

'Democracy: Time for Renewal or Retreat in Educational Leadership'

How the leadership style of Sir Alec Clegg could impact educational renewal through retreat today.

Key words

Educational Landscape, Sir Alec Clegg, Bretton Hall College, Narrative

Abstract

The work of Sir Alec Clegg, Chief Education Officer of the West Riding of Yorkshire (1945 – 1974) was grounded in progressive child-centered learning with a heuristic philosophy, his belief of individuals as agents of change, in challenging academic measurements of success through the testing of children together with an underpinning framework of the value of the arts to the curriculum for every child are recognisable as Sir Alec Clegg's practice. The love of teaching and the transformative power of education for everyone was integral to Sir Alec Clegg's beliefs, these two core values of love and transformation offer much to underpin educational policy and practice today. (Darvill 2000) (George 1999) (Brighouse 2008) (Newsam 2008) (Brundrett 2008)

Using the narrative of the individual and their social environment whilst taking the stance of Sir Alec Clegg being in an environment of his time and how he shared his narrative and in what ways he did this and what impact it had in his use of narrative leadership construction will be used as the framework to interview individuals who worked for Sir Alec Clegg and who studied in the culture that he created at Bretton Hall College, originally a Teacher Training College for Teachers of the Arts.

Through analysis of these storied life narratives that were influenced by Sir Alec Clegg's leadership style, using a Labovian approach to determine what aspects of his leadership style were predominant, how they were manifest and how they affected the learning environment will be addressed. Through this reflective retreat it will be asked how their renewal could impact educational leadership today.

IMAGE HERE OF ALEC CLEGG AND SIR ALEC CLEGG HERE

START BY ASKING HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE HEARD OF SIR ALEC CLEGG OR KNOW WHO HE WAS.

Introduction

Background

The project seeks to address if a sustainable model of higher educational leadership in art and design can be found, referencing past and existing frameworks of the arts in education based on the work of Sir Alec Clegg, Chief Education Officer of the West Riding of Yorkshire 1945-1974, with particular reference to Bretton Hall College founded in 1949 as a teacher training college for the creative and visual arts. The current fracturing between policy and the educational environment signifies reform and as the education system prepares for significant changes, models of success are being sought as the impact of globalisation, internationalism and a digital future are being felt. (Education 2013)

The Current Educational Landscape

The impact of changes within the main stream school education system will ultimately be felt within higher education, as the higher educational landscape itself has already changed, encountering economic constraints, unprecedented technological growth resulting in new modes of working compounded by the significant reduction in funding for teacher training in universities (Shaw 2013) (IPPR 2013) (IPPR 2013) (Ward 2013).

Within this sphere a new vocabulary around arts education has started to emerge where 'appreciation' of 'cultural' education is stimulating debates around what arts education will become in the future as the language implies a move away from practice (Henley 2012).

What is demanded of higher education now is a 'glocal' perspective, economic growth of the sector through new partnerships, directional steering as opposed to drifting with the tide of digitisation, the unbundling of pedagogy through MOOCs and Transnational Education and a shift in attitude of what higher education will be (Education, 2013).

Within this changing framework is arts education, a small number of specialist arts institutions still operate in the UK however much arts education in higher education is now delivered as part of multi-faculty universities. (of which there are 165 in the UK(UK 2012).

This relationship has often been one of jarring ideologies, where the pedagogy is predominant over the art for the institution, and an independence of character and systems of working are prevalent for the art (Ritterman 2010).

For both organisations the changing landscape means change at grass roots level, new models of working are required with new perspectives of what and who will need to be engaged with (Education, 2013). Private higher education and Alternative Art Schools with socially engaged models of practice are already part of the horizon with institutions including Open School East in Hackney, Islington Mill Art Academy in Salford and Grizedale Arts in the Lake District now part of the educational offer for students (Batty 2013). Traditions of art school and university as separate identities and as one identity, must be forward facing

in curriculum models, delivery and leadership in a climate of vast arts funding cuts and fear of the future for art in higher education.

Applications to study creative arts programmes at universities are in decline by, leadership in arts education will need to be driven through with vision, openness and to challenge its capacities in providing a sustainable future. The value of arts and culture to the economy should not be underestimated, in 2013 it was reported that arts and culture made up 0.4 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product with a turnover of £12.4 billion.

Investing in arts in the higher education landscape is to invest in the economy of the future (Asquith 2014) (Research 2013).

Sir Alec Clegg

The work of Sir Alec Clegg was grounded in progressive child-centered learning with a heuristic philosophy, his belief of individuals as agents of change, in challenging academic measurements of success through the testing of children together with an underpinning framework of the value of art to every child throughout his life are recognisable as Sir Alec Clegg's practice (Darvill 2000) (George 1999) (Brighouse 2008) (Newsam 2008) (Brundrett 2008). The love of teaching and the transformative power of education was integral to Sir Alec Clegg's beliefs, these two core values of love and transformation offer much to underpin educational policy and practice today. Throughout his career with the West Riding Sir Alec Clegg was important not only in his Authority, he was instrumental in shaping educational policy, advising on the Crowther Report and Newsom Report. It was not just his leadership of the West Riding Authority that leaves his legacy however but also the disbandment of the Authority in 1974. Throughout this process Sir Alec Clegg remained steadfast in his working practices as his work of 30 years was dismantled to make way for new educational advances (Darvill, 2000). Much of what Sir Alec Clegg achieved is inextricably linked to the period of reform of post-war Britain, the reform taking place then could only have happened then as current reform can only happen now. Today, could higher education be dismantled in the way that the West Riding Authority was dismantled? Could higher education in the UK be sold to the international market under the guise of educational advances? As policymakers remain political rather than educational it is hoped that the impact of this study will highlight the new pathways around art education and higher educational leadership and encourage policymakers to engage with them as agents of change in a new landscape.

Bretton Hall College

In 1949 Bretton Hall College was founded as a Teacher Training College designed for the promotion of art education in the West Riding of Yorkshire. It opened with fifty six students and by 1964 the college had expanded significantly resulting in an extensive building programme encompassing nine student hostels, a music block, gymnasium, sanatorium, dining hall, library and Principal's residence. In 2007 the college had closed and the campus is earmarked for development.

Sir Alec Clegg and Bretton Hall College

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narrative leadership construction will be used as the framework to interview individuals who worked for Sir Alec Clegg and who studied in the culture that he created at Bretton Hall College, originally a Teacher Training College for Teachers of the Arts.

Through analysis of these storied life narratives that were influenced by Sir Alec Clegg's leadership style, using a Labovian approach to determine what aspects of his leadership style were predominant, how they were manifest and how they affected the learning environment will be addressed. Through this reflective retreat it will be asked how their renewal could impact educational leadership today.

Methodology

Narrative Analysis is being used as the methodology with an interpretive approach focusing on experience-centered narratives giving scope for the remembered and the reconstructed narrative to be re-written.

The research being presented today uses the framework of William Labov, , using Labov's six structural features of Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Resolution and Coda allows for critical analysis of the influence of Sir Alec Clegg to happen in establishing how does the story begin? what were the key factors of what? how? where? and when? what happened next in the story? so what now? what finally happened? and what does it all mean?

Using the narrative of the individual and their social environment whilst taking the stance of Sir Alec Clegg being in an environment of his time and how he shared his narrative and in what ways he did this and what impact it had is fundamental to understanding the narratives.

It is noted here that the Labovian approach is the underlying approaching running throughout the study, however, the approach is being used not only in spoken narratives, but also with written narratives, this it is believed will produce rich valuable data that can be contrasted and potentially reveal new data, in this way both spoken and written data by the same narrator can be analysed. This approach was taken as it was not known what narratives would be told, it is therefore important to ascertain as much information as possible from the narrators, using the Labovian method in this way, data collection and analysis has the potential to yield greater depth.

The narratives of personal experience have be used, situated in the belief that people can lead storied lives and that individuals can understand their experiences in story form through this to address the evolving narrative of Bretton Hall College and Sir Alec Clegg.

If narrative has a beginning, a middle and an end the idea of an evolving narrative will be explored through transformation in narrative time (May 2012) (Andrews, 2013).

Therefore moving from narrative into storytelling allows for the frameworks of storytelling to be introduced, therefore the work of Vladimir Propp can be used to gain further insights into the life stories of the students and staff of the college.

This 'Propp Skin' was used to determine how the leadership style of Sir Alec Clegg impacted on the educational culture and climate through the people who studied in the culture and climate, in this research this is the Bretton Hall College Alumni.

Primary Data Analysis and Narratives

Interviews involved two primary groups, West Riding Education Department staff who may or may not have known Sir Alec Clegg personally and Bretton Hall College students and staff who attended and worked at Bretton Hall College between 1945-1974, with six participants in each group.

The narratives were captured through face to face semi-structured interviews where the interviewee were key to leading the dialogue. The semi-structured nature of the interviews was to allow for a framework to exist of questioning whilst allowing the personal narratives of the interviewees the freedom to explore their narratives in a directed yet fluid interaction.

Six frame-worked questions were in place to provide the semi-structured nature to the interview this allowed for the storytelling narrative to emerge unfolding naturally without a black and white question and answer format.

SLIDES HERE

Primary Data Collection

Interviewee	Interview Completed	Relationship/Dates
West Riding (Intensity Sampling)		
Eric Woodward	Yes	Schools Museum Service Officer, 1956 - 1974 (continued to work after 1974 when West Riding was reorganised until his retirement)
Peter Clegg	Yes	Son
Nancy Smith	Yes	Headteacher & Inspector, 1953- 1974 (continued to work after 1974 when West Riding was reorganised until her retirement)
Martial Rose	Yes	Head of Drama, 1952-1965
Sir David Attenborough	Yes	Nephew
Bretton Hall College (Typical Case Sampling)		
Margot Andrews	Yes	1952-1954
Derek Andrews	Yes	1952-1954
Denis Green	Yes	1965-1969
Anonymous	Yes	1969-1971
Carol Vidal	Yes	1969-1972
Charles Vidal	Yes	1969-1972

What is emerging? (About Sir Alec and Bretton Hall)

Sir Alec was a magnet (ERIC)

People felt valued (STUDENTS)

People were and still are loyal to the West Riding and Bretton Hall (MARY CLARKE)

An implicit policy (SEE ALEC'S HAND)

The character of leadership (HOW ALEC WAS GOOD AT SELECTING STAFF, YOUNG, SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH GOOD STAFF)

Sir Alec had a steady hand

The environment of the West Riding and Bretton Hall (COURSES FOR CARETAKERS - PRIDE)

The timing of 1945-1974 - a golden time

A fondness, emotion

Stories

Humour

Enjoyment

Attachment

Pride

Themes

Implicit Policy

Storied Lives

Belonging

Legacy

Environment

Conclusion

So how through this reflective retreat could it's renewal impact educational

leadership today?

The Dignity of Teaching.

In 1964 at the unveiling of the commemorative plaque of the expansion at Bretton Hall College it was said;

‘What constitutes the dignity of teaching?’

It is to realize that knowledge leads to understanding, and understanding is something that must be patiently and devotedly unmasked. Surely the dignity of teaching is to unmask it with simplicity, to guide the pupil into the inner centre of learning and to know that you can leave him there to browse with insight, self-assurance and discrimination.’

The dignity, character, implicit policy of values, believing in teaching staff and a sense of belonging can also be characterized as Sir Alec Clegg’s practice, as told by the people who worked with him, for him and even to those who never met him but whose lives have been shaped by him.

FINAL SLIDE QUOTE LOAVES AND HYACINTHS

‘I remember many years ago going to the house of my aunt, who taught languages to teenage girls including a future prime minister [Margaret Thatcher]. The following lines hung on her sitting room wall:

‘If thou of fortune be bereft
And of thine early store hath left
Two loaves, sell one, and with the dole
Buy hyacinths to feed the soul’

Now as I see it, the education which we dispense falls into fairly clear categories. In the first place, there are the loaves, that is to say the facts that the child has to learn: two and two make four, the Spanish Armada was defeated in 1588, a wild rose has five petals and so on. The characteristics of this kind of learning is that the child gets it right or wrong, and we can measure his accuracy....

The loaves are mainly concerned with facts and their manipulation, and they draw on the intellect. The hyacinths are concerned with a child’s loves and hates, fears, enthusiasms and antipathies, with his courage, his compassion and his confidence: in short, with a whole range of qualities which determine not what he knows but the sort of person he is and the way he is likely to act....’

Sir Alec Clegg: 1980

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