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Editorial Comment

This is International Literacy Year and N.A.L.A. is to be congratulated on organising a well run and effective campaign to focus attention on the problems of adults with literacy difficulties. It must be recorded too that progress has been made over the past number of years. The funds made available through the Adult Literacy and Community Education Fund have been particularly important and have made it possible to place Adult Literacy schemes and groups on a sounder footing. This year the Fund has been supplemented by an additional one million pounds. This, we are told, is a special gesture on the part of the government to mark International Literacy Year. But the Adult Literacy movement needs this funding if it is to develop and so we ask the government to make this, as a minimum, an annual subvention so that we may tackle in a serious and planned fashion the blight on peoples' lives that reading and writing difficulties can cause.

At the other end of the scale, there are problems for adults too — not so pressing of course and indeed easier to resolve. Over the past ten years, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of adults returning to study and opting for Leaving Cert. courses and Diploma courses provided by institutions like Maynooth College. Many of these adults students would now like to continue their studies at the third level by taking courses leading to a recognised degree or at least offering credits. A university, as I understand it, is an institution which attempts to facilitate in every way those who are willing and eager to study. Does this definition fit the institutions that we call universities? If it does, then why is access so difficult for adults and why does it seem that the colleges are more interested in creating obstacles than they are in solving the problems? What we have at present are not so much institutions encouraging the pursuit of learning as third level sausage factories producing "qualified" people — and the quotation marks are intentional! Come out of your hiding places, you purveyors of dull sanitised education, and look at what is happening in adult education centres now around this country. Forget your constipated tradition and see the joy of learning being experienced, and the commitment and determination shown by these adult learners. Then compare that with your stuffy, elitist, and jejune university programmes. Look and see and make it possible that adults who wish to continue their studies may be facilitated and granted access in a fair and reasonable manner. Believe me, if this is done, the institutions will be the beneficiaries.

In this edition, we have tried to present in as clear a fashion as possible all the information that is available on third level courses for adults — accredited courses that is. We are grateful to the consultants from

the various agencies who have responded to our request and so readily supplied the necessary information.

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**Members of the Editorial Board of the Adult Learner
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*From Left: Kathleen Forde, Tony Downes, Liam Bane, Dr. Hillery.
(Missing: Michael Riordan).*

ACCUMULATION OF CREDITS and CERTIFICATION OF SUBJECTS — THE NCEA “ACCS” SCHEME

DENIS McGRATH

INTRODUCTION

Following the publication of the Murphy report on Adult Education in Ireland (1) the National Council for Education Awards (NCEA) established a working group on recurrent education (2) and adopted the concept of life-long learning as a new and innovative approach to education provision. Life-long learning would make education, as far as possible, available to all individuals, wherever and whenever they needed it.

Throughout the 1970s the non-university sector of higher education developed rapidly with the establishment of a wide range of full-time, part-time and adult education courses. Large numbers of adults also participated in a comprehensive range of night-classes provided in vocational schools. With this rapid growth in provision came a further demand for certification of adult and continuing education courses in the “Lifelong Learning” report (3) published by the Government in 1983. In response to this, the NCEA committed itself to certification of individual subjects on any courses it had recognised and in 1984 published a report (4) which outlined a system of subject certification and credit accumulation for adult students.

In October 1988, the ERASMUS Bureau of the European Community published the European Community Course Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) (5) with the objective of facilitating student mobility around Europe within a credit transfer scheme which would allow educational institutions to give credit to students for courses of study carried out in other EC countries. This scheme included the concept of measuring learning in terms of total student effort and suggested that the student effort involved in one academic year of full-time study should constitute 60 credits.

In response to these developments the Minister for Education launched, on behalf of the NCEA, its ACCS scheme (Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects) (6) (7) in November 1989. It was decided to confine the initial stages of the scheme to courses leading to National Certificate, National Diploma and Bachelor degree awards, though consideration would be given in certain circumstances to subjects not on any recognised course.

THE NCEA ACCS SCHEME

(a) Subject Certification

Each time the NCEA recognises a course it issues an Approved Course Schedule which specifies the subjects on each stage of the course and the relative weighting of each subject. Subject Certification means that a student may present for any one or more of these subjects and if successful in examinations can be awarded a Subject-certificate.

Recognising that many of those participating in this scheme will have been away from formal learning settings for some years, the NCEA is encouraging participating institutions to devise learning and student assessment processes which take account of the needs of such students. While the syllabus to be followed must be as recognised, institutions are free to use a variety of learning processes such as: part-time day or evening classes, week-end workshops, summer schools, open learning systems etc. Equally, subject only to extern examining in accordance with NCEA regulations, students should be assessed using assessment methods suited to their needs. These might include a wider use of continuous assessment than is normally used with full-time students, oral and aural assessment methods, project assessment etc. Participating students will be required to meet the normal entry requirements for the 'parent' course. It is expected, however, that many students will qualify for admission on the grounds of mature years.

In order to facilitate credit accumulation, the method of quantifying the learning experience outlined in the ECTS scheme has been adopted. This states that the total student effort (participation in lectures/classes/tutorials/laboratory, private study, seminars, using open learning facilities etc.) expended in one academic year of full-time study constitutes 60 credits. Accordingly, the NCEA ACCS Scheme has established a nominal unit of effort called the 'NCEA Credit' which represents 20 hours of student effort.

Often, however, as student effort varies in terms of academic level between stages or years of a course and in terms of the award being pursued, different qualities of NCEA credit in terms of level and type were established (Table 1).

Table 1 Quality of NCEA Credits

| Award Stage | NCEA Credit Level and Type | |
|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| | National Certificate/Diploma | Bachelor Degree |
| 1 | 1N | 1P |
| 2 | 2N | 2P |
| 3 | 3N | 3P |
| 4 | — | 4P |

Because of the similarity between them, NCEA credits gained while studying for a National Certificate or Diploma are described as 'N' type credits while NCEA credits gained while studying for a Bachelor degree are described as 'P' type credits (The letters 'N' and 'P' were chosen at random). The numbers 1 to 4 are used to describe NCEA credits gained in the years or stages of the full-time mode of the course being followed.

An alphabetic grading system of student assessment is being adopted. This consists of five grades from A (highest) to F (lowest). Students scoring between A and D will be awarded a Subject Certificate.

(b) Credit Accumulation

Underlying any system of credit accumulation is an acceptance that progress towards an educational award may take place on the basis of accumulating courses rather than completing a total course of study. Major advantages then accrue to students and to educational institutions as follows:

- (i) Greater flexibility in choice of material to be learned,
- (ii) Easier student mobility between courses and institutions,
- (iii) Introduction of elective subjects into courses is rendered easier,
- (iv) Student paced rather than institution-directed learning can take place,
- (v) More efficient management and administration.

In devising a suitable system of credit accumulation, the NCEA had to ensure that participating educational institutions would find in it a framework which would allow them to function in accordance with their missions. It therefore had to incorporate flexibility within the limitations which had to be present if the system was to work effectively. Ultimately, elements of the modular-credit scheme used in the United States and of the ECTS scheme were combined with elements of the Irish higher education structure to result in the NCEA ACCS Scheme.

In accordance with the 'NCEA Credit' definition above, NCEA awards were given specifications as described in Table 2.

Table 2 NCEA Credit requirements for different awards

| Award | National Certificate | | National Diploma | | Bachelor Degree | |
|-------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| | NCEA Credit Level and type | No. of NCEA Credits Required | NCEA Credit Level and type | No. of NCEA Credits Required | NCEA Credit Level and type | No. of NCEA Credits Required |
| | 1N | 60 | 1N | 60 | 1P | 60 |
| | 2N | 60 | 2N | 60 | 2P | 60 |
| | - | - | 3N | 60 | 3P | 60 |
| | - | - | - | - | 4P | 60 |

(c) Possible Routes to Awards

The NCEA ACCS scheme will apply in all 33 institutions designated under the NCEA Act. Participating students will have freedom to select subjects and awards to pursue within general guidelines in the institution or institutions of their choice. Counselling from staff will be an ongoing feature in educational institutions as to the options which exist for students in accumulating NCEA credits towards a National Certificate, National Diploma or Bachelor Degree.

(d) Credit Transfer

The principles underlying student transfer from one award level to higher levels which exist for full-time students will also apply to students who have accumulated credits towards NCEA awards.

A student may have previously successfully studied a subject(s) or a course leading to an award of another awarding body or educational institution — particularly in other EC countries — such as a University, Department of Education, City and Guilds of London Institute, a professional body etc. If such certified study implies that the student has successfully met some or all of the learning outcomes of a subject on an NCEA-approved course, the student may be exempted from an appropriate number of NCEA Credits after evaluation by the institution in accordance with general criteria to be laid down by the NCEA.

(e) The Process of Credit Accumulation

When a student has accumulated NCEA Credits for all the early stages of a course and perhaps has a Subject-certificate(s) for a few of the subjects at award level *f* he/she may complete the remaining requirements for the appropriate award in the following way:

- (i) The student shall establish with the institution in which he/she is then registered, the outstanding subjects he/she is required to succeed in for the award in question (as in Table 3 above) and participate in the learning and assessment processes for these subjects as offered in that institution.
- (ii) Alphabetic grades are allocated to each subject in the normal way (as per Subject Certification scheme) based on the Student's performance in the appropriate assessments and examinations.
- (iii) Previously gained NCEA Credits and grades at this award level, as listed on the appropriate Subject-certificates should be combined with the current NCEA credits and grades to give a complete set of credits and grades for the student.

CONCLUSION

The NCEA has approved over 400 courses in 32 designated institutions throughout the country and most of these courses would include five to eight subjects per Year or Stage — a total exceeding 5000 subjects. The NCEA ACCS scheme will allow students to follow these subjects, to be awarded Subject-certificates on their successful completion and to accumulate NCEA Credits gained towards a final award. It is hoped that this will allow designated institutions to further develop their adult and continuing education programmes and to greatly widen the range of part-time courses available.

f NCEA Credits for subjects on Stage 2 of a National Certificate, Stage 3 of a National Diploma and the final stage of a Degree.

Denis McGrath is Assistant Registrar, National Council for Educational Awards, Dublin.

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ALL HALLOWS

A New Third Level Centre of Adult Education

FR. BOB NOONAN

All Hallows is a Third Level Education Institute. It is an approved institute of the National Council for Educational Awards and as an Educational Institute, it is an independent, self-financing College.

On the fourth of May 1988, it received approval from the N.C.E.A. for a Bachelor of Arts Degree. This degree is divided into core subjects and electives and extends over four years. The core subjects, at present, divide into Theology (major) and Philosophy (minor). It is hoped to have two other Minor subjects in the very near future. These will be Psychology (minor) and Spirituality (minor).

A primary aim of this course is to enable students to acquire a sufficient degree of intellectual competence as to be able to assume leadership roles, primarily in the Christian community, but also in society in general. It is also hoped that this degree will provide a very adequate preparation for women and men who desire to work in Pastoral Care Departments e.g. in schools, universities, and the social services, as well as those who hope to obtain posts in radio, television and journalism. In short All Hallows offers this degree to all those who are interested in Ministry/Leadership.

Objectives

All Hallows had defined the objectives of its degree in the following way:—

To provide a coherent and rigorous introduction to the study of Philosophy, its historical development and its distinctiveness as an intellectual discipline in relation to other sciences.

To provide the basic materials and methodologies to ground students in the study of Theology.

To lead students to a sufficient understanding of the Christian tradition and its historical development and to enable them to relate it to the religious needs of people today.

To develop an understanding of the nature of human religious experience, which is sympathetic to both believer and non-believer.

To enable students to handle primary sources in both Philosophy and Theology and to make balanced, critical judgements of their significance and relevance.

To inculcate an openness towards the Arts (Music, Literature, Aesthetics...) and the Sciences (Psychology, Sociology...) through the system of electives on offer.

To encourage students to engage in personal research in Philosophy and/or Theology and to provide them with opportunities to do so at certain points in this degree course.

To provide students with a theoretical basis to the pastoral skills, they are introduced to such fields as Communications, Preaching, Liturgical Animation, Community Building, Spiritual Direction, Counselling.

To help students acquire a vision of how to integrate the various disciplines of Philosophy and Theology in an effective programme of pastoral development in the parish and other contexts.

Entry Requirements

This degree then is open to women and men who think they might like to aim at the Ministry/Leadership role in society. The minimum entry requirements laid down by the N.C.E.A. are as follows:-

Bachelor's Degree

Grade C in two Higher (or Common) Level papers, together with Grade D in four other subjects of the Leaving Certificate Examination, to include Mathematics and a Language.

or

Matriculation from a University in the State.

or

a level of qualification which the Council deems equivalent to the foregoing.

The Council will also give consideration to applications on behalf of candidates holding any of the following qualifications:

- a) National Certificate
- b) National Diploma
- c) Senior Trades Certificate with appropriate endorsements and/or examination attainments
- d) Age/experience/attainment thresholds deemed equivalent by Council on the recommendation of the designated institution

- e) An approved GCE — six subjects, two subjects at Advanced Level
- f) The appropriate second level terminal qualifications and equivalences applicable in the member States of the European Community
- g) Such other appropriate qualifications and experience as the Council may approve from time to time.

Mature Students

Candidates who do not meet the above entry requirements may be admitted to courses on the grounds of mature years if they have attained the appropriate age, experience, and attainment thresholds deemed equivalent by Council on the recommendation of the designated Institution. Candidates for the degree course must be 23 years of age or over.

All Hallows is a College where, for many years now, thousands of women and men have followed various courses to prepare themselves for Ministry/Leadership in the community. So this opening of the degree programme to mature students is a natural development for the College. We are especially aware of our responsibilities to the north side of the city and of the great possibility in the area as well. The College was made aware of these possibilities by the work done by the Research, Planning and Development Sub-Committee of AONTAS, in their report "Live & Learn". In this report we especially noted that many adults, especially women, not only deserved to be educated, but who wished to be educated because they were "interested in power...in order to be heard by the holders of power in society and community in which they live, and that includes the politician, doctor, priest, teacher etc." These are precisely the people All Hallows is targetting for the degree course. These are the people All Hallows could respond to and train for Ministry/Leadership.

For these adults then, All Hallows is in the happy position to be able to offer them a degree course not only as full-time students — which may not suit many of them — but on a part-time basis. This is due to the fact that the N.C.E.A. introduced the "Access Scheme" in April 1989 and offered it to all its affiliated Colleges. This scheme allows the part-time students to take individual subjects or groups of subjects leading to an N.C.E.A. award. It permits All Hallows to really develop adult and continuing education programmes.

This then is the new degree programme in All Hallows. However, I feel that any account of it would benefit from the experience of those who are actually taking part in the programme. So I asked one of our students, Ann Grange — who is a full-time student, to present something of themselves and of their experience in All Hallows.

Fr. Bob Noonan is Dean of Studies at All Hallows College, Dublin.

THE ALL HALLOWS COURSE — A Student's View

ANN GRANGE

Introduction

Going to College for me is part of a dream come true. A dream I have had for a very long time. I do not look on it as a second chance or a last chance, it is simply the right chance at the right time. When I left school just before my fourteenth birthday, I had the necessary skills, reading and writing, I was good at Irish and Maths. I loved school. I used to dodge cookery on Saturday in order to work in the library. The library was my favourite room in the school. I felt as if I was surrounded by greatness and intelligence. At the end of my first year in secondary school I had two big fears "the Inter Cert" and "typing" (typing was compulsory). Listening to the older students did not help. I was terrified of exams and failure.

I did not tell anyone about this. I was already working part-time in my sister's hairdressing salon. I had a flair for the work and it was not too difficult to persuade my parents to let me leave school. My career was successful and productive. But the desire for learning was still there. If a bottle of colour No. 18 turned white hair blond, I had to know exactly how and why, and so I attended classes and courses on all aspects of hair and health care. During this time I met Pat and we got married. We have 6 children. Their ages are from 6 to 16 years. Married life went on as it does with 6 children. Nappies, Bottles, baby talk, measles, mumps and whooping cough etc. At this stage my vocabulary was reduced to, 'don't do this', 'put that down', 'no you can't', 'no you musn't', and all that is not so easy to leave behind.

Going to College

However, in 1982 when Colaiste Dhulaigh began their adult education programme I was in the first year, I took English, Irish, and Maths, just the basic class in each. From there I became interested in the extra-mural classes from Maynooth College. And I studied basic counselling.

Going to College for me in a word is "challenging" and I like all challenges. It is full of excitement, awe, paralysing fear, doubt, adventure and it is great. It is not easy, it is hard work. It is also very rewarding. It is time consuming and demanding. It is not like taking on a course or a class because you are free one or two mornings a week, it requires a serious level of commitment and involvement.

For me the main difficulty is trying to pace my study time. The amount of effort I put into reading or essay work is up to me, deciding what I really have to read as opposed to what I want to read. It is so easy to get caught up in reading very interesting and informative articles, and at the same time neglect the material I need to read. People often say "how do you find the time to study?" I reply "I don't" and it is true I don't find time. I have to make time. Some subjects are extremely interesting. Others are a hard slog but in general there is a good balance.

As a College All Hallows is a very special place. There is a terrific atmosphere. The staff and student body vary in age and experience. There is a mixture of laity and religious in both. In my class the students ages range from early twenties to mid sixties. There are six seminarians and two young girls who have just finished their first few years of religious formation. We have one sister who has been teaching in a primary school in England for twenty years and has decided to take a degree in Theology. We have five married women in the class; Frances is a grandmother and she travels in everyday from Tallaght. Mary travels in from Killiney. She is separated from her husband and is rearing three children on her own. Our two lay men are Pat and Kevin. Pat has retired from business and Kevin is a widower, with five children, and so as you can gather there is a great richness of life in our class.

The welcome we received was terrific. The Dean of All Hallows, Fr. Bob has one aim in mind. He wants everyone to have realistic goals and to achieve those goals.

The year began with an orientation programme, which included a welcome from Father Kevin Rafferty and Father Bob Noonan. Our subjects were explained to us. Our timetable was organised. We were introduced to the Librarian, Jean Harrison. We had a couple of lectures on "how to study" which included how to get the most from our reading, how to write an essay. We were given some valuable pieces of advice, the first was to enjoy College life, the second was not to be afraid to say "I don't understand", and finally, if anyone had a real difficulty, "go talk to Fr. Bob". His office is at the back of reception and generally knowns as "the panic room". I do not know how many have panicked but if the walls could talk!!! I am struggling to find something really encouraging to finish up with, but all I can say is, if you are interested in the subjects on offer, if you are looking for a challenge, if you have the desire to learn and can organise the money, then "GO FOR IT". When you arrive in September, I will be there and I am already looking forward to meeting you. A degree to some is only a

piece of paper, but like our faith “it may not be a lot to have, but there are times it is a lot to be without”.

Ann Grange is married with six children and lives on the north side of Dublin. She is a full-time student on the Theology Degree course at Hallows College.

'OPEN' OPPORTUNITIES IN IRELAND

Is the door opening for study with the Open University?

DIANA PURCELL

A new agreement has recently been confirmed between the Open University and the National Distance Education Council of Ireland which from 1991 should provide the beginning of increased access to Open University courses for Irish students.

In an interesting example of academic cross-border co-operation, Irish students will enrol on O.U. courses through the local Distance Education Centre in Dublin, they will receive their course units and media programmes from Milton Keynes in England, and their tuition and counselling will be supervised by the O.U. regional staff in Belfast.

The Open University

The Open University was originally set up in the U.K. to provide an opportunity for adults to study for a degree at home in their own time. The major study components of every course are the course units -something akin to lecture notes - which are mailed to each student, and the regular writing of assignments to be posted to the tutor for grading and comment. This *learning at a distance* is at the heart of the Open University method; but the student also has local tutorial and counselling support, radio and television programmes, and some courses have a residential weekend or week-long summer school.

The system is open: there is openness of access - no entry requirements, no age limit (although students must be over 18) - an open choice of courses to build your own degree, and an open rate of progress to allow for the complexities of adult life.

Many people study with the Open University to improve their qualifications and job prospects, while others study for personal interest and pleasure. Not all are following degree level courses: in recent years the Open University has developed a wide range of short courses and study packs relevant to training and education in the community.

Since 1985 Irish students have been able to register through the Belfast O.U. office on a great number of the courses provided, and in 1990 there are 296 students who are registered from the Republic of

Ireland. This represents 12.68% of the O.U. student body attached to the Regional Centre in Belfast and confirms the steady increase in interest from Irish students. (There is also a 'black economy' of students from the Republic of Ireland who, in order to circumvent the regulations restricting enrolment on some courses to residents of the U.K., are registered from addresses of convenience in Northern Ireland. Their numbers are therefore difficult to assess, but are thought to be considerable, especially in the border counties.)

Who are these students and what are they studying? 130 are undergraduates working towards a degree, 119 are associate students taking 'one-off' courses from the undergraduate programme, 9 are following taught Masters degrees and 38 are enrolled on the Open Business School Diploma. Of those studying undergraduate level courses, the greatest number, approximately two-thirds, are in the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, one-sixth are studying Mathematics and Computing and the numbers are slightly fewer for Education, Science and Technology.

Regulations for Students in the Republic

It might help to clarify the situation if we look first at the **regulations governing O.U. study in the Republic of Ireland** and then at the different groups of students who enjoy this provision.

By charter, only residents of the U.K. can register with the O.U. to study as an undergraduate for a degree, and the undergraduate fee level is subsidised by the British Government. Thus a resident of the Republic of Ireland is not eligible to register as an Undergraduate.

However, since 1985, Irish residents have been able to register as Associate students on any of the courses offered in the Associate programme. As most of the undergraduate second and third level courses are also in this programme, it follows that a student could pass 5 out of the 6 credits needed for a B.A. degree by studying as an Associate. The vital 6th credit - (which ideally should be the first to be studied!) - is the obligatory Foundation Course which can be selected from one of the five Faculties. Foundation Courses are not currently offered on the Associate programme, although this regulation may change at a later date.

The recent agreement reached with the National Distance Education Council of Ireland is important because it will allow for the provision of Undergraduate Foundation Courses in Maths and Technology in 1991. Initially this will be in selected areas and for a limited number of students. (Dublin, Limerick and Cork will be the first study centres.) It is hoped that this provision will increase to include Foundation Courses in Arts, Social Sciences and Science to allow students a

broader academic choice, and other study centres will be established to cover a wider area.

Certain courses in Science and Technology require the use of home experiment kits which cannot be exported from the U.K. and, as a result, Irish students currently cannot register on these courses.

In addition to the Undergraduate provision, the Open University also offers a wide range of short courses and study packs at varying levels on its Associate programme, and these are open to Irish students. They can also register on the taught M.A., MSc., the Diploma of the Open Business School and the M.B.A.

Having said that the current O.U. regulations do not permit students resident in the Republic to complete the full requirement for a degree, nevertheless there are some students who are doing just that! They are:-

1. **students who commenced study when resident in the U.K. and are now living in Ireland:** despite their change of residence, they can continue to register as undergraduates and complete their degrees. Currently there are 75 such students.
2. **students who are studying with one of the Department of Justice schemes:**
 - a) the prisoners' scheme which commenced in 1985 as a special project to enable prisoners to study for a degree. Since then 99 prisoners have studied a total of 290 courses ranging over all Faculties, and 6 have graduated as B.A.s. Some, on release, have continued their studies with the O.U.
 - b) the prison officers' scheme which commenced in 1988 to offer staff the opportunity to gain higher qualifications and further education. Currently there are 20 students enrolled who are working towards a degree, and some will go on to qualify for the new O.U. Diploma in Criminology.
3. **students who are using addresses of convenience in Northern Ireland to enable them to enrol as undergraduates.**

Other Courses

With the Open Business School Irish students are able to study for the O.U. Diploma in Management as:—

1. students registered directly with the O.U. in Belfast, with the Northern Ireland tutorial programme and residential schools
2. students registered with the Plassey Management & Technology Centre at the University of Limerick which, since

1984, has been offering O.U. Open Business School courses with local tuition and residential schools.

3. There are future plans for the provision of Open Business School courses to be also made available through the National Distance Education Council in Dublin.

Irish students are able to enrol on courses for the M.B.A. directly with the O.U. in Belfast.

The Open University also offers **taught Masters degrees** in Education, Literature, Advanced Research Methods and Mathematics, and there are study programmes for **Advanced Diplomas** in Education. Irish students can enrol directly on these study programmes with the Open University in Belfast.

In Co. Cork, the Carrigaline Community School is offering an Open University course on Educational Management to a group of teachers and educational administrators. This will lead to the award of an Advanced Diploma with the Open University.

In addition the O.U. offers Irish students a **wide range of Associate courses**, which vary considerably in academic level and study commitment. Some are full length undergraduate level and could be counted towards a degree, others are short courses of more practical content. There is also a range of study packs on topics of personal and community interest for individual or group study. The pack *'Drug Use and Misuse'* has been used by groups on a course organised by Carrigaline Community School, and other groups use O.U. study materials in a variety of informal ways.

Information on all these courses is published in the Prospectus 'Open Opportunities' which is available from the O.U. in Northern Ireland, 40 University Road, Belfast BT7 1SU. Tel.: 084 245025.

Recently an agreement has been reached between the National Distance Education Centre in Dublin and the Open University whereby 3 courses on Technological Updating will be distributed by the Centre on licence from the Open University.

Increased Demand

Without doubt there is considerable interest in Open University courses in Ireland. Most people see the programmes on television and occasionally hear part of a course on the radio; many have colleagues or relatives in the U.K. who are OU students.

The Belfast office deals with a steady stream of enquirers and finds it frustrating to have to turn away students because of the regulations

restricting their entry to only certain programmes of study. In particular it is the degree which people are seeking; and there are many who feel that the Open University, with its open entry and distance learning techniques, combined with the high quality of its teaching materials would offer them the best, or indeed the only means to reach that goal.

The new agreement with the N.D.E.C. should mean that more Irish students can join the Open University, although the initial limitation set by the Council of only 2 undergraduate Faculties, Maths and Technology, does seem very restrictive, especially as there are already provided for to some extent by the existing N.D.E.C. courses. Experience has shown the O.U. that the greatest demand from adult students is for courses in Social Sciences and the Arts. So intending undergraduate students in these areas in Ireland will be disappointed, and will presumably continue to enrol on second and third level O.U. courses as Associate students directly with Belfast, waiting for the day when they can convert their credits to a degree!

Another difficulty is the higher level of fees which students in Ireland will have to pay. While many could say that Stg£465 for a full credit course (one-sixth of the degree) compares favourably with fee levels for other Irish University courses, it is considerably more than a student in the U.K. would be charged — but U.K. students enjoy a Government subsidy to keep fee levels down.

Also, whereas U.K. students who are unemployed or on low incomes can apply to the Open University for a Financial Assistance grant, this relief is not available to students resident in Ireland. Thus many will find study with the O.U. beyond their reach.

It is a fragmented beginning, and restrictions imposed by O.U. regulations along with limitations set by the N.D.E.C. make a truly open opportunity to study for an O.U. degree throughout Ireland, North and South, seem a long way off. However, 1992 is nearly with us with its promise of equal access for all Europeans: no-one seems sure yet what this will mean for higher education, but we must hope that as customs barriers fall they will take with them the barbed wire entanglements of educational protectionism and provide a wider choice at degree level for the adult student.

Diana Purcell is Senior Counsellor with The Open University, Northern Ireland.

I HOPE I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN

AD HOCK

Ad Hock worked for some years in the diplomatic service before becoming a voluntary worker with T.A.C.T., an adult education committee. His training in diplomacy included intensive courses in decoding official language, or POLITIKSPEAK as it was then called. He was reluctant at first to divulge his secrets, but having been persuaded that this is a matter of importance for adult education practitioners and having been offered a large sum of money, Ad Hock agreed to publish the following guidelines. Anyone wishing to acquire further information can do so by attending a summer school entitled Depoliticising Politics to be held at the Ad Hock Adult Education Centre, Second Prefab on the Left, Inner City, Dublin 3.

You're doing a grand job.

— I suppose someone has to do it.

You're doing really fantastic work.

— So is Walt Disney.

You deserve your success.

— If you want to stay at this, then that's your problem.

Your enthusiasm is infectious.

— You're obviously quite mad.

What you're offering is really a social service.

— Don't expect any money from the Department of Education.

The job satisfaction must be enormous.

— You couldn't be doing this for money.

It's amazing what's going on here.

— I've often wondered what you do all day.

I didn't realise you had such a big operation.

— I hope they found the part that's causing the trouble.

It's refreshing to see people who are prepared to give of their time.

— There are too many people being paid.

There's a wonderful mix of the voluntary and the statutory.

— It's great to see people working for nothing.

- Is the creche really essential?
- Is there any danger you'll be looking for state aid?

- How is the caretaker paid?
- Is there an opportunity of a cutback here?

- Of course, we know all about you.
- Watch it, we know what you're at.

- Indeed, your article was most interesting.
- We saw the nasty things you wrote about us.

- This is a fine example of the co-operative spirit.
- Are these people given to drink?

- Are all your people here today?
- I hope I haven't missed any potential votes.

- Isn't this a fine building?
- Why are you complaining about the cold and damp?

- Adult Education is really important today.
- Hopefully it'll go away tomorrow.

- Adult Education will come into its own.
- Wait around for another fifty years or so.

- Perhaps next year we'll be in a position to improve matters...
- Or next year or next year or next year...

- Remember, from the tiny acorn the mighty oak doth grow.
- Well, would you believe a whin bush.

- You have to walk before you can run.
- You have to crawl to get anything.

- We'll be in touch.
- You'll never see us again.

OPEN LEARNING

by DÓNAL O'SCÓLAI

Definition of Open Learning

It is only relatively recently that the term "Open Learning" has come into general usage in the U.K. but it is by no means a completely new idea. The phrase was used as long ago as 1924 in Pitman's Journal:

"one of the most interesting developments of recent years in the educational world has been the growth of tuition by distance learning... Tutorial comment and criticism are valuable factors of open learning."

Many learners have been studying at a distance in the U.K. and elsewhere since the establishment of the first correspondence teaching programme by Isaac Pitman in 1840.

Open Learning arrangements enable people to learn at the time, place and pace which satisfies their circumstances and requirements. The emphasis is on opening up opportunities by overcoming barriers that result from geographical isolation, personal or work commitments or conventional course structures which have often prevented people from gaining access to the training they need.

Implementing Open Learning

I will now examine the current and possible provision of Open Learning in my own area of Co. Leitrim. Even though I do not have any post-compulsory institutions in my area, an institution is not needed because open learning is learner-centred, rather than institution-centred.

Open Learning removes one major barrier for students in Co. Leitrim who are geographically isolated from provision. The small catchment of students hinders the formation of class groups of sufficient size to be financially viable. Therefore, open learning facilitates the use of learning materials to pursue a learner-centred philosophy. Thus the use of open learning is a powerful way of making the provision of further, higher and adult education more widely accessible and more responsive to the individual needs of students.

Characteristics of Learner Centred Provision

Two of the barriers to learning are, first, incomplete information held by institutions on the needs of learners and, secondly, lack of knowledge on the part of learners of what is available. Marketing — in

both its research and its promotional aspects — is therefore a vital ingredient of client-centred provision and learner-centred provision.

The use of learning materials in open learning gives learners a degree of control over the time, the place and the pace of their learning that is not available to those in traditional models. They may attend by agreed appointment or on a 'drop-in' basis and use materials in an in-college learning workshop or resource centre, or they may have the learning materials posted to them for study at home or work, or some other convenient place.

The pace of learning depends to some extent on the characteristics and other commitments of learners. Pre-study counselling and diagnosis aims to ensure that learning programmes are appropriate to learners abilities and potential so that the pace will be suitable to them.

All open learning materials and programmes must reflect a learner-centred design policy. The materials that meet specific needs can be greatly enhanced by its structuring into modular sections, or units. Use of the term 'module' varies in further and higher education. However, it is primarily a term used to describe a free-standing unit of knowledge or skills which may be studied as a single entity, or be linked with other related modules in a programme.

An increasing number of students on open learning programmes look for accreditation. This, coupled with a modular system, allows students to learn and accumulate credit at a rate and in a manner which suits their abilities and personal preferences. The Department of Education and Science in England is encouraging the development of credit transfer initiatives and has funded the publication of the first collection of available information on credit transfer. Our own Department of Education are investigating similar initiatives at the moment.

Resourcing

Since open learning systems exploit the potentialities of a range of media through the use learning packages, successful implementation of open learning is dependent on an institution possessing a substantial resource-base of such learning materials. Building up a base may be achieved either by developing the materials internally or by purchasing them from an external source.

Yet another alternative in open learning is the use of study guides. An important advantage is that they are an economic means of expediting the implementation of open learning.

Funding is a vital question in the provision of all forms of open learning, but particularly so where it involves expensive hardware. Institutions must consider the extent to which the funding is to come from their base budgets or to come from other sources.

Resource allocation

It is recommended that local authorities should formulate policies on open learning provision. On the basis of such policies it is then possible to have informed debate on the allocation of funds. The implementation of open learning should be seen by providers, as an important contribution to the creation of more flexible learning opportunities across the whole spectrum of further, higher and adult education.

Tutorial Staff

A scale based on six learners per tutor hour should form a basis for local negotiations. Delivery in open learning requires tutors to be willing and able to negotiate with individual learners in a process that involves joint discussion of objectives and mutual planning of learning schedules. Tutors need to be skilled in diagnosis, guidance and counselling — sometimes at a distance — and to be willing to use or adapt learning materials developed by others. The teaching of study skills, a vital ingredient throughout the curriculum, takes on added significance in open learning. In particular, tutors need to be aware of the study difficulties that may be generated by open learning. Because all this is substantially different from the role of teachers in the traditional mode, successful implementation of open learning will, to a great extent, depend on planned programmes of staff development.

Support Services

Librarians have a considerable contribution to make to open learning provision. In some cases librarians provide first-level tutorial support — in the form of counselling, encouragement, motivation and study skills — leaving second-level support in the form of advice on subject content and assessment to tutorial staff.

Libraries that contain good educational sections are not available to students or tutors in Leitrim, “without considerable travel.”

Initiatives to develop open learning schemes in practical subjects requiring ‘hands-on’ experience necessitate the support of laboratory and workshop technicians who are required to assimilate changing workloads. Thus all support staff need to understand the rationale of open learning if they are to fulfil their respective roles effectively, and they, too, need the training that can be provided through planned staff development programmes.

It is important, to ensure that when potential clients come to an institution with enquiries they can do so with confidence. Easily distinguished direction signs and well-furbished reception facilities are factors that help to put enquirers at their ease. The aim should be to create a pleasant, adult and professional environment that is comparable with commercial premises. In some areas, information and advice may best be provided in an easily accessible 'high street' location rather than an institution. It is recommended that institutions should assess critically their allocation of space for open learning with respect to both tutors and learners needs.

Conclusions and Future Development in Co. Leitrim

However appropriate open learning is to County Leitrim, as a delivery system, it faces major obstacles to its implementation. As stated earlier, we don't have any third level institution, which would give us accommodation, or support systems, suited to open learning. The major resource would be skilled tutors in all aspects of open learning. But even our third level institutions don't have people with the necessary training. The little that has been done was by the few correspondence colleges. In the last ten years, a few more projects were implemented. I will deal with some of the ones that I had some involvement with.

In 1985 Maynooth College provided a course called 'ADULTS LEARNING' using material bought from the OU. This was supplemented by radio programmes broadcast by RTE, to make it more relevant to the Republic. There was only one assignment i.e. a project. There was no final examination. So you were left to study at your own pace and your own choice of material. It was a very good innovation at the time. I felt that it would have been a great induction course for AEO's.

RTE has produced some fine education programmes in the last few years. But like the course mentioned above, they produced a distance education packaged course in 1981. It was an Irish Language course called 'ANOIS IS ARIS'. It was the first time that RTE co-operated with the AEO's in providing school based courses, and not just for a home based audience. They were promoted very heavily, and were a great success. The only drawback was with the tutors, who were briefed beforehand on how to conduct the course, but most reverted to the more traditional style of teaching.

Dublin City University, is again promoting a computer course, but this time under the title of open learning. They have also reached agreement with the Open University, to provide two of their 'Foundation' courses, which should start in 1991.

The other open learning that I have introduced in the last few years are learning packages for:

- (a) Supplementing traditional teaching methods in a Travellers Training Centre.
- (b) Tutor training.
- (c) Community groups, especially for parents.
- (d) Telephone counselling.
- (e) Making instructional material.

In conclusion, we can use open learning to improve and widen our provision. But development will be slow, due to lack of finance and skills. For the AEO the main cost is time — to provide information and counselling. Maybe also setting up study and tutorial groups. The study packs of the OU would be the main method of providing courses.

Dónal Ó Scólaí, A.E.O. for Co. Leitrim, has done a special study of the theory and practice of open learning.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON DIPLOMA IN ECONOMIC SCIENCE and B. Sc. (ECON.) DEGREE

MICHAEL BURKE

For 128 years the University of London offered the only opportunity of obtaining a Degree without attending a University. The B.Sc. Degree is actually older than the University's Internal Degree and is recognised as an international standard in higher education. Over the years it has provided access for tens of thousands of people throughout the world to earn an Honours Degree which is universally recognised.

The University's staff set the question papers and mark the examinations. The B.Sc. (Econ.) Degree is awarded with First, Second or Third Class Honours or at Pass level.

There are nine different options or specialised pathways, in the B.Sc. (Econ.) Degree, namely Management Studies, Economics & Management Studies, Banking Trade & Industry, Accounting, Economics, Government & Politics, History, Geography, Sociology. Each pathway is an honours degree in its own right and the final University Degree records the honours subject or subjects taken. The structure of each pathway consists of 3 parts. You must pass each part before proceeding to the next. The minimum period of study is three years, one for each part of the degree.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO B.SC. (ECON.) DEGREE

The conventional access to the University of London is through a school leaving examination e.g. U.K. Advanced Levels, Irish Honours Leaving Certificate etc. For Irish students the entry requirements are presently 3 Bs and 2 Cs at Honours Leaving Certificate level. These requirements are quite stringent and Irish students who did not reach these requirements were given a life-line when the City of Limerick Vocational Education Committee initiated the Diploma in Economic Science through CoACT, the College of Art, Commerce & Technology in conjunction with the University of London B.Sc. Economics Degree course.

DIPLOMA IN ECONOMIC SCIENCE

The Diploma in Economic Science is a two year part-time course which exempts the student from the entry requirements of the University of London. In addition, depending on the degree subjects chosen, holders of the Diploma will be exempted from all or part of the first year (Part I) of the degree course. If exempted a student can then proceed to Part II.

There are four subjects covered in the first year of the Diploma Course — Sociology, Mathematics, Statistics, Micro and Macro Economics. In the second year, students can have the option of substituting additional Sociology for Mathematics. Course work on the part-time course comprises nine hours of evening lectures per week, from late September to the end of April in both years (28 weeks approximately each year). Examinations are held each year in late May or early June. Standards are monitored by External Consultants from the London School of Economics and from Trinity College, Dublin.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR DIPLOMA IN ECONOMIC SCIENCE

The recommended minimum course entry requirements for people under 21 years of age are, two Grade C's in Leavin Certificate higher papers, one of which must be English. **People over 21 years of age will be accepted on grounds of maturity subject to certain requirements, and subject to satisfying the authorities that they will be able to follow the course.**

NATIONAL NETWORK

Having established the Diploma in Limerick and in response to numerous requests, CoACT turned its attention to establishing a national network of outcentres throughout the country. The course is currently running in Monaghan, Thurles, Tralee, Dublin, Limerick, Leixlip, Naas, Portlaoise and Clonmel. All of these venues, with the exception of Limerick, are running the Diploma Course on a part-time evening basis. There is a one year full-time day course in Limerick and a number of outcentres have already made application to run full-time courses.

COSTS

The current cost of the Diploma in Economic Science full-time day course in Limerick is £800 per annum. It is £475 for the part-time evening course in Limerick. Our-centres charge approximately £450 -£500 per student per annum. Out-centres also pay a registration fee of £100 per student to CoACT. Examination fees are £40.

MERITS OF THE DIPLOMA

The Diploma has a dual purpose — on the one hand it was expressly designed as a first class free standing qualification with the imprimatur of The University of London as a guarantee of its standard, as well as a stepping stone to an Honours Degree. On the other hand it carries the exemption already stated. This latter helps to avoid the stringent University regulations required for entry into the Degree Course. It also offers an important opportunity for continuing education.

Having completed the Diploma, students have a choice of continuing on to a Degree in Limerick and out-centres or alternatively they are eligible to complete their Degree at The London School of Economics or The University of London.

The Diploma and the Degree to which it gives access helps fill a serious deficiency in the education system. At a time when third level qualifications are becoming even more vital, the conventional channels for obtaining them are becoming more exclusive. The Diploma/Degree package offers an alternative, leading to an internationally recognised degree. It is also very accessible to the adult student. At present approximately 500 students are pursuing the Diploma in Ireland and it is envisaged that the numbers of students will grow. Centres interested in providing the Diploma can get further information by contacting John Gallahue, School of Engineering, Moylish Park, Limerick, Tel. 061-51344.

Michael Burke is the Adult Education Organiser in Co. Sligo. The information in the article was supplied by John Gallahue of CoACT.

A HARD STRUGGLE

KATHLEEN MAHER

Background

In 1987 I decided to take two years away from my many activities in the community to do a diploma course in Maynooth in Youth and Community Studies. For many years, I had been working in my own community in the area of community development, youth work, social welfare and informal counselling. My particular interest was in women's issues, such as class, poverty and child care facilities. The issues for women are always important to me. Most of my work over the years was approached from a practical perspective with little or no analysis involved. I have experienced many dramatic changes in my life, but nothing to compare with those resulting from this course in Maynooth.

Interviews

Although the college year does not begin until October interviews are held beforehand. I was required to undergo two interviews to determine my suitability. The interviews focussed on my ability to learn in an academic environment, and secondly, on my ability to fund the course. FÁS provides four bursaries for suitable candidates.

My first interview was with a Maynooth staff member and a representative from FÁS. Although this interview was less formal than the second, I found that there was a class difference which put me at a disadvantage. I suppose I felt intimidated that my ability to be a community worker was being assessed by two male professionals who would also determine my suitability for the course. However, I was successful both in securing a place on the course, and in getting a bursary to enable me to pay for the course which I was not in a position to fund myself.

The second interview took place shortly afterwards. This experience had me almost deciding to pull out of the course. The interview involved the College Registrar and myself. This man had in front of him my written application for the course. It was apparent from this application that I had never taken any formal exams in my previous years, thus creating doubts for the interviewer, doubts which were raised later during the interview which lasted about forty minutes. I was taken through my application and asked what books I had read.

My response was that the work that I was doing did not require books, and the answer to poverty is not found in books. In particular, people struggle to survive on a day-to-day basis with welfare payments, medical care, improving home maintenance and other basic rights. This required practical action rather than theoretical thinking. I did, however, inform the interviewer that the only book I could associate myself with was *The Report of the Commission on Social Welfare (1986)*, which made sense to me.

I felt that the main concern of the interviewer was that I had never taken a formal exam. This was highlighted for me when I observed and felt doubts being expressed in his voice. I asked him if he saw any problems for me in terms of taking the course. With his professionalism, he was quick to point out that I had spelt two words wrongly in my application. I immediately tried to defend this by saying that I had not been in a position to take second level courses, as the means to do so were not available to me. I felt that I was having to apologise for the class I was born into.

By the end of this interview I felt that I might not be able for the course, while realizing at the same time that I had come through the first hurdle on two counts: firstly, securing a place on the course and, secondly, securing a bursary to enable me to take the course.

The Diploma Course

On Tuesday morning, October 6 1989, I arrived at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth for my first session in Youth and Community Studies. This was to be the deciding day for me, a bright sunny autumn morning as I left my house in Ballymun at 8.15 a.m. to begin my two hour journey for the following two years. A long and hard struggle it was, resulting in my determination to complete the course and achieve a diploma at the end of two years. The course combined both theory and practical learning, and involved reading, discussion, fieldwork, written assignments and continuous assessment. The number of students taking part in the course varies from year to year and can reach twenty-two, although in our class the number was smaller. Students on the course come from many different social backgrounds and were required to have had experience in youth and community work, as well as being over twenty-one years old. The course, therefore, is aimed at the mature student.

My learning in terms of reading caused problems, in that I found it difficult to concentrate. I believe that this was partly due to the way I was used to working at a practical level, the fact that I had not been in a classroom for over twentyfour years, and the time it took me to get to and from Maynooth, as well as not being able to study at home due to

lack of physical space and family size. The above problems could not have been overcome without the individual assistance and support of a part-time lecturer on the course.

The need for Support Systems

Attending the course demanded that I think in a very different way from the way I used to think. I was used to learning from my everyday experience, but was now being exposed to learning from books. I was also asked to translate my own experiential learning into a theoretical context, and to structure it into report form. This caused untold anxiety which led to a lack of confidence and a feeling of being over-powered. To overcome this, a great deal of support was required. Given the complexity of the demands on the course, those administering it would be advised to improve on their support systems to course participants with special needs.

Reflecting back on the course I learned a great deal. Firstly, I learned to reflect on myself, including my strengths and weaknesses. This helped me to appreciate and refine my own strengths. In addition, the course also helped me to analyse actions and issues from different perspectives. Central to the analysis were the perspectives of class and gender. This has helped me to understand and plan action more effectively.

In conclusion, although it was a great struggle travelling the fifty miles per day and being cut off from my family and community, I feel that I have benefitted a great deal from the course. If asked what I would like to improve about the course, I would like to see the course made more accessible to working class people. This would involve locating these courses closer to these communities, perhaps one on the northside and one on the southside of Dublin or in city centre. This would reduce travelling time. Funding should not be an obstacle and should be made available for those who are motivated to undertake the course. Finally, people with special needs should receive appropriate support.

Kathleen Maher is a community activist in Ballymun for many years. She is married with a family and has just successfully completed the non-graduate course in Youth and Community Studies at Maynooth College.

JOURNEY TO LITERACY

This is International Literacy Year. In this interview, the Editor, Liam Bane, talked with two adults who looked for help with their literacy difficulties some years ago and have worked their way up to examination standard. James sat his Leaving Cert. English (Pass) examination last year and passed. Lisa took the first state examination of her life this June when she sat the Group Cert. English.

L.B.: Now, Lisa, that you have reached the stage where you are facing the prospect of a state examination, what are your feelings?

Lisa: Well, obviously, I'm very nervous. I know that I will have answers but will I have the time to put them down? To tell the truth, I am not that concerned really with whether I pass or fail. I never thought I would see the day that I might actually be doing an "exam" — and all the others in the group are very excited and enthusiastic.

L.B.: James, I think you have got to the stage where you enjoy doing exams?

James: At the beginning, I wanted to set myself a goal, something to aim at and after coming through from the Basic English class, I attended the Leaving Cert Pass English class for two years before I took the exam.

L.B.: And you were successful.

James: Yes, I got through alright. Now I am in the Honours English class. I'll do the exam this year and if I don't succeed, then I'll come back again next year. The most important thing now is that I actually enjoy the poems and the plays, even if they are difficult.

L.B.: For the two of you, it has been quite a journey to arrive at this point. Could you both tell me something about the beginning, how you think the problem arose in the first place?

Lisa: Well, you see, I left school at twelve or rather, I was taken out of school. I had to help out at home — after all, I was one of thirteen and my father had this idea that education was for the boys. If the girls could cook and sew a bit, they would be alright and they would be getting married anyway, hopefully. Also and you won't believe this now but I had a bad stammer. My reading and writing problems were severe — I could just about write my name.

James: I left the national school badly equipped. My education at primary level was a disaster. I had a teacher who was alcoholic and then when I moved to another school, a model school if you wouldn't mind, we never saw the teacher; most of the time, we just sat there and talked. I was seven years of age before I even learned the ABC, so I was wrongshipped from the start. My problem was that by the time I reached the top class, I was already deficient in the basics. Nobody was told about the problem and my parents just didn't look for information.

L.B.: Did you move on to second level at all?

James: I had two years in a vocational school. The principal recognised that I had a low standard at the entrance test. One teacher in the English class really did try and even gave me individual attention. He was really very helpful. But I left to join the army where schooling was optional and so of course, if there was a choice, it wasn't going to be school.

L.B.: Could you describe what it was like going through life with these particular problems?

Lisa: The two words that I would use are "lonely" and isolated". It is a frightful loneliness that people like you just can't imagine. And as well, you feel intimidated... people around you discussing different books and pieces that they read and you just can't take part.

James: For me it was a lack of confidence, never being sure whether you were right or wrong.

L.B.: Was there anything in particular that prompted you to look for help?

Lisa: Well, one thing I remember especially was going to enrol my son for the primary school. The headmaster lands this form in front of me, I nearly died! I tried to fill it in and of course, made a mess of it. I could see the reaction on his face, I knew he was shocked.

James: For me there wasn't anything in particular. I took up reading seriously but I knew that I wasn't getting the full benefit. You could say I was only getting a skeleton image. So I went looking and came across a Basic English class, as it was called. I joined that because I wanted to start at the very beginning again. I should say too that I was in a job where there were reports to be written and that was something of a hit and miss operation for me.

Lisa: I didn't even know there was help available until I happened to hear an announcement in church one Sunday.

L.B.: So where did you begin?

Lisa: There was a sister who was working on her own with some literacy students in the area. I still remember going to the house and standing outside for ages. I was put working one-to-one with a tutor for two years, but at the end I felt I wasn't learning anymore.

L.B.: Why was that?

Lisa: I'm not so sure. Maybe it was that we become really good friends and I don't think that's a good thing. I feel now that tutors should be changed after a while, as you need someone who is really going to push you.

L.B.: Do you have opinions now about the argument that goes on as to whether individual or group tuition is preferable?

Lisa: The group definitely is helpful but it must be a small group. Also, it depends at what level you are at and I think for a lot of students, one-to-one is better at the beginning. The first time in a group you can be very self-conscious.

L.B.: Both of you have attended classes now for a number of years and have obviously made significant progress. What difference has it made in your lives?

James: It's a question of confidence. As I said, I am in a job where I have to write reports and there are forms to be filled. This used to be a nightmare for me. I always worked with a dictionary, not sure whether I was right or wrong but now I know that it can be read by anybody. I've gone from a bluffer to a straightforward person.

Lisa: I attended an English class at one stage for three hours one morning a week and I really loved that. But then the hours in my job changed and I went to a group at night then. The main thing for me now is the absence of fear... I just say to myself "Swallow your pride and go and do it".

L.B.: And now?

Lisa: Now I don't fluster anymore. I know I can read this if I take my time, so I take my time and I don't care.

L.B.: And what have you found that's really new to you?

Lisa: The poetry. The poetry is really nice and I'm amazed at the way they put the words together.

James: We were studying there recently in my English class "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and you know, I can really identify with that man and his frustrations and dreams.

- Lisa: I tell you, Liam, if a genie in a little bottle were to come to me and ask me what I wanted most — I'd love to go back to school fulltime for a year.
- L.B.: Thank you both. I really appreciate your talking so frankly and openly about your difficulties. You are great people and I would like to think that what you have said might be a source of encouragement and inspiration for others with similar problems.

RADIO AND EDUCATION

SEAN CONNOLLY

Introduction

A friend of mine, an Englishman, attached to the University of Limerick, attended a daylong meeting in Dublin recently. At day's end, tired and mentally exhausted, he found a section of the Dublin/Limerick train with just one other passenger and flopped into the chair with every intention of having a quick 40 or more winks.

His travelling companion, who evidently had been there for some time, folded up his copy of the London Times and offered it to my friend. Nothing unusual there, you might say, except that the hand proffering the paper bore all the hallmarks of one who was used to the hard graft of heavy, physical outdoor work. And so it emerged in subsequent conversation — he was a farmer in East Limerick. Being Irish too it did not take him long to glean that my friend was attached to the University and, therefore, I assume, could be expected to have academic leanings. For the next two hours my friend and the farmer engaged in a fascinating conversation on a wide range of topics — industrial relations, European policy, long-term effects of colonialism, architecture, pollution and so on.

My friend didn't have much time (nor indeed desire) to think about the missing 40 winks. Near Limerick Junction, encouraged by the open flow of the conversation, my friend lost his natural English reticence and enquired where his companion had been educated. The reply was startling.

"I left school at 14. Everything I know I got from the radio, particularly the BBC. I bring the transistor with me everywhere - out to milk the cows, in the tractor, in the middle of the night waiting for a cow to calve. First it was the radio, then I started buying the papers and magazines. The funny thing is, it's made me a better farmer too because I know what's going on and these days in farming you have to".

My friend was impressed. Not so much by a few hours in the company of an intelligent, well-educated man but by the 'school' he attends every day.

Studying by Radio

I'm sure each of us remembers studying (last minute!) on the bus or car on the way to school. It's still the same these days. Except that

nowadays it is not always to be seen in hunched shoulders and books precariously balanced on the knees; the kid with the walkman is just as likely to be studying French through his/her headphones. Not quite radio, but a very near relation. Radios go just about anywhere — in cars, on the street, in the kitchen, in the garden, even to bed. The opportunities to use them, to learn from them abound. The requirement to attend at a specific time in your local community centre, or post primary school or whatever need not be so great. This can be a big help to the housebound, to those who work odd hours or spend long stretches driving to or from work.

So, what can be taught on or learned from radio? In Australia and Canada some schoolchildren receive all their instruction by radio. In Africa, radio is used to provide community information, health education and instruction for farmers. In America, it is used for physical training programmes and aerobics (shades of Din Joe and tap-dancing on radio!). Worldwide, open university type education is provided in subjects as diverse as politics and archaeology. In Ireland... well, I suppose if you have the initiative and perseverance of our friend from West Limerick...

But all is not yet lost. A new era in broadcasting has begun, an era which will bring with it a range of local and community stations and will also force change in RTE by bringing into sharper focus the question of public service broadcasting and the responsibilities that brings with it. The new era is also likely to see the development of radio stations devoted specifically to education and information. It seems that opportunities exist; the question for educationalists is what to do about them.

Programmes needed

The canon for public service broadcasters down through the years had been 'to entertain, to educate, to inform'. Undoubtedly RTE has done all of this. But has it done enough? Done the 'right' things? Should it do more? These are questions which those in the education sphere could and should address. Identifying the problems is not enough, I suggest - making pragmatic proposals is much more valuable to a busy broadcast company.

The same and more besides can be said for local broadcasters but for a different reason. Once outside the major areas of population — in the context of radio this probably means outside Dublin and perhaps Cork — the stations are much more local in character. To survive they need to be. They must produce local material for consumption by a local audience. And therein lies the conundrum. On the one hand they require local material; on the other they often don't have the in-house resources to deliver. Ideas are not enough. Willing hands, minds and,

ultimately, mouths are what they need. People to come up with the idea, agree the outline with the station, do the research, produce the bodies to talk (where appropriate) and, most important of all, do all of this on a regular, consistent and frequent basis. This is critical because of the way most stations are programmed — they 'grow' on the listener by having the same show at the same time each night/week. All of which provides the problem for already busy educators who will find it very difficult to spare the huge amount of time involved in putting a series of radio programmes together. Is the solution to be found in co-operation between the different bodies or individuals involved in education or between educators from different parts of the country?

The same kind of problem arises in relation to a station devoted entirely to information/education and one such station is being mooted in the greater Dublin area, a station which has potential to expand right across the country. At early meetings of the group intending to establish such a station some speakers seemed to see little difficulty in 'filling' a one hour slot, once a week, every week. Any experienced broadcaster will quickly confirm that there is one hell of a difficulty in producing regular shows with an instructional and/or speech format. It could be done, I suppose, if one were to read the lecturer's notes/speech on air, a lecture which may be difficult enough to listen to when the lecturer is present, in full view — but on radio? Which raises the question of what will work on radio. A question for another day, another forum, but maybe a good question for people in education to start with.

By way of conclusion only two thoughts occur. My friend from Paragraph I still meets occasionally with the West Limerick farmer, who turns out to be an absolute mine of information on the development of contemporary music - jazz, black, reggae - all due to a pregnant cow, late nights in the byre and a transistor radio. This brings about the second thought, beloved through the ages by teachers writing school reports and hated by students reading them — "*Johnny has great potential*". For Johnny substitute radio.

Sean Connolly is Chief Executive of the Independent Radio and Television Commission.

COMMUNITY RADIO AND ADULT EDUCATION

DR. COLLUM KENNY

Community Radio

Community radio provides an opportunity for people to learn more about their own environment and about themselves. To some extent any form of local radio does the same thing but the benefits of the community radio model come from the fact that it is actively intended to foster skills and to enable people to express themselves and to grow.

The term "community radio" has a fairly specific meaning within the broadcasting context. While many stations claim to be "serving the community", this does not make them community services in any meaningful sense. What distinguishes community radio from other forms of radio are three features.

Firstly, the community station is in some sense democratically controlled. That is to say it is set up as some kind of co-operative or trust and has representatives on its board of management drawn from a wide cross-section of the community. One of the dangers of such a structure is that it can become unwieldy and committees are not a recipe for lively or entertaining radio. So care has to be taken to remain practical about the decision making-structures which are established in such cases.

The second distinctive feature of community radio is that it does not set out to return a profit to private investors. It must, of course, aim to have popular appeal and it may, hopefully, be profitable. But such profits are not alienated as dividends. Instead they are returned to the community by, for example, investment in programmes or new equipment.

The final and third distinctive feature of community radio is that it actively encourages members of its listening public to become involved in producing programmes. This amounts to more than the tokenism of making announcements about community activities and bringing people in for an occasional interview by some existing programme presenter.

The involvement which community radio stations aim at is more total and recognises an important distinction in the dynamics of

programme production which is often overlooked by non-professionals. It is in this very activity that the greatest potential for adult education seems to me to lie.

Programme Production

In the normal process of production the most important phases are the initial choice of programme idea and the conception as to how it is to be executed and who is to be interviewed. By the time people come to be interviewed the shape of the final impression created by the programme has already been largely determined. So involving members of the community simply as persons interviewed is to keep them forever excluded from the most crucial moments of production.

It is a common misconception that making radio and television programmes is a technological process which depends largely on one's ability to handle machines. While it is undoubtedly necessary to have some basic skills, making programmes is a bit like typing the manuscript of a book or making a long car journey. Just because you master typing, it does not mean that you have anything to write which people will want to read. Similarly, just because you learn to drive it doesn't mean that you know where you are going. However, it is necessary to learn to type and to drive in these cases.

Likewise, you must learn to use certain equipment just to begin broadcasting. But you need only come to terms with this like you drive a car. You do not have to understand motor mechanics to get a driving licence. What is under the bonnet may remain a mystery. It is the same with recording equipment. You only have to learn to use it, not to construct or maintain it.

It is fortunate that in the case of radio, the equipment is really quite easy to master. The standard tape recorder and editing equipment, even studios themselves, are usually relatively easy to come to terms with. If there are problems, technical assistance will always be at hand. Even in small community stations, there is seldom a shortage of technical enthusiasts around to complement those people who want to produce or present programmes.

But having mastered the techniques of production you are no closer to having a programme. This is where the fun really begins. For production, contrary to what people outside broadcasting seem to think, is only partly about technology and far more about ideas and people and the management of those people and ideas within the time and resources available.

Community radio affords people the opportunity to get involved in such productions and to learn its techniques for themselves. This in

turn teaches them not only about the topics on which they make programmes but, at a more fundamental level, about the way in which programmes are made and presented by private or professional broadcasting organisations. In a society in which so much time is spent listening to the radio and watching television and in which the electronic media are believed to have such dominance, it is extremely revealing for people to discover the deliberate mechanisms employed by programme makers.

In my opinion there is a high level of public ignorance about the extent to which media products are a chosen construction rather than simply a mirror. This is not to advance some kind of conspiracy theory but to suggest that once people understand the degree to which value systems are part of the production process and how those value systems find their way through to the completed programmes, people can then begin to ask questions about the absence of other values or reference points.

So what I am saying is that community radio offers members of the community an opportunity not only to make programmes, which is valuable in itself, but also teaches them about the wider electronic environment. Furthermore, the programmes which will be made by such "amateur" broadcasters may themselves serve as educational vehicles in that they may help a group to identify its own needs and enable it to express these coherently for the first time. For example, a programme could be made with local disabled people which brought them together for the first time and showed them that problems which they thought only they identified were in fact shared by others and might be addressed in some united fashion.

In all of this it is important that community broadcasters remember that you do not have a captive audience out there. Whatever you do on radio or television must be relevant or lively and must hold the audience, while not necessary being sensational. Worthy programmes which bore will also turn off. If programmes are about real issues and are presented with respect for the listener and his or her tastes, then listeners are likely to really want to hear what is being said.

Another relevant consideration in all of this is cost. Unfortunately it is relatively cheap to play pre-recorded pop music and it also maximises advertising revenue because mass audiences enjoy it. When one begins to make speech programmes or specialist music or drama programmes, the time and resources needed for production grow and the audiences become more specialist. This increases costs. Some community radio groups are opposed to advertising on principle. Others do not mind taking the revenue from advertising, provided it is not allowed to dominate the nature of the schedule.

Community Radio in Ireland

So given that community radio is a developmental tool with relevance in the area of adult education, what is the state of community radio in Ireland? Only two or three of the local radio stations licensed so far could be considered "community" stations in the sense outlined above. These include Horizon, North Wicklow and Kilkenny Local Radio. Even in these cases, there are pressures to conform to the more widespread commercial model or go under.

Some of the commercial local radio stations certainly provide excellent local services, some of these of great value to particular communities and some of them of a high standard. But, ultimately, the ideology of such stations is not that of educationalists or community development enthusiasts.

The government had promised to issue another round of licenses, specifically for smaller geographic areas and communities. This has not happened and the Independent Radio and Television Commission seem to be in no hurry to invite applications from community groups. The National Association of Community Broadcasting seems demoralised as it watches its hopes for community radio being smothered by commercial and political interests.

It is indicated unofficially by the government and by the IRTC that it would be inadvisable at this point to create further radio stations which might undermine the market. Given the difficulties which have been experienced by some of the commercial stations, any new community stations might entice away vital listeners. Even if the community stations were forbidden to take advertising, if they took listeners it would lessen the amount which other stations could charge for their advertisements.

There is little consolation for supporters of community radio in the fact that it is ironic that a system of commercial deregulation is now being shored up by a latter-day regulation which prevents community stations coming on stream. Who is afraid of community radio and why? It is a reflection on the commercial stations that community stations might attract their audiences?

If some community stations are allowed eventually, it would seem unfair to prevent them from accepting advertisements when the context which they would want to broadcast is by its very nature more expensive than are pop music formats. Clearly there is a bottom line to deregulation and to commercial competition and it is drawn to exclude those most in need of financial support and fora for expression. The idea that public money would be made available to help develop community radio seems unrealistic in the present ideological and economic circumstances in Ireland.

For many years RTE experimented with a small community radio studio which travelled around the country. During the pirate radio days there were a number of more adventurous and imaginative experiments in community radio by people closely associated with the National Association of Community Broadcasting. There was a wealth of experience from which the government and the IRTC might have drawn in the creation of a local radio system in Ireland.

This experience has received international recognition by the fact that Amarc 4 (the fourth worldwide conference of community orientated radio) is to take place in Dublin this coming August. Maybe before then the government or the IRTC will be shamed into taking decisive action to facilitate the growth of community radio in Ireland, a growth which has such interesting possibilities for those interested in adult education.

f Those interested in learning more about community radio might like to read **A VOICE FOR EVERYONE: ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COMMUNITY RADIO**. This is a handbook published jointly by the National Association of Community Broadcasting, 32 Gardiner Place, Dublin 1, and Veritas Publications, 7/8 Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1. Price IR£5.00.

Colum Kenny practised as a Barrister for three years before joining RTE in 1978. He was a reporter and presenter in Current Affairs. He is now Lecturer in Broadcasting at Dublin City University.

BOOK REVIEW

LOCAL COMMITMENT AND ADULT EDUCATION

Essays in honour of Alfred O'Rahilly
An Irish Adult Educator.

Edited by Denis O'Sullivan

This book comprises seven articles on a range of Adult Education issues. Topics range from an exploration of Alfred O'Rahilly's contribution to the development of adult education to adult education and rural change, women and adult education, citizenship and personal change in adult education. The authors are well known figures in the field of adult education both nationally and internationally.

It is always good to welcome a scholarly publication on Adult Education in Ireland. Sadly, it is an area where research invariably gives way to action, and rarely follows upon action. Adult educators are either deeply convinced already that they have all the answers or are assiduously avoiding the answers.

While there is little original research or insights in this publication, it never the less scans a wide field and marshalls a great deal of interesting material. For anybody interested in the development of adult education in Ireland, it is essential reading.

In any book of readings, decisions on the selection of papers will always be arbitrary and less than entirely satisfactory. This is the case here. It is never quite clear if the book is a eulogy to Alfred O'Rehilly; a chronicle of the development of adult education in Ireland and elsewhere, or merely about its social purposes.

If one is left with an abiding impression of the social purpose of adult education in Ireland since the Foundation of the State on reading this book, it is how unchallenging it has been for most of its history. By and large, it was only in the 1980's with the development of (largely unsupported) women's groups and a more discriminating social analysis within some sections of the adult education movement that it assumed a more challenging demeanour. With the exception of the Trade Union efforts in the development of the People's College, Adult Education has either actively espoused a conservative political/social

ideology or, amounting to the same thing, has simply ignored the issue entirely.

As a critique of Alfred O'Rahilly's contribution to the development of Adult Education in Ireland, the book does not succeed in locating or assessing his contribution within the ideological framework. Michael O Murchu's article on O'Rahilly, while valuable, is one of a devotee. Rex Cathcart brings a more cutting edge to his analysis, seeing O'Rahilly as a pivotal figure in the anti-left vanguard of Catholic social action in the 1930's and 1940's in Ireland. This also appears to be the view arrived at in the conclusion of the book.

When one considers the ideological position of Adult Education in Ireland for the fifty years between 1920 and 1970, it seems fair to say that the efforts of the current generation of adult educators in Ireland in transforming this position and in assuming a working class agenda have not been insignificant. It is unfortunate that this shift has yet to be documented. Maria Slowey's article on the participation of Women in Adult Education in Ireland is a significant contribution towards this effort. Unfortunately, Tom Lovett's article has little reference to the Irish scene.

Denis O'Sullivan's article raises two issues. Firstly, there is the issue of methodology. While one would question the appropriateness of factor analysis as a means of exploring the social commitment of adult education at any time, its appropriateness in this book is certainly questionable.

The second issue which arises from the article concerns the outcome of adult education programmes. Just as the social purpose of O'Rahilly's contribution in the 1930's and 1940's is open to scrutiny, so too must adult education today be subjected to the same scrutiny. In particular, one must query the social function of the emotional salving which is so much a feature of current adult education programmes. As adult educators we have failed to trace the linkages between psychological remedies and social ills. In this failure are we ignoring the possibility that our social purpose is little different to that of our predecessors. Have we merely become more adept at obfuscating it?

TOM COLLINS

BOOK REVIEW

THE STORY OF THE PEOPLES' COLLEGE

Ruaidhri Roberts

Edited and additional material incorporated by R. Dardis Clarke.

Published 1986, O'Brien Press in association with the Peoples' College.

Price £2.50. Pp. 135.

In adult education, more than in any other branch of education in this country, progress towards a specific goal requires the dedication and persistence of an individual and/or group who are prepared to pursue that goal in single-minded fashion. In this story of the Peoples' College and the attempt to provide educational courses for trade union members, it is clear that the unswerving determination of Ruaidhri Roberts played a most important part in finally establishing the College and making it the recognised centre of adult education it is today.

The College did not have a promising start and in the paranoid confessional Ireland in which the idea was first mooted, there were objectors aplenty. Some of the objections came from people who ought to have known better — people like the late Professor Alfred O'Rahilly who chose to see the Peoples' College as an affront to the work he was doing in University College, Cork in association with the Cork Council of Trade Unions — "we are the Peoples' College" was his reaction. Or perhaps he was voicing the fears of Catholic churchmen and University clerics who were wary of the prospect of an independent establishment offering courses to adults in a "non-sectarian" environment. The Catholic Workers' College was quickly born and, as the author notes, "no sooner was a course announced at the Peoples' College than it was duplicated elsewhere".

The idea of the College survived, but only just and it struggled for a number of years. Reading this book, one cannot but notice that the difficulties encountered then are the very ones still being experienced by adult education practitioners. Yes, there was the difficulty of finding a suitable premises, the lack of a permanent home for classes and the other problems we have come to know and hate like inadequate heating and inadequate funding. These are problems which, it seems to me, ought to have been addressed by the combined trade unions, even if the government, as always, was not interested. But, having read the book through, I am not sure that there was any great commitment beyond that of individuals like Roberts and others

who are mentioned. Certainly, more than anything else, what kept the notion of the College alive, was the grant of funding from the Shaw Trust.

This book, taken as an account of the progress and the development of an idea, cannot be described as rivetting. It is a mixture of personal reflections, lists of programmes and events such as summer schools and, most of all, accounts taken from minute books — is there anything couched in duller language than proposals and motions at committee meetings? The book badly needs to be ordered and it fails, in my view, to capture the enthusiasm and camaraderie and the will to succeed that are characteristic of adult education groups battling against the odds.

For all that, it is important that developments like the Peoples' College are placed on record and that the efforts of individuals over the years do not go unrecognised. In that context, it is pleasing to see that here is formal recognition of the contribution made by Sheila Conroy and her band of workers in making education available and accessible to those who, for all the wrong reasons, were previously denied it.

LIAM BANE.

BOOK REVIEW

ANYTHING TO LEARN A Scottish/Danish Dialogue on Adult Education.

Edited by Finn Anderson and Nigel Paine.

Published 1989 — Scottish Institute of Adult and Continuing Education and the Danish Cultural Institute.

Price: £5 stg. Pp. 109.

This brief volume from our Danish and Scottish colleagues clearly signposts the value of learning opportunities for adult educators from international exchange visits and contacts. As such, it is of more than academic interest to Irish readers. Originating from three exchange visits between Adult Education colleagues from the two countries during 1986 - 1988, culminating in a joint seminar in Odense during the 1988 Scottish visit to Denmark, this book outlines the core issues identified, shared and explored in Odense. Each chapter is written jointly by a Scottish and Danish colleague, highlighting aspects of the dialogue on key issues raised. What emerges is a very open, sometimes blunt, and frequently illuminating and instructive appraisal of two relatively well developed adult education systems.

Impressions

A flavour of the dialogue may be gleaned from the Danish comment: "In Scotland, Adult Education appears increasingly to focus on vocational training and the demands of the labour market... Education, apparently, has to be seen to be useful in order to receive public support (i.e. funding)". The Danes felt strongly that general, liberal, non-vocational education is not politically in favour in Scotland. A Scottish impression of Danish provision, on the other hand, states: "Danish Adult Education rests on the premise that popular enlightenment and active learning are a right... in financial terms the system is demand rather than supply based... the 1968 Leisure Time Act provides that every group of at least twelve people who wish to study a particular subject will have two thirds of the tuition cost provided by central and local government and their equipment and accommodation provided free of charge... (Irish providers, eat your hearts out!)... A significant number of Danish M.P.'s come from Adult Education backgrounds... Adult Education associations are embedded in the political structure... through links with political parties... government commitment to Adult Education in Denmark is impressive".

Strengths and Weaknesses

Besides those strengths springing from its liberal roots in Grundtvig's (the founding father) philosophy of adult learning which has firmly established an adult education ethos in Danish culture and society since the early nineteenth century and besides the obvious political commitment to adult education in Denmark referred to above, other strengths in the Danish system include generous government funding which amounts to 8% of the total education budget (compared to the 1% allocation in Scotland and the 0.6% in Ireland). To this can be added the high participation in adult education in Denmark which involves one fifth of the entire adult population in liberal, non-vocational learning. This figure represents about four times the Scottish equivalent participation rates.

Weaknesses in the Danish system identified by Scottish colleagues included perceptions of "draughts of anti-intellectualism, stemming partly from Grundtvig's emphasis on the 'living world' rather than on academic study". Scottish frankness verges on the hostile in the following: "...much of what is called adult education seemed to consist of practising hobbies rather than active learning. Overall, we found wariness about evaluating or even describing the outcomes of adult learning".

For the Danes, Scottish adult education is marked by its lack of an overall coherent organisational structure which they describe as "atomistic, consisting of many activities financed in many different ways and often unrelated to one another". They also noted that much of adult education in Scotland appears to be based on short term projects for which money is available, with the consequential disadvantage that much valuable experience is lost once these projects end. More positively, the Danish visitors found that research into adult education and certain facets of tutor training were more advanced in Scotland; that Scottish adult education is more academic than the Danish model with a more theoretical and systematic approach. In addition, they commented: "On several occasions we noticed, enviously, that idealism and voluntarism still play an important part in Scottish adult education". What grade on the international envy scale, one wonders, would they have registered had their visit included the emerald isle?

Common Issues

The major common issue confronting both partners to this dialogue emanated from the current economic climate of fiscal rectitude and public spending cutbacks in adult education, as in every other sphere. In Denmark, this is manifested, for example, in the closure of a special T.V. department (what planetary paradise do these Danish adult

educators inhabit?). In Scotland, cutbacks manifest themselves, for instance, in the withdrawal or earmarked funding for the Scottish Adult Basic Education Unit. Other common issues include the challenges posed by long-term unemployment in both countries and the predominance of middle class participation in adult education.

The Scottish experience of central government policy in relation to unemployed people is instructive — "... at present in Scotland, three times as many adults want to study with the Open University than can do so because of restrictions in government funding, while 39% more government places are available in Employment Training than are actually taken up. Employers' demands for graduates continue to outstrip supply, yet the participation rate in higher education by those qualified to enter has declined throughout the 1980's due to funding restrictions by central government".

Radio and Adult Education

Of possible particular relevance to Irish adult educators at this time are two Scottish experiences of the use of local radio (commercial) for adult education purposes. Basic education numeracy programmes were recently broadcast by Edinburgh's Radio Forth. The programmes proved very popular and may soon be repeated. In another setting, Radio Tay's (Dundee) educational subsidiary, Campus Radio, broadcast evening Adult Education courses backed up by written material. These programmes have attracted a regular audience of several thousand listeners and are linked to adult education provision in the local colleges of further education.

In conclusion, it is encouraging to note that our Danish and Scottish colleagues see in the European Community's medium term guidelines for education and training 1989 — 92 which give adult education a central place in the development of Europe a source of hope and encouragement for the future of Adult Education. Has anyone here seen the guidelines?

TONY DOWNES

BOOK REVIEW

'FOR ADULTS ONLY' The Case for Adult Education in Ireland

Aontas 1989

When responding to this publication for the pages of the "Adult Learner" my first impulse is to point out that the AEO's are the one group of full-time professionals engaged since 1979 specifically to ensure the development of Adult Education provision in Ireland. Responsibility for the failure to develop the structures, funding arrangements and public perception must belong there, in the first instance. No doubt AEO's will feel that they have spent so much time getting courses together and teachers and students onto courses that it is grossly unfair to charge them so. No doubt there are extenuating circumstances in the conditions of their employment, in their location in the VEC organisational framework. However, just as they can claim the greatest credit for the success to date, so too must they bear the main responsibility for the challenges ahead.

In facing the challenges ahead they will be assisted considerably by this fine publication from Aontas.

"Aontas would like to see itself as a forum for new ideas and areas of interest in adult education provision".

This is a most proper role for Aontas and one admirably filled by their other recent publications — "Priority Areas in Adult Education (1986)" and "Live and Learn - an evaluation of Day time Adult Education in Coolock" (1988).

In "For Adults Only" some basic thinking about Adult Education in Ireland is concisely, clearly and attractively presented. The range of existing provision (200,000 people provided with places per annum, 120,000 in educational institutions), the dearth of funding (0.16% of the Republics Education budget compared with 6% in Denmark), the lack of a framework for widespread certification, the part-time, temporary nature of most Adult Education teaching appointments, and the total absence of an agreed national policy, these are all presented succinctly.

In chapter 3 "A Theoretical Foundation for Adult Education" is presented. That such is attempted I find one of the most stimulating aspects of the publication. I approve too of the distinctions between 'technical', 'practical' and 'critical' knowledge a la Aristotle or is it

Habermas? I am unhappy however about the distinction between Education and Training that is presented. I am strongly of the view that this very disjunction between elements of the same continuum is one of the reasons why adult education policy at national level is so grossly underdeveloped. Until there is a clear realisation of the role of 'practical knowledge' and 'critical knowledge' in the process of National Development, economic as well as social, we will not have a comprehensive perspective of our 'human resources' requirements. It was Joe Lee of UCC who asserted some years ago that the major 'breaks' on national development were 'cultural' rather than technical (c.f. his paper in 'Enequal Achievement' IPA. 19).

I have some quibbles too with Chapter 4 on 'Structures and Organisation'. The first arises from the point I have just made about integrating adult 'Education' and 'Training'. At the level of national policy, these should be co-ordinated — ultimately by unifying the Department of Labour planning and training functions with those of the Department of Education. At local/regional level, structures for Adult Education can only be addressed successfully in the context of education authorities with a comprehensive range of responsibilities. Either the VECs involve to such a role or a new structure is established. Current Ministerial statements suggest that the former is the only option available at present.

I am particularly taken by the little sections in Chapters 4 to 7 titled "What needs to be done". These sections give the ideas focus and bite. For the layout and especially for the cartoons Bill Bolger is to be congratulated. For the publication as a whole, the Aontas Executive, Maureen Bassett, Berni Brady, Ted Fleming and Tom Inglis deserve the thanks and appreciation of us all.

I feel a little uncomfortable with statements such as the opening sentence in the President's forward: "We have a proud tradition of education in Ireland". There is not a whole lot to be proud about as it does not hold true in Adult Education. The people whose pride should now be most challenged are the full time AEO's on whose professionalism, intelligence, and imagination, the future of Adult Education in Ireland depends. The organisation skills, the negotiating and diplomatic skills of AEO's are the key to the development of this area which as the report says is:

"one of the most innovative, dynamic and challenging areas of education".

BARNEY O'REILLY.

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