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From exclusion to self-selection: examination of behaviour in Finnish primary and comprehensive schooling from the 1860s to the 1990s

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Introduction

In his inaugural lecture at the Sorbonne in 1902, Emile Durkheim[1] described compulsory schooling as 'an initiation ceremony' that makes of the initiate 'an entirely new man', 'a man and a citizen'. Since Durkheim's times this 'extended initiation rite', as John Boli[2] formulated it, has developed into a fundamental societal institution promising to transform children 'into modern individuals, capable of rational calculation, self-discipline, political astuteness, and religious righteousness required to make the national policy both successful and just'. Mass schooling has become the main gateway to fully authorized citizenship throughout the world.

It was Michel Foucault[3] who focused on examination as one of the main tools for this specific moulding and shaping work. He saw the modern school as a part of a new kind of disciplinary power deriving its historical success from the use of 'hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination'. Only by examination is it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish—in a word, to create a new individual. The results of these countless examinations, and the different diplomas, certificates and reports they give rise to, dictate the recognition or denial of our access to social success and affluence in our 'credential societies'.[4] This article is about one specific form of school examination—concerning pupils' behaviour. By analysing changes in Finnish educational discourse from the beginning of mass schooling in the 1860s up to the late 1990s it is aimed to elucidate how the examination of behaviour, as one ritual among others, contributed to the construction of citizenship.

The concept of examination here covers a wide range of words: evaluation, assessment, grading, marking, testing and measuring. This vast field is narrowed down by focusing on what has been stated about the examination of behaviour in authoritative educational texts and in reports—i.e. the term and year report forms, especially Graduation Diplomas. The source material comes mainly from texts that could be characterized as 'state educational discourse': the national curricula, governmental committee reports, legislative and administrative texts, semi-official hand-

1 E. Durkheim, *Education and Sociology* (New York: Free Press, 1956), 126.
2 J. Boli, *New Citizens for a New Society: The Institutional Origins of Mass Schooling in Sweden* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1989), 221.
3 M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 170.
4 R. Collins, *The Credential Society: An Historical Sociology of Education and Stratification* (New York: Academic Press, 1979).

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books on primary and later comprehensive school, and the relevant teacher training. The following list of attributes used as targets in assessing pupils' behaviour over the years gives a hint as to where we shall be going in the future:

> 'conduct', 'neatness', 'attentiveness', 'inclinations', 'character', 'diligence', 'persistence', 'honesty', 'attitude', 'comprehension', 'regularity', 'punctuality', 'initiative', 'enterprise', 'tidiness in work', 'attitude towards safety consideration', 'active participation', 'ability and willingness to cooperate', 'positive attitude and willingness to act according to the educational goals', 'working habits', 'independence', 'creativity', 'critical ability', 'responsibility', 'consideration of others'.

Manifold forms of school examination are seen here as procedures or *techniques* that are meant to be used in examination practices. This approach emphasizes the consequences or *effects* of these techniques. All examination is essentially a question of power—although in state educational discourse this is a concept that has lately become almost *taboo*. Two different notions or dimensions of power are considered here: one is the concept of power as repressive, preventative or negative, and the other as productive, creative and positive.[5]

In this sense, the examination of pupil behaviour in Finnish schooling seems to fall into three different categories. The first includes the many and various pedagogic examinations given during the school years, the second examinations for term and year reports, and the third those that determine the Graduation Diploma. From the point of view of effects, virtually all the examinations are *normalizing* and *individualizing*. On the one hand, they mould the soul and the body of the child according to a system of norms, and also produce individuals who are created by various combinations of these norms. On the other hand, they produce unique combinations of features, qualities and variables, in other words, individuals. The diploma also has a *selective* effect. It classifies, categorizes, defines, verbalizes, numerates, makes comparable, objectifies—in a word, it tells the truth about the pupil. These examining practices are clearly top-down procedures, using power in a classic, repressive way, and so the effects may also be *punitive* and *exclusive*. It is easy to understand that they produce, at the same time, both the good pupil and the poor pupil, the included and the excluded, excellence and failure. Between pedagogic examination and diploma fall the term and year reports. These cannot be selective in the way that diplomas are, but they also normalize and individualize. This supposes new kinds of selective techniques where the effect does not work top down, but where the pupil pushes him- or herself up or down, in or out. I call this effect *self-selective*.[6]

The article focuses on appearances, transformations and disappearances of these examining techniques. It is divided chronologically into four parts according to the

5 Compare T.S. Popkewitz and M. Brennan, 'Restructuring social and political theory in education: Foucault and a Social Epistemology of School Practices', in *Foucault's Challenge. Discourse, Knowledge, and Power in Education*, edited by T.S. Popkewitz and B. Marie (New York: Teachers College Press, 1998), 3–35.

6 As the textbook that dominated teacher training for decades put it: 'At the age of 9 to 14 . . . [t]he pupils increasingly begin to use the yardstick of marks for their own performance' (A. Lehtovaara and M. Koskenniemi, *Kasvatuspsykologia* [Educational Psychology] (Helsinki: Otava, 1966), 265). The 1994 curriculum put the same thing as follows: 'To a large extent, the student concretizes the aims of his studies and forms his self-image through evaluation. Evaluation is part of all phases of interaction in school. Some of it is conscious feedback to the student on his studies and progress; some is unconscious communication from the teacher and fellow students' (Curriculum 1994, *Framework Curriculum for the Comprehensive School 1994* (an official English translation of Peruskoulun opetussuunnitelman perusteet 1994; Helsinki: National Board of Education, 28).

changes in the Finnish schooling system.[7] The first period covers the decades of the 'old primary school' (1866–1943), the second the 'new primary school' (1943–70), the third the 'early comprehensive school' (1970–94), and the fourth the 'late comprehensive school' (1994–). In the concluding part the changing forms of examination are analysed in this historical context.

I: The old primary school (1866–1943)

The Finnish primary school institution was established late (1866) and, compared with many European nations, became compulsory even later (1921). In fact, only Belgium and Russia were at that time without a compulsory school system.[8] Although the idea of the 'Founding Father', the Revd. Mr Uno Cygnaeus, was to make the primary school the obligatory and common basis for all further education, his dream was never realized. It was primarily schooling for the rural population.[9] Until the Second World War, the primary-school curriculum was based on the prevailing moral code.[10] Although the benefits of mass schooling for individuals were mentioned, schooling was principally legitimized by the needs of society, of the nation, of the fatherland. The aim was to educate pupils in the established religious and agrarian way of life where 'work and faith were the central concepts of the curriculum, and home and fatherland [its] solid ground', as

7 Naming the four periods is not, of course, accidental. The basic division between primary and comprehensive schools is based on legislative changes. The further distinctions during the primary-school period between 'old' and 'new' and in the comprehensive-school period between 'early' and 'late' are more diffuse. Finland before the Second World War is commonly seen in various cultural contexts as the 'Old Finland'. Following discussion on school reform after the 1940s, the 1952 primary-school curriculum was widely seen as a response to these demands and thus a manifesto for the 'new' primary school. To attribute the comprehensive-school periods as 'early' and 'late' refers to distinctions between modern and late modern (or even postmodern).

8 A. Halila, *Suomen kansakoululaitoksen historia. IV osa: Oppivelvollisuuskoulu vuosina 1921–1939* [The History of the Finnish Primary School System IV] (Porvoo – Helsinki: WSOY, 1950), 15. In Denmark, for example, compulsory primary education was created as early as in 1814, and in Sweden in 1842. Finland was an agriculture-dominated country until quite recently. In 1945, about 70% of the population lived in rural areas and nearly 60% were employed in agriculture and forestry. Two basic explanations might be put forward for this belated establishment of compulsory schooling. First, the vast majority of the population, country people and the peasantry, actively opposed the establishment of the primary school under the Russian Empire (1809–1917). Second, after independence and the bloody civil war in 1918, the upper classes also felt deeply disappointed with both the people and the efficiency of the schooling (Halila, 1950, op. cit.). Thus it actually took until the Second World War before primary education was truly universal in Finland (O. Kivinen, *Koulutuksen järjestelmäkehitys. Peruskoulutus ja valtiollinen kouludoktriini Suomessa 1800- ja 1900-luvuilla* [The Systematization of Education. Basic Education and the State School Doctrine in Finland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries] (Turku: Turun yliopisto. Annales Universitatis Turkuensis. Scripta Lingua Fennica Edita. C 67, 1988).

9 Even though the school network had been built up in the cities during the nineteenth century, some 20% of urban children still attended private or 'preparatory' schools in the 1930s. These were abolished only in the 1950s, when a decree declared that four years of primary school were a prerequisite for entering grammar school (V. Nurmi, *Uno Cygnaeus. Suomalainen koulumies ja kasvattaja* [Uno Cygnaeus, A Finnish Sschoolmaster and Educator] (Helsinki: Valtion painatuskeskus, 1988), 227).

10 Here I am following Lundgren, who defines a curriculum in three ways: (1) 'a selection of contents and goals for social reproduction, that is a selection of what knowledge and skills are to be transmitted by education'; (2) 'an organization of knowledge and skills', and (3) 'an indication of methods concerning how the selected contents are to be taught; to be sequenced and controlled, for example' (U.P. Lundgren, *Between Education and Schooling: Outlines of a Diachronic Curriculum Theory* (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University, 1991), 5). A 'curriculum code' is thus a 'homogenous set' of 'principles according to which the selection, the organization and the methods for transmission are formed' (ibid.).

one Finnish historian of education[11] phrases it. Still, in 1946, a governmental committee saw the training of workers explicitly as the basic task of primary school, while the middle (lower-secondary) school was to educate the future foremen, and the gymnasium (upper-secondary school) the new generation of managers for the fatherland.[12]

From the beginning, it was clear that the primary school must have an examination. Cygnaeus proposed in 1861 that the work of the school year must be finished by the spring *fête* that was immediately preceded by the 'year examination' where:

> ... the teacher may show his/her skills and ... the children's advances in knowledge. But first of all, the results of the school year's work, useful for practical life, will become clear to the parishioners.[13]

The annual examination thus had three functions, as far as Cygnaeus was concerned. First, it was an official ritual through which the knowledge and skills of the pupil were to be checked. Second, it was a ritual evaluation of the teacher's competence. Finally, and this was the most important function for him, it was an excellent opportunity to propagate the usefulness and the blessings of primary school among people who were often not at all convinced by it. The emphasis of these functions changed over the years, but all three have remained, in one way or another, until now.

The importance of the Primary School Graduation Diploma was recognized only when there was some use for it in society. In the 1880s, military service was greatly shortened for those with a primary-school diploma, and so in 1889 the National Board of Education (NBE) announced the official form of the Graduation Diploma.[14] Pupils' behaviour and progress in school subjects were to be graded on the French scale from 1 to 10. It is notable that a strong and respected opinion prevailed, according to which the diploma should not include any numbers at all, but just a few remarks on the pupil's behaviour, diligence and progress. It should thus be a certification and guarantee of citizenship, not a list of scholarly achievements. There was, however, a consensus on grading the behaviour of pupils by giving two marks in the diploma: one for 'conduct' and the other for 'neatness and attentiveness'.[15]

It is a revealing fact that, in spite of the achievement of national independence and the establishment of the compulsory primary-school system, nothing happened in terms of assessment and reports on an official level between 1889 and 1943. There were sporadic discussions among teachers and inspectors, but no common consensus

11 R. Rinne, 'Has somebody hidden the curriculum? The curriculum as a point of intersection between the utopia of civic society and state control', in P. Malinen and P. Kansanen (Ed.), *Research frames of the Finnish curriculum* (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, Department of Teacher Education. Research Report 53, 1987), 109.

12 Curriculum KM 1946:2, *Kansakoulukomitean mietintö* [Report of the Committee for the Primary School Curriculum] (Helsinki: Valtioneuvoston kirjapaino), 17.

13 U. Cygnaeus, *Kirjoitukset Suomen kansakoulun perustamisesta ja järjestämisestä* [Writings on the Establishment and Organization of the Primary School in Finland] (Helsinki: Kansanvalistusseura, 1910), 308.

14 G. F. Lönnbeck (ed.), *Kanskoulun Käsikirja* [Handbook for the Primary School] (Helsinki: K. W. Edlundin kustannusosakeyhtiö, 1907), 202–3.

15 A. Salmela, *Kansakoulun oppilasarvostelu* [Pupil Assessment in Primary School] (Helsinki: Otava, 1948), 11; A. Halila, *Suomen kansakoululaitoksen historia. II osa: Kansakouluasetuksesta piirijakoon* [History of the Finnish Primary School System II] (Porvoo – Helsinki: WSOY, 1949), 88–93.

was reached about when, for example, a pupil should receive a Graduation Diploma, whether such a diploma should include poor marks (1–4), how to use the grading scale, or whether some pupils could repeat the year. According to an authoritative school official,[16] the teachers were, up to then, as 'sovereign as a Great Power' in their assessment. The basic reason for this inaccuracy was their fear that pupils would leave school if the demands were too rigid.[17] It is fair to conclude that it was actually not so important what the primary-school diploma was like. What brought the benefits was to possess it.

There was one mark in which the symbolic guarantee of citizenship was crystallized above all: the mark for conduct. Even that was not standardized by order of the authorities. According to Salmela, it was 'quite common' to give the top, excellent mark 'if the pupil did not possess a serious weakness of character or s/he had not been guilty of some grave misdemeanour'. There were, nevertheless, teachers who thought that 'nobody's conduct is excellent and so nobody should actually receive an excellent mark for it'.[18] A semi-official handbook of pupil assessment described the significance of the conduct mark as follows:

> In grading conduct for the Graduation Diploma, the teacher makes a statement about the pupil's appearance, growth and development during his/her school years. This is a statement to society about what kind of position the individual coming from the school might be placed in, and about his/her value. It is society that needs the assessment in the diploma, and not only for taking a newcomer from school into life, but also for maintaining firm belief that respectability and ability will be prized, and good-for-nothings will be punished.[19]

If early criticism of the assessment of scholarly achievement dated back to the late nineteenth century, it did not take long for the first ambitious applications of verbal assessment to appear. In 1908, a publishing house owned by the Union of Finnish Primary School Teachers published a booklet called the *Pupil's Book*.[20] This was a collection of report forms for pupil assessment by month, term and year for the entire upper primary school. Using this book, teachers could assess their pupils on the monthly report page on a dozen dimensions using a four-step scale (good, satisfactory, passable, poor). These dimensions were conduct, diligence, attentiveness, regularity in coming to school and to the classroom, attention to the instruction, care with homework, care with school work, obedience, care with textbooks and notebooks, cleanliness, and general progress. Lateness, absence, punishments and admonitions were also recorded here. Thus, this was no overstatement on the first page:

> Take care with this book so that you can show it to those who seek information about your capability. This book is the best recommendation you can give when, in the future, you are looking for a job. Therefore, behave yourself at school so that this book is your helper, a certificate of honour.

The new version of the *Pupil's Book* was probably published in the 1910s. Three odd innovations were introduced in this second edition. First, the assessments were no longer to be given monthly, and the teacher was allowed to make them less frequently. Further, whereas all the dimensions were external in the first edition, the first genuine psychological dimension—comprehension (*käsityskyky* in Finnish)—

16 Salmela, 1948 op. cit., 31–32.
17 Ibid., 9–21.
18 Ibid., 45.
19 Ibid., 46.
20 S. Luoma, *Valistuksen oppilaskirja* [The Pupil's Book] (Helsinki: Valistus, 1908).

was introduced in the second. Finally, the numeric scale from 1 to 10 replaced the verbal four-step scale. I do not know how much the teachers used the first sophisticated, monthly examination or the later version. What is known, however, is that these monthly report pages were excluded from the third version onwards, probably published in 1923. The book became just a technical collection of term and year reports.

It is fair to say, in summary, that the first period (1866–1943) during which *the old primary school* became compulsory, was dominated by repressive and exclusive examination techniques. The teachers based their conduct marks on common sense or on their own convictions and morals. Salmela gave many examples of arbitrary teacher action. A low mark in the diploma seemed effectively to exclude the pupil from successful citizenship, and in reports it produced behaviour categorized as almost criminal. It is noteworthy, however, that the examination focused mainly on deviating pupils, and its exclusive effect was decreased by the far from complete coverage of compulsory schooling. The curiosity of the old primary school was the detailed *Pupil's Book* with its monthly and detailed examination of behaviour, but this was only used for a dozen years, and we do not know how much store teachers set by it in reality.

II: The new primary school (1943–70)

The moral curricular code became a *civic code* after the Second World War.[21] Only then did the solitary and original individual emerge at the side of society as the legitimate basis for compulsory schooling. However, the individual was still subordinated to the interests of society. School was seen as a 'mini-society', and as a workplace for children, which led to the idea of moulding the 'school life' of pupils into something that was totally educational. The main task of the school was to train 'individuals for society', or more precisely, 'for our society'.[22]

Compulsory primary school was finally universalized in the 1940s. It was only then that there were school buildings in every corner of the country, and virtually every child between seven and 15 went to school in one form or another. At the same time, it was considered necessary to standardize school examinations. Common sense or the teacher's conviction was not suited to the universalized school. Besides, there was no longer any danger that pupils would leave school because it was now finally institutionalized and also controlled as part, though not yet a very large or uniform part, of the normal life course of every citizen-to-be.

21 Rinne 1987, cit. op.

22 Curriculum KM 1952:3, *Kansakoulun opetussuunnitelmakomitean mietintö II. Varsinaisen kansakoulun opetussuunnitelma* [Report of the Committee for the Primary School Curriculum II] (Helsinki: Valtioneuvoston kirjapaino), 13–14. The collectivist tradition was strong in Finland and remained so up to the 1950s. Linked to the moral and civic curriculum codes, the key words of the Finnish progressive 'new school' movement since the 1930s were still *Die Arbeit Schule*, workbooks and social education rather than child-centred individualism (E. Lahdes, *Uuden kansakoulun vaikutus Suomen kansakouluun* [The Influence of the 'New School' on the Finnish Primary School] (Keuruu: Otava, 1961); H. Simola, *Paljon vartijat. Suomalainen kansanopettaja valtiollisessa kouludiskurssissa 1860-luvulta 1990-luvulle* [The Guards of Plenty. The Finnish Popular Teacher in the State Educational Discourse from the 1860s to the 1990s] (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto. Opettajankoulutuslaitos. Tutkimuksia 137, 1995), 118). It is curious that in all party programmes up to the 1960s, the legitimization of school reform was based on the interests of society rather than on those of individuals.

In 1943 and 1944, the NBE finally gave guidelines for pupil assessment and reports. Ever since, two poor marks have meant repeating the year. A Graduation Diploma could not include poor marks. An excellent mark for conduct was given if the pupil had not been guilty of 'any grave offence, gross neglect or other conduct that indicates obvious and serious weakness of character'. The mark for neatness and attentiveness remained alongside the conduct mark. The NBE emphasized that the general grading must not be influenced by affection for or dislike of the pupil. It was also declared that 'the Graduation Diploma is proof that the behaviour of the pupil is socially acceptable'. To push this point home, two new statements were included. The teacher had to complete the sentences 'During his/her school career, the pupil has shown a special inclination for ... ', and 'The pupil has shown the following traits of character ... '.[23]

However, these were not enough for the NBE. Alfred Salmela, the longstanding and authoritative head of the General Education Department, continued the standardization work in his semi-official handbook entitled 'Pupil assessment in primary school'. The first cycle in the pursuit of reform had just been set in motion in the 1940s, and Salmela's vision was related to this. He suggested that in the 'old' school it was enough to 'reject the undersized and roughly behaved', but that in modern school reform, 'pupil assessment is one of its most important but also one of its most difficult problems'.[24]

Salmela paid a lot of attention to the assessment of behaviour because he thought it a serious issue for both society and pupils. The function of the conduct mark in the year and term reports was 'to compel the pupil and his/her guardians to pay attention to the errors, even the smallest ones, that have occurred'. The Graduation Diploma was an even more serious thing. For this society demanded that, in assessing conduct, the teacher should look 'deep into the pupil's heart', and the grading must be 'incorruptibly and ruthlessly just', using 'the scales of Goodness of Justice'.[25] No wonder Salmela used the metaphor of a court of law here. He referred to the NBE directive that the mark for conduct could be lowered only after deliberation by the school board. This was like the panel or the jury representing common opinion and society, and was 'not as formal as a conscientious and a pedantic teacher may be'.[26] All this was necessary because:

> The character and the behaviour of a human being belong so fundamentally to his/her personality that to show those to be less than the general level is a much more rigorous and injurious assessment than the assessment of knowledge and skills. ... Therefore great care is essential because the assessment touches upon the most sensitive feelings of a human being.[27]

What, then, were the crimes that lowered the mark for conduct in the Graduation Diploma, according to Salmela? He mentioned only three clear cases: rudeness to and disrespect for the teacher, fighting using a dangerous

23 A. Mäntyoja (ed.), *Kansakoulun lainsäädäntö* [Primary School Legislation] (Helsinki: Otava, 1951), 290–4; Salmela 1948 op. cit., 154.
24 Ibid., 5–6.
25 Ibid., 46.
26 Ibid., 58–9.
27 Ibid., 55.

weapon, and pilfering and theft. Thus, he stressed that, in legal terms, a poor conduct mark was a case of serious *dolus* but not of *culpa* or *casus*.[28] If we believe him, such a mark was really a handicap for the pupil in Finnish society. It meant:

> ... being obliged to remain on the level of an unskilled, manual worker, not because of the mark itself but because of the defective character it implies. A person with a low conduct mark in the Graduation Diploma does not easily move to a higher level than that of manual work. Further education also closes its doors to him/her. This looks like the Last Judgement indeed.[29]

Salmela thus went on to recommend that such a wretch could, after his/her penitence, receive an exculpatory document from the (same) teacher before the age of 18. He also proposed that a low conduct mark should be given to no more than one in every hundred pupils. Low marks for neatness and attentiveness were not seen as fatal, and could be given more often, but the average marks should be between 9.0 and 9.5, which meant that, again on average, every third pupil had a poor mark for this in their Graduation Diploma.[30]

Salmela also outlined the significance and use of two statements about the inclinations and characteristics of the pupil to be completed by the teacher. He recalled that one reason for assessment is to guide the pupil towards a suitable career. The marks in the diploma, however, gave a one-sided picture. They did not say much about the relation between diligence and ability, even though this was of extreme importance in career counselling. Because society offers many jobs needing diligence, persistence and loyalty rather than talent, the pupil with these qualities benefits from positive comments about them in the diploma. Referring to the NBE circular, Salmela emphasized that the remarks on inclinations and character should only be positive, and referred to areas such as sports in the former case and diligence or thoroughness in the latter. He then went on to stress the value of systematic observation in the documentation to ensure that assessment was valid. Finally, he referred to the Swedish and US practice of assessing the 'citizenship' of the pupil, and declared that the aim and function of the new assessment of inclinations and characteristics corresponded to these.[31]

The report of the Curriculum Committee for Primary School[32] was published in 1952. This became the national *model curriculum* as its precursor, the report of the Curriculum Committee for Rural Primary School,[33] was in its time. Both were explicit and extensive (235 and 218 pages), and both had virtually no word about pupil assessment. The basic reason for this might be found in the fact that the selective function of the primary school was still very limited. Only a few pupils aimed at studies in further education, and the diploma served only as a certificate for citizenship. As Salmela's statement above suggests, in the 'old' primary school it was enough to 'reject those below standard and behaving roughly'—and the job of the

28 Ibid., 47–9.
29 Ibid. 55–6.
30 Ibid. 50–1, 59–60.
31 Ibid., 138–40.
32 Curriculum 1952, op. cit.
33 Curriculum KM 1925, *Maalaiskansakoulu n opetussuunnitelmakomitean mietintö* [Committee Report on the Curriculum for the Rural Primary School] (Helsinki: Valtioneuvoston kirjapaino).

1952 committee was to prepare a primary school curriculum, not to think about general reform.[34]

Nevertheless, given the subject of this article, there was one point on which the 1952 curriculum already seemed an interesting precursor: the idea of a complete archive was introduced. The curriculum proposed creating a certain type of 'Pupil Register' for continuous and cumulative documentation of notes and observations about 'the mental development and particularities of the child'. The idea came from an eminent Finnish psychologist, Arvo Lehtovaara, who had published a rationale of pupil observation including 95 targets for evaluation. However, it is important to note that both the 'Lehtovaara Rationale' and the pupil register were planned particularly for pupils 'at risk', for those whose 'mental balance and working capacity may easily be disturbed'.[35] The idea of an extensive and exact archive was thus created, but it was not yet the time to concentrate on all pupils—the focus was still on the deviant ones.

Nevertheless, a selective function was also put on the primary-school agenda. In the 1950s, four years of primary school were made a prerequisite for entering grammar (secondary) school.[36] This was done because of the increasing grammar-school boom. From then on, primary-school teachers had to rank their pupils and to evaluate their chances of success at grammar school. The former was based on their average grades, but the latter was a purely subjective assessment of personality and talent.

It was not only the pupils who went to grammar school, but also those who continued at primary school, who were subject to selection procedures. The 1958 Primary School Decree stated that, for career counselling, the teacher must take 'continuous notes, based on pupil observation', about 'pupils' inclinations, abilities and hobbies'.[37] A guide to pupil observation was published in 1960, and this included sociometric testing, evaluations of personality and behaviour, assessment of school success and parental attitudes. The detailed questionnaires and observation forms were standardized, and it was clearly stated on the title page that the booklet was only for professional use.[38]

If these innovations came essentially from the coincident increasing need for selection and the emergence of the psychology discipline, pedagogy as an academic discipline was also making its contributions to the examination of pupil behaviour.

34 The 1952 curriculum contained one statement referring to the emerging selective function of primary school. On the subject of problems of vocational selection, the report noted that primary schools should help here because 'the teacher knows so much about his/her pupil and his/her abilities' (Curriculum 1952, op. cit., 22). Two other statements, however, clearly illustrated the fact that selection was not the recognized job of the primary school. First, the curriculum emphasized that '[t]he main task of the teacher is to guide the studies of the pupil but not to control the results' (ibid., 32). Second, on the subject of studies in mathematics, the committee referred to grammar school where mathematics was 'one of the most effective tools for pupil selection'. In primary school, mathematics 'has no selective role' because it is practically oriented: 'so that the pupil will cope well with life' (Curriculum 1946, op. cit., 49).

35 Curriculum 1952, op. cit., 36.

36 Nurmi 1988, op. cit., 227.

37 A. Hinkkanen (ed.), *Uusi kansakoululainsäädäntö* [The New Legislation for the Primary School] (Helsinki: Valistus, 1959), 48.

38 A. Jauhiainen, *Koulu, oppilaiden huolto ja hyvinvointivaltio. Suomen oppivelvollisuuskoulun oppilashuollon ja sen asiantuntijajärjestelmien muotoutuminen 1800-luvuin lopulta* 1990-luvulle [School, Student Welfare and the Welfare State. The Formation of the Student Welfare System in the Finnish Compulsory Education System and its Network of Experts from the Late 1800s to 1990s] (Turku: Turun yliopisto. Annales Universitatis Turkuensis C 98, 1993).

Its leading figure at that time, Professor Matti Koskenniemi, repeatedly proposed that the marks for conduct and for neatness and attentiveness were too narrow: they did not reveal whether the pupil had 'a constructive mind or only a skill for avoiding reprehensible conduct'.[39] He introduced international examples of detailed evaluation of pupils' behaviour, character and personality, and finally proposed a 'Pupil's Account', a model which came from the Jena School, headed by Peter Petersen. Koskenniemi openly stated that employers, in particular, would benefit greatly from this kind of detailed description of the pupil's 'whole being', 'social and ethical attitude', and 'personality and its quality'.[40] To my knowledge, however, the Pupil's Account was never widely used.

After the Second World War, the need arose to define the criteria for conduct and neatness and attentiveness, which limited the arbitrary freedom of teachers to grade behaviour. In *the new primary school* (1943–70), the main techniques of the behaviour examination were still exclusive and punitive. The statements on inclinations and characteristics in the Graduation Diploma, however, gave a slight opportunity for positive selection, too. However, the real innovations were the selective techniques that focused on different groups of pupils: the Lehtovaara Rationale for deviating pupils, the success prediction for Grammar School candidates, and the observation model for pupils continuing their studies in the upper grades of primary school.[41] Although the focus of examination thus started to move from the deviating to all pupils, the most ambitious assessment tools—the Pupil's Account and the Pupil's Register, proposed by the leading figures in pedagogy and psychology—were never realized.

III: The early comprehensive school (1970–94)

The 1970s could be described as the 'golden era of educational reforms' in Finland. Various fundamental reforms were carried out. The most important of them, Comprehensive School Reform (1972–77), meant the replacement of the dual-track school system of eight years of compulsory education and a parallel grammar-school option by the single, mixed-ability comprehensive school in which the whole cohort of pupils was educated for nine years full time.

As shown above, grading and assessment were not considered before the 1960s in curricular or committee texts. In all the decrees determining the tasks of the teacher, however, it was clearly stated that the teacher shall 'check and supervise the exercises, carry out the grading and prepare the pupils' report cards'.[42] It was only in 1960 that 'evaluation of learning results and pupil assessment' was first mentioned as one study content of didactics in teacher training.[43] Neither had the NBE sent new circulars or other orders about pupil assessment since the 1943–44 circulars mentioned above. It was simply not seen as problematic.

39 M. Koskenniemi, *Kansakoulun opetusoppi* [Didactics for the Primary School] (Helsinki: Otava, 1944), 350.

40 Cf. M. Koskenniemi, 'Miten voisin lisätä todistuksen tehoa' [How could we increase the effect of the report]. In *Kansakoulun työtapoja II. Yläkoulun menetelmistä*, edited by K. Saarialho and M. Koskenniemi (Porvoo: Werner Söderström osakeyhtiö, 1952), 116–28.

41 These grades, 7 and 8, were originally called *jatkolouokat* (extension classes) and later *kansalaiskoulu* (Civic School). Since the early 1960s, increasing numbers of pupils with the Graduation Diploma have continued their studies in vocational training.

42 See Hinkkanen 1959, op. cit., 80.

43 Committee Report KM 1960:7, *Seminaarilainsäädännön uudistamiskomitean mietintö* [Report of the Committee for the Reform of Seminar Legislation] (Helsinki: Valtioneuvoston kirjapaino), 77.

A dramatic change occurred in comprehensive-school texts. Following the 1966 report on school reform,[44] examination became a constant and central theme of official school discourse. The report noted a problem: that the traditional grading and assessment of pupils gave both quantitatively and qualitatively limited knowledge about their progress in their studies. Pupils themselves, and parents, teachers, future educational institutes and employers, were seen to need, first, comprehensive and individual assessment during the school years, and second, objective and comparable grading in the leaving certificate. According to the report, verbal reports for the former and standardized tests for the latter purpose were necessary. The committee made the distinction between 'pedagogic assessment' and 'final assessment', clearly and explicitly stating that these 'must be carefully distinguished one from the other'.[45] These two main examination techniques of assessment in words and grading in marks (numbers) have appeared ever since as the basis for the two central aims of schooling: comprehensive evaluation for pedagogical purposes and objective assessment for pupil selection.

The 1970 report of the Curriculum Committee for the Comprehensive School became a very monument to this break with tradition. It introduced, among many other things, the term 'evaluation' into general educational discourse. Valid, objective and comparable pupil evaluation was seen, first of all, as serving the society outside the school, as well as the parents. In 1970 this was assumed to be possible due to 'the considerable development in measurement techniques of learning achievements'.[46] It was hoped that standardized testing in particular would objectively establish the 'pupil's rank in his/her own study group and the level of this study group in relation to other corresponding groups'.[47] One of the main innovations was the special education system for those who were excluded from normal classroom routines. Part-time and school or classroom-type full-time special education was finally available for about 15% of the cohort.

Developments in educational sciences and psychology were seen both as legitimizing profound intervention in the personality of the pupil and also as offering the necessary tools. The 1970 curriculum committee brought into the arena a whole range of scientific vocabulary, including terms that referred specifically to medicine. In this 'diagnostic-didactic' discourse, it became usual to talk about ability and personality testing, systematic and continuing observation, summative, formative and diagnostic tests, and the teacher's ability to utilize all this new technology.

According to the 1970 curriculum, *everything* could and must be evaluated. If it was enough to assess two dimensions of behaviour and results in studies of different school subjects at primary school, it certainly was not enough at comprehensive school. The 1970 committee referred to the necessity for advanced evaluation methods for achieving goals in religious, social, ethic and aesthetic education, and

44 Committee Report KM 1966:A 12, *Koulunuudistustoimikunna n mietintö* [Report of the Committee for School Reform] (Helsinki: Valtioneuvoston kirjapaino).

45 Ibid., 81.

46 Curriculum KM 1970:A 4, *Peruskoulun opetussuunnitelmatoimikunna n mietintö I. Opetussuunnitelman perusteet* [Report of the Committee for the Comprehensive School Curriculum I] (Helsinki: Valtion painatuskeskus), 161.

47 Ibid., 171–2.

also in the 'development of the whole personality'.[48] Every pupil was also to be evaluated individually and comprehensively. If, at primary school, the teacher's knowledge of the pupil was clearly concentrated on deviant pupils, at comprehensive school methods were developed to help the teacher to get to know *every* pupil, individually and fundamentally.

To accompany this systematic observation and scientific testing, the dream of the complete archive, to integrate all bodies of information, now became reality.[49] This fully fledged archive was meant to consist of a massive amount of information on 'gifts, character, family background, hobbies, physical development and school performance', to be gathered through 'testing, questionnaires, interviews, home visits, exams, etc'.[50] It was seen as justified by the ambitious goal of responding to the learning needs and abilities of every individual pupil. What was of essential importance here was that this personal 'pupil information card' was to be categorized as a 'confidential document'—and as such closed to the pupil and his/her parents but open to teachers, school officials and researchers.[51] However, the 1970 committee's dream of the complete archive was never realized, although the reason was not its totalitarian character, but rather the practical problems involved in its construction. The information collected on the pupil-information card was much more restricted than the 1970 committee suggested. It was restricted further in the 1980s when reference to parental occupation was dropped, for example.

The real innovation of the 1970s concerned comprehensive verbal assessment. There was, of course, nothing new in verbal evaluation, which has always been the main everyday feedback that pupils receive from their teachers. Until then, however, it was mainly informal and implicit. The origins of formal, explicit verbal assessment are to be found in additional remarks on pupils' inclinations and characteristics in

48 Curriculum 1970, op. cit., 162. It was proposed to send parents, twice or three times per term, a written description, especially of the 'development of the pupil's personality and maturation and learning in social skills' (ibid., 170). Even 'poor learning success' in 'emotional development and in social skills' might result in the pupil being 'moved to special education or to further examinations and possibly into therapeutic procedures', the committee noted (ibid., 160). Therefore a vast special-education sector was created for the new comprehensive school. This currently caters for about 16% of pupils, part time or full time, in special schools or classrooms (J. Kivirauma, *Erityisopetus ja suomalainen oppivelvollisuuskoulu vuosina 1921–1985* [Special Education and the State School System 1921–1985] (Turku: Turun yliopisto. Turun yliopiston julkaisuja. Sarja C. Scripta lingua Fennica edita, 74, 1989); R. Rinne and J. Kivirauma, 'Education and marginalisation: The changing position of poor education as a factor in indigence in Finland', paper presented at the International Sociological Association conference, University of Joensuu, 16–18 June 1997).

49 Schools collected knowledge about their pupils in many forms. From the very beginning (1866), the teacher was obliged to keep a 'Name Book' containing details of her pupils' name, birth, parents, address and financial situation. From 1882, the teacher had to mark in the Class Book the content of the teaching and the names of absent pupils (Lönnbeck 1907, op. cit., 148–9). During this century, a record of every Graduation Diploma has had to be kept in the school (K. Kerkkonen (ed.), *Kansakoulukäsikirja lisäyksineen* [The Handbook of the Primary School] (Porvoo: Werner Söderström osakeyhtiö, 1923), 75, 13). The fourth field of knowledge was constructed much later, from the 1950s, when school health care was organized and universalized by the state, and information on pupils was compiled on individual 'Pupils' Health Cards'. Finally, in 1985, the 'Punishment Book' was created in which disciplinary measures taken were to be recorded. These interesting issues of health and punishment go beyond the limits of this paper although they have been extremely important in constructing citizenship in the school (see, e.g., M. Ojakangas, '"Kuri käsittää koulun koko elämän ...". Viime vuosisadanvaihteen suomalainen kansakoulupedagogikka ja ruumiin poliittiset teknologiat' [Finnish school pedagogy and political technologies of body at the turn of the last century], *Sosiologia*, 29(1992), 277–93; Jauhiainen 1993, op. cit.).

50 Curriculum 1970, op. cit., 186.

51 Ibid., 172.

the primary school diploma, as stated in the NBE directive in 1943. Verbal assessment, in both oral and written form, became the main proposal of the 1973 committee in the reform of pupil assessment.[52] The committee declared its vision of 'a gradual shift from comparative assessment to counselling verbal information'.[53] The 1973 committee believed it was possible, by developing goals and tests, and by counselling, to 'abandon predictive assessment models and to move to the use of counselling information and remarks about the courses that the pupil had passed.[54] In 1976, an NBE circular recommended using 'a verbal information form' for the three lowest grades. The NBE also supplied model forms that became the basis of verbal assessment in the Finnish comprehensive school up to the 1990s.[55]

Comprehensive school also brought changes in the traditional numerical assessment of behaviour. By decree, the marks for conduct and neatness were *not* to be included in the Graduation Diploma after 1970.[56] This made it possible to argue for using the whole numerical scale in conduct and neatness assessment as well, because it was now restricted to time in school. An NBE circular letter sent in 1978 ordered teachers to use the whole scale in behavioural assessment, emphasizing that 'the excellent mark may be used often'.[57] The circular stated that adequate behavioural assessment 'requires an extensive view of individuality and personality development of the pupil and of the different ways in which the goals of schooling may be achieved'.[58]

The next major curricular text, the 1985 framework curriculum, realized some basic ideas of the 1973 committee concerning the renewal of pupil assessment.[59] It conceded the fact that it would be possible to shift from selection to counselling while orienting pupils towards further education after comprehensive school. This optimism was based, first, on a governmental decision to guarantee enough full-time student places to accommodate every comprehensive-school leaver by the end of the 1980s. Second, the pupil cohorts were continuously decreasing. The curriculum text

52 Committee Report KM 1973:38, 'Oppilasarvostelun uudistamistoimikunnan mietintö' [Report of the Committee for the Reform of Pupil Assessment], mimeograph.

53 Ibid., 120.

54 Ibid., 118.

55 E. Koski, *Peruskoulun ala-asteen oppilasarvostelu. Opas opettajille, koulujen johtajille ja kouluneuvostojen jäsenille* [Pupil Assessment in the Lower Stage of Comprehensive School] (Vantaa: Kunnallispaino, 1981), 12–16. The model form consisted of 66 statements that were to be evaluated mainly on a three-step scale (e.g. frequently/sometimes/rarely). The statements dealt with six areas including 'Working habits', 'Adaptation', 'Progress in school subjects', 'Skills in the mother-tongue', 'Skills in foreign languages' and 'Skills in mathematics'. The first two areas are of special interest here. Working habits were assessed through statements such as: 'The pupil is able to concentrate on his/her work'; 'The pupil is able to cooperate with his/her classmates'; 'The pupil is able to work consistently'. The social adaptation of the pupil was described in statements such as: 'The pupil behaves kindly and politely towards his/her classmates and teacher'; 'The pupil seems to enjoy his/her time at school'; 'The pupil is able to follow the collectively accepted rules of the school'. It should be remembered that these forms were only recommendations, and there is no evidence of how much they were used in reality. Nevertheless, a new assessment technique had been introduced into Finnish state-educational discourse.

56 Kettunen and Koski, 1972, op. cit., 327.

57 E. Koski, *Peruskoulun ala-asteen oppilasarvostelu. Opas opettajille, koulujen johtajille ja kouluneuvostojen jäsenille* [Pupil Assessment in the Lower Stage of Comprehensive School] (Vantaa: Kunnallispaino, 1981), 20.

58 There were three basic dimensions of conduct assessment: 'honesty', 'consideration of other persons' and 'attitude towards the environment of work and living'. The dimensions of the neatness assessment were 'regularity and punctuality', 'initiative', 'tidiness in work' and 'attitude towards safety considerations' (ibid., 21–3).

59 Committee Report 1973, op. cit.

implied that these trends would give more autonomous space to the comprehensive school because its function would be less and less selective.[60]

Consequently, the 1985 curriculum introduced a unique assessment model in which traditional relative assessment was explicitly abandoned. The learning results of one pupil were no longer to be compared with those of other pupils in the group, but rather to his/her individual learning goals.[61]

However, the curriculum did not abolish numerical assessment, and even defined the general levels of each mark related to the national curriculum.[62] To bring more flexibility to the grading and to give weak pupils an opportunity to achieve better than the poorest marks,[63] it introduced another radical principle that meant a break with the tradition covering all compulsory schooling. The 1970 curriculum formulated this principle as follows: '[T]he assessment carried out by the teacher should be focused on the performance and particular behaviour of the pupil and not on his/her personality as a whole'.[64] Since 1985, in addition to knowledge and skills, 'the achievement of general educational goals that are central for the whole development of the pupil' has also been taken into account in grading school subjects.[65] Examples of such criteria included 'active participation', 'the ability and willingness to cooperate', 'a positive attitude and willingness to act according to the educational goals'.[66]

These two innovations—goal-based evaluation and considering the achievement of general educational goals in assessing teaching subjects—allowed the teacher a totally free hand, at least in principle, in pupil assessment. First, the teacher had both the right and the duty to define 'the limits of the pupil's abilities' as a basis for assessment.[67] Second, the teacher was justified in raising or lowering the pupil's mark in a school subject, pleading the 'achievement of the general goals that are important for the overall development of the pupil'.[68]

The third innovation in the 1985 curriculum also emphasized the omnipotence of the teacher's observing eye. Feedback on progress and development was seen as coming from two main sources, first from 'summative testing', and second from 'observation of continuing proof'. There is nothing unusual in the former concept, which just means traditional examinations, but the latter might indeed come straight from Foucault's pen:

> The teacher realizes *observation of continuing proof* by controlling the participation of the pupil in the learning situation in all its forms. Both oral and written proof may be the subject of observation. The observation shall be systematized and diversified because then it will develop the teacher's knowledge of the individual pupil. The knowledge produced from observation will supplement the feedback on the pupil's progress proved by the tests. In some school subjects, the observation will

60 Curriculum 1985, *Peruskoulun opetussuunnitelman perusteet* [Framework Curriculum for the Comprehensive School] (Kouluhallitus. Helsinki: Valtion painatuskeskus, 1985), 11.

61 'Thus, given the goals defined by the curriculum ... it must be clarified how far towards the general goals each pupil is able to advance in each specific issue, within the limit of his/her own abilities. Therefore the pupil's marks will also show how she/he has succeeded in this. This kind of evaluative procedure may be called *goal-based evaluation*. In giving marks, the teacher does not compare the learning results of one pupil with those of others as in relative assessment. The individualization of learning goals should spur every pupil to capitalize on his/her own abilities as efficiently as possible' (ibid., 29).

62 Ibid., 31.

63 Ibid., 30.

64 Curriculum 1970, op. cit., 52.

65 Curriculum 1985, op. cit., 30.

66 Ibid., 30, 31.

67 Ibid., 29.

68 Ibid., 30.

> be the only basis for assessment. Formative tasks are one form of observation of continuing proof, though their basic aim is to give to the teacher immediate feedback on the achievement of learning objectives. ... It is not necessary to inform the pupils of the formative tasks in advance, since then they could get some sense of summative testing.[69]

There is no evidence that goal-based evaluation would have affected the everyday routines of assessment in the school in any way. It has been claimed that it resulted in 'inflating' comprehensive-school marks and in making them less comparable.[70] If so, the NBE order to change pupil evaluation in 1991 did not weaken this trend because the detailed recommendations concerning assessment levels in the 1985 curriculum were replaced by short descriptions according to which 'evaluation must be individual and related to the age and abilities of the pupil'.[71] Verbal assessment became possible in the four lowest school grades, and the assessment of behaviour remained similar to what it had been since 1978, i.e. it was not included in the Graduation Diploma.

In the period of *the early comprehensive school* (1970–94), the marks for behaviour (now divided between 'conduct' and 'neatness') were taken out of the diploma, and thus their selectivity disappeared. Conduct and neatness were now to be evaluated on the general scale, which heralded the appearance of the standardizing function. The inclusion of verbal assessment in the first four grades also produced a slight standardizing effect as so-called goal-based evaluation because it brought behaviour into the assessment of school subjects. While giving the teacher a free hand to combine behaviour assessment with subject assessment, it also created a new potentially repressive effect. The selective effects of behaviour examination were concentrated completely on the new system of special education: chronic bad behaviour resulted in relegation to the 'observation class'. The continuity of exclusion is illustrated here because to be moved into special education—whether part-time or full-time—certainly had exclusive effects. In sum, the main innovations of the early comprehensive school were the standardizing techniques and the subsequent focus on all pupils. Exclusive and selective techniques were limited to the expanding special education. It is noteworthy, again, that the most ambitious innovations, proposed now by the educational scientists, were not realized.

IV: The late comprehensive school (1994–)

The late 1980s saw Finland turning from quite consensual social-democratic politics in a more market-oriented and neo-liberal direction, as happened in other Nordic countries, too. This was reflected in one of the changes promoted by the 1994 curriculum that was related to the concept of the pupil. The curricular code was individualist indeed, but there was a qualitative change that could be characterized as a shift from *egalitarian* individualism to *competitive* (or market) individualism.[72] The curriculum explicitly manifested a turn towards the values that 'promote the

69 Curriculum 1985, op. cit., 30.

70 Committee Report 'Peruskoulun oppilasarviointityöryhmän muistio' [Memorandum of the Committee for Pupil Evaluation in Comprehensive School] (Helsinki: Opetusminsteriö. Opetusminsteriön työryhmän muistioita 4: 1996), 17, 22; M. Apajalahti, Peruskoulun oppilasarviointi [Pupil evaluation in comprehensive school]. Helsinki: Opetushallitus, memo 7.2.1996, 5.

71 Ibid., 6.

72 P. Sulkunen, 'Introduction: Intellectuals and the great projects of the twentieth century', in *Vanguards of Modernity*, edited by N. Kauppi and P. Sulkunen (Jyväskylä, University of Jyväskylä. Publications of the Research Unit for Contemporary Culture, no. 32, 1992), 7–15; L. Koski and A. R. Nummenmaa, 'Kilpailu kouludiskurssissa' [Competition in school discourse], *Kasvatus–The Finnish Journal of Education*, 26(1995), 340–9.

strengthening of individualism'.[73] It is no wonder, then, that the main justification for all the development, systematization and intensification of evaluation was presented as being entirely in the service of the pupil him/herself.[74] Emphasis on verbal evaluation and the process of learning fitted well with this individual-centred ethos.[75] The emphasis on evaluation was manifested in talk about the importance of reviewing, improving and developing the 'school's evaluation system' as an essential part of both curriculum and school practice.[76] An innovation in the assessment of conduct and neatness was their combination in one mark. This mark for behaviour was still not included in the Graduation Diploma. 'Self-evaluation', 'group evaluation' and 'evaluation discussion' were introduced as new examination techniques.[77]

The justification for evaluation now comes almost entirely from the individual pupil, and numerical grading may be complemented by verbal assessment in all reports.[78] If the emphasis was clearly on verbal rather than numerical assessment, and on the process rather than on the learning result, both dimensions were nevertheless present. The 1994 curriculum stated clearly that evaluation also has selective functions.[79]

The Basic Education Act and Statutes[80] confirms the individualistic outlines of the 1994 curriculum. According to the law,[81] the aims of pupil evaluation are 'to guide and encourage studies and to develop the pupil's capacities for self-evaluation. The learning, working and behaviour of the pupil shall be evaluated in a versatile way.' What is curious here is that 'self-evaluation', a novelty just a few years ago, found its way into legislative text, which had traditionally incorporated only established and settled concepts. The Statute[82] includes one article dedicated to the evaluation and assessment of the pupil, both of which are defined in separate sections, as

73 Curriculum 1994, op. cit., 10.

74 Evaluation should promote the development of sound self-esteem in pupils as well as the formation of realistic awareness of their own knowledge and skills and of the importance of continuous study. Self-esteem is reinforced, and their awareness of themselves, their own aims and potential, are emphasized when freedom of choice and flexibility within the school system are increased. Feedback in the form of evaluation in school that pupils get direct their interests and efforts. ... The task of evaluation is to encourage pupils—in a positive way—to set their own aims, to plan their work and to make independent choices. ... Pupil and other evaluation are based on the aims of the curriculum. What is important is that the evaluation centres on the individual and takes into consideration his developmental stage and abilities (Curriculum 1994, op. cit., 29–30).

75 According to the text, '[v]erbal evaluation gives to the individual student a meaningful wealth of evaluation information which supports him in his studies. ... More and more attention in this feedback should be paid to the process of learning' (ibid., 28).

76 Ibid., 30.

77 Ibid., 29.

78 Cf. Apajalahti 1996, op. cit., 7. This is echoed in the statement of Martti Apajalahti, secretary of the working group on pupil evaluation (Committee Report 1996, op. cit.) appointed by the Ministry of Education: 'numerical assessment fills only a small part of the needs of pupil evaluation, and it seems to be playing a less and less important role' (Apajalahti 1996, op. cit., 7).

79 'Evaluation information serves an important purpose outside the school. The pupils' guardians, other institutes of learning and employers need such information on which to base decisions that are important for their future. ... The use of evaluation in making individual choices, among other things, requires reliable and fair evaluation of learning. In life, pupils are faced with situations in which their knowledge and skills are compared with those of others, and they are placed in order on the basis of the evaluations given by the school' (Curriculum 1994, op. cit., 29).

80 Law 1998. *Perusopetuslaki 21.8.1998/628* [The Basic Education Act], in *Opetustoimen lainsäädäntö* 1999, edited by H. Ranta (Helsinki: Kauppakaari OYJ, 1998), 1–8; Statute 1998, *Perusopetusasetus* 20.11.1998/852 [The Basic Education Statute], in *Opetustoimen lainsäädantö 1999*, edited by H. Ranta (Helsinki: Kauppakaari OYJ, 1998), 8–11.

81 Law 1998, op. cit., section 22.

82 Statutes 1998, op. cit., §10-12.

moving from grade to grade during school, ending with a final assessment, i.e. graduating evaluation. The statute states that '[a]t the end of every academic year, all pupils shall receive a school report that includes their study plan and an assessment by teaching subject or inter-curricular issues of how they have achieved their set goals, together with an assessment of their behaviour'. It also stipulates that the Comprehensive School Graduation Diploma shall not include any assessment of the behaviour of pupils.

In 1999, the short section of the Framework Curriculum[83] describing pupil evaluation and their reports was replaced with a 33-page booklet entitled *Guidelines for Pupil Evaluation in Basic Education*.[84] Self-evaluation is strongly emphasized as 'a central part of the evaluation system of the school'.[85] The Guidelines has separate chapters for evaluation of both behaviour and work. It is seen as necessary 'to state the goals for pupil behaviour, to guide them in their pursuit of these goals and to evaluate the achievement of the goals. The evaluation of behaviour shall be constant, truthful and versatile.' The evaluation of work is focused on the learners' skills in planning, carrying out and evaluating their own work. This means considering how responsibly, autonomously and cooperatively they act, and especially 'how the pupil is able to connect the specific sectors of working skills into a easygoing and natural learning process where it is the self-evaluation that directs the planning and realization of work'.[86]

The 1994 Framework Curriculum made it possible for schools to create a curriculum of their own, albeit based on the national framework curriculum. In many cities and municipalities, the local board of education gave the schools quite a free hand in the format of the reports. They were allowed to use their own forms for both the intermediate (given at least once in the course of the school year) and the yearly reports (given at the end of the school year). In the following, I will briefly describe some findings from a study[87] on the verbal assessment[88] of pupil behaviour that appeared in these reports.

Possibly the most striking innovation was the procedure in which the pupil assesses him/herself, complemented with parallel teacher assessment. The teacher makes his/her own assessment or comments *after* the pupil has done his/her self-evaluation. We could easily imagine a situation in which the pupil grades him/herself by ticking the 'mostly' box on the 'responsibility for his/her own school and home work' question, and the teacher ticks 'often'. Or when the pupil states that she/he 'accepts disappointments' 'well', but the teacher indicates 'poor' acceptance.

83 Curriculum 1994, op. cit.

84 Curriculum 1999, *Perusopetuksen oppilaanarvioinnin perusteet* [The Guidelines for Student Evaluation in Basic Education] (Helsinki: Opetushallitus).

85 Ibid., 10.

86 Ibid., 14.

87 H. Simola, *Ulossulkemisesta itsevalikointiin—Opettajuus, kansalaisuus ja käyttäytymisen arvostelu kansa- ja peruskouludokumenteissa vuosina 1866–1996* [From Exclusion to Self-selection: Teacherhood, Citizenship and Examination of Behaviour in Finnish Primary and Comprehensive School Documents from 1866 to 1996] (Helsinki: Helsingin kaupungin opetusvirasto. Helsingin kaupungin kouluviraston julkaisusarja A3, 1997).

88 These assessments were 'verbal' in a very limited sense of the word. They were actually multiple-choice questions where the teacher's or the pupil's agreement with a statement is expressed on a three- to five-point scale. Only a few forms include open questions, or even sentences to be completed. Therefore, it may well be claimed that the 'Pupils' Book' designed by Luoma in 1908 was an early predecessor of this kind of 'verbal' assessment.

The content of the statements could be divided into two categories. The '*traditional*' ones referred to the behaviour (or characteristics) of a well-behaved, punctual, painstaking, diligent, adaptable and obedient pupil; to put it simply: a nice pupil. These kinds of traits have often been connected in progressivist child-centred literature to traditional school goodness, to the sphere of the well-known 'hidden curriculum'. On the other hand, '*progressive*' statements refer to qualities often emphasized in modern child-centred pedagogy, such as sociality, independence, activity, creativity and criticism. The great majority (roughly between 70% and 90%, depending on the interpretation) of the statements used in the forms—both in the teacher's assessment and the pupils' self-assessment—were traditional ones.

It is curious that many traits emphasized in the reform discourse since the 1960s (such as honesty, truthfulness and justice) were completely excluded from these verbal assessments, or appeared only very rarely (e.g. creativity, criticism and courage). One-fifth of the schools did not use *any* progressive statement in their forms, and half used only one. Only one-third used more than one progressive statement among the traditional ones. We are thus witnessing, again, an interesting phenomenon already pointed out in this study: the most ambitious reform ideas tend never to be realized at school level, or if they are, then not as intended.

The 1994 curriculum seemed to herald the fourth period, the period of *the late comprehensive school*. The individualist curricular code turns from egalitarian towards competitive individualism. The most striking novelty is the introduction of 'self-evaluation', at the levels of both reporting and pedagogic examination. Self-evaluation seems to function at all levels, and it may have strong self-selective effects in all its forms. Our sample of report forms from some Finnish cities made it clear that self-assessment may also be having normalizing and even standardizing effects. What was the most curious here was the predominant technique in which the teacher assesses the pupil after his/her self-assessment. It is claimed that self-evaluation is used in an increasing number of schools, and in nearly all schools committed to experiments on pupil evaluation.[89]

Conclusions

The examination of pupils' behaviour in Finnish schools changed in many ways during the period of over a hundred years studied above. The old primary school (1866–1943) was dominated by techniques of punishment and exclusion, whereas selective and standardizing techniques were virtually non-existent. The new primary school (1943–70), while maintaining or even strengthening exclusion and punitive techniques, introduced new selective criteria for behaviour assessment. Nevertheless, there was not one technique that covered all pupils, and various special ones were used for different groups, according to the increasing need for selection. Among the innovations in the early comprehensive school (1970–94) was the standardizing of behaviour examination. Even more important was the fact that the selective function was completely concentrated on the new special-education system, in which new professional school psychologists cooperated with teachers. The most recent period, late comprehensive school (1994–), has brought back selective techniques, although the role of special education is still essential. The real novelty of the 1990s, however, was the variety of self-selection techniques.

89 Committee Report 1996, op. cit., 32.

Three general conclusions concerning the four periods mentioned above may be drawn. First, virtually all techniques of behaviour examination throughout the years of mass schooling have been individualizing and normalizing. To put it briefly, their main effect has been to mould an individual citizen who has internalized the hegemonic divisions of society between the true and not-true, the good and not-good, the right and not-right. Second, examination during primary school was focused on deviant pupils or special groups, and not on all pupils. It was the comprehensive school that brought the entire cohort under the scrutinizing eye of more and more sophisticated and comprehensive behaviour examination. Finally, the most ambitious techniques, often proposed by the academics, were used only for short periods of time, or they were never realized, or their implementation deviated essentially from the original intentions. This makes conclusions about the recent period rather vulnerable. As we have seen during our excursion through the term and year reports from some Finnish cities, the innovation seems to have strengthened and particularized traditional behaviour assessment rather than to have broadened its scope in a more progressive and liberal direction.

It is my belief that the new forms of examination contribute to the creation of a new pupil who is willing and able to engage in self-evaluation and self-selection. This means that pupils undergo constant assessment and grading, and invest in and incline themselves towards the faith of schooling. Both a new expert teacher and a new 'portfolio pupil' are being constructed, both willing to take part in continuous and comprehensive, systematic and sophisticated examination, no matter whether carried out by their peers, their superiors or themselves. If the mission of the teacher in the old school was to be a gatekeeper of fully authorized citizenship, the mission of the modern comprehensive-school teacher might be seen, to cite Rinne,[90] as 'to inscribe into the pupils the sense of ''self-selection'' and ''suitability'', to guide the pupils to the free choices and routes that are fitting and suitable for them'.

But are self-evaluation and -selection not, indeed, highly functional in late-modern society, which is ruled by doctrines of free but obligatory individual choice, of persistent competition, of the exchangeable and the replaceable, of constantly weighing the adequacy and sufficiency of others and oneself?[91] The school promises, once again, to respond to the 'requirements' of 'society'. For some, this means a Foucauldian nightmare, for others it is exactly what has been needed for a long time. The majority of teachers, I venture to guess, regard this change, once again, as reform rhetoric that will never be realized on the everyday level of schooling. There is, however, every reason to claim that none of these critical worries, optimistic hopes or cynical prophecies will come true. On the evidence of the foregoing historical analysis, it seems fair to say that the most ambitious examination reforms systematically remain unrealized in the reality of schooling. The abilities of and possibilities for teachers to evaluate their individual pupils seem to be very limited.

90 R. Rinne, 'Kansan kasvattajasta opetuksen ammattilaiseksi: suomalaisen kansanopettajan tie' [From educator of the people to professional of teaching: the path of the Finnish primary school teacher], *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus*, 19(1988), 430–44, 443.

91 See, e.g., N. Rose, 'Expertise and the government of conduct', *Studies in Law, Politics and Society*, 14(1994), 359–97; N. Rose, *Powers of Freedom* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999); U. Beck, A. Giddens and S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994).

In one Finnish study,[92] eight primary-school teachers were scrutinized as evaluators and describers of their pupils. Although the teachers were working in the lower grades of primary school and were well motivated, the conclusions were depressing:

> ... teachers have to evaluate and describe their pupils without knowing them too well. The pupils are described by means of their external behaviour. In the multifaceted and busy school life, shattered by accidental breaks and outside disturbances, it is not possible for teachers to know the deeper learning processes and motivation of their individual pupils. In these circumstances, the pupils are described practically, sometimes even at random. To put it in a slightly pointed way, one could say that the description of the pupil will be constructed depending on the impressions the teacher happens to receive of the pupil, on which kind of group the pupils happens to fall into, on who happens to be his or her teacher, on how his or her parents happen to cooperate with the school and on what kind of support the teacher happens to receive from colleagues and experts.[93]

A significant proportion of teachers and most educational politicians, administrators and educational scientists cannot, however, resist the temptation to tell the truth about pupils, and so the introduction of new, promising and ambitious techniques for behaviour examination will continue. In this study, I have outlined some potential effects of these techniques. What will be the real effects in schooling reality, however, will be revealed only in empirical studies that remain to be carried out. The 1996 report claims, for example, that '[e]xperience has proved that pupils, in general, do not by nature have sufficient ability for self-evaluation but they learn it quite quickly'.[94] We do not know what is really being examined when a seven-year-old child deliberates whether she/he will allow 'the others and him/herself to work in peace', or when a 10-year-old wonders whether she/he 'accepts disappointments'—especially when the teacher immediately comments on this choice. We do know, however, on the basis of the historical experience of school reforms,[95] that we should ask how schools change reforms rather than the reverse. The reforms change the school, indeed, but rarely in the intended direction.

92 K. Mäensivu, Opettaja oppilaidensa kuvaajana—praktis-konstruktiivinen näkökulma [The teacher as a describer of his or her pupils—a practical-constructivistic approach], unpublished licentiate thesis in psychology, University of Jyväskylä, 1995.

93 Ibid., 120–1.

94 Committee Report 1996, op. cit., 32.

95 For example D. Tyack and L. Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia. A Century of Public School Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).