DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 099 262 SO 007 957

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TITLE Recurrent Education, Policy and Development in OECD Member Countries: United Kingdom.
INSTITUTION Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris (France). Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.
PUB DATE 74
NOTE 29p.
AVAILABLE FROM OECD Publications Center, Suite 1207, 1750 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 ($2.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; *Comparative Education; Continuation Education; *Continuous Learning; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Trends; Industrial Training; Inservice Education; Program Descriptions; Retraining
IDENTIFIERS *United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to give a brief account of the present provision of education in the United Kingdom which can in some way be characterized as reflecting the principles of recurrent education. Recurrent education refers to periods of formal or structured study, undertaken largely in institutions, at various stages in the lifespan of an individual. This is one of a number of member country reports on recurrent education issued by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation for the Council of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The paper examines the present thinking on this subject in the United Kingdom and outlines possible future developments. Recurrent education in the United Kingdom is described in its two presently occurring forms of further education and adult education. Future developments are foreseen in the extension of inservice provisions, in retraining of workers in industry and business, and in more adult education for cultural and recreational purposes. (Author/KSM)

Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI)

RECURRENT EDUCATION

Policy and Development in OECD Member Countries

UNITED KINGDOM

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ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
1974

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PREFACE

Recurrent education, on which CERI has been carrying out preparatory work over the last few years, has rapidly become one of the most interesting and promising alternatives for the future development of the educational system and its interaction with the world of work.

Through a recent publication, "Recurrent Education: A Strategy for Lifelong Learning" (CERI/OECD 1973), CERI has made explicit the assumptions on which a policy for recurrent education is based and tried to identify its relation to social and labour market policies.

The essence of the concept is that it distributes education over the lifespan of the individual in a recurring way. This means a development away from the present practice of a long, uninterrupted pre-work period of full-time schooling. It also implies the alternation of education with the individual's other activities in life - principally, of course, his work: but his leisure time and even his retirement might also be included. Hence the essential potential outcome of recurrent education would be the individual's liberation from the strict sequence of education-work-leisure-retirement and his freedom to mix and alternate these phases of life within the limit of what is socially possible, to the satisfaction of his own desires and needs.

At this point CERI has considered it essential to present the actual developments in Member countries concerning recurrent education. As part of this project on recurrent education CERI is now issuing a number of country reports on recurrent education. These reports are intended both to describe existing educational provision which is relevant to recurrent education and to attempt an estimation of future developments in this field.

The present report on the United Kingdom, written by Professor Leonard Cantor at Loughborough University, England, will be followed by other reports from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand.

Reports are already available for Australia, the Federal Republic of Germany, Norway, Sweden, Yugoslavia and the State of New York.

J.R. Gass
Director
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A. INTRODUCTION

1. DEFINITION

This paper aims to give a brief account of the present provision of education in the United Kingdom which can in some way be characterised as reflecting the principles of "recurrent education". It also examines the present thinking on the subject in the United Kingdom and outlines possible future developments. However, before proceeding further it is necessary to define the term "recurrent education" as the author understands it. Put simply, I take it to refer to periods of formal or structured study, undertaken largely in institutions and at various stages in the lifespan of an individual. An essential part of the concept of "recurrent education" is implicit in the term itself, that is that education is distributed over the lifespan of an individual in a recurring way: in other words education will alternate with other activities, of which the principal will be work but which can also include leisure and retirement. Thus, it implies a break with the present practice of a long, uninterrupted pre-work period of full-time schooling, followed directly, for many individuals, by a further uninterrupted period of higher or further education.(1)

2. BACKGROUND TO THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

In order to understand the context against which the present provision of British "recurrent education" is to be set, it is necessary first to give a brief outline of the British educational system as a whole.

The first point that must be taken is that there is not one system, but three: one each for England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. The Department of Education and Science (DES) is the central authority for education in England and Wales, the Scottish Education Department (SED) for Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Department of Education (DENI) for

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1) For fuller definitions of "recurrent education", see Recurrent Education: A Strategy for Lifelong Learning, OECD, Paris 1973; and John Lowe, Recurrent Education, Scottish Journal of Adult Education, Vol. I No. 1, Autumn 1973.

Northern Ireland. A short paper of this sort must necessarily generalise to a considerable extent; however, it must be borne in mind that there are great differences in detail between the three systems.

With that proviso, it can be stated that each country organises its educational system along broadly similar lines. Thus, full-time compulsory schooling is divided into two sectors: primary (from 5 to 11) and secondary (from 11 to 16). Thereafter, a minority of students stay on at school until 18, or 17 in the case of many Scottish students, and then move directly into degree or sub-degree courses in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics and colleges of technology. Of those who leave school at 16, the great majority of the population, most have no further contact with formal education. However, a proportion of them will undertake some form of full-time or part-time post-school education in what is known as the "further education" sector and it is this sector which contains most of what, in other countries, would be described as "recurrent education". To add to the confusing nomenclature, the United Kingdom educational system also has a sector called "adult education". This has generally been equated with evening or weekend courses designed to enrich leisure or to provide opportunities for self-improvement for the working man.(1) Such courses are provided by local education authorities in further education establishments, in which case they also come under the heading of "further education", and by voluntary organisations such as the Workers' Educational Association and by the Universities.(2)

As far as the administration of the three education systems is concerned, its chief feature is its decentralisation, whereby schools and further education establishments are run, not by the central authorities but the local education authorities (LEAs). Following the reorganisation of local government in England and Wales in 1974, these consist principally of Counties and Metropolitan Districts.

From the above account it can readily be appreciated that the United Kingdom boasts a great variety of educational institutions. In so far as they constitute an educational system, it can only be fully understood in the context of its historical development. It is hardly surprising therefore to discover that recurrent education is not at all systematically organised in the United Kingdom; indeed many critics would argue that there

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1) Maureen Woodhall, Adult Education and Training: A Synopsis of Information on its Scale and Costs in Britain, Sweden and France, OECD, Paris, 1974, pp. 8-10.

2) For detailed accounts of further and adult education respectively, see L.M. Cantor and I.F. Roberts, Further Education in England and Wales, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Second Edition, 1972; and John Lowe, Adult Education in England and Wales, Michael Joseph, 1970.

is as yet little official recognition of the need to make systematic provision for it. However, education in the United Kingdom does contain the elements of recurrent education upon which to erect a more systematic provision. It is to a detailed examination of these elements that we shall now turn.

B. THE PRESENT PROVISION OF RECURRENT EDUCATION

Recurrent Education in the United Kingdom presently occurs primarily within further education; it is also to be found however in adult education, within higher education, notably in the shape of the Open University, and in one or two other guises.

1. FURTHER EDUCATION

The term "further education" subsumes the educational provision, on the basis of both full-time and part-time study, made for those who have left school, in educational institutions other than universities and colleges of education. The statutory basis for this provision is Section 41 of the 1944 Education Act which lays upon local education authorities the duty of securing adequate facilities for the following: "full-time and part-time education for persons over compulsory school age; and leisure-time occupation, in such organised cultural training and recreative activities as are suited to their requirements, for any persons over compulsory school age who are able and willing to profit by the facilities provided for that purpose."

As a consequence of these instructions, a sector of education has developed which is more complex than any other area of education in the United Kingdom. In general terms, it may be said to operate at five broad levels.(1) Firstly, it offers non-advanced, non-vocational courses such as the General Certificate of Education. Secondly, it has a major and unique concern with training for all aspects of industry and business, a vocational aspect which applies to all levels of attainment from low-level

1) Cantor and Roberts, op. cit., pp. 285-6.

operative courses to high-level post-graduate courses, in an enormous range of subjects from Basic Engineering Craft Studies through Agriculture to Business Administration. Thirdly, it contains a growing range of courses at degree and sub-degree level, both vocational and non-vocational, offered mainly in polytechnics and colleges of technology. Fourthly, it offers specialist "post-experience" courses to people who have already received some form of higher or further education and wish to update or improve their knowledge of such subjects as modern languages, special technologies, art or business administration. Lastly, further education also includes a very substantial number of recreational courses, operating mainly in the evening.

One of the most significant features of further education has been its extremely rapid post-war growth. In the autumn of 1971, for example, there were approximately 3,450,000 students enrolled on courses of further education, including non-vocational courses, in the United Kingdom; this represents a doubling of numbers in 25 years. Even more significant, however, is the expansion in the numbers of full-time students from some 50,000 in 1946 to 315,000 in 1971. Catering for the needs of these students is a bewildering range of institutions, including 30 polytechnics offering primarily advanced courses, and some 700 major establishments, including Colleges of Technology, Colleges of Further Education, Colleges of Art and Colleges of Agriculture, to name but a few.

In this brief account, it is clearly impossible to do justice to so complex a sector of education. Instead, I propose to highlight some of the major features of further education in England and Wales and to add a brief description of the situation in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively. By way of introduction, it must be emphasized that the local control of further education has resulted in a wide diversity of provision. Fowler puts it thus:

> "No two colleges look the same or offer exactly the same range of courses. Buildings are rarely all of the same era; they have been built or acquired by steady accretion as further education has continued its unpredictable expansion. Many colleges still have some ancient 'annexes' - old schools, factories, mills, houses, even a hospital - pressed into service in a crisis of accommodation which turns out to be chronic. Similarly most colleges have their 'local' courses, sometimes reflecting a demand in the local community or the zeal of individual members of staff, but sometimes little more than the last historical relic of a once great but moribund industry."(1)

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1) Gerald Fowler, "Further Education", Chapter 35 in Education in Great Britain and Ireland, (Ed. R. Bell, G. Fowler and K. Little), Open University Press, 1973, p. 184.

Perhaps the major feature of our further education sector, certainly the one that sets it apart from the other sectors of the educational system in the United Kingdom, is its concern with meeting the needs of industry and business. Indeed, until fairly recently, further education was virtually synonymous with "technical education", consisting very largely of vocational training in science and technology. Although, as we have seen, it has now outgrown its technical confines, nonetheless industrial and commercial training still form an integral and essential part of its remit.

As far as the training of craftsmen and technicians is concerned, the most common method is undoubtedly by means of courses sponsored by the City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) which examines over 300,000 candidates a year for craft and technician qualifications covering all sectors of industry and a few sectors of commerce. These courses, the staple diet for the average student in further education, are part-time and taken by young employees on the basis of day or block release supplemented by evening study. This system remains the one by which most British craftsmen and technicians are trained. Commonly, CGLI courses consist of two years' part-time study, beginning at age 16, leading to a Part 1 award, followed by a further two years leading to Part 2. Some employees may then proceed beyond this level to obtain advanced qualifications.

For those who wish to become technicians rather than craftsmen, an alternative route is available, namely that leading to National Diplomas and Certificates. Ordinary National Diplomas and Certificates (OND and ONC) are roughly comparable in standard to the Advanced Level of the General Certificate of Education. They are of two years' duration, OND being on the basis of full-time or sandwich study - a "sandwich" course being one in which the student alternates between theoretical study in the college and gaining relevant practical experience in industry - and ONC by means of part-time study. Both OND and ONC are available in a wide range of subjects including agriculture, building, business studies, engineering, and hotel and catering operations. The full-time OND courses have grown rapidly in recent years: in the United Kingdom there were 4,400 candidates in 1967 and 7,000 in 1971. Of the latter, the biggest groups were Business Studies with 3,100 and Engineering with 2,400.(1) By contrast, there has been a decline in the number of students taking the part-time ONC courses, from 38,000 candidates in 1967 to 36,000 in 1971. For many students, OND and ONC represent the end of the line as far as their formal education is concerned; for some, however, they provide the means of entry for a further two years' full-time study leading to the Higher National Diploma

1) Education Statistics for the United Kingdom (1971), HMSO, 1973, p. 32.

(HND) or two years' part-time study leading to the Higher National Certificate (HNC).

It will be seen that there are two major routes to technician qualifications - the CGLI route and the National Diploma/Certificate route. There are cross-links between them and, under certain conditions, it is possible to transfer from one to the other. Equally, it is possible to move up on the technician ladder from the craft courses below them. Nonetheless, the present pattern of technician education leaves much to be desired. The Haslegrave Committee, which was appointed to examine it, reported in 1969(1) and concluded that there was an urgent need to rationalise technician courses and to simplify and standardize the system. It recommended a new unified pattern of courses, constructed on modular principles, consisting of two main elements: material designed to complement the broad basic training requirements of technicians, and a study of the theoretical principles underlying this material. The present awards would disappear to be replaced by Ordinary and Higher Technician Diplomas and Certificates. To administer and supervise these new courses, two new national councils should be set up, the Technician Education Council (TEC) and the Business Education Council (BEC). Although there has been widespread agreement of the need to reform technician education, progress has so far been slow. The TEC was established in 1973 and, at the time of writing, it appears that the BEC will shortly follow. However, it is likely to be some few years before the first new courses appear.

It is apparent from the foregoing description of craft and technician courses that they are not to any appreciable extent based upon the principle of recurrence. The vast majority of students taking them do so immediately upon leaving school and only relatively few entrants have first had some years of industrial and commercial experience. Nevertheless, they clearly offer a vehicle whereby recurrent education could be greatly expanded. If there were a systematic programme of "release" for established employees it would be quite possible - and indeed desirable - for a person having, for example, left school and completed an ONC course at a technical college, to undertake an HNC course at some later stage in his career. Equally, a technician with a CGLI qualification could be released to undertake a CGLI Advanced Certificate Course. As and when the new Haslegrave pattern of courses is implemented, the same procedures could apply to them.

In the meantime, day release - the system whereby employers release their young workers to attend courses in further education establishments,

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1) Report of the Committee on Technician Courses and Examinations (Haslegrave Report), HMSO, 1969.

typically for a day a week - is virtually restricted to 16- to 21-year-old apprentices and then only to a minority of the population. In 1971, for example, only 22.4 per cent of young employees in the age-group up to 18 were receiving day release, consisting of about 35 per cent of the boys of this age and only 10 per cent of the girls. This percentage has been steadily dropping in the last few years, partly because more youngsters are staying on at school. In any case, day release is not a very satisfactory method of study, partly because of the difficulty of constant readjustment between study and work. It seems unlikely that, in the present economic climate, there will be any marked increase in the provision of day release even though the Labour Party in its recent Green Paper on further and higher education recommends that it be made compulsory for all employers to release their young employees.

Industrial Training Schemes

During the 1960s the growing concern with the inadequacy of industrial training, resulting largely from the fact that it was left to the uncoordinated decisions of a large number of individual firms lacking the economic incentives to invest in systematic training, culminated in the passing of the Industrial Training Act of 1964. The Act set up Industrial Training Boards (ITBs) which collect levies from employers and give grants for industrial training. There are now 27 statutory ITBs and 2 voluntary ones which cover the great majority of industrial employees. Their task is to secure the provision of an adequate number of training courses for employees in their respective industries. As a result, a number of new courses have been devised integrating training and further education, notably those introduced by the Engineering ITB.

However, the Industrial Training Act has not worked as successfully as was hoped. Although there has been a definite improvement in the quality of training in the last ten years, it has not been matched by any marked increase in quantity. For example, as we have seen, fewer than one in four of our young employees obtain day release for further education. Moreover, the considerable administrative structure which has resulted from the Act has been the subject of growing criticism. It is charged that the levy-grant system - the system whereby employers pay a levy according to the number of their employees and, in return, receive a grant for the training undertaken by their employees - has failed to spread the costs of training more equally throughout industry, that some of the grant systems encourage training for training's sake and that the Boards have subjected industry to unnecessarily bureaucratic procedures.

As a result of these criticisms the government set up an enquiry into the work of the ITBs, which in 1972 published a discussion document, "Training for the Future". This document announced the Government's decision to expand training massively by developing the former Government Vocational Training Scheme into a Training Opportunities Scheme (TOPS) which will train 60,000 to 70,000 people a year, excluding 16 to 19 year-olds. A wide range of courses will be made available, provided in an increased number of Government Training Centres and by making greater use of employers' facilities and further education establishments. The ITBs will continue and will retain their responsibility for encouraging training in industry, especially for new entrants; however, the levy-grant schemes will be phased out. Finally, the 1973 Employment and Training Act provides for the establishment of a Manpower Services Commission which would work through two executive arms - the Employment Service Agency and the Training Services Agency. The latter will have responsibility for co-ordinating the work of the ITBs and developing training in employment sectors not covered by them, and for TOPS. As far as the further education colleges are concerned, a small beginning has already been made. They were given a target of 6,000 TOPS places in 1972-3, which was somewhat exceeded, and the target for 1973-4 is 14,000 places, of which 10,000 are at commercial, clerical and craft levels. Insofar as these retraining schemes include an element of further education and take place in the further education colleges, they can be regarded as a form of recurrent education. However, it still represents a drop in the ocean and much remains to be done before retraining, and associated recurrent education, is available on an adequate scale.

Other Courses

One of the most important group of non-advanced courses offered in further education is that leading to the General Certificate of Education (GCE). Taken very largely by immediate school leavers, these courses are available both at Ordinary and Advanced Levels, on the basis of full-time or part-time study. There are about 150,000 students undertaking such courses in the United Kingdom, that is, more than one in four of all students on GCE courses. They began on a relatively small scale in the post-war period and have grown very considerably in recent years so that they now constitute a very important part of non-advanced provision. This considerable growth can be ascribed to a number of reasons. Firstly, as many secondary schools have no GCE courses, more able children from these schools or those who mature late or who lack motivation while at school have an alternative route to these qualifications through the further education colleges.

Secondly, a number of students in those schools which do offer GCE courses prefer what they regard as the more adult atmosphere of the college which may also offer a way of 'escape' from the school's emphasis on a general education and a range of subjects to a concentration on relatively few subjects. Thirdly, some students may require, for example, one or two Ordinary Levels as entry requirements to specific vocational courses, and, fourthly, some schools may lack facilities in some areas (particularly science in girls' schools), so that students naturally turn to further education.

For all these reasons, GCE courses have expanded very greatly in further education, a development which represents a major area of overlap with the secondary school sector. Another area of overlap has been the introduction in the last few years of so-called "linked courses". These are courses in which students still at school attend a further education college for one or, sometimes, two days a week. They are specifically designed for 15- to 16-year olds in their last year at secondary school and have received a great stimulus as a result of the raising of the school-leaving age. Although a very varied pattern of courses has developed, they mostly have a vocational element, being based on subjects such as commerce, engineering, catering, applied science or building. Inevitably there is some confusion about their aims and objectives: whether they should be job-oriented, a means of introducing youngsters to the various career alternatives open to them, or whether they should be regarded as part of a general education. In any case, they have grown quite rapidly - in 1973-74 they were catering for about 25,000 students - and seem likely to grow further in the next few years.

The growing degree of school/further education overlap which these developments represent has been carried a logical stage further by a few local authorities who have made more far-reaching institutional arrangements. These take two main forms. In one or two areas, a 'campus' arrangement has been effected, whereby a secondary school and a further education college are built on the same site and students may elect to take courses in either or both institutions. In some cases similar arrangements may obtain for schools and colleges which are some little distance apart. The other, more far-reaching, arrangement is to erect a purpose-built junior college for the education of all 16- to 19-year olds, whether taking vocational courses or not. Arrangements such as these are the product of the greater complexity of provision for the education of the 16-19 age group and they reflect in part a growing volume of opinion which advocates a common policy for these youngsters, wherever they may happen to be educated. Certainly, these pressures are likely to grow in the years ahead.

However, when all is said and done, we must return to the fundamental question: "To what extent do these developments represent any form of recurrent education"? In truth, the answer must be 'very little'. One may point, for example, to the relatively few adult workers who undertake GCE courses, usually on a part-time, evening-only basis in further education colleges as an instance of recurrent education. The other side of this coin is an experimental scheme introduced by Leicestershire LEA whereby adults may join sixth-form classes in some of their schools to undertake GCE courses. Together, they represent only a small minority; by far the greatest majority of students in further education taking GCE courses are doing so on a continuing basis, that is immediately upon leaving school. Nonetheless, the principle of recurrence has been established and there is no reason why, if it became a matter of central or local governmental policy, it could not be greatly expanded. Indeed, the same could apply to "linked courses" and, in principle, there is much to be said for an adult returning to an educational programme, based partly on school and partly on further education provision.

One of the most remarkable features of further education in recent years has been the great expansion of advanced courses, that is of higher education within further education. For example, in 1971, over 220,000 students attended advanced courses in further education institutions in the United Kingdom, of whom more than 100,000 did so on a full-time or sandwich basis. Recently, there has been a trend towards more and more full-time attendance and its relative importance is emphasised by the fact that a full-time student spends between four and five times as much time in a further education college as does a part-timer. Most of the advanced courses, whether full-time or part-time, are concentrated in the Polytechnics and lead mainly to Higher National Diplomas and Certificates (HND/HNC) and degrees of the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA).

HND and HNC are the advanced equivalents of OND and ONC, the former being a full-time course and the latter part-time. They are also available in similar subject areas and, like OND and ONC, the number of full-time students is growing each year while the number of part-timers declines. In 1971, for example, there were 8,600 candidates for HND in England and Wales, as compared with approximately 4,000 in 1967. Until recently HND and HNC have been, above all, the route to membership of the professional bodies, especially those in engineering. However, the raising of standards in the last few years - for example, the engineering institutions now require degree-level education for admittance - has transformed them into high-level technician qualifications. Indeed, as we have seen, if the recommendations of the Haslegrave report are implemented they will be replaced by explicitly-

called Higher Technician Diplomas and Certificates. Both HND and HNC courses are taken, very largely on a continuing basis, by students who have just left school or who have previously successfully completed an OND or ONC course in a further education college.

One of the major developments in further education was the setting-up in 1964 of the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), the only degree-awarding body outside the universities. Its activities have grown so rapidly that by 1971 more than 28,000 students were following 364 CNAA first-degree courses in 42 British institutions, mainly in polytechnics. Of these 364 courses, only 30 were part-time: these are specifically designed for personnel engaged in industry and commerce and for practising teachers and are available in such subjects as business studies, chemical engineering and the sociology of education. However, the number of students taking the part-time courses is relatively small, the great majority being engaged in full-time study. Consequently, CNAA degree courses are primarily designed for youngsters coming straight from school rather than for adults returning to education. Nonetheless, the development of part-time courses is encouraging and, for the most part, they can be considered to be based on the recurrent principle.

During the next few years, the amount of higher education within further education is likely to grow considerably. This is due partly to the planned expansion of advanced courses, mainly in the polytechnics, but also to administrative changes that will follow upon the government White Paper, "Education: A Framework for Expansion." At the time of writing, LEAs are preparing development plans for the reorganisation of higher education institutions within their areas. The upshot of these decisions is likely to be that many Colleges of Education, until now exclusively teacher-training institutions and attached to universities, will offer a much wider range of courses and also move into the further education sector. However, insofar as these colleges cater almost exclusively for full-time students who have just left school, and will continue to do so, they will not add to the amount of recurrent education within further education.

Post-experience Courses

While further education is clearly overwhelmingly catering for the young and is not therefore governed by the principle of recurrence, it does however contain one area which could be said to fall into that category, namely in its provision of post-experience courses, that is, courses for those persons who have already had some experience of industry and business. In one sense, retraining courses such as those available under the TOPS

scheme would be so described, but for the most part they are taken to refer to courses designed to up-date or refresh persons with a particular expertise and tend to be fairly advanced in character. A typical course of this kind is that which leads to the Diploma in Management Studies (DMS) which annually attracts about 6,000 students and is offered in over 40 colleges. Most students attend DMS courses on a part-time basis and are required to hold a suitable academic or professional qualification, such as a first degree or HNC and, for the second stage of the course, sufficient practical experience in industry or business. Although much concern has been expressed about the nature and quality of DMS courses, there is general agreement of the need to provide more in the way of post-experience courses in the whole field of business and management education.

Certainly, the contribution of further education to this area has not been confined only to courses for managers but has, in recent years, become increasingly important in the provision of courses for supervisors and foremen. Partly as a result of the Industrial Training Act, a more favourable climate for the promotion of supervisory training has emerged, and a variety of courses has recently been developed, including the Certificate and Advanced Certificate in Supervisory Studies, together now offered by more than 200 colleges. Only recently have we begun to provide for the education and training of shop stewards and to offer courses to meet what is clearly an urgent need. These courses, which aim to develop the efficiency of trade unions' representation on the shop floor and to encourage a broad understanding of industrial relations, are offered by a number of further education establishments and also by the Trades Union Congress, the Workers' Educational Association and by extra-mural departments of universities. They usually comprise half-day or full-day release for 8 or 10 weeks and in 1972 about 7,000 shop stewards attended these courses. At the present rate it would take 25 years for all the shop stewards in the country to be put through them. Here surely is an area of important recurrent education which should be greatly expanded.

Another general area of post-experience study is that of teacher training for further education. Many of the teaching force in further education come into the colleges directly from industry or business without having undertaken any form of professional teacher training. Indeed, of an estimated 65,000 teachers currently employed in further education, fewer than one-third have been trained. However, it is possible for a limited number of practising, untrained teachers in further education to obtain a professional qualification by means of "in-service", or recurrent, courses. These take several forms, including a four-term sandwich course

offered by a college of education (technical)(1), of which commonly two terms are spent on theoretical work at the college and two terms in the teacher's own establishment in teaching which is supervised by specialist tutors from the college. In addition, the colleges organise a number of extra-mural courses at selected further education establishments consisting of two-year day release programmes, supplemented, for example, by an 8-weeks' period of full-time study during the summer vacation at the parent college. In addition, each college offers a variety of supplementary courses for practising further education teachers to up-date them in such matters as recent developments in industry and business, new curricula and syllabuses, and modern approaches to teaching. Finally, following the proposals put forward in the government White Paper, "Education: A Framework for Expansion", issued in February 1973, provision is being made to allow all teachers, including those in further education, to be released one term in every seven years for in-service or recurrent training.

In describing post-experience courses I have dwelt at length on management education and teacher training, as these are at present the most important areas. However similar courses are also to be found, on a more limited scale, in other areas, including art and design and agriculture. They all incorporate the principle of recurrence. Moreover, further education has the experience and flexibility both to increase the provision of existing courses and to extend them into other areas. If this is to be done on an extensive scale it will of course require either the allocation of new resources or the redeployment of existing ones.

Non-vocational Courses

In our description of the major aspects of further education, we come finally to its provision of recreational or non-vocational courses. In 1971 over 1,600,000 students were enrolled in recreational courses in more than 6,600 further education institutions in the United Kingdom. The great majority of the establishments offering these courses are known as Evening Institutes, operating as they do on a part-time evening basis. They normally occupy premises which are used by day for other purposes, particularly secondary schools, and often the principal of the evening institute and the head of the school whose premises it uses are one and the same person. In some of the large towns, however, a number of centres may

1) There are four colleges of education (technical) which were set up specifically to train teachers for the further education sector: Bolton College of Education (Technical); Garnett College, London; Huddersfield College of Education (Technical); and Wolverhampton Technical Teachers' College.

be grouped together under one principal for whom it is a full-time job. The staff of the institutes are employed on a part-time basis and many of them are school-teachers by day.

In recent years some LEAs, when building new schools, have added premises specially designed as evening institutes, while others have developed comprehensive Community Colleges with a wide range of facilities designed to serve both as schools during the day and community centres at night. The evening institutes offer a very wide range of courses, which often tend to reflect the socio-economic structure of the neighbourhoods which they serve. They may range from handicraft, dressmaking and cookery to art, pottery and foreign languages. Admission to such courses is rarely dependent on formal qualifications. In response to a demand from housewives and others who have daytime leisure, a growing number of centres are also offering recreational courses during the day.

The provision of recreational courses within the further education system is not, of course, without its problems. It often proves difficult to find suitably qualified staff to work part-time for relatively low fees; the facilities are often barely adequate, being frequently based on old schools designed for other purposes; and some LEAs are reluctant to make sufficient funds available for this purpose. Moreover, in times of financial stringency, recreational further education is one of the first areas to suffer. Nonetheless, in an age of increasing leisure, the provision of recreational courses will surely expand. Whether such provision can be regarded as recurrent education is, however, open to question. I began by defining recurrent education as "formal or structured study" and it is a matter of debate whether recreational courses in, say, handicraft or badminton can be so described. If so, then they are clearly recurrent in every other sense of the term.

In the foregoing description of further education, I have attempted to deal with the United Kingdom as a whole; inevitably, however, the emphasis has been on England and Wales. It is appropriate, therefore, to add a brief description of some of the particular characteristics of further education in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

Scotland

In general terms, the further education system in Scotland is very similar to that in England and Wales, though its much smaller population is, of course, reflected in a much smaller provision. There are at present 78 Further Education Colleges and Centres; in 1971-72, they catered for 144,000 students on vocational courses, of whom 27,000 were studying full-time. Many of these colleges have been built in recent years, some

with a technical, others with a commercial bias. In addition, there are 13 Central Institutions financed directly from central funds, including Colleges of Technology, Colleges of Art, Colleges of Agriculture, two Colleges of Domestic Science, a College of Music and Drama and a Nautical College. Together they catered in 1971-72 for over 11,000 students, of whom almost 8,500 were studying part-time. Some of these central institutions, notably those in Edinburgh and Glasgow, may be compared with the Polytechnics of England and Wales, both in respect of the advanced courses they offer and of the high proportion of students on full-time courses. In addition, as in England and Wales, the further education establishments make provision for a large number of recreational courses, which together with the other agencies of adult education catered in 1971-72 for about 165,000 students.(1)

Northern Ireland

Further education in Northern Ireland is provided in 27 Institutions of Further Education, formerly called technical colleges. They offer a similar range of courses to the further education colleges in England and Wales, and in 1971-72 they catered for 34,034 students following vocational courses. The major high-level further education institution in the Province is The Ulster College, the Northern Ireland Polytechnic, which is situated near Belfast. Like many of its English counterparts it was created from the amalgamation of a number of separate colleges and, like them, it offers a large variety of advanced courses, including three leading to degrees of the Council for National Academic Awards.(2) Nine Industrial Training Boards operate in Northern Ireland in much the same way as those in England and Wales.

2. ADULT EDUCATION

In its broader sense adult education can be defined as comprising all the organised forms of activities with an educational and cultural object in which adults take part after they have left the formal education system.(3) This definition would therefore embrace not only non-vocational

1) For a fuller account of education in Scotland, see Leslie Hunter, The Scottish Educational System, Pergamon, Second Edition 1972.

2) For a fuller account of education in Northern Ireland, see Margaret Sutherland, "Education in Northern Ireland", in Robert Bell et. al., Education in Great Britain and Ireland, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973.

3) Woodhall, op. cit., p.2.

liberal and recreational studies but also much of the area of vocational studies. In any case many adult educators believe that the distinction between non-vocational and vocational education is both irrelevant and harmful and would rather emphasize the need to integrate education and training.(1) It will be seen therefore that a good deal of the provision within further education, notably the recreational courses, could equally be described as adult education. The confusion is made more confounded by the fact that, as we have seen, traditionally we have restricted the term "adult education" to describe liberal studies for adults provided by LEAs within the further education system and by voluntary organisations and university extra-mural departments outside it.

For the sake of convenience, however, I propose to define "adult education" as comprising all those educational activities for adults, other than those already described within further education. These activities fall into four main categories: non-vocational and cultural education provided by voluntary organisations and universities; professional in-service training; adult education at university level; and correspondence courses.

The first category, non-vocational cultural education, or, as it is sometimes called, "liberal adult education", consists principally of evening and weekend courses designed to enrich leisure or to provide opportunities for self-improvement for the working man or woman; courses which are neither specifically vocational nor geared to formal examinations and qualifications. These courses are organised principally by the Workers' Educational Association and University extra-mural departments, and in 1970 catered for an estimated 250,000 students for a total expenditure of about £3.5 million.(2) In addition, bodies such as the National Federation of Women's Institutes offer courses, as do a small number of residential colleges such as Ruskin College, Exford, Coleg Harlech in Wales and New Battle Abbey College in Scotland, which take mature students for full-time courses leading in some cases to formal qualifications such as Advanced Level GCE. Finally, mention should be made of the fact that recently some university extra-mural departments have developed post-experience courses for such groups as wives wishing to return to work in their middle years and people anxious to function effectively as voluntary social workers.(3)

A government committee, set up to review the whole field of non-vocational adult education in England and Wales, issued its report in

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1) John Lowe, Recurrent Education and British Practice, op. cit., p. 8.

2) Woodhall, op. cit., p. 9.

3) Lowe, op. cit., p. 11.

1973.(1) It interprets adult education as having to meet three main needs: to offer people a second chance to continue with their formal education in order to obtain specific qualifications or to up-date particular skills; to enable them to pursue creative studies; and to strengthen the place of the individual in society, for example, education for magistrates, shop stewards, social workers, and the consumer. It recommends that the mixture of provision - by the local authorities, universities and the WEA and other voluntary organisations - should continue, but should be more effectively run on twice the present scale. In order to bring this about a national development council for adult education for England and Wales should be set up, together with local councils established by each local authority. As its critics point out, the report makes no real attempt to tackle the issue of recurrent or permanent education. It avoids the critical question whether more adult and recurrent education should be regarded as alternative to the increasing provision of ordinary higher education and, by implication, regards it as an adjunct to it. Moreover, it remains to be seen whether the report's major recommendations, as they stand, will in due course be implemented by the government.

The second category of adult education, professional in-service training, is a difficult one to itemise in that it is not systematically organised and information is hard to come by. However, it comprises that part of the education and training of professional workers, including doctors, lawyers, architects, accountants and teachers, which is "in-service" or post-qualification, namely it is available, or even compulsory, throughout the professional career. Although the amount of such in-service education is still very limited, it is growing all the time and recent reports on the training of doctors, lawyers and teachers have all recommended, that it should be substantially increased.(2) Recently, the College of Law, which provides professional training for solicitors in the United Kingdom, appointed a Director of Continuing Education and in 1972 organised short courses on new developments in law for 2,000 practising solicitors.(3) As we have seen, the government has accepted the recommendation of the 1972 James Report on Teacher Education and Training that all teachers should be entitled to release for in-service training for one term for every seven years of service, which will mean that three per cent of the teaching force will be receiving training at any one time as compared to less than one per cent at present.

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1) Adult Education: A Plan for Development, Russell Report, HMSO, 1973.

2) Report of the Royal Commission on Medical Education, HMSO, 1968; Report of the Committee on Legal Education, Ormrod Report, HMSO, 1971; Report of the Committee on Teacher Education and Training, James Report, HMSO, 1972.

3) Woodhall, op. cit., p. 6.

The third category, adult education at university level, is provided in the United Kingdom by the Open University. Its courses are designed for adults who were unable to pursue higher education in their youth or who lack formal entry requirements. In 1972-73, over 40,000 students were studying for Open University degrees and some 2,000 were taking their post-experience courses. The great majority of the students are between the ages of 25 and 45, over a quarter of them are women, and a high percentage are teachers. In 1971, 27 per cent of the students entered the Open University without normal minimum qualifications, a percentage which rose to 37 in 1973. When the Open University was established a few years ago it was hoped that it would attract a substantial number of working-class students; to date, however, this has not happened. Much interest has been shown in the teaching methods which it has employed, including the use of television and correspondence courses together with tutorial guidance, and in its course unit and credit system, which are relatively new to the United Kingdom. There is no doubt that the Open University is meeting the wishes of many people for recurrent education and that many of its major characteristics, including entry procedures and teaching methods, are well adapted to the needs of the recurrent learner.(1)

The fourth category, adult education by correspondence courses, is one of which is little documented, but is nonetheless of considerable importance. A recent estimate suggests that there are about 500,000 adults in the United Kingdom taking correspondence courses, of whom more than 75,000 are studying for degrees or professional qualifications in such areas as accountancy, banking or commerce.(2) In the United Kingdom, unlike Sweden, France, and the Soviet Union, correspondence courses fall entirely outside the formal education system and receive no government finance or supervision. This is due in part no doubt to the fact that they tend to be regarded officially as an inferior method of education. They continue to be popular, however, and in an attempt at self-regulation a Council for the Accreditation of Correspondence Colleges has recently been set up. Correspondence courses clearly incorporate some of the features of recurrent education; moreover, they represent a relatively inexpensive means of increasing its provision, one which the formal educational system has almost entirely ignored.

Clearly, the adult education sector as described above cannot be said to be organised on a recurrent basis. Nonetheless, equally clearly it includes a number of developments - such as the Open University, the post-experience courses offered by some extra-mural departments of universities,

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1) Lowe, op. cit., p. 11.

2) R. Glatter and G. Wedell, Study by Correspondence, Longmans, 1971.

recent developments in professional in-service training, and courses provided by correspondence colleges - which incorporate many of the features of recurrent education. To that extent, if it were decided to establish systematic provision of education on a recurrent basis, the elements of such a system already exist within adult education in the United Kingdom.

C. POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

In a time of economic stringency, such as the present and the foreseeable future, it is unlikely that substantial additional resources will be allocated to education. Indeed, the reverse may be true and there are indications already that the anticipated expansion of provision of higher education in the United Kingdom, to take but one example, may be scaled down. It is extremely unlikely, therefore, that any additional provision will be made in order systematically to cater for recurrent education in the United Kingdom.

There is, of course, another possibility: that resources presently devoted to other sectors of our educational system, such as our secondary schools and universities and further education institutions, might be reallocated for the purpose of providing recurrent education. In my view, this is unlikely to happen on a major systematic scale, at least in the foreseeable future. There are several reasons for this belief. Firstly, the British system of decentralisation and pragmatic response to social and economic pressures is not wholly amenable to the implementation of major policy decisions by the central authority. Secondly, and more important, the indications are that high-level British educational administrators are not wholly in agreement with the need to make large-scale provision for recurrent education. Their essentially pragmatic approach is summed up by Sir Toby Weaver, until recently Deputy Secretary at the Department of Education and Science. In an address to the OECD Conference on Future Structures of Post-Secondary Education,(1) he declared forcefully:

> "We do not think of education in terms of social engineering, nor do we see it as an instrument to be wielded by governments or educators for the radical reconstruction of society. We have the more modest,

1) Given in Paris, 27th June, 1973.

liberal and realistic aim of providing a framework within which an independent teaching profession can offer to all, young and old, the best possible opportunities, within the resources available, to achieve self-fulfilment by the maximum enhancement of their individual capacities confident that they will themselves discover how best to make their own unique contribution to the renewal of society. We find the concept of recurrent education that has been put before us more confusing than clarifying."

Thus the classic British, essentially pragmatic, approach to educational provision. However, whatever the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach it is both legitimate and desirable to question the concept of recurrent education as seen by its proponents, and more important to ask what the results would be of its implementation. The term itself is doubtless unexceptionable and - like "motherhood" or "incorruptibility" - one to which we would all subscribe. What is open to question and debate is how far it can be implemented and what the effects would be on the present system of education. On this matter, Sir Toby Weaver makes his own views crystal clear:

"We are of course in sympathy with the general notion that education cannot be completed once and for all at the end of a young person's school career, but must be sustained and developed by subsequent education and training. We have our own form of recurrent education. We could not otherwise have developed over the last hundred years the wide opportunities for continued education that we classify by the terms 'further' and 'adult' about which the Russell Committee have written so eloquently; nor would we otherwise have committed very substantial resources to give practical and successful effect to the unprecedented pioneering proposals of the Open University. We cannot, therefore, readily accept that all these valuable diverse opportunities for self-realisation which we construe as impressive expressions of recurrency should be swept away in the name of a new and dubious interpretation of the word."

It could be argued that these views are somewhat mistaken and that if the principles of recurrent education were applied to British further and adult education it would not so much involve a sweeping away of the present system as moving it in a different direction. Moreover, it would seem indisputable that the present British system of further and adult education is <u>not</u>, except to a very limited extent, a form of recurrent education - at least as far as that term is commonly understood. On the other hand, it is my belief that a number of social and economic pressures are moving the system very gradually in a recurrent direction and, as we have seen,

the British educational system reacts to such pressures, albeit, some would argue, rather belatedly. I would pick out four major pressures working in favour of recurrent education.

Firstly, it is becoming more and more apparent that the education and training of a young worker is not a once-for-all injection which he receives on first entering industry. As industrial processes change and older industries decline and labour is redeployed in new growth industries, so new and flexible patterns of training for adults, as well as young workers, need to be developed. As we have seen, the introduction of the Training Opportunities Schemes and the expansion of Government Training Centres reflect the growing awareness of this problem. Nevertheless, much more will have to be done and it will be surprising if the next decade does not witness a considerable expansion of facilities for retraining adults both without, and within, further education. Secondly, in a rapidly changing society, individuals need to make frequent social readjustments, which call for some form of continuing or permanent education. Provision of this kind already exists, in an embryonic form, in some of the work of the evening institutes. This provision is also likely to increase in the years ahead. The third factor at work is that our society is acquiring more and more leisure and one of the functions of recurrent education is to cater for this. Fourthly, there is an obvious need to reduce the disparity between the educational opportunities now available to young people and those much more meagre opportunities that were available to their parents and grandparents. The provision of recurrent education is an obvious and effective way of doing so.

For these reasons, the principle of recurrent education is likely to feature more and more in our educational systems, though as we have seen there is little likelihood, in the near future at least, of any major re-distribution of resources from other sectors of education. This is partly because the concept of recurrent education has not really taken hold in the United Kingdom, even in some educational circles. For example, the eagerly-awaited Russell Report on Adult Education, while sympathetically mentioning the development of permanent or life-long education, nonetheless concluded that it is a long-term concept for which we do not have time to wait. It disappointed many educationists who expected the report at least to consider some of the implications, even if they were eventually to be deferred - including the relationship of adult to further and higher education, and the right to study leave and the job enhancement that are necessary if permanent education is to mean anything.(1) Although the report comments

1) Anne Corbett, Much To Do About Education, Council for Educational Advance, Third Edition 1973, p. 45.

sympathetically on such ideas as paid educational leave, extended broadcast education and education for retirement, it makes no specific recommendations, but merely expresses hope and optimism.

On the other hand, the British Labour Party issued a Green Paper on Higher and Further Education in February 1973 in which it makes a number of proposals for the future development of post-school education which are clearly based on the principle of recurrent education, although it seems unlikely that many of these proposals would be implemented by a Labour Government in the next few years. The Liberal Party at its 1973 Assembly also indicated that it is thinking along the lines of recurrent education by adopting a resolution which made specific mention of "the right of everyone at any age to have his wishes for further education met, if necessary by release from work, without loss of job security." Thus there is a growing volume of opinion in British educational circles which believes that recurrent education must soon begin to complement more extensively the provision of conventional higher and further education.(1) Certainly, as has been shown, we have much of the infrastructure on which to erect it - including, to name three main elements, an efficient network of further education colleges, providing bodies for adult education, and the Open University. There is, of course, much that is already being done in one way or another: for example, it is estimated that in Britain about two million workers receive some form of in-service training each year, though of course this training may not always measure up to the criteria of recurrent education. One of the problems that presently faces us is that there are a number of agencies providing education for adults, but because they have different aims and objectives there is little co-ordination between them. Another difficulty is lack of knowledge and information. As Maureen Woodhall points out, despite the present interest in recurrent education there has been very little research on such matters as the resources devoted to adult education and training and it is very difficult to find out, for example, precisely how much money is being devoted to its provision in the United Kingdom.(2)

In conclusion, it is clear that the elements of a system of recurrent education presently exist in the United Kingdom, and it is my belief that developments in society at large will gradually move us to increase the provision for it. Given the nature of British education, however, this is unlikely to be on a major systematic basis. If I were to forecast the most

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1) See, for example, Stewart Maclure, Over to the Russell Committee, an article in the Times Educational Supplement, 15th December, 1972.

2) Woodhall, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

likely developments in the next decade or so, I would see them as being threefold: the extension of in-service provision, soon to become available to teachers, to other professions and occupations; an increase in the re-training of workers in industry and business; and more provision of adult education for cultural and recreational purposes. Any positive decision to divert substantial sums of money from higher and further education into recurrent education seems unlikely in the short-term.

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