**Coding Scheme for Northern Ireland**

**Notes:**

1. **Common Codes:** ‘Reasons that don’t make sense’, ‘NA’, and ‘Interesting Responses’ have same codes for all questions – 90, 91, and 92. **This allows for consistent usage of these codes across questions.**
2. **Use 90 sparingly**, and only after seeing to it that there is no sensible interpretation.
3. **Responses that argued against the position they were supposed to be supporting**: There are a lot of responses that argued against the position they were supposed to be supporting. These should be coded the same, except each code should have a prefix – c. For example, code 4 will become c4. **Why?** It is likely that the people did not read the question carefully, which is worded slightly confusingly, but had meaningful things to say. These reasons will be carried over to the appropriate variable, and tallied there.

**Q. 18a**

Think first about the proposal of having a system of **all-ability schools, all providing the same wide curriculum**. Regardless of your own opinion, **what reasons would the** ***people who strongly support this*** give for their position? Provide up to five reasons in the spaces below. If you can’t think of any reasons, don’t worry about it, just move on to the next question.

**Additional Information:**

**Introduction**

In the future, pupils in Northern Ireland will be expected to receive a common statutory curriculum up to age 14 years, but from this age onwards they will have greater choice in the range of subjects they chose to take. For pupils aged 14 years and over, all schools will be expected to provide a choice of at least 24 curriculum subjects.

Few, if any, schools in Northern Ireland are currently able to deliver the full range of subjects required. Schools will be encouraged to develop collaborative arrangements with other schools in order to deliver the required courses, but it will be up to schools and managing authorities to negotiate those arrangements locally.

The Omagh area contains a number of primary and post-primary schools. There are a number of quite small rural schools. Some schools are attended mainly by Catholic pupils and some are attended mainly by Protestant pupils. In the town itself there are three schools which currently select their pupils in the basis of the 11+ transfer tests and so have a particular emphasis on academic subjects. The other schools are non-selective.

In the Omagh area the number of young people entering schools has fallen by about 10 per cent over a five year period and will likely continue to decline. This means that some rationalisation of schools is likely to occur in the coming years.

**Academic and Technical/Vocational schools**:

This system is the status quo in the Omagh area.

**Grammar Schools** are considered to be the most elite secondary schools in Northern Ireland. They tend to give a more focused academic emphasis to their curriculum and are attended by some of the most academically gifted students. Students generally apply for Grammar Schools with the +11 Transfer Tests at age 11.

**Technical/Vocational schools** are secondary schools that provide a curriculum that focuses on vocational or technical areas in addition to academics. They usually cater to students with a much wider range of abilities.

**All-ability schools**: Under this proposition, all schools would do away with +11 selection and seek to provide the same, wide curriculum for their pupils. The most likely way this could be achieved would be through the development of a very small number of large schools and it is not clear this could be fully achieved in a largely rural area. Because of the size of the schools, this arrangement would also likely mix Catholic and Protestant students.

**+11 Transfer Test:** Is an academic placement test for 11-12 year olds of British origin, which is still in use in the Omagh area schools. It plays a significant role in determining to which post-primary school Omagh pupils attend.

**Notes**

* Read Page 7-9 of the briefing materials

**Categories for question 18a (Support)**

1. Practical
   1. Funding
   2. Convenience
2. Quality ~ Increases Academic quality
   1. Students will be given a better education
   2. Students will learn from one another
   3. Academic resources will improve
3. Other Social Benefits
   1. Students will be better adjusted
   2. Less stigma for +11
4. Decreases prejudice, increases tolerance, etc.
5. Equality ~ Increases equality
   1. Students will be given the same opportunities and resources
   2. Lessen elitism
6. Reasons that do not make sense
7. N/A
8. Interesting Responses

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**Q.18b**

**And what reasons would the *people who strongly oppose this* give for their position?**

**Categories for question 18b (against)**

1. Practical
   1. Expense
   2. Convenience
   3. Content with Status Quo: Think that changes will be too difficult to implement
2. Academic Quality
   1. Preference for grammar schools
   2. Loss of attention for students, particularly for those in the top and bottom quartiles
3. Are prejudiced – Snobbish, ignorant, dislike the other religion
4. Prefer single sex schools
5. Tradition
6. Problems with mixing
   1. Fear prejudice
   2. Fear problems (fights, drugs, etc.)
   3. Children adversely affected
7. Self Interest
   1. Grammar schools don’t want to give up elite status
   2. Parents of students in Grammar schools don’t want to give up status
8. Reasons that do not make sense
9. N/A
10. Interesting Responses

**Q. 19a**

Now think about the issue of **whether children should attend schools only with other children of their own religion or should attend schools that have a balanced enrolment of Protestant and Catholic pupils.** Regardless of your own opinion, what reasons **would the *people who* *think that children should attend schools only with other children of their own religion* give for their position**? Provide up to five reasons in the spaces below. If you can’t think of any reasons, don’t worry about it, just move on to the next question.

**Additional Information:**

**Denominational Schools:**

As in the rest of Northern Ireland, most post-primary schools in Omagh comprise those attended mainly by Catholic pupils or those attended mainly by Protestant pupils: in fact, a little less than 10 per cent of these schools have a significant proportion of ‘minority’ pupils in their enrolments. The Churches often directly control schools through their school boards. Despite the traditional role of the Churches in education in Northern Ireland, however, parents have the right to apply to send their children to any school.

**Integrated schools**: This option would involve the establishment of formal Integrated schools in which all the partners, including the Churches and the other education providers, would have a right to play a role. All post-primary schools would become integrated schools. These schools would mix Protestant and Catholic students, remove the traditional role of the Churches in education, and, arguably, restrict choice for parents and pupils.

**Categories for Question 19a (Against schools with mixed religious student bodies)**

1. Academic Quality (6)
2. Affect Based Reasons or Prejudice (3)
   1. Fear
   2. Ignorance
   3. Bigotry
3. Student Unity (2)
   1. Less bullying
   2. Group identity
   3. Sense of community
4. Tradition (4)
5. Religious and Moral Focus in School (1)
   1. Favor their own religion
   2. Worry that mixing students will weaken student’s cultural and moral moorings
6. Political (5)
   1. Fear of repercussions
   2. Loss of standing in community
7. Reasons that do not make sense
8. N/A
9. Interesting responses

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**Q. 19b**

And what reasons would ***people who think that children should attend schools that have a balanced enrolment of Protestant and Catholic pupils*** give for their position?

**Categories for Question 19 (Support schools with mixed religious student bodies)**

1. Practical (4)
   1. More funding
   2. Saves money
   3. Better for children of mixed marriages
2. Academic Quality (5)
3. Promotes Understanding in Children and Parents (1)
   1. Increased tolerance
   2. Increased integration
   3. Better social development/ mirrors real world
4. Societal Benefits (4)
   1. Less conflict
   2. Greater understanding
   3. Way to break violence cycles
   4. Forward looking
5. Equality (2)

89. Too vague

1. Reasons that do not make sense
2. N/A
3. Interesting responses

**Q.20a**

Now think about the issue of **whether, if schools with different religious compositions enter partnerships, the children from both schools should at least sometimes be taught in the same classroom**. Regardless of your own opinion, what reasons would the ***people who strongly agree*** *with this* give for their position? Provide up to five reasons in the spaces below.

**Additional Information:**

Under government plans it is intended that schools will collaborate with one another to a greater extent in the future largely as a consequence of delivering the educational reforms and for economic reasons.

**Shared courses**: Two or more schools could agree to operate common courses which would be undertaken by pupils across all of the collaborating schools. By pooling resources schools could more readily deliver the educational reforms. These collaborations could mix protestant and catholic students together in the classroom. Logistically, however, it could be difficult to accomplish.

**Categories for question 20 (Support school partnerships)**

1. Makes Economic Sense (5)
2. Academic Quality (2)
3. Promotes Understanding (1)
   1. Increased tolerance
   2. Increased integration
   3. Better social development/ mirrors real world
4. Societal Benefits (4)
   1. Less conflict
   2. Better understanding
5. Equality (6)
6. Schools need not teach religion (7)
7. Small Step Towards Integrated Schools (3)

89. Too Vague

1. Reasons that do not make sense
2. N/A
3. Interesting Responses

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**Q.20b**

And what reasons would the **people *who strongly disagree with this* give for their position**? Provide up to five reasons in the spaces below.

**Categories for question 20b (Against school partnerships)**

1. Only a half-measure to Integrated Schools (6)
   1. Could increase tension / segregation
2. Disrupt School efficiency (7)
3. Prejudice (5)
   1. Bigotry
   2. Fear
   3. Ignorance
4. Student Unity (2)
   1. Less bullying
   2. Fear indoctrination
   3. Genders mixing
   4. Sense of community
5. Tradition (3)
6. Religious and Moral Focus in School (1)
   1. Favor their own religion
   2. Worry that mixing students will weaken student’s cultural and moral moorings
   3. Child may lose a sense of Identity
7. Political (4)
8. Reasons that don’t make sense
9. N/A
10. Reasons that do not make sense
11. N/A
12. Interesting responses

**Q.21a**

Now think about the proposal for **schools combining primary and post-primary pupils (for example, ages 7-14).** Regardless of your own opinion, **what reasons would the *people who strongly support schools combining primary and post-primary pupils* give** for their position? Provide up to five reasons in the spaces below.

**Additional Information:**

Most post-primary schools in Northern Ireland either take pupils aged

11-18 years, or pupils aged 11-16 years.

**Traditional pattern**: This arrangement reduces the number of times pupils have to change schools. It also relies on the +11 Transfer Test.

**Primary and Post-primary Combination:** This option delays +11 selection so students have longer to mature. It may also require students to switch schools more frequently.

**Categories for question 21 (Support combining primary and post-primary students)**

1. Practical (4)
   1. Easier transportation
   2. Easier for parents
   3. Keep rural schools open
2. Lets children mature before choosing specialization (1)
   1. Children too young at 11 – less stress/pressure
   2. Improve performance
   3. Prevents children from changing schools so young
3. Social Development (2)
   1. Siblings and friends stay together longer
4. Ease Sectarian Tensions (5)
5. Earns school more money (maybe in 1?) (3)
   1. More Cost-Effective

89. Too Vague

1. Reasons that do not make sense
2. N/A
3. Interesting responses

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**Q.21b**

And what reasons would the ***people who strongly oppose schools combining primary and post-primary pupils* give** for their position? Provide up to five reasons in the spaces below.

**Categories for question 21b (Against combining primary and post-primary students)**

1. Practicality (2)
   1. Don’t think that the schools or teachers are equipped to handle the change
   2. Need new teachers
   3. School closings?
   4. Operational Inefficiency
2. Academic Quality (4)
   1. Would increase class size
3. Affect Based (6)
4. Age Difference too great (1)
   1. Bullying
   2. Younger students may feel uncomfortable around 14 year olds
   3. Older children not stimulated by the company of the younger ones
   4. Older Students Ready to Move on
5. Satisfied with status quo (3)
   1. Tradition
6. Too Many School Changes (5)
   1. Some Children too Young to Change Schools
7. Reasons that do not make sense
8. N/A
9. Interesting responses