Developing Anthropology in the Schools' Curricula
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In recent years, higher education has undergone significant institutional changes. At the same time, an enhanced interest in the quality of the undergraduate experience has provided a boost to pedagogical studies of higher education. These developments, encouraging participants to greater introspection, have provided fertile ground for an anthropology *of* higher education.

Despite some long run expansion of undergraduate anthropology in the United Kingdom, the continuing minority status of anthropology *in* higher education confers upon the discipline a particular vulnerability in a climate that demands disciplines demonstrate their 'relevance'. Anthropology's relative invisibility in the public arena has contributed to its predicament. However this is only partly explained by a failure of anthropologists themselves to engage proactively in public debate of those many issues on which they are particularly qualified to offer analyses and commentaries. A fuller explanation must take account of the public's poor recognition of anthropology, to which its absence from the mainstream schools' curricula has been a contributing factor.

In 2004 the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) established an Education Committee tasked to promote a knowledge and awareness of anthropology 'among pre-university and further education students and their teachers and advisers' (RAI, 2004) by developing innovative programmes of educational outreach. Its most substantial achievement to date has been the successful development of a GCE Advanced level (A-level) in anthropology, bringing the discipline into the mainstream of English sixth form education. ***The papers presented here by members of the Committee reflect on the experience of developing anthropology in secondary and further education contexts, and its justification.***

The A-level project gave attention to issues of curriculum content, of pedagogy and of relationships between institutional stakeholders. This development therefore extends the scope for an anthropology *of* education and anthropology *in* education, hitherto applied to higher education, to be studied in relation to secondary education. In his paper Brian Street, Chair of the Education Committee, presents the development of the A-level as a case for just this sort of dual study.

A-level innovation can be set in the context of broader efforts that stretch back over half a century to place anthropology in schools' curricula, whether *as* anthropology or more usually in other subject guises. These efforts are reviewed by Barry Dufour, another longstanding advocate of anthropology in the schools' curricula, in a personal and reflexive narrative that emphasises the discipline's potential for promoting an understanding of cultural diversity, feeding into such areas as multi-cultural and anti-racist education, development and citizenship education.

The support of the RAI has been critical to the success of recent attempts to expand anthropology into schools' curricula. The specific history of the A-level has been well documented elsewhere (e.g. Bennett, 2011; Callan and Street, 2010). Revisiting this history, the RAI's former director Hilary Callan offers a fresh perspective by focusing on the Institute's pivotal role in negotiating this curriculum development with the

discipline's professional community (both in marshalling support for change and in drawing upon expertise to create a specification that communicates faithfully the discipline to its intended audience) and in dealing with a variety of 'external' stakeholders including awarding bodies and the regulatory authorities. Her paper is also a reminder that curriculum innovation is an ongoing process; periodic revisions to the A-level course specification may be expected and ownership of the process is continually negotiated.

Aside from the purely functional arguments for expanding anthropology into schools' curricula – for example, that by raising the public profile of the discipline it may encourage increased participation at the undergraduate level – there exists the unique contribution anthropology can make to a broad education by imparting discipline-specific values and skills. David Bennett considers the scope for A-level students to acquire something of an anthropological imagination by learning to think 'as anthropologists'. Tentative observations are included from a discussion with A-level anthropology students close to completing their two year course.

Complementing Dufour's broad diachronic sweep, Joy Hendry focuses on the school as a site where an appreciation of cultural diversity can be both acquired as knowledge and practised as a skill. Anthropology in schools' curricula can facilitate multi-cultural dialogue; in doing so, the discipline will benefit from the recognition it receives for its contribution to multi-cultural engagement, helping to throw off the negative stereotypes that have misrepresented the discipline.

Collectively, these papers argue the case for promoting the expansion of anthropology in pre-university contexts. Beyond an increased awareness of the discipline, they anticipate these students acquiring an anthropological sensibility that can be applied in everyday situations; experiencing, to quote from Callan's paper, 'the "epistemological shift" in which the discipline is grounded'. A measured appraisal of these prospects will recognise the opportunities presented by curricular innovations; but will note also the existential challenges faced by a discipline attempting to consolidate its small bridgehead to secondary education.

References

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