems to support a large army of local and national inspectors as testimony to a continuing concern that schools should be accountable to society for the investment in them, as measured by the achievements of their pupils, and their conformity to accepted practice, moves to use formal testing for this purpose have been relatively rare until recently. Indeed, provision for accountability can take many forms

depending on the ideological and institutional traditions of a particular national system.

Where there is a strong central authority, control has, in the past, tended to be focused on provision. Where this has been lacking control has tended to be exerted very indirectly through the existence of various kinds of assessment and particularly public examinations. Arguably this distinction is now changing in favour of a more common emphasis on assessment as represented by various forms of quality assurance and control (Harlen 1994). Whether the control in question is that of legal or bureaucratic accountability to superiors or concerns a moral element of responsibility to clients, it is the language of assessment that increasingly provides the currency of communication.

### **Accountability**

Accountability may be regarded as a two-stage process involving first the identification of the performance of the education system in relation to its goals, as defined at any one time, and second the response by educational institutions brought about through the mechanisms of system control in response to any perceived shortfall between performance and goals. Although conceptually distinct, these two stages are frequently simultaneous in practice. As well as these bureaucratic accountability relationships, education systems are also likely to be characterized by other patterns of informal accountability in the form of the constraints and responsibilities that actors in the education system set for themselves as part of their 'professional standards'.

Where accountability has emerged as an explicit issue – typically in systems where there is weak central control – the focus has tended to be on student gain: the results of the system. The assumption is that the supply of information and knowledge about the system is the basis for various forms of control: the sanctioning of individuals, the allocation of resources and more general exhortation including occasionally explicit coercion, although, as Chin and Benne (1978) point out, it is rarely effective to run organisations on a power-coercive basis.

Educational control is thus much more commonly exerted through attempts to colonize professional attitudes and other



'normative re-educative' strategies. Rarely do specific proposals for action follow directly from the provision of information (Kirst and Bass 1976). Rather, it is the act of assessment itself which is crucial, for the way in which information is gathered and the content of that information itself embody prevailing values. Thus, the responsibility to give an account or to be accountable acts in itself as an important force of control. This argument is discussed at more length later in the book. It is sufficient at this point merely to introduce the important argument that whether or not there is extensive provision for bureaucratic central control, the key to effective control lies in the power to generate the evaluative criteria which inform the content and style of educational discourse and to impose these as the basis of both formal and professional accountability.

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