

**A  
neoconservative  
moment?:  
Education for  
character and  
the nation in the  
21<sup>st</sup> century**

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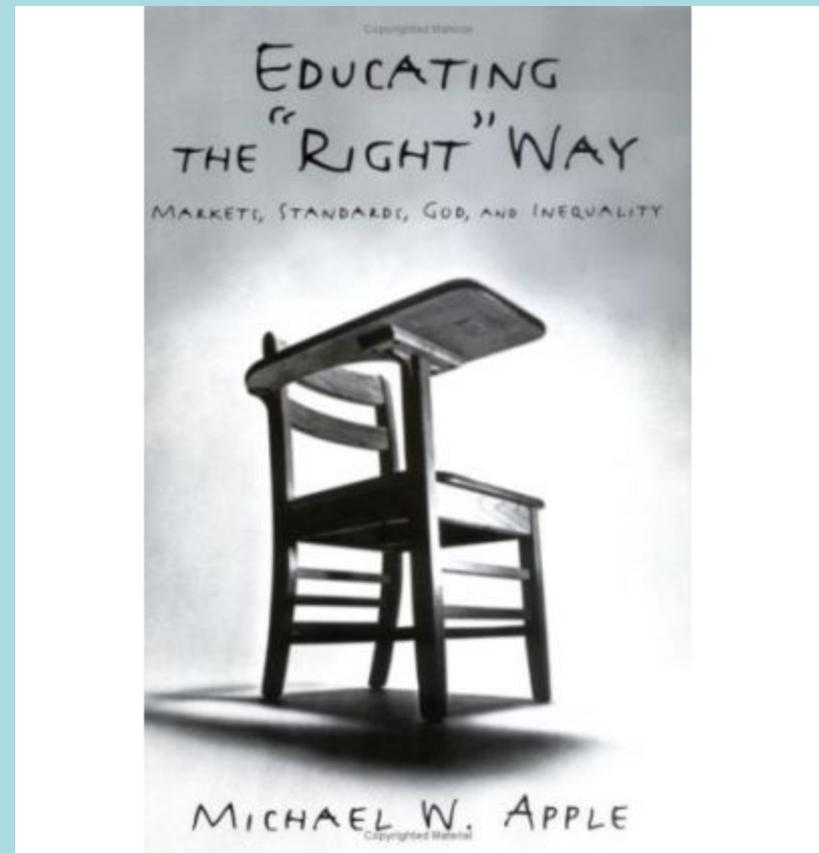
## SESSION OUTLINE

1. Introduction: Neoconservatism and neoliberalism
2. UK and the 'New Right'
3. Conservative education policy
4. Choice and diversity
5. Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century
6. Happiness and wellbeing
7. Character and resilience
8. Security and the nation
9. Grammar schools...
10. Conclusions



## 1. Introduction: Neoconservatism and neoliberalism

- Neoliberalism: individualism, consumer choice, market forces, private enterprise
- Neoconservatism: organic society, moral authority of tradition
- APPLE (p. 13, 2006, USA): ‘The current emphasis on “character education”, on patriotism, and on restoring “our” culture must be understood in relation to this history.’
- Contradiction, harmony or fusion?
- A symbiotic relationship



## 2. UK and the 'New Right'

- 1980s 'New Right'
- State control or market forces?
- 1988 Education Reform Act
- Whitty, Quicke, Lauder
- National Curriculum: a nation at risk?

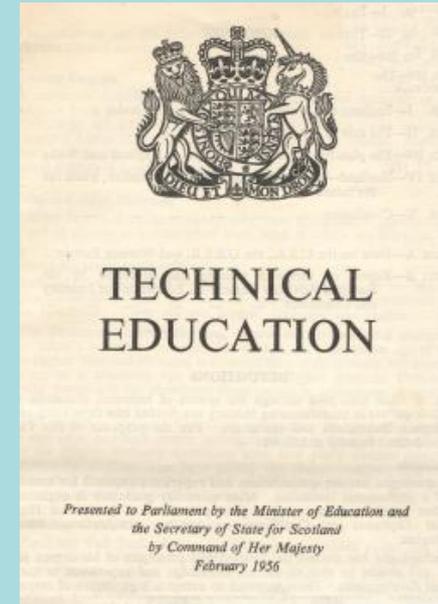


Education Reform Act 1988



### 3. Conservative education policy

- 19<sup>th</sup> century:  
Markets and morals
- 20<sup>th</sup> century:
  - 1944 Education Act
  - Meritocracy
  - R.A. BUTLER (diary, 1943):  
‘political interest is shifting from the soul of man to his economic position, which all seems very unhealthy’
  - DAVID ECCLES: middle-class mentality



# 4. Choice and diversity

- Meritocracy and competitive individualism
- The rhetoric of Government White Papers
- Accountability
- Excellence
- Standards



## 5. Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

- 1992 White Paper – guiding principles of ‘schools into a new century’
- 1997 White Paper – ‘investment in learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century’
- DCSF ‘Children’s Plan’ 2009 – ‘a whole 21<sup>st</sup> century school system’



## 6. Happiness and wellbeing

- International Day of Happiness
- Happiness Index
- Wellington College
- Anthony Seldon



## 7. Character and resilience

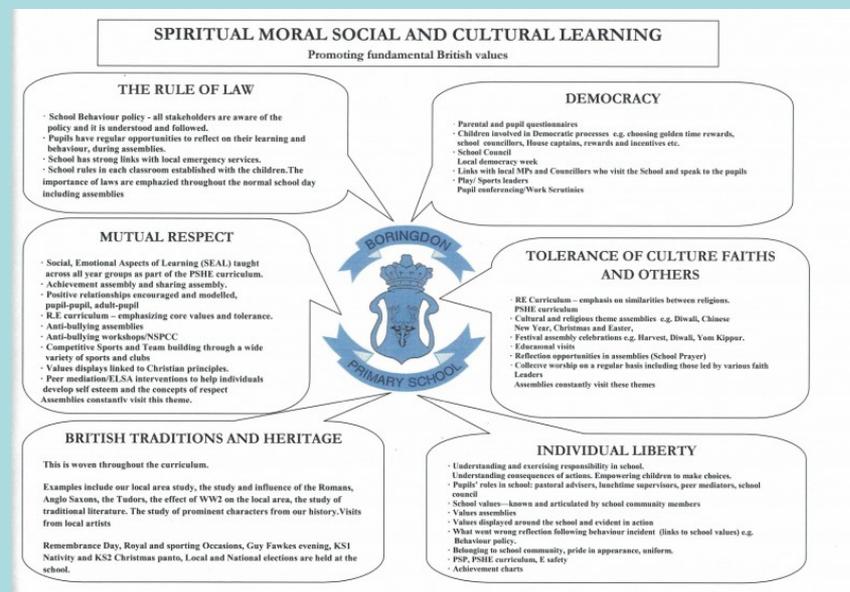
- Character education
- Character Innovation Fund
- The values of rugby
- Jubilee Centre





## 8. Security and the nation

- Battle of Waterloo
- First World War
- Security
- Britishness
- Promoting Fundamental British Values



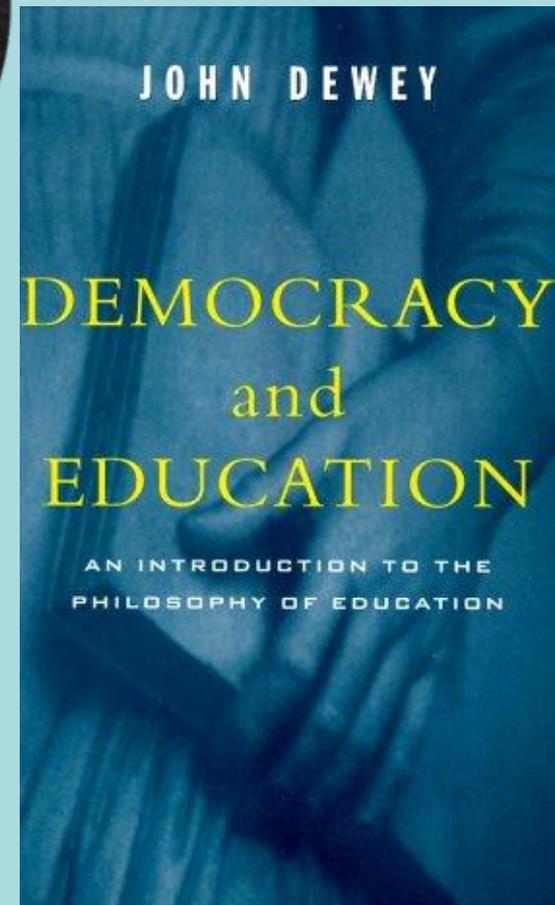
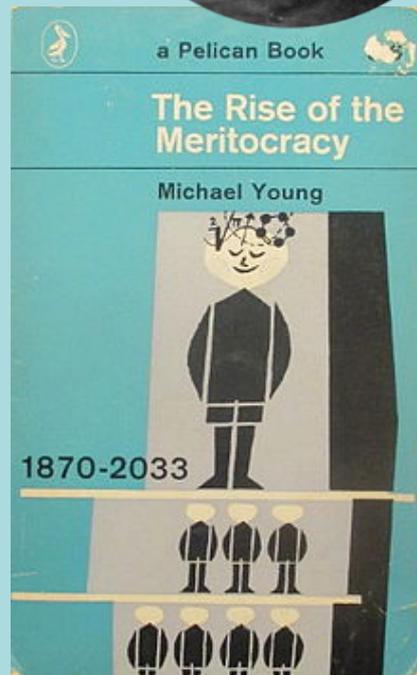
## 9. Grammar schools...

- 2016 Theresa May  
Conservative government
- Grammar schools:  
both neoliberal and  
neoconservative?
- ‘A true meritocracy’?
- ‘The spirit of citizenship...there  
is more to life than individualism  
and self-interest’



## 10. Alternatives?

- A historical back-catalogue?
- Education as a public good
- Tawney
- Citizenship
- Democracy
- Ethics
- Internationalism



## 11. Conclusions

- Value systems
- Cognitive rationality, self, individual
- Emotional commitment, community, nation

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