W. Kenneth Richmond

# Education and Schooling: What's the Difference?

In the first place, why bother to look for a distinction between the two terms? Why all this fuss about the use of words which everyone recognizes to be fuzzy, and why pretend to feel concerned if they *are* commonly taken to be interchangeable? Many would say that the question, "What is the difference between education and schooling?" if not actually improper, involves a verbal quibble and to that extent deserves to be dismissed as a non-problem. English usage is essentially flexible in these matters, after all, not given to the terminological exactitude of other European languages.

Sociologists, for their part, are not in the least inclined to insist on the need to draw any firm distinction between education and schooling. For them the organized learning which takes place in schools and similar institutions which together form the education system as a whole is a social *fact.* They have a point, of course. For practical purposes we must agree that entries in *Who's Who* informing us that so-and-so was "educated at Eton and Trinity" are in some sense correct: it would be highly pedantic to object that strictly speaking, the word ought to be "schooled!"

Chameleon-like, the meaning of the word "education" is as variable as its contexts in time and space. Too late in the day to protest that it was invented in the eighteenth century by schoolmasters who wished to give their work a spurious and inflated self-importance. The truth is that ever since mass schooling was first introduced, the enlargement of its influence and control over the young has fostered the impression that there is little or no significant difference between education and schooling. Formerly, the family, the Church, apprenticeship, neighborhood and other social agencies played a major role in the rearing, nurture and upbringing of chil-

dren. Significantly, these words are no longer fashionable in the technical jargon of education. As R. S. Peters remarks:

> There is a general concept of "education" which covers almost any process of learning, rearing or growing up. Nowadays, when we speak of education in this general way, we usually mean going to school, to an institution devoted to learning.[1]

This conflation of the word "education" to cover a wide range of functions can be seen as resulting from the gradual take-over by state-controlled bureaucracies of responsibilities which were originally discharged either by individuals on their own behalf or by informal, voluntary organizations. This aggrandizement is so obvious that it scarcely needs to be illustrated. Thus, in recent years, Teacher Training Colleges have been re-named Colleges of Education an honorific title which owes more to status-seeking motives than anything else. A similar pretentiousness is the trade mark of most histories of education, in which the relatively insignificant part played by formal schooling in the cognitive and personal development of the young has been consistently suppressed for the sake of bolstering up an importance which it never possessed. To date, in Sol Cohen's judgement, most historians, in confusing education with schooling, stand guilty of the sin of parochialism ("writing a narrow history of the schools") and the sin of evangelism ("seeking to inspire teachers with professional zeal rather than attempting to understand what really happened").[2] Ministers of Education would, no doubt, be very surprised if they were advised that their titles of office were misleading and that it might be better for all concerned if they reverted to calling themselves Ministers of Public Instruction. Most Professors of Education would be indignant — for the same reasons as were the Sophists in Socrates' day — if it were put to them that they were violating some as yet unwritten Trade Descriptions Act, still more indignant if it were suggested that they were regularly in the habit of condoning practices which were positively mis-educative.

But, surely, it will be said, most of us are well aware of the difference between education and schooling and cannot be accused of falling into the error of supposing that one is the same as the other. In fact, although many of us privately recognize the need to draw a distinction, we find it difficult to do anything of the kind; and in public we tend to go along with the opinion that no great harm can come of treating the two terms as if they really were synonymous. And even if our attitude is not so easy-going as this, the general view

seems to be that education and schooling, like love and marriage, go together; and that in the words of yesteryear's popular song, "You can't have one without the other."

• • • •

"TEESIDE TEACHERS' STRIKE: PUPILS MISS EDUCATION," a newspaper headline announces. Children attend school in order to receive an education, thinks the average parent — in the same way that shoppers go to the supermarket to buy groceries. "Education," in short, has come to be thought of as a commodity, a package deal; and "schooling" provides its service station. Since the latter is the monopoly of the "education system" it is hardly surprising that the notion of education without schooling should have come to seem a contradiction in terms.

Are we only playing at word-games, then, in seeking to draw a distinction? Granted, both terms belong to the class which Wittgenstein described as blurred at the edges, interpenetrating and shading off into each other so imperceptibly that there seems to be no saying for certain where schooling ends and education begins. As Polanyi says:

> We must accept the risks of semantic indeterminacy, since only words of indeterminate meaning can have a bearing on reality and that for meeting this hazard we must credit ourselves with the ability to perceive such bearing.[3]

Seeing that it is useless to look for definitions, and in view of the close family resemblance between education and schooling, what possible harm can there be in treating them as if they were synonymous? As to that, the obvious retort must be that it would be folly to conclude that they are identical simply because they share certain affinities. In any case, we cannot ignore the social fact that, "ordinary language has lost the ability to distinguish between procedure and substance, schooling and education, curricular participation and learning."[4]

In order to achieve clarification, the first step is to pinpoint the essential characteristics of the two concepts. The following list enumerates some of these in the form of propositions. If any of these propositions is held to be unarguable it will be because a clear distinction is self-evident. If, on the other hand, a valid objection can be raised against any of these propositions, the objection will at least serve as a cue for further discussion.

(1) *"Education" is much the fuzzier of the two concepts.* Schooling is a tangible process, embodied in institutions:

it has its "outward and visible signs," whereas education corresponds rather to an "inward, invisible grace." In other words, whether or not a person has been subjected to schooling admits of no argument: whether or not he can be said to be educated is more doubtful.

(2) *"Education" is a more socially prestigious word than "Schooling."*
In Ryle's terminology "education" is an *achievement* word, "schooling" a *task* word.
Alternatively, "education" is U, "schooling" Non-U (i.e. an O.K. word vis-à-vis one which is not quite O.K.).

(3) *There is a part-whole relationship between Schooling and Education.*
Schooling is only one among a number of social agencies concerned with the process of education.

(4) *There is a means-end relationship between Schooling and Education.*
Schooling serves a propaedeutic purpose in making education possible. It is, as Bruner says, an *enabling* process which helps the learner to become a responsible agent. Education is what happens when he leaves his instructor behind and takes off on his own. Carl Bereiter, in an article entitled "Schools without Education" in the *Harvard Educational Review*,[5] argues forcibly that we would do well to drop the pretence that schools exist to provide pupils with an "education": far better, he thinks, to cut our losses and agree that all they can rightly be expected to do is to provide basic training.

(5) *Schooling is largely concerned with training in specific skills whereas education is all-pervasive in its influence.*
We usually say that a man has been schooled in this, that or the other field of knowledge, but we speak of him as "educated" without any such qualification. According to R. S. Peters, "*trained* suggests the development of competence in a limited skill or mode of thought whereas *educated* suggests a linkage with a wider system of belief."[6]

OBJECTION

A. N. Whitehead maintained, rightly, that any liberal education worth the name must enable a man to *know* something well and to *do* something well. Again, in *The Evolution of Educational Theory*, Sir John Adams warned against the

futile and effete notion of "the man who is educated, just that and nothing more."

(6) *Animals can be schooled but only human beings can properly be said to be educated.*
Dolphins, even killer whales, can be taught, instructed, conditioned, trained, "gentled," — schooled — to perform all manner of engaging tricks. Possibly the greatest danger in the current tendency to identify education with schooling is that it leads ultimately to a dehumanization of theory and practice. In the last resort, education has to do with what M. V. C. Jeffreys has called "the sacred and hidden identity which no techniques can reach."

OBJECTION 1

"School is the one difference between men and animals. Animals don't go to school. In the Free Development of their Personality, swallows have built their nests in exactly the same way for millenniums."[7]

OBJECTION 2

As late as the 19th century, English usage saw nothing wrong in speaking of the education of animals and even plants. The idea of an "educated man" is of comparatively recent origin.

(7) *Schooling has its detractors but everyone, apparently, is in favor of Education.*
Anti-school criticism has a long history, too long to recapitulate here. One has only to think of Quintilian's castigations of the vices of Roman schools, of Luther's fulminations against them as "slaughter-houses of the mind," of Rousseau's contempt for "jeunes professeurs," of Pestalozzi's sad comment on the pupils of Geneva, "Sie kennen wiel und wissen nichts," of Dewey's complaint about "the divorce of school from life," etc., — and in the contemporary situation of Kozol's "Death at an Early Age," Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" or John Holt's round assertion that "Schools are bad places for kids." Yet in denouncing *schooling*, all these critics urge the cause of *education* and stress its benefits.

OBJECTION

But these criticisms apply only to bad schooling, not to schooling *per se*.

(8) *Under certain conditions, schooling can be shown to be miseducative — which would be impossible if schooling and education were invariably identical.*
Just what these "certain conditions" are, and how they arise, should therefore be our immediate concern. See 15 *infra* for further discussion of this point. Suffice for the moment to say that there is plenty of evidence to suggest that, for a substantial proportion of non-academic teenagers, prolonged schooling is too much of a good thing. For many, the raising of the school-leaving age merely confirms and reinforces the sense of anomie, frustration and low ego-concepts which they have acquired en route and from which they are unlikely to recover. The overt objectives of the secondary school, measured in terms of cognitive achievement, mask its covert objectives — the hidden curriculum which operates only too efficiently in condemning a majority to the role of third-class citizens. "The fact that much of what goes by the name of education, i.e. schooling, teaching, and learning does not necessarily assist in the optimization of human life, and in fact is often non-, mis-, or even anti-educative, signifies the general inadequacy of the educationists' preparation for, and comprehension of their role."[8]

New ventures, like the so-called "School without Walls," must therefore be seen as necessary attempts to mount a rescue operation, releasing young adults from enforced confinement and restoring them to their rightful place as active members in society. Plutarch's saying, "The City is the best teacher," is at the heart of many of the significant innovations and experiments in educational reform today. Over-schooling, we are now beginning to realize, has the effect of prolonging childhood and adolescence unnecessarily, a device for preserving the learner in a state of submissive dependence. Despite its protestations to the contrary, it does everything possible to sidetrack, if it does not actually deny, the will to be free, to be different, to "do one's own thing" — which explains why so many of the youngsters nowadays are driven to seek outlets for personal satisfaction outside the school system. Task forces, Youth Volunteers, community service — these are the growth-points for tomorrow's education.

(9) *Schooling is imposed on the learner willynilly, but education is liberal in the sense that it implies the existence of a responsible free agent.*

To be in *statu pupillari* is to submit to the authority and discipline of a mentor. Voluntary learning admits of no such need. In Rousseau's terminology, school learning is *labor* (being consciously subject to external, adult authority), whereas spontaneous, playful learning is *opus*. In Illich's terminology, it is the difference between a *bureaucratic*, rule-bound learning situation and one which is *convivial*. In Piagetian terms, it is the difference between *assimilation* and *accommodation*.

OBJECTION 1

In the case of young children, compulsion, however arbitrary, is necessary for their protection. Even as adults, most of us have reason to be grateful for having been forced to learn and do things against our personal inclinations. Says Peters, "Gifted teachers are precisely those who can get children going on activities which have no initial appeal to them".[9]

OBJECTION 2

Willynilly? This argument smacks too strongly of the old, unwillingly-to-school plaint. In any case, schooling does not *have* to be compulsory.

(10) *Educere aut Educare? In general, education corresponds to the former, schooling to the latter.*

True enough, debates about the derivatives from these Latin verbs are mostly claptrap. At the same time, they serve to highlight the difference between those two schools of thought which, for the sake of convenience, are commonly referred to as "teacher-based" and "child centred." Hitherto, educational theory and practice have been predominantly "teacher-based," the assumption being that education was a process which was administered to the learner — a matter of doing things to him and for him — *not* a process in which he was the prime mover.

The Socratic method, Rousseau's negative education, Dewey's Progressivism, activity methods and integrated day curricula in primary schools, resources for learning projects, *et al.*, each represent an attempt to carry into practice a theory which holds that in the first and last resort the learner must be encouraged to get an education for himself. In the past, this theory and practice failed to find universal acceptance because adults were convinced that children were incapable of doing anything of the sort

and could not be trusted with the responsibility. Hence the stress on classroom instruction.

In the original edition of his masterly review of resource-based learning projects, L. C. Taylor took a somewhat gloomy view of their chances of succeeding. In the second edition, he is decidedly more optimistic. As he says, "The pace of change is now such that "recurrent" education is likely to become the general experience. An independent, resource-based style of learning provides a more suitable preparation than does class teaching for continued studies."[10]

To repeat, schooling serves a propaedeutic purpose in making education possible. The point is made more simply and elegantly by the children of Barbiana: "The teacher gives to a boy everything the teacher himself believes, loves and hopes for. The boy, *growing up, will add something of his own.*"[11]

It is this growing-up-and-adding-something-of-his-own which the professional educationist tends to ignore. Preoccupied with the "forms of knowledge" which are "public" only in the sense that they are the private monopoly of intellectuals, his concept of education is restrictive. The "knowledge" he peddles belongs to the realm of uncommon-sense (as Bernstein categorises it) and largely rules out the world of common-sense learning and existential knowing. The fact that the mass of ordinary folk do not share this concept is not to be held against them. It it only the sin of Pedagogue's Pride which causes us to look down on simple souls like Monsieur Jourdain because they are unaware of the fact that they have been talking prose (and good sense) all their lives. In short, schooling normally relies heavily on external discipline; education presupposes the exercise of inner freedom and self-discipline.

(11) *Schooling promotes rational thought: education is the development of personal judgement and understanding.*

OBJECTION

Even Socrates seems to have been doubtful about the possibility of making men wise. Why not settle for more tangible objectives?

(12) *Schooling is necessarily institutional, education not so.*
In all societies, schooling represents a systematic attempt

to organize learning collectively. Education, by contrast, is the concern of the individual. Ideally, the interests of the individual and of society coincide. Insofar as there is a conflict of interests, it is arguable that there is a vital difference between schooling and education.
The self-educated man may be a rarity in the modern world, but to speak of him as self-schooled makes no sense at all.

(13) *Schooling ends sooner or later, but education is a continuous process for which death is the only terminal behaviour.*
Properly conducted, schooling sets the pupil on the road to lifelong learning. The indications are that too often it does nothing of the sort.

(14) *Education is to schooling as theory is to practice.*
Thus, "schooling" is what we actually get, "education" is what we are *supposed* to receive. In fact, what we get is:
(a) Instruction
(b) Custodial care
(c) Socialization
(d) Classification
What we are *supposed* to get is something more than the sum of these parts — "the nurture of personal growth," "the whole man," etc., etc. To pretend that education is all one with schooling is, therefore, to perpetrate a colossal confidence trick. Quite apart from the disparity between the overt and covert objectives of schooling (already discussed under point 8), schooling is patently inefficient in fulfilling each of these four main functions:

(a) As regards *instruction,* courses are often irrelevant or so organized as to ensure that many pupils are left with a permanent sense of failure and inferiority. Despite the best efforts of curriculum developers to validate the hypothesis that, "Any subject can be taught in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development," the only possible verdict must be that the search for a viable alternative to academic-type secondary education has demonstrably failed. Secondary schooling on the traditional model caters for a certain kind of intelligence, emphasizes the importance of symbolic skills and bestows its favors and rewards on those pupils — predominantly middle-class — who abide by the

"Principle of Deferred Gratification." Inevitably, the effect of formal classroom instruction is to depreciate the average and below-average ability pupils: a depreciation which one critic, not without cause, has styled "the great brain robbery."

(b) *Custodial care,* so far as young children are concerned, may be a necessary function *in loco parentis* in modern industrial societies, but it is not altogether cynical to see it as a street-cleaning operation designed to keep teenagers out of circulation and to preserve them in an indeterminate status, in limbo between childhood and adulthood.

(c) *Socialization,* in practice, means training children to accept the conventional wisdom, the effect of which is to confirm the values and requirements of an acquisitive, consumer society.

(d) *Classification,* seen by sociologists as the main function of any educational system, involves the selection and grading of pupils for their future occupational roles. It results in the kind of schooling which is geared to examination requirements and intense competition for paper qualifications. So organized, schooling becomes a bitter game in which, in the nature of things, there are relatively few winners and many losers. In this stressful situation, learning is mostly *labor* and *opus* gets short shrift. Granted, because of the complex division of labor in advanced industrial societies, some method of selection and grading is essential. The question is whether this function ought to be discharged primarily by the school. As things are, many of the decisions affecting the learner's future occupational role are taken far too prematurely: at an early age he is labelled fit for this, that or the other category in the Registrar General's list — and the labels may stick for the rest of his working life. Worst of all, he may come to accept the evaluation placed upon him by the school. As for the examination fetish, there are good reasons for thinking that it has now reached the stage when it is on a par with the selling of indulgences in Luther's day. In too many cases, these so-called paper qualifications bear little or no direct or indirect relation to the learner's on-the-job performance: a wholesale racket which is nicely satirized by Ivar Berg in

*The Great Training Robbery.*
Both as regards the parts and the sum of the parts, then, there is a blatant credibility gap between our professed theory of education and its practice in schools. Clearly, a distinction has to be drawn between What-is (i.e. schooling) and What-might-be (education).

OBJECTION
This may well be the case, but all it proves is that we live in an imperfect world. Socrate's comment (in *The Republic)* about the impossibility of implementing idealistic plans seems relevant here.

(15) *Schooling, i. e. the compulsory institutionalising of the young, is an invention of 19th century industrial mass production: an ersatz process compared with that of liberal education which was always associated with, and reserved for, a leisured class.*

On this reckoning, the objections raised previously (7, 9) can be dismissed on the grounds that compulsion, at any rate beyond early adolescence, is one of the conditions which make for bad schooling.

(16) *Schooling puts a heavy premium on verbal reasoning and on testable cognitive skills — scholarship — but these cannot be considered the sole criteria of educational achievement.*
During the 19th century literacy was the main stock in trade of the schools. Ever since the invention of printing, indeed, our ideas about what constitutes "learning" and "knowledge" have been book-based. Just how these ideas came to be legitimised — or rather institutionalised — has been elucidated by Father Ong in his study of Ramus[12] and by Marshall McLuhan in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. We forget that two of the most influential educators in the Western World, Socrates and Jesus Christ, left no written record of their teaching.
The extent to which our educational theory and practice, even our philosophies of education, are themselves institutionalized explains the curious blind spot which prevents most people, none more than professional educationists, from recognizing the many kinds of informal, non-verbal learning which receive no credit in schooling. Was Michaelangelo an educated man? R. S. Peters thinks

not, apparently! Says he, "We do not call a person "educated" who has simply mastered a skill even though the skill be very highly prized such as pottery."[13] Or sculpture, it is fair to ask? What sort of cognitive perspective is it, one wonders, that can pass judgements like this?
The case of Michaelangelo, a typical pre-Gutenberg artist, is worth pondering if only to make the point that cultural values are relative, not absolute. It is true that he wrote sonnets and that, under protest, he painted the ceiling and wall of the Sistine Chapel, but for him sculpture was the supreme art, painting a next-best form of creative expression and literature a poor third. "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must create an image," was the sum of his philosophy. What he had to "say" could not be adequately communicated in words: it had to be hewn, at times in a white heat of fury, from the mute block. So the Sonnets, moving as they are, lack the *terribilita* of his *Last Judgement;* and that awesome fresco, in turn, is not so sublime as his *Moses*: while none of them can match the unspeakable pathos of the Rondanini *Pietà.*
This digression might seem to run the risk of stating the obvious were it not that schooling is pre-eminently a matter of verbal learning and our educational psychology one which equates intelligence with verbal reasoning. We need a more human evaluation. The extent to which our modes of thought have been moulded by four hundred years of reading and writing can scarcely be exaggerated. Only recently have a few perceptive thinkers become aware of it and dared to crack some of the time honored, case-hardened presuppositions which determine our current theory and practice of education. The new theory and practice, as yet dimly envisaged, will conceive of education not as *a* process confined more or less to schooling but rather as a family of processes.

(17) *Schooling is necessarily formal and deliberate, but education can be both informal and non-deliberate.*
It is often said that education is what is left when everything learned at school has been forgotten. The inference seems to be that education, like digestion, is largely a matter of unconscious assimilation. Schooling implies the need for conscious effort on the part of the pupil, compliance with regulations, obedience to the dictates of adults, "paying attention." Schooling, in short, means undergoing corrective treatment. Education, on the other

hand, is what one makes of one's schooling. Presumably this is what Nunn had in mind when he said that "Character is what each of us makes out of his temperament." For better or for worse, one *receives* a schooling. One acquires an education. Education is the Pygmalion at work in each of us, only as St. Augustine put it, "The Master is within."

(18) *Education is perfectly possible in the absence of schooling.* Q. E. D.

Thomas Huxley thought so, as did Margaret Mead's aunt. Oddly enough, even R. S. Peters agrees: "In the end, education is something that only the individual can achieve for himself. . . . He can do it in solitary confinement."[14]

## references


1. R. S. Peters, "The Justification of Education," in *The Philosophy of Education,* ed. R. S. Peters, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 238.
2. Sol Cohen, "New Perspectives in the History of American Education," *History of Education,* ed. M. Seaborne, London: David & Charles, 1973, Vol. 2, p. 82.
3. M. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge,* Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958, p. 251.
4. Ivan Illich, *On the Necessity to Deschool Society,* New York: UNESCO International Commission on the Development of Education (Series B: Opinions), 1971.
5. C. Bereiter, "Schools Without Education," *Harvard Educational Review,* Vol. 42, No. 3 (August 1972), pp. 390-413.
6. R. S. Peters, *Ethics and Education,* London: Allen & Unwin, 1966, p. 32.
7. School of Barbiana, *Letter to a Teacher,* Hamondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970.
8. Mark Braham, "The Grounding of the Technologist." Paper presented to APLET Conference, Falmer, 1973.
9. Peters, *Ethics and Education,* p. 39.
10. L. C. Taylor, *Resources for Learning,* Hamondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 2nd ed. 1972, p. 247.
11. *Letter to a Teacher.*
12. W. Ong, *Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue,* New York: Octagon Books, 1972, p. 150.
13. Peters, *Ethics and Education,* p. 30.
14. Peters, *Ethics and Education,* p. 38.

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
## FROM
## THE CANADA COUNCIL'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON THE INDIVIDUAL, LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

The Canada Council, advised by the Development Committee of its Academic Panel, has established a Consultative Committee on the Individual, Language and Society.

Among the areas of concern of this Committee will be the emotional and cognitive consequences of second language acquisition, bi- and multi- language facility, minority ethnic status, acculturation and deculturation. Broadly speaking, the focus is on:

A. Linguistic studies with a social component;

B. Psychological studies with a language component;

C. Social studies with a language component.

The Committee is charged with assessing the state of research in the area, identifying gaps in that research and making recommendations to the Canada Council about ways of filling these gaps.

A critical aspect of the Committee's work is to identify all scholars in Canada who are working in the area of the Committee's concern. One approach is to solicit information through notices in publications such as this.

We ask scholars whose research bears on the terms-of-reference of the Committee to write to: —

**Dr. W. H. Coons, Chairman,**
**Consultative Committee**
**on the Individual, Language and Society,**
**Department of Psychology,**
**York University,**
**Downsview, Ontario, M3J 1P3.**

It would be appreciated if each respondent would indicate his research interests, problems he has encountered in the conduct of his work (including financial problems), fields of study in need of special attention, the names of others working in the area, and anything else which he thinks the Committee should consider.