

Sixth forms should be taught five subjects, head says

By David Tytler, Education Editor

Sixth-form students should be taught five subjects in their first year before going on to A levels, the chairman of the Head Masters' Conference said yesterday.

Mr Martin Marriott, headmaster of Cranford School, Dorset, told the conference's annual meeting at Christ Church, Oxford, that a broader curriculum would encourage more students to stay on at school after 16.

He said: "All is not well with our sixth-form provision, nor have people been happy with it in the past, or why would there have been so many attempts to broaden the curriculum?"

Under Mr Marriott's scheme, more able pupils would, as at present, sit three or four A levels at the end of the second year, but probably having made a more informed choice of subjects. The others would continue with their five subjects, being assessed by an examination at the end of the course or by the extension of the national curriculum to cover 16 to 18-year-olds on a voluntary basis.

"Does it really make sense that the national curriculum commendably insists that pupils should study up to 10 subjects until they are 16 only for them to reduce immediately and abruptly to a mere three?" Mr Marriott asked.

"Is this really a convincing educational policy? Is it in the best interests of our pupils? We must be concerned that only 32 per cent of the age group - the lowest in Europe - stay on at school after 16.

"We must question a system where only 24 per cent are currently studying A levels, although be pleased that this figure appears to be rising. We must ask questions when as much as 25 per cent of A-level papers fail to be awarded even a grade E."

Mr Marriott said that his proposals could be adopted without extra resources. "Such a system would provide much needed flexibility and thereby cater better than we do at present for the needs of our sixth-formers."

Mr Marriott said that the Government's scheme for broadening the sixth-form curriculum by the introduction of the A/S Levels, equivalent to half an A Level, would not succeed, partly because they had not yet been fully accepted by the universities.

Turning to teacher shortages, he said: "In spite of the Government's reassurances and its nimble footwork amongst the conflicting statistics that are available, there can be no doubt that this country is facing a serious problem as far as the supply of well-qualified, well-trained, well-motivated teachers is concerned."

He called on headmasters to do more to encourage students to become teachers: "We must appeal to their idealism; to their desire to serve their fellow men and their country. I don't think we should be shy about using such words. I believe that many young people would respond positively to such an approach."

(David Tytler in *The Times*, 20 September 1989)

Praktische Hilfe

Die Hauptabsicht eines *argumentative-Textes* ist es, sich mit einem umstrittenen Thema argumentativ auseinanderzusetzen.

Meistens weisen solche Texte drei Teile auf. Was den Textaufbau betrifft, nennt man diese drei Teile *structural elements*. Am Anfang der Argumentation wird die eigene Position bzw. Überzeugung dargestellt. Dann werden Argumente für und gegen diese Position dargestellt und abgewogen. Beweise werden präsentiert, um die eigene Meinung zu unterstützen und die Gegenargumentation zu entkräften. Dieses Abwägen führt in der Regel zum dritten Teil des Ablaufs, der Schlußfolgerung.

Argumentative-Texte zeigen eine Reihe charakteristischer Merkmale. Besonders wichtig darunter sind:

1. Ausdrücke der persönlichen Meinung wie / *think...*, *in my opinion*,... usw.
2. Betonungsmittel wie *there can be no doubt that ...*, *we must...*, *it is dear...*, *whichever way you look at it...*
- 3 rhetorische Fragen
- 4 das Zitieren von Beweismaterial wie Statistiken, Zahlen, usw.
- 5 *should/ought to* als Ausdruck einer dringenden Empfehlung
- 6 *will* (indirekte Rede: *would*) in der Bedeutung, daß in Zukunft eine gegebene Situation sicherlich eintritt
- 7 die Verwendung des Komparativs (*better than ...*, *more informed*)
- 8 der Gebrauch von Vergleichsmitteln wie *On the one hand, ..., but on the other (hand)...* usw.

• ask a rhetorical question; be convinced that...; call into doubt; conclude that...; doubt; draw a conclusion; emphasize a point about...; highlight an argument ...; make use of...; present a case for...; question the government's policy on ... by asking ... / by pointing out...; refer to comparative statistics on ...; stress; use; writer's use of...