The ADULT LEARNER

Adult and Community Education in Ireland

Volume 2. No.5. 1994

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ISSN 0790/8040

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Editorial Comment

The old debate, education v training, continues and what is even more tiresome, the old distinction continues to be drawn in some quarters. There is an element of training in all education courses and who can really argue that training is not education. Time now to accept reality although, of course, where training is concerned money talks. Is it because training is more likely to attract funding that the French will always refer to adult training in preference to adult education? Damned semantics and high time to end the unnecessary and dubious distinction.

This is one of the issues dealt with in an article by Cecilia Whitehorn of Belfast. We also have an in depth analysis of the highly successful Vocational Training (should that be Education?) Opportunities Scheme by Helen Keogh, National Co-ordinator of V.T.O.S. The core theme of this issue is Community Development, an area which has seen some of the more interesting and worthwhile projects in recent times.

My thanks to all contributors, advertisers, subscribers and to my hard-working colleagues on the Editorial Board.

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Editorial Board

The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme - Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice.

Helen Keogh
Helen Keogh is National Co-ordinator VTOS.
(The views expressed here are these of the author and to not necessarily represent the views of the Department of Education).

The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) is a European Social Fund supported intervention in the Irish labour market to enable, as a priority group, unemployed people over 21 years of age who have been on the Live Register for at least six months, to access education and training which will enhance their employability.

This paper is a reflection on the scheme with a view to arriving at a set of shared meanings in relation to the practices that have emerged in VTOS provision. I limit myself chiefly to a discussion of the delivery of VTOS, but provision for unemployed people cannot be taken in isolation from the political, economic, social, cultural and personal factors which form the context. I describe the VTOS phenomenon as it occurs in all its rich diversity throughout the country. VTOS is then placed in the context of adult education theory and the extent to which VTOS practice reflects the theory is examined, with particular reference to the factors that may give rise to a gap between theory and practice. Finally, the question of bridging the gap is explored.

VTOS in Context

One of the major concerns in relation to unemployed people in Ireland is their generally low educational and skill levels. This is of particular significance because of the senior cycle qualifications requirement for access to the specific skills training programmes relevant to the current labour market and because of the increasing evidence that the Leaving Certificate is now seen as a basic educational qualification by many employers (Duggan et al forthcoming).

Heretofore, the provision of vocational training has been a principal instrument in meeting the challenges posed by unemployment. More recently, the development of adult education has come to the fore in the search for new ways to combat unemployment as it has been realised that vocational training has only helped to control the crisis. What is now thought to be needed is a comprehensive education combining vocational training and general education.

Introduction of VTOS

VTOS is a new departure in Ireland in terms of labour market interventions for the adult unemployed in its concern to address the overall education levels of participants, their

vocational orientation and preparation and their personal and social development; in its grounding in an adult education philosophy; in its flexible provision in terms of levels, time spent and examinations taken and in its linkage to progression to further education and training as well as employment.

VTOS was introduced on a national basis in 1989 and in January 1994 a total of 2.900 places were on offer in the thirty eight Vocational Education Committee. The budget of February 1994 proposed an additional 2,5000 places on the scheme.

The specific objective of the VTOS is to enable unemployed persons to progress to stable employment or further education and training. Clearly, VTOS is not just an educational concept. It is also an economic concept rooted in the social and political realities of structural unemployment and the emergence of an ever growing hard core of long-term unemployed people.

VTOS Participants

Unemployed people are a relatively new target group in adult education in Ireland and elsewhere. They do not constitute a homogeneous group. All they may have in common is their lack of paid work. In practice, in Ireland, however, unemployed people, especially long-term unemployed people, tend to share certain characteristics, viz., low level of education attainment, poor or outdated occupational skills, discontinuity in their labour market history or, in the case of under 25s, no experience or only very limited experience of, paid work.

Educationally, applicants to VTOS fall in three categories, those who have completed primary education only; those who have completed post-primary junior cycle only and, in the minority, those who have completed some or all of post-primary senior cycle.

VTOS Curriculum Provision

VTOS is an umbrella scheme rather than a specific programme or course. It is an enabling mechanism, a series of structured education-led, progressions-related opportunities which enable participants to continue their education and vocational preparation.

Department of Education (1992) guidelines indicate that "the scheme will have a predominantly vocational training content". In practice, because the minimum age for entry to VTOS is 21 years and because of the generally low educational and skills levels of participants, VTOS operates for the majority of participants as a second-chance education and vocational preparation programme. Second-chance provision tends by definition to be fairly closely tied to existing provision. In the case of VTOS, this means existing provision in post-primary schools which has been traditionally that of a broadly-based education for all combined with, in recent years, vocational preparation courses.

Because of its long-held high status, the Leaving Certificate has a virtual stranglehold on the collective imaginations of many VTOS participants who do not hold the certificate. Their goal when they first come on the scheme is "to get the Leaving". However, not all participants are ready, or, indeed, after guidance from providers, ultimately keen, to pursue this goal of a Leaving Certificate. Accordingly, nine broad models of provision have emerged as follows

to meet participants' needs, demands and interests:

- A basic education model based on one-to-one or small-group tuition in literacy, numeracy, study skills and personal effectiveness;
- A foundation model mainly based on the Junior Certificate;
- A Leaving Certificate model based on Leaving Certificate subjects;
- A "portfolio" or combination model offering certification in a range of subject areas at different levels;
- A vocational preparation and training model at approximately post-Junior Certificate level;
- A Post -Leaving Certificate (PLC) vocational preparation and training model;
- A general education model along the lines of the General Equivalency Development (GED) awarded to adults in North America;
- A mini-enterprise model where the participants form a company or co-operative;
- A model comprising activities drawn from a very wide range of local, extra-mural and distance provision tailored to the requirements of individuals;

In summary, VTOS covers the gamut of provision from basic education and training to advanced vocational preparation and training. It has a strong emphasis on raising the general education levels of participants, facilitating personal development and preparing and/or re-orienting participants for the world of paid work through the provision of vocational education and training in a range of transferable and specific occupational skills. Not all VECs are in a position to offer all of the above models of provision, however. Where a provider is constrained by a small number of places, the portfolio of certification model has evolved in an effort to provide individual responses to individual participants.

In the early days of VTOS there was discussion as to whether the provision was, or indeed should be, general education, vocational education, vocational training or vocational preparation. In practice, in adult education the distinction between non-vocational and vocational is held to be largely unrealistic as adults may turn up for vocational reasons to take a non-vocational programme whilst others may pursue a supposedly vocational course for non-vocational reasons (Stephens 1990). Set VTOS in the context of lifelong learning and the distinction is even less relevant because lifelong learning sees the process of education as a continuum thereby reducing the significance of calling one part education and another training.

Theory and Practice in VTOS

As has been pointed out, VTOS is unique among labour market interventions for unemployed people in Ireland in that it works out of an adult education philosophy. In fact, the scheme has acted as a catalyst in the development of adult education nationally and locally and it has given a certain reality to the rhetoric of lifelong learning in that adults, albeit a restricted group, are enabled to resume their interrupted learning on a full-time basis.

Andragogy, the science and art of teaching adults, makes the point that the education of

adults should be different from the education of children for several reasons relating to maturity, motivation and life experience (Jarvis 1988). Further, it has been stated that the overwhelming proportion of adult learning is self-directed and that self-directedness must be facilitated otherwise "a dysfunctional dependence relationship between learner and educator" is being perpetuated. This, according to Mezirow (1981), is a foundation for a distinctive philosophy of adult education and adult learning which he sees as reflection upon experience rather than memorisation of data.

It has been further claimed that if educational activity with unemployed people does not involve development of awareness of the wider social-economic forces at work in creating employment and unemployment it could become an agent of social control and could be seen as a palliative designed to mitigate the political impact of high levels of unemployment (Lynch 1991).

These are the views on the nature and role of adult education which have influenced adult educators in Ireland who have worked with people in literacy schemes and community-based education since 1980. Admittedly, the extent to which these views are explicitly held or acknowledged by providers varies from VEC to VEC and from person to person within VECs. The extent to which practice in VTOS mirrors these views of the role of adult education is equally varied. In reality, it appears that in many cases there may be a gap between the theory and the practice. This arises for a number of reasons; because of the views of providers on the role of adult education in relation to unemployed people; because VTOS operates mainly as a second-chance programme; because of curriculum issues; because of the attitudes and expectations of VTOS participants; because of confusion about the concept of needs; because of the level of pre-service and in-service education of VTOS tutors and because of the location of VTOS courses. A discussion of these reasons follows.

The Views of Providers

Adult education has always been characterised by its association with the ideologies of the provider. Even the most seemingly neutral model has strong ideological orientations and is based on a philosophy, consciously or unconsciously, explicitly or implicitly, held. Five models of response to unemployment have been identified (Taylor and Ward 1988) viz., the training model, the therapy/social control model, the liberal model, the social purpose model and the community action model.

The reality, however, is that much adult education, particularly when it becomes institutionalised and more mainstream, is conservative in that it follows one of the first three models described above rather than the fourth or fifth models which are designed to challenge the status quo (Apps 1985). VTOS, with some notable exceptions, appears to conform to this reality. Unlike literacy schemes and community-based education which because of their perceived marginality, are frequently interpreted by providers as bestowing certain freedoms on those who deliver the programmes, VTOS is a much more high profile initiative with the result that providers may be less willing to be seen to encourage participants to deal with issues that may be politically sensitive. Secondly, providers may have

unconsciously adopted a conservative approach to VTOS provision through reluctance on their part to interrogate their own philosophy and practice. Finally, the tutors may lack confidence in their ability to handle controversial issues. However, the tendency towards conservatism is not only due to providers' views. As will be described later, participants' attitudes also have a big part to play.

VTOS as Second-chance Education.

Another factor that may militate against VTOS's embracing a learner-centred model of adult education is the fact that much VTOS provision, in response to demand from participants, operates mainly as second-chance education. As such, it is closely tied into mainstream post-primary provision with its subject-based approach which emphasises content rather than process and which is mainly assessed by terminal, normative examinations where the learner may be placed in a position of dependence. In short, second-chance education may tend more towards adult schooling than adult education and consequently may exclude the development of a critical capacity, especially in the case of award-bearing provision.

At a more fundamental level, it is claimed that second-chance education may run counter to the humanistic theories of adult education in that being a kind of "educational rescue mission" (Costello and Richardson 1982) it appears to locate the causes of unemployment in the unemployed people themselves by attributing them to lack of education, thereby leaving unquestioned the structures that produce unemployment and reinforcing a particular view of the labour market.

On the other hand, the provision of second-chance education, is supported by the argument which emphasises the close correlation between employment status and educational levels (Lynch 1991). Who are we as people who already hold the relevant certificates, so the argument goes, to question the wish of excluded people to gain qualifications with labour market currency rather than challenge the status quo?

Of course the above arguments assume that existing content-laden syllabi cannot be handled in a way that leads to critical analysis and empowerment. They can, by the skilful tutor, but, as has already been mentioned, the main block is the existing assessment practices which tend to be a major barrier to developing student autonomy.

Curriculum Issues

Curriculum issues, or rather the limited nature of the debate on such issues, may also deflect the models of VTOS provision from a learner-centred approach. The term 'curriculum' is not in wide use in adult education in Ireland, the narrower term 'programme' being more usual.

To date, in VTOS, there has not been much explicit exploration of the two broad patterns of education which find their expression in adult education as polarities such as 'education from above' and 'education of equals'; adult education and adult schooling; the banking concept of education leading to conformity and "domestication" and education for liberation.

"Education of equals' involves education for development and freedom of expression for individuals and groups while 'education from above' is an instrument of control, segregation and social reproduction (Gelpi 1984). In curricular terms the duality is expressed by terms such as classical curriculum and romantic curriculum. In the former the content is selected and transmitted by the teachers/tutors while in the latter the content and learning process may be selected by the learners (Jarvis 1988). Much VTOS provision follows the classical model of curriculum which comes under the category 'education from above'. This arises from the second-chance orientation of the provision, but it is not an inevitable consequence of it.

The Attitudes and Expectations of VTOS Participants

Apart from the difficulties in the way of adopting a learner-centred approach presented by the situations described above, the participants themselves have frequently displayed very traditional ideas not only about what they ought to learn but also about how they ought to learn. The principles of learner-centerdness can be extremely demanding on participants who have limited former experience of education and training. They often consider participative techniques as "time-wasting" and wish only "to be told" what they "should know" about a topic. In particular, VTOS participants have shown a marked reluctance to explore the issue of unemployment.

The VTOS tutor who is largely unfamiliar with adult education theory may quite happily conform, consciously or unconsciously, to this. But, for the VTOS tutor who is committed to working out of an adult education philosophy it can lead to frustration and anxiety and a sense that the adulthood of the student is being denied as many of the learning activities become the all too familiar sprint towards examinations.

All this is not to say that the VTOS tutor should have no goals or should be totally non-directive (Brookfield 1986). Bringing students to the point where they can be self-directed in their learning paradoxically requires considerable investment of resources, both human and material. In short, students have to be led to autonomy.

The Concept of Needs in Adult Education

Response to needs is at the heart of the service ethic of many adult educators (Jarvis 1985), and as a corner-stone of their aspiration to be learner-centred, most VTOS providers see themselves as facilitating the long-term unemployed to negotiate the most appropriate education and training option in terms of their 'needs'. This aspiration does not always necessarily lead to learner-centred provision, however, because needs analysis is a complex issue. Participants usually come to VTOS with a set of intentions, sometimes vague, at other times clearly identified. The basic question faced by the majority of VTOS providers is whether they should offer already-designed courses that can be adapted after consultation with participants or, taking an open-ended approach, attempt to identify the participants' needs and gradually design a negotiated course in response to the identified needs. The reality is that providers are usually forced into a compromise situation by staffing, accommodation and resourcing constraints.

More fundamentally, even though adult educators tend to use the term freely, the area of 'needs' is a highly contested one. The term itself appears to offer a moral rather than a theoretical foundation for the education of adults (Jarvis 1985). Lawson (1979) maintains that it operates as a "premature ultimate", that is, "a concept that provokes such reverence and contains such connotative potency that its invocation tends to silence...discussion" (Brookfield 1986). Adult education often confuses needs with demands, interests and wants. The concept of need is ill-defined and is therefore an inadequate basis for curriculum provision in VTOS, but, rather than abandoning the concept, it should be recognised for what it is (Jarvis 1988). Felt needs and the wants, desires and wishes of the learner will determine some of the provision but the adult educator has a professional responsibility to introduce the participants to issues beyond their present comprehension and development (Brookfield 1986).

The Pre-service Education of VTOS Tutors

In a learner-centred VTOS, the tutor is primarily a manager and facilitator of the learning process and the adult becomes a partner in the learning rather than a passive consumer. As we have already seen, the extent to which this is the practice may be limited by a range of circumstances. To these circumstances should be added the understanding and skills VTOS tutors have in relation to their role. The absence of a developed system of pre-service education for adult education tutors means that many VTOS tutors have gained their understanding of and skills in, adult education, through working with adults on other adult education programmes. Others are new to working with adults and they are obliged to educate themselves 'on the job', as it were.

The Location of VTOS

The location of VTOS can influence the way in which the scheme is delivered. In January 1993, fifty per cent of participants were located in post-primary schools which cater, wholly or as a growing part of their school population, for adults. The other fifty per cent of participants were accommodated in a variety of locations that might loosely be termed adult education centres. Opinion is divided on the merits of the different locations. Separate provision in separate institutions can reinforce marginalisation, some participants may be reluctant to identify themselves with provision which is labelled too clearly and the range of activities may be curtailed by resource restrictions. Location in an adult education centre may, however, give providers greater opportunity to aspire to learner-centredness and the empowerment of the adult learner as the appropriate social, psychological and physical environment may be more readily achieved than in a school setting. On the other hand, location in a post-primary school setting means that the range of options available can be extensive, resource-intensive programmes are possible and administrative and support structures are usually in place. However, the school setting could prove a barrier for adults whose initial education may have been an unhappy experience and the appropriate social, psychological and learning environment may be more difficult to achieve than in an adult education centre where structures may be more fluid.

Conclusion

I have sought to raise issues that may not have been addressed by providers in the hectic activity of setting up VTOS. As has been shown, there are, for all the reasons outlined above, quite notable disparities between much practice in VTOS and what, according to the literature, is appropriate adult education practice. In reality, this disparity often exists in education work with adults and it is not necessarily negative, but it does put the onus on providers to understand **what it is they provide for VTOS participants and why they provide it**. They have a responsibility to develop effective "theories-in-use" (Brookfield 1986) for their own practice to replace theories of adult education that are not relevant to their situation and to enable them to make critical choices about the direction in which they wish to go as educators of unemployed adults. Effective "theories-in-use" developed and debated by providers will help make sense of VTOS in all its diversity and will enable shared meanings about practice to emerge.

In relation to the on-going debate about the role of second-chance education in adult education, much of the heat would disappear from the debate if it took place within the context of the concept of lifelong learning which sees people as accessing education and training appropriate to their requirements throughout their lives.

In terms of curricular provision for unemployed people, there is no general panacea or formula for success. VTOS providers will always have to find their way back and forth along the continuum between 'education of equals' and 'education from above' (Rogers 1986) and continue to strive to increase their knowledge of the relationship between education, training and employment and of the real nature of adult learning enterprises.

No more than the concept of need should be permitted to act as a "premature ultimate" neither should the demand for the Leaving Certificate be seen as a reason for abdicating professional responsibility to explore the possibilities of developing adult-oriented alternatives. Such courses should attract alternative accreditation which takes account of adults' existing knowledge and experience, which offers flexible structures and assessment and for which equivalent status should be secured.

Qualifications for existing and aspiring tutors of adults should be made available on a part-time, modular basis with inbuilt credit accumulation and credit transfer mechanisms and with, as far as possible, the inclusion of accreditation of prior learning. At the same time, structures which recognise and remunerate qualifications gained from participation in such courses will have to be put in place.

The impact of location on VTOS provision and outcomes should be monitored on an on-going basis.

Finally, the critical area of guidance and counselling for VTOS participants must be addressed. There is a growing realisation throughout Europe that what many unemployed people require is provision which combines education and training with guidance and counselling which may contain elements of social work and psychological care as well as guidance in relation to education activities (European Bureau of Adult Education 1987).

The provision of a guidance and counselling service with VTOS will have implications for the funding of the scheme as will undertakings by VECs to address the issues raised here.

In conclusion, it seems probable that historically high levels of unemployment will exist in Ireland for the foreseeable future. At present the potential of adult education to address the situation of unemployed people is only beginning to be tapped. In 1992 the VTOS throughput amounted to 1.5% of the long-term unemployed. Since then the capacity of the scheme has more than doubled and Vocational Education Committees have responded with commitment and energy to the challenge of providing worthwhile education and training opportunities for unemployed people. However, as the scheme expands, the potential of VTOS to form a significant part of a comprehensive service to unemployed adults must continue to be explored. It would be all too easy for those involved in the implementation of the scheme at all levels to relax in the knowledge that, to date, it has been given a positive reception by participants and evaluators (Duggan et al forthcoming) alike or to get so caught up in the hustle of responsiveness that we fail to reflect on our objectives, on what is being achieved and on what might be achieved in the future.

(This is an abridged version of a paper published in **Compass** Vol 22 No 1. 1993)

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The National Convention Report and The Premier League Table

Liam Bane

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It seemed a good idea - to gather together all the principal agencies involved in education and afford them the opportunity to debate and discuss the present state of Irish education and to reflect on how its shape might be altered with a view to meeting new demands. There is implicit in this an assumption that there is need for change, maybe even radical change. Undoubtedly, there will be those who will not concede this fundamental premise, who will argue that the system has served us well and that we must be careful not to interfere too much with a fabric that is basically sound. This will be the view of those whom the system has served so well.

There is, too, in this convocation a hope, more than an expectation, that the Major Players will come to the table - in radical as well as conservative mode - prepared to consider new ideas rather than defend old assertions, prepared to offer a new vision rather than resort to failed paradigms, prepared to face the new realities rather than take comfort in old established positions. Of such hopes are dreams fashioned and so, the National Convention was a good idea.

The Major Players came to the table and what they brought, for the most part, was not any great vision of education which might respond to the needs and the demands of a changing society. First of all, to take the hard questions. Does the education system, in the first instance, take any responsibility for the kind of society that has evolved on our island, a society in which the demarcation lines are even more sharply drawn, between those who have and those who want, those who achieve the comfort zone and those who lose on all fronts, those who have access to all privilege and those for whom all the avenues are firmly barred. Having responded to that question, truthfully and openly of course, the second question on the paper asks: Do the guardians of the system have solutions to offer for the great and growing problems we now face? What for instance, have they to say to the hopeless and the helpless who have never known work and probably never will and who are helpless and hopeless because they have been educated in the belief that there is a god and that he will have a job for everyone. Refer, if you must, to the famous new catechism - or how to go forward in reverse gear. And what have the guardians to say, for instance, to those unfortunate teachers who are trapped in the trenches, where the unrelenting war is being waged between those whose task is to transmit a value system and those for whom this value system has no meaning, no purpose, no place in their lives - those who are more likely to find meaning in a bottle or a syringe.

And so the Report

The National Convention Report contains the summation of the accumulated wisdom of the Major Players and their responses to the kind of problems cited above. But from a reading of the report, what emerges is that the system is not really in need of any kind of radical overhaul - rather, it is more Bondlike in its approach - shaken, not stirred, thank you very much. But what was really on offer or to be expected from the Major Players who came to the table, apparently unarmed but with guns not too cleverly hidden beneath the table. Was there ever any intention of departing from the norm, as positions were taken which, when the disguise was removed, was simply a restatement of the grand old maxim 'what we have, we hold.' Thus, for example, denominational education is still a good thing because it was always a good thing and sadly this kind of sustained assertion is defended not by one denomination but by all. In the face of this kind of beleaguered approach and Jurassic Park educational mentality, the framers of the report were set a thankless task.

The Intermediate Tier

Take the case of the Intermediate Tier. Coming from starting points that are sometimes directly opposed, there has been a remarkable convergence on the need for an Intermediate Tier. I mean, could you imagine life on this island without an Intermediate Tier. The reasons advanced, of course, were all the right ones - decentralisation, democratisation, representation, consultation, and any other -ation you like. These are, of course, the right reasons but the question is: are they the real reasons? Might it have something to do with control, with maintaining status and a church which can say - we, after all, have exclusive ownership of the property and that's a fairly incontestable case. Talk your way around that if you can, but don't try to bulldoze your way through it. There will be an Intermediate Tier, which may resemble the old Intermediate Tier and the Major Players will live happily ever after. All of this will be done in the interests of developing a really effective and fair education system. Of course.

The Department

The Report, while disappointing in its main conclusions, makes interesting reading and it does have some valuable recommendations which, if acted upon, should make for significant improvement. There is the recognition that the Department of Education is firmly at the centre of all things and that a dependency culture has been created "which may have resulted in a sapping of self-reliance and innovative approaches at local level"! As a result, Department personnel are so busy sorting out individual problems that they have no time to devote to planning and the formulation of education policy. The thorny issue of providing an effective inspectorate is dealt with and while there is some tip-toeing through the tulips, if the proposals here are implemented, it should improve the situation in schools.

The pivotal role which principals occupy in schools at present is also discussed. 'A school is only as good as its principal' may be true but the principal in an all-powerful central managerial role is hardly the solution to present difficulties. Hopefully, the earlier notion of an executive - style principal managing the firm and running the operation after the manner

of a well run company will now be quietly buried - the head of the board sitting in an office where the buck stops and the bucks stop.

Adult & Community Education

There is something for everyone here and there is something for adult education - not much but 5 $^1/_2$ pages out of a total 140. That seems to reflect fairly accurately the priority given to adult education.

"It was suggested that many of the materials and methodologies which have been developed as part of adult literacy courses, perhaps with appropriate adaptation, could prove very beneficial at other levels of the system i.e. at primary and secondary level"[2] . Yes and third level too. This of course is a suggestion and nothing more, but a recognition, at least, of truly innovative educational theory and practice. But what if this was not just a suggestion, what if this were a proposal to be taken seriously and to be acted upon. We would then have a radical alternative to the tried, trusted and not always succeeding. We might have had genuine openness, real representation and meaningful consultation. The battle for control might have been avoided and, certainly, voices which were not and will not be heard might have been afforded the opportunity of making an input and even offering realistic solutions to the kind of growing social problems we are now experiencing. Speaking of consultation, did it occur to any of the organisers of this convention that the consumers, the students, might have had opinions about the kind of education on offer, about the manner in which it has served them well and the ways in which it has failed them. It seems to me entirely reasonable to seek the opinions of those who have experienced the best and who have had to endure the worst of our present system.

As an Adult Education Organiser, I am not flattered that a section of the report entitled Adult, Community and Continuing Education has been provided without a single mention of Organisers and their activities. Reading this section in conjunction with the position paper on Regional Education Councils, my reaction is one more of sorrow than despair. I appeal at this stage for recognition of what has been happening over the past fifteen years in adult and community education. There is now an opportunity to formulate a clear policy statement and to implement a philosophy of lifelong learning which will enable adult education to develop and progress in the coming years. There is now the opportunity to acknowledge the exciting initiatives and the important educational interventions that adult education has witnessed in recent years. There is the opportunity now to extend a welcome to the marginalised, to include the excluded, to empower the powerless. There is even now, at the very least, the opportunity to express gratitude to those who have, despite all obstacles and in the face of official neglect, invested considerable time, energy and commitment in their basic belief - that education does have solutions to offer. Mixing classical metaphors, I say to the powers - *Carpe diem* or you will have brought forth a mouse.

1. Report on The National Education Convention p. 15
2. Ibid. p. 101

Think Globally - Act Locally

Rita McNulty

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People who work in adult education, community development, development education and overseas aid are busy with what seem to be very different areas of work and priorities. What brings such sectors together to implement education and awareness programmes which are relevant to the pressing needs of local communities in Ireland and to communities and groups in developing countries? For what purpose and to what effect? I will attempt to answer these pertinent questions by outlining the rationale for development education in the women's adult-community education sector and by describing the work which has gone on over the past three and a half years in Banúlacht and more recently in DESC's One World Quilt Project.

The case has been made for "The Personal is Political" by adult educators, women's group/activists and by the women's movement in general. The growth in the numbers and vibrancy of women's day-time adult groups, the "quiet revolution " and the current feminist backlash is evidence of the veracity and difficulty of this reality. The old boxes which categorised dominant and subordinate world views into private/public, female/male, powerless/powerful are now seriously being questioned and hopefully transformed, largely due to women's struggle and participation in social and political life. In Ireland the work of the Aontas Women's Education Group which published the women's education workbook "From the Personal to the Political" has made an important contribution to this process.

In the same way the case for "The Local is Global" or "Act Locally, Think Globally" is being made by development educationalists and the environmental movement. Believing and understanding that the earth can provide plenty for everyone is an educational and political process.

Scarcity only appears to occur because of our methods of distribution economics and politics. The earth doesn't pick and choose who may drink her water or eat her fruits - we do. When we begin seeing ourselves as interconnected beings, we realize that, ultimately, we are all harmed by our complicated system wherein some have nothing and others have far more than they need. (1)

It is no longer sufficient to analyse issues and problems that affect people in Ireland from a national or even European perspective. In all areas of life - work/unemployment, poverty/wealth, education, health, power, etc. we are connected with local, national and international systems of oppression change and liberation. This world is indeed becoming a smaller place due to greater and more complex communication systems, travel, tourism, trade, transnational capitalism and international political structures, to mention a few. Segments of the world's

population have indeed benefited from increased communications and "modernisation", but the gap between rich and poor persists, evidenced not only in the "First/Third Worlds"* divide but also in the growing numbers of marginalised and poor in so called developed societies. The "Third World" within the "First World" is a significant and vital sector of people who have a common cause with the oppressed and marginalised in "Third World" countries.

Women are the most affected group in this category, they have the major responsibility for the care and support of children and families and consequently bear the brunt of recessions, 'belt-tightening' exercises and policies which favour economic 'growth' at the expense of human development. Many would argue that we have enough problems of our own in Ireland without imposing a development/global agenda on people who are already overburdened with their own struggle for change and survival. This is an understandable and legitimate view which I believe has been challenged and transformed by much development education practice in recent years including that of Banúlacht and the One World Quilt project in the women's community sector.

One popular argument for international co-operation is based on 'enlightened self-interest'. This requires the developed part of the world to share and protect the world's resources and reduce over-consumption in our own long term interests. Banúlacht supports North/South co-operation based on a broader, less Eurocentric view which highlights the interests which women world-wide share, based on their common experience of gender oppression. Through development education supplemented by research and lobbying, Banúlacht seeks to link the experiences and perspectives of Irish and "Third World" women, in order to create a deeper understanding of common issues. This 'commonality' forms the basis for building alliances and developing strategies to effect change, while acknowledging differences of class, colour, creed, caste and ethnicity both at home and in developing countries. Banúlacht's approach is encapsulated for me in the following quote from Carol Carbajal, a Mexican activist:

"Our isolated little works will not change anything unless we get linked and organise and force things. Black and white distinctions between the First and the Third World are neither useful nor accurate any more. Interdependence reinforced by the advance of communications and rooted in the new international division of labour shows us a linked world where power and hierarchy is concentrated in just a few hands. Co-operation, within this context, cannot be a one-way process. It has to be a responsible and mutual activity which in addition must confront the need to preserve our world. It must also face its historic responsibility towards those countries which have supported at their own expense the progress of developed countries. Therefore, co-operation for development has to be a double way. The interchange needs to be not only financial; human expressions could also be interchanged, such as: history, art culture, faith and others. Power relations expressed in gender, race and age oppression are a problem for the whole world. The recognition of a common ground such as the search for a higher quality of life could be the basis for democratic cooperative relations."(2)

*NOTE: *The terms 'First World/Third World, developed/underdeveloped and North/South are used to denote the division between the richer and poorer parts of the globe. I am conscious that these terms are value laden and unsatisfactory. I would suggest that the use of North/South is the most neutral.*

Discovering Common Ground

As a network of women from development organisations and community groups, Banúlacht aims to establish practical, intellectual, emotional and political links between women in Ireland and the "Third World". Since 1990 our work has included the organisation of a major conference entitled "Women World-wide: Common Interests?", training courses, workshops, a women's study tour to Morocco, international links/networking, creative arts training, research and lobbying. As a result of a training course with community tutors and leaders run in 1991/92, a growing number of groups began to incorporate development education into their programmes and activities. A training handbook is being published from this course which will be a resource for adult educators, community leaders and other educationalists. It explores a range of issues from a gender perspective linking the experience and analysis of development, health, work/unemployment, food/trade and debt from the local to the global levels. Working at community level on an international feminist agenda, with a mind that is open to the challenges and learning offered by the local community while at the same time keeping the Southern women's perspective centre-stage, is both difficult and exciting. There are so many layers of learning, levels of analysis and opportunities to break new ground as well as make mistakes, it is an on going process of change, challenge and reflection at all levels.

The space which Banúlacht is aiming to create - through training, networking, debate, education, research and lobbying, is for women to identify links and occupy common ground. Women's struggle for development can be strengthened by working in solidarity to overcome the barriers presented by patriarchal structures and mind-sets. Despite differences in degree and location, the struggle, I believe, is similar and is taking place in marginalised communities in urban and rural Ireland, among subsistence farmers in Africa and sweat-shop workers in Asia. This common ground can be occupied by different women at different times around issues such as the feminisation of poverty, economic dependence, violence against women, reproductive rights and the debt crisis. However, it can only be done when there are acknowledged differences and there is a desire to link with the central common issue which is gender subordination.

Learning Points

Banúlacht's practice of development education within the women's adult community education sector has involved a range of groups including the Lourdes Youth and Community Services (LYCS), Clondalkin Adult Morning Education (CAME), Geraldstown House Ballymun, Letterfrack Women's Group and the Western Women's Link. The process of bringing development agencies and community based, women's groups together started with consultations and discussions, followed by working together on short locally-based courses during which relationships were tested and forged. This led to longer term projects and training. There are a number of learning points from this experience which I would like to highlight:

- It is imperative to tune into where local groups' needs and interests are 'at' and negotiate a space and agenda which is compatible with both local needs and the development

education agenda of raising awareness of overseas development.

• The process of local community development is a challenging arena for development education practitioners to bring the "out there" Third World theory and practice back home. There is also much to be learned in Ireland from community development practice and grassroots organising in countries of the South.

• The process and practitioners of development education, community development, adult education and women's education have much in common and can learn from each others' perspectives and experience.

• Empathy and strength through struggle have characterised the coming together of many Irish women and women from Southern countries. Direct contact between people has great learning potential and impact.

• In dealing with development issues of such great magnitude as famine, disasters etc., it is important to develop action strategies which overcome the danger of immobilisation engendered by feelings of hopelessness and guilt.

• There is huge potential for change in the growing number of grassroots organisations which look at issues from a feminist/women's perspective. There is also a wealth of complementary expertise among such women's groups in Ireland and in Southern countries.

• "Doing together" is an important aspect of building relationships, as it can provide the dynamic and energy which sustain the group/project over time.

Two examples of "doing together" are the study tour by sixteen women from Ireland, North and South, Germany, Holland and Scotland to Morocco last year and the making of a 17 ft x 11 ft One World Quilt by 59 women's development, religious, community and other groups in 1993. Both initiatives involved people with very different perspectives - class, religious, political, settled/traveller, urban/rural etc. The challenge of working collaboratively together to broaden our understanding of global development issues across our local differences was and continues to be a difficult and rewarding "doing together". It is a mirror of the difficulty which is presented by working across the North/South divide. We have much to learn about the process of alliance building at home which can inform our international linking and solidarity work.

Women's community education and development education

These two education processes converge not only through the women's movement but also in their approaches, methodologies and underlying philosophies. Adult education which aims to develop critical reflection in the learner moving from personal development to empowerment to emancipation is complementary to development education which is also learner-centred, active and participative. It seeks to develop skills of empathy, inquiry, analysis, critical reflection and information-gathering as well as increasing knowledge and developing attitudes consistent with living in an interdependent, pluralist, multicultural world.

In Ireland both disciplines are under-resourced and under-recognised, it is not the case that both have been tried and found wanting, the reality is that the commitment to learning and change which has been demonstrated by adult learners, educators, development

educationalists, activists and all those working for social change has neither been fully exploited nor rewarded. [3] Forging a strategic alliance between the two would go a long way towards supporting and enhancing each others' efforts. The common starting point could be a commitment to empowerment through education and action. In this we could learn much from DAWN*, who want to realise an empowerment vision of development through political mobilisation, legal changes, consciousness raising, popular education and an international movement of 'women and the oppressed'.

Peggy Antrobus in her paper 'Women in Development' outlines five elements for an alternative, gender-sensitive analysis, which she calls " the wisdom approach".

She begins by making the distinction between change at a strategic level and approaches that maintain the status quo. Her second point is that experience at the micro level (community, project, or household) should be used to inform macro-level policies, and vice versa. Thirdly, the approach must be holistic in order to integrate social, cultural and political dimensions into economic analysis. The fourth point is that the political nature of the processes of development and underdevelopment lie in "imbalances of power within and between nations rather than the presence or absence of resources". Finally, Antrobus calls for an analysis which is feminist in orientation. We need to reject the separation of private and public domains: of the household from the economy: of personal and political realities: of the realms of feeling and intuition from that of rationality: Above all we need to reject an analysis which lies within the monetised sector of the economy [4]. Working together from such a starting point with the 200,000 adults [5], including 300 day-time groups [6], involved in adult education in Ireland is fertile and exciting ground for transformative and liberating learning.

The One World Quilt Project

The One World Quilt, a tapestry of the micro and macro, is another example of development education practice in the women's education and development sectors which has extended the boundaries of learning and change into the imaginative and artistic arenas. It involved almost three-hundred people in fifty-nine groups from all over Ireland in making panels for a One World quilt depicting a range of images and messages of interdependence, development, peace, violence against women, sisterhood and many more. Workshops were held to identify and explore development themes which were translated into creative panels by ICA Craft Committee and launched by President Mary Robinson in the Irish Museum of Modern Art in November 1993. It involved the coming together of divergent groups who, despite their differences, made a statement of the desire for a different life, a different culture, which transforms and reshapes the world into a way of being based on values of nurturing, caring and respect for the planet and all its living creatures.

The making of the quilt symbolises the leaps of imagination which women world-wide have been making in their communities, organisations, workplaces and homes, in order to find creative and alternative solutions to political, social and economic problems. It reclaims the value and respect denied to women's traditional skills down through the years. The quilt is now used as a tool for education, discussion and debate, it travels around the country to

* **NOTE**: *Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era,*

workshops, community festivals, international women's day celebrations and other local and regional events. A video and booklet are being produced on the project to complement the quilt's educational value. The initiative is a useful adult education model using creative skills which can engage the learner on a number of levels - creative, intellectual, spiritual, imaginative and political.

My experience as co-ordinator of these two initiatives - Banúlacht and the One World Quilt Project has taught me lessons I did not even know I needed to learn for myself. The projects have contributed a global dimension to community and adult education in Ireland which many of the groups involved have found not only useful, stimulating but also consistent with their local education and community development programmes. In many ways the work of the past three and a half years has been about piloting, experimenting and relationship building. This could be consolidated and expanded through greater institutional and organisational co-operation between the various agencies and groups involved in adult and community education and development education. Development education is initially about awareness, the prerequisite to consciousness, empowerment and emancipation. According to Starhawk, "Awareness is the beginning of resistance. We can only resist domination by becoming and remaining conscious: conscious of the self, conscious of the way reality is constructed around us, conscious of each seemingly insignificant choice we make, conscious that we are, in fact making choices. Resistance becomes a discipline of awareness, akin to any spiritual discipline that demands we remain present to our experience". [7] I hope those active in adult, community and development education will build on the groundwork of recent years as well as begin to form a more structured alliance at institutional level. It is in our common interest to secure government support and recognition for non-formal adult education. What is required is not only adequate funding but also a shift in thinking which recognises that school is not the only seat of learning and that the non formal education sector is equally important and currently very dynamic.

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Community Development in Rural Ireland

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A United Nations meeting in Athens defined Community Development as: "the process by which the efforts of the people are united with those of the statutory bodies to improve the economic, social and cultural life of the community, to integrate the community into the life of the nation and to enable the local community to contribute fully to the national progress."

The basic thrust of any community development approach is to help people to improve their way of life. The two main prongs of such development can be described as the direct approach or the indirect, grass-roots approach.

The Direct Approach

An inventory of peoples' problems is drawn up and prioritised by a development officer who then maps out a programme for the people. Next there may be some type of publicity campaign to sell the idea to the people. The development officer, or others, hire workers to do the job for the community.

On the positive side, the direct approach produces tangible results; it gets things done and concerns itself with projects that can be completed without leading to a self-perpetuating programme.

But it also has weaknesses in that it invites competing programmes because of its attention to a single facet of living rather than to the community as a whole. It could also be very costly. It concerns itself not so much with meeting the felt needs of the people as carrying out approved projects imposed from above or outside. The programme usually stops when the development officer leaves because it is his/her programme rather than one owned by the people.

The Indirect Approach

In this grass-roots approach, the development officer works with the people first to win their confidence and support. The concerns of the people, as well as their problems, needs, hopes and desires are discussed. Through joint planning they select a realistic problem that they feel they can solve. They secure advice and assistance from existing agencies to carry out their plan and then decide on appropriate action. This then enables them to move on to the next problem which they feel is the most urgent, proceeding with increased confidence in their ability to help themselves.

The strength of the indirect approach is that it is self-perpetuating because initiative rests in the hands and minds of the people. It is economical because the people contribute energy and material resources wherever possible. Programmes grow from what the people feel are the real and basic needs.

On the negative side, it seems slower to the development officer and others, who feel they must show results quickly. Some projects chosen by the people themselves may not fit into the national plans and may require scarce resources. Qualified development officers needed for the indirect approach are usually harder to find.

Muintir na Tíre

The indirect/grass roots approach has been the method used by Muintir na Tíre, Ireland's National Community Development Organisation, since its foundation by John Canon Hayes in Tipperary Town in 1937. The basic unit of the organisation then was the Guild, which was elected by the people of the parish on a vocational basis. The period of the Second World War was a testing time for Muintir na Tíre's brand of community development. The needs of the people were many and there was the added problem of the government of the day establishing statutory parish councils in an attempt to meet local needs.

The organisation realized at an early stage that adult education was one of the great needs of rural Ireland and they set out to establish summer schools for boys in Pallaskenry and for girls in Dundrum.

The Parish Plan for Agriculture

As a result of the success of this venture into adult education, the Parish Plan for Agriculture was prepared by the government in 1946. Over a period of fifty years, it has sought to promote a true community spirit, the spirit of local caring communities, aimed at the formation of attitudes favourable to constructive community development. It pioneered the model of the local Community Council, representative, non-sectional and interdenominational, as the most effective means of enabling the process of community development to work.

The indirect approach has led to a variety of projects over the years:

- Development of turf-cutting cooperatives, including the purchase of modern turf-cutting machines.
- Development of the Parish Plan for Agriculture in 1950.
- Direct involvement in the implementation of the Rural Electrification Scheme from 1947 onwards. Who would believe that the value of having electricity in the home and on the farm had to be sold to communities?
- Carrying out of many of the Piped Water Group Schemes to rural homes.
- Promotion of small and medium-sized industries as the most suitable for the Irish economy, as identified by Muintir in the Limerick Rural Survey research project.
- Promotion of employment opportunities by means of the community development process which was later adopted by the Youth Employment Agency.

- The building of local Community Halls and Centres throughout Ireland.
- The promotion of a National Public Speaking Competition for post-primary schools.
- Involvement in tourism development: Tidy Towns, Rent-a-Cottage Schemes.
- Promotion of the Credit Union movement.

The Antigonish Movement of Adult Education

When I was studying at St. Francis University, Nova Scotia, Canada, I had the opportunity to see how the Antigonish Movement of Adult Education through economic cooperation operated. It was founded by the late Dr. Moses Coady in 1928 and sponsored by St. Francis Xavier University. This movement has spread to many parts of Canada and to several developing countries. In his book, **Masters of their Own Destiny**, Dr. Coady refers to one particular difficulty:

"If the masses of the people have become in a sense slaves, it is because they have not taken the steps or expended the effort necessary to change society. The coal miner comes out of the pit, cleans up and calls it a day. The fisherman thinks he has done enough when he lands his catch on the wharf. The farmer puts in a day of drudgery and 'knocks off' until tomorrow. This is the great mistake. There is no standing still, and if the people do not take the means toadvance themselves, they will slip surely backward. Let us take a lesson from the man in whose window a light burns late each night. He does not watch the clock or wait for a whistle. He is sufficiently interested in the advancement of his own affairs to work overtime without compulsion."

The Antigonish Community Development Movement had its own particular approach, which centred on mass meetings and the promotion of adult education so that there would be programmes in every community, as well as links with the educational colleges. In the early days of the movement, there was a vision which included the development of consumer cooperatives, a credit union attached to every unit of the movement to supply the economic arm, and a training centre which has now been named The Coady International Institute.

Community Information Centres

In 1968, Muintir na Tíre gave me the task of piloting the first Community Information Centre in the country, having had already identified a need for this service to the community. Since Carlow town had an active Muintir na Tire council, it was chosen as the venue for the centre. On November 2, 1970, the Community Information Centre was launched at a public meeting in the town. So successful was it that many requests were received by headquarters for help to start similar centres around the country. At a later period, the National Social Services Board took over the promotion of the centres and in recent years, the name has been changed to Citizens' Information Centres.

Research and Development Project

In 1973, community development in Ireland received a great boost when the European

Social Fund made a grant-in-aid to Muintir na Tire to enable it to carry out a pilot scheme in community development. The main aim of the scheme was to establish a development and service unit within Muintir and to assist in the training of people in local communities in the principles and practice of community development.

The Development and Service Unit was established in 1970 with Tomás Roseingrave, National Director of Muintir, as Unit Manager, Tom Fitzgerald as C.A.O., and six community field officers, including myself. We spent six months on a Community Development Training course at U.C.D., after which we were assigned to different parts of the country to provide both formal and informal training in community development.

Carlow Farmers

In the parish of St. Mullins in Co. Carlow, 42 local farmers had been waiting for years for the government to drain four miles of the Aughafadaa River which was meandering like a stretched spring over 400 acres of land. This left no outlet for the draining of a further 1,000 acres of marginal land. Some of the land had not been farmed in living memory, and parts of it had been abandoned for so long that when the initial survey was done, the farmers were not sure of the exact location of boundaries.

As Community Development Officer for the area, I was involved from the start of the project. Having first identified the need, Muintir na Tire Council then carried out the necessary research and appointed their secretary as liaison officer with the 42 farmers. A public meeting was held to provide up-to-date information and farmers' signatures were collected. Muintir na Tire, working closely with the Agricultural Advisory Service, applied for an E.E.C. grant, invited tenders from contractors to carry out the main drainage, collected the farmers' contributions and decided on the amount of voluntary work each farmer would have to contribute.

The most significant material result of all this work was the increase in the value of the land by at least £1/2 million. On the human side, an unsurpassed spirit of cooperation developed among the farming community. The project was accepted by the E.C. Social Fund as a worthwhile contribution to community development and was offered to other countries in the E.C. as a model. Other projects carried out during this period included the provision of piped water to 500 homes in Co. Kerry, the restoration of economic and social life to a Co. Meath village, the provision of employment to 200 people through small craft industries in Co. Cork, and the provision of leadership training courses for hundreds of people.

Historical Research Project

I was directly involved with St. Mullins Muintir na Tire when they set up this project. It aimed to encourage research into the recording of local history through the development of genealogy, the transcription of parish registers and the recording and publishing of gravestone inscriptions. The research included the recording of religious practices as written in church registers, birth rate trends as seen through baptismal records, marriage trends over the years, emigration patterns and recording local history.

This project continued for seven years and provided employment and training for young people each year with the help of a grant from the Youth Employment Section of the Department of Labour. The work was supported by Bishop Laurence Ryan of Kildare and Leighlin who advised parish priests in the diocese to have their church registers transcribed and indexed. Information and advice on how to carry out this type of project was given to many groups all over Ireland including Sneen, Freemount, Rathdangan, Dun Laoghaire/ Monkstown, Graigeunamagh, Tullow, Camross, Inistioge and Carlow. St. Mullins Muintir na Tire are now involved in the promotion of a heritage centre in the old Protestant Church building at St. Mullins, where many of the results of the research, carried out in the project, will be on display.

Community Alert

Through the community development process over recent years, Muintir na Tire has been promoting Community Alert in cooperation with the Gardai. This is a project organised by voluntary community groups in association with the Gardai. It aims to improve the quality of life for all by preventing attacks on vulnerable people in rural areas and especially on the elderly. In this regard, Community Alert has three main objectives:

1. To take measures to reassure the elderly of the community's concern for their welfare.
2. To give them advice and guidance, involving them in crime prevention measures and in security procedures.
3. To raise the level of alertness of everyone in the community, and especially the elderly themselves, to people acting suspiciously and taking steps to inform the Gardai.

Community Alert is a nationwide campaign designed to operate in the rural areas of Ireland. It is hoped that it will still have benefits long after the physical threat to old people has gone. It has now spread to all of Ireland and to parts of Wales and Scotland.

What of the Future

Community Development may be more important now than ever before because of the growing complexity of society and the increased inter-dependence of the world economic system. Programmes must be planned to stimulate local initiative by involving people in the process of change. Channels of communication need to be provided that promote neighbourliness and also improve the economic and cultural well-being of people.

The late Dr.Tom Walsh, former director of the Agricultural Institute, speaking at a seminar in Dundrum in 1987 on the theme "Helping the Neighbour", concluded his address as follows:

"Here at this seminar, the best thing we can do is to put into practice what the late John Canon Hayes had in mind when he talked about a community development that would give this nation a new strength, new hope, create new initiatives, turn around the apathy and despondency that has been there for so long. If we can do that, then we will have succeeded in doing something for this nation in re-building it, in a sense of real nationhood, a nation in which young people will feel proud to work and earn their living."

A People on the Move

Jim Owens

Jim Owens worked in Sierra Leone, West Africa, from 1979-80 with the Holy Ghost Missionaries and since then he has also worked with Concern and with South Inner City Community Development Association in Meath St., Dublin. Having gone into full-time pastoral care, he now works in St. Vincent's Hospital, Fairview, Dublin. He is among the few but growing number of lay people working full-time in pastoral care in Ireland.

The Germ of an Idea

The 1980's saw the return of many development workers from abroad, especially from the Third World. These people, both lay and religious, saw in urban areas many parallels with the situations in which they had been working in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Irish people had been affected by urban decay and the vast shifts in urban population, while crime and vandalism contributed to a sense of hopelessness. Naturally, these returned workers wanted to use their skills in their own country.

The Irish Missionary Union enabled this process to develop in the beginning. In 1984 Ann Hope, author of Training for Transformation, was invited to lead a programme in Partners in Mission (1). The spirit and philosophy of her work served as a foundation for the development that was taking place. Various renewal programmes got under way such as "Renew" and "Better World Movement". These initiatives can now be seen as the first steps in the development of pastoral policy and planning.

In 1985, a Committee for Parish Development and Renewal was set up to research and facilitate a renewal process in the parishes of the Dublin diocese. Subsequently, this committee embarked on a consultation with the priests of the diocese. The participation of over three hundred priests led to the identification of the main needs of the parishes as they saw them, the chief of which was the need for lay people to collaborate with the priests in taking responsibility for the life of the parish.

Called by Name

I had been involved in a Dublin Inner City parish, City Quay, for some time and had contact with several people there. My involvement changed focus significantly when I was invited to lead a Lenten programme in the parish in 1993. "Called by Name" is designed by the Parish Development and Renewal Group in the Dublin diocese (2). It consists of six weekly sessions on related themes:

- Change in society and in the Church
- Images of God and the positive and negative view of power stemming from these images.

- The importance of each person.
- The local parish community and how it is understood today.
- An exploration of the dynamics of Mission.
- Group reflection on putting one's mission into practice and overcoming obstacles to this.

While honoured by the role assigned to me, I was also humbled by the task. Drawing on my experience of working in several communities in Ireland and in Sierra Leone, I decided that my priority was to listen to the people of the parish. I quickly realized that they were concerned about many issues and problems, and they wanted a chance to speak their minds.

Personal contacts and encouragement plus the enthusiasm of the parish clergy were the main planks used to advertise the programme, augmented by publicity in the parish newsletter. There were sixty-five participants in the programme which was designed to assist people to reflect on their experiences and to share them with each other. Various techniques were used to facilitate this process, which led to a candid and honest exchange of insights.

Surveying Needs

Six months later, a formal survey of the needs of the parish was undertaken to prepare for a parish assembly. The results of the survey focused on five areas:

- The local environment and the need to liaise with statutory authorities such as Port and Docks and Dublin Corporation.
- Liturgy and church activities.
- The way various parish facilities were being used, especially the community centre.
- The needs of youth.
- Drugs in the area.

The assembly was attended by eighty people and working groups were set up to deal with each of the above priorities. Fifteen leaders from these groups also did a leadership training programme.

The Environment Group

An example of the approach adopted by these groups can be seen in the manner in which the Environment Group worked. This group was concerned about how the quays in Dublin City would be used by Port and Docks since the Guinness boats had gone. They did not want the area along the Liffey to become a car park and, therefore, had meetings with the relevant authorities on this issue. As a result of such negotiation, the group is hopeful that walk-ways will be developed along the river banks. With the demolition of the gasometer, more land is becoming available which the people want for a mixture of low cost and Corporation housing to enable local people to raise their families in their own community. Property developers are eager to build offices and expensive apartments which would not benefit the local residents, either in their construction, or in providing employment in the subsequently built offices.

There will be dissension and conflict. Some people will tire of the almost impenetrable walls of bureaucracy and red tape. The task facing the various leaders is to support the people

in their struggle with the various authorities in the area. The battle is far from being won but parish development and renewal is a process that unfolds and emerges in the parish. It is not a package brought in from outside but a process within the parish whereby gifts that lie dormant are activated. Through this process the community gradually realizes some of the goals of Parish Renewal and Development, namely, their importance as people and their ability to obtain and hold what is rightly theirs. They are like the Israelites, once held in captivity in Egypt, setting out to follow their insights and to cross into the uncharted terrain of freedom in the Promised Land.

Benefits Gained

The ideas and strategies described above are used in similar community and development training programmes in many parts of the world, especially in developing countries. Such a process fuels the energy of a people as they realize that they are significant and that they have an important contribution to make. Coming together for the course strengthened the solidarity among the people of City Quay parish. The mutual support of the participants has given them the courage to start other initiatives locally. In the light of this experience of support and networking, I would suggest that building links with other communities in similar circumstances, in fact with a community in a developing country, would bring further enrichment, encouragement and solidarity.

(1) Partners in Mission, 3 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1.
Tel. 01-855 1025. Contact, Maureen Sheehy.

(2) Parish Development and Renewal Office, The Red House,
Holy Cross College, Clonliffe Road, Dublin 3. Tel. 01-837 9253

(3) Parish Development and Renewal, Presenting the Dublin Experience.
Veritas Publications, 1993.

I Didn't Interrupt You.....

Ad Hock

Following repeated requests (at least twice), we are pleased to publish here the text of the interview given by Ad Hock soon after his recent appointment as Special Adviser to the Minister for Clarification. He will have responsibility in the areas of Global Warming, Windows of Opportunity, Property Attacks, Current Affairs (liaising with the ESB) and Adult Education for All Sexes. He will receive the full salary of Special Adviser for each of these posts with the exception of Adult Education, which he will be expected to fill in a voluntary capacity.

The interview was given on the radio programme, Goodnight Ireland, and the interviewer was Dudley Hardly, who is a renowned expert in uncovering Hidden Agendas and in Abrasive Questioning, in which he has a third degree from The Prawn Institute.

Dudley Hardly: Now, Ad Hock, sir... well, how should I address you?

Ad Hock: You can just call me Special Adviser.

DH: Very well, Special Adviser can I first ask you.... but before I do, let me talk for a paragraph or two as there is no one I would rather listen to than myself... how do you see your role?

Ad H: Not very well at present but I am having the eyes tested. I have also ordered those new spectacles designed by a snooker player so this should give me a much broader perspective. Later on...

D.H: These overlong replies will have to be avoided as clearly the public would much rather listen to me. Relax then while I go on for a bit before asking the next question... will you actually be in a position to influence legislation?

Ad H: Well let me put the question another way, or rather let me answer another question, since you refuse to ask the question to which I had prepared the answer.. cf. page 35, The Prawn Manual, Speaking is not Talking, Chapter 4, Listening is not Hearing..... Perhaps if I gave you the answer, you could then put the question and we could start again. Let's try - This problem hasn't arisen overnight or at the end of the day and it's something that my department has been aware of for a long time....

DH: This is ridiculous. Let me put this to you then and do try to make your responses brief, you must be aware that you are taking up my talking time. You are quoted as saying that in the overall context of developing societies, "Nothing succeeds like failure". What exactly did you mean by this?

Ad H: I'm sorry, Dudley, but I think you got the wrong end of the stick - the gummy end. What I actually said on that occasion, and I remember it well, it was in response to a paper entitled Mad Dogs of Ireland, what I actually said way "Once shy, twice bitten". However, since you didn't ask the question, let me ask myself....

DH: Well listeners, I know you want to hear me....

Ad H: Please don't interrupt me, I didn't interrupt you...

DH: But you did...

Ad H: And if I did, that is my prerogative. Now. Let me proceed to answer the question which is the really important one, which is the one to which I have prepared the response. You ask me if I have any plans for job creation and I say that I am delighted that you didn't ask this question. There are, first of all, the several jobs which I have created for myself. Remember that I am only in these jobs for three weeks and already I have managed to find positions for fifteen relatives on my own side and I am now proceeding to see what can be done for the wife's lot..

DH: I am renowned for my blunt style of interviewing and I have therefore got to say to you that this sounds like nepotism to me and I know that many of my listeners don't know what nepotism is, so this makes me look like a Really Smart Interviewer....

Ad H: Yes, yes indeed, nepotism, that's a very good word to describe it, it's part of our overall package, the Programme for Nepotism and Work. I have - suddenly - a lot of family and friends in the building trade and they must be looked after...

DH: But are you not... I almost asked the question without first giving the overlong introduction and thereby depriving the listeners of the opportunity of listening to me... are you not leaving yourself open to the charge....

Ad H: Of course, I'm leaving myself open to the charge, as any self-respecting official in Current Affairs must do. I have...

DH: I didn't press you, so don't press me....

AH: It is my intention to put an interpretative centre in every T.D's clinic so that takes care of my building friends. That just leaves my first cousin... He's a bit of a no hoper so we'll put him in charge of the Job Creation programme.

DH: Alright, this has been a most unsatisfactory interview as I've hardly had time to listen to myself but let me put this to you, and before I do, let me give the listeners the benefit of my wisdom.... I must ask you about the part of your brief that has to do with Windows of Opportunity. Now...

Ad H: Can I make a joke?

DH: No...

Ad H: Actually that brief is a bit of a pane..

DH: You mean, you can't see your way..

Ad H: No, it's a pane in the glass...

DH: Please don't interrup.....

Ad H: I didn't interrup..

DH: We're creating a precedent here, interrupting the interruption. Anyway, we have only fifteen seconds left, so that should give us adequate time to deal with the issue of Adult Education. Now, let me ask you and hopefully by the time I get to the question the time will be up... is it true that you especially requested this voluntary post in Adult Education...

Ad H: Yes, yes, of course it's true. As you can imagine, there was some pretty stiff competition, in particular from my dearest friend's youngest son who gives night classes in

Know Your Car.....

DH: How did you get round this one?

Ad H: He's my driver.

DH: You say there was stiff competition.. for a voluntary post? Are you telling me that there is absolutely no remuneration - note that five syllable word, listeners - there is absolutely no remuneration for this post?

Ad H: Only the travelling expenses, but if I give you the full title, then perhaps you may understand why...

DH: You mean it's not just Adult Education..

Ad H: No, no, the full title is Developing Adult Education Links with Institutes in the U.S.A. and Accessing Transnational Networks in Europe and Other Continents.

Since this interview was given, it has been announced that in addition to his brief Adult Education for All Sexes, Ad Hock has been appointed to the Commission to investigate the provision of Sex Education for All Adults.

Learning Together - Vocational Training and Community Development

Cecilia Whitehorn

Cecilia Whitehorn has experience of primary school teaching, community development education and vocational education and training. She is currently Regional Training Worker with Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation.

> "Knowledge, like wealth, needs to be widely and evenly distributed if people are to keep the independence required for human dignity..."(Training for Transformation 1984).

While few would disagree with this statement, the introduction of vocational education and training has provided a new focus for many aspects of community development education. Increasing emphasis on issues such as skills training and accreditation has, at times, seemed to shift the focus of adult education activity until, it appears, the political agenda has somehow become entwined with the educational one.

Recent years have seen the emergence of funding structures regionally and on an European basis which appear to separate and marginalise education, training and community development education. While that "division of labour" has provided the opportunity for clarity of purpose, it has also failed to recognise the transferability and effectiveness of good practice in the differing approaches to learning. This article suggests that it is time for a re-think. A re-appraisal of existing provision, coupled with recent developments in the field, may yield a creative and fruitful form of adult education, which integrates the best of education, training and community development approaches.

The time has come to gather in the best of developmental community and adult education practice and to transplant it into the field of vocational training. All must surely reap the benefits.

Similar or Different

Training and education are different yet complementary. However, while the differences may be significant, it should not obscure the fact that

"learning is the common factor...and that both are concerned with the development of human potential or talent." (Kenney and Reid 1986)

It may be liberating therefore to recognise that this expansion of human capacity is central also to the values of community development, which...

"helps to realise the potential of both individuals and groups within communities" (Community Development Review 1991).

The recognition of this common bond provides new and exciting opportunities to seek strategies which harness the best within adult education, training and community development education. The challenge of such a partnership lies in seeking to recognise the differences and integrating the strengths within each approach.

The Processes: With a similar value-base of developing human potential, the process involved becomes the next most important element for analysis.

Training: Identify needs, plan and design training, deliver training, evaluate outcomes

Learning: Have experience, review experience, draw conclusions, plan, test future applications.

Community Development: Act, look, think, plan, do, change

All are cyclical, continuously moving through the development of the individual or group involved. The juxtaposition of models such as these highlight the fact that while language may differ, certain underlying issues remain the same. The various stages of the processes reflect also that different people may learn in different ways, depending upon the nature of the person and the activity.

Identifying Needs

Identifying needs, looking, thinking, are the starting points for any learning activity. A community development approach encourages the participation of all those involved in the learning experience not only to identify their needs but also to participate in exploring their learning objectives.

Training objectives are often expressed in behavioural terms, for example, "she/he will be able to...as a result of this training". Traditionally this has been seen as being 'job' rather than 'person' centred. Educational aims are often much more complex and seek to address personal development goals rather than remain 'job' oriented. The contribution which community development brings is the participation and co-operation of the small group or community involved in the learning in setting goals. The discipline of setting aims and objectives within a developmental process encourages all participants to clarify their work. When clear objectives have been set, of which the whole group has ownership, then targets, whether behavioural, personal or community-centred maybe monitored and used for on-going evaluative purposes.

Plan

Planning any learning event begins with a thorough understanding of goals and objectives. While practical arrangements planning is often taken for granted, it is vital to recognize its effect upon the learning experience. Many adults will not access education and training unless they feel confident about the situation into which they are going. Community-based, out-reach provision has become much more available in recent years from voluntary and statutory providers alike. It is interesting to note also within vocational training, the requirement for trainers to monitor their resources, buildings, materials and so on in order to provide an equal opportunities approach to learning.

Design

The design of a learning event is as much a piece of creative endeavour as designing a room or garden. In any design activity, the influence of the designer may be seen in overt and subtle ways. So too in a learning experience. Course content has, to some extent, been explored at the earlier stages of the process. However two vital elements can change the nature of the learning. These are the role of the tutor/trainer, and the methods used.

Traditional roles of "teacher", "trainer" are easily recognised, as is the increasing use of "facilitator". Another role suggested in Training for Transformation is that of an "animator" whose role is to help a community or group discover and use all its potential for creative and constructive team work. It is possible for an individual to adopt one or indeed all of these roles within the same learning experience. The challenge lies in the awareness of the appropriate-ness and consequences of each role model.

Training methods have often been regarded as mechanistic, repetitive and skills based. Increasingly, however, vocational and personal demands for areas such as interpersonal and communication skills are being made. These demand from providers the production of stimulating and creative opportunities for skill acquisition. Course objectives may be analysed in terms of knowledge and/or skills acquisition and awareness raising. New technological aids and proven techniques provide a myriad of choice not only for the educator but also for the group. It must be recognised that methods as much as content are not neutral.

Different methods and different "tutor" styles are useful in different situations. Their strength lies in their purpose and ability to be utilised in a way that enables people to grow in knowledge, skills and self confidence and does not control them.

Deliver, Experience, Do

To deliver and have experience within the context of learning seems simple enough. The words imply a giving and receiving of information, awareness and skills, as might be appropriate in fulfilling certain learning objectives. The word "do" is slightly more ambiguous in that it fails to delineate boundaries and roles in the same way. Do suggests an activity open to all. It concerns the recognition of the skills and experiences that all participants bring to a learning group. The challenge is to find ways to encourage, acknowledge, share and

integrate these previous experiences. Traditional good practice has encouraged the sharing and recognition of the learning experiences of the group. Developments in the assessment of prior learning has provided a new impetus to this area.

Assessment and Accreditation of Prior Learning is

"a process that enables people of all ages, background and attitudes to receive formal recognition for skills and knowledge they already possess". (Simosko 1991)

A P L, as it may also be known, recognises that learning is a lifelong process which often occurs within uncertificated and informal learning situations. Participants engage in a process where they begin to develop a profile of what they know, understand and can do. Often a formal portfolio is built which provides supporting evidence to validate the claimed skills, knowledge and understanding. Where individuals seek to re-enter a more formal education and training system their portfolios may be used to seek credit, exemption or recognition for their achievements. For many students the portfolio provides a wonderful record of their life achievements. Their self-confidence and self-esteem increases thereby enabling them to participate in a more active way as they share their skills and knowledge. The "doing" of the learning becomes a truly collaborative process.

Review, Evaluate, Draw Conclusions

Evaluation is about improving the quality of a learning experience. It is different from assessment which is associated with making judgements about the aptitudes, progress and achievement of students using some measuring device. Often evaluation is carried out at the end of a learning experience. Judith Edwards suggests that it is a series of procedures which yield information before, during and after a course to continuously re-shape it. She states:

"At its best, it is designed with others, carried out with widespread participation and the results are widely disseminated so that we can learn both from good practice and from our mistakes" (Edwards 1991).

On-going developments in participatory evaluation have led to the development of methods which suit the concerns, abilities and resources of those involved in a variety of educational programmes. The community development process recognises that to do or to act is not enough. Effective evaluation leads to change. The implementation of change to continuously improve the quality of a learning experience is the primary aim of evaluation. Those changes in turn must then be evaluated for their effectiveness, thus enabling the continuous development of the training cycle.

For those involved in adult education the need to respond to this evaluative and developmental activity has certainly resulted in changes being made. However, as Sir Winston Churchill once said "There is nothing wrong with change if it's in the right direction". While further change is healthy and inevitable, so too is the realisation that much of what was cultivated in the past in terms of adult education and learning still remains to be harvested and indeed to be transplanted into vocational education.

The consultative and participative model of community education is not alien to vocational education. A flexible, adaptive workforce operates most effectively within an ethos

of negotiation and agreement. Skills training develops from a technical, mechanistic focus to areas of problem-solving, communication, personal effectiveness and group management skills. The traditional role of the work supervisor transforms and subsumes that of group leader and facilitator. The assessment and accreditation of previous learning experiences recognises the relationship between vocational training and lifelong learning. Assessment of vocational training expands from a narrow skills-based focus to the monitoring and evaluation of the assessment process, including the provision of access to equal opportunities within the assessment.

The division of education and training into rigid categories of principles and practice serves only to dilute the strengths and highlight the vulnerabilities within each learning experience. The integration of the best of these principles and practices must surely result in the conservation of existing resources and skills and the development of creative opportunities for collaboration and growth. The harvest awaits to be gathered.

Case Study of a New Opportunities for Women Programme

Peggy Flanagan

Peggy Flanagan is co-ordinator of the NOW programme with the Women's Resource and Development Agency in Belfast.

Introduction

The women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA) based in Belfast, has been in existence for 11 years and since it's inception, has responded to the learning requirements of community based women's groups in working class areas in the North of Ireland.

The project has a proven track record of attracting back to education many women who would not otherwise have considered formal education or training as a realistic or desirable option.

The WRDA applied for funding under the EC New opportunities for Woman programme in an attempt to gain funding to ensure the continuance of the work of the organisation. The challenge for the organisation was to ensure that their ethos and approach to work in the informal adult education field with women would not be subsumed by the narrow economic skills based training objectives of EC guide-lines. Instead of solely responding to these guide-lines, the WRDA sought to be proactive by ensuring that their work experience and knowledge be built on through the EC programme.

The WRDA application to the EC funded the New Opportunities for Women (NOW) programme outlined a pre-vocational training course for 12 women over 25 years of age; women who were part of a women's group; women returning to work/training after a long break in skills e.g. women who had been working in the home for a number of years and women with childcare responsibilities.

The pre-vocational nature of the course was a recognition and awareness that women returning to skills training after a long break would benefit through confidence building to reach a point at which they were identifying gaps in their learning and choosing what skills they required, in effect having control over their learning experience rather than responding to 'what was on offer'.

Identifying Needs

Inherent in the course design and delivery was a community development approach. This approach began with building on the existing work of the organisation i.e. work in community based informal education with women in working class areas and their work in the support of women's centres and groups. The design of the NOW course in terms of content was based on the expressed needs of women in the community. The course targeted

women from women's centres and women's groups. This ensured that the skills and confidence gained by the women on the course would be brought back to their groups, so broadening the effectiveness of the course.

"A few of the group to which I belong are now interested in doing courses themselves having seen me on this one. I can tell them about this course and others I've heard of".

"I found I could not settle back into my old ways in my local group. I wanted to do more than sewing and knitting. I wanted to organise the other women to do more classes." *

The course, as mentioned, was based on the expressed needs of women in the community. This included the need for support re childcare, flexibility in line with women's childcare responsibilities and the need to construct a course which ensured that new skills were gained through the building on and acknowledgement of existing skills gained by the women through their unpaid work in the home and community.

Plan

The community development approach to the work of the WRDA and the NOW course recognises women's lives in terms of childcare needs. Lack of childcare provision has in the past been a barrier to women gaining access to training and education.

"Without childcare I could not have come on this course. My little girl was sick a lot and I needed a childminder. I could not have paid for this myself".

Recognition of women's lives places women within a societal context and acknowledges the reality of their lives in terms of childcare needs, poverty, family and societal pressures to maintain the status quo.

Organising for the course included distributing information as widely as possible. The most effective way of encouraging women to partake in the course was talking to women's groups. This face to face contact meant women could air their anxieties, ask questions and get a sense of the approach that would be taken in the delivery of the course. The credibility of the WRDA amongst women's groups further allayed women's fears in participating.

Design

The approach on the course was one of collective learning, enabling individual women to recognise their skills and work with them in identifying their learning needs. Through this process, the women were empowered on a personal and collective level.

"I learned how to use computers, passed the RSA CLAIT 1 and 2, made good friends I learned to put me first, opened new horizons for myself and gave myself the push to go back to school"

Delivery

The Assessment of Prior Learning process was used as a vehicle for exploring with the women the skills they already had through their unpaid work in the home and community.

"The lifelines (APL) helped me to recognise all the skills which I had but never called them

* *All quotes in this article are from the women participants in the NOW course.*

skills before"

"I have gained a bit more confidence and have learned that I can be more than just a housewife and mother. It also helped me to mix with people from other groups"

Evaluation

Continuous evaluation was inherent to the course to ensure quality provision and to ensure that the women on the course 'owned' their learning and evaluated their on-going needs.

"It gave me the opportunity to say how I felt about the session.....and a chance to make suggestions for other sessions"

"It was good to be able to look back at the things which I found helpful"

Conclusion

The WRDA NOW programme offered the opportunity to incorporate the experience of many years in informal education with the training based objectives of the EC NOW programme.

Approaches to the design, planning, delivery and evaluation of the course built on the experience in informal education and a knowledge of the reality of women's lives.

The challenge for voluntary organisations and groups is not to forget this experience and be constrained by the push for 'results' and narrow interpretation of what constitutes 'skills training'.

Organisations such as the WRDA have a part to play in integrating elements of both approaches which has inherent in it responses in line with needs as expressed by those availing of such education/training

Evaluating Literacy Work

Sean Conlan

Dr. Sean Conlan is Adult Education Organiser with Co. Clare Vocational Education Committee

Adult literacy work in Ireland has developed greatly over the past decade. The adult literacy and community education budgets, introduced in 1984 and administered by the Vocational Education Committees, have been very supportive of most schemes. There are now more students receiving tuition, part-time or full-time organisers have been appointed to most schemes, resources have improved, the National Adult Literacy Agency and the local schemes have improved both basic and in-service training. Volunteer tutors, however, still form the backbone of most schemes and a majority of students, particularly in rural areas, still work in a one to one context.

With all of this development and its associated concerns, the practitioner can easily become confused about the quality of the job that he or she is doing. Everyone comes to the adult literacy field with the best of motives and intentions. But how do I, as organiser, co-ordinator or tutor, know I am doing a good job? Is it enough for a politician or community leader or administrator to offer occasional praise? Is it enough to feel, at the end of a tiring week, that because I was busy I must be doing a good job? Is it enough to know that we had 20% more students than last year or received a bigger grant from the VEC, or trained more tutors? Or do I intuitively know that I am doing a good job?

This article attempts to give the tools to help the practitioner judge the effectiveness of his or her literacy scheme. Three different perspectives from the fields of programme planning and curriculum development are applied to the work of Irish adult literacy schemes. Three different ways of looking at a local scheme, three different models, are outlined and literacy schemes are questioned in the light of each approach. These approaches are presented as useful tools to help the practitioner gain perspective on his or her scheme. The approaches are not critiqued in themselves, merely presented as templates against which a literacy scheme may be measured. The models used also have general applicability to the work of adult education planning at any level.

1. The Analytical Approach

This approach to programme planning owes its clearest expression to Ralph Tyler (1949). His analytic approach moves from developing objectives which can come from studies of the learners themselves, research on contemporary life, suggestions from specialists or from philosophy to designing the learning experiences, to developing methodologies, to finally evaluating the entire exercise. This approach has had huge influence on the way curriculum is designed at all levels from pre-school, to industrial training, to post graduate courses.

Can adult literacy schemes be viewed in this analytical way as a piece of curriculum? Objectives can surely be assigned to what goes on within literacy schemes. Even if they remain unstated, the objectives of a scheme would focus broadly on the improvement of reading and writing skills. At a more precise level, objectives could be stated behaviourally for easier measurement. Learning experiences and methodologies clearly are part of any literacy programme. Tutoring takes place in a certain way using one-to-one or group techniques. Content often derives from the lives, interests and needs of students, the materials we possess or the course outline we are following.

Traditionally, evaluation has not been systematic in Irish adult literacy work. Often practitioners justify this, claiming that students evaluate themselves, by leaving the scheme when they themselves judge appropriate.

Tyler's analytical approach is one way of viewing an adult literacy scheme. From this viewpoint, practitioners must ask a series of questions about their adult literacy practice. What are the objectives of my programme? Do I have objectives, where are they stated, if at all? How do I choose learning experiences or content areas? Why do I work in one way (example, one-to-one) and not another (groups)? Do things happen because of a deliberate decision or merely develop by accident? Does evaluation take place? Do we measure progress and how do we do this?

Tyler's analytical model helps adult literacy practitioners break down their schemes into manageable and logical parts. Answers to distinct questions can be sought, strengths and weaknesses identified and an overall assessment of the effectiveness and adequacy of the programme attempted.

2. The Naturalistic Approach

The naturalistic approach to programme planning moves away from the step-by-step approach of Tyler and regards the planning process as an attempted answer to, what in philosophical terms might be described as, an "uncertain practical question". How do we deal with the adult literacy problem in our area? This is the uncertain practical question which demands an answer. This question demands an answer but there are no certain grounds for decision making. Context is important. Compelling goals and values exist, and when a decision is made, we presume that the subsequent action will result in some desirable state of affairs.

The American educationalist, D.F. Walker (1971), describes the curriculum planning process in the following way. There are three major stages. (i) The "platform" consists of the "system of beliefs and values that the curriculum developer brings to his task and that guides the development of the curriculum" (p.52) (ii) "Deliberation" is the process whereby the practitioner reflects on ends and means, relevant facts, alternative solutions, consequences and finally chooses the best available solution. (iii) The "design" is what results from the deliberation, the result in action of the decisions taken.

This model, Walker claims, is based on how curriculum planners actually operate. The model is primarily descriptive. The main principle is the defensibility or justifiability of

decisions. Different voices are heard in the deliberation process. Certain views and arguments are more convincing than others. These become part of the platform and lead to the design and action stage.

This model has clear resonances for adult literacy schemes. In practical terms literacy practitioners are asked to look at how their programme came together, how it was designed and how and why it works in a certain way.

To go back to beginnings, the process might be characterized in this way. A need was perceived by someone. Low levels of adult literacy exists in this area. This person talked to others, as individuals or at meetings. A deliberation process, informal and formal, was taking place. Views were expressed and justified or rejected by weight of argument. People were being influenced. The platform was being formed. Finally the program design emerged which contained such details as who will do the tutoring, how funds are acquired, where to meet, teaching methods used, one-to-one or group tuition, recruitment methods and type and duration of training.

This model also allows for change and development. The deliberation process is continually at work and the platform and design may be modified in the light of this process. Thus at one point, one-to-one tuition may seem like the only way of acting while at other times there is a strong justification for using small groups. These matters are deliberated on, discussed, argued and thought about. If the arguments become convincing, changes are made.

This naturalistic model provides practitioners with a second way of viewing the operation of their schemes. Questions posed by this model might include the following. How might I describe the platform which underpins my scheme, what are the assumptions on which it rests? Who formed this platform, who had a voice in creating the platform, should other voices be heard? How open is the deliberation process which continued to create the platform which forms the basis of my practice on the ground?

This model attempts to describe how the design of a literacy scheme emerged through the process of discussion, deliberation and justification. Practitioners are queried by this model in relation to the reasonableness of their programs, the rationale on which they are based and the justifiability of what is being done on the ground.

3. The Critical Approach

This third approach is articulated in J. Forester's book "Planning in face of power" (1989). In this work, Forester bases his approach to planning on a socio-political analysis. There is a strong recognition that education is not a neutral process. If this is true, then literacy projects are not neutral either.

The kind of socio-political analysis you arrive at dictates your approach to how you plan any programme, what actually happens and how effective it is. The critical model suggests that we live in a complex society which demands from us a complex analysis of the social and political reality in which we live.

Power and powerlessness are central issues in this critical approach. The programme planner, this model claims, either goes along with existing power structures or wants to change them. The planner is a coalition builder, attempting to counteract the powerlessness of people through various techniques which seek to encourage participation, dialogue and

conversation. Forester's approach involves not only "changes in strategies but also changes in the very parameters of the definition of the problem" (1989, p.128).

How can the adult literacy practitioner use this model to measure the effectiveness of his or her scheme? The role of the literacy organiser in the critical model is to be highly aware of the social and political reasons for poor literacy levels and to act on this information where possible. The organiser becomes a selective organiser of attention, focussing tutors and management boards on certain injustices in society, which result in services going towards those who possess wealth, power or influence.

The literacy practitioner watches out for and counteracts misinformation. For example, a government may claim that because money is being spent on the literacy problem, the service is adequate; a scheme may claim that because pre-service courses are offered to tutors, adequate training exists. The practitioner must guard against extravagant political claims both locally and nationally and where possible attempt to disseminate accurate information.

The literacy practitioner, this model claims, should establish dialogue in order to counteract powerlessness. In this way, the organiser or the scheme itself tries to expand the vision of tutors, students and the general public, clarify possibilities and focus public attention on actions that address the needs of the poor or powerless.

The purpose of a literacy scheme, in this model, is to align itself firmly with the powerless adults it purports to serve. The scheme must also use every opportunity to discourage misinformation and encourage dialogue and conversation.

The critical model provides a third approach for practitioners when viewing the operation of their schemes. Questions posed by this model might include the following. Is there any socio-political analysis evident in my scheme? If so, what is it? What values are enshrined in my programme? Whose interests are being served? Does my scheme ever give out misinformation? Does my scheme focus public attention on actions which might address the needs of people with reading and writing difficulties?

The critical model forces the practitioner to look at his/her scheme as it fits into the wider society. Issues of poverty, powerlessness and political awareness are clearly on the agenda. A coherent socio-political analysis is encouraged and an astuteness necessary to combat misinformation and make gains with and on behalf of the powerless in society.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to give three different perspectives on how the practitioner might judge the adequacy of his or her adult literacy scheme. Questions have been suggested which might be asked of a literacy scheme by a proponent of each perspective. How these questions are answered will help the practitioner reflect more systematically on what he or she is doing and why he or she is doing it.

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The Importance of Networking

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This article is based on a paper at an ACE Network meeting in Kilkenny

Networking is above all about social change. It is a strategy for bringing about social change and so it is about politics, relationships, development and progress. But networking isn't just another tool in the bag of the political activist or the social change agent. Networking is a whole new way of organising which is alternative, feminist and which is providing a blueprint for the emergence of new ways of thinking about leadership and power.

Truly we are living and working for change in extremely exciting times. The problems which we are facing as a society are enormous. Poverty, violence, social injustice and inequality, all seem to be intensifying. When we look at Bosnia or Somalia or Belfast or at the lengthening dole queues and the worsening health and social welfare services, it is hard to feel optimistic. I find that my own involvement and commitment to social change is no longer (as it was in the eighties) a matter of blind faith or blind rage. Now in the midst of the crisis all around us, I see the seeds of something new beginning to sprout. It is like looking into a whirling spiral of chaos and becoming aware of a beautiful crystal at the centre and realising that there is the possibility that the faster the chaos spins the harder, the brighter and the bigger the crystal will grow till eventually there will be no chaos left: all will be crystal. It depends on us continuing to feed, to build and to protect that crystal.

Chaos and Change

All around us old structures, old frameworks, old ways of doing things are breaking down. Barriers are falling. While war intensifies, the Cold War is over, while nationalism, for example, in Eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union increases, internationalism is also becoming a much stronger and ever-present force in our lives. While fundamentalism, whether Christian, Catholic or Muslim is on the rise, so also are societies around the world moving more towards the need to recognise and protect human and civil rights and to safeguard personal and cultural liberty and freedom.

We have seen major changes over the last few years in particular. Several long term struggles have borne real and concrete fruit: there is South Africa, Palestine, the Berlin Wall, the former Soviet Union, the Peace Process on our own island, Coalition Governments, the move towards partnerships and new ways of developing responses to our social problems, the growth of community activism and the empowerment of ordinary people to take an active part in shaping programmes and policies that affect their lives.

A major part of all this chaos and change - a very significant part of it - has been the growth

at every level, local, national and global, of the women's movement. In just two decades women all over the world have begun to take power, to speak out, to really change things. Already women have moved from working on themselves and their own relationships and lives to working at social and community levels for change. In recent years we have seen women moving into positions of real leadership, authority and influence at national and international levels. The last decade in Ireland, as elsewhere, has seen the emergence of women as political actors. Women are in the process of reshaping and remaking the world's image and perception of the role, the value, the very meaning of being a woman. Already in the space of a couple of decades we have come a very long way.

The world is growing ever smaller and, as it does, the interdependence and interconnections between its parts is becoming stronger and more powerful. Everything is being reorganised as we learn that old hierarchical structures, rigid belief systems, strategies of confrontation, aggression and force and traditional ways of organising work, family and social life simply are not working. We are in the middle of a total transformation and the pace of that transformation is very fast. The further it progresses the faster it gets. And we have no maps, no models, we are having to create them as we go. No wonder it feels like chaos.

New Models

All of us are a part of making this new world that is emerging. Each one of us is participating in its shaping and moulding. Any of us who has decided to move beyond moaning and groaning about what is wrong to taking action is a part of it. Any of us who has decided to move beyond me and mine and what I need and want to what is necessary for everyone's needs to be met is a part of it. Any of us who has decided to step into who we really are as human beings and start to take up the challenge of getting involved, of contributing, of making a difference, is a part of it. We have understood at some level that the only way things are ever going to come right is when enough people decide to come together and make them right. Heaven, paradise, the revolution, the perfect society are not somewhere down the road. They are nowhere at all until we build them, until we create them out of our own efforts and determination and creativity, out of how we work, organise and relate. We have committed ourselves to struggling to find a way of bringing into reality the dreams and visions we carry in our hearts. And we have realised that we simply can't do any of this on our own.

At the simplest level, networking is a way of organising. It is a way of setting about getting a job done. But it is a way of organising which is different from traditional ways of getting things done. Traditional models are hierarchical. The image is that of pyramid. At the bottom are the people who do the work, who get minimal reward for that work and who have a minimal say (if any at all) in what gets decided and on how things are. Above them are people who have power over them - what these people say goes. And on top of the whole lot - in splendid isolation - sits one individual on whom the whole thing rests. He - because it usually still is a he - gets to make all the decisions, take all the responsibility, get all the credit and take all the blame. Ultimate power rests with him and the name of the game is control.

Networking is an attempt to do things differently. The image as the word implies is of a

net or a honeycomb - a collection of equal parts connected up to one another. It is inclusive and participating. The flow of power, energy, information, resources is horizontal rather than vertical. Responsibility is shared as is leadership, credit and blame. Every part has an equal say in what goes on, plays an equal part in the doing of it and shares an equal stake in the outcome. The name of the game is power - "power with" rather than "power over". Instead of the group or the organisation investing its strength in ever decreasing numbers of super skilled and powerful people arranged one on top of the other, it invests its strength instead in ever widening and inclusive networks of skilled and powerful people linked up to each other in a supportive and mutually reinforcing way.

Networking as a strategy for bringing about social change and setting out to change something, anything, is not easy. It always involves resistance. Always there will be people and forces opposing the change or pushing for changes other than the ones I want.

The task of setting out to effect social change involves the building of organisations devoted to the specific needs and concerns of particular groups of people and the development of vibrant networks for these groups. Networks are systems of communication and cooperation, ways of building power and strength. They are sources of support, inspiration, encouragement and morale, sources of resources, skills, information and ideas.

Today women in Ireland are doing just this. Having spent a decade building local groups in their own areas, they are now beginning the task of linking those groups into regional networks. There are local networks eg. Tralee Women's Network, Waterford Women's Network, Clondalkin Women's Network, regional networks such as Western Women's Link, Offaly, Cork, Kerry and Clare. There are sectoral networks - Travellers and Parents Alone and there is talk of building a national network.

But networks are not just a strategy not just a means to an end. I believe that they are in themselves already the beginnings of alternative and participative structures of power. They allow for and facilitate the emergence of new, more democratic ways of organising which are not only more co-operative and non-hierarchical but also more creative and dynamic in their inter-relations with each. In this way the foundations are being laid for a new way of organising our society.

Why Network?

Moving on to the question of why network - to really understand the necessity and the implication of networking we need to understand how change is actually brought about. To my mind there are two ways of looking at this. One, which has dominated political organising in the past, sees social change as a set of difficult tasks that must be accomplished. It's something we're heading in the direction of, that will be achieved sometime in the future - just as soon as the right people get into power or the people in power make the right decisions. It's a bit like setting out to climb a very difficult mountain. We set out to achieve a particular goal - to get so-and-so elected, get such a law changed, to overthrow the present system - and to achieve it in the quickest possible way. So we organise our campaign designed to force our will on others, we choose our leader, name our enemies, whip everyone into line and set out to win. Sooner or later we'll get there and when we do we'll be faced with all the other

things that need changing so we'll just have to choose the next assault and set off to conquer that peak too. When we conquer the whole damn lot of them we'll have social change. Its a pretty exhausting way of tackling social change.

The second way of thinking about social change (the energising way) sees it more as a dynamic continuous process going on all the time. We are all involved in this collective, on-going process created by a constantly changing and moving interaction of different people all with a different role to play, yet part of and essential to the whole - more like a set dance with different groups and issues coming to the fore and taking the lead at different times. If this is true then, how we are now and everything we do now matters, for it is here and now shaping how things will be. So in order to bring about social change we need a vision. We need to be creating in the here and now what we are hoping will eventually be created in our society - for there is no other way that it will be created.

It we begin to think about social change in this way then it becomes clear how and why the strategy of networking must come to the forefront of our political practice. For the broader our links, the richer our vision, and the deeper our analysis, the more varied and all-inclusive our strategies for change.

To be successful we need to understand what we are trying to change. We also need to develop a clear vision of what we want in its place. And to do this we need each other's varied experiences and insights because we are all bounded by our own particular background and experience. Unless we take on board even those experiences that do not touch us directly, we limit our effectiveness.

To be successful also we need to work on all issues, on all fronts and at all levels at once - we cannot do this alone. We need as many different interests, strengths, skills, ideas, perspectives, people, groups and organisations as there are. We also need to stay in touch with the bigger picture and with how things are for others as well as for me because otherwise we can be divided, pitted one against the other in the bitter competition for resources, and the systems we are trying to change will remain because those systems depend for their survival on us staying divided. If politics is, as I am suggesting, essentially about the art of building alliances and relationships across differences; if change is brought about organically and by collective participation; then networking is a necessity rather than a luxury and it must move to the centre of our organising.

How to Network

So how do we do it - this networking?

It's not easy, partly because it's new and there are no tracks to follow and partly because we've all been brought up in and have internalised the traditional hierarchical ways of doing things. However the years of networking that we've done have taught us a few things.

Good successful networking needs more than goodwill - it needs more than a firm belief in its value and the commitment to do it.

It needs resources, structures and skills.

Here, then are some guide-lines for successful networking which our experience to date has indicated:

1. The first requirement of good networks is strong groups. Individual groups need to be sure of their own identity, aims, needs, values, vision. All members need to be involved in deciding whether or not they want to network and if so why and with whom.

2. Still at the level of individual groups - groups need to devote real resources to networking - time/money/people - that's why everyone needs to understand the value and purpose of networking.

3. The main problems around networking involve issues of representation, information, communication, accountablity and support. One way to address these problems is to appoint a networking person to represent the groups at networks and then to ensure that this person is given what they need to do the job properly. Time needs to be given to discussing issues, sharing information and reporting on how things are going. Structures need to be put in place to make sure everyone is kept involved and informed. Good records need to be kept. Regular mail-outs need to be made. Time at every meeting for network issues needs to be made.

4. The network needs to work together to develop a clear and agreed statement of aims and objectives and of its short-term and long-term goals. Essential questions to be answered are: Why has it come together? What does it want to achieve? Who is it for? Who is it not for? What does it have the resources and the capacity to work on now and what should wait until it is stronger? What is its vision and then what is its mission?

5. Networks should work together to develop a clear understanding and statement of their basis for unity - is it a shared goal, a shared location, a shared philosophy, a shared experience? What is hat it is essential that all members share? For example, members may need to provide wor en's education but may/may not need to be women only groups. Determining the basis of unity is essential to identity and to helping decide who can join and who can't. It saves these decisions becoming personal. Working for the broadest possible basis of unity in order to encourage and facilitate the inclusiveness needs to be balanced against maintaining an identity and remaining true to network's aims and objectives.

6. Regular time to identify both what it shares - its collective strengths and riches - and its differences. Essential is the ability to name, recognise, respect and work with difference. Ignoring differences only leads to those with less power, resources and status becoming more marginalised. It doesn't work.

7. Networks need to develop a concrete programme of work based on consultations with members in relation to expressed priorities, resources, capacity and needs. This programme needs to specify tasks, responsibilities, roles and time limits.

8. Good networks establish good structures for accountability and participation. This means developing open two way and accurate information and financial systems, publicising decisions, policies, areas of responsibility and developing ways of ensuring the active participation of its members through newsletters, observation places at meetings and regular consultations.

9. Effective networks are committed to and invest in regular evaluation through which the impact of the network's work is assessed in terms of both task and process. Such evaluations pose to network members at regular intervals questions like how representative is the network? Who's missing from it? Who has the power? How are decisions made? How active/involved are the members? What needs to change?

10. Networking is essentially about relationships. It is important to invest in having fun together. Experience has proven the power of social events to bond people and groups and to build solidarity, and the importance of celebrating. Without fun and celebration, people dry up, burn out and fall away.

We need to develop ways of organising and leading that are strong enough to cope with all we are trying to change, yet human enough to make it worth it, not just in the end, but now. Our networks are one way of doing that. We must start valuing ourselves, our dreams and our struggles enough to start really investing in our networks. They are the trackway to the better world whose image we carry in our hearts. They are in the here and now, in the midst of all chaos, the seeds of the future we are trying to birth.

Book Reviews

Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter
Peter McLaren and Peter Leonard (Eds.)
(London: Routledge, 1993. 194pp. £15.OO)

There was an excitement in the 1960s that new freedoms were possible. Few captured the spirit of these possibilities better than Paulo Freire in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Unfortunately, the task addressed by him then has not changed: how to struggle for the social transformation of the world in the interests of the liberation of subordinated peopled from the structures and ideologies which dominate them.

We are familiar with commentators who underline the philosophical roots of his work. They usually point to how he integrates insights from a wide range of sources, e.g.. from Marx, Fromm, Liberation Theology. We are familiar too with practical examples of 'how to do conscientization'. Kirkwood & Kirkwood, *Living Adult Education: Freire in Scotland* and Anne Hope & Sally Timmel et al ., *Training for Transformation* are accessible examples. What we are not so familiar with is an up-to-date account of what has happened to Freire and his *Pedagogy* in the past fifteen years.

Much has happened in the world too. Firstly, the 'failure of socialism' in the countries of Eastern Europe has made it more difficult to make the case for a Left-oriented philosophy and practice of teaching. When Fukuyama proclaimed 'The End of History' in 1989 he gave the capitalist liberal democracies of Thatcher and Reagan the language to celebrate the triumph of their system. Secondly, a radical feminist critique has raised serious questions about the sexism of Freire's language and the phallocentric concept of liberation in his work. Finally, a generation of teachers and facilitators are now putting into practice a methodology which they claim is Freirian. Many mean by this that their methods are dialogical rather than authoritarian, interactive rather than expository and that their aim is the empowerment of students.

This collection of articles deals with these issues. Anyone looking for tips as to 'how to do it' in the form of new methods will be disappointed. This is primarily a thought provoking book. The action it provokes is not by outlining methods for teaching but by getting the reader to be critical of her/his own praxis.

All the authors are firmly on the Left. However, the critical encounter promised in the title is not delivered. But what is delivered is an exciting discussion of what has happened to the man, his ideas and practice since *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* In Freire's words, the authors have "tried to reinvent" his writings, bring them into contact with European thinkers (Gramsci and Habermas) and see how they might be applied in schools, workplaces and universities. What is clear from all the contributions to this book is that the struggle for democracy is central to the struggle for liberation. The democracy they work for is not that of liberal democracy but rather the process of achieving social justice for all through popular sovereignty. History is not ended.

Paulo Freire's work is constantly in danger of being domesticated by progressive educators who see in his *Pedagogy* a mere method. Stanley Aronowitz in the chapter entitled "Freire's Radical Democratic Humanism" argues strongly for the radical revolutionary nature of Freire's praxis. "Problem-posing education is revolutionary futurity." Empowerment is too tame to describe what he is suggesting. It is not enough to preserve Freire's work as a mere teaching method. A shift in power relationships both in the classroom and in the world is what is being proposed by him.

Until recently Freire was Secretary of Education for the Workers Party, the ruling party of local government in Sao Paulo. Accountability there meant that the school director was elected by the community! When democracy was being created in this way teacher training, school administration and the curriculum also became subject to public debate and approval.

Aronowitz also adds to the discussion on what is usually seen as a weakness in Freire's writings - a thorough understanding of the psychological aspects of oppression. The oppressed believe that learning and praxis will change their life's situation. But however grim the present reality, it is at least known. Freire's pedagogy encourages dialogue with the resulting fear of freedom (Erich Fromm). The relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor is one of sadism and masochism. The sadistic oppressor when internalised by the oppressed produces the masochist - 'colonised man'. How better to explain how the oppressed have an investment in their own oppression.

Ira Shor has written widely on Freire's ideas and contributes an interesting article on "Freire's Critical Pedagogy". He concentrates on how resistance to problem-posing education can be overcome and how the question of power and knowledge is the central expression of the development of critical consciousness. He provides much food for thought. In a world where we are making more and more links between schools and business, he asks why are we not also making similar links with trade unions? Politics is everywhere in the way teachers and students talk to each other, in the diminished role of the arts in schools, in the unelected bureaucracies running schools, in the imposition of standardized tests.

For many teachers the insight about focussing on the experience of adults finds its roots in Paulo Freire's work. In the chapters by Tomaz Tadeu da Silva and Peter McLaren called "Knowledge under Siege" and "Decentering Pedagogy", the authors discuss the problem of experience. Stories, memories and experience play at best an ambiguous role in that they not only connect with social reality but also exclude it. What we remember, how we experience events and the stories we remember are all constructed in and by the social world we wish to critique. All language, according to Freire, works to reproduce dominant forms of power relationships. But language also carries with it the resources for critique and the dismantling of the oppressive power structures of the social order. It also allows us express a vision of a liberating future.

The implication of this is that teachers must avoid the conservatism inherent in an uncritical celebration of peoples' experience. There is a social construction of experience and memory which is the other side of the valuing of experience that is now so central in the practice of adult education. This valuing is not without its problems. A subversive and dangerous remembering is needed which will take the form of a "radical disruption - a blasting

- that is strong enough to break through unconscious repression."

All the chapters in this book blast their way into the mind with the forcefulness of their language. For example, "art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it" (Brecht). Or the description of Freire's ideas as "whispering with the force of a gale..."

Colin Lankshear in "Functional Literacy from a Freirian Point of View" argues against functional literacy. Teach people to function in society is the message of some programmes. This domesticating model is radically critiqued and a liberating and humanising model eloquently proposed.

Even if Freire's work originated in the Third World, there is an important area of debate which tries to link First World philosophy and practice with *Pedagogy*. Carlos Alberto Torres sets up an interesting dialogue between Freire and Gramsci. What are the implications of a First World country getting involved in education and development with Third World countries?

For a long time the feminist movement has been critical of Freire's work and for good reasons. In the chapter "Bell Hooks speaking about Paulo Freire", she is critical not only of the sexist language but more importantly of the way he links and equates his concept of freedom and the experience of patriarchal manhood. She nevertheless celebrates and attempts to rescue this "flawed gift from Freire" as she calls it.

Three short chapters conclude the work. The first of these outlines the implications of Freire's work for a critical model of social work. The second is an interview by Donaldo Macedo which reacts to the previous articles and attempts to clarify in particular the feminist critique by Bell Hooks.

The final chapter by Henry Giroux places Freire's work within a post-colonial discourse and is critical of the ways in which Western intellectuals appropriate his work. Giroux's warning to us in the West is that we do not unwittingly incorporate Freire's work from a colonial or neo-colonial perspective.

People who have become accustomed to reading Freire and attempting to teach for critical consciousness or who have even succumbed to the idea that what Freire is saying is simple will find this a challenging read. Old connections and ideas are offered in fresh shape and language. A difficult read but like *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* worth the effort.

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Adult Education and the State: Towards a politics of adult education

Peter Jarvis, London: Routledge, 1993, pp 159, £30 sterling.

Viewed from the outside, it would appear that the British State is involved in a process of slowly but surely removing structures of local democracy. It is also involved in a process of only funding adult education courses and programmes which are accredited. This is quite different from the role the Danish State has played in adult education. In the late 1980s, for example, the Danish government made grants available to local adult education groups to develop new, alternative forms of education

The strength of the Danish State is such that it funds a wide variety of adult education activities. It even got around to funding an anarchist folkschool. We in Ireland do not have to be all that concerned about State involvement in adult education, since there has been very little funding, structures or policies. And if one reads the Green Paper and the proposals for the reorganisation of education structures, there will be equally little to worry about in the future.

In this context, reading Peter Jarvis's latest book is a bit like a contemplative monk reading a sex manual. Jarvis takes a sociological perspective on the relationship between state and adult education. As in his previous works, he takes a metatheoretical approach. He surveys the existing field of sociological and adult education writings and brings them together into an analytical framework which helps us understand this interesting and complex relationship. Jarvis is a good surveyor of the field and the success of this book lies in his ability to bring a wide range of sociological, philosophical and adult education issues into a very coherrent, accessible text. It is not so much that he is saying anything new, it is rather that he has provided a detailed map of the issues. While he does not spend long enough on any one issue, he does provide a logical path for getting from one to another.

He begins by identifying and describing relevant definitions of education and civil society and then gives a brief analysis of the relationship between the two, particularly in Britain. He then moves on to his classification of the different ideologies concerning the state, i.e., radical (get rid of it), social reformist (necessary evil to ensure justice and freedom for all), liberal (as little as possible interference in individual rights) and conservative (maintain law and order). He then links these ideologies to the way some of the classical thinkers have written about education. It is towards the end of this chapter that Jarvis comes down off the academic fence and shows some of his colours.

The state must control, that is at the heart of any understanding about the state. No state can allow an institution to exist that could undermine its credibility. It needs the consent of the people and so it would be problematic ever to regard institutionalised adult education in any other role than that of being subservient to the state".

Given that the state then encourages or requires certain forms of education to take place, Jarvis identifies four different models; operating the system on market principles of demand and supply; a progressive liberal model empowering individuals; a welfare model which sees

education as part of social redistribution; and a social control model. Although Jarvis presents them as alternatives, it is more probable that any state at any time operates within different models.

Since states are modern rational organisations, there are constant moves made to provide a more efficient system of adult education. This involves wider forms of modularisation, accreditation and certification with easier access and flexibility. This leads on to a discussion about assessment, examination and other forms of measuring competence.

One of the responsibilities of the state is the creation and maintenance of mature democratic societies. This basically involves two notions. The first is that in order to participate fully in society, people should be aware of the structures of power which dominate and control their lives. The less radical form of this education centres around citizenship and Jarvis outlines some of the programmes organised in Denmark, Canada and the United States around this issue.

Jarvis then embarks on a general discussion of people's educational rights, needs and interests and the state's role in helping and preventing them achieve these. Following the general pattern of the book, there is a brief review of some of theories relating to rights and interests before then applying them to adult education. Some of this discussion, and indeed discussion in the following chapter on a civilised society, may seem a little shallow. But that would be a harsh criticism. As argued at the beginning of this review, Jarvis is covering a huge intellectual territory and dredging up large, complex issues. Perhaps he might have been better off digging in one area, but then we would not have had the detailed map which he has provided.

For Jarvis, adult education is a primary force operated in and through the state for keeping market forces, competition, consumerism and instrumental rational thinking at bay. It is something in between a social movement and a civilising process. In this respect, he continually returns to the notion of justice and morality promoted by writers like Rawls. It is a pity perhaps that towards the end he moves into discussing the relationship between adult education and Utopian thought. It might have been more interesting if he had returned to a theme touched on at the beginning and echoed throughout the book, i.e., the role of adult education in the public sphere, particularly in relation to the dominance of debate and discussion in the public sphere by the mass media.

To conclude, then, while I consider this to be a good introduction to a number of complex issues relating to the state, democracy, rights, interests, morality, civilised society, there are two main flaws. The first is that Jarvis operated as a liberal democrat wolf, wearing objective, neutral, academic sheep's clothes. In other words, power may come and power may go, but if we all work together we can make this a much better place in which to live. The second flaw is not Jarvis's fault, but the publishers. On a price per page this book is very expensive.

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Liberating Learning
A report on day-time education groups
by Tom Inglis with Kay Bailey and Christine Murray Aontas/NOW Project, 1993.

This report is a valuable addition to the sparse body of documentary and analytical work in the area of adult education in Ireland. It is significant in that it is the first real attempt to document a movement in adult education in this country which can only be described as revolutionary, a movement which has been quietly growing since the early 1980's. It is one which has changed the face of adult education provision in many areas of the country and it is not only significant in its emergence but also in the change it represents and the facets which have been integral to its evolution.

Liberating Learning comes almost a decade after the emergence of the first of these day-time education groups. The fact that the report has been initiated and directed by learners, members of two day-time groups, is critical. It involves people, mainly women, providing their own learning opportunities and telling it like it is for them. Kay Bailey and Christine Murray are well placed to contribute to the documentation of the life of day-time education groups, many of whom feel isolated, lacking in recognition, resources and funding - struggling against the odds to achieve for themselves a meaningful and valuable engagement in education. This truly is liberating learning!

Most of us approach reports with some degree of trepidation. They are often over-complex, difficult to read and statistically overwhelming. The authors of this report are true to their aspiration of keeping "the language and presentation of the findings as clear as possible" and have created a document which is informative, straightforward, relevant and easy to read. It will be a valuable resource for all those involved in the area of day-time education provision. The challenge now is to ensure that it is distributed as widely as possible.

This report sets itself the task of outlining the overall picture in relation to day-time groups throughout the country, setting out their characteristics, aims and objectives, issues and problems and in the final analysis attempts to offer some recommendations for the future.

The first four chapters supply factual information on the geographic spread of groups whose key characteristics are that they are voluntary, independent and embody an alternative vision of education which in essence involves taking control of all aspects of the learning process from initiation to delivery. Two thirds of all groups included were established between 1986 and 1990 and operate from bases as diverse as schools, resource centres and even individual homes in a substantial number of cases. Indeed, the latter characteristic is seen as a critical drawback in terms of recognition, legitimacy and funding.

Groups are primarily autonomous and locally based, with an underlying maxim of providing cheap, open access courses based on shared self-directed learning. While all the groups are not specifically women's education groups, the reality of response is that the majority have become such. Of the ninety six groups who responded, only six identify male contacts. Indeed, it would be interesting to examine the relationship of those contacts with the specific groups - it strikes me that in some instances they may be employees rather than

volunteers. While the documenting of groups is a valuable, if difficult exercise, this report is by no means exhaustive. From my own perspective, the information on Kilkenny is incomplete as it omits reference to one of the strongest women's groups in the city, established in1985, and another vibrant suburban group of more recent origins. I highlight this not to emphasise weaknesses in the report but merely to draw attention to the fact that the reality in other areas of the country may be somewhat different also.

Chapter 5 of the report is particularly telling as it begins to analyse programme provision and its associated issues. It examines the difficulties which groups encounter when moving "beyond the talking stage" and also the nature of relationships with other structures and how they impinge on the development of the group. Specific concerns in relation to premises and creche facilities, organisation and management and general attitudes are dealt with in Chapters 6,7 and 8 respectively.

In relation to the groups themselves, critical issues like numbers, variety of provision, fees, enrolments, tutors and evaluation methods are addressed. Group size varies, there is an average of 42 participants, but the largest caters for 900. I think this figure is skewed by the fact that larger groups based in Dublin make up a considerable proportion of respondents and in the main they tend to cater for larger numbers. Rural groups can vary in size from 12 participants upwards. Interestingly, of the 769 courses provided, 50% cite Crafts as their most popular class, followed by Personal Development, Cookery, Parenting and Fitness courses - a range not too dissimilar to the traditional model. To suggest that time is the only factor involved would be a gross misrepresentation of the reality. There is a dynamic at work here which is fundamental to day-time education - it is about a process of engagement, the essentials of which are collective, developmental and self-directed. It is a response which demands a philosophical shift in terms of both provision and control.

The problems of overall recognition and attitude, together with specific organisational concerns experienced by all of us working in adult education, are magnified in the case of day-time education groups. Accumulated problems of status, premises, insurance and creche facilities conspire to render groups very vulnerable. It makes one wonder how, in the face of such enormous commitment in terms of class and creche organisation, and indeed why, these groups survive. Perhaps the most telling factor in this section is the examination of how groups progress in areas where support is provided.

In analysing external relations with groups, the report suggests that while the Catholic Church plays a major role in terms of groups support and development, the single most significant institution in this area is the local V.E.C. Liberating Learning sees this as manifest in the critical relationship between day-time groups and their local A.E.O. While 61% of respondents felt that their V.E.C./A.E.O. has been supportive and helpful, others identified this as a source from whence they had expected greater assistance. This is a cause for some concern, but it must be remembered that groups identified as having similar characteristics may not in essence be the same. In some areas day-time education groups are seen to cater for women from middle and higher socio-economic groups, who are not seen as priority groups for support or assistance. While this may go some way towards explaining the

situation, it does raise critical issues for adult educators and should certainly challenge traditional perspectives which contribute to the creation of the inconsistencies identified in the report.

In conclusion, the report contends that the "Primary need of day-time groups is recognition and support by the state for their work, especially in terms of proper funding and coherent policies". Following the survey findings and a subsequent series of workshops, the report identifies a number of recommendations, which might be taken on board by government, local agencies and day-time groups themselves. While I am in agreement with the general thrust of these I would, however, have some reservations about specific provision for day-time groups in terms of the ALCE budget and wonder how realistic some others may be.

We are indebted to Kay, Christine and Tom for beginning the documentation process of day-time adult education groups and for doing so in a manner which is refreshing and stimulating. I would recommend *Liberating Learning* to anyone involved in any area of adult education or community development. Its very existence should act as a support and beacon of hope for all those disparate groups struggling at the margins of our education system.

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Learning in Adulthood

Sharon B. Merriam & Rosemary S. Cafarella
Jossey-Bas Inc, San Francisco 1991, Unpriced pp. 375.

This book presents a conspectus of current findings and pre-occupations of U.S. researchers in adult education. Written by two well-respected American professors of adult education, it is comprehensive, detailed and well structured in five parts with useful summaries concluding each of its sixteen chapters and an extensive bibliography. As such it offers a useful review which will mainly interest academics and students of adult education. For practitioners, it may either confirm ingrained prejudices against academe or facilitate re-appraisal of unquestioned assumptions concerning the adult learning enterprise.

Three of the five sections of this volume are devoted to reviewing the extensive U.S. research focus on the individual adult learner and adult educator. This alone highlights the fact that most American researchers are "field dependent" rather than "field independent" as the jargon of the "trade" puts it. Put more simply, it appears that most U.S. research in adult education is specific rather than global in perspective and focus. Given the American cultural bias towards matters psychological and "scientific" empirical research, it is hardly surprising that these values and pre-occupations are predominant in U.S.research in adult learning.

These sections conjure up an image of hordes of hardworking and earnest researchers assiduously beavering away in academic hot-houses on sometimes trivial (e.g. Adult Classroom Environment Scale), often jejune (characteristics and objectives of learners) and relatively marginal issues (participation/non-participation in adult learning). One longs for some sense of vision, some integrative perspective to counteract or contextualise such fragmentation by extending research interests beyond the predominantly functional, pragmatic and essentially instrumental preoccupations of so much U.S. research in the field.

The authors also reveal another feature of American culture which impacts on adult education viz. the American capitalist ethic. This, they point out, provides the dominant rationale for all public subsidy of adult education in the U.S., resulting in much adult learning being essentially consumerist and market driven. As a consequence, they confirm that "Adult education now practised in the United States is elitist in nature", since its main beneficiaries are those who are already best educated and best able to pay. Indeed, according to this value system, social justice becomes equated with economic opportunity and the quest to enhance economic opportunities seems to provide the main motivation for much adult learning in the U.S. The question arises whether we are fundamentally any different in Ireland despite the rhetoric of empowerment! Given the foregoing, it is hardly surprising that this literature review reveals little concern for or interest in adult education as an instrument of social change, since maintenance of the status quo appears as the main unquestioned assumption of most of the literature reviewed.

Another feature of the impact of capitalism on U.S. adult education is the growing prevalence of "workplace learning" to the extent that the authors can assert "employers

deliver learning to more people than does the entire U.S. higher education system". Predictably enough, research studies reveal that the "learning delivered by employers is essentially instrumental (presumably of benefit to employers' profitability and workers' skill enhancement), is behaviourally orientated and designed on a "deficit" model, which "measures individuals against...expert designed views". In other words, a capitalist funded FAS!

Elsewhere the authors refer to a blurring between higher education and business and industry when they point to (I kid you not!) "a growing number of private companies such as MacDonald's Hamburger University....offering accredited degrees."

Two of the most interesting sections, for this reader at least, are at the beginning and end of this volume. Chapter one examines the socio-cultural context in which adult learning takes place and points out that the rapidly accelerating pace of social change implies "that the urgency of dealing with today's social realities lies with adults. Society no longer has the luxury of waiting for its youth". This provides a credible rationale to encourage all of us engaged today in the adult education enterprise to review and re-commit ourselves to our noble cause and its challenges.

The final chapters (13-16) provide an indication of some of these challenges which are not unique to the American continent viz. seeking to delineate comprehensive theories of adult education/learning, seeking to clarify the social and political issues (e.g. should adult education be focussed on radical social transformation or maintenance of the status quo?) and, not least, seeking to identify the many ethical issues involved in the essentially political and interventionist social phenomenon of adult education. These sections alone are sufficient justification for recommending this book to practitioners and academics alike.

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Do you know us at all?

Promoting Attitudinal change towards Travellers.
Parish of The Travelling People, Dublin 1993. pp157. IR£6.00

The layout and design of this book and the clear concise style in which it is written makes it attractive to read and accessible to both the expert and the layperson. After reading this book, the reader will certainly be better informed about the Travelling People. It also invites the reader to examine his/her attitudes and beliefs about Travellers, to evaluate their validity, to value cultural diversity and to recognise that Ireland is not as homogenous a society as many of us would believe. Inherent in all this is that it is the attitudes of people in Society (that's you and me!) which are the greatest stumbling block to issues of accommodation, health and education for Travellers which need to be addressed urgently, accommodation being the most critical.

For me, this book is about celebration, celebration of difference. Travellers and settled people in dialogue, not as one dominant majority culture prevailing over the other, but as equals, each sharing the richness of their own beliefs and values while valuing and validating the beliefs and values of the other. It is the hope of the contributors that people, in the words of Michael McDonagh will "see us all as a people with a difference that is positive and enriching for all".

Sr. Dolores O'Sullivan asks, what is culture? She draws a culture diagram with two zones, the fluid zone on the outside which holds things that can be easily changed and the core zone which holds values and assumptions which are deeply rooted and highly resistant to change. Core values given high priority in one culture may have low priority in another. She asks, is one culture superior to another?

Michael McDonagh sets out to dispel the myth that travellers are diplomats or misfits from the Famine times, and in his research has traced them back to Celtic and even pre-Celtic times. Traveller language, called Sheta, Gammon ni Cant is very close to old Irish. Nomadism and the extended family are the main mechanisms for survival. "Travel is essential to our economic survival", and the family is the chief support mechanism. He traces the disturbing effects it has on Travellers when they're expected to "fit in", to assimilate in the sedentary culture and deny their Traveller identity. Winnie McDonagh tells us what life is like for a travelling girl growing up and her preparation for marriage. "When you come to about eight or nine years, your childhood more or less ends", and she tells us of her wedding to P.J. "The first day I met him was the day I married him".

The sad picture painted by Winnie and Michael gives us great insight into a way of life which is quite different in many respects to that of the settled community and in so many ways, of immense cultural richness.

A paper by Liam Gaul introduces us to some famous Traveller musicians of the past, musicians like Johnny Doran (1908 - 1950). He it was who introduced Willie Clancy to the uileann pipes and continued to travel with him long after he became famous. Ireland today has a wealth of great pipers, unfortunately few of them now from the Travelling community. The one great piper from this stock is Finbar Furey.

Pat Brady speaks about the negative perceptions people have of Travellers which have major implications for the appalling lack of proper accommodation and health and Aideen Kearns and Teresa O'Connor speak about the 1987 National Study on the health of the Travelling people, conducted to establish the reasons for the apparent low life expectancy and the high number

of infant and child deaths. One of the main reasons is closely linked to unhoused accommodation. The mobile clinic was established in 1985 with a brief to improve the health of Travellers and "the mobile is an effective way of bringing the Health Service out to the public".

Sheila Nanan traces the history of Traveller involvement in education and describes the shift from separatismt policies in the 1970's to investigation and to an intercultural approach not mentioned in the 1970's, but gaining independent support from teachers, Travellers and others rising from teachers' experiences and parents' views. This approach to education is teased out more fully by Marion Kenny in the paper "Travellers and the Classroom". Nuala McAongusa speaks of "value systems in conflict" and echoe again the words of Michael McDonagh that Travellers' value system is based on survival, the essential mechanisms being nomadism and the extended family, and she looks more closely at attitudes to relationships, activity and the core values which are quite different to those of settled people.

Value systems in conflict are well described by Sally Flynn, voluntary youth worker, who tells of her experience of being a traveller in school. Some memories are good, most are discriminatory and hurtful. She mentions one teacher "my very first teacher" who quickly saw her talent for art, drama, music and encouraged her, building up her self-confidence "to do it, and do it well" and she did.

Martin Sheridan gives some practical hints on the kind of classroom atmosphere which works best, the disposition of the teacher and the preparation of lesson plans.

Cathleen McDonagh and Carmel Ryan describe the importance of religion, that for the Traveller, God reveals Himself in all her life's experiences, and the need to prepare religion programmes which are appropriate to the lived experience of the child. This can be done for example by providing additional worksheets to supplement the excellent programmes already in existence.

John O'Connell in his paper entitled "Anti-Racist Education" says that basically we see ourselves as a homogenous society, one where all minority groups must "fit in" because they are seen to be deviating from the normal". These attitudes have huge implications for Travellers' children attending school. Non-Travellers' children have negative images of Travellers. Traveller children are made to feel unwelcome and ashamed of being a Traveller. That Traveller children underachieve is a fact long recognised by Traveller parents and teachers alike. He explains that as individuals we need to be able to define "racism" and other key items correctly so that we can retain their meaning and therefore describe situations more accurately as they arise and he suggests in his paper how this might be done as an exercise in a group setting. He proposes that the way forward is to ensure that our education system is inter-cultural and anti-racist.

If this book is studied carefully and taken seriously, at the very least it has to be thought-provoking.

Sally Flynn's last message to the reader is to invite us to make contact with the Travelling community in your area. Then you will begin to get to know us as people, and begin to understand our ways as we learn about your ways". This book is a start in the right direction.

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