

I have been taught within the 'old' secondary modern method of teaching. Being an eleven-plus failure, I have had to fight against the popular belief that secondary modern schools were considered inferior. The secondary modern was also associated not only as being the school where the eleven-plus failures went, but also as the old, central or modern school which had previously given an education to the working class.

It is due to these deeply rooted beliefs that many children, like myself, have been made to suffer the snide comments from the "creme de la creme" pupils of the grammar schools. The grammar education incorporated within its curriculum the lessons of hierarchy and supremacy over others. The pupils absorb these teachings, then go forth and 'do battle'.

The move to abolish the old eleven-plus tradition in many of the schools eliminates some of the deeply rooted hierarchical feelings amongst adults. Indeed, it is most parents that contribute to the maturing attitudes of self esteem within their children.

It is, however, only in the last decade that a widespread move for comprehensive education has arisen, although the ideas date back as far as 1944. It is now, as it should have been long ago, realised that a child cannot be fully assessed on its potential/mental ability at the early age of eleven. The classification of three mental types suitable for three different types of school has proved to be equally ridiculous.

What has also disappeared with the old schooling system is the traditional format of education. The Parrot Fashion learning required for the CSE and Ordinary level examinations has finally been discarded, and the education of pupils is on a much more relevant and useful level. The traditional Advanced level examination techniques still exist, and I hope that these abstract bodies of education will soon be revised also.

I am currently pursuing 'A' level courses in Geography, English and Music. The Music course, for instance, is in the traditional format, following the characteristics of composers throughout history. This will prove to be of little value to me on leaving full-time education except for personal enjoyment and entertainment.

By seeing the progress of fourth and fifth formers pursuing the new GCSE courses, I find the traditional nature of the courses to be exemplified in their abstractness. The new GCSE Music course pursues music in its 'true' sense with the learning of music through personal experience in compositional exercises. This is the real way to learn about music and not from textbooks, which destroys any emotion or feeling.

However, although in theory the new courses prove to be successful when carried out, their worth is often destroyed by the teaching methods of the staff. In certain cases, some teachers regard teaching as merely a job and not a profession, concerned with the upbringing and teaching of children in both moral and educational areas. Indeed, what will happen to our new generation of adults who spend the most influential period of their lives in an atmosphere of indifference?