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Teaching Business Education 14–19

Martin Jephcote • Ian Abbott

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14-19

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Preface

Teaching Business Education 14–19 is a new contribution to the literature designed to meet the needs of beginning and experienced teachers. It has evolved out of a long-standing relationship between the publishing community and the Economics and Business Education Association going back over a number of years. The major departure in this book is the shift in emphasis from economics to business education, and this reflects the trends in course development, examination entries and assessment that are prevalent in schools and colleges. The subject area has continued to grow in schools, colleges and universities, but this growth has been primarily in business studies. The content of the book is, therefore, a response to the changes that have taken place over a period of time. It seeks to capture what is currently important to teachers of business education subjects, but also indicates key areas in which developments are taking place.

One of the major differences between this and the previous books borne out of this relationship is the rapidly changing external context in which education is constructed and enacted. Devolved governance means increasingly that educational policy is being written and implemented in different arenas and gives rise to different sorts of curriculum structures. Currently external examinations provide a more-or-less common framework within which the subject area operates. However, proposed changes to post-14 education are likely to have a significant impact on the way in which business education is taught and assessed. This book attempts to begin to address some of these issues. However, the focus on learning and teaching and the common interest in the students we teach continues and will remain to provide a common focus and be the basis for ongoing dialogue.

This book, therefore, provides both theoretical perspectives and practical insights into the evolving nature of business education and draws from a wide range of contributors including those in higher education, classroom teachers, consultants and examiners. The editors wish to express their thanks to all contributors to the book who have given generously of their time. As part of the editing process the editors have sought to assemble and give direction to these separate contributions that together provide a contemporary account and critique of business education today.

The book is split into four parts, each reflecting important aspects of business education. Part 1 focuses on the major policy developments that have taken place in education and training and how these impact on the subject area. Part 2 is largely written by practising teachers and considers a range of teaching and learning issues and strategies. Part 3 is devoted to staff development and the continuing professional development of teachers. The final part contains a teacher-reviewed resource guide to a range of text- and web-based resources for business education.

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PART 1

Business and Economics in a Changing World



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The changing curriculum: the interaction of policy and practice

Martin Jephcote and Ian Abbott

Introduction

For teachers in schools and colleges there is a sense in which new demands are always being placed on them, and to a degree these require changes in the curriculum in terms of what is taught and how it is assessed. Indeed, the history of education in the past thirty years gives witness to how the curriculum has been used to promote one agenda or another; for example, to promote equality of opportunity, to respond to rising youth unemployment and growing disaffection, to combat crime, and to enable Britain to compete in the global knowledge-based economy. Schools and colleges have been faced with endless initiatives, with one arriving so soon after the other that they begin to be counter-productive. This works to leave the impression that educational policy-making is piecemeal and nothing more than a response to the latest panic. It might also leave teachers feeling swamped and exhausted by the constant pressure for change. What is certain is that the autonomy which teachers once thought they had has been lost because of the ways in which central government has taken more control, not just in shaping the curriculum but also through the coercive mechanisms of assessment and external quality control.

For teachers of business and related subjects the last thirty years has been a particularly turbulent time. Economics was an established A level subject and enjoyed record numbers of examination entries. Economics teachers were so confident about their subject and its base in schools that they wanted to expand to reach lower-aged pupils, and some wanted to ensure that a basic understanding of economics was a curriculum entitlement for everyone. As early as 1973 Christie believed that all pupils in secondary schools should be given some form of economics education and Holley (1973), while against proselytising the subject, was in favour of developing skills and abilities for a changing world. The idea that the Economics Association should establish an Economics Education 14–16 Project was first conceived in the early 1970s but did not get under way until 1976, making its

first-phase formal report in 1980. In the period 1980 to 1983 the emphasis of the second phase of the Project was to develop exemplar materials to be used in economics, commerce and multidisciplinary social subjects. The third phase of the Project, started in 1985, was a wider dissemination phase which was directed at spearheading the spread of economic literacy through the in-service training of teachers; and in 1985 the revised exemplar materials were published in three volumes called *Young Person as Consumer*, *Young Person as Citizen* and *Young Person as Producer*. An objective of the materials was what Ryba (1984) called ‘personalising’ economics and was based on his view that courses in economic understanding should be available to all pupils regardless of ability. The publication of the materials was timely in a number of respects. First, they provided a concrete example of how LEAs and schools might respond to the DES consultation document *The School Curriculum* (1985), credited by Ryba and Hodkinson (1985) as the most important document to date in terms of the future of economics in the 14–16 curriculum because of its references to the needs of the economy and establishing links between schools and industry. Second, the materials informed the development of a teacher’s guide for the introduction of the General Certificate of Secondary Education which in 1986 replaced the O level and Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) and introduced the materials to a wide school and college audience.

Thirty years ago a business studies department was probably separate from the higher-status economics department. Typically, a business studies department comprised a permutation of office skills, typewriting, shorthand, commercial English, and commerce. A level business studies was first introduced in 1967 as an outcome of the pioneering work of John Dancy, the Master of Marlborough College, with financial support from the Wolfson Foundation and in collaboration with a small number of schools and the Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. By 1975, 50 centres entered 400 candidates (Barker 1974) and over the same period business education developed and expanded as a vocational course in further education. More than 75,000 students were enrolled on either a Certificate in Office Studies, an Ordinary National Certificate or Diploma, or a Higher National Certificate or Diploma. Dyer (1979), the then Director of the A level Business Studies Project, sought to dispel any thought that it was vocationally oriented. His predecessor, however, recognised the inherent relationships between business studies and delivering what industry wanted, that was, he suggested, to provide information on how the nation earns its living and develop an appreciation of the role of industry and commerce in this process (Clifford 1978).

Today economics stands at the margin of the curriculum whereas business enjoys the ‘high ground’. Indeed, as the title of this book suggests, economics in schools and colleges is, arguably, pretty much subsumed within the broad business education framework. Lines (1988) had warned that action was needed to revitalise and renew the study of economics and Livesey (1986) and Levacic (1987) foreshadowed the likely effect of the continued adherence to an outdated economic and pedagogic paradigm on the

numbers taking A level. There was also a growing perception on the part of teachers and students that it was both easier to pass and get higher grades in business than in economics.

At times, there have been opportunities for activists, such as members of the Economics Association/EBEA to be proactive, to set the agenda and work at bringing about change. At other times, they have been forced into a reactive mode, having to respond to external agendas and to changing conditions, and often this has seemed like a fight for survival. For example, in response to the rejection of the recommendations made by the Higginson Committee (1988) for the reform of A level, the Secondary Examinations and Assessment Council promoted its own review. An outcome was the development of principles to cover all AS and A level syllabuses which supported the 'twin-track' approach dividing academic and vocational qualifications. In response, in 1989 the Association undertook a major review of the post-16 economics curriculum and formally launched its Economics Education 16–19 Project in 1991. Among other things, the intentions of the Project were to stimulate a review of the nature of economics thinking in both academic and vocational contexts and consider the implications for teaching, learning and assessment strategies. It sought to address the gap between the sorts of abstract economics now so widely criticised and the interests and understanding of professional economists. It did not set out to produce a new examination syllabus but sought to clarify the nature of learning economics and provide an antidote to the existing theory-first approach.

The fact was, however, that against a background of increased staying-on rates in post-16 education, in the period 1990 to 1996 the numbers taking economics halved whereas those taking business doubled. This 'turn-around' is well illustrated through the recent history of the Economics and Business Education Association (EBEA). For example, in his report to the 1990 Annual General Meeting, the Chair of the Association indicated that extending services to members who taught business studies was a priority and he reaffirmed a commitment to forging an effective partnership with the National Association of Advisers and Inspectors in Business and Economics Education (NAAIBEE) and the Society of Teachers of Business Education (STBE) (Hodkinson 1991). It was not however until 2003 that a Joint Policy Forum for Business Education succeeded in getting the EBEA, NAAIBEE, STBE and the National Association for Business Education (NABSE) into meaningful negotiations (see Wall 2004). A more immediate response to the growth of business was when, in 1993, the then Economics Association transmuted into the EBEA and its journal, once called *Teaching Economics* changed its title, first to *Economics and Business Education*, and in 1997 to *Teaching Business and Economics*. These changes reflected the decline in economics and the rise of business at GCSE and A level and as a popular General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) introduced in 1993.

Business and economics in the curriculum

Even though individual subjects might seem impervious to change they are not monolithic but evolve over time. It would be wrong to think that changes necessarily come about as a result of a 'grand plan' or from the deliberate workings of an identifiable pressure group, but instead changes are often the result of the complex interplay of people and events. Over time there is an ongoing contest within and between subjects over matters such as their definition, content and pedagogic practices and between subjects and subject factions over status. New generations of teachers and others within subject communities engage in a process of thinking about the purposes of the subjects they teach and in the ways in which they seek to make changes. Moreover, engagement in this evolutionary process is important if as Kirk *et al.* (1997) asserted, courses that fail to reinvent themselves in the face of new circumstances are liable to decline or disappear. Indeed, as this and other chapters illustrate, these matters are particularly pertinent to the development of business and economics education in the UK.

A starting-point is to ask what are the purposes of business and economics in the curriculum and for individual teachers to be clear about why they teach their subject. Looking at curriculum provision today we might express some dissatisfaction with existing arrangements and argue for a curriculum more suited to those culturally and socially deprived young people who form the bulk of the lower achievers. Instead of attaching so much importance to an academic curriculum we might also argue that it should be pitched at a level of practical common life experiences, rather than at the level of abstraction, which is generally considered to be more appropriate for those culturally and socially advantaged higher achievers. We might think of education as essentially preparatory for life ahead and to ensure that young people can cope with the circumstances they are likely to encounter throughout their lives. If so, then perhaps emphasis should be placed on methods of enquiry rather than on an accumulation of facts and less emphasis be given to external testing. The fact is that these sorts of concerns are not new but were raised more than thirty years ago by educationalists such as Bantock (1971) and Musgrave (1968), but continue to be recurring themes.

As early as 1974 Raynor (1974: 9) had noted the tensions and 'contradictory forces' pulling the curriculum in opposite directions. He asked:

- Should schools meet the needs of the individual child or meet the needs of society and the economy?
- Are schools to be used as a means of changing society or preserving the existing social order?
- Should schools be a vehicle to transmit traditional moral values even though these may be regularly breached in the wider society?

These are not easy questions to answer. For example, on the one hand, employers may emphasise the need to prepare young people for the world of work. Politicians may assert the need for schools to contribute to an efficient and competitive economy. Parents and pupils may be most concerned about finding jobs and providing for a secure future. Taking these together we might, without getting into issues of either defining society or specifying its systematic requirements, suggest that a key role of schooling could be to provide young people with the appropriate general and vocational knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes that made them better prepared for changing patterns of work. A role for schooling could be seen as to induct prospective workers, managers, consumers and citizens into their more or less predetermined roles in the culture of a democratic industrialised society. This would be achieved by providing pupils with the necessary knowledge and understanding and engendering values, attitudes and beliefs which enabled them to transfer easily from school to their adult roles as effective managers, workers, consumers and citizens.

On the other hand, it could be argued that the role of schooling is not to facilitate passage into the prevailing or taken-for-granted 'norms' and structures of society. A purpose of education could be to question the future direction of society. Rather than regard existing school-society relationships as self-perpetuating, education could be seen as an opportunity to change society for the better, that is, education would be a powerful instrument for reconstruction. Education would, in this argument, not be regarded as an induction into the predetermined roles of manager, worker, consumer or citizen, but schools would provide an opportunity for pupils to question these roles and the relationships, rights and responsibilities between individuals (managers, workers, consumers and citizens), groups (firms, associations and communities) and institutions (industry and government). The processes of education would not be concerned solely with transmitting knowledge and inculcating 'appropriate' values, attitudes and beliefs but would also be concerned with questioning their bases.

Teachers of business and economics have to ask themselves how they view their role with regard to educating young people. Is it to serve the prescribed needs of an industrialised society? That is, is it about passing on knowledge and attitudes about business, industry and the economy and the development of work-related skills? Or is it about focusing on the needs of individuals and their roles in shaping society, that is, about giving insights into business, industry, the economy and the community and analysing and questioning the relationships between them?

Clearly, we have to acknowledge the realities of living, growing up and being educated in a society divided by inequality of income and wealth, dominated by a class system and unequal educational opportunity, differentiated individual expectations and future life chances. We also have to acknowledge the real school and classroom problems of trying to provide an education based on a curriculum designed to motivate and engage the interests of all learners. However, whereas in these respects education can be a powerful force for change it is not a palliative for every economic and social problem.

Lawton (1989) pointed to reconstructionism, that is, a synthesis of progressivism and classical humanism, as a means to improve society. In this, the curriculum is designed to give support to social values and those experiences which develop citizens and social co-operation within a democratic society. Knowledge is only important in the ways that it helps to develop an understanding of society.

For Lawton, (1983: 25) education was ‘... concerned with making available to the next generation what we regard as the most important aspects of culture’ and, in the limited time available, the curriculum should be planned to ensure an appropriate selection. The term ‘cultural analysis’ was used to describe the process on which the principles for this selection were derived and justified. In proposing an eclectic system of cultural analysis, he drew on both classificatory and interpretative methods of looking at culture as a whole. This is about asking these kinds of questions:

- (a) What kind of society already exists?
- (b) In what ways is the society developing?
- (c) How do its members appear to want it to develop?
- (d) What kind of values and principles will be involved in deciding on this ‘development’, as well as on the educational means of achieving it? (Lawton 1996: 9).

He suggested that eight subsystems, or aspects of culture, were necessary requirements for a balanced curriculum and that curriculum-planning should begin by considering to what extent these were covered by existing subjects, followed by an evaluation of the quality of that coverage. The systems are: social; economic; communication; rationality; technological; moral; belief; and aesthetic. Each was ‘indispensable’, and improving the curriculum required gaps to be identified and filled.

Changing priorities

The development of business and economics in the curriculum has to be seen against broader economic, social and educational change and the opportunities and constraints which they presented. For example, a key focus of the educational debate in the 1960s was on the raising of the school leaving age, where it was argued that, given the expansion in knowledge and the need for a ‘better’ educated workforce, the school leaving age should be raised to 16. In turn, this gave rise to a heightened awareness of and further debate over the inadequacies of the secondary school curriculum and was met by attempts in the 1980s to vocationalise the post-14 curriculum. The Job Creation Programme of 1974, and the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) started in 1977 and later replaced in 1983 by the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), were designed to structure the experiences of young people’s transition from school to work but turned into the means of dealing with mass unemployment and keeping thousands out of the dole queues (Finn 1985). The introduction of other employment programmes and legislative

changes, for example the progressive erosion of benefit entitlements from 1980 to 1991, sought to reduce what was described as a ‘dependency culture’ and to remove the ‘option’ of youth unemployment (Roberts 1995: 15).

Growing concerns about the lack of articulation between schools and the world of work were brought to a head by James Callaghan in his now famous 1976 Ruskin College Speech. The introduction of comprehensive schools had put issues such as streaming versus mixed-ability teaching, the supposed adoption of progressive teaching methods and falling standards under the spotlight. Furthermore, the world economic recession of the mid-1970s made education an easy target for politicians who sought to transfer blame. A rising population meant that education was an increasingly heavy financial burden, so that once the ‘favoured child of the Welfare State’ there was now growing pessimism about what a ‘good’ education does and at what cost (Kogan 1978: 46). In initiating the ‘Great Debate’, Callaghan took the opportunity to express his own concerns about falling standards and his speech marked a turning-point in government thinking towards the curriculum, especially in the linking of education to the ‘needs of industry’.

Among other things, Callaghan’s speech worked to accelerate the shift towards central control of education and the curriculum. The 1960s and 1970s are generally characterised as a period of consensus in education when control over the curriculum was in the hands of teachers and local education authorities (LEAs). However, moves towards central government intervention and control rapidly gained momentum during the 1980s and worked to marginalise the role of teachers and their professional associations. In a number of respects, the centralising tendencies apparent in education were at odds with the general thrust to deregulation and privatisation experienced elsewhere in the public sector. Moreover, moves towards the local management of schools, ‘opting out’, and other aspects of so-called deregulation, which appeared to decentralise control, were, in fact, elements of a centralised model.

Following the ‘Great Debate’ the ‘burgeoning procession’ of documents from central government agencies developed a ‘state conception of how the curriculum should be organised and taught’ (Salter and Tapper 1981: 1). Those interested in promoting business and economics education exploited what small concessions were made and, overall, those interested in expanding economics education had to look for linkages with other parts of the curriculum. They took advantage of statements about the need to help pupils ‘acquire knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and employment’ and ‘understand the world in which they live’ (DES, *A Framework for the School Curriculum*, 1980) and to look for opportunities ‘across the curriculum’ (DES, *The School Curriculum*, 1981). By 1985 there was an optimistic mood. The DES had sought the views of the Economics Association on the principle of equipping all pupils by the age of 16 with some economic awareness and understanding. At about the same time HMI had undertaken an investigation of the teaching of economic understanding in schools (HMI 1987). In papers presented to an Economics Association seminar in July 1985 it was

stated that interest in the development of economics education had never been higher (Hodkinson 1986). But as Hodkinson went on to point out, earlier expectations about the expansion of economics as a separate examination subject had not come about. Instead, the opportunity to provide an economics education for all was coming via the Technical Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI).

Launched in 1983, the TVEI marked a particular shift away from local to central control in the ways in which funding was 'earmarked' to promote vocational education and not passed directly to LEAs to do with as they wished. The thrust of both the TVEI and its predecessor, the Certificate of Pre-vocational Education (CPVE), was towards new patterns of curriculum, teaching and assessment. It was an attempt to shift styles of teaching and learning from didactic methods more associated with academic subjects to learner-centred, problem-solving and participatory approaches, thought to be a better preparation for the world of work. Within the TVEI both economic understanding and business were given some prominence, the latter partly because of its promise to deliver information technology. In 1986 the Manpower Services Commission published a report of its TVEI-related in-service training activities in which the focus was on 'economic awareness'. This put the emphasis on the need to understand and evaluate the implications of individual and group decision-making with respect to the use of resources and to explore these ideas within the existing curriculum.

With the introduction of the National Curriculum in the period 1988–94 the reforms associated with the TVEI were short-lived and the mood became more pessimistic. The contents of those subjects chosen for inclusion were defined and prescribed in their associated attainment targets and programmes of study. Paradoxically, given all those earlier attempts to vocationalise the curriculum, neither business nor economics was included and the return to a subject-based curriculum illustrated all too vividly the contradictions between the economic and political within state policy-making (Ball 1994). Apart from 'lip-service' to cross-curricular themes, there was virtually no provision in a crowded curriculum for the preparation of young people for the world of work. During the early stages of the introduction of the National Curriculum, Economic and Industrial Understanding (EIU) became a focus for activity. Of the five cross-curricular themes this 'benefited' from the financial and practical support made available by a number of sponsors and agencies. However, in time there opened up a schism between competing factions interested in promoting differing definitions and versions of economic understanding. In particular, some wanted to give emphasis to the economics agenda whereas others were more interested in the schools industry agenda. Although it was the case that these differences could not be resolved, events were taken over by the rolling out of the National Curriculum so that all cross-curricular themes were marginalised (see Jephcote and Davies 2004).

Initially the introduction of the National Curriculum caused major concerns for the subject area and there were fears that business and economics might disappear at Key Stage 4 (Davies 1994). In practice the subject area has thrived and prospered as an

option choice at GCSE, but as we have already noted there has been a significant shift from economics to business studies. Pupils have voted with their feet and opted to take business studies in large numbers at GCSE. At GCSE level, in 1992, 20,472 studied economics; by 2003 this figure had fallen below 7,000. In 1992 business studies attracted 119,989 entries, there was a slight increase by 2003 with 125,000 entries. At GCSE-level business studies remains a major option choice for a significant number of students, and is one of the most successful subjects outside the compulsory subjects laid down by the National Curriculum. Certainly reform of the National Curriculum, which has provided a greater amount of choice at Key Stage 4, has helped business studies to remain popular, but students and parents also view the subject as relevant and interesting.

The last 15 years have seen continuing development within the subject area as a number of new courses have been introduced. Business and economics have remained as popular academic subjects, with GCSE and Advanced level continuing to be viewed as valuable qualifications, especially for entrance to higher education. However, economics has declined in popularity as business studies has continued to attract increased numbers. In 2003 32,253 students took A-level business studies, making it one of the top ten A level subjects. These areas have not been resistant to change and there has been a limited revision of content and continued reform of assessment methods. In particular, modular programmes have been introduced and greater emphasis has been placed on coursework at the expense of examinations.

Of greater significance has been the large increase in the range of vocationally related courses being offered by business and economics departments. This has coincided with an increase in participation rates post-16 as successive governments have attempted to encourage more young people to stay in education and training. In some comprehensive schools the move away from the traditional emphasis on academic subjects for an increasing number of post-16 students has led many business departments to offer an ever increasing range of courses which were deemed to be more relevant to young people. These courses were more closely related to the world of work and offered an alternative route for entry into Higher Education or the labour market. Within schools the business and economics department has been at the forefront of these developments, with many departments taking the lead for vocational initiatives across the school. This has led to areas such as health and social care and leisure and tourism coming under the control of economics and business departments.

By far the most important vocationally related programme to be introduced was the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ). GNVQ was piloted in 1992 and fully implemented in 1993 and was seen as part of the overall process aimed at increasing the skills and flexibility of young people who enter the labour force (ED/DES 1991). According to Jessop (1993: 133) a major objective of GNVQs 'was to encourage a far higher proportion of young people to stay in full-time education beyond the end of compulsory schooling at age 16 than hitherto'. GNVQs were intended to be equivalent

to the 'gold standard' of A level, but with the added bonus of a strong vocational emphasis.

This programme significantly extended the opportunities for work in vocational areas and moved the subject area away from the academic route offered by the traditional A levels in Economics and Business Studies. This development provided opportunities for significant growth in the subject area. Advanced Business GNVQ was intended to have equal status to A level, but teaching methods and assessment procedures were significantly different with a strong emphasis on coursework and greater student participation.

However, the introduction of GNVQ was not straightforward and there were a number of criticisms relating to assessment and course structure (see for example Smithers 1993 and Ofsted 1994). A major review of GNVQ was undertaken and the programme became a popular choice for many young people post-16 (Capey 1996). However, GNVQ still had many critics and suffered in comparison with A level. As a consequence GNVQ was perceived to be an easier option than A level and despite the many changes to GNVQ it was often referred to as a second-class route.

The review of 16–19 education, that resulted in the implementation of Curriculum 2000 (QCA 1999, 2001), saw the conversion of Advanced GNVQ into the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE). This involved less emphasis on coursework and the development of a more 'academic approach'. A common format with AS and A2 level was introduced with 6 units of study.

Curriculum 2000 also saw some alterations in the assessment and content of both A-level business and economics. We will return to look at this in more detail in Chapter 3, but the outcome for the subject area is dual qualifications in business studies: AS, A2 level and AVCE, alongside economics at AS and A2. Despite the changes the subject area remains popular with post-16 students and this is a major area of work for business and economics teachers. Currently approximately one in four post-16 students takes a business-related course.

There have also been a number of developments within economics and business studies at Key Stage 4. However, GCSE remains the major area of work for teachers of business and economics. The vast majority of comprehensive schools offer GCSE business as an option choice for pupils 14–16. GCSE economics is only available in a limited number of schools, and it is difficult to imagine that this situation will change in the foreseeable future. Despite a number of changes to the National Curriculum over the past 15 years business and economics has remained outside the core of compulsory subjects. However, the changes to the National Curriculum have allowed greater choice at Key Stage 4 and a number of previously compulsory subjects are now only available as option choices. As a popular option with pupils and parents business studies has benefited from this development. Having to compete for space in the curriculum is nothing new for business and economics teachers and they feel more confident about

retaining a significant role at Key Stage 4. Business, which was once considered to be a marginal subject at Key Stage 4, is now more secure as the pattern of provision starts to fragment.

As a whole the GCSE has remained relatively unchanged since it was introduced in 1986. There has been reform of assessment and some updating of content with new subject criteria, but the overall structure remains broadly the same. There is a mixture of coursework and end of course examinations, and GCSE business remains a popular option for many Year 10 pupils.

At Key Stage 4 the introduction, in September 2002, of a new range of GCSE programmes, now referred to as the Applied GCSE, was a significant development. Applied Business was one of the eight areas introduced to replace the previous GNVQ Part One qualifications. This qualification is intended to provide a vocational context for the study of business. Links with business are an integral part of the course and project work has to draw on real and relevant business scenarios. Students are encouraged to make use of extended work experience to gain practical experience of the vocational sector, and greater emphasis is placed on coursework.

The introduction of the Applied GCSE provides another opportunity for development within the subject area. However, the impact this programme will have on the 'traditional' GCSE remains to be seen. It seems ironic that a course called Applied GCSE Business has been introduced, because it is difficult to imagine a business course that isn't in some way applied. Perhaps this tells us something about the way in which the existing GCSE business has been taught? It also raises a number of issues about the academic and vocational nature of the subject area. Economics has clearly been seen as an academic subject, which might be one of the reasons for the decline in student numbers. On the other hand business is more obviously a vocational subject, so why do we need another business course?

Despite these questions and an ongoing debate about the nature of the subject area, teachers have to get on with the realities of introducing new courses. For a detailed analysis of the practical implications arising from the introduction of applied business see Chapter 7.

From September 2002 all school pupils have to be taught Citizenship as part of the National Curriculum. In many areas the introduction of Citizenship mirrors the problems associated with the implementation of Economic and Industrial Understanding. There is a clear issue around ownership of the subject and who will actually be responsible for delivery. The reality in many schools is that business and economics departments have been heavily involved in the implementation of Citizenship (see, for example, Stoney 2004). Significant parts of the content of Citizenship, especially at Key Stage 4, comprise elements of business and economic understanding. For example:

- How the economy functions, including the role of business and financial services;
- The rights and responsibilities of consumers, employers and employees;
- The wider issues of global interdependence and responsibility, including sustainable development;
- The United Kingdom's relations in Europe, including the European Union. (QCA 2002)

Whatever the arguments surrounding the introduction of Citizenship it clearly offers the opportunity to make elements of business and economics available to all school pupils, and we will return to this in more detail in Chapter 4. If this is done properly by staff who understand the concepts involved it should increase interest in business and economics and lead to increased numbers of students opting to take courses in the subject area. In addition the Government continues to recognise the significant role business and economics education can play in the creation and maintenance of a successful economy. A significant part of the Government's strategy to raise standards in schools is the creation of specialist schools. The number of specialist schools is being increased and schools can now apply for Business and Enterprise status. These schools have to secure some funding from the private sector, but they also receive a capital payment of £100,000 and additional funding for each pupil (DfES 2002). A full explanation of the application process is contained in Chapter 20. However, allowing schools to acquire specialist business and enterprise status can only raise the profile and status of the subject area. Business and economics is now able to compete on more equal terms with subjects such as technology, maths and modern foreign languages. In addition the current Labour Government has a strong commitment to the development of enterprise education in schools. There will be £60 million available to develop enterprise capability (Davies 2002). This is likely to contribute to further growth in the subject area as business and economics teachers take the lead in developing enterprise education.

Summary

Taken together, the ongoing restriction of the autonomy of LEAs, institutions and teachers have all contributed to increasing deprofessionalisation and worked to decrease the role of teachers and others in subject communities with respect to subject definition, content and pedagogic practices. The curriculum and the individual subjects it is comprised of are an outcome of both its social and political construction. In other words, although we can recognise increasing political control through policy-making and its implementation, at the same time the ongoing social interaction of teachers and others has an important bearing on the outcome.