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ABSTRACT

The first part of this paper reviews the literature on fundamental issues that relate to the work of teachers as the national curriculum is implemented in the United Kingdom. These issues include: (1) the work day of junior and secondary school teachers; (2) the politics and sociology of teaching; (3) the work of primary school teachers; and (4) teaching under the Education Reform Act of 1988. The second part examines the teaching of infants under the Education Reform Act, factors in teachers' working conditions that hinder or help them in delivering the national curriculum, teachers' perceptions of the teaching of infants, and the impact of teachers' work on their personal and social lives. Policy issues that must be addressed to ensure the success of educational reform in the United Kingdom are identified. Issues that relate to the use of teachers' time include the pressure on teachers' time within the school day and the staffing of primary schools, teachers' work loads, infant teaching as work, and the use of nonteaching assistants. Issues that relate to the delivery of the national curriculum include pupil assessment, the subversion of formative assessment, and class size and management. Issues that relate to teachers' careers include teacher retention and promotion, and teachers' overconscientiousness. A list of 56 references is provided. (SM)

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THE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF INFANT  
TEACHERS' TIME : SOME POLICY ISSUES

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A paper prepared for the  
Policy Analysis Unit Seminar  
to be held at Warwick University on  
Friday, the 15th November 1991

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## 1. TEACHING AS WORK : THE STATE OF CURRENT THEORISING

The literature on teaching as work has had a sporadic, fragmented history, which we judge to have been not entirely helpful for understanding the changing nature of teaching, as large-scale national reforms are being implemented. There have been four strands in the literature.

### i) The Teacher's Day

The first comprises key empirical studies in this country (Hilsum and Cane 1971; Hilsum and Strong 1978) which mapped out baseline data on the working days of junior and secondary school teachers. The studies were influential in dispelling the myth of teaching as a 'nine-to-four' job, primarily because they showed that a substantial proportion of working time was spent out of contact with pupils. However, the data are between fifteen and twenty years old, and there has been no systematic follow-up, although recent atheoretical surveys of teacher time spent on work (eg. NAS/UWT 1990, 1991; Campbell and Neill 1990; Lowe 1991) provide a limited basis for bringing the empirical picture up to date, particularly in respect of the "extensiveness" of work (ie. the overall hours spent on it).

### ii) The Politics of Teachers' Work

A second group of studies concerns the politics and sociology of teaching. Some of these (eg. Burgess 1983; Grace 1978) have contributed to our understanding of the experience of teaching in the institutional context of secondary schools. There has been international interest in the politics of teachers' work (see Connell 1985; Lawn and Grace 1987; Reyes 1990) and a renewed interest in teacher professionalism and teachers' organisations (Ozga and Lawn 1981; Lawn 1985; Lawn and Grace 1987; Poppleton and Riseborough 1990). A common thesis here is of the "de-professionalisation", "de-skilling" or "proletarianisation" of teachers, as union influence has

been eroded and central control increased.

A more generalised version of this thesis, traceable to Larsen (1981), emerged in Apple's (1986) book, Teachers and Texts, and in an analysis by Hargreaves (1991). This uses the concept of "intensification" to argue that teachers, like other 'educated labour', are experiencing increased pressure for productivity and efficiency under late capitalism, resulting in reduced collegial relations, less time for relaxation in formal breaks, and reductions in quality of the service they provide.

We would want to link this thesis with the widely quoted work of Fullan (1982, 1991) in which it is argued that under 'imposed change' teachers will feel de-skilled and lose a sense of ownership and professional autonomy in curriculum matters, whilst acquiring a sense of alienation towards the change itself.

A perspective on teachers' careers (Sikes et al. 1985), and in particular gender-related opportunities (eg. Purvis 1981; De Lyon and Migniuolo 1989; Skelton 1987; Evetts 1990), has also characterised recent work.

Insofar as these studies have placed teaching as work into a central frame of analysis they are useful, but they have four substantive limitations.

First, although they refer to teaching generically, their principal concern has been secondary teaching, so that they tell us little about contemporary primary teachers' work in general, and almost nothing about the work of infant teachers. Second, there has been no attempt to build upon, extend or test the empirical baseline data established by Hilsum and his colleagues in the early and mid-1970s. This concerned mundane, but for teachers highly significant, parameters of work such as the amount of time spent on it, the balance of time across different components, both on and off school premises, and factors in their working conditions affecting both the realisation of teaching goals and teachers' personal lives. In particular, the concentration on gender-differentiated opportunities in educational careers may have helped to distract attention from factors in the workplace of all teachers, irrespective of status or gender. Third, the evidence is nearly all ethnographic or based on life history, which makes for lively reading sometimes, but uncertain representativeness, always.

Despite this, teacher commitment has been almost entirely neglected, with the notable exceptions of Nias's work (see below), Fullan and Hargreaves' (1991) questioning of the excessive identification of Canadian teachers with their work, and the NFER study (Earley and Baker 1989) of teacher retention. Fourth, the statutory intrusions upon teachers' work of the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act 1987 and the Education Reform Act 1988 have been so pervasive, recent and immediate, as to reduce the relevance of most analyses that pre-date them.

In particular, devolved management has brought into more local focus employee-employer relations, not least through the responsibility given to governing bodies for appointment and dismissal of teachers. The detailed impact of such changes on the experience of teaching as work, workplace relations of teachers and their working conditions is not able to be examined by means of macro-analyses of teacher careers and teacher-state relationships focused on the extra-school context.

### iii) Primary Teachers' Work

The third strand is a small number of studies of primary teachers' work, the most sustained of which (Nias 1980, 1981, 1989; Nias et al. 1989) analysed teacher perceptions within a symbolic interactionist framework, with some discussion of the implications of the findings in a post-1988 context. Teacher satisfaction derived mainly from contact with children, and there was a marked preference for positive leadership styles from heads. Other evidence (Goodacre and Donoghue 1983; Campbell 1985; Taylor 1987) revealed the changing nature of the work relations, and increased occupational stress where primary teachers were adding coordinator roles to the conventional classteaching one. One study (PSRDG 1987) reported stress arising from the increasing demands of primary teaching generally, a view shared by Nias. Again, none of these studies claimed representativeness for their samples. Acker's (1987) review drawing partly upon evidence from the USA following the introduction of state-wide curriculum and testing, identified low status, low autonomy and a sense of de-skilling leading to "burn out", in an occupational culture where vocational commitment and self-sacrifice characterised women teachers. These studies, with their focus on the experience of primary teaching, its satisfactions and stresses, provide a strong conceptual framework, though it is constructed on a relatively thin empirical base.

iv) Teaching under the Education Reform Act

The fourth group relates to the work of teaching under the Education Reform Act. Two studies (Busher and Saran 1990; Maclure and Marr 1990) of teaching as work in the post-1987 context identified a wider definition of teaching:

"Teachers are no longer seen purely in terms of the classroom, responsible for pupil performance. They now have many other specified duties ... including essential administration to maintain the organisation of the school, attendance at parents', curriculum development and in-service meetings, as well as preparation of their lessons and marking students' work. Well understood pedagogical responsibilities have been widened to include administrative, and in some cases, managerial duties."

(Busher and Saran p.1)

They identified three problems which they traced to the post-1987 context; the use of teachers' time, alienation from, or reduced identification with, teaching as an occupation or a career; and widespread disaffection arising from the workloads created by obligations under the 1988 Act. Studies examining the implementation of statutory orders relating to the core curriculum and its assessment have mainly been produced by government agencies (eg. DES 1989a, 1989b, 1990, 1991; SEAC 1990; NCC 1991). They have concentrated on the work of delivering the curriculum and assessment, and have not taken account of work outside school or occupational stress.

2. THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND TEACHERS' WORK AT KEY STAGE 1 : SOME FINDINGS

The above review of the literature has identified some fundamental issues, but has also illustrated the tendency for theorising in education to run ahead of empirical observation. It reveals the shortage of basic information and description to help understand the work of teachers as the national curriculum is implemented. It raises for us four deceptively simple questions about

the contemporary work of infant teachers about which empirical evidence is needed. They are:

- i. What is the nature of infant teaching as work under the Education Reform Act?
- ii. Which factors in the teachers' working conditions hinder or help them in delivering the national curriculum and assessment?
- iii. How do teachers perceive and value infant teaching as work, and as a career, in the post-1988 context?
- iv. How does teachers' work impact upon their personal, social and domestic lives?

Some answers to these questions are being developed in a series of studies at Warwick University examining the use of teacher time in an attempt to analyse the policy implications. Time in these studies is seen as the basic component in the structuring of teachers' work. The two studies (Campbell and Neill 1990, Campbell et al. 1991) that provide that data for this paper generated the following findings, grouped according to the above four questions. (A summary of the statistical data on how teachers' time was spent is provided in Appendix A).

#### i) The nature of infant teaching

Infant teaching appears to have changed, in 4 ways in particular, though the shortage of baseline data referred to earlier needs to be remembered. First, it has become more extensive in terms of overall time on work. The average working week in Spring term 1991, in terms of overall time, was about 55 hours. These overall hours are similar to the NAS/UWT and Lowe studies referred to earlier (p.1) but are very high by comparison with those reported in Marsh's (1991) study of general working hours in Britain, or of women teachers within it. Second, about 60% of working time was out of contact with pupils, mainly in preparing, marking and recording results, administration and in-service training. The nearest comparable figure (for junior teachers) in 1971 was 42%. This suggests that a fundamental re-structuring of the job is occurring. Third, the range of time spent on work was very great, between 40 hours and 76 hours per week, yet all teachers were engaged in fundamentally the same

job, namely classteaching. Longer hours were not related to positional characteristics, such as salary status or responsibility post, but were related to the personal factor of "conscientiousness" - the hours teachers thought it was reasonable for them to be expected to work in their own time. We were not able to test the relationship between hours on work and the quality of teaching in the classroom, but the interview data show it, at best, as uncertain.

Year 2 teachers, ie. those with at least some 7-year-olds in their class, who would be involved in statutory end-of-Key-Stage assessment, were spending longer hours overall, more time on Preparation and In-service, and Marking and Recording results, especially in their own time. The obvious danger here is that the more demanding work of teachers at the end of a Key Stage will be shunned by those with choice or sought by the over-conscientious; and it allows heads the power to construe it as a stick or a carrot. In either case, because of the division it may create between staff, it could corrode the fragile base in primary schools for whole school development (see Nias et al. 1989).

ii) Teachers' working conditions and the delivery of the National Curriculum

The conditions under which teachers conducted their daily tasks varied considerably. Class size, school size and organisation, the extent of collegial support, and to a lesser extent the allocation of non-contact time, showed variation without apparent logic. However, the common thread across this variation was a universal perception amongst teachers that workloads overall were unreasonable and unmanageable even for experienced teachers; and that there was not enough time in the school day to meet all the expectations currently laid upon classteachers at Key Stage 1. This is the intensive side of teachers' work, an unwelcome complement to the extensive side outlined in the preceding two paragraphs. Supporting evidence appears in a range of sources (House of Commons 1986; Whetton et al. 1991; Smithers and Zientek 1991) and is uniform. Teachers experienced the work of teaching as an enervating treadmill of hard work that rarely gave them a sense that they had achieved their goals. One of our interviewees likened it to a Running Commentary at the back of her mind which was saying constantly, "You haven't done this. You haven't done that", even though she was working flat out. To some extent infant teaching may always have been like this, as Nias (1991) argues,

but the objective data support the teachers' subjective sense of shortage of time. The explanation for this intensity of pressure is threefold.

First, the range of tasks now expected of primary teachers has increased, especially through the adoption of coordination responsibilities for all teachers. Second, the range of curriculum and assessment demands made of classteachers has increased to include Science and Technology, to require differentiation according to pupil capacity, and systematic assessment and recording. Third, a range of extra-classroom activities has been built into teachers' work, including meetings in and out of school for in-service training, for inter-school liaison, and for other forms of professional development. This inflation in the job specification of classteachers has not been accompanied by widespread increases in staffing to give teachers more time in the day, despite pressure for such increases from official sources such as the White Paper, Better Schools, and the ESAC 3rd Report, Achievement in Primary Schools. It would therefore be odd if the teachers did not feel under intense pressure. Studies of contemporary classroom organisation (Bennett 1989; Alexander 1990) suggest there are some improvements in class management that might lead to reduced pressure. However, our early tentative evidence (Campbell et al. 1991) suggests that the strategies our teachers adopted to deal with classroom pressure included making low-level demands on many children and reducing the frequency with which children were heard reading.

We would not, however, read this sense of lack of achievement, pressure and perceived inability to do the job, as supporting the theories of "intensification" de-skilling and alienation under imposed change, mentioned earlier. Our research provided us with the opportunity to test some aspects of these theories empirically, though it has to be said that the way the theories are expressed does not lend itself to the easy formulation of falsifiable propositions.

Our evidence suggests that the imposed change of the national curriculum, far from de-skilling and de-professionalising the teachers, was, on the contrary, seen by them as extending their skills and increasing their professionalism. In interview, teachers talked of the national curriculum helping them to become better teachers, leading to improved planning of teaching and extending collaboration with their colleagues, especially in the development of whole-school approaches to the curriculum and its assessment. Moreover, the quantitative data showed the teachers implementing

Science for substantial amounts of time (around 6 hours a week on average), a dramatic increase in coverage compared to that obtaining in the pre-1988 period, and an innovation that was widely welcomed in the interviews.

### iii) Teachers' perceptions of work and career

Interviews with the teachers suggested that the intrinsic satisfactions of infant teaching remain, as Nias has shown, in their interactions with pupils. However, four other aspects of work were seen as sources of dissatisfaction.

First, poor LEA in-service training and inadequate school management had led to anger amongst teachers because of the perceived waste of their time, a commodity at a premium for them.

Second, a paranoia about accountability had set in; teachers lived with a sense of fear that inspectors and parents would soon be checking up on them, and therefore had spent enormous amounts of time inventing, often at the request of headteachers, immensely detailed records and evidence of children's performance. This fear that the "Key Stage Cops" were coming, was a figment of imagination, given the numbers of inspectors in relation to schools, but was a real influence on the way teachers saw their work. Third, teachers saw their classrooms as less joyful places, with less attention to display, less time listening to children talk about their lives and preoccupations, on singing and painting, and following up children's spontaneous interests. This was because their work had become pressurised towards cognitive objectives, focusing on national curriculum targets.

Finally, we found that most classteachers had lowered their career aspirations. They had been cooled out (Burton Clark 1961) and no longer looked for promotion to headship or deputy headship. This lowering of career ambitions may be intrinsically worrying given Marr and Maclure's (1990) identification of a growing underclass of, mainly women, teachers, but also in terms of the potential loss to the leadership of primary schools of experienced infant classteachers.

iv) Impact on teachers' personal and social lives

The unmanageable workloads referred to earlier had had an impact on the personal and social lives of most teachers. We found two broad categories of teacher, which we called "the over-conscientious" and "the sane". The former reported that the demands of their work were causing stress personally, and putting strains on their domestic relationships. The latter, a minority, had decided that they would control the extent of interference of work in their personal lives by not taking seriously all the expectations laid upon them.

The implementation of the national curriculum has occurred by means of a clearly defined curriculum prescription. Paradoxically the assessment arrangements were experienced by these teachers as anomic - with no clear expectations about the practical aspects of assessing and recording. The triple combination of anomie, high levels of conscientiousness, and paranoia about inspection appears to have led to teachers devoting so much time to work that they and their families were put under great stress. Part of the explanation may lie in the general occupational culture of primary teaching, but another is in the fact that the infant teaching force is almost exclusively female and therefore tends, regrettable as it may be, to carry heavy domestic responsibilities. However, the assumptions in the school workplace about work commitment are from a business model - of masculine career orientation in which work, not the family, has the prime claim on workers' time. The mismatch of this model with the reality of the women teachers' lives, where powerful claims on their time are exerted simultaneously from work (including their obligations to the needs of the children) and home might help explain the high stress levels experienced by these teachers. It also suggests that removing the system-based obstacles to women's career advancement in primary education may be necessary but will not be sufficient, to deliver equality of career opportunity in primary teaching.

### 3. POLICY ISSUES

We have identified ten policy issues arising from our research and present them here in outline to create the basis for discussion in the seminar. We have grouped them under three headings:

- a. The Use of Teachers' Time
- b. The Delivery of the National Curriculum
- c. Infant Teachers' Work and Careers

#### a) THE USE OF TEACHERS' TIME

##### i) Pressure on Teachers' Time within the School Day and the Staffing of Primary Schools

The pressure the teachers were under within the school day was creating a sense of working hard but achieving little - the "Running Commentary" Syndrome, referred to above. Their experience was simply that they did not have time in the school day to do all the things which had to be done. We do not think that teachers can sustain this sort of pressure for very long, nor should they be expected to do so. They have a right to working conditions that enable them to do their job well. The problem is long-standing and the solution has been recognised since at least 1986, when the House of Commons' Education, Science and Arts Committee's third report argued that primary schools could not be expected to make further improvement in standards unless they were staffed in ways that provided class teachers with some time in the school day away from their classes. "Non-contact time", where it was available, was often snatched at the expense of other activities, such as assembly.

But it was used for "other contact", with colleagues in joint planning and review or for working more intensively with small groups of children. We think that those

responsible for policy-making on staffing levels in primary schools need to give further attention, urgently, to this issue or quality and standards in learning will continue to be adversely affected. In this they would be helped by the adoption of activity-led staffing models (Simpson 1989) rather than pupil/teacher ratios. However, if funding were to be provided, ensuring that it is used for the purposes intended and not for small reductions in class size will raise considerable practical problems, not least in monitoring how teachers' time is used.

ii) Reasonable Workloads

The concept of what constitutes a "reasonable" workload for primary school class teachers is problematic. Our teachers were experiencing what they saw as unreasonable workloads. This was especially, but not exclusively, true of Year 2 teachers. The objective data provide a picture of a typical working week of around 55 hours, with Year 2 teachers working around 58 hours. One in five of the Year 2 teachers were working an average of 68 hours a week. The time spent on work had increased since the same point in the 1990 school year, and looks set to increase further as Statutory Orders in new subjects are introduced.

We argued earlier that the underlying business-derived model of teachers' time in Key Stage 1 is mismatched with the empirical reality of their lives. A model of time derived from business, commerce or industry, in which the underlying assumptions are that work has a prior claim on teachers' time, both at school and at home, simply ignores the current realities. Such models also imply an enthusiasm for promotion through hard work, which does not apply to the teachers mentioned above who have reduced their career aspirations. We think that the device of dividing teachers' time into directed (accounted for) and non-directed (unaccounted for and unmeasured) time has created intolerable tensions for conscientious teachers. Whilst we acknowledge the difficulties in setting ceilings for a semi-profession, the expected relationship or ratio between directed and non-directed time might be re-examined so as to indicate to teachers, and especially to heads, what could reasonably be required. Our evidence - that in the period concerned the ratio of directed to non-directed time was nearly 3:2 - might provide a starting point for discussion. We do not think that exhortation to teachers to engage in better "time management" is anything other

than a rhetoric in which the victims of unreasonable time demands are blamed for them. A particularly heavy and difficult responsibility is laid on heads in respect of Year 2 teachers. Heads need to develop collegial management styles so as to share the pressures of Teacher Assessment through the school, rather than target them, even by default, on Year 2 teachers.

### iii) Infant Teaching as Work

Our evidence shows the fundamental shift in the balance of work, with working time away from contact with pupils occupying about 60% of the teachers' overall time. Much of this time is invisible to the public and needs to be brought out into the domain of public understanding, if the '9-3' image of infant teaching is to be destroyed. However, compared to time spent in contact with children, much of the other time on work was experienced as unrewarding, to put it kindly. LEAs and headteachers need urgently to develop ways of using teachers' time, in INSET and in meetings, that are efficient and productive (see for example, Morrison 1990). If this does not happen, the opportunities for teachers' professional development, provided by INSET and by other kinds of meetings, will not be fully realised.

### iv) The Use of Non-teaching Assistants

We found that over five hours a week of the teachers' time was spent on relatively low-level administration and welfare activities, such as registration and dinner money collection, moving children round the school, supervision at the beginning and the end of sessions, and mounting displays and assemblies. It has to be asked, and under LMS no doubt will be asked, whether this is a good use of graduate time, especially since one of the major problems for teachers is shortage of time within the school day. We acknowledge that this time is well spent in social, emotional, personal development activities but it could equally well be done by non-teaching assistants more cheaply. We do not know whether this is a practical option since many of these activities are short time spaces of 3-9 minutes spread across the day, but we think it is an option that should be explored. It would shift the conception of infant teaching towards a more European model, (see Osborn 1985), in which the focus of work is narrower but the responsibility for pupil progress is more directly accepted by the teachers.

b) THE DELIVERY OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

i) Assessment and Recording

We have shown that teachers perceived a policy vacuum or, at best, policy confusion in respect of assessment and recording. This helps explain the unduly complex, time-consuming and often purposeless assessment and recording activities. We think that normal expectations for recording and assessment need to be clarified. This could take the form of non-statutory guidance about what might reasonably be expected about frequency of observation of pupils, frequency of recording, numbers of pieces of pupils' work needed for a portfolio, etc., rather than DES guesstimates about the hours needed for recording. The 1992 assessment arrangements, with extensions to both the SAT period and the TA period, appear on the surface to allow more time for the same amount of assessment and recording overall, than in 1991. However, if our analysis is correct, these proposals would lead to increased, not reduced, workloads since under them, without guidelines of the kind we suggest, teachers' conscientiousness would drive them to further excessive, frenetic assessment and recording, only over longer time-frames. If such guidance is not made available, we think school staff, with the support of governing bodies, should create their own policies, bearing in mind the excessive workloads we have identified arising from practice in Spring 1991.

ii) The Subversion of Formative Assessment

The main purpose of assessment, according to the TGAT report, was "formative" - to help teachers identify children's achievements and to plan the next steps in their learning. Our interviews with teachers lead us to believe that they have largely excluded the formative purpose from their thinking about assessment, which was dominated by concerns to achieve a "summative" purpose, ie. to allocate pupils fairly to levels in ways that could provide a basis for comparison between pupils, classes and schools. This has happened partly, of course, because of the time when we were conducting the research during Spring term when Teacher Assessment has to serve a summative purpose, following the decision that

most attainment targets would not be assessed by SATs. In addition, there has been a drift towards the end of the Key Stage in assessment and recording because the statutory arrangements are largely concerned with this period. There needs to be an attempt to reclaim the formative purpose of assessment and to redress the balance of assessment activities so that they are spread across the whole of the Key Stage. The advantages would be that the burdens of Year 2 teachers would be lightened and that teachers would not feel that the formative approach to assessment, which they found attractive and worthwhile, had been discredited.

### iii) Class Size and Class Management

The teachers had classes ranging from those with 20 pupils to those with 35 pupils in them. There may be good reasons for such variation but, nonetheless, they mean that different conditions under which the national curriculum and assessment are being implemented do not obviously bear direct comparison. From our pilot study (Campbell and Neill 1990) about 25 pupils was a threshold beyond which questionnaire responses showed that class size became the most serious obstacle to delivering the curriculum. This figure was confirmed to us in our interviews. The Audit Commission has arrived at a threshold of about 30 pupils. Whilst we accept that class size is a crude measure - it ignores the age range and the existence of support teachers, assistants, etc. - we think that schools should develop a policy on class size that takes account of the demands of the national curriculum and assessment. Moreover, central and local government policy-making on teacher supply needs to take account of the large proportion (1 in 5) of primary classes over 30 pupils. To restrict the policy discussion to analysis of pupil-teacher ratio ignores the realities of large classes since the pupil/teacher ratio has only an indirect relationship to class size.

We were concerned that, to implement national curriculum and assessment, the teachers were adopting two class management strategies in which they did not believe, and which they thought would lead to lower standards. The two strategies - increasing pupil independence in matters of classroom routines while setting "low input" tasks, and hearing children read less frequently than they thought desirable - were designed to free-up teachers' time in classrooms to engage in detailed observation and recording of groups and individuals. We do not know whether the teachers' views that these strategies would lead to lower standards, especially in Reading, will be

supported from future evidence, but the teachers' perceptions need to be taken very seriously. If the only way that very experienced infant teachers can deliver the core curriculum and assess it is by setting most pupils low-level tasks to keep them busy and by hearing them read less frequently than previously, the cost of the core curriculum and assessment might be high. The findings in the SEAC evaluation of the pilot SATs were congruent with the views of our teachers. When, over 1992-1993, the other foundation subjects come in, teachers will be put under even greater pressure to adopt such strategies for class management. Changes in 1992 assessment arrangements will not solve this problem, since removing ATs in Science and Mathematics from the SAT assessment does not remove obligations on teachers to assess the ATs concerned. It simply transfers it to TA.

#### iv) The Core and Foundation : Breadth and Balance

We were able to show that, although the teachers were implementing the core subjects, the other foundation subjects and RE were being delivered for the equivalent, at most, of about 15 minutes a day. Most of these subjects, eg. Art, Music, PE & Movement and Technology, are time-consuming since they are practical activities. It is difficult to believe that reasonable time was being devoted to these subjects, given the understandable concentration upon the core. The delivery of the broad and balanced curriculum, as defined in the Act, seemed in question in 1991. As the statutory orders in the other foundation subjects come in in 1992 and 1993, the pressure on time and teachers is likely to increase. A key policy concern in this period should be INSET for the whole curriculum, or for integrated approaches to aspects of it, rather than, or in addition to, training focused on single subjects.

### c) INFANT TEACHERS' WORK AND CAREERS

#### i) Teacher Retention and Promotion

We argued in 1990 (Campbell and Neill) that the fundamental shift in the structuring of teachers' work, outlined in 2(i) above, would lead to teachers leaving the profession. The reason we advanced was that the

parts of the job that teachers found attractive and satisfying - contact with children - comprised, relative to other parts, a small proportion of time. Our argument was not directly supported, but we did find that almost all the teachers had lowered their personal ambitions. They no longer saw promotion to deputy head and head as attractive because of the legal, moral and administrative responsibilities attached to the posts. If this view is widespread in the profession as a whole, two consequences follow. First, there is a time bomb in the supply of high quality leadership in infant schools and departments because it will become even more difficult than at present to fill headships and deputy headships. Secondly, where these are filled, it may often be by people who have relatively low commitment to children's interests and high commitment to administration and public relations. They may, more often than now, be men. We are not sure that this will be a benefit to infant schools. Ironically, if the policy of rewarding good teachers for remaining in the classroom were to be taken seriously and implemented widely, it would reinforce this possibility.

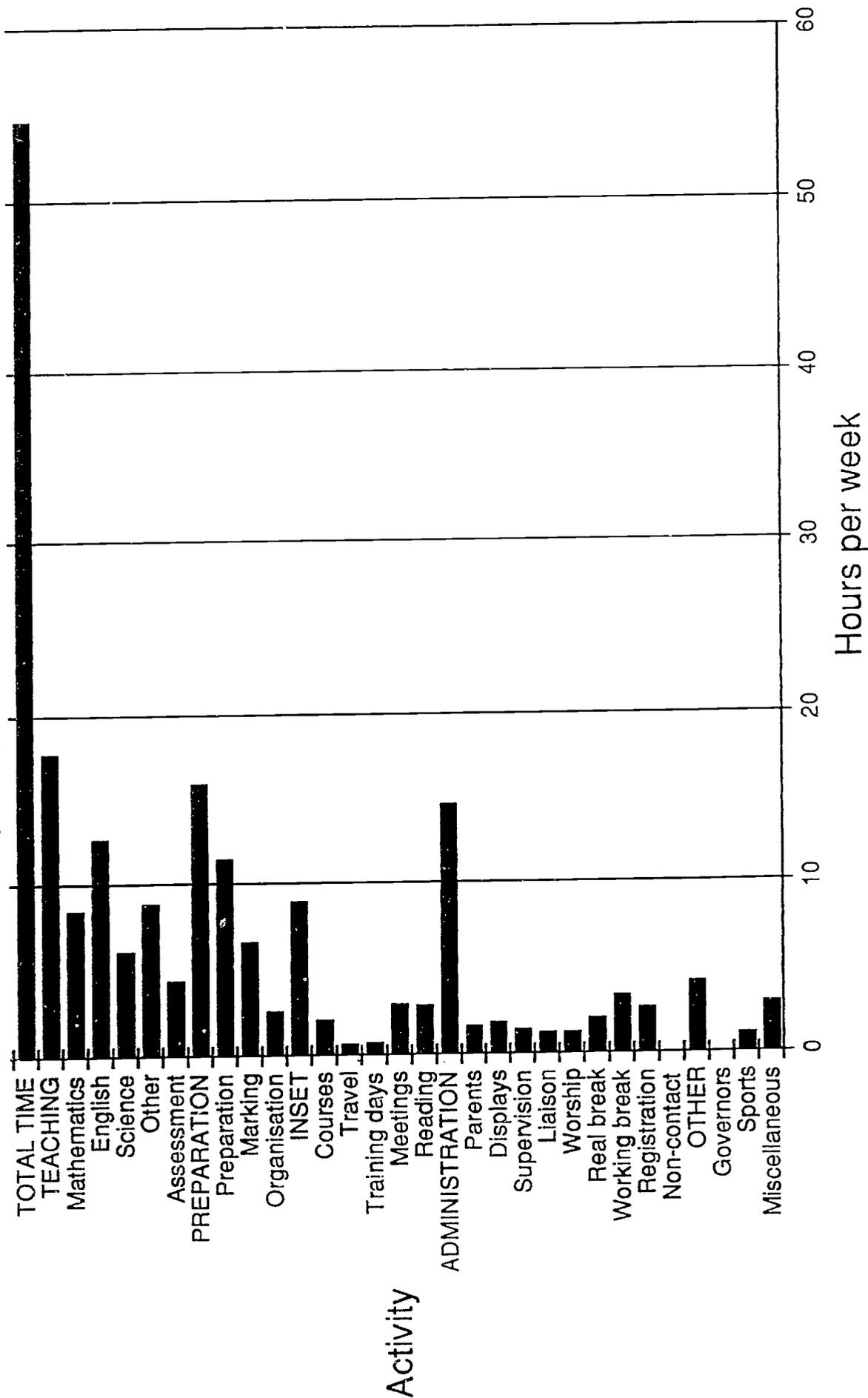
ii) The Education Reform Act and the Trap of Conscientiousness

Personal commitment, "conscientiousness", rather than salary position, was associated with long hours on work. We originally used the term "conscientiousness" to imply the possibility of "over-conscientiousness", ie., conscientiousness to a fault. We think that many teachers in Key Stage 1 were having to, or choosing to, spend so much time on work in the Spring term 1991, that the virtue of their conscientiousness must be called into question. They saw it as damaging their personal lives, their health and, ironically, the quality of their pupils' learning and relationships with them. Conscientiousness had become, in a literal sense, counter-productive. We do not think that this state of affairs is intentional but it should be brought to a halt.

All the parties involved in primary education have a role to play here. Teachers need not be so conscientious, though this will be difficult because of their training into an occupational culture in which a high value is placed on vocational commitment. But, if the demands on time are actually absurd, conscientious teachers need not simultaneously take all of them seriously. Teacher associations will need to support teachers here. Headteachers have a role in both resisting outside

pressure to do everything at once, (1990-1991 was a trial year for assessment and recording, not the real thing), and in not making more demands upon teachers than are necessary. Records in five different formats, for example, or in daily checklists, or in Records of Achievement format, are not statutorily required. LEAs and governing bodies should examine their staffing formulae, using activity-led models to find ways of improving staffing levels. Central government might wish to take into account the experience of Key Stage 1 teachers so far, and consider the implications for its reforms over the next few years as further subjects come into statutory orders, and as statutory orders affect Key Stage 2. The teachers supported the reforms and had achieved much in attempting to make them work. But we do not think they will be able to sustain permanently the heavy workloads and high levels of stress that they see as necessary to make the reforms work. It is probable that some reduction in time will be made as teachers get used to the changes. However, it is difficult for us to envisage the full national curriculum (as opposed to the core curriculum currently in place) and assessment being effectively delivered if the working conditions of primary teachers are not improved. By far the most pressing improvement in conditions is **time in the school day**, and the most obvious way of securing that improvement is to press for staffing levels in primary schools to be increased. The purpose would be to support class teaching, not reduce class size, and the funding would need to be earmarked. Without such improvement the reforms are unlikely to succeed.

# Key Stage 1 - Time on Work, Spring 1991



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