

## Tekst 8

# Teaching's true vocation

Correlli Barnett (Letters, February 14) applauds Estelle Morris's "attempt to create a more equal balance between the academic and practical avenues in our schools", but does so in terms which themselves effortlessly reproduce that same old scenario, where "the practical" and "the academic" are opposed.

What are these "intensely boring academic studies"? I wonder whether there may not be a generational problem here — a tendency to look back with indignation and regret, rather than offering any hint of a teaching programme which starts from the supposition that all students need access to the full range of skills and knowledge. Some of these are reading-writing based, and include mastery of those activities; and some are grounded in mixed-mode practices — such as music technology or video production — but which also include critical perspectives and the history of the discipline, as well as mastery of its current and potential applications.

In this different scenario, Barnett's "academic" is also practised, rather than opposed to "practice"; no longer succumbed to as a dominant

code imposed from above. In some instances this is already happening. But what is needed, if that aspiration is to be widely realised, is a different language — and a better grasp of newer possibilities.

**Prof Susan Melrose**

● If you talk to even the most academically able 15-year-old pupils, you will find that most of them evaluate all school subjects according to their potential usefulness for future employment. This means that some subjects, such as history, English literature, even mathematics, are regarded as "useless". Any attempt by teachers to justify them in terms of usefulness results in trivialisation.

Let us by all means provide young people with training for work and let it have high prestige, but let it also be separate from education. Then the values of both may flourish in their own environments and not conflict. Perhaps, then, we could envisage the best of both worlds: a well-trained workforce of culturally sophisticated individuals.

**Michael Bulley**  
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*The Guardian*

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Hieronder staan vijf uitspraken. Twee ervan geven elk een opvatting weer van één van de twee briefschrijvers.

1 Practical training is ultimately the only useful thing in education.

2 Pupils do not realise the relevance of academic subjects.

3 Recently introduced school subjects do not deserve to be called academic.

4 School subjects should be approached from an academic as well as a practical perspective.

5 Teachers are reluctant to experiment with new approaches in education.

2p 34 □ Noteer de naam van de twee briefschrijvers, gevolgd door het nummer van de uitspraak die zijn/haar opvatting weergeeft.