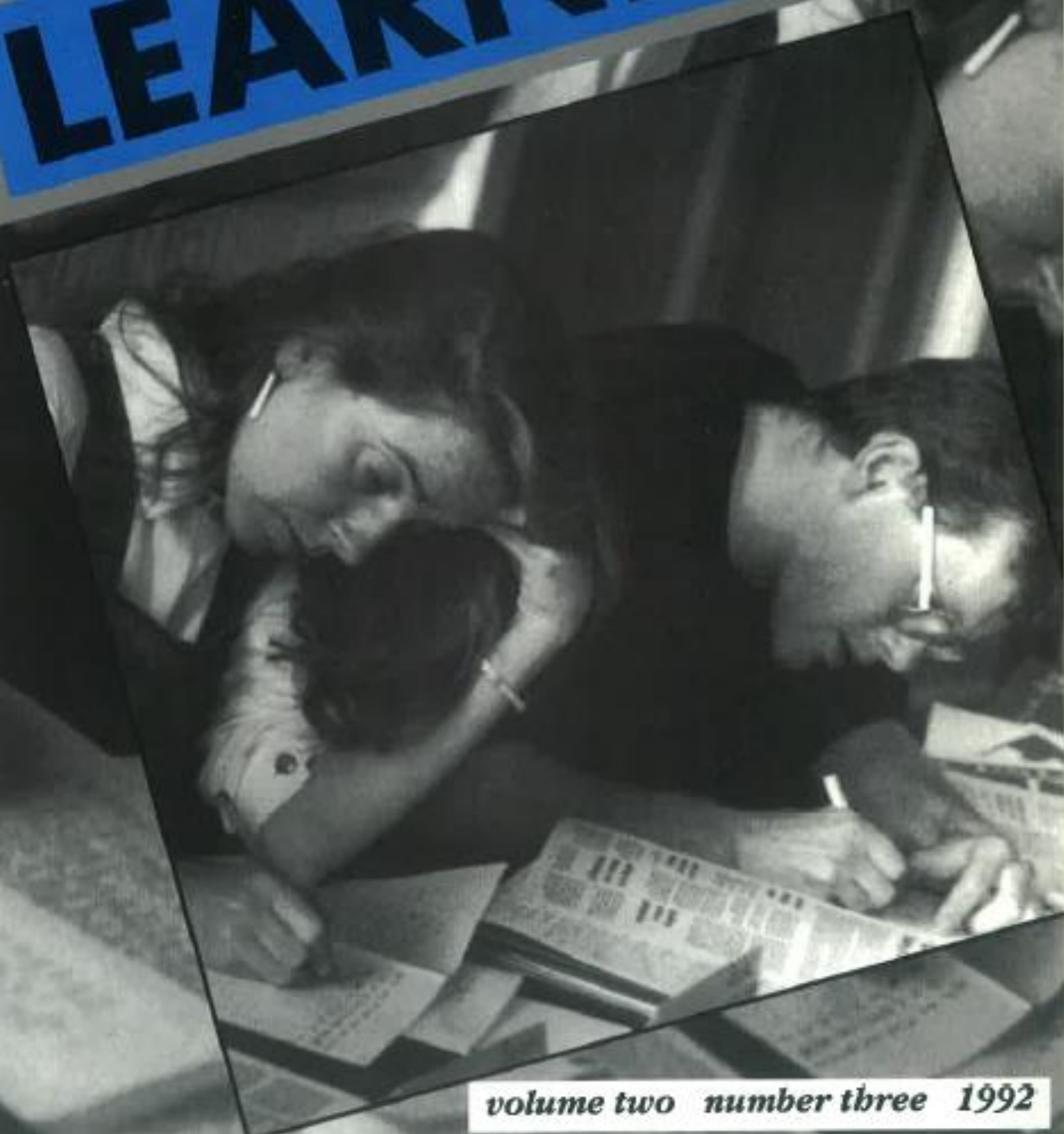


Adult & Community Education in Ireland

THE ADULT LEARNER



volume two number three 1992

Contents

<i>An Páipéar Glas - The Green Paper</i>	4
Mícheál MacGréil	
<i>Try Telling That To Socrates</i>	8
Ted Fleming	
<i>The Green Paper - A Response from Aontas</i>	11
Bernie Brady	
<i>The Green Paper - A Response from the Adult Education Organisers' Association</i>	15
Pat Staunton	
<i>Adult Literacy in the Green Paper</i>	18
Tony Downes	
<i>Five Years of V.T.O.S.</i>	23
Fred Goulding	
<i>Education - A Long-Term Response to Long-Term Unemployment ?</i>	29
Edwin Mernagh	
<i>Having an Adult Education Ball</i>	32
Ad Hock (LIAM BOWEN)	
<i>The Educational Guidance Service for Adults in Northern Ireland</i>	34
Eileen Kelly	
<i>Adult Education in Germany - An Outline</i>	40
Marie Morrissey	
<i>Book Reviews</i>	46
• <i>Dublin Communities In Action</i>	
• <i>Self-Direction In Adult Learning - Perspectives on Theory, Research and Practice</i>	
• <i>Training Adult Educators in Western Europe</i>	
• <i>Reminiscence Packs - Ireland and Dublin Recall</i>	
• <i>The Opportunity Guide to Qualifications - Part-Time Courses</i>	

PLAY YOUR PART IN THE PRESERVATION OF OUR HERITAGE

Cullenswood House, the original site of Patrick Pearse's Scoil Éanna was once described as "one of the noble old Georgian mansions of Dublin".

In its long and varied history Cullenswood House has been a home for both Nationalist and Unionist traditions. Indeed it has been associated with some of the most distinguished citizens of Dublin since the mid-eighteenth century, including Dr. Bartholomew Mosse, founder and first master of the Rotunda Hospital who died in Cullenswood House in 1759. In 1833 the house came into the possession of the family of the liberal Unionist M.P., William Lecky, who was an eminent 19th century historian, after whom the Lecky Library in Trinity College is named.

Patrick Henry Pearse bought the house for £370 in August 1908 and opened Scoil Éanna there on 7th September that year. This was the first bilingual school for boys to be established in Ireland.

When Pearse moved Scoil Éanna to the Hermitage in Rathfarnham in 1910, a bilingual school for girls, Scoil Ita, was established in Cullenswood House. The noted educationalist, Louise Gavan Duffy, taught there and went on to found Scoil Bhríde in 1917 in St Stephen's Green. Today Scoil Bhríde is sited in the former gardens of the House.

It remained in the Pearse family until it was presented to the State in 1960. Over the years the house had fallen into dereliction. A group of concerned and dedicated local residents campaigned vigorously to save it from demolition. Under the leadership of the late



Herbert Egan, they formed Cumann Theach Feadhá Cuileann Teo. (Cullenswood House Association Ltd). In 1990 the Commissioners of Public Works granted a lease to this Association with the object of having the house restored for Irish cultural and community purposes.

In 1991 the then Taoiseach, Charles J. Haughey, T.D., approved the expenditure of £120,000 to commence the task of restoration. This money has enabled the Association to re-roof the building, to make it structurally sound, and to complete and furnish a caretaker's apartment and an administrative office.

It is estimated that a further £300,000 is required to finish the restoration of Cullenswood House as a fitting and living monument to its very illustrious past in the service of the people of Ireland.

We need your help.

You can become involved in this worthy restoration project by contributing financially. Whether you are a private individual, company or organisation, there are several ways in which you can subscribe. It can be in the form of sponsorship, a once-off donation, a monthly standing order or a yearly covenant. Our treasurer will be happy to discuss with you whatever method suits you.

Please contact Fr Michael McGreil S.J., College of Industrial Relations, Sandford Rd., Dublin 6. Tel: (01) 976195

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount £ _____

Sponsorship

Covenant

Standing Order

Once-off Donation

Allied Irish Bank, 40 Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

Branch sorting code: 93-12-02

Account sorting number: 02085521

Registration Office: 90 Ranelagh Rd., Dublin 6

Charity Registration Number: C01710331

Cullenswood House, Oakley Road, Dublin 6.

Editorial Comment

Rumours of the demise of the Adult Learner in 1992 are greatly exaggerated as this belated issue proves. We ask the indulgence of our subscribers and many readers when we ascribe the delay to the postal strike and the eventual publication of the Green Paper "Education for A Changing World". Like last year, our journal 1992 is a collaborative production between the Adult Education Organisers' Association and Aontas, the National Association of Adult Education. We hope you find the result of our efforts interesting, challenging, informative and enjoyable.

Given the year that is in it, we felt it necessary to devote five articles in this edition to the current national debate on the Green Paper. In addition to Mícheál MacGréil's and Ted Fleming's thoughtful and challenging overviews, we include three keynote addresses delivered at the joint Maynooth/Adult Education Organisers' Association symposium held on November 7 in Maynooth College on Adult Education and the Green Paper.

Adult Education's relevance to the needs of Irish Society today is perhaps well exemplified by the recent expansion of the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) and the Local Community Partnerships established in twelve pilot areas under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP). Hence the very welcome contributions from Fred Goulding, who previews a research report on Five Years of VTOS in Tallaght (one of the original two EOS pilot areas), and from Edwin Mernagh who reports on the Coolock Partnership.

The papers from Eileen Kelly on the Northern Ireland Educational Guidance Service for Adults and from Marie Morrissey's description of German Adult Education provision (before unification) besides their intrinsic merits, do, we hope ensure that our horizons are not totally domestic local or insular. Ad Hock of course remains our constant companion and favoured contributor ab initio. As acting editor this year, I would like to thank all our contributors and my colleagues on the editorial board for their wholehearted co-operation and support in this enterprise.

Tony Downes
Editor

Editorial Board

Liam Bane, *AEO, Co Dublin VEC*
Kathleen Forde, *AEO, City of Dublin VEC*
Helen Keogh, *VTOS National Organiser*
Mícheál MacGréil, *Aontas Executive Committee*
Joanna McMinn, *Women's Education Project, Belfast*

An Páipéar Glas - The Green Paper, A Brief Commentary

Micheál MacGréil

Léachtóir i Socheolaíocht é Micheál MacGréil i gColáiste Phádraig, Má Nuad.

The importance of the Green Paper: Education for a Changing World could hardly be exaggerated in terms of Irish educational policy. It is comprehensive in its scope and likely to be decisive for education in Ireland for the next fifty years. It is the fruit of much effort on the part of a number of contributors and editors. Such a document is to be welcomed as a stimulant for the broadest discussion leading to amendments and additions where necessary. The more debate and reaction is generated the better it will be for the future of Irish education in the decades ahead.

This brief commentary focuses on a number of areas of education requiring more or less emphasis. In the area of adult education a special appraisal is attempted.

Basic Philosophy of Education

The basic education philosophy could be generally classified as pragmatic and instrumental. The principal function of education would appear to be the provision of young adults properly qualified in spirit (motivation) and in skills to fit into the technological needs of the new economic order. The pivotal position of the economic institution is implicit in the perception of education in the Green Paper.

This philosophy of education certainly differs from that of John Henry Newman, who saw education's end as the production of an enlightened, self-critical, committed, cultured adult. It also differs from the philosophy which would see the main aim of education as the handing on of the culture of the society to the young with the resultant 'patriotic' commitment to the interests of the community. This latter aim would be concerned with the 'quality' of life of the society as well as that of the individual.

The absence of sufficient emphasis on personal development and on socio-cultural awareness could lead to an overall impoverishment of Irish education in the future. My first problem, therefore, is concerned with this imbalance in the over-pragmatic philosophical approach which seems to be present throughout the Green Paper. The 'enterprise subculture' may be a necessary element in part of Irish culture, but should not become over-dominant. Where does this leave the strong Irish tradition which saw education as something of value in itself? The Irish proverb, "aoibhinn beatha an scoláire", underpinned the intrinsic cultural and personal value of education.

The view that education can become an instrument of social engineering seems to be an underlying conviction of the pragmatic approach. This has not been proven to be that successful in the past. For example, the post-war hope that free and equal access to education would lead to social equity in Britain did not work out. Nevertheless, it must

be admitted that education enables society to adapt to social change brought about by political and economic changes. The link between education and social change is a very complex sociological question.

Enhancement of European Identity

The assimilation of young Irish people into the European Community is promoted in the Green Paper as a desirable result of education. 'European Identity' as distinct from 'Irish Identity' is not defined. Is there such a thing as a distinctively European ethnic ethos? In medieval times the Judaic-Christian ethos could be seen as a basis of a European ethnic identity. Since that time the continent of Europe has become a pluralism of cultures, i.e. French, German, Italian, Spanish, English, Russian, and many others of lesser prominence including Irish, Dutch, Danish and so forth. Is it now envisaged that a new pan-European superculture will be created under the influence of one of the dominant cultures, e.g. German or French or English? Such an end-product could be criticised from two points of view. Firstly, it would provincialise Irish culture. Secondly, it could close us off to a broader world cultural affiliation. Cultural assimilation is more acceptable to centralised bureaucracy than would be cultural pluralism between European ethnic groups.

It is very relevant for Irish education policy, that it maintain pluralism in Europe, that is, if the continuity of a distinctive Irish cultural ethos is to be maintained. Education has in the past been a main agency of cultural anglicisation in Ireland in the 19th century. In my opinion, the best way for the Irish to be Europeans is to be authentically Irish in the sense of enabling young Irish people to internalise what is best of the Irish cultural ethos. The addition of the label 'European identity' as something in itself would, in my opinion, be an impoverishing development.

Arts, Literature and the Humanities

It may not be a misreading of the Green Paper to say that it fails to give adequate emphasis to the central place of the humanities, arts and literature in the Irish educational programme of the future. Reference to the study of languages fails to highlight their literatures and culturally creative dimensions. Oral competence is very important and must be pursued but not at the expense of introducing the student to the literary treasures of each language studied seriously. This is particularly true of Irish, English and other modern European or world languages, e.g. French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, et cetera.

The place of the classical languages of Latin, Greek and Hebrew is not featured as being very important in the Green Paper. This is to be regretted if for no other reason than that of providing access to the main Mediterranean cultural roots of Western civilisation. It is very difficult to understand positive references to 'European identity' while at the same time seriously neglecting its linguistic classical bases. While I would not favour a return to Hellenist or Roman European mono-culture, I do not feel that Irish educational programmes should not neglect the introduction of the young to the languages and

cultures of the classical civilisations.

Human beings seek meaning as well as material interests. Without a thorough education in the humanities, arts and literature, not to mention philosophy, politics and religion, it is difficult to ensure the education of the young in a manner likely to enable them to live a more meaningful life.

The playing down of religion and of the role of voluntary religious bodies in the Irish education system either ignores the history and current practice of Irish education or envisages an exclusively State controlled secular system and curriculum in the future. It would have been more honest to have spelled out this intention, which would have many ideological implications. The continuity of religious pluralism in Ireland would be affected by the effective removal of religion and Church, Synagogue and Mosque interests in the education of the young.

Youth Work Services

The formal recognition of youth work services as informal developmental education is, in my opinion, something to be welcomed in the Green Paper. The excellent work over the years by the National Youth Council of Ireland and by the Youth Section of the Department of Education in developing this aspect of education has made this due recognition possible. It is also good to see that the wise recommendations of the 1984 Costello Report are incorporated into the Green Paper.

The role of youth work services through Irish could also play a very significant role in providing students with extra-curricular opportunities to practise the use of Irish in real life situations. Hopefully, the Department of Education will encourage schools and colleges to support participation in youth clubs (in Irish or English) and make their halls and theatres available for activities as well as encouraging members of staff to provide counselling services to the various youth groups.

Social Education

One of the most urgent needs likely to arise in modern societies in the years ahead will be social and domestic skills to cope with the growing complexity of urban and urbanised living. The transmission of social and domestic skills in the past was adequately provided for informally in the family and neighbourhood environment. This is not the case today. Therefore, social and political (in the non-partisan sense) education will become an essential part of the universal curriculum in order that those leaving school and college will have sufficient knowledge and skill to participate fully as adults in their community.

The recognition of social studies in the second-level curriculum in the Green Paper is to be welcomed. "Ach, is é a locht a laighead!" Unfortunately, insufficient emphasis is given to the various disciplines, i.e. anthropology, political science, social psychology and sociology. Environmental and social studies as alternatives to history and geography in the curriculum of the junior cycle (p.94) is hardly a great advance. The mention of a "module in political and social studies" in the senior cycle would also be optional.

Regrettably, social and domestic challenges in modern society are not optional!

The area of social education needs much more prominence in our second and third level curricula than has been recognised to date. The provision of social studies would be a very important response to the needs of "a changing world".

Adult and Community Education

Chapter 9 of the Green Paper deals with "Adult and Second Chance Education". It would be presumptuous for me to give the official reaction of the Adult Education agencies to this chapter. There are, however, a number of points which I feel should be noted:

- the formal recognition of adult education as an integral part of the educational system is to be welcomed, provided it does not lead to "over-formalisation". One of the most attractive aspects of adult learning has been the "informal" pedagogical methodology.

- the approach is quite minimal and it would be a most serious mistake to have future adult educational policy in Ireland limited to what is stated in Chapter 9.

- the vision of adult education in the Green Paper seems to focus on remedial and second chance education (which are very important in themselves). Adult Education is, however, primarily developmental and of benefit to all citizens.

- the inclusion of sport education in Chapter 9 is difficult to fathom, unless there was not sufficient substance on adult education itself to fill the chapter! This is not to say that sport education is not something worthwhile.

- the vision of the development of adult education in the Green Paper is, in my opinion, very disappointing and little more than token.

Despite its lacunae and problematic orientation, the Green Paper has, at least, provided the interested public with an agenda for discussion. The Minister(s) and all involved in its production and publication merit our thanks. It is indeed an historic document.

The points made in this brief commentary are intended to highlight certain ambiguities and inadequacies, all of which are possible to correct before the expected White Paper is issued. I hope the points raised are helpful.

Try Telling That To Socrates

Dr. Ted Fleming.

Dr. Ted Fleming is a lecturer in Communications at Dundalk R.T.C. He delivered the above paper at an Aontas General Meeting to discuss the Green Paper on Nov. 14th 1992.

I remember Paulo Freire telling the story of how he once had dinner with a man in Guinea-Bissau where he was advising the government. During the meal the man began to explain how colonialism must have done some good and left behind some good institutions, e.g. civil service or school system. Immediately, Freire stood up and walked away without saying another word. Freire explained his actions by saying that there was in fact no other way that he could get that man to think about what he was suggesting.

I am tempted to say that there are good things in this Green Paper. Yes there is a commitment to gender equality, better access to third level for adults, training for adult educators, the strengthening of the key role of the AEOs, important recognition of the learning needs of travellers, etc.

But other images keep coming into my mind.

I got a strong image of a cruise ship on the high seas with a full load of passengers. They spend their time sorting out the seating arrangements and trying to attain some element of equality. There will be no better cabins, all will get the same meals, have occupational therapy and there will be Sport for All. While all the while there is not time for asking where the ship is going and why? In whose interest are all these diversions being organised?

There is one final image I have which makes it clearer what I see as the problem. Were you at Dancing at Lughnasa? The story of a family and its relationships, the women, their hopes, dreams, fears, insecurities and jealousies. But it is only when they dance that you see a whole dimension that is otherwise hidden. Suddenly, you understand. You can feel the buried energies, the passion, the feelings, the souls of these women. The Mundy sisters in Ballybeg are Brian Friel's way of underlining the power of memory. The Green Paper is Lughnasa without the Dancing. It has no passion, no soul, no insight, no energy, no philosophy that stands up to even the most basic critique.

Why?

There are two topics that I want to focus on. Firstly, the term disadvantage is problematic. Secondly I think there are enormous problems with the use of the concept enterprise culture. Both these problems are so serious that the adult educator, I believe, must come to the conclusion that the document is fatally flawed. Let me explain what I mean in detail.

The Problem with Education for the Disadvantaged or Trickle Down Education

The Green Paper's approach to adult education is basically remedial. Let's find out

what people lack - jobs, literacy, training, etc. It hints that adult education will remedy this lack. Adult Education is seen primarily as something that will give people a second chance. At one level this is hugely welcome. Who could possibly be against a second chance? I'm in favour of a second chance. But what the Green Paper hides is any awareness of the long tradition in sociological literature which criticises the patronising, paternalistic and ideological assumptions on which such ideas are usually based.

The reasons for disadvantage are not lack of education or lack of anything but social, political and economic. This paper sees disadvantage as located in the individual, the family or the area in which people live and this disguises the structural causes of poverty, inequality, sexism and educational disadvantage. Disadvantage and deficit are embedded in the class system and the patriarchal society. Adult education questions this Green Paper's pathological presentation of disadvantage which makes individuals feel responsible for their poverty. Adult learning at its best and when it is being most significant and vital leads people to question the economic and social structures in which the creation of disadvantage occurs. Trickle down education as proposed here like trickle down economics is already a discredited policy of the Thatcher and Reagan era.

It is important that we do not become seduced either by the notion that lack of education is the cause of disadvantage or more importantly that it is the solution. People are poor not because they lack something. Education is a popular solution to social and political ills. If they became more like us everything would be fine. Not true. The deficit or lack that needs to be remedied is not in individuals but in the social and political system which produces the deficit or poverty.

This privatization of the deficit by locating it in the individual must be resisted by adult education which has an immensely more powerful vision of itself. The language of adult education and its vision is full of ideas like critical awareness, empowerment, emancipation, consciousness raising, feminism, women's education participation, social action, social change, democracy, solidarity and working with people not for them. Reading the Green Paper would lead one to believe that this vision, philosophy and system of values does not exist. How can we support a policy which ignores so much of what informs the thinking and practice of what we do? How can we support a way of thinking about education which uses the concept disadvantaged when it means working class, poor and women. How can we support a document and its proposals when it ignores sociology which explains the ways in which unequal society reproduces itself?

The Enterprise Culture or Let's Join Pinnochio in Pleasure Island and become Donkeys

The Green Paper is most ideological when it attempts to hitch the education wagon to the enterprise culture. The first sentence in the Green Paper is about the enterprise culture. Education, schooling and adult education, is now about jobs - a tool of the economy. Just as interest rates, exchange rates, tax allowances are used to regulate the economy so now adult education will be a servant of the economy. This unannounced

new definition of adult education is the one in command throughout the paper and not the one announced at the beginning of Chapter 9. Adult education is on the verge of becoming one more technique for regulating the economy. This is a most disturbing definition of adult education. Adult Education is not to unquestioningly support the enterprise culture. In fact at its best it is the process which most effectively critiques the assumption on which the enterprise culture is based. At its best adult education is part of the process which links the enterprise culture with poverty and oppression. This culture is part of the problem and not part of the solution. This Green Paper invites us to run into the open arms of the enterprise culture without at any stage analysing the causal link between this culture and poverty.

Look at a quote from Roche and Tansey, "Industrial Training In Ireland" [a background volume to the Culliton Report]. I paraphrase: Because education makes such financial demands on the State it is imperative that the returns on education be improved.

"The only clearway of achieving this result is to ensure that education spending is more tightly focused on the domestic manpower requirements of the economy." [p. 20]

How could you imagine supporting such a vision in front of a tribunal of great educational thinkers? Try telling Socrates that his aim was to support the search for jobs, skills, industry, trade, profit. His aim was much more subversive. The absence of reference to the humanities, social studies throughout the paper confirms the conviction that the economy is king. It has replaced society. Thatcher abolished society. So does this Green Paper. Unknowingly. My proposal is to follow Paulo Freire's actions and walk away from the table. Adult education cannot be discussed on the basis of what is presented here. The great debate has to stop and the authors have to return to the study of adult education and redeem the features which make it the most exciting, powerful, empowering experience in the lives of so many people. This potential needs to be channelled in the service of society, not in service of the enterprise culture.

Response to the Green Paper

A Response from AONTAS

Bernie Brady

Bernie Brady is President of Aontas - The National Adult Education Association and Director of the Dublin Literacy Scheme.

In responding to the Green Paper on Education. I would like to say at the outset that, as an adult education practitioner I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate about the future of education in this country. I would also like to respond as a practitioner, and I base my response on my experience of dealing with adult students for the past twelve years. I suppose at the end of it all I am an eminently practical person, and, in my function as an adult education provider I would seek in the Green Paper positive practical recommendations - which address the problems currently facing adults in education.

The green paper provides much food for thought and it gets off to a good start with six key aims broadly relating to equity, resources, training and accountability. It is not my intention to examine in this paper the philosophy behind these aims, although they raise serious questions for me about the nature of education. Some of them make me uneasy, in particular the emphasis on an enterprise culture. I'm still not quite clear what is meant by that. As a parent of a school-going teenager I am more concerned that she will get a well rounded education where she can have an opportunity to try as many things as possible in an open and flexible environment.

As an adult educator I am concerned with the same things. There are many varieties of adult students. Some are people who pursue hobby or leisure courses; some are in what has become known as "sustainable jobs" and wish to upgrade their knowledge and skills; many are women who are interested in improving their education perhaps with a view to future entry into the labour market; some are people with no sustainable jobs, known generally as the unemployed, as if they were a homogeneous group; some adult students have formal educational qualifications at second and third level. Many do not. In numbers they make up, at the last count, approximately 200,000 people.

Currently on offer to this mixed bag of people are a huge variety of courses offered by a range of statutory and voluntary providers. The bulk of the courses are short, part-time and self-financing. Some are accredited, many are not. In Higher education there is a limited number of places available to mature students. In some institutions we are seeing the beginnings of modular courses, where credits can be accumulated over a period of time. Some people opt to do courses through the medium of distance learning. All these courses are expensive, especially if you happen to survive on unemployment benefit. There is little or no financial support available to the adult student. And there are few essential support services which make it possible to pursue educational courses. Adults who wish to return to education, particularly adults who are labelled "disadvantaged", face a number of barriers in the "snakes and ladders" route to achieving educational qualifications.

Adult Students' Needs

What is it that these adult students want? From the experience of working with adult students and from the scant research done by agencies such as AONTAS, Combat Poverty and the universities, we can make a number of assumptions.

Adult students want open access to courses which are flexible and which meet their needs, whether these are basic literacy needs or the opportunity to pursue second or third level qualifications. For adult students to be able to do this there would appear to be a number of basic requirements.

- There is a need for good quality advice, guidance, information and counselling so that adults can make decisions which are in their own best interests. This will include not just information about courses but information about social welfare benefits, grants etc.
- Courses need to be delivered to adults in a variety of locations, ways and times which take account of their family and personal needs.
- Adult students require access to accreditation and to credit accumulation and transfer for the purposes of accessing further education and training opportunities.
- There is a need for continuing support for adults while they are pursuing their studies. This includes access to courses which help develop study skills, foundation courses, on-going guidance and childcare facilities.
- Teachers of adults need to be aware of their learning needs and should be trained in methodology which can address these particular needs.
- Finally, adults must have access to funding and bursary systems which accommodate their financial needs.

Green Paper's Response

These are broadly the issues which are relevant to adult students wishing to pursue educational courses. How does the Green Paper on Education address these needs? In its section on adult education it states clearly that learning is a lifelong process and that access to learning is important for all people, especially those who have not reached their full potential. It does attempt to address some of the issues I have outlined above.

For example it is stated that barriers to participation will be identified and eliminated progressively as resources permit. What does this mean? How are those barriers to be identified and when will resources permit?

The Green Paper states that the needs of many mature students can be met by facilitating their return to mainline education programmes, while special programmes specifically designed for adults must be provided for others. This is something adult educators and students have been seeking for years. What the Green Paper does not state is how this is going to be done and who is going to pay for it.

These are suggestions about some of the options which might be opened up to adult students. For example there is the welcome recognition of the increasing demand for further and higher education from adults. The Paper suggests that third level institutions

will be encouraged to provide mature students with access to a wide range of accredited courses. They will also be encouraged to develop current initiatives which will involve modularisation of courses and credit accumulation. It does not identify what encouragement will involve. Does it involve more resources, support structures or quota arrangements for adult students? There are no practical proposals for the development of this course of action outlined in the Green Paper.

Some changes are suggested in the grants system to facilitate the funding of courses for mature students. This is a practical and welcome suggestion. However, even if course fees are covered by a grant, there are the extra costs to the student of books, travel, subsistence, childcare. If the student happens to be unemployed, how is s/he to meet these expenses? We know that the take-up of places on courses that are subsidised increases dramatically. If the government is serious about equity in education, then it has to address these issues in practical terms and with adequate resources.

The establishment of the new certification bodies will address the accreditation needs of adults who wish to pursue further education and training. A working group has already been set up to examine the issues involved. Are resources going to be allocated to researching what the accreditation needs of adult students are? How is the accreditation system to be monitored and evaluated? These are questions which are not addressed in this paper.

There is an acknowledgement that the teaching of adults differs significantly from teaching students within the school system. Again this is a welcome step forward but like many other issues it is left hanging in mid air. How are the training needs of adult educators to be addressed? Will training take account of the many self-trained and voluntary adult educators who have learned their skills through experience or by taking courses but who don't have paper qualifications? Will it take account of the need for retraining teachers whose skills and experience have been in the formal school system? Who is going to be responsible for this training. Where and when will it take place and who will finance it?

Adult Literacy

The section on adult literacy acknowledges the work done already by groups on the ground and projects organised through the resources of the ALCE budget, but as a literacy organiser, who often has 'long waiting lists' of students and who often cannot accommodate people because of lack of space, I find it an extraordinary statement that "generally speaking, the scheme has succeeded in meeting demand in that all those coming forward could be accommodated". It is our experience that publicity is to be avoided because we would be unable to cope with demand. As a literacy organiser I am alarmed by the paragraph on p166 which states that:

"Special attention will be directed towards meeting the needs of those who have basic literacy skills but who are not functionally literate, and a multifaceted diagnostic and remedial programme will be developed in consultation with FÁS and other educational agencies. A clear statement will be developed of the different skills which

are involved in functional literacy and of the level of competence in these skills which might be regarded as minimum requirements in different situations in the home, community and at work."

I am alarmed at the functional and remedial tone of this paragraph. It reminds me of the old curative approach of the early seventies, which I thought had long been abandoned because of what we have learned about literacy in the last twenty years.

In our own recent research, 'Learning To Be Literate' it is clear that the holistic approach to literacy and basic skills succeeds in taking into account the whole life and situation of a person and not just the bits that other people assume adults need in order to survive. I would be highly critical of the philosophy contained in this paragraph and would worry about such a limited base for the development of provision.

The Missing Gender

Finally, a glaring omission in the adult education section of this report is the omission of women's education. It is particularly disappointing since, contained within the equity section is the aim of ensuring gender equity. I wondered on examining this aim whether gender equity was confined to the under 21s. One of the largest growth areas in adult education in the past five years has been the growth of women's education. These groups mostly form and manage themselves and are generally run in the daytime, often with the support of local VECs. AONTAS has recently completed a survey of day time education and circulated questionnaires to 250 groups. Over 70 groups are members of our organisation. They cater for anything from 20 to 1200 adults at any one time.

They pursue all kinds of adult education courses and include many women, who, because they are not on a live register, are not included in statistics anywhere. They also include a cadre of highly skilled and experienced women who have done numerous courses which give them no credit. I would like to ask where they are in the Green Paper. They have the same requirements of any of the adult students mentioned earlier. In particular they have childcare needs if they wish to pursue their education. I would ask the thinkers and writers of the Green Paper to think again and write women into the education act, not just women under 21 but women as lifelong learners.

Obviously it is difficult to address all the issues involved in a short paper like this so I have chosen to highlight the ones that most immediately concern us. I welcome the inclusion of the issues addressed in the Green Paper but I am concerned at the lack of practical suggestions and procedures for development. I am also concerned about the recurring phrase, "as resources permit", or "as resources become available".

Currently £9 million is spent on adult education. This is 0.5 of 1% of the total education budget. On the graph in the appendix, adult education isn't even named. At least it is named in the Green Paper. If the government is serious about development, which I believe it is, then they must also be serious about how they can put this development into practice. While it is accepted that a Green Paper is a discussion document, nevertheless it does raise practical questions especially about the resourcing of education and these I hope will be heard as a result of these discussions.

The Green Paper - A Response from the Adult Education Organisers' Association

Pat Stanton

Pat Stanton is chairperson of the Adult Education Organisers' Association and AEO with Co. Mayo VEC.

Introduction

I would like to put forward some reactions to the Green Paper expressed by members of my association. Briefly I would like to deal with these aspects under the following headings: Policy, Structure, Resources, Provision and Training.

While the AEOA welcomes the general commitment in the Green Paper to adult education and to the emphasis on life long learning, we will argue that overall it fails to address adequately the key issues which are the establishment of a coherent policy and the provision of the necessary resources and structures to implement that policy.

Policy

It would appear that among educationalists there is a fair measure of agreement on the philosophy of adult education, and both the Murphy and Kenny Reports in the past have enunciated the principles of this philosophy, as well as other publications by various bodies involved in adult education. Where the difficulty arises is in the area of an overall policy framework for the implementation of aims and objectives. The AEOA would maintain there is little evidence of this in the Green Paper other than vague references to various measures which do not appear to have been thought out or planned.

It is essential that if an effective co-ordinated adult education service is to be delivered throughout the country, then a system based on a coherent policy must be established.

Structures

It is perhaps this issue which gives the most concern among adult education organisers as it does not appear to have been addressed at all in the Green Paper. It is too simplistic to say that the responsibility for the delivery of the service can be devolved in the main to the post primary institutions. Why? Because this poses a whole range of questions in regard to funding, staffing and programme provision. Will these institutions for example be given any funding to enable them to develop effective adult education programmes and who in the schools will be responsible for implementing adult education?

The AEOA would make the following recommendation in regard to structures for the delivery of adult education:

- A National Central Executive Agency should be established within the Department of Education which would be responsible for policy, planning and regulating aspects of adult education.

- An appropriate independent local statutory body in each county equipped with the necessary resources: - buildings, finance, personnel and with responsibility for the delivery of adult education services at local level.

In connection with the above proposals, the role of the AEO would have to be examined and while the association welcomes the reference in the Green Paper to the strengthening and clarifying of the role of the AEO, we would go a step further and say that the AEO is no longer merely an organiser but, due to the expansion and development of adult education provision in recent years, has now in effect become a director of services. This increased responsibility and changing status must be properly recognised.

Resources

The funding of adult education has for many years been a very contentious issue. The Green Paper indicates there will be an expansion of programmes such as the VTOS and Adult Literacy Schemes and this is welcomed. However, it is the opinion of the AEOA that the commitment to providing a separate and realistic budget for adult education is vague and inadequate. Phrases like "funds permitting" and "the reallocation of existing resources" do not inspire a great deal of confidence that the matter will be addressed effectively.

Perhaps one of the single most negative aspects of the current funding of adult education is the application of the so called self financing principle. This has been most detrimental to adult education and has given rise to much inequity. The Department has been most inflexible in its application of this principle and a situation has been created where those who can afford to pay for certain aspects of adult education benefit the most. For example, we have the anomaly whereby an unemployed person on a VTOS course doing leaving certificate English pays no fees, whereas an unemployed person following an ordinary night class for the same subject is normally required to pay a fee.

The AEOA would propose that the present self financing system be abolished and replaced by a more equitable system which would exempt fees from all types of basic and second chance education.

In regard to other types of resources such as personnel and buildings and equipment, the AEOA proposes that in the case of

- (a) personnel - the roles of tutors, principals, post holders, literacy organisers, co-ordinators and those working with the unemployed be clarified
- (b) that a proper career structure for adult educators be established
- (c) buildings and equipment - that adult education should have access to and use of existing school buildings and equipment
- (d) that purpose-built adult education premises be established.

Adult Education Provision

The Green Paper gives much emphasis to the development of adult basic education and the AEOA welcomes this, particularly in regard to the increased support for literacy programmes and the specific targeting of the disadvantaged. Also, we welcome the commitment to continue and expand the training of tutors. However, the AEOA is concerned that there appears to be an over reliance on existing resources and post-

Maastricht funds and also the continued dependence on volunteers. We recognise the valuable contribution made by voluntary groups, but these groups should be given much-needed recognition and support.

It is important that adult basic education should be properly funded and that the contribution of those who are involved in its delivery should be fully recognised.

While the AEOA accepts the need to emphasise basic adult education, it also recognises the need to develop and expand the existing day and night provision, and the Green Paper does not give any indication that this area would be addressed in an effective and co-ordinated manner.

In regard to access to provision, the AEOA is of the opinion that more cognisance should have been taken of the barriers to adult education which, for example, were clearly outlined in the Kenny report. It is essential that a serious commitment be given to identify barriers and deal with them if we are to facilitate participation in adult education. In this connection too, the AEOA would propose that it is essential that an information and guidance service for adults be set up in each local statutory area. This service should have the necessary resources in terms of staff, funding and facilities.

If adult education provision is to meet the needs of its participants, then those delivering the service must be adequately trained, but at present opportunities for training in adult education are limited. The teaching of adults is a skilled professional task and should be undertaken by people who have had the appropriate training. A system of tutor training must be part of future adult education provision.

While welcoming the references in the Green Paper to the need for accreditation and certification and the commitment to access to modularised courses, the AEOA would like to see a firmer commitment from third level colleges to accommodate mature students. In other words, third level colleges should have a clearly identified policy which encourages mature students to apply for courses.

Finally, in the area of provision for adult education there is an ongoing need to respond to the changing demands in society. In order to identify these demands and then respond to them, basic research is required. The AEOA is disappointed at the lack of commitment in the Green Paper to provide resources for research.

Concluding Comments

In the course of its consideration of the Green Paper the AEOA would summarise its major concerns as follows:

- The absence of any real coherent policy for adult education.
- The lack of commitment to investment in resources at national and local level for the development of adult education.
- The lack of clarification on national and local structures.
- The lack of clarification of the role of the AEO.

It would appear that unless some of the critical issues in regard to structures and resourcing are addressed, adult education will continue to be organised in an ad hoc, unplanned manner. It would also continue to have a marginalised role in the education system and thus will fail to make any significant contribution to the individual within the community.

Adult Literacy in the Green Paper

Tony Downes

Tony Downes is the chairperson of NALA and Adult Education Organiser with County Dublin VEC

I welcome this opportunity on behalf of N.A.L.A. to contribute to the national debate on Education initiated by the Minister's Green Paper. At present, we in N.A.L.A. are engaged in the process of preparing our Agency's considered and formal response for submission to the Minister. In the meantime, I am glad to take the opportunity to share with you some initial and largely (though by no means exclusively) personal reflections, reactions, responses and even prejudices regarding aspects of the Minister's discussion paper.

I will attempt to:

- outline briefly some key principles which inform the understanding and outlook of those of us working in the adult literacy movement;
- consider whether the Green Paper enshrines and affirms these values or not;
- identify some of the positive aspects of this document
- indicate some negative elements and
- offer some proposals on structure for discussion

Key Principles of Adult Literacy Work

The bible for those of us engaged in adult literacy work is the Policy Document of the National Adult Literacy Agency entitled "Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work" (Revised edition 1991) and I will be quoting extensively from its first section in outlining the key principles referred to above. Four basic principles are identified as follows:

Adult Literacy Work is Holistic i.e. it includes aspects of personal development - emotional, social and economic. It covers much more than mastery of the technical skills of reading and writing... "The negative experiences at school" include neglect, isolation... abuse which have left some adults deeply alienated from schools and schooling". Those students who were labelled as failures often internalise the projected low image of themselves and do not develop a sense of their own worth ... Work with adult students has to take account of all these experiences.¹

Adult Literacy Workers must always recognise and respect the Adult Status of the Learner. This demands special and distinctive teaching responses. Most people involved in adult education have experience of only one system of education, of the formal sectors at primary, secondary or third level. This system has failed many people because it is too subject centred, non-participatory, competitive and irrelevant to the needs of students and it should not be copied for adults when they seek help...

It is important that the learners' life experiences be brought into their studies, that their needs be considered at all stages and that an open and equal relationship between tutor and student be established from the beginning".²

Adult Literacy Students need to become active not passive learners who "should always be enabled to contribute their skills, knowledge and experience both to the learning process and to the organisation of provision at all levels."³

Learning is a lifelong process. "Adult Literacy needs to establish links with other existing educational activities and to initiate new developments in continuing education..."⁴

To sum up then, "adult literacy work shares its basic principles with that form of adult education which emphasises the relationship of the learning to the development of the whole person; recognises the student's life experience as something valuable to be brought into the study; supports the idea of the student as giver as well as taker of skills and knowledge; encourages the principle of participation of the student at all levels. These key features imply an open and democratic style of learning."⁵ In one sentence - good adult literacy work (as with all adult education) is essentially learner-centred.

Green Paper and Literacy Work Principles

So how does the Green Paper enshrine, reflect, endorse, affirm and support the principles outlined above? To answer briefly - it doesn't! In keeping with, and flowing directly from, the instrumental and utilitarian philosophy of education which permeates the entire document - the essentially pragmatic vision (if that's not a contradiction in terms!) is revealed in all its starkness in the Section (9.5) of Chapter 9 devoted to Adult Literacy and Future Developments. There the central conceptual framework is derived from the OECD report ominously entitled "Adult Illiteracy and Economic Performance. (1992)"

Thus the problem is identified as "functional illiteracy" afflicting "high proportions of individuals falling within the lower and middle ranges of literacy scales who are unable to participate fully in the economic and civic life of today's advanced nations". To provide the basis for more extensive initiative in the future ... a national survey is proposed seeking to assess competency levels in various categories in reading and writing, including communicative and interpretive skills, through an in-depth survey of sample groupings."⁶ Most worrying of all is the promised focus on "meeting the needs of those who have basic literacy skills but who are not functionally literate" and wait for it - "a multi-faceted diagnostic and remedial programme will be developed in consultation with FÁS and other educational and training agencies" for the work force.

What is revealed here is the narrowest and most functional understanding of the nature of adult literacy work. It is totally focused on remedial work to train people to acquire specific technical competencies in reading and writing based essentially on techniques for training developed in military and industrial settings.⁸ This is a model most of us would have considered utterly inappropriate even in the early 80's! While one can sympathise

with a Departmental preoccupation with prising funding from Europe for adult literacy work, one must ask whether this approach means that those of us committed to adult literacy work must be prepared to sell our souls, vision and ideals for “a mess of European ‘pottage’ ?”

Positive Aspects

Despite the foregoing, it needs to be emphasised that there are indeed many positive aspects in this document relating to Adult Education and Adult Literacy work in particular. These include:

- The fact that Adult Education merits an entire chapter to itself in a Green Paper devoted to a major review/restructuring of the Nation’s education system is to be very much welcomed. It is to be welcomed as a statement and clear indication that adult education is firmly inserted into the national education agenda for the coming decades.
- The clear acknowledgement throughout this Green Paper that adult literacy is indeed a significant reality and an issue in Irish society which needs to be addressed.
- The open recognition that the school system does have a significant role and responsibility in preventing young people from leaving the system without acquiring adequate literacy and numeracy competencies;
- The frequently repeated emphasis on the intention of removing access barriers to basic and second-chance education for adults.
- The intended targeting of resources on schools in disadvantaged areas and students with special needs.
- Recognition of the increasing scope of adult literacy tuition including local community based schemes, adults in the workplace, unemployed adults, early school leavers and travellers.
- The stated commitment to continue and develop the Adult Literacy and Community Education Scheme (ALCES) of funding to meet the needs of those lacking basic literacy skills as well as a similar commitment to the current tutor training programme being carried out by N.A.L.A. (though unacknowledged in the Green Paper!).

Negative Aspects

Some negative aspects which are a cause for concern include:

- The impoverished, pragmatic philosophical premises and assumptions which underpin the entire approach to education adopted in this document are particularly starkly revealed in its narrow perception of the adult literacy challenge as indicated earlier in this paper. Instead of being learner centred, the approach is task and skill centred.

- The monastic silence in this document concerning structures for Adult Education in general and Adult Basic Education in particular is puzzling. The contrast between the Green Paper and the Kenny Report, "Lifelong Learning" is nothing short of startling.
- The totally thunderous silence, in particular on N.A.L.A.'s role in the future scheme of things is too Machiavellian to figure... either this vow of silence has been taken by the Department to tell us that our role is so obviously central to the development of future provision that we don't need to be even mentioned or that no future role whatever for N.A.L.A. is planned in the new dispensation - we are merely mini-leaguers in the ball park!
- On local education structures we are informed that VECs, while losing responsibility for schools and teachers..." will play an important co-ordinating and support role at the local level... in adult education, including literacy and community education, youth and sport services and a range of other special (unspecified) services."⁹ Does this mean that adult education and adult literacy in particular are destined to become institutionally marginalised in this education blueprint for a changing world? It's bad enough to be marginalised but to be assigned to a marginalised institution for development purposes...
- 'Quality Assurance' is one of the new buzz words looming largely in this document when considering standards within the school system. It is notably absent when considering adult literacy provision and in particular with reference to funding/promoting service provision or career opportunities for adult literacy workers.
- The coyness throughout this document on funding commitments to develop a dynamic adult education system into the twenty-first century and an effective adult basic education service can be described in one word - underwhelming!
- Finally, one detects an almost pathological aversion in the Green Paper to addressing the how and the when and the who question - even as a basis for discussion.

Proposals

I offer the following two proposals concerning structures as a possible focus for discussion.

- **At national level**, I believe we need to establish an Adult Basic Education Agency mandated, structured and resourced to spearhead implementation of an integrated, enlightened and essentially developmental model of adult basic education nationwide.
- **At local level**, structures will be required to mediate quality provision of adult basic education. Whether these intermediate structures should be based on the existing country structures or a combination of a number of counties with a broader remit is the subject of much animated discussion at present. Whatever emerges, it will be vital that all education sectors, including adult basic education, are effectively represented and actively involved.

To finish then may I add my hope that if this Green Paper ever graduates to the level of a White Paper, which in turn translates into an effective Education Act, that the process will have been as important and as valuable as the product and that the therapy of the current and ongoing debate will have cured us of the aversion to asking and answering hard questions.

References

1. Guidelines for good Adult Literacy Work - Policy Document of the National Adult Literacy Agency. Revised Edition 1991, p.10. (passim).
2. Ibid., pp.11-12.
3. Ibid., p.12.
4. Ibid., p.13.
5. Ibid.
6. Education for a Changing World - Green Paper, June 1992, p.165.
7. Ibid., p.165.
8. Learning to be Literate - A Study of Students' Perceptions of the Goals and Outcomes of Adult Literacy Tuition - April 1992. Dublin Literacy Scheme, 3 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1.
9. Green Paper, p.126.

Feachtas: Óg-Ghluaiseacht na Gaeilge

37 Sráid na bhFínní, B.Á.C. 2.
01-681165

Cur chun cinn na Gaeilge agus forbairt phearsanta agus shóisialta an duine óig, an dá phríomhaidhm atá ag Feachtas. Eagrais daonlathach, neamhspleách is ea Feachtas a fhreastalaíonn ar an aoisghrúpa 12-25. Tá gasraí ar fud na tíre agus reachtáiltear Cúrsaí Oiliúna, Laethanta Spóirt, Comórtais Thráth na gCeisteanna, Comórtais Scoraíochta agus imeachtaí eile. Is balleagras é Feachtas de Chomhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge.

Rúnaí: Cáit Ní Dhurcáin

Five Years of VTOS

A Preview of the Findings of the Tallaght Research Project

Fred Goulding

Fred Goulding is an Adult Education Organiser with County Dublin VEC based in Tallaght.

The VTOS is now in its seventh year of operation in Tallaght. Research into the participants' profile, expectations and assessment of the VTOS has been carried out by the Work Research Centre through the Tallaght Centre for the Unemployed on behalf of the Tallaght Community Reserve Steering Committee.

Forty Four past-participants, whose participation spanned a five-year period, were interviewed.

The final research document is due to be published shortly and here Fred Goulding AEO previews some of the main findings.

Participant Profile

The eligibility criteria for participation in the VTOS place constraints on whom may apply i.e. over 21 years of age and signing on for 12 months or more. These rules effectively guarantee that more men than women are eligible. What are the other characteristics of VTOS participants?

86 percent were between the ages of 25 and 44. Of these half were between 35 and 44.

Over three quarters were married or co-habiting and just under 10 percent were separated. Fourteen percent were single. It is notable that women were much more likely to be single; 46 percent compared with 3 percent. As married women are being much less likely to be signing on and also are unable to absent themselves for the entire day due to family commitments, this figure is not surprising but does point up the inadequacy of the programme in terms of access for all and the need for creche facilities.

Eighty percent of respondents had at least one child and three quarters were renting their accommodation from the local authority.

Previous Educational Experience

Age Leaving School

AGE	14	15	16	17
Men	42%	24%	28%	15%
Women	36%	6%	9%	18%
Total	41%	27%	16%	16%

Over two thirds had left school before the age of 16. 57 percent had no formal educational qualifications while just over one third had junior cycle qualification only

How Had Participants Become Aware of the VTOS?

In Tallaght leaflets were distributed at the Labour Exchange each year of the VTOS. It is interesting to note, however, that in a separate survey of the unemployed in Tallaght, "Life on the Dole" 60 percent had not heard of the VTOS. This points up the need for a concerted, nationwide, centrally organised raising of the profile of the scheme.

The poor advertising of the scheme nationally is in contrast to the large national campaigns of FAS.

Two thirds of participants had heard of the scheme through the Labour Exchange while nine per cent had heard of it through a past participant. In Tallaght we have since used a combination of methods for advertising: Walk-in sessions at the Tallaght Partnership, house-to-house distribution of leaflets in unemployment blackspots and the distribution of leaflets through the Labour Exchange.

Reasons for Coming to the VTOS

When asked to indicate their reasons for availing of the scheme 52 percent stated that they wished to improve their level of education. One fifth stated they wished to improve their chance of finding work. Just over one quarter (27 percent) indicated reasons such as to "meet people", "something to do" and "get off the dole".

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Improve Education	45%	35%
Find Work	27%	0
Something To Do	27%	27%

Problems Encountered While on the VTOS

The factors that affected participants was the difficulty in finding time to study (39 percent), family pressures (23 percent), how to study (14 percent) and lack of confidence (11 percent). A large number, 59 percent, indicated that they had difficulty in studying at home. This finding has implications for the structure of the course - study periods with library facilities should be an integral part of the scheme, although this alone is not sufficient because there is an obvious need for guidance in the form of study methods and confidence building.

Family pressures manifested themselves in terms of the guilt feelings the participants felt because of spending so much time on the course without any extra income.

Financial Difficulties

The VTOS is marketed to the long-term unemployed as being a scheme which will not affect their benefits in any way. While this is true, the respondents had a different perception of costs involved. 47 percent of those in receipt of travel allowance said that

this did not cover the cost of transport and 96 percent said that the meal allowance was insufficient.

Participants indicated that the extra costs accruing to them lay between £5.00 and £10.00 weekly.

The anomalous situation in relation to the £10.00 premium paid to participants on FAS courses but not to VTOS still exists. It is most disappointing to note that the new area allowances which were to be introduced in September and which would have given participants the premium of £10.00 per week plus £2.00 for each dependent child have not been implemented.

In all, 11 percent felt they were financially better off while on the VTOS, 59 percent felt they were about the same while 30 percent felt they were worse off financially.

In addition, 5 percent mentioned foregoing work opportunities as a difficulty relating to participation.

Course Content and Examinations

In Tallaght the general principles underpinning the formulation of the programme has been a focus on the Leaving/Junior Certificate for a core group of subjects augmented by studies in art, computers, social and educational trips/activities outside the classroom. There has been much discussion among adult educators about the relevance of the Leaving Certificate for adults but we must always remember that the majority of participants come on the course to increase their general level of education and they regard the Leaving Certificate as a necessary and attainable goal for them. Achieving this fundamental qualification provides for them a basic standard on which to build further education/training qualifications if they so desire.

Participants focused mainly on academic rather than technical subjects, reflecting the educational bias of participants towards the course. It is also worth reiterating (but should there be a need to do so among adult educators?), that education is a life-long process and that the Leaving Certificate is a foundation on which to build further participation.

Almost half the respondents (48 percent) studied exclusively for Leaving Certificate, 16 percent studied exclusively for Intermediate Certificate and 30 percent combined Intermediate and Leaving certificate examinations.

68 percent sat examinations on completion of their year on VTOS while 23 percent did not sit any exams either because they had left the course or lacked the confidence to do so.

Participants' Perception of the VTOS

Participants were asked to comment on how satisfied they were with subject choices, their input into the course, teaching input, their own group and the venue.

While 59 percent desired a greater input into the construction of the course, 82 percent were happy with the choice of subjects. 75 percent were satisfied with the quality of the teaching and 95 percent felt they had a good rapport with the tutors. Only 21 per cent

were satisfied on the matter of advice on study techniques and this reflects the situation that for the participants at that time there was no structured, on-going, career/study guidance.

On the matter of ability mix in the group, 48 percent indicated that the wide range of abilities in the group has caused them problems. In fact 71 percent noted that the ability level of their group was very mixed.

In order to rectify the above problems structured career advice is now a feature of the VTOS in Tallaght and because we have four distinct programmes running, we are able to provide courses at a number of levels from basic literacy upwards.

Because the VTOS in Tallaght took place in a second level school there was a feeling of isolation among the adult students. Only seven percent were satisfied with the opportunities afforded to them to meet other adult learners and eighty-six percent expressed a wish to meet other adult learners.

The advantages of providing several VTOS programmes at a number of different levels, in the same venue, ideally an adult education centre where there would be a range of adult education activities taking place, are obvious.

Perceived Benefits to Participants of VTOS

Much has already been documented on the increased self-confidence and well-being of those who take part in the VTOS and indeed this research bears this out.

<i>Benefit</i>	<i>%</i>
Personal Benefit (confidence, self-esteem etc.)	77
Education	42
Off the dole	11
No Benefit	9

Participants were asked what were the outcomes immediately after participating in the VTOS.

Signed on	68
Got a job	16
FAS scheme	11
Second year on VTOS	2
Domestic duties	2

However at the time of the survey - which spans five VTOS years - a different picture emerges.

Working full-time	18
Working part-time	7
Training programmes	5
Full-time education	5
Unemployed	55
At home	9

We see that thirty-five percent of participants were engaged in activities that are work, training or education related. Forty-three percent of participants reported that they had been employed at some time since completing the VTOS.

Those who secured employment were less likely to have been unemployed for more than three years, were more likely to have had some educational qualifications and to have availed of training programmes. They were also more likely to have sat examinations at the end of the course.

Subsequent Participation in Education and Training

SES/Training	32%
Education	21%

It would seem reasonable to deduce that having participated in the VTOS participants are more ready and able to access programmes to further their desire for improvement in their education, training, or social conditions.

When asked how the VTOS could be improved, 48 percent indicated that a better venue was their priority. While this could be attributable in part to local difficulties in finding suitable accommodation, this response, taken in conjunction with the findings on the difficulties participants had in studying at home and their desire to interact with other adult students, reinforces the necessity to hold the VTOS in an adult education centre, properly resourced and equipped.

The next most significant factor related to the teaching staff. Thirty nine percent of participants indicated that "better teachers" were needed. This result must be taken in context with the finding that 75 percent were satisfied with the quality of the teaching and 95 percent felt that they had a good rapport with the teaching staff. There is an obvious need for inservice training for VTOS tutors and it should be said that tutors, whose educational experience may have almost exclusively been at second level schools, may not initially understand that in teaching on the VTOS, an holistic approach must be taken to the needs of the participants. All factors - social, economic, family personal, educational - must be taken into account collectively when working with participants. Indeed there are so many issues that can affect the lives of the long-term unemployed that sometimes the educational aspects of the scheme may become secondary. The importance therefore of looking at the participant's needs in a truly holistic sense cannot be over emphasised.

The next factor that concerned respondents was the ability mix of the group. 23 percent rated this as worthy of improvement.

One fifth of respondents indicated better linkage to other opportunities and that there should be less academic content. Surprisingly only 18 percent saw more financial support as a means of improving the scheme - last in their list of improvements.

That the VTOS has been immensely successful scheme is without question. Participants have indicated that they have benefited educationally, socially and personally. Yet there are pointers to improvements that can be made such as venue, career development advice and linkage with other programmes.

It is important for educationalists to understand that the VTOS must be seen as but one rung of a ladder of opportunity - educational, training, SES/Community Enterprise Development Programme, employment - for the long-term unemployed. In Tallaght our VTOS programme is now a minimum of two years and is viewed as part of an integrated long-term approach to long-term unemployment within the overall initiative of the local-area Partnership. It is unrealistic to expect that after one or even two years on the VTOS that the majority of VTOS participants will have real access to a diminishing job market.

Having been involved with the VTOS since its inception, I am still convinced that it can effect real, positive and long-term change in the lives of the long-term unemployed. Taken as part of an integrated strategy to improve the position of the long-term unemployed, it could make an enormous and even more effective impact on the problem of unemployment.

Summary of Findings

- Participants are most likely to be men (75%), to be married (75%), to be aged between 25 and 45 (86%), to have left school before 16 (66%) and to have no formal qualifications (57%).
- The highest percentage, 37%, had been unemployed for four years or more with 40% having been unemployed in unskilled manual labour.
- 48 percent regarded education as being a very important factor in securing employment.
- The largest percentage, 52 % came on the scheme to increase their level of education, 27% for something to do and 21% to find work.
- The biggest difficulty participants had was in finding time to study (39%), while 59 percent found it difficult to study at home.
- The range of ability within the group caused a difficulty for a sizeable minority (34%).
- In relation to venue, just under half (48%) rated it as the factor in need of most improvement, 86 percent expressed a desire to be with other adult learners, and 14 percent looked for improvements in canteen and library facilities.
- Over 80 percent desired additional information on education, training, employment and social welfare issues.
- At the time of survey over one third (35%) of past students were participating in employment, SES/training schemes or further education.

Education - a Local Response to Long-term Unemployment?

Edwin Mernagh

Edwin Mernagh is Education Co-ordinator of the Northside Partnership based in Coolock, Dublin. It is one of the twelve PESP companies recently established.

Most of those involved in Adult Education must be aware, at this stage, of the recent growth in a particular sector of the field - education for the unemployed. This growth is particularly evident in areas where "Partnership Companies" have been set up as part of the Programme for Economic and Social Progress. The purpose of this article is to give an overview of the current situation: what is available, and how it is provided. It is not an apology for any of the new schemes and arrangements. Nevertheless, I must at the outset declare my position in favour of an approach whereby adult education is focused on local needs; in the case of an area where there is a high level of unemployment, the content, "delivery", and support systems should reflect that fact and combine to make education accessible to unemployed people.

Adult Education and the Unemployed

This need to "focus" adult education activity was suggested by Dr. Tom Collins in "Adult Education and the Unemployed" (The Adult Learner, 1991), where he further asserts the "inseparability of the political agenda from the educational agenda". This idea is implicit in the key objectives of the overall strategy of the Partnership Companies: "to work with people who are long-term unemployed and those in danger of becoming long-term unemployed in order to improve their skills and self-confidence..... a locally based approach will ensure the better identification of the needs and resources of an area as the basis for the formulation of a highly focused local action plan(which) will ensure a more flexible and more integrated use of resources, based on meeting needs rather than providing programmes and measures in a vacuum".

This "area-Based" approach to the problem of unemployment represents a fundamental change in the attitude of policy makers, correctly identified by Dr. Collins as the major obstacle to progress.

"Policy makers are extremely reluctant to abandon their view of unemployment as a temporary condition..... This view is acknowledged in two related principles underpinning welfare policy: the Eligibility principle and the Availability principle. The Eligibility principle is the one under which it is decreed that welfare must not become more attractive than employment... The Availability principle is that under which the unemployed are effectively barred from a wide range of socially and personally useful activities because it may render them unavailable for work.... The fundamental conditions of unemployment will never change until these assumptions are challenged".

Present Provision

The recent developments in the field of education for the unemployed represent just such a challenge to the system.

What are these "developments"? In the area of part-time adult education, there is, of course, a wide range of courses (both Day and Night) provided in most Vocational and Community schools and colleges; a further range of courses, generally more "specific skill" oriented, is provided in most FÁS centres. Many community-based groups run courses, frequently through the facility of teaching hours provided by VECs Adult Education Organisers, and are working in many areas, providing co-ordination and inspiration; it is a tribute to their work that adult education has managed to prosper in an era of education cuts and budgetary constraint. This all represents a considerable "menu" of courses available, particularly in urban areas where many prospective students would have several centres within reach. Unfortunately, participation in these courses by unemployed people is very poor, even in areas where a local school is a major provider of adult programmes. The reason for this is obvious: unemployed people cannot afford to participate. Fees are the first problem, all the more so since it was decided that adult courses should be "self-financing"; however, other cost factors enter the equation - books, materials, exam fees, childminding. In addition, the style and ethos of many adult programmes tend to reflect the nature of the main participating groups; they do not respond to the needs or desires of unemployed people. The clear exception in this matter is the network of courses provided by the Unemployment Centres. Michael Allen, in "Adult Education in Unemployment Centres" (Adult Learner 1988) describes how each centre "... has developed activities which respond to the needs and existing facilities of its community; but all see themselves very much as a resource to be used by unemployed people in whatever projects they develop".

A Model for Future Development

This could be a model for the process that lies at the heart of the Area-Based Response concept: education for the unemployed must be focused in content and style on the needs of its target group, and delivered in a way that enables unemployed people to avail of it. Each Partnership Company has an Education Co-ordinator allocated to it, with the prime objective of identifying and implementing ways of achieving this focus in their particular area. Where Part-time courses are concerned, there have already been several pilot schemes of courses tailored to the needs of local unemployed people; evaluation of these programmes is proceeding, but there are clear indications of widespread interest in and demand for them. A voucher system to enable unemployed students to avail of courses in the existing adult programmes is also under way (again, on a pilot basis). Further developments can be expected, as the Partnerships (which are little more than a year in existence) move from the planning stage to implementing their objectives.

The change in the nature and scope of education for the unemployed is more obvious in the area of full-time courses. In the first place there is now a large and rapidly growing

range of courses specifically designed to cater for unemployed students; these operate under the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS). This offers participants up to two years full-time education, while retaining all welfare entitlements. These programmes are available at many centres all over the country. The majority are working towards the Leaving Certificate as an objective, but there are also a variety of Foundation courses and vocationally-oriented courses designed along VPT-2 lines. A parallel scheme allows unemployed people to undertake regular VPT or PLC courses and retain welfare entitlements. The VTOS scheme is by no means perfect - it's limited eligibility is one significant problem - but it does represent a revolutionary change in policy. With careful and controlled development, it could form the basis of a superb integrated network of programmes.

Third Level Developments

Developments at Third Level centre mainly on the Third Level Allowance Scheme, which enables unemployed students who have earned a place on a Third Level course to retain their welfare support. Recent changes in the Grant schemes will also help to open up access. Much remains to be done before there is anything like equality of opportunity in this area, but progress has been made. The Finglas Partnership in Dublin has pioneered techniques for supporting unemployed students in the transition to Third Level and there is already a small but significant group who have made this huge step.

It is too early, at this stage, to say whether the developments outlined are an ephemeral phenomenon or the beginnings of a fundamental change in the system. Education has up to now been a key element in the network of privilege that effectively marginalises the unemployed. Real change may well depend on the success or failure of the Area-based approach in demonstrating that education can, in fact, be part of an effective response to problems of long-term unemployment. If it succeeds, adult education may never be the same again!

Having an Adult Education Ball

Ad Hock

This year Ad Hock was the guest of honour at the Annual Gala Ad Ed Ball, where I was presented with an award for my special contribution to Adult Education affairs down the years. Fittingly enough, it is called the Ad Hock Award and I am the first and only recipient. Surprisingly enough, it was my first time attending the Ball and I am sure that readers will be interested in my observations.

It was a beautiful crisp evening and the Prefab looked absolutely fabulous, newly painted for the occasion by the participants from a FAS community enterprise project who happened to be in the vicinity. The gas cooker was very cleverly disguised and the premises was nicely heated by the time the guests arrived. The caretaker was on overtime and had the super sers installed from the night before.

It was quite a night for the fashion conscious. Myself I took note of some ultra chic trench coats. Scarfs or scarves were very much in evidence and there was a very nice line in duffle coats with frayed edges. The VTOS lot who are the people to be seen with at the moment had an impressive array of track suits and anoraks and the Yoga class wore multi-coloured sleeping bags. As usual, Kildare corduroy featured prominently and Joe wore badges with messages like "Vote maybe" and "I'm not drunk, you shilly sit".

The meal was pleasant if not exciting but I did note the nice new line in paper plates and plastic cutlery. The cold meats were overdone and had to be defrosted. Dessert was abandoned when the gas cooker couldn't be located and the pavlova collapsed. Couldn't wait to get the formalities over. The speeches as usual were witty and sometimes hilarious as speaker after speaker referred to Chapter Nine of the Green Paper. Just to give you the flavour. One speaker had this to offer - What's the difference between the wrestler Big Daddy and the Minister for Education? None, they both want a submission. And there were better ones than that.

Now for some juicy bits of gossip. Met Dr Tom who used to be in charge of the show at Aontas before the merger with the Adult Learner. He has moved on now to higher things, if this is possible, and I had a whisper in my ear that a book is contemplated. I can categorically state that there won't be a bishop between the covers but obviously, there will be some sleepless nights at headquarters. Tom has promised to tell all. Bumped into Bibi from the Institute. She looked absolutely stunning and is extremely busy at present lecturing on the diploma course on Green Papers. Accompanied by your man from Maynooth, who is just back from Katonga where he was arranging a failed coup d'etat, which is why you didn't hear anything about it.

A nice little soiree. Spent a short time with the small tightly-knit group from the ICA before trading a few insults with the NALA party. They were led by a TD, who told me that he had a cornucopia of glad tidings recently and some good news as well. Geraldine was charming as ever and she is welcome chez moi anytime.

I know there is a special name for a collection of AEOs but it just doesn't come to mind. Is it a pestilence? A conflagration? Anyway I was delighted to see them coming into their own and word has it that they are the people of the future. For that reason I had a quiet word with the Chief AEO, who is actually quite a well-informed chap, even though he comes from Mayo. Some members of this group looked ill at ease at the dinner table, but I was informed that they are more at home with part-time courses.

Speaking of AEOs brings me to CEOs. It didn't actually. Ad Hock is by nature a cautious person and at this point in time, when I am in close and constant contact with Green Paper framers, I decided that it was best on this occasion to give all CEO's, whether acting or real, the proverbial wide berth. One can't be careful enough, isn't there some legislation about consorting with endangered species?

I ran into a posse from the Peoples' college. Talked for a while with the delightful Sheila, looking as redoubtable as ever. I can't understand why they don't just hand over the country to her and let her get on with it. Someone drew my attention to another group huddled together in a corner. I was informed later that they were members of voluntary adult education committees. I didn't have time to converse with them, since I assumed that they were there to prepare the food and keep the place tidy.

At last, I came into my own as I lingered with the University set. The third levellers as we are sometimes known. We had some meaningful exchanges although the Pedrotti was not conducive to intellectual sparkle. There was some concern expressed about the lack of decent intellectual journals for the publication of substantive refereed articles with copious footnotes for the mutual admiration and appreciation of these particular doyens of academic life. No one mentioned the Adult Learner.

Oh, I almost forgot. The music was, well, unusual. There were several bands playing in different rooms but no one told them it was the Prefab. There was some really contemporary stuff from the PESP INITIATIVE, rhythm and blues from CHAPTER NINE, traditional music was supplied by CÚPLA FOCAL and there was some way out rock 'n roll from a group calling themselves WHATEVER HAPPENED THE JUNKETS.

I've told the organisers that I won't be available next year.

Educational Guidance Service for Adults in Northern Ireland

Eileen Kelly

Eileen Kelly is Director of the Educational Guidance Service for Adults in Northern Ireland

Anne left school at 15, worked in a clothing factory for 5 years until she had the first of her 3 children. She has been at home for 15 years and now she feels the need for qualifications to help her to compete for jobs. She doesn't want to return to factory work. Discussion with an EGSA guidance worker revealed that although Anne had not been employed she had been book-keeping for her self-employed husband and was keen to enrol in an Access course at her local FE College where she brushed up on English and Maths and was introduced to Economics. She completed the Access course and is now a student on a BTEC Business and Finance course.

In many areas of Northern Ireland, one of the problems facing potential adult learners is not so much where to find an appropriate course as how to choose from the increasing adult education provision. Colleges of Further Education and universities are now offering a wide range of courses which are for adults only. Opportunities to study at home are on the increase as is the availability of courses provided by voluntary, statutory and private organisations.

As the provision increases, so too does the number of qualifications and awarding bodies: progression routes appear confused and destinations unclear. The role of Northern Ireland's Educational Guidance Service for Adults becomes more important.

EGSA - the Educational Guidance Service for Adults - exists to help people make informed choices about available learning opportunities. EGSA is a voluntary, independent organisation which was set up in 1967 as an experimental pilot scheme by the Northern Ireland Council of Social Services. It was the first such service in the United Kingdom and has had considerable influence on the pattern of similar services established elsewhere. The Service - originally known as the Adult Vocational Guidance Service - was financed by two charitable trusts for 3 years until the sponsors considered that the need for the Service had been adequately demonstrated. Since 1970 its main funding has come from the Department of Education. EGSA now has charitable status and is governed by a Management Committee which is representative of a broad range of interests including Further and Higher Education, Trade Unions, Broadcasting, Health Service, Libraries and Voluntary Sector.

Carol graduated with an arts degree some years ago. She never had any particularly strong vocational aims and had spent the time since leaving university in clerical work - from which she derived little satisfaction. She had a strong interest in mentally handicapped people and spent most of her spare time in various voluntary activities.

Following discussion with a guidance worker, she applied for full-time work in the caring sector and is now working towards a Social Work qualification.

Educational Guidance

Before describing the operation of the Service, it is important to consider what Educational Guidance is. In its report 'The Challenge of Change' (1) published in 1986, UDACE (Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education) defined Educational Guidance as:

"... the specific area of personal guidance concerned with choices about learning".

UDACE uses the term Educational Guidance to describe a process involving 7 inter-related activities which are quoted here:

Informing - providing information about learning opportunities and related support facilities, without any opportunity to discuss the relative merits of different options.

Advising - helping clients to interpret information and choose the most appropriate option.

Counselling - working with clients to help them discover, clarify, assess and understand their learning needs and the various ways of meeting them.

Assessing - helping clients ... to obtain an adequate understanding of their personal, educational and vocational development, in order to enable them to make sound judgements about the appropriateness of particular learning opportunities.

Enabling - supporting the client in dealing with providing agencies, or in meeting the demands of particular courses.

Advocating - negotiating directly with institutions or agencies on behalf of individuals or groups of clients.

Feeding back - gathering and collating information on unmet, or inappropriately met, learning needs and encouraging providers to respond to these."

UDACE recognised that the 7 activities are provided by a variety of agencies and that some will offer only a limited range of activity. It went on to say, however, that:

"Although many agencies will only undertake some of these activities, a comprehensive service of educational guidance will include all of them".

While educational guidance aims to ensure that all adults are encouraged and assisted to engage in formal or informal learning, it also aims to assist providers of education and training to develop learning opportunities which are appropriate to the needs and interest of adults.

Harry first approached EGSA three years ago as a 20 year old GCSE student wanting to explore his options. He had a fairly unhappy family life including frequent house moves and changes of school with the result that he left school with no qualifications and poor self-image. He was encouraged by the guidance worker to broaden his base of GCSEs before choosing A levels. By doing this he discovered an

interest in and a flair for languages. He is due to take A levels next summer, feels confident about his ability and choice of subjects and has applied for university.

EGSA in Practice

As a comprehensive guidance service, EGSA aims to offer the UDACE combination of activities and is supported in this by the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. Such networks may consist of individuals and organisations and are as important for gathering and disseminating information as they are for the onward referral of clients. EGSA is seen as a body representing individual learners, providing the link between them and education and training providers; between those individuals and potential funders and also between and other information services.

EGSA is used by a wide variety of people who are interested in returning to or continuing in education for a correspondingly wide variety of reasons. They range from those requiring help with basic skills to those contemplating postgraduate or professional qualifications. Users of the Service tend to fit into the following categories:

- those who feel that they missed out on education first time around and who feel generally unfulfilled because of undeveloped educational potential
- those who made the wrong choice in education, training or employment and who now want a “second chance”
- those who lack qualifications to compete in today’s job market
- those who wish to take advantage of new forms of further education or training
- those who wish to change career.

Many people who contact EGSA have straightforward requests for information eg:

- Where can I do a course in Word Processing?
- Can I study for an A level in Maths through Distance Learning?
- Is there a course to help with Report Writing?

These queries are normally dealt with by our Information Officers who gather and store information on education and training provision and who respond to telephone, written and personal enquiries. They produce and regularly update information leaflets listing courses in popular demand and generally provide an essential support service for guidance workers.

EGSA houses the Adult Literacy Referral Service for Northern Ireland - a confidential telephone service through which people with Basic Education needs can be referred to Adult Basic Education Organisers in FE Colleges throughout Northern Ireland. These calls are often straightforward but must be dealt with sensitively and efficiently. More involved queries to this Service are referred to guidance workers and can result in callers being invited for interview to discuss learning needs.

David is 29 and has been unemployed for 2 years. His work experience since leaving school has consisted mainly of casual work. He left school with no qualifications, having had no interest at that time in education. He began to appreciate the need for some

qualifications to help him compete for jobs and was referred to EGSA by the Training and Employment Agency. David was interested in achieving the 'good general education' so many employers look for. He was advised to start with Basic English and Maths at his FE College to refresh his knowledge and restore his confidence. He has progressed to GCSEs in English and Maths and has already acquired a qualification in computer literacy.

Those people who contact EGSA requiring more than information are referred to guidance workers who normally see people by appointment. In order to help reduce waiting lists for appointment - which at peak times can last 4-5 weeks - a "drop-in-day" was introduced last year. This has proved very successful but many people still prefer to wait for an appointment for which one hour is usually allocated. While most of our work is done in our Belfast office we appreciate the importance of outreach and will always respond to requests to talk to groups or adults returning to education. We are also aware that not everyone can travel easily nor cheaply to Belfast for guidance interviews. It has been our policy for the past 4-5 years to offer interviews in different locations throughout Northern Ireland. While our resources do not stretch beyond one office, we have been assisted by two Education and Library Boards - the Southern and Western - to travel to their areas usually once per month and to make use of ELB premises for interviews and talks. Currently we can offer guidance interviews in Craigavon, Derry, Dungannon, Enniskillen, Lurgan and Newry.

Many clients are seen once only, others come back for second and occasionally third interviews. Often a phone call after a first interview can clarify a piece of information and remove the need for a second visit. People who "drop-in" to speak to one of the guidance workers are asked to fill in a brief form outlining education and work experience and reasons for contacting EGSA. Those who are seen by appointment are normally asked to complete a fairly detailed "Introduction Form" in preparation for the guidance interview. Apart from the factual information e.g. education and work experience, health and interests, they are also asked to describe themselves in terms of their main abilities and characteristics, their reasons for contacting EGSA and how they found out about the Service. The last detail is important for statistical and marketing purposes. EGSA does not pay for press adverts but relies on word-of-mouth recommendations and referrals from other agencies. Where literacy problems are stated or suspected, people are not asked to fill in a form. We are often asked to tell about our "successes" - i.e. clients who have "succeeded" - and while there are many examples of adults who have achieved significant academic success, there are probably more who may make only limited progress in terms of education but whose self-esteem or ability to cope has improved. The latter are just as satisfying if not more so for guidance workers. Clients are normally followed-up by letter a few months after interview.

Frances had failed her O levels at grammar school, undertook a Hairdressing course at FE College and worked in Hairdressing continuing in a casual basis while her children were small. Once her children started school, she became interested in furthering her

own education and approached EGSA at that point. Frances was encouraged to consider a WOW course (Wider Opportunities for Women) in her local FE College and there gained the confidence in herself in Foundation Studies which will enable her to apply for a part-time degree course.

As already stated, EGSA does not publicly advertise, yet our appointment waiting lists are long and our requests for information and advice are on the increase. Many of our clients and enquirers find out about us from other clients and enquirers; some are referred by a range of agencies and organisations including:

- education and training providers
- jobmarkets and jobclubs
- health and social service agencies e.g. social workers, doctors, clinical psychologists
- voluntary organisations e.g. Citizens Advice Bureaux, other advisory or counselling organisations

During publicity campaigns for Adult Education, local broadcasting stations may publicise EGSA as a point of contact for potential adult learners. Recently Adult Learners' Week provided such an opportunity and information on EGSA was carried by Ulster Television, local radio and press.

In the Department of Education's report on Further Education published in 1991 - *The Road Ahead (2)* - comment on Educational Guidance was encouraging:

"Many of the responses to Signposts (3) emphasised the need for high quality guidance and counselling services for adults, which would be readily accessible, and which would assist them in identifying the type of course provision most appropriate to their particular needs, abilities and aptitudes. The Government agrees that this is of vital importance, and is considering what might be done to improve and extend existing arrangements."

Even more encouraging was the recently published Report of the Further Education Review Group which was set up by the former Education Minister, Lord Belstead, to advise on the planning and funding of further education. The Review Group recognised the need for increased and more effective guidance and counselling within the further education sector and outside it and recommended ...

"... that there should be more guidance and counselling in schools, colleges and externally that more closely meets the individual's needs; and that there should be a special financial initiative to enable each college to employ its own guidance and counselling officer and the Educational Guidance Service for Adults to increase its client base."

We warmly welcome the Review Group's appreciation of EGSA and look forward to the Education Minister's response to its recommendation which should have lasting implications not only for EGSA but also for existing and potential adult learners.

Robert liked school but left for an apprenticeship in engineering. He progressed to OND but had little interest and eventually dropped out. His dominant interest in his teens and twenties was music, and he made a successful living touring with a band until

he tired of that and settled but could not find a fulfilling job. In discussion with an EGSA guidance worker he acknowledged his great interest in social issues, and revealed an alert, well-informed mind. He had not thought of pursuing study in this area, but once given career and course information and with encouragement, he applied for a Foundation course where he achieved distinctions. He has now applied for a place on a Nursing Degree.

References

1. The Challenge of Change: Developing Educational Guidance for Adults, UDACE 1986
2. The Road Ahead: Further Education in Northern Ireland, Department of Education Northern Ireland 1991
3. Signposts for the 90s: A Review of Further Education, Department of Education Northern Ireland 1990
4. Review of Further Education: Report to the Minister for Education on the Planning and Funding of Further Education in Northern Ireland, June 1992

WERRC

**Women's Education Research and Resource Centre
University College Dublin**

COURSES

MA DEGREE
Full Time & Part Time

GRADUATE DIPLOMA
Full Time & Part Time

CERTIFICATE
Part Time Evening
Open Entry

ACTIVITIES

Public Lectures

Research Seminars

Workshops

Conferences

Publications

For further information, please contact
WERRC, Room 525, Library Building, UCD, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-706 7002

Adult Education in Germany - An Outline

Marie Morrissey

Marie Morrissey is attached to the Pharmacology Department of University College Galway. She has a special interest in comparative education.

Introduction

The expansion and importance of adult and continuing education is likely to be one of the most significant challenges for all European countries in the 1990's. Internationally, there is a growing interest in comparative adult education as is evident from conferences, publications and person-to-person contacts.

Due to my interest in comparative education, a period of five weeks was spent in Germany 1990. The purpose of this trip was to study the German education system at the different levels and part of the visit involved looking at the adult education sector. This paper attempts to give an overview of the provision of adult and continuing education within the country.

In relation to the contents of this paper, two points must be taken into consideration. Firstly, on entry into third level institutions in Germany, students are generally aged nineteen or twenty years. German law recognizes them as adults, although such students are classified as traditional students. When speaking about adult education, adult students are generally defined as being older than traditional students and in relation to this paper, the provision of adult education applies to non-traditional students. Secondly, the visit was conducted in what was formerly West Germany prior to unification in 1990, and the data contained in this paper refers to the West German education system.

Background to Adult Education in Germany Since 1960

In the context of education, the period from the 1960's to the early 1970's are often referred to as the years of political innovation of the German educational system. During that period, many committees were set up with the purpose of reviewing the structure of the various sectors of education and making recommendations for future planning. In relation to adult education, one of the foundation documents was issued in 1960 by the German Committee for Education. This document which was entitled "Situation and Function of German Adult Education", dwelt on the organizational and structural aspects of adult education. Further reports and developments followed, possibly as a result of the expansion of the Volkshochschulen (VHS) (local adult education institutions). In 1970, another landmark document called "Structural Plan" was issued by the German Educational Council. This important document outlined the type of educational reform that was needed and felt that adult education must be recognized as an integral part of the German public education system. Since the publication of those two main documents, the

majority of the Lander (federal states) have passed separate adult education laws. It is therefore important to remember that in Germany there is no universal pattern of adult education provision. Within each federal state, there are some variations in terms of objectives, but in order to ensure the promotion, co-ordination and institutioning of adult education, each of the states has passed separate laws on adult education. For example, in 1974, the North-Rhine Westphalia Region implemented their "First Act on Continuing Education." This Act expressed the view that education needed to be continually updated throughout one's lifetime. It was also felt that the term "adult education" should be substituted for the term "continuing education" (Weiterbildung) and should cover the following areas: vocational, non-vocational, political and scientific education and education for leisure.

The Higher Education Sector

With a few exceptions, the higher education institutions in Germany are state institutions maintained by the federal states. Resulting from a dramatic increase in the number of traditional students applying for entry into third level education in the 1970's and 1980's, there was an increasing demand for new institutions of higher education. The university institutions form the strongest pillar of the higher education system and now consists of the traditional universities (those which existed before 1960), new universities (set up in the 1970's and 1980's), comprehensive universities and technical colleges.

At the beginning of the 1970's, Fachhochschulen (equivalent to Polytechnics in England) were established. The comprehensive universities encompass fields of study offered by both universities and Fachhochschulen. Fachhochschulen and technical institutions are practical oriented and provide courses in the fields of engineering, technology, sciences, agriculture, economics, public administration, social pedagogy and para-legal services.

Legislation on higher education stipulates that the provision and development of vocational and non-vocational continuing education must be a function of the higher education system. Due to current labour policy, there is increasing demand for courses for three categories of adults, the unemployed, the early retired and senior citizens. Many of the institutions are gradually responding by providing courses relevant to the needs of particular groups, for example extra-mural classes, technology and health courses.

Regarding the provision of academic courses in institutes of higher education for non-traditional students, in contrast to Ireland, the following two points confirm that the entry system is not very flexible. Firstly, as an admission requirement, almost all German third level institutions (there are a few exceptions), require adults to have obtained the Abitur Certificate (equivalent to the Leaving Certificate Examination). In contrast, adult students in Ireland who do not possess the Leaving Certificate can, based on mature years, gain entry to some full and part-time undergraduate programmes (mainly first degree courses), in most of the third level institutions. Secondly, an increasing number of third level institutions in Ireland are reserving a number of places for mature students on their

full-time courses, while such a system does not prevail in Germany. Some second level colleges offer the Abitur course, but the number of adults who avail of this qualification for gaining entry into higher education is low. For adults who do not possess this qualification, some universities permit attendance at lectures in specific subjects, but students are not allowed to register for examinations.

The main provider of adult education leading to third level qualifications is the University at a Distance, situated at Hagen. This German Open University was opened 1976, and based on their flexible approach to learning, the college has expanded into a comprehensive university offering courses in a wide range of disciplines.

In relation to enrolment trends, outside of the VHS institutions, the sphere of adult education is difficult to pin down in statistics (Fuhr, 1989). Some institutions have conducted internal surveys, but there is little up-to-date information in relation to the participation rates of mature students in the third level sector. A representative survey on the development of participation in further education between 1979 and 1985, published by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science, came to the conclusion that one in four adults were involved in some kind of continuing education.

Volkshochschule (VHS)

The adult education colleges known as the Volkshochschule were founded in 1966 and are located in most towns and cities in Germany. As public education centres, their primary role is to encourage participation among the adult population in continuing education. The majority of their semester and year courses takes place in the evening and at weekends. Languages, business and computer studies, health education and creative arts are the most popular courses (VHS Annual Report, 1989). Examinations and continuous assessment form a component of some certificate courses and continuing education units with standard validity have been created by the VHS in the form of VHS certificates.

Other Agencies Involved in Adult Education

The last ten to twelve years has seen a dramatic increase in the number of private adult education colleges. Those institutions are determining and developing their own programmes, and in some cases the validity of their certification courses is causing concern among educationalists and employers. However, enrolments are increasing each year and the type of courses provided are similar to those offered by private institutions in Ireland.

The Catholic and Protestant churches play an important role within the German adult education system. Some courses are offered in conjunction with other institutions and courses are not only in religious education but also in a wide range of other subjects.

In addition to the distance learning at the Open University, there are numerous educational bodies offering correspondence courses. For example, courses on Radio (Funkkolleg) have proved popular with many students.

As already stated, research findings on non-traditional students is limited, but survey

findings by the VHS shows that more women than men participate, although the number of male students has gradually been increasing, particularly on technical type courses. Adults who participate are generally under forty years of age and come from middle class backgrounds, while working class people and the educationally disadvantaged are under-represented. Internal surveys in some of the universities concurs with the VHS findings.

Provision of Paid Educational Leave (PEL)

Closely allied to increasing participation rates, is the issue of paid educational leave. Presently, there are five provinces that have laws on PEL: Lower Saxony, North-Rhine Westphalia, Hamburg, Bremen and Hessen. In those states, the 1974 International Agreement on PEL has been implemented and there is a strong interlinking between continuing education and PEL. Employees are entitled to leave to participate in vocational and/or political education and the leave can be taken either yearly for five or biennially for ten days. A representative survey conducted in 1985, showed that approximately 50% of total participation in continuing education is taking place within the system of employment-linked training (Kunzel, 1989), while according to Knoll (1990), the implementation of PEL in certain states is gradually enhancing motivation for education for those people who would not normally take part in adult education courses.

From discussions with staff in the adult education field, there were two main issues that were constantly highlighted and causing concern. Those were training and funding.

Adult Education Staff Training

One of the developments in German adult education occurred in the 1970's when the universities established Professors of Adult Education. Many of those universities now provide diploma courses in adult education. Despite such courses, staff involved in adult education administration and/or teaching, expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of staff training and re-training. With the exception of those who studied adult education, most staff have no special training in adult teaching. The VHS (and some of the non-university institutions) provide "in-service" courses on a regional and local level. The VHS courses are voluntary, teachers are encouraged to participate, but according to VHS Course Directors, participation is generally low.

On a more optimistic note, according to Weinberg (1991), as a result of close co-operation between universities and adult education institutes, there has been an increase in the number of short "in-service" courses for adult educators. Weinberg (1991), also stated that there is a demand for full-time personnel, not only for managing and programme planning, but also for teaching and counselling.

Adult Education Funding

In Germany, education is seen as a civil right. With the exception of a few private colleges, the first, second and third level system is state operated and traditional students do not pay course fees. In relation to non-traditional students, course fees apply. The fees charged by the third level colleges and the VHS are lower than those charged in Irish

institutions; some VHS courses are subsidized and there are concessions for the unemployed and senior citizens.

There has been much criticism within German education regarding the educational cutbacks. Nowhere is this more felt than in the adult education sector. According to Volkshochschule Administrators, while the amount of funding is increasing slightly, resources are still inadequate.

Institutions have found it necessary to increase their fees on a regular basis. This has resulted in a decline in enrolments (Reischmann, 1988) and particularly from people who are regarded as being strangers to adult education (Pfundtner, 1990). As an example of educational cut-backs, between 1981 and 1986, grant-aid to non-vocational adult education in the North Rhine-Westphalia Region amounted to a reduction of 37%, while the figure for 1988 was below the level of funding received in 1978 (Kunzel, 1990).

Conclusion

Having studied the various sectors of education in Germany, and based on visits to institutes and discussions with staff and students involved in adult education, the following points summarise what I see as the present position of adult education.

- In comparison with other sectors of education, adult education has a low status.
- Gradual change and development seems to be bringing new dimensions into adult and continuing education, training and learning.
- There is slow but increasing pressure towards achieving a certain degree of co-ordination and planning, notably by means of access courses, the improvement of entry regulations, the consideration of work experience, certification at different stages, accumulation of credit schemes and institutional transfers.
- In order to be able to provide a comprehensive range of publicly funded continuing education programmes, accessible to all citizens, lasting financial security is essential.

References

- Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband. (1979) *The German Volkshochschule - Its Position and Function*
- Fuhr, C. (1989). *Schools and Institutions of Higher Education in the Federal Republic of Germany*. Inter Nationes Bonn.
- Knoll, J. H. (1990). *Adult Education and Legislation*. In: "The State and Adult Education". Poggeler, F. (Ed.), Verlag Peter Lang, Germany.
- Kunzel, K. (1989). *Adult Education in the Federal Republic of Germany*. In: "Internationales Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung". Knoll, J. H. (Ed.). Germany.
- Kunzel, K. (1990). *The State and Adult Education in West-Germany: Comparative Notes*

on a Precarious Relationship. In: "The State and Adult Education". Poggeler, F. (Ed.). Verlag Peter Lang. Germany.

Pfundtner, R. (1990). Studying while working: A new way towards academic further education in Universities in the Federal Republic of Germany. Int. J. Lifelong Education," 9, 15-29.

Reischmann, J. (1988). Adult Education in West Germany in Case Studies. Verlag Peter Lang, Germany.

Volkshochschule Report (1989). Annual Report in Association with the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband.

Weinberg, J. (1991). Training in the Federal Republic of Germany. In: "Training Adult Educators in Western Europe". Jarvis, P. and Chadwick, A. (Ed.), Routledge, U. K.

Dublin Institute of Adult Education

3 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1.
Tel: 787266 Fax: 364755

Newly decorated conference facilities
available at reasonable rates

Academy Hall for up to 120 people
10 workshop rooms (20-40 people)

Full catering service on request (Marie Tyrath - Larkin Workers Co-operative)

Conference equipment (video, TV, overhead & slide projectors) included in price

Creche facility for hire • Residential accommodation (16 rooms) June-September

Contact Person: Sharon Wylie

— 41 YEARS FACILITATING ADULT LEARNING —

For a full brochure of all our courses and other enquiries, just phone or call in

Book Reviews

Dublin Communities in Action

by Patricia Kelleher and Mary Whelan, CAN/Combat Poverty Agency, 1992, Price: £6.00

Community development is about initiatives, processes and people and the challenge facing those who document it is to do justice to all these facets, to convey in a very real way the spirit, excitement, sense of empowerment and even frustrations which it engenders. The task is to document the evidence available and challenge the underlying approaches and practices with a view to elucidating principles and models of good practice. In my view the recently published *Dublin Communities in Action* concentrates excessively on the former without giving due consideration to all aspects of the latter.

This report is a joint Community Action Network, Combat Poverty Agency publication - a study of six community based projects in the Greater Dublin Area. It comprises four sections: the first looks at the background and context from which community development has emerged and introduces the projects examined; the second outlines the projects involved and how they organised themselves; the third deals with the potential of community groups, particularly in the areas of economic initiative, housing and education; and the final section concentrates on offering some conclusions about future policy. A working definition of the community development process is offered in the early stages of the report, emphasising the importance of factors like local control, empowerment, participation, awareness, self-reliance and action - all essential criteria for positive development within the community. It then goes on to highlight the historical traditions from which such ventures have emerged. The remaining section outlines the scope of the study and introduces the main projects and their offshoots, a total of 15 in all. While these are set out with some clarity on page 18, by the end of the chapter and the introduction of a plethora of abbreviations one's enthusiasm for the report begins to falter. The number of projects involved is confusing and the alacrity with which names are dropped in favour of abbreviations is both frustrating and infuriating for the reader. Constant reference to the abbreviations page weakens the impact of the report considerably and impinges on understanding and enjoyment throughout. One does not expect a report of this nature to have its scope so confined by the limits of location.

The confusion wrought by "abbreviation mania" is most apparent in the second section of the report where it is very difficult to keep track of project associations. The practical processes, prevailing structures and relationships are the focus of attention here. While the documentary evidence is strong, one of the factors most difficult to come to terms with is the failure of the report to take up any of the emerging issues. Critical factors like local input and control, the role of paid and unpaid workers, types of management structures and varying external relationships are raised, but no attempt is made to offer any critique of the various methods and approaches used. Is one approach more useful than another? Did any project cope more effectively with particular problems? How have

partnership arrangements worked? To what extent has the absence of an overall policy framework affected delivery structures? That these issues are problematic for local groups is evident and while one accepts that community development as a process is dynamic and organic, surely the experiences of the selected projects can offer guidelines on good practice. Why not face up to this challenge and ask the hard questions?

In exploring the potential of community development as an impetus for positive local action, the third section of the report focuses on three areas of activity: economic initiatives, housing and environmental renewal, and community education. It documents the various activities undertaken by local projects and how they affected their initial objectives. It outlines the manner in which the quest for resources and funding has sometimes compromised the integrity of projects and how the constant struggle for survival manifests itself at local level. Positive action in the areas of housing and urban renewal seem to indicate that on specific practical issues local activity can be very effective. However, it seems that a coincidence of interests rather than a commitment to effectively involve local groups in decisions was central to such successes. It certainly appears that as problems like housing, unemployment and poverty become more manifestly unmanageable, the greater the willingness to involve local communities, thus creating an illusion of partnership - a partnership of convenience rather than one based on the principle of equality.

Community Education is also cited as a key factor in the movement towards community action. Two different models of practice are outlined in the report; one focusses on an open, informal network based on local knowledge and experience fostering high levels of participation in programme development, while the second is, by contrast, highly structured with greater external input. The latter affirms the role of the Church as an active participant in community development and is primarily centred on a Christian philosophy with a spiritual dimension. While there is evidence that both models have much to recommend them, there are also some fundamental questions raised and further analysis of some of these issues would have been valuable.

The final section of the report attempts to place the projects' experiences into some kind of overall framework recommending a range of considerations based on the underlying tenet that community development is a viable and essential development strategy in communities affected by cumulative disadvantage which facilitates in identifying and articulating local needs, but whose potential has been severely restricted by the absence of state policy. The range of conclusions offered centre on the ad hoc, piecemeal approach which has characterised state engagement with community groups and all those involved in community based work will see them as central to the evolution of a flexible framework and integrated approach designed to bring the voices of marginalised people into the area where real decisions are made.

There is no doubt that this report will contribute to a greater understanding of the process and potential of community development and is a welcome addition to debate in this arena. It is strong in its documentary evidence and makes many positive

recommendations. It therefore seems entirely unfortunate that its effectiveness should be limited by factors which were well within the control of the authors. It is a report which would have benefited enormously from a more selective, analytical approach. Greater selectivity would have enabled it to overcome the confusion and confines of location in a way that would enhance its clarity and make its experiences far more relevant to other community groups. A more analytical approach would have facilitated an in-depth examination of the provocative issues facing those involved in community development work and contributed in a more substantive way to overall debate. As a report on the process of community development it had the potential to achieve much more.

Eileen Curtis, AEO, Kilkenny



Self-Direction in Adult Learning, Perspectives on Theory, Research and Practice

by Brockett, R.G. and Hiemstra, R., 1991, Routledge, London/New York, 276pp. stg.35.00, Hb, ISBN, 0 415 00562 0

This is a book for everybody involved in adult education whether as a student, a professional or an academic. It is aimed at several audiences from a wide range of settings. It targets professionals who are concerned with developing programmes for adult learners where self-direction is an integral part of the programme. The authors suggest it could serve as a primary text for courses on self-direction in adult learning or as a supplemental text for courses on adult learning or current issues in adult education. They also recommended the book as a tool for researchers exploring the territory of self-direction in learning. Finally, they claim that the book will appeal to readers with a more general interest in learning about areas of current development relative to the education of adults.

The book's stated purpose is to bridge theory and practice and to provide a comprehensive look at the state of the art of self-direction in adult education. We are told that self-direction in learning should be considered a way of life and we are offered strategies for facilitating self-directed learning as an instructional method and for enhancing learner self-direction as an aspect of adult personality. There is an analysis of current research trends and the book also has chapters on major issues for practice, viz., institutional perspectives on self-direction, policy issues, international views and ethical concerns. The final part of the book looks to the future and ends with a useful section on conclusions and recommendations.

The self-directed learner is defined as one who takes responsibility for his or her own learning. The Personal Orientation (PRO) model which is presented as a tool for better understanding self-direction in learning is premised on the idea that individuals taking personal responsibility for their learning is central to understanding self-direction. Drawing largely on the assumptions of humanistic philosophy the authors base this emphasis on personal responsibility on the view that individuals possess virtually unlimited

power for growth and on the belief that only by accepting responsibility for one's own learning is it possible to take a proactive approach to the learning process. Part two of the book presents a critical analysis of the research that has contributed to the knowledge base on self-direction in learning. The research, both quantitative and qualitative, has served a consciousness-raising function for the adult education field and has provided data to confirm that which was known intuitively for many years. It has also played a major role in making self-direction one of the most extensively researched areas in adult education during the decade of the eighties in the USA. Interestingly, from the point of view of this country where the bulk of the research into adult education, such as it is, is mostly atheoretical in nature, they assert that the area of self-direction can and should serve as a model for the field of adult education in terms of how to systematically develop a research base over time.

One of the main aims of the book is to explore appropriate roles for educators of adults and a major focus is an emphasis on supporting self-direction in learning. The authors give practical guidance and examples from their own experience of promoting self-direction in adult learning over many years. Various steps are detailed, from ideas about initial planning that must take place before contact with learners is made, to such a basic feature as helping learners become acquainted with each other, facilitating needs assessment activities and engaging learners in individual planning and evaluation functions. The authors firmly believe that individuals can become increasingly more self-directed in their learning when given appropriate learning tools, resources, experiences and encouragement. The underlining of the apparent paradox of the need for highly structured support for self-direction to be a truly effective learning strategy for adult education students is very welcome and it is to be hoped that it will dispel the common perception on the part of many, including adult students, that the promotion of self-direction is merely an abdication of responsibility on the part of the tutor. As this book demonstrates, effective self-direction on the part of the learner puts very heavy demands on the organisational and facilitational skills of the tutor. Adult students do not automatically know what they want to learn or how to learn.

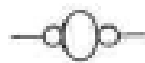
This is a most user-friendly book which embodies all the positive characteristics of a self-directed learning text. The front piece gives a brief overview of the contents, the preface gives an overview of the structure of the book and a brief summary of the five parts or sections of the book. In addition, at the start of each section, we get a synopsis of the section, chapter by chapter. In chapter 1 the authors very usefully draw on the literature of the past two decades to outline and dispel ten myths they feel have grown up around self-direction in learning. They give a very comprehensive review of the literature on research and development in self-direction in learning, a review that one can only hope might act as an inspiration in Ireland where much of the writing on adult education is descriptive and opinion-based. It seems to this reader that we might very usefully embark on developing a knowledge base for adult education along the lines of the categories identified by Caffarella and O'Donnell and described in Chapter 3. In keeping with the

whole philosophy and practice of self-directed learning. Appendix A contains an annotated bibliography of ninety-seven sources related to androgogy/ andragogy. However, as many of the sources are published in North America, accessing them in Ireland may prove laborious.

One quibble. The mix of styles, from case studies in the folksy style reminiscent of many self-help manuals to the necessarily highly technical accounts of research instruments jars somewhat and caused this reader to wonder if the authors had not tried to meet too many objectives and reach too many audiences between the covers of one fairly slim volume. That reservation aside, this is a timely publication from the point of view of developments in adult education in Ireland. Already there are signs of fresh developments in relation to self-direction and adult education on the horizon. In 1990 a committee consisting of National Distance Education Council personnel and representatives of other interested parties produced a report on the potential of self-directed and distance learning in literacy work. New funding currently available under the Euroform initiative will provide funding for projects involving distance education and self-directed learning for unemployed people and their tutors. The expansion of the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme to populations that are geographically dispersed has raised questions in relation to the role of self-direction in learning in the scheme, questions that are already being asked in the context of appropriate learning strategies for the scheme as a whole. In addition, the proposed development by the NCVA of a framework of certification for adult education, starting with adult basic education, would appear to offer opportunities for self-direction in adult learning.

Finally, while most of what the authors have to say about self-direction in learning is very useful, ultimately, each adult educator has to do what the authors themselves advise, that is, filter the thinking and ideas in the book through her/his own experience base, philosophical beliefs and day-to-day instructional realities in adult education.

Helen Keogh - member of the Adult Learner editorial board.



Training Adult Educators in Western Europe

edited by Peter Jarvis and Alan Chadwick (London: Routledge in association with the European Bureau of Adult Education, 1991).

In a collection of interviews, lectures and other writings published in 1980,¹ the French historian and philosopher, Michel Foucault summarised a number of ideas he had developed throughout his career about the relationship between knowledge and power. In his earlier works, Foucault traced the historical evolution of systems of thought in such fields as medicine, natural history, grammar and economics, and in each case he noted a substantial break with earlier traditions. In Foucault's view, these discontinuities in development cannot be ascribed simply to the discovery of new truths or the adoption of new theoretical paradigms. Instead, they represent the emergence of linkages

between power and language, and these are embodied in 'régimes of discourse' that govern what is accepted as knowledge. Foucault concludes that it is not so much the essential truth of an idea that is important, but rather "... how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false". By implication, the way in which we talk about a field of knowledge both reflects and reproduces a specific set of power relations.

Foucault's theory offers a useful perspective for reviewing this collection of papers on Training Adult Educators in Western Europe. Prominent academics, administrators and practitioners from seventeen countries were invited to contribute short case studies, each of which gives an overview of adult education provision and of the types of pre-service preparation and in-service training available to those working in the field. The unifying theme for this volume is a concern to develop a professional role and status for the adult educator, and co-editor Peter Jarvis discusses this process in his introduction. The emergence of other specialisms as distinct professions has traditionally arisen when a body of practitioners begin to work in a full-time capacity. Jarvis acknowledges that this phase of the theoretical model may be of little relevance in the field of adult education where the majority of workers throughout Western Europe are involved in a part-time capacity. However, the second phase of the process is directly related to the theme chosen for this collection.

Jarvis suggests that an occupation is transformed into a profession through the construction of "a systematic body of knowledge about the field of practice", accompanied by the establishment of a uniform programme to train those about to enter it. For many professions, such training programmes are provided and validated by universities or specialist institutes. Thus, this volume may be seen as contributing to the development of a widely accepted 'discursive régime' that has the potential for uniting all those working in adult education, while at the same time distinguishing it from related fields, such as teaching in the formal education system or providing vocational preparation in training institutions. By the standards of this régime, the provision of professional training for adult educators in Ireland compared very unfavourably with the range of courses available in Sweden or Switzerland, for example.

What this volume fails to address, except in passing by one or two contributors, is the consequences of any move towards increasingly formalised training and accreditation of adult educators. On the one hand, the advantages of professionalisation are obvious to those working in the field. Recognition of adult educators as qualified professionals would, undoubtedly, increase their status, which is universally low throughout Western Europe, and it would also involve a commensurate improvement in working conditions and career prospects. On the other hand, restricting access exclusively to those who have undergone a particular form of training would effectively close off opportunities for talented newcomers, as Ivan Hauser notes in his contribution on Denmark. And if such training programmes are located in universities, this will almost certainly put those with little formal education at an even greater disadvantage. Declan Irvine of UCG also

questions whether the development of a professional identity is possible, given the "patternless mosaic of activities" that is embraced by the term adult education. The situation is not peculiar to Ireland, and it is valid to ask whether those who undertake this work as a 'secondary', 'allied' or 'subordinate' function think of themselves as educators. In his chapter on training in Germany, Johannes Weinberg points out a related anomaly that arises when some adult education institutions are hiring staff. Those who are qualified in teachable subjects are often given preference over those who have followed specialised courses in adult education.

What is at issue is not the need for additional training, which is generally accepted by everyone involved in adult education, but what is meant by the term. My own personal experience as both a volunteer literacy tutor and a lecturer in a third-level institute has left me with the impression that these situations represent separate realms of discourse. While universities speak about training in terms of course syllabi, theoretical perspectives and academic standards, those working at the chalkface (or should that be felt-tiphead?) often seek training as a means of solving immediate, practical problems or as validation and support for what they are already doing. In order to meet the diverse needs of adult educators, those who provide training in voluntary organisations and educational institutions will have to develop a range of programmes that are highly varied in terms of content and mode of delivery. Perhaps the greatest contribution that this volume can make is to expose readers to a range of collaborative models for training adult educators that have been tried in other countries.

Ed Du Vivler, Coordinator of the NALA Training Development Programme



DUBLIN RECALL - A REMINISCENCE PACK

Faith Gibson (Friends of the Elderly, 1989)

IRELAND RECALL - A REMINISCENCE PACK

Faith Gibson (Eastern Health Board and Age and Opportunity, 1922) - £40.00

In 1981 Help the Aged, London, produced a tape/slide reminiscence programme entitled Recall, as a form of therapy for elderly people, especially those in institutions. The programmes are designed to encourage people to recall aspects of their past life, such as family, school, work and recreation. Old photographs/slides were used to help people remember, and to engender discussion. A Northern Ireland version was produced by Faith Gibson in 1984, and several other locally based packages followed.

The process of reminiscence was given a major boost by the establishment in London in 1987 of AGE EXCHANGE whose activities now include a Reminiscence Centre, a professional Reminiscence Theatre Company, Youth Theatre, a Museum, publications, and training courses in handling reminiscence sessions. There are about 25 people employed, in addition to free-lance workers.

The two RECALL packs under review are similar in format. DUBLIN RECALL consists of 50 photos (and slides) of life in Dublin from 1900 to the late 1950's. The 50 print/slides in IRELAND RECALL represent rural and small town life in the four provinces from 1910 to 1960. As well as notes on the photographs, the pack includes an introduction to various aspects of reminiscence work, whether with individuals or small groups; guidelines on methods; and details of further resource material. In the list of Historical events, it is questionable whether happenings going back to 6,000 B.C., while informative, are relevant! The notes on the photographs are excellent, and examples are given in each case of open-ended questions for use as discussion starters.

The packs appear to envisage use with 'captive' individuals or small groups over an extended period of time in the form of regular sessions of up to one and a half hours. However, it is emphasised that there are no strict rules and the process can be adapted in various ways to suit particular circumstances.

In the Foreword to IRELAND RECALL, the CEO of the Eastern Health Board writes - "The valuable contribution of Reminiscence Therapy in various settings - Hospital Day-care and in the Community - in assisting elderly people with memory impairment, particularly those suffering with dementia, is fully recognised by our Board".

This quite valid comment encapsulates what may be a major difficulty in getting reminiscence accepted as a form of adult education, i.e., the perception that reminiscence is a form of morbid retrospection and is for the institutionalised geriatric elderly. But I think a distinction must be drawn between reminiscence as a mental health therapy and the more general process of reminiscence which is a normal activity for people of all ages.

Reminiscence is all around us in various forms. We note the proliferation of Heritage Centres and Folk Parks, the remarkable success of Alice Taylor's "To School through the Fields" and other similar publications, as well as media interest in 'times past'. In sport in general, and in Gaelic games in particular, Ag Feachaint Siar - Looking Back - is an intrinsic part of every great occasion.

I feel that this use of reminiscence in sport holds the key as to how it should be used generally as an adult learning tool, which is that the past is linked with the present, the past influences the present, and the past is used to enrich the present. Of particular importance is the use of reminiscence to exchange experiences and information between older people and the younger generation. To explain the positive value of reminiscence, I cannot do better than to quote Dianne Norton the author of "Aging-an Adventure in Living":

"The use of older adults as a resource is a lesson that we are starting to re-learn. One of the most popular forms of educational activity involving older people (as well as youngsters) is based on reminiscence. Exploring the past, particularly as a group activity, has a number of very real benefits. It gets people thinking, keeping their brains active, and it gets people talking, communicating. Everyone has something to contribute; it offers instant involvement. By discussing and analysing past experience, individuals

become aware of a sense of themselves. They can locate themselves in the community, in the patterns of history relevant to their own lives, and they develop important feelings of self-esteem. It is a form of activity that links past and present and very frequently leads on to pursuits of other kinds”.

The Active Retirement Association to which I belong has engaged in a non-formal reminiscence session as part of its education/social programme. It was very enjoyable, included poetry and song and much interaction. We found that people who would not normally speak at meetings were willing to get involved. We are also taking part in a Age-Link project involving contacts with students from local Community Colleges, and we hope to incorporate reminiscence at a future date.

There is undoubted potential in the use of reminiscence as a form of adult learning in Active Retirement Associations and other groups. In my view the activity would not require the use of “trigger” material as used in the Packs under review. It would also be an occasional session rather than a series. Though non-formal, it would still require adequate preparation. The best results would be obtained by using the services of a guest chairperson with experience of handling group discussions as good ‘chairing’ skills are vital.

There is a wide range of topics to form the basis for discussion. While excellent resource material is available for therapeutic reminiscence work as in IRELAND RECALL, it would help the promotion of reminiscence for the ‘young-old’ if guidelines were produced dealing with the special educational, social and creative aims of the project. It might also help if the term reminiscence could be replaced by a more appealing description, e.g. “Oral History”.

We are indebted to Faith Gibson who is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work in the University of Ulster, Coleraine, for her valuable work in the area of therapeutic reminiscence. She also stresses in her Introduction to IRELAND RECALL that reminiscence is not the monopoly of any one profession.

“Teachers of Social History and Oral History, of social education and social skills programmes have found reminiscence enlivens and enriches their teaching. Reminiscence work crosses professional boundaries, builds bridges between the generations and excites and stimulates all who experience it”.

Muiris Prenderville, Executive Member, Federation of Active Retirement Associations.



The Opportunity Guide to Qualifications - Part-Time Courses in Ireland
An Aontas/Wolfhound Publication, Price: £5.99

The publicity blurb for this guide heralds it as “the key comprehensive guide to professional and continuing education” - “packed with solid information on part-time courses leading to a cert, diploma, degree or professional qualification”. It is against such

a lofty aspiration that the guide must be measured. A reference guide of this nature has long been sought to assist all those interested in part-time learning in their quest for an appropriate programme.

Aontas, the national umbrella body for Adult Education in Ireland over the last 22 years, has established high standards in research and project work during that time. The Opportunity Guide to Qualification Part-Time Courses in Ireland is a reference manual, a book of lists designed to provide intending participants with an exhaustive list of options available in their required study area. It outlined the range of part-time courses leading to a certificate, diploma, degree or other professional qualification - programmes which offer an award with recognised levels and standards.

The need for the publication of such information reflects the changing trend towards certification for part-time learning in Adult Education in Ireland in recent years. Adult education students want validation for their learning experience - they want recognition for the time and effort put into attendance and course work, and rightly so. The decision to embark on part-time courses such as those described here are not lightly taken and involve an enormous degree of personal investment of time and effort, not to mention finance. While the enjoyment gained from selecting a programme which really suits your aptitude and talents is invaluable, the need to have that valued and properly recognised is also great.

The types of courses we see listed in the Opportunity Guide have resulted in large measure from the groundswell of demand by Adult Education students at local level. While the short hobby and leisure type course is seen as having a place, it must now be complemented by an ever increasing variety of part-time programmes offering recognised certification. The purpose of this guide is "to inform people about these courses".

The guide comprises an introductory section which looks at the nature of Adult Education provision and certification processes, before going on to list the course types and their relevant details under various headings. The final appendix lists the providing agencies mentioned throughout.

Most of us using a reference book like this tend to ignore the introductory pages and delve straight into the section that interests us most. We can then find ourselves pondering about the choices available and often end up more confused than we were at the outset. If you find this happening, my advice is to go back to the introductory section. Perusal of these 20 or so pages will help place the guide format and the vast array of provision into some of perspective. Dr Tom Inglis' section entitled Adult Education in Ireland is particularly valuable, offering a step by step guide through the maze of jargon such as credit accumulation, modular systems, credit transfer which has passed into common usage in Adult Education circles. The oft asked "How valuable is my degree, Diploma or Certificate?" is also addressed while the final General Hints section provides some good advice for the prospective student. After reading this you should at least be asking yourself and others all the right questions.

The remainder concentrated on providing some insight into the major pathways

towards certification available. Options provided through Northern Ireland, Distance Education, The Open University, Modular and ACCS Programmes are all outlined, some with greater clarity than others. Finally, there is a short section outlining the terms of reference, composition and work of the NCVA to date - a body we are likely to hear more from on certification.

Chapters 1 - 9 list a range of 1,500 part-time opportunities for adults in a wide variety of areas: Computers, Engineering, Accounting, Business related Programmes, Liberal Studies, Languages, Health, Medicine and Science. The task of placing some order on such a variety of provision cannot have been easy. Each chapter begins with a listing of the professional bodies associated with the relevant discipline and then proceeds to outline the courses available at different levels. This includes information on course type, duration, time, cost and awarding body. In general the information is clear, concise and easy to follow but can only provide a starting point for the intending student.

On reading through the broad spectrum of options available on a part-time basis, one cannot but be overawed by the range and complexity of information provided. It highlights the clear need for a comprehensive educational guidance service for adults to help them make the most of the opportunities available. In the absence of such support intending students would be well advised to heed Dr Inglis' recommendation "to be wary and diligent" in their enquiries.

This publication is to be welcomed. Its range is comprehensive, its format clear and concise. It is not exhaustive and has limitations. That said, it is the most valuable resource available encompassing this particular range of provision in Ireland and will greatly assist those interested in part-time education.

Eileen Curtis, Adult Education Organiser, Kilkenny