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ABSTRACT

This monograph presents six papers that analyze the current state of research and practice in continuing professional education. Papers address: (1) the problems confronting effective research and policymaking presented by the diverse and unorganized nature of the continuing professional education enterprise; (2) what is known concerning the learning and teaching experience in continuing professional education, paying particular attention to the ways that have been tried to assess learning and educational effectiveness in such programs; (3) the state of regulation, governance, and quality assurance in continuing professional education and the relationship of these issues to questions of finance and whether such education is mandatory or voluntary; (4) whether collaboration and cooperation exist across professional and provider boundaries and, if so, what motivates it; (5) the state of continuing professional education in Europe, especially the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the Netherlands; and (6) how one accounting firm in particular, and the accounting profession in general, has approached the design, delivery, and assessment of continuing professional education. Appendices include the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants Statement of Standards for Formal Group and Formal Self-Study Programs. (GLR)

PROFESSIONAL WORKERS AS LEARNERS

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The Scope, Problems, and Accountability of Continuing Professional Education in the 1990s

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Contents

Introduction: Professional Workers as Learners

by

E. Stephen Hunt[*]

This volume addresses the issue of the continuing education of professionals. Professional education is the preparation, at the postsecondary level, of persons who will practice one of the licensed occupations, either as independent practicioners or employees of an organization. Professions require an advanced level of education and training for entry and usually demand some form of continuing education in order for an active practityioner to maintain a license or to keep up with the ever-changing procedures, technology, and methods of the field. Education to maintain and improve professional competence is called continuing professional education, and is a special subset of the broad field of adult and continuing education. As such, it is part of the most rapidly growing segment of American education, one of increasing importance to our society and economy, and one symbolizing profound changes in the way we approach education, work, and the relationship between the two.

Education for contemporary Americans does not end with a diploma, be it for high school or college graduation. At one or more points in life, virtually every American will participate in some further education for personal enrichment or to acquire or enhance work-related knowledge and skills. To speak of any traditional educational program as "enough" education for life, or to imply that only degree programs equate to "real" education, is to live in a netherworld, not this one. Today's citizen is more likely than not to continue his or her education either through further credit coursework or via short, noncredit programs offered by an employer, an education and training firm, a school, a union, or a professional association. This additional education and training can be crucial to an individual's career and personal development, and can carry considerable weight with employers and licensing authorities, regardless of whether it is recognized by academic institutions or forms part of a degree program.

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To say this is not to belittle the importance of formal academic instruction. Indeed, more Americans than ever before are enrolling in further education for academic credit and are completing certificates and degrees. Much, but not all, of this further education is related to occupational needs and is frequently in a vocational or professional field of study. The variety of what is studied continues to expand as working Americans and their employers discover that new (to them, not someone else) subjects need to be tackled in order to be competitive in a modern global economy and even to be licensed to work or hired. In this way salespeople and business managers have encountered foreign language and culture studies; tradespeople and independent professionals have encountered small business administration and marketing; technical and industrial professionals have encountered environmental affairs; and everybody has encountered the subdiscipline of philosophy called ethics.

As the demand for such continuing education and training increases, however, so does the demand for it to be appropriate to the needs of adults. Adults do not require, expect, or enjoy learning experiences designed to manage the growth and development of incipient adults. They work or have worked full time for some years, and possess a fund of experience and on-the-job knowhow that needs to be appreciated and exploited by those who would teach them more. And, unlike youth who have never been in the working world, this adult knowhow is real, not fantasy that needs to be unlearned or fashioned into something better. Adult learners also have responsibilities that are inflexible, like family life and job. Educators cannot expect that an adult will modify his or her schedule to fit the school's, or believe that their most important task in life is adherence to the rhythm of the full-time academic schedule and the assumptions of the academic life. This does not mean that adults are indifferent students, poor learners, or not appreciative of the benefits of further education and training. They are all of these, but they are a class of learners who need programs designed for them.

Those who design programs for adults will frequently need to offer tailored short courses and learning modules that do not resemble the comprehensive surveys of the traditional curriculum, and which are not always offered for traditional academic credit. The content will be based on what students already know and what they specifically need out of a given learning experience, and the students will be active participants—based on their past experiences—in the learning enterprise. The programs will be offered at flexible times, in convenient locations, and will use available instructional technology to maximum advantage. While the result may superficially resemble traditional schooling, it will succeed if it is well planned,

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delivered by instructors who understand adults as learners and who are themselves practical experts, and organized to be convenient and accessible.

A successfully organized and delivered adult education experience may not be a good one, and this is a matter of concern in view of the extent of the continuing education and training enterprise. Short courses or full programs for adults are offered by most of the 3,000 postsecondary academic institutions in America and by nearly all of the more than 8,000 proprietary schools. In addition, hundreds of thousands of education and training opportunities are offered each year by corporations, unions and professional associations, and independent entrepreneurs in the training business. The 1984 Census data on participation in job-related education alone, derived from responses to the Household Survey, indicated that over eight million Americans were taking advantage of at least one job-related continuing education opportunity. This is truly a massive educational enterprise, and it is one that is extraordinarily diverse. Much of it is unaccredited, since accreditation is both voluntary and generally aimed at institutions and providers offering degree programs for academic credit. It may be regulated, however, either by state agencies or by authorities governing a particular occupation, but this is not always the case. The lack of consistent practices and standards across this industry means that reliable data about it do not exist; the public and the industry's clients often lack vital information which would help them choose appropriate educational opportunities; and there frequently is no way to be assured that the product delivered is worth the time, cost, or effort spent.

The challenge of serving the adult learner across a lifetime contains all of these facets, which together make up the concept of continuing or lifelong learning. In this volume we are concerned with one specific component of lifelong learning, the continuing education of professional workers. Although it resembles the other aspects of lifelong learning in many respects, it possesses other attributes that are unique to its highly focused character. It is to examine these special attributes that we now turn.

Why Study Continuing Professional Education?

The continuing education of America's professional workforce is a major activity of U.S. employers, professional associations, and educators. It is an activity that influences the American economy and America's economic competitiveness in significant ways, since modern industry and commerce are dependent upon skilled professional workers who are able to keep abreast of all that they must in order to

contribute to the success of their employers and serve the needs of society. These overarching facts are reflected in the important position occupied by continuing professional education in the National Education Goals, a collection of six fundamental objectives for improving American education jointly adopted by the state governors, the Congress, and the executive branch of the federal government. Lifelong learning activities for working Americans are stressed in the Goals, together with other forms of job-related continuing education and training. Goal Five is explicit in this regard:

> *By the year 2000, every adult American ... will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.*

Among the objectives intended to fulfill this Goal are a strengthened connection between education and work; improved opportunities for acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to adapt to new technologies, work methods, and markets; and increased numbers of educational programs to serve working adults. The National Goals also envision the creation of a nationwide skill bank—which entails ongoing data collection and analysis—and increased involvement by businesses in the adult learning enterprise. Clearly, the direction of education policy at the national level is toward more emphasis on a trained and educated workforce than ever before, and this emphasis includes professionals as well as other workers.

It is the mission of the Office of Research, and specifically of its Higher Education and Adult Learning Division, to conduct and support research in the areas of postsecondary and adult education. Continuing professional education is both postsecondary in character and adult oriented, and thus it comes under the responsibility of this agency to provide the information on this enterprise that is needed in order to support policymakers, education providers, consumers, and the public. This is not a responsibility that is the government's alone. Consequently, a panel of distinguished experts in the field of continuing professional education, representing some of the major providers of such education to practicing professionals and leading students of the field, were assembled in Washington, D.C., on May 2-3, 1991. They were asked to assist us in defining what was meant by continuing professional education and in identifying an agenda of research activities to pursue. In particular, they were requested to

- Identify the kinds of research activities that it would be appropriate for the Government to undertake;

- Suggest specific research questions to ask and lines of inquiry to be pursued;

- Suggest promising practices or activities in the field that deserve study and possible dissemination as exemplary models; and

- Propose ways to identify problems needing improvement and to gauge the quality and effectiveness of this type of education.

The results of the panel's deliberations are reported in this Introduction, and the background papers prepared for the panel—the remainder of this volume—are also described.

Operationally Defining Continuing Professional Education

The first job of the expert panel was to propose a working definition of continuing professional education. In this effort, the panel members were motivated by the need to reflect the real-world diversity of the continuing professional education enterprise, the variety of actors and interests in the field, and the need to refine the definition for purposes of national research. The definition of continuing professional education that the panel proposed is as follows:

> *Continuing professional education describes the varied modes and content of education and learning that are recognized by appropriate authorities as contributing to the knowledge, competence, development, and performance of individual professionals after they have been licensed as practitioners.*

Under this definition, continuing professional education encompasses all forms of learning (including education and training experiences) that are organized to enhance the practicing professional's capability and recognized as doing such by whatever competent authority (licensing board, association, employer, etc.) is empowered to do so. *Organized* learning experiences are implied because education itself is defined in terms of formal learning, not merely any sort of experience that might inform an individual. Without formal organization and delivery via some means, an educational experience cannot be recognized as having occurred and, therefore, credited. Recognition, then, is implicit in the concept of contributing to professional knowledge, competence, development, and performance. Someone or something must certify that the organized set of learning experiences accomplished

its goal, both from the perspective of the provider and the learner. Such certification need not be academic credit; it can just as easily be provided by an employer, oversight board, or professional association (in many cases it is a combination).

But all of this begs the essential question: what is a profession? The panel of experts addressed this question and recognized immediately that the answer would need to reflect existing practice if it were to prove a useful to researchers and policy makers. A number of approaches to defining a profession were debated, but most resulted in either a gratuitously elitist concept or one that could not be readily converted to a operational definition usable in data collection and analysis. In the end, the panel turned to two operational concepts used by the federal government. These are the concept of a profession embedded in the *Standard Occupational Classification Manual (SOC)* of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Federal Statistical Policy and Standards, and the concept of a professional-level instructional program embedded in the *Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)* of the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. CIP considers a professional instructional program to be postsecondary, and often post-baccalaureate, in level; to be a focused program that prepares the student to apply advanced knowledge and skills in the making of independent judgements without close supervision; and which delivers a distinct body of subject matter organized uniquely. SOC regards professional occupations as those requiring a high level of technical knowledge and skill; that are practiced independently or without much supervision; that are organized around a body of knowledge and skills not possessed by those outside the occupational group; and that are licensed or otherwise recognized as distinct occupations. Consequently, a profession may be defined, using the panel's concepts, as:

> *An occupation that requires the possession of a postsecondary degree to qualify for entry, that involves the independent practice or application of a defined and organized body of competencies which is unique to that occupation, and which is formally recognized and regulated—internally or externally—by some type of licensure, accreditation, or permit.*

A profession, then, is any occupational field as classified in SOC or CIP that requires at least an associate degree or the equivalent in order to qualify for entry, that is regulated as to membership qualifications and permission to practice at the state or national level, and whose education and training components pertain to a body of competencies which—in the form regulated—are the exclusive domain of

that recognized occupational group. The knowledge base and the skills employed by a given profession do not themselves have to be unique possessions, only the way they are organized and delivered by that particular group of practicioners. Lawyers, nurses, and engineers, for example, are not the only people who know and use the principles and skills relating to law, health care, and applied science. They are, however, the only people permitted to apply that knowledge and those skills in certain ways, ways that define the character and competencies of their professions and for which they can be held accountable under law and the sanctions of their professional colleagues.

Researching Continuing Professional Education

The field of continuing professional education not only needs definition, it also needs description and analysis. From the standpoint of public policy, what is needed is a picture of the scope and nature of this enterprise, including both its providers and users, and an analysis of how it functions, what its problems are, how it might be improved, and how it might usefully inform other types of educational activity. When the enterprise to be studied is as large, diverse, and inchoate as continuing professional education, these tasks become daunting unless they are focused on manageable aspects of the whole. Helping to achieve this focus was the second job of the expert panel.

Descriptive Research. The panel considered that some basic data are needed about the entire field of continuing professional education, despite its size. These descriptive data include

- An inventory of what professions and what continuing professional education providers are currently recognized across the country by responsible authorities;
- A descriptive portrait of the universe of recognized continuing professional education providers by characteristics, type of education or training offered, professions served, types of clientele, methods of educational delivery, and types of assessment and evaluation used;
- An inventory of current accreditation and regulation affecting the field, both governmental and associational, including applicable standards and policies; and

- An inventory of currently used methods of assessing, crediting, and evaluating providers and learners, together with examples of each.

These data are critical to the provision of accurate information on the nature and scope of the continuing professional enterprise. They are also necessary in order to identify promising areas for in-depth analysis and to formulate the requisite research questions. Such information can serve as the foundation of a national network or data bank in the field and will make possible the identification of innovative and exemplary practices as well as issues needing attention.

Analytical Research. While descriptive information may itself suggest certain issues for analysis and contribute to such analyses, other research efforts are needed in order to address the important questions of how continuing professional education functions in various settings, how well it functions, and what its short- and long-term impact is on the lives of those who experience it. Since the field is so broad and diverse, one cannot hope to cover all of it with in-depth inquiries. Selectivity is required, so the expert panel proposed that analytical research be conducted via surveys and case studies. The identification of target populations and candidates for case studies would be facilitated by the collection of the descriptive data described above. The analytical studies proposed by the panel include

- A longitudinal study of a cohort of professionals who participate in continuing professional education, across a variety of professions, to study why they participate, what they take, how their studies are financed, and whether these experiences affect their professional competence and career paths in the short and long runs;

- A series of case studies of professional employers in different industries to learn how they approach continuing professional education, how they plan it and finance it, how they make decisions about offering it (in-house or external, picking providers), and how they assess its worth and impact;

- A series of case studies of different professions to investigate how they approach continuing professional education for their members;

- A study of the relationship between preservice and inservice education, with particular attention to identifying constructive models in preprofessional curricula that anticipate and encourage future practicioners to engage in continuing professional education;

- Studies of the consumers and regulators of continuing professional education to discover their specific needs, what drives and motivates continuing professional education, and what experiences and approaches work best in terms of achieving quality;

- An analysis of the pre- and post-outcome assessment and evaluation tools used in continuing professional education, including those used by providers and by external licensing and review authorities; and

- The development of models of continuing professional learning that can serve to guide the further development of research and practice in this and other adult education fields.

Analytical studies will enable researchers and others to work to improve the practice of continuing professional education, to identify what works and what does not in different contexts, and to establish linkages (such as to business, regulatory authorities, and independent providers) that will be important in future research on work-related education.

The Contributed Papers

In addition to its own work, the expert panel benefitted from several analyses of the current state of research and practice in continuing professional education commissioned by the Office of Research. These have been revised and refined for publication and are presented in the remainder of this volume. Together they provide a portrait of continuing professional education as it is today, both in America and abroad, that reveals not only what has been accomplished to date but how much remains to be done.

Milton R. Stern and *Donna S. Queeney* provide an overview of the field that discusses its history, recent development, and major outstanding issues. Their paper

demonstrates the problems confronting effective research and policymaking presented by the diverse and unorganized nature of the continuing professional education enterprise.

Donna S. Queeney discusses what is known concerning the learning and teaching experience in continuing professional education, paying particular attention to the ways that have been tried to assess learning and educational effectiveness in such programs. She draws upon examples from the highly successful advisory work done by the faculty and staff of the Pennsylvania State University in cooperation with the architecture and health professions.

John F. Azzaretto addresses the state of regulation, governance, and quality assurance in continuing professional education and discusses the relationship of these issues to questions of finance and whether such education is mandatory or voluntary. He provides a checklist to consider in both assessing quality and doing research in this area.

Ronald M. Cervero asks the questions, "does collaboration and cooperation exist across professional and provider boundaries and, if so, what motivates it?" In his answers he shows that there are cross-cutting issues in the organization and delivery of continuing professional education, and that it is possible to generalize about the field and apply findings from one situation to other contexts, so long as an adequate typology has first been developed.

Ernest A. Lynton presents a picture of the state of continuing professional education in Europe, concentrating on the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. His paper reveals that many of the issues being grappled with in American continuing professional education are in fact common to other societies as well, and reports on some interesting solutions that may have relevance in the domestic context.

Finally, members of the human resources development staff of the accounting firm of *Ernst & Young* provide a case study of how their firm in particular, and the accounting profession in general, has approached the design, delivery, and assessment of continuing professional education.

Conclusion

Continuing professional education, as a subject of research, needs more systematic attention than it has previously received. It is appropriate for the federal government to participate in this effort, for the government is better placed than any individual actor in the field to provide a national, cross-professional perspective. The result of a concerted research activity in this field will benefit, not only those who participate in continuing professional education, but also others engaged in providing or participating in adult and lifelong learning, as well as to postsecondary education in general. The potential benefits include a greater understanding of what constitutes effective adult education, identification of the barriers to effective lifelong work-related learning, identification of ways to overcome these barriers, models of learning that can be applied in various contexts, and a rich database that can be used to facilitate both further research and improved practice.

The Scope of Continuing Professional Education:

Providers, Consumers, Issues

by

Milton R. Stern and Donna S. Queeney[*]

The concept of continuing professional education is not new. It can and has been traced as far back as the apprenticeship and guild systems of the ancient and medieval worlds, and has been an informal adjunct of professional practice into modern times (Houle, 1983). Beginning in the 1960s, expanded technology, increased concerns about public welfare, changes within professions (such as the creation of sub-specialties), plus increasing numbers of new professions, called for more and more carefully structured education for professionals throughout their careers (Houle, 1980; Shuchman, 1981; Staff, 1979). In addition, a longer working life span combined with the explosion of new knowledge to require more study by professionals throughout their careers. These developments resulted in a trend toward mandated continuing professional education, encouraged through either state relicensure or professional society recertification requirements, or both. The establishment of continuing professional education requirements escalated through the 1970s and 1980s, and today continuing professional education has become a major dimension of what may be called **post-tertiary** education, the further education of skilled practitioners beyond degrees and beyond their initial professional education (Stern, 1986).

Continuing Professional Education as a Field of Study and Practice

Notwithstanding such growth, continuing professional education today remains an **emerging** field, held together by a group of people, most of them with academic affiliations, who have conceived of continuing professional education as a larger whole and are committed to addressing professionals' needs for lifelong

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learning. Specialization, of course, is naturally present among providers. Continuing professional education providers rarely address a **spectrum** of professions; rather, they focus on continuing education for specific groups, such as lawyers, engineers, or physicians. They tend to think of themselves as continuing legal educators or continuing medical educators, for example, rather than as continuing professional educators *per se*. Communication across these specialty areas, and between educators of professionals in colleges and universities, industry, professional associations, or elsewhere, has been minimal. For these reasons, until recently continuing professional educators operated in relative isolation. The same problems were addressed many times over in a variety of arenas and across professions.

Yet despite the differences in content areas, semantics, and educational bases, continuing professional educators across fields and representing different educational providers grapple with many of the same issues (Phillips, 1987). Within the past two decades, they have come to recognize the need for a forum for discussion of the emerging field they share and the importance of structuring continuing professional education in ways that will improve service to all professionals. They have begun to understand, regardless of discipline addressed, that they are engaged in a process of mutual interest and that they all will benefit if they take time to examine the continuing professional education process across disciplinary boundaries.

Those who have addressed the basic interprofessional issues of continuing professional education are not, by and large, active providers. In that sense, continuing professional education is not only still an emerging field but might even be called synthetic. There remains a great deal of translation needed from the concepts of what may be termed "transprofessional educators" to the subgroups of providers working as educators in the various professional fields. Nevertheless, the gap between these two groups is being bridged, and educational approaches are being changed in response to productive exchanges between researchers and practitioners.

Beginning in the 1970s, a small but steadily growing stream of journal articles on continuing professional education began to appear with some regularity. Professional conferences on the topic of continuing professional education began around 1979 (Nowlen and Hohman, 1979). A high point of such early activity was the 1980 publication of Cyril Houle's book, *Continuing Learning in the Professions*. Houle's thoughtful approach offered perspective, structure, and even terminology to the field of continuing professional education. His concentration on **learning** as the

primary consideration for people in the field gave authority to those who wanted to deal with professionals with a seriousness commensurate with the interest that practitioners themselves had already shown in acquiring new information and knowledge beyond earlier training in their respective fields. More important, perhaps, this comparative approach, crossing professional boundaries to consider common issues of motivation, ethics, identity, and pedagogy, helped validate the concept of continuing professional education as a field cutting across issues of instruction within individual professions.

An early effort to develop an agenda of questions for research and practice in continuing professional education occurred in early 1981, when Phillip E. Frandson convened a group of leaders in the emerging field to discuss key issues (Stern, 1983b). Frandson's group was concerned that higher education's leadership position in continuing professional education, which could enable it to have an impact on both professionals as consumers (students) and their educational providers, was fast eroding, and they sought to identify the main issues obstructing continuing professional education's development as a unified field. The four issues identified included

1. Financial considerations as the driving force behind continuing professional education;

2. The appropriate locus of responsibility, power, and authority for continuing professional education among higher education, other providers, and regulators;

3. The need for quality in continuing professional education; and

4. The need for higher education to work with professional associations, labor unions, employers, private enterprisers, and other interested parties (Stern, 1983a).

A book incorporating the fruits of the 1981 discussions was published in 1983, and the issues thus framed gave some direction to the field, especially the summary contributed by Cyril Houle (Stern, 1983b).

As had been predicted, continuing professional education became the fastest growing area within continuing higher education (Froke, 1977), as well as a major focus for professional associations (Jones, 1975). Previously considered an adjunct operation wherever it was placed, it began to be recognized as an embracive

professional field in its own right (Cervero, 1988). Within higher education, the professions, business and industry, and the government, CPE came "into focus as the more formal, episodic, and visible expression of the sustained drive for learning . . . a major fixture of American professional life" (Nowlen, 1988, p. 20).

Continuing professional education is as different from professional education on one side as it is from other aspects of continuing education on the other (Cervero, 1988). Professional education is (or should be) characterized by being an introduction to and preparation for an occupational field of study and practice. General postsecondary continuing education, which in a loose taxonomy encompasses continuing professional education, also may include leisure and enrichment programs, part-time noncredit instruction, nontraditional credit instruction, and nondegree programs in both academic and nonprofessional occupational subjects.

By contrast, continuing professional education is a focused program extending the preparatory professional curriculum and expanding it through the career stages of professional practice. To do this, it must go beyond individual learning activities to include development of learning agendas specifically designed to meet professionals' practice-oriented educational needs (Nowlen, 1986; Nowlen and Queeney, 1988). In other words, CPE is not only post-secondary, it is **post-tertiary**:

> *Continuing professional education is conducted at advanced levels for skilled professionals . . . It has its own set of pedagogical, organizational, political, and fiscal characteristics. . .* (Stern, 1986)

Developing meaningful continuing professional learning experiences requires knowledge, experience, and ideas from several perspectives. Higher education provides leadership in understanding educational processes and has access to current research that guides much professional practice. Professional societies—national, state, and local—represent professionals as practitioners; they reflect their constituents' interests, whether they be material, quality control, or ethical. The societies, where they exist—some groups are too new to have such representation—serve as liaison between higher education and professionals in the development of programs (Queeney, 1984; Nowlen and Queeney, 1988). Employers of professionals are another essential partner in the evolving matrix of providers, consumers, and researchers in the field of continuing professional education.

Providing Continuing Professional Education to Consumers

While optimism about the acceptance of continuing professional education as an emerging field may be justified, a gap has emerged, and persisted, between the perceptions of university-based members of the field, often engaged in research, and those engaged in the rapidly proliferating community of continuing professional education providers. The provider community consists of higher education institutions (in their teaching and public service roles), professional organizations (including associations and unions), employers, and private entrepreneurs. Although all of these groups may be classified as educators insofar as they provide continuing professional education instruction, they have somewhat different outlooks and interests than do members of the research-oriented professoriate.

Perhaps the main example of this gap is the linkage that providers make between quality and economics. Most researchers and practitioners understand the necessity of adequate quality standards in the delivery of continuing professional education services. But providers know that continuing professional education is a major income-producing activity for every entity involved in it, and thus their concept of quality is based on resource maximization and marketing and business considerations as well as principles of academic excellence.

Maintenance of basic competence for all professionals has been constantly emphasized as the goal of continuing professional education (Houle, 1983, p. 257), but its potential as a business venture has been equally obvious, whether measured by professionals' participation rate, dollars committed, numbers of providers, or variety of programs (Nowlen, 1988, p. 20). Higher education institutions with declining traditional enrollments, professional associations, and for-profit entrepreneurs have all claimed that the amount U.S. employers annually spend on executive, white-collar, and blue-collar employee education and training has averaged over twice what the fifty states annually appropriate for kindergarten through grade 12 education in recent years (Nowlen, 1988, p. 2).

The reality of the profits to be made in providing continuing professional education has encouraged many entrepreneurs to become interested in the field, offering programs mostly in management and in the more clearly established professional areas such as the health sciences. Unfortunately, some of these independent providers have been guilty of neglecting to assess professionals' needs or failing to distinguish between lower level instruction and that for more mature professionals before jumping in to offer seminar programs of dubious value. The result has been programs that benefit neither less sophisticated audiences nor

advanced practitioners and which give continuing professional education a bad name.

Entrepreneurial providers of contining professional education have discovered the international market and also the need to address the issue of quality. Recently an International Association for Seminar Management (I.A.S.M.) with a base in Washington, D.C., was established. The organization appears to be intended to cut across all kinds of providers and to formalize relationships among some of the professional societies, private enterprisers, and universities engaged in providing continuing professional education. In this case, the initiative apparently has been taken by the independent entrepreneurs. From the point of view of university providers and professional societies, this development may have interesting later results. The issue of quality, obviously, has great significance to consumers and providers of continuing professional education, intellectually, ethically, and economically. A question remains as to whether any voluntary association encompassing such variety as that proposed by the I.A.S.M. can assure quality or whether that is better undertaken by each profession through its own association, without reference to any kind of national or international grouping.

The extensive and highly competitive market for continuing professional education points up a need for leadership in convincing all concerned provider organizations to work toward ensuring that continuing professional education be viewed as a field requiring broad consideration of issues and cooperative engagement. As Stern (1986) said, if a field as "confused and competitive as . . . continuing professional education" is to be adequately addressed, "an objective forum for discussion" remains essential. At one level, the integrity of educational offerings is a valid concern; at another, the direction of continuing professional education as a field of study and practice is at stake.

The Need for Collaborative Action

Azzaretto, et al. (1990) defined continuing professional educators as "... those who research, develop, deliver, arrange, and evaluate educational programs for professionals to maintain a knowledgeable and proficient work force" (p. 39). They further proposed that representation of these five interests within the continuing professional education community is essential. The authors of this chapter would argue that the public interest requires that, while not necessarily themselves educators, **regulators** have an undeniable place and cannot automatically be listed under "evaluators". While an individual educator or organization may provide more

than one of such strengths, it is unlikely that all of the activities listed will be addressed by a single organization working alone. Rather, collaboration among providers is advocated as a means of bringing coherence to continuing professional education.

The exponential expansion of technical knowledge and growing concern with professionals' competence have heightened the sense of disorder within continuing professional education and underscored the importance of interaction and collaborative programming among higher education, the professions, and controllers of the workplace. The challenges of this situation go beyond the organizational to the heart of the content, methods, and assessment of continuing professional education. In the realm of content, Smutz and others (1986, p. 390) have cited "fragmented course offerings, lack of standards, and a variety of providers in any one field" as symptoms of the lack of coherence in the field.

Relating continuing professional education offerings to real workplace needs is equally important. Samuel Kalman (1984) has noted the need to make continuing professional education "part of the interplay between the practical problems of the real world and the insights and generalizations derived from research . . . (no longer) apart from 'where the action is'." He has cited the importance of shared dialogue among educators, professionals, and employers, and stressed the need for continuing professional education to achieve a more central position within higher education, not only administratively but academically as well. In his opinion, continuing professional education programs need to be designed and organized sequentially to professional education curricula, rather than being treated as a peripheral adjunct.

The Role of Employers

One of the significant changes of our century has been the transformation in professional identity. The concept of the independent professional, well established throughout most of history, is disappearing. As of today, most professionals are employed by others. Not only do most newly created professions function largely in a bureaucratic context, either corporate or governmental, but even members of the long-established professions, commonly called "free professions" (medicine, law, etc.), find it increasingly difficult financially to establish themselves as individual practitioners. In medicine, for example, this has meant not only group practice, but also employment of physicians in for-profit health maintenance organizations.

The changing face of the professions has major implications for all providers. Chief among them is the matter of relating to the management cadres:

> *Dialogue with those who employ professional practitioners is necessary for the reinforcement and implementation of continuing professional education. Although a professional may master new information or skills, it cannot be assumed that he or she will automatically incorporate the newly acquired learning into practice . . . Therefore any attempt to improve professional practice must include not only instruction but reinforcement of that instruction in the working environment.* (Queeney, 1984, p. 17).

As a group, employers are now the largest provider of continuing professional education and, simultaneously, the largest consumer of continuing professional education provided by others. They have demonstrated that they recognize the benefits of collaborating with higher education and professional associations to obtain the education their employees need (Nowlen, 1988, p. 21). However, all provider groups, including employers, must anticipate the social and political implications resulting from a professional work force that will, for all intents and purposes, have lost independent status. With regard to quality control, for example, "whistle-blowing" is already difficult; how much more so will it be in the new dispensation? And what are the implications for continuing professional education in that regard?

Content Issues and Instructional Leadership: Focusing on the Consumer's Needs

One consideration for providers may be to rethink the role of the professional as consumer. While they are consumers of education, their special status as students would seem to call for priority. As professionals study—whether they be accountants listening to audio tapes on new tax laws in their automobiles while going to work; whether they be neurosurgeons concentrating on videotapes of new techniques in craniotomies; whether they be engineers, either at a computer console or in the classroom, or both, or talking to each other via electronic mail—they are learners, individuals who cannot be subsumed only under the heading of consumer. Although helpful, that perspective by itself does not encourage pedagogic consideration of the learner by the provider. Indeed, often enough, the word "consumer" does apply to the corporation or government agency that employs professionals wholesale and pays for their study.

Issues of curricular development and pedagogic policy, method, and delivery system, are now being discussed more generally by providers even than in the recent past. That fact argues that continuing professional education has matured not only as a unified field of study but increasingly of practice. Nevertheless, the chief actor, the university, needs prompting in its lines. The extent of higher education's appropriate role in and responsibility for continuing professional education requires examination and clarification. Despite general agreement that continuing professional education is an obvious responsibility of at least some institutions of higher education, most colleges and universities have neglected this aspect of their mission (Stern, 1986), and other providers have begun to fill the void (Hofstader and Munger, 1990). While these groups—employers, professional associations, regulatory agencies, and entrepreneurial providers—may have excellent knowledge of professional practice and the work setting, they frequently lack understanding of educational processes and access to current research.

Regardless of the curriculum development model a provider uses, collaboration can enhance its application. Nowlen (1988) describes three such models of continuing professional education, all of which can benefit from a range of perspectives available across providers and professions. The *Update Model* emphasizes keeping up with a profession's knowledge and skills base. To this, the *Competence Model* adds analysis of job functions and preparation for new roles within professional practice. The *Performance Model*, while including these factors, also allows for consideration of the environmental, professional, and personal contexts within which professionals practice. Nowlen suggests that continuing professional education should be based on a performance model, which is ". . . likely to generate the richest assortment of needs and responses" (Nowlen, 1988, p. 224). He emphasizes that this model encourages, is enhanced by, and indeed requires collaboration among providers.

Leadership must come from the research universities. To fail a constituency of many millions of their own professional graduates is not a sound policy. Indeed, absence of policy regarding continuing professional education characterizes higher education. How may leadership be promoted? This is perhaps the most urgent question on the agenda of those members of the professoriate who have asserted the importance and commonality of continuing professional education as a field of study and practice.

Regulatory agencies, such as state licensing boards concerned with professional competence, are frequently not acknowledged as participants in continuing professional education development and delivery. However, their focus

on practitioner competence underlies the concept of continuing professional education, and this makes regulators important players in the process of developing sound practices and adequate assessment methods in continuing professional education. For these reasons, recent statewide collaborative efforts have included professional regulatory bodies in their working groups and consultative networks. Examples include both The Pennsylvania State University's Continuing Professional Education Development Project for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Ohio State University's Commission on Interprofessional Education and Practice for the State of Ohio (Queeney, 1984).

Professionals as Learners

Although continuing professional education should be the individual practitioner's ongoing responsibility, professionals have not been prepared to be intelligent consumers of continuing professional education. Here the usefulness of the appellation "consumer" is in no doubt. But the professional must fulfill that role because providers have not yet lived up to their pedagogic responsibilities, important in which is recognition of the professional as a learner. This neglect extends backward in the educational life of the professional, even to the preprofessional instructional program.

Traditionally, professionals have been prepared to enter practice but have not been oriented toward lifelong learning. The concept of lifelong professional education should be introduced with preparatory education and supported by practitioners' employers and professional associations throughout their careers. In addition, individuals preparing to enter professional practice should be aided in developing learning skills and familiarity with educational resources.

As Houle (1983) suggested, professionals' growing acceptance of lifelong professional education as a concept they must understand and embrace has had the potential to change the nature of continuing professional education. Noticeable changes in practitioners' attitudes toward and understanding of continuing professional education began to be apparent in the early 1980s. "Our clients have become much more sophisticated about continuing education for the professions," claimed Nowlen (1986) in his role as provider, "and while nettlesome, I view this as an extremely positive influence on our field."

As consumers of continuing education, professionals must be seen as students. While individually they will have somewhat different approaches to

learning, they share a number of characteristics related to the ways in which they learn:

- As adult learners, they may be expected to prefer educational activities in which they can participate actively, such as small group discussions and workshops, and to value hands-on learning experiences; and

- As sophisticated practitioners they have contributions to make to the learning situation through the sharing of their experiences and consequent generalization.

In effect, the predominant tone in continuing education at its best ought to be peer exchange. New knowledge is offered and received in a fluent, mutually profitable way, a situation in which an instructor is "first among equals," if perhaps only on the theme of his/her expertise. And the relationship between what the professionals learn and its direct application to their daily practice is critical to the success of the program.

In addition to the adult learner characteristics described above, which are shared across the professions, these experienced students have specific and diverse educational needs, both because of individual differences and differences in practice settings and experiences. Educational providers and professionals need to recognize, understand, and address these factors in their educational planning.

Abelson (1987) noted that it is simply not feasible for mid-career professionals to avoid obsolescence without some kind of structured educational support. Continuing professional education, as one of its major responsibilities, has to assist professionals in becoming independent learners by offering them help in developing individual learning plans, providing learning support systems to guide them in this endeavor, and motivating them to design and implement their own educational plans (Smutz and Queeney, 1990a).

Motivation in Continuing Professional Education

Motivation is critical to learning at any level. Among the factors related to motivation are the demographic characteristics of the professionals who may be involved, the influence of the culture of a given profession on its members attitudes toward continuing professional education, the personal drive to learn and improve of

individual practitioners, and the incentives that make continuing professional education attractive to different individuals and groups in particular circumstances (Houle, 1961; Douglah, 1970; Grotelueschen et al., 1977, 1979).

Dubin linked motivation to learn to professionals' recognition of the need to pursue continued competence to avoid becoming obsolete. He defined obsolescence, or the reverse of learning, as ". . . a decremental process comprising the loss of acquired knowledge and the nonacquisition of new learning which occurs unless effort is constantly made to repair the erosion of knowledge and to stimulate growth and innovation" (1981, p. 39).

While motivation of individual professionals as learners is critical, motivation of entire professions to support continuing professional education also is important. Professional responsibility is a group, as well as an individual, concern. Indeed, to be a "professional" means that the group interest must be seen as being essential to one's identity. While many, and even most, professionals are motivated to continue learning, every profession has laggards, practitioners who either ignore or fail to recognize their learning needs (Houle, 1980). Laggards may reflect adversely on their entire profession (Shimberg, 1980, p. 205).

Assuring Quality: The Alternatives

The Need. Can (Does) continuing professional education make practitioners more competent? This is a central question in continuing professional education; it has been asked for years and remains unanswered by academic researchers in the field. On the other hand, the unscientific, common sense approach the public today increasingly accepts is that education produces competent practitioners. It is assumed, therefore, and not without reason, that the principle that education investment should produce positive results must apply to continuing professional education as well as to other types of education.

The general public is not the only concerned voice in demanding assurances of quality in continuing professional education. Identifying means of assuring practitioner competence has been a major concern of educators, the professions themselves, and employers. It is also a concern of those who must regulate the practice of professionals, including their certification to practice. This concert of interested parties brings the issue of the quality of continuing professional education squarely into the middle of the debate on the question of whether the professions

themselves, or external public authorities, have or ought to have the power to assure professionals' competence.

The Obstacles. Professions have tended to resist schemes for periodic evaluation of practitioners, as have those certifiers and regulators who might be responsible for such programs. Development of meaningful and manageable evaluation strategies would be a most difficult task, and the motivational and philosophical problems inherent in such a program would be considerable. Peer review and practice audits have received limited consideration within only a handful of professions (Queeney and Smutz, 1990).

Mandating Continuing Professional Education. In the absence of other viable alternatives, a number of professions in many states have turned to mandatory continuing education as at least an interim, if sometimes reluctant, answer to the competency maintenance issue (Shimberg, 1980, pp. 194-95). Still other professions have tried peer review, re-examination, practice audits, and other alternatives to requiring continuing professional education. State legislators, unsurprisingly, have been more enthusiastic about mandated continuing professional education that professional associations, since such legislation has enabled them to show the broad public—the consumers of professional services—that their surrogates were on the job, protecting them from inferior practitioners.

Required continuing professional education was virtually unheard of until the early 1970s (Shimberg, 1980). Professionals simply were expected to engage in appropriate educational activities to remain competent. However, the efficacy of voluntary continuing professional education was questioned when U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare reports in 1967 and 1971 cited growing concerns with professional obsolescence in medical and allied health professions. It became apparent that "merely making opportunities available for practitioners to update their professional education would not necessarily assure that such opportunities would be used. The need for an incentive was raised. . . ." (Shimberg, 1980, p. 201).

Thus, some form of mandatory continuing education became a major issue for the field. Advocates perceived it as a means of ensuring that professionals' knowledge and skills would remain current, enabling them to provide competent service to the public. Detractors declared that simply requiring professionals to participate in educational activities offered no guarantee that learning took place, or that practice was improved. Some professional associations proposed that mandated continuing education could be avoided if state professional societies linked continuing education to continued membership and all practitioners were required to

join these associations, a self-protective measure which tended to make little headway with law-makers.

Controversy over mandated continuing professional education, a hotly debated issue in the 1970s and early 1980s, has diminished without definitive conclusions. Some professions and some states have concluded that although voluntary learning may be more appealing than mandated education, mandated program participation offers a quantifiable response to public criticism of professions. However, evidence that mandatory continuing professional education ensures competence, or even guarantees that learning has occurred, remains elusive.

Accreditation of Programs and Providers. Accreditation of educational activities has been an additional factor to be addressed by mandatory continuing education systems. Identification of educational activities qualifying for licensing board or other approval requires establishment of common standards, language, and guidelines, as well as an approval structure and mechanism. Implementation of such a system has both political and educational ramifications, and the potential for conflict of interest or an attempt at monopoly. For example, many professional associations offer extensive continuing education programs and at the same time are also involved in program accreditation.

More Work on Quality Assessment is Required. Shuchman (1981), in a study of three professions (accounting, law, and medicine), cited four major problems inherent in implementing mandatory continuing professional education programs:

1. The effectiveness of mandatory continuing education was yet to be demonstrated;

2. The cost of services to the ultimate patient-client consumer would be increased by required continuing education;

3. Standards of quality would have to be set; and

4. The knowledge gained by practitioners participating in educational activities would have to be measured.

Shuchman also noted that professionals object to many educational activities because they lack relevance to clinical skills (p. xiv). Most of these criticisms apply with equal force to quality assurance in nonmandated programs.

Perhaps the strongest argument against mandatory continuing education, as well as the greatest obstacle to effective quality control in general, remains the lack of documentation of a positive relationship between educational participation and practitioner competence. A few studies have been undertaken in an attempt to identify causal relationships between continuing professional education and practitioner competence (Queeney et al, 1990; Spencer and Battison, 1983; American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, 1985). However, research in this area is exceedingly sparse (Queeney et al, 1990). Not surprisingly, most continuing professional educators have found identification of such relationships too difficult and frustrating a task, and have chosen not to pursue it.

Provider program evaluations solicit information on participants' satisfaction with their overall experience, but they ignore measurement of knowledge acquisition or the educational activities' impact on professional practice. Efforts to ascertain what learning has taken place or what changes might be made in practice as a result of participation in continuing professional education are rare. Large program enrollments, rather than any indication of knowledge or skills acquired or practice improved, often are considered indicative of program success.

Declaring that professionals' preparatory education should be enriched and extended throughout their careers is not sufficient to meet the needs of society, to justify continuing professional education, or to satisfy the interests of concerned providers and consumers. Continuing professional education has the potential to affect professional competence only if it is tailored to professionals' learning needs; offered not as a series of isolated events, but as a coherent educational program spanning the career stages; and properly evaluated over time (Smutz and Queeney, 1990). Continuing professional education must turn its attention to development of strategies and structures to support these concepts. Perhaps, then, incrementally and over time, answers will be found.

A Look Toward the Future

Continuing professional education has become nationally important not only to the professions but to the public. Growth in the number of malpractice suits and increases in malpractice insurance premiums will testify to the growing importance of insuring advanced learning and competence in all professions. As noted above, events that began in the 1960s led to broad awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of continuing professional education as presently configured (Nowlen, 1988). Interest grew within individual professions and among continuing

professional educators. The issues of the 1970s, such as those of turf (who will provide? who will accredit?) and what defines a profession, gave way to concerns about the nature of the product or service offered and the impact of programs on consumers. More recently, questions about appropriate outcomes of continuing professional education and the individualized nature of professionals' learning needs have been added to the list (Smutz and others, 1986, pp. 390-391).

The field of continuing professional education remains an evolving one. Yet as one reflects on events of the past three decades, progress is apparent.

> *We're arguing about better issues than we used to. There is a sense of turbulence but the quality of the turbulence has improved ... The issues have shifted from arguments we had five and ten years ago which imaged our provider centeredness and concerns with issues such as finance, marketing and competition. There was, as well, a kind of penny dreadful weeping about how undervalued we were by our parent corporations, associations, and institutions of higher learning. (Current) questions . . . have been learner-centered. We are trying to come to terms with the nature of competence and how to teach toward it. We are trying to come to terms with tools, scanning devices, strategic planning models, learning systems, and technologies insofar as they serve professional performance* (Nowlen, 1986).

Still, as Nowlen (1988) also observed, considerable patience is needed; ambiguity and confusion continue to abound as continuing professional educators pursue Houle's (1983) hope that continuing professional education will build on what has been done "...to plan sequential future eras in which the professions, working separately and together, can find ways to achieve the goals they have in mind" (p. 257). Integration of the work of higher education, professional associations, employers, government, regulatory agencies, and others has begun with their incorporation in specific projects (Office of Continuing Professional Education, 1985) and their joining together to engage in a growing dialog that has included two national conferences on continuing professional education sponsored by Penn State University and the Kellogg Foundation (Staff, 1986, 1990).

Continuing professional educators acknowledge the need for more common understanding of their field, semantic standardization, and a taxonomy to facilitate understanding and research. Despite their disparate backgrounds and the variety of professions they represent, they have achieved substantial agreement regarding the following key tasks facing them and the field they share with others:

- Expanding professionals' awareness of and commitment to continuing professional education as their ongoing responsibility and developing guidelines to assist professionals in designing their lifelong learning plans;

- Developing a structure to enable continuing professional educators to share state-of-the-art methods and research;

- Developing and implementing a range of needs assessment methods for use by both providers and professionals in identifying educational needs to be addressed;

- Building collaborative relationships among continuing professional education providers by identifying specific problems, then determining how each group can contribute to collaborative endeavors to address them;

- Integrating current and future technology with traditional teaching and learning methods to enhance continuing professional education;

- Predicting societal trends that will require educational intervention to take professionals into the next century;

- Infusing continuing professional education with encouragement of a broad perspective, critical thinking skills, and enhanced interpersonal communication;

- Examining how continuing professional educators can best serve their constituents;

- Identifying a base of financial support for continuing professional education and identifying ways to contain costs without sacrificing quality; and

- Identifying ways continuing professional education can promote and enhance interprofessional practice and defining a framework for addressing interprofessional learning needs (Staff, 1986).

Plainly, much work lies ahead before continuing professional education becomes a fully mature field. As Houle (1983) urged, in the next period, the third era, the focus must be on developing and actively promoting a structure and a process for determining professionals' needs in continuing education, providing learning support systems and educational activities to address those needs, and documenting the improvements in competence thus attained. The work ahead requires, too, a sense of the wholeness of continuing professional education and a constant awareness of the responsibilities we all have in society as the specific goals are met.

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Problems of Content and Delivery in Continuing Professional Education

by

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The concept of formal continuing professional education was virtually unknown not many decades ago. Across professions, the need for education after initial professional preparation was unrecognized. Once prepared for practice, professionals were presumed to be forever competent. Identification of educational resources and decisions to read journals, discuss problems with colleagues, or attend educational sessions at conferences were left entirely to individuals' ingenuity and discretion.

Continuing professional education as a distinct educational activity gradually began to emerge in the late 1960s. As concern with professional incompetence grew, continuing professional education was grasped as a panacea, a quick fix to shore up professionals' performance. The assumption that educational activities could remedy incompetence led increasing numbers of professionals back to the classroom and those concerned with continuing professional education to consider ways in which they could make that education meaningful.

Some time after the realization that the education process does not end with graduation and entry into practice came recognition that continuing professional education should be part of an educational continuum that begins in early childhood (Houle, 1980). Like the rest of that continuum, continuing professional education needs coordination, coherence, and guidelines. Professionals, however well-intentioned, often have little knowledge of how to go about choosing appropriate educational opportunities, and purveyors of continuing professional education need a systematic approach to identifying appropriate educational activities. And although each profession has many characteristics that make it unique, these problems span the professions.

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If continuing professional education is to improve or enhance performance, it must be related to practice. It has to build on previous education; address professionals' entire scope of practice; and offer opportunities to remedy incompetence, maintain competence, improve performance, and update knowledge. Episodic continuing professional education, in which practitioners choose isolated educational activities throughout their careers, simply is not structured to enable the practitioner to design a well-rounded learning program that will enhance practice (Smutz and Queeney, 1990). The elementary school teacher who enrolls in courses on developing art projects one year, working with special needs youngsters another, and photography a third year probably is not being guided by a systematic continuing professional education framework. From the provider's perspective, such a cafeteria approach encourages development of courses, workshops, and other activities on the basis of their marketability rather than their educational merit. The result is that professionals often select educational activities for frivolous reasons, and providers select their content and delivery for maximum market appeal rather than to improve or enhance performance. If continuing professional education is to become more effective, individual educational activities must be part of a coherent, comprehensive, well-planned continuing professional education program designed to serve the professional throughout his or her career.

Because professionals are not prepared to be lifelong learners, they need a structure to help them become intelligent consumers of continuing professional education. Although adults learn best if they are in charge of their learning situation and responsible for their own learning, most professionals have not been educated to be independent lifelong learners and are not prepared to coordinate their continuing professional education (Smutz and Queeney, 1990). They require guidance in developing a comprehensive program of educational activities, just as providers require guidance in determining what professionals need. The notion of structuring continuing professional education should be introduced in initial professional education to inform emerging professionals about the concept, goals, and virtual necessity of a continuing learning plan. They need to recognize not only the importance of continuing to learn throughout their careers, but also the benefits of having a coherent plan for that learning.

Like elementary and secondary, college, and professional education, continuing professional education would benefit from a curricular framework for long-term educational planning. This concept is fairly new to continuing professional education, no doubt because of the developing nature of the field (Hanson, 1989); yet it should be addressed. Because each profession has its own body of knowledge and scope of practice, each requires its own structure, enabling

both practitioners and their educational providers to consider the broad range of educational needs throughout a professional's career. Such a structure ensures that important content areas are not ignored and that the knowledge and skills needed to perform certain tasks are not neglected. Through this type of comprehensive approach, continuing professional education can enhance professional practice and enable professionals to serve the public well.

A curricular framework also might enable individual professionals to structure their lifelong education according to a logical sequence. It incorporates the differing educational needs that accompany various career stages and alternate career paths. It recognizes the particular needs of professionals who choose to focus on an area of specialization, or those who move away from direct provision of client services to research, management, or teaching. By presenting an array of educational activities that cover the total scope of profession, a framework encourages professionals to discover what they should but do not know.

The framework within which professionals' lifelong learning is built should include a number of factors. Rather than being considered together, however, these factors often are considered in isolation, if at all. Some of these factors are related to development of continuing professional education content, while others are related to ways of delivering continuing professional education.

Developing Continuing Professional Education Content

Currently the content of most formal continuing professional education represents responses to a single issue, advances in knowledge and technology that can render professionals' existing knowledge and skills obsolete (Scanlan, 1985). As a result, considerable energy has been focused on providing opportunities for individuals to update their knowledge and skills in order to remain competent (Willis and Dubin, 1990). This challenge of helping professionals remain current and become familiar with new information has been sufficiently attractive to providers that they have devoted minimum effort to broader educational context and content issues.

The knowledge and skills needed for professional practice obviously are critical considerations in developing continuing professional education content. The two go together, for knowledge informs the skills required to execute professional tasks. Because continuing professional education should be geared toward improved performance, emphasis must be placed on relating knowledge and skills to daily

practice. Expansion of knowledge alone is not enough to affect practice substantially (Nowlen, 1988).

Building a sound continuing professional education program begins with understanding the full scope of the specific profession being addressed. A comprehensive practice description or role delineation is one way of providing a foundation that outlines the practice areas educators might consider in developing educational activities or that practitioners might review when planning their individual continuing professional education (Kris-Etherton et al., 1983). Because proper definition of the scope of practice is a profession-wide concern, the professional association usually takes the initiative if a practice description, outlining all duties performed by practitioners within that profession, is to be developed. A number of professions, including pharmacy (Kalman and Schlegel, 1979), architecture (National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, 1981), and dietetics (American Dietetic Association, 1984), have developed comprehensive practice descriptions, often working with consultants.

Identification of the broad areas, or **domains** of practice, is the first step in creating a practice description for any profession. As the example below, drawn from a practice description for nursing, indicates, providing direct client care is a domain within nursing practice. Within each domain are a number of

Sample Portion of a Nursing Practice Description*

Domain: PROVIDE DIRECT CLIENT CARE

Responsibility: Assess Health Status

Tasks:
- establish interpersonal rapport
- systematically obtain all applicable information
- record assessment data
- validate findings with client or significant others
- validate findings against knowledge base

*Continuing Professional Education Development Project, 1982.

responsibilities; assessing health status is a responsibility within the domain of providing direct client care. Each responsiblity is comprised of a number of **tasks**; obtaining all applicable information is one task included in assessing health status.

Not all practitioners will do all of the things included in the practice description, but some individuals will do them as part of their professional work. For example, all lawyers may not do appeals work or active trial court litigation, but the legal profession includes lawyers who do engage in these activities.

Development of a comprehensive practice description is a substantial undertaking, and the completed description will require updating as the profession changes. Once the practice description for a given profession has been developed, the basic structure can be used to guide educational providers and professionals for many years. However, while a practice description is highly desirable, it is not essential. The important point is that both continuing professional educators and individual practitioners must have some way of comprehensively reviewing the areas of practice as a first step in determining what educational content will improve practice.

Continuing professional educators or professionals themselves may choose to focus on an area of specialization within the profession. In such cases, they consider only those areas of practice relevant to that specialty. Educators identify the knowledge and skills necessary to handle the responsibilities and tasks they wish to address, and individual practitioners identify those responsibilities and tasks that comprise their professional practice.

Needs Assessment

Once relevant areas of practice have been identified, assessment of educational needs across those content areas serves as a means of identifying appropriate continuing professional education content. The needs assessment processes employed by educational providers may vary substantially from those used by individual professionals, for their goals are different. Providers seek to identify content areas in which educational activities are needed, whereas practitioners are concerned with their individual learning needs.

The differences between assessment of educational needs and competency assessment are substantial. Educational needs assessment is designed to discriminate between broad knowledge, skill, and practice levels across a range of

content areas (Queeney, 1988). Such assessment may offer comparisons of individuals to their peers, or comparisions of abilities in various content areas. Educational needs assessments usually lack the precision necessary to evaluate competence to practice, and they should not be mistaken for competency measures.

Continuing professional education providers can use a broad range of needs assessment and related methodologies to obtain several types of information:

- In what areas do practitioners of the specific profession lack the knowledge and skills necessary to perform well? Which tasks do they perform least well? Standards of acceptable performance must be established to answer these questions properly.

- Which of the weaknesses identified can be corrected by educational interventions? Some problems may be caused by an unsupportive work environment, lack of proper equipment, or other factors that cannot be corrected by continuing professional education.

- Do the areas of weakness merit development of educational activities? Are they (1) important to practice of the profession, and (2) performed frequently by a sizeable number of practitioners?

- For those areas of educational need, is development of new educational activities appropriate, or are a sufficient number of good learning opportunities already available? Little will be gained by developing activities for a market that already is saturated.

- Will it be possible to generate interest in educational activities designed to address the weaknesses identified? Regardless of how valuable an activity might appear to be, if professionals cannot be motivated to participate, it will be worthless.

Without basing their educational development and delivery on answers to the above questions, continuing professional educators cheat both themselves and the professionals they purport to serve. They risk offering programs that will not attract an audience, but even more important, they fail as educators by not availing

themselves of the opportunity to provide meaningful education to improve and enhance professional performance.

Professional practitioners logically are concerned with their individual educational needs. Unfortunately they are not trained to identify those needs, and support systems to assist them in identifying their needs exist within few professions. Thus professionals often are reduced to selecting educational activities on the basis of what they think they might need or, worse yet, because of convenience or attractiveness of the time, location, or delivery method. Several professions—among them architecture (Smutz and Queeney, 1990), medicine (Davidoff, 1989), and dietetics (Babjak, 1990)—have begun to establish learning support systems that enable individual practitioners to assess their educational needs effectively. Such support systems include prior needs assessments that drive the design of the educational programs of individuals, and identification of relevant educational resources. They should serve as models for other groups.

Characteristics of Professionals

In addition to assessing educational needs, *per se,* the continuing professional educator and the practicing professional must consider other factors in planning educational activities and programs. These factors give additional dimensions to the needs assessment described above.

Professional life cycle stages affect program content decisions. As individuals move from entry into practice through the stages of their career life cycle, skills learned in the past may grow rusty or be rendered obsolete by new knowledge and technology (Dubin, 1972). Professionals initially concerned with handling the basics of practice move into more senior roles, often become mentors to newer professionals, and eventually consider decreasing professional involvement as they look toward reducing their workloads and retiring (Dalton, Thompson, and Price, 1977; Thompson, Baker, and Smallwood, 1986). Because they have not been prepared to adapt to these changes, continuing professional education is needed to ensure smooth transitions.

Professionals who have been practicing for some time often feel quite comfortable with the skills and procedures they use regularly, and they tend not to view themselves as being weak in these areas. However, assessments of mid-career professionals reveal deficiencies in some of the most basic areas. For example, the Continuing Professional Education Development Project found that accountants

often are weak in communicating with clients, and many dietitians' skills in teaching patients about nutrition need strengthening (Queeney and Smutz, 1990). These professionals need assistance in identifying learning needs of which they may not be aware and in selecting educational activities to strengthen their performance in those areas.

Midcareer professionals may perform professional tasks at higher levels or assume greater responsibility than they previously did. They may be expected to handle more difficult, complex issues and problems requiring advanced skills and knowledge. Some of these higher level competencies may be gained through practice, others may require additional education.

Throughout professionals' careers, the knowledge base of their professions will grow, technological advances will introduce new procedures, and the socioeconomic contexts in which they practice will fluctuate. Examples of such changes abound, ranging from technological innovations such as computer assisted design, which has revolutionized the engineering, drafting and design professions; to expanded social roles and responsibilities, such as the tremendous increase in the duties of teachers, now surrogate parents and social workers as well as instructors. These changes will alter the ways in which their professions are practiced, and their duties and patterns of daily practice may change. Unless professionals make a conscientious, ongoing effort to remain current, their knowledge and skills rapidly will become outdated. Today's accelerated pace of knowledge generation renders virtually all professionals obsolete within only a few years of their entry into the professions unless they regularly engage in additional education (Dubin, 1990). Yet relatively few efforts have been undertaken to examine the relationship between career stage and continuing professional education content.

Professionals' areas of specialization are yet another consideration in identifying educational content. Practitioners who choose career paths that lead them away from direct client service or patient care into related areas of practice and those who specialize in particular facets of their fields have new educational needs as they make these changes (Scanlan, 1985).

Within most professions, some practitioners move beyond direct professional practice into related areas within the profession. They may become administrators or managers for the profession, as happens when engineers become project supervisors or lawyers assume responsibility for operating large firms. Professionals often move into management positions with little or no educational preparation, frequently seeking education to support their new roles only after they have

encountered problems. Other professionals may elect research or teaching rather than direct delivery of professional services. In addition to requiring knowledge of the profession, these career paths call for research or teaching skills, both of which the professionals may lack but are able to acquire through education.

It is not uncommon for professionals to move toward an area of specialization after their initial professional education has been completed. In some professions, such as medicine, specialization is quite formalized, with specific requirements for specialty practice. Pediatrics and cardiology are examples of recognized medical specialties. In other fields, like teaching and nursing, a practitioner may move into specialization informally simply by working in a particular area, or may choose to pursue specialization formally through additional education. For example, elementary school teachers may specialize in teaching reading because providing reading support constitutes a large portion of their assignment, or they may pursue formal educational programs to become certified reading specialists. In yet other professions, such as architecture, the nature of individuals' work may lead them to become specialists through experience alone. For example, architects employed by large firms may have administrative responsibility, such as project scheduling, or may concentrate on one type or aspect of design work. Such a specialization may occur as the result of several years' experience in that role within the firm, rather than by virtue of prior qualification. Both formal and informal professional specializations are similar in that they require attention to continuing educational needs.

Some professionals choose to leave their professions for related fields. While career changes of this nature may require return to basic professional education programs, often a limited amount of carefully targeted continuing professional education can provide the necessary knowledge and skills. Lawyers who become judges, for example, can acquire the additional knowledge and skills needed for their new position through continuing professional education. However, formalized programs to help professionals make these career shifts are not common.

Interprofessional Education

As the Ohio State Commission on Interprofessional Education and Practice has demonstrated, many societal problems require the combined efforts of practitioners from a number of professions (Browning, 1987). Dealing with AIDS, for example, calls for participation of doctors, nurses, psychologists, educators, counselors, social workers, lawyers, clergy persons, dietitians, and others. By

bringing practitioners from all relevant professions together for workshops on topics such as this one, educators can prepare them to collaboratively handle major problems (Cunningham and McLaughlin, 1990). Such interprofessional activities are most successful if representatives of all participating professions are included in the planning process and care is taken to ensure that no single profession is permitted to dominate the interaction. Seating arranged to integrate practitioners from all professions and small group discussions built into the learning experience maximize opportunities for valuable interprofessional discussion. The professionals, their clients, and society all benefit.

Professionals all think that they are unique, and many resist participating in educational activities designed for a group of professions. In some cases, they exhibit a territoriality that must be overcome if practitioners from different professions are to learn and work together. Architects feeling that their educational needs are sufficiently different from those of engineers, for example, may not be receptive to educational activities designed to teach both groups about construction administration. Because collaboration is essential for interprofessional education and practice, hierarchical relationships such as those sometimes perceived to exist between doctors and nurses are not conducive to successful interprofessional activities.

Because the content of professions differs, interprofessional education is not suitable for all topics. Even continuing professional education addressing areas that are not profession-specific, such as assessment techniques, communication skills, and patient teaching, may need to be tailored to the jargon and content areas of specific professions. For example, the communication skills needed by architects interviewing clients differ markedly from those used by physicians explaining illnesses to patients. Although developing a single educational activity addressing one of these topics for practitioners from a range of professions may be tempting, it most often will be ineffective unless it is aimed at compatible professions with related content areas, respect for one another's work, and willingness to translate the material presented to their own situations.

The Critical Viewpoint: Professional Reflection

The different kinds of continuing professional education content described above primarily are products of advances in scientific knowledge or professional technique. Certainly the specific content may change, with the content of interest to mid-career professionals differing from that of interest to younger professionals.

However, the basis of the ongoing education is the same: the need to use recent advances to remain current, competent, and productive in one's field.

Recently another view, the critical viewpoint, has gained recognition as affecting the essential content of continuing professional education. Based on the work of Schon (1983, 1987) and applied to continuing professional education by Cervero (1988, 1990) and Todd (1991), this perspective suggests that scientific/technical/rational knowledge is only one source of knowledge for practicing professionals. Another source, according to this view, is the repertoire of understanding and skills that practitioners develop over time as a result of their professional experiences. It is this source on which professionals draw most frequently when confronted with the ill-defined problems common in daily practice. From this perspective, an added challenge for continuing professional education is the need to help professionals recognize and apply the practical knowledge acquired through experience. For this to happen, continuing professional education content must be designed to assist professionals in learning how to reflect on their own practices and procedures in order to enhance their performance. As Cervero (1988) notes, this type of content is not intended to replace that generated through scientific and technical advances but rather represents an additional source of content to be addressed by continuing professional education.

Delivering Continuing Professional Education

Decisions regarding the content of continuing professional education are necessary but not sufficient to ensure sound programming. Continuing professional educators also must concern themselves with the ways in which their educational activities will be delivered to the professionals they seek to serve. Unless they do so, they risk (1) presenting material in ways that discourage its application to practice, (2) not serving substantial segments of the professional population who are location bound or otherwise unable to participate in certain types of activities, and (3) offering programs that lack appeal for professionals as adult learners. While individual practitioners need not actively address the issue of delivery methods, they will select those methods most attractive to them. In addition, if they are serious about enhancing their practice as a result of educational participation, they will consider the appropriateness of a particular delivery method to the material they hope to learn. They will recognize that 1-day workshops, which have become popular with practitioners across professions, often are not appropriate for particular types of learning, which may require more in-depth concentration than is possible in a single day.

All professionals, or even all practitioners within a given profession, cannot be expected to have the same approach to learning. However, as adult learners, professionals share some characteristics related to the ways in which they like to learn and learn best. Characteristics of adult learners are well documented. For example, adults prefer educational activities in which they can participate actively, such as small group discussions and workshops, rather than lectures. They have contributions to make to the learning situation through sharing their experiences and often are eager to do so. The relationship between what they are learning and its direct application to their daily lives is important to them. These and other recognized preferences of adult learners must be considered in planning continuing professional education (Cross, 1981; Knox, 1986).

Despite a strong tendancy to rely on conventional lecture format, continuing professional education can be delivered in many ways. For some educational activities, a variety of delivery methods may be suitable. Selection of appropriate methods depends on several factors.

Content. The content of any educational activity is the most critical factor in determining delivery method. Delivery requirements will be far different for an activity designed only to impart knowledge than for an activity intended to teach a new skill. For example, lawyers may easily learn new tax laws by reading journal articles, but a workshop or laboratory setting may be essential for teaching chemists to use a new piece of equipment. Interactive skills, such as patient interviewing or counseling techniques, generally are best taught in small group sessions, often with cooperative learning and peer feedback.

Professionals' practice setting. Many professionals practice in institutional settings such as schools and hospitals. Others, like accountants and lawyers, may practice in large firms. Still others practice either alone or with only a few colleagues. Within a number of professions, all three types of practice may be common. The practice settings of the professionals for whom educational activities are designed will influence selection of delivery methods. Educators serving professionals in large firms, for example, may find that self-standing educational materials accompanied by an instructor's guide to be used by firms' staff development personnel, are desirable. Professionals in hospitals, who may be able to commit only small blocks of time to continuing professional education, may welcome a series of short self-study modules.

Location of professionals. While the majority of professionals practice in urban areas, those practicing in more isolated regions cannot be ignored.

Continuing professional education activities are needed to reach professionals in sparsely populated areas as well as those with easy access to educational centers. Technological advances have expanded distance learning possibilities to include, for example, cable television and interactive video in addition to audio and video cassettes, telephone conferences, and written independent study materials. Opportunities to read journal articles and submit accompanying tests offered by the American Dietetic Association exemplify an inexpensive, structured approach to taking learning to professionals.

Nature of the profession. Practitioners of specific professions may be particularly comfortable with certain types of learning. For example, medical and allied health professionals, accustomed to working in clinical settings, learn well from both actual and simulated clinical cases. Because architects are visually oriented, self-study packages that include slides or other visual materials are particularly helpful to them. Clinical psychologists, whose practice is highly interactive, may benefit from small group workshops featuring extensive discussion and feedback.

The above factors merit consideration in development of all individual continuing professional education activities and the broader educational programs of which they are a part. Viewing a series of activities or a total program in terms of the delivery methods to be used should result in a pleasing variety of activities with appeal for professionals. For example, the practitioner who finds Friday afternoons a poor time to initiate new projects or the accounting firm that devotes Wednesday afternoons to staff development appreciates educational activities designed to fit those blocks of time. Practitioners of virtually all professions benefit from some interaction with their colleagues from different work settings, an opportunity that informal workshops and seminars can provide. Professionals driving to and from work can receive information up-dates en route via audio cassettes.

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants is an example of a provider that put some thought into selection of delivery methods. That group created standardized courses to fit its continuing professional education curriculum and sought to provide them across the country. Packaged instructional materials form the basis of the courses, which are designed for distribution by individual state associations. Qualified instructors are identified locally in the states and regions offering the activities. They receive no special training but rely solely on their own knowledge and the packaged materials. The American Institute of Architects is moving toward a similar, although less comprehensive, model of standardized

educational offerings, as described below, but is adding a training program for instructors.

Delivery of continuing professional education generally has not kept pace with knowledge of appropriate learning methods for adults or with technological advances. Despite the realization that lecture format is far from the best method for teaching professionals, providers continue to rely heavily on it. They may make this and similar choices almost unconsciously, driven by inertia and a reluctance to try new methods. Cost also is a major consideration, since use of technology, hands-on learning experiences, and other practice-oriented methods often are expensive means of delivering information. Yet these decisions ignore the importance of providing practice-oriented education in a manner that encourages its application to daily practice and makes it readily accessible to practitioners regardless of where they are located. Unfortunately, they often lead to continuing professional education activities of minimal value.

With few exceptions, use of technology for continuing professional education has been ineffective. Many providers and professionals are reluctant to consider use of equipment and methods with which they are not familiar, a situation itself indicative of an educational need. Certainly technology should not drive the educational process, but satellites, compressed video, audio and video cassettes, computers, and other relatively new delivery methods should be used when they provide the best means of delivering practice-oriented continuing professional education.

Architecture: An Example

The level of sophistication with which individual professions address continuing professional education varies substantially, as does the degree of professional associations' involvement. Some professional associations have developed detailed, comprehensive needs assessment and program development systems, and offer a plethora of activities. Other associations have procedures for approving educational offerings but are not educational providers themselves. And some associations do both. Although the educational content of each profession is unique, the structures, procedures, and systems that can be employed to develop and deliver meaningful continuing professional education are remarkably similar across professions. Thus continuing professional educators and professionals themselves can learn from their colleagues working with other disciplines.

The Pennsylvania State University and the American Institute of Architects have been working together, in cooperation with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards and the Pennsylvania Society of Architects, to develop a systematic approach to needs assessment and educational development and delivery for architects. Architects, unlike practitioners of substantially larger professions, have a limited number of educational opportunities available to them. Thus the participating organizations felt it especially important that those activities available be carefully designed to meet educational needs and affect practice. Several aspects of their work merit discussion here.

In 1981, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards completed a study that included development of a practice description for the architecture profession. That study formed the basis for the work described here. During the course of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation-funded Continuing Professional Education Development Project conducted at Penn State in the early 1980s (Queeney and Smutz, 1990), the practice description was refined for use as a continuing professional education needs assessment/program development guide. Initial work focused on group assessment of architects' learning needs and development of educational activities to address those needs. From these endeavors, it became clear that the needs assessment activities, based on assessment center methodology, were useful as educational experiences in and of themselves, in addition to providing data on learning needs to inform educational development.

Within architecture, as in other professions, it was apparent that assessment of group needs was limiting, primarily because individuals frequently did not recognize the group needs as relevant to their own needs. Those involved in this work determined that assessment of individual educational needs was necessary. They further concluded that, because of the isolated nature of many architectural practices and architects' reluctance to devote income-producing time to such activities, self-assessment instruments that could be used by individual architects in their homes or offices would be highly desirable. Thus an innovative project to develop self-assessment audits for professionals was begun. The architecture practice description developed earlier (with some updating) was used as the basis for identifying content areas in which to measure individual architects' strengths and weaknesses.

To ensure comprehensive representation of the profession, an Architecture Profession Team was formed to guide the project. It comprises representatives of the American Institute of Architects, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, the Pennsylvania Society of Architects, and Penn State's

Department of Architecture. Staff members from Penn State's Office of Continuing Professional Education have coordinated the effort. At this writing, considerable progress has been made toward the goal of developing a full series of self-assessment audits to cover the entire scope of architectural practice. Architects may purchase the individual audits, complete them at their convenience, and return them for confidential scoring.

Identification of individuals' learning needs is only a first step, however. Professionals need guidance in identifying educational activities to address their needs. Therefore each scoring report sent to a participating architect includes not only a report of that individual's strengths and weaknesses, as determined by the audit, but information on a variety of educational activities available from multiple providers appropriate to the weaknesses cited. For those topics within the profession not fully covered by a range of educational opportunities, Penn State and the American Institute of Architects are developing appropriate activities.

Through this project, the architecture profession is taking a broad look at the formation and maintenance of a continuing professional education curriculum. The evolving curriculum is not simply an extension of initial professional education. While it includes core topics that are part of the professional curriculum, such as design, it also incorporates areas architects encounter only as they move into professional practice, such as construction contract administration and office management. Establishment of this continuing professional education curriculum is feasible for two reasons. First, this particular profession is well established and has been concerned with continuing professional education for some time. For example, the Intern Development Program, developed by the profession to give prelicensed architects structured practice experiences, provides a foundation for further learning. Second, the theories underlying the concept of continuing professional education curricula are the result of growth of knowledge and understanding within the field of continuing professional education over the past several years.

Two features of this project are critical to its success. First, the participating organizations recognized early that this task required the collaboration of their two organizations, a concept that goes well beyond that of collaboration between individuals. The professional association and the university each have brought different strengths and resources to the project. As is true in all collaboration, each group has had to be willing to relinquish some authority and to compromise on a number of factors in order to maintain a healthy collaborative relationship. They have had to recognize the importance of input from other groups, such as the state

professional association and the national regulatory body, and the need to utilize external consultants to provide specialized skills.

Second, efforts have been made to focus both the audits and the educational activities on architectural practice. For example, case studies have been used in the audits, and each audit is thoroughly reviewed and pilot tested. As educational activities are developed, they are designed to build skills and to provide opportunities for active participation in the learning experience. Application of materials covered to practice is emphasized. A variety of delivery modes will be utilized, with selection being influenced by the nature of the material to be covered as well as by recognition of architects' learning preferences. Long-range plans call for development of self-study programs to provide all architects with access to appropriate educational programs.

Project participants recognize that the process in which they are engaged must be an ongoing one; even before materials are developed to cover the entire scope of practice, it will be necessary to begin updating them. However, once the system is in place, it will offer architects the support they need to develop individual continuing professional education plans to span their careers.

Conclusion

While continuing professional education should not be seen as a panacea for all professional ills, it is reasonable to expect that participation in properly chosen educational activities may help practitioners reduce incompetence, maintain competence, improve their performance, and update their knowledge. However, such expectations will be realized only if professionals' learning needs are systematically identified and educational activities are carefully developed to address those needs within the context of practitioner and professional characteristics. Those continuing professional education providers who determine the content of their offerings solely on the basis of financial gain are abandoning their responsibilities as educators. Their activities may attract participants but do little or nothing to enhance professional practice. Fortunately, increased understanding of continuing professional education has led many providers to reexamine the goals and processes associated with their endeavors, resulting in a steady improvement in continuing professional education across the professions and across the nation.

The fact remains that people do not always seek out that which is good for them. Professionals may choose the simplest path, participating in continuing

professional education only if it is required and selecting their educational activities on the basis of convenience rather than content. Such a course of action serves neither the individual practitioner nor the profession, for it contributes little or nothing to enhancement of professional practice. Professionals must be inculcated with expectations and understanding of continuing professional education, a mindset that should be introduced early in their introductory professional education. In a related vein, continuing professional educators must do their part to expand awareness of the value of carefully conceived educational opportunities.

Continuing professional education has the potential to significantly affect professional practice. However, unless educational content is correctly chosen, and development and delivery of educational activities are guided by the goal of achieving maximum impact on practice, this opportunity is bypassed.

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Quality Control in Continuing Professional Education:

Accountability, Effectiveness, and Regulation

by

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Few would doubt the power and influence of the professions in contemporary society (Azzaretto, 1990; Benveniste, 1987; Friedson, 1970; Friedson, 1986; Stern, 1983). Professionals, as a collective body, represent over one-quarter of the workforce, and they have an enormous impact on our health, safety, and quality of life (Cervero, 1988). The proliferation of highly specialized occupations that require advanced, specialized education and training has paralleled significant changes in American society and the American economy. It is no longer possible to engage in many activities without calling upon the services of someone professing a specialized expertise. We have come to rely on highly trained specialists, practicing their occupations with an assumed skill and degree of competence, and accountable in large measure only to their peers.

If our reliance upon professionals is acknowledged, then their qualifications and competence are of great concern. Expertise and autonomy are essential characteristics of a professional (Shanker, 1985). Consequently, the training a professional receives to ensure this expertise is of paramount importance. Education for the professions, primarily at the pre-service level, is the foundation of practice. To help assure ongoing practitioner competence, however, the professional educational system must continue to provide reinforcement throughout a practitioner's working life (Tallman, 1989). Professional education can no longer end at the completion of preservice training. Because of the current knowledge explosion and rapid rate of technological change, professionals who lack the commitment to maintain and enhance their competence, and professions that do not provide such opportunities for their members, will face the threat of obsolescence (Willis & Dubin, 1990).

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Demands for high quality professional services arise from ever more critical consumers and their legal and legislative advocates, from third party payers, and from members of the professions themselves who are concerned with maintaining a positive public image (Jacobs, 1987; Lindsay, Crowe, & Jacobs, 1987). Requiring some form of continuing professional education is one way for professions, consumers, legislatures, and regulators to use in improving professional competence and achieving greater professional accountability. This, in turn, requires some assurance that quality continuing professional education programs are available.

When the quality and effectiveness of education is linked to assuring competent professional performance, this aspect of lifelong learning takes on special significance. Arden Grotelueschen has captured the importance of this link:

> *As professional knowledge increases in complexity and practice circumstances change, professionals are being held accountable for maintaining and developing proficiency in the quality of services they provide. At the same time, they must justify time spent away from their professional duties for participation in CPE. Since justification for participation must come from expected program benefits, participants should be assured of high program quality.* (Grotelueschen, 1986, p. 1)

Quality control and programmatic effectiveness bring together policymakers, educators, and consumers as stakeholders in a system of continuing professional education that Houle (1980) believes will eventually rival the system of preservice professional education programs now in existence, and that others believe is poised to experience tremendous growth and development during the coming decades (Cervero, Azzaretto, and Tallman, 1990).

This paper examines the purposes of continuing professional education from a quality assurance perspective, paying particular attention to the measurable ends of such education. The ways by which continuing professional education may be required of practitioners are then discussed, followed by a similar discussion of methods of quality control in continuing professional education programs. Finally, these three subjects are brought together in a series of recommendations for assuring the effectiveness of continuing professional education.

The Goals of Continuing Professional Education

Continuing professional education helps to provide three types of education outcome to practicing professionals: assistance in maintaining their professional knowledge and skills; preparation for assuming new responsibilities or changing career paths; and a broadening of the practitioner's range of knowledge and skills in order to cope with new developments in the field and the need to achieve flexibility in complex work environments. Each is discussed in turn.

Career Maintenance: Preventing Obsolescence. Career maintenance relates both to preventing professional obsolescence and insuring continued competence, matters of primary interest to both professionals and the public. Samuel Dubin (1971), a noted expert in the field of professional obsolescence, observed 20 years ago that rapid changes were occurring in every technical, scientific, and professional field. To maintain professional status in one's chosen occupation, Dubin said, a person must stay current with new developments or become obsolete. He further observed that updating is a learning process and that knowledge and methods used in the learning process apply to the updating process. In his more recent work on obsolescence, Dubin (1990) calls attention to the fact that knowledge is becoming increasingly complex, "especially [its] interdisciplinary aspects" (p. 9). He goes on to note: "Meanwhile, the public is demanding that professionals be accountable for their actions. The increased complaints and growing number of malpractice suits are symptoms of incompetence and obsolescence" (p. 9).

Continuing professional education is the primary method through which professionals are updated in their specialized knowledge base, which is ever-expanding and changing as a result of the technology and information explosion. Professionals not only need to learn the most current information in their fields but also how to continuously access this information. The ultimate beneficiaries of professionals who choose to participate in this sort of educational maintenance are the consumers, clients, and patients of these practitioners, not to mention their fellow professionals and the public interest.

Career Enhancement: New Knowledge and Skills. Career enhancement allows professionals to grow in responsibility and to undertake new jobs, such as moving from a technical support role to a supervisory role. While continuing professional education has provided assistance to professionals in mastering new developments in their fields and in preparing for in-field advancement, it has often neglected educational activities which help a person prepare for career and life

transitions. Recent writing such as Nowlen's (1988) addresses the larger contexts in which any individual exists and in which professionals practice. Cultural and environmental influences, effects of home and family life, developmental changes, and life crises all impinge upon professionals and their performance. Nowlen argues that not only should continuing professional education take into account this larger, more holistic model of the learner, but it should directly address some of these personal concerns. Quality assurance in continuing professional education should address whether programs in life skills, stress management and leisure, career enhancement, and personal development are available and made part of the comprehensive continuing professional education package provided to practitioners.

These are not ephemeral or dubious subjects. For example, a practitioner who moves to an administrative or supervisory role may require management and interpersonal skills not previously learned, or refresher instruction in such skills. Professionals also need to know how to plan and manage career growth, including such issues as professional incorporation and insurance, additional requirements for advanced or specialized licensure or certification, and the whole process of marketing one's services and planning the career path. Closely related are issues of physical and mental well-being. Mental health and physical well-being are oftentimes neglected by high achievers and are important aspects of competent practice. Helping professionals improve in all of these areas can have positive effects on the quality of professional services (Zeff, 1989).

The Broadening Function I: Knowledge Integration. Extreme specialization tends to promote a certain parochialism of outlook. Our complex society demands problem solving approaches that span professional boundaries and take into account a multiplicity of disciplines. Quality educational programs for professions in the future will be designed to encourage integrative thinking, blending the knowledge and expertise of different fields.

In addition to broadening the knowledge base required for doing the things traditionally associated with a particular profession, such as becoming a more competent surgeon or teacher, many professionals are being required to address subjects that have been ignored in the past or not treated as integral aspects of professional competence. Most professionals today, for example, must consider the broader ethical and moral implications associated with professional practice. Other types of humanistic knowledge and skills, such as mastering foreign languages and sensitivity to cultural differences, are critical to success in many settings in ways that were not a concern a generation ago. And the importance of computer literacy

and proficiency has now reached all professions, requiring new technical skills and procedures.

The Broadening Function II: Collaboration. The complex problems with which professionals deal do not occur in isolation, and this reality usually means that a team of various professionals is at work on any given project or for any given client. Such situations call for workplace flexibility, which refers to the increasing need to use a team approach in problem solving and the concomitant necessity for cooperating professionals to know something about one another's specific functions. Continuing professional education can be an ideal arena for promoting the interprofessional collaboration necessary to function in such a team environment. Once together in the neutrality of a learning environment, professionals realize they have much in common. Cunningham and McLaughlin (1990) observe that interprofessional collaboration may be helpful in

- Making comprehensive assessments of and providing coordinated responses to increasingly intricate human problems;
- Filling the gap in support to individuals caused by the reduced capacity of families and communities to meet individual needs; and
- Developing professional ethical guidelines responsive to contemporary societal concerns (p. 116).

Interprofessional collaboration provides a means for enhancing and improving the quality of service that professionals can provide in this increasingly complicated society. By collaborating across professions, practitioners can comprehensively assess and respond to complex societal problems (Capron, 1988).

Strategies for Assuring Professional Competence

Continuing professional education occurs because there is a demand for it. Professionals and the public perceive a need for such programs. The interest in maintaining and enhancing the special knowledge and skills that professionals possess has resulted in the adoption of a variety of strategies to insure that continuing professional education becomes part of the career path of most practitioners. These strategies take different forms and are described below.

Professional Certification. Perhaps the most common strategy for promoting participation in continuing professional education is certification, the process developed inside each profession to regulate the admission and advancement of its members. Professional certification, unlike licensure or other externally imposed requirements (see below), is a voluntary process regulated by the profession itself. Its main intent is not to restrict entrance into the profession but to advance the competencies of individual practitioners and to enhance the prestige of the profession (Galbraith & Gilley, 1985).

Certification is accomplished by mastering a body of knowledge and set of competencies identified by the profession's own governing body and submitting to a regulatory mechanism set up by the profession to evaluate the proficiency of its practitioners (Galbraith & Gilley, 1986). Certification provides a framework to identify critical competencies, validate them, and place them in performance terms. However, it should not be confused with the accreditation or licensing process. Accreditation is a voluntary process whereby an agency grants recognition to an educational program or institution. Licensing is a mandatory legal process required by a governmental or quasi-governmental regulator in order to protect the public from incompetent practitioners.

Professional certification programs are expanding in their acceptability and popularity. As with any credentialing process, there are advantages and disadvantages, proponents and detractors. Galbraith and Gilley (1986) present a systematic discussion of the certification process as it relates to human resource development and adult education. In it they develop a nine-stage model for a professional certification program with the goal of achieving greater professionalism through training in identified competencies. The most important aspects of their education strategy are that professional certification is a voluntary procedure for assessing competence of practitioners and that it is controlled by the professional association (Galbraith, 1987).

Professional Licensure. States license professionals in order to protect the public from physical and financial harm at the hands of incompetent or unethical practitioners. The theory behind this practice is that professional services are considered too specialized for lay consumers to be expected to be able to distinguish between good and bad practitioners unassisted, yet they cannot depend upon the professionals themselves—competing with one another in the market—to provide unbiased guidance as to who is qualified and who is not. State governments have stepped into this breach and set up procedures for formally recognizing—licensing—persons deemed qualified to practice various professions. Special administrative

agencies or boards are usually delegated the task of interpreting and implementing licensure laws (Berry, 1986; Gross, 1984; Schneider, 1987).

Licensing boards possess important administrative and regulatory responsibilities. They establish and monitor entrance requirements for new practitioners; they handle complaints from consumers; and they decide if and what type of disciplinary action will be taken against professionals who violate board regulations. Across the country, over 800 different occupations are regulated by state laws. Some states regulate a wide variety of occupations; for example, California has 29 boards, covering virtually everything from physicians to acupuncturists. Other states—for example, Wyoming—limit their licensing activities to the major professions, such as architects, pharmacists, physicians, and dentists (Schneider, 1987; Shimberg, 1982).

Licensing is coming under sharp attack. Opponents argue that while more licensing boards now include representatives of the public, many boards' interests are nearly identical to those of the people they regulate. Opponents also claim that by setting and preserving rigid educational and other entry requirements, there is often an artificial scarcity of trained people, which they say leads to rising costs and restricts consumer access. Additionally, there are questions of accountability when the licensing board's makeup continues to be dominated by professionals (Young, 1987).

Until recently, the states alone have been responsible for implementing the regulation of professions and occupations. Now, however, the federal government seems to be increasing its involvement in activities that traditionally and constitutionally belonged to the states. Schmitt (1989) attributes the increasing role of the federal government in licensing and regulation to the "apparent perception that a regulation vacuum exists, whether due to insufficient resources, a lack of interstate cooperation, or a lack of desire on the part of the states to act" (p. 33). One important federal initiative is the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) which eventually will house information on health-related licensees against whom malpractice judgments or discipline have been imposed. More than 30 health professions are included in the mandate, which affects not only state licensing boards, but also hospitals, state and national professional associations, insurance companies, and federal employers.

Critics contend also that by concentrating on educational and examination criteria as the measures of competence rather than on consumer satisfaction and performance, licensing fails in its primary mission, the delivery of high quality

services. Nonetheless, a growing number of occupational groups are asking state legislatures to make them subject to licensure (Shannon & Dietz, 1989). Proponents, on the other hand, insist that society benefits from state regulation of occupations. The issue centers on who is most likely to be protected, the public or the licensed profession, and at what social cost.

The increased cost and fragmentation of health care services highlight licensing problems. Some experts maintain that there is a need to reduce the anti-competitive and exclusionary behavior fostered by licensing (Shannon & Dietz, 1989; Young, 1987). The growing number of malpractice suits, for example, has focused on the need to tighten accountability which, in turn, ultimately contributes to the overall quality of care.

However, traditional and newly established professions have been extremely reluctant to give up any of the hard-won prerogatives obtained through licensure. Licensed groups tend to guard their turf jealously. This situation is further complicated by rapidly changing technologies and techniques within established occupational roles that make some tasks obsolete and create new ones—in some cases entirely new occupations. For example, advances in medical technology have led to new health care roles and occupations and a corresponding rise in the number of provider groups seeking licensure or the right to expand their scope of practice. The role and function of inhalation therapists, nuclear medical technologists, and physician assistants, for example, are fairly new (Shimberg, 1982). As their memberships continue to grow, many groups want the enhanced status as well as legal and economic benefits of licensure, including eligibility to receive third-party insurance payments.

Many states are improving their regulatory efforts despite increasing federal involvement. Two examples are sunrise and sunset reviews to ensure that only those professions that really require licensure are licensed and states working more closely with one another to reduce the interstate mobility of incompetent and unethical licensees. A need exists for the federal government to expand its role in data collection and dissemination to the states on professional malpractice, unethical conduct, and disciplinary actions. Working cooperatively with the Council of State Governments National Clearinghouse on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR), the national data bank should include not only health but other professions as well.

Professional Competency Review. Related to the issue of licensing, or recognizing, professional status is the issue of assuring licensed professionals'

continued competency. There is an unmistakable national trend toward finding effective ways to monitor and assess the performance of practitioners after licensure. The question is, how do the professional organizations and licensing boards determine that such continued competency exists? Relicensure is not the whole answer, for it may amount only to paying an application fee for a new permit to practice. State licensing officials increasingly believe that some form of skill maintenance should be demonstrated for license renewal:

> *Regulatory agencies and licensing boards are revising their thinking from granting a lifetime carte blanche to practice to seeking some assurance that the public is receiving competent, safe care from responsible licensees. At the same time, the health professional, as part of the scientific community, is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and skill to help maintain the health of the public. The quality check that continued competency assurance provides is not at all incompatible with that professional goal.* (Liddle & Dixon, p. 9)

During the 1960s there was a growing awareness that continuing professional education could help to promote quality assurance if made part of the relicensure process. Continuing professional education was also viewed as a measure that could help to ensure against professional obsolescence, and thus was attractive to some professional organizations. In consequence, many professional associations began to require continuing education for recertification purposes or strongly urged their membership to participate voluntarily. However, it became apparent that while many professionals could be motivated to continue learning throughout their careers, every profession would have some members not motivated to do so. Those professionals choosing not to participate voluntarily in educational activities to maintain competence in their field endangered the public and became a source of embarrassment to their profession (Queeney, 1984).

A case in point is the accounting profession. Long considered to possess rigorous standards for those entering the field, it has come under fire recently for not taking a more active and interventionary role in preventing clients' businesses failures. Some accounting firms have been sued by their clients, and the savings and loan crisis has even been attributed, in part, to the failure of audits to uncover signs of trouble. Bernard Blum, chairman of the Connecticut State Board of Accountancy, the state licensing agency for public accountants, has said that if the accounting profession does not police itself, Congress will impose national rules (McCarthy, 1990). Congressional warnings and a desire to improve the profession have led to the passage of laws in 19 states requiring, as a condition for license

renewal, that members of public accounting firms undergo quality reviews by their fellow accountants.

The purpose of such laws is education, not punishment. In the case of Connecticut, the statutory competency review is designed so that firms will be advised of areas where they are not meeting the latest professional standards. These firms will then be asked to take action. For instance, some employees may be asked to enroll in courses which in effect supplement a Connecticut state law already requiring that public accountants take a minimum of 40 hours of course work a year (Connecticut General Statutes, 1989, 20.280-20.281).

Quality reviews have emerged as another strategy intended to protect the public and improve professional performance. By their nature, most quality review programs are directly linked to continuing professional education programs, and they indicate how regulatory bodies have begun to move away from focusing on continuing learning as a voluntary activity and toward using it as a mechanism for assuring quality control (Stark, Lowther, & Hagerty, 1986, p. 69).

Mandatory Continuing Professional Education. Mandatory continuing professional education is a concept stimulated by the belief that all professionals are not equally conscientious in keeping up with their fields. A number of states have enacted mandatory continuing education requirements for specified professions, and several professional associations and independent certifying bodies with regulatory authority have implemented educational requirements of their own amounting to the same thing (Queeney, Smutz, & Shuman, 1990). While these mandated programs are usually tied to relicensure regulations, the purpose of mandatory continuing education is not merely to satisfy credentialing requirements. It is also intended to address issues such as preventing obsolescence, managing career development, and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

Louis Phillips has systematically tracked the development and characteristics of mandatory continuing education requirements among 16 occupations in all 50 states. He believes that such requirements are focusing attention on the issue of continued competence at the point of relicensure. This, according to Phillips, will force states to make relicensure a meaningful process (Phillips, 1987).

A recent study by the Mandatory Continuing Education Study Committee, New York State Board for Public Accountancy (1990), presented a systematic and comprehensive analysis of participation in continuing education for public accountants in that state. It concluded with a clear endorsement for required

participation in continuing education activities: "as a condition of reregistration" (p. 2).

However, not all agree that mandatory continuing professional education should be used as a strategy to assure competence. Queeney, Smutz, and Shuman (1990) examined the issue of continuing education requirements within a voluntary certification program for school counselors. In their discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of mandatory continuing professional education, they note: "Few if any people on either side of the mandatory continuing education issue would contend that all or even a majority of professionals will pursue continuing professional education only if it is mandated, and only in the amounts required" (p. 12). Another critic of mandatory continuing professional education, John Ohliger (1981) contends: "Mandatory education is a misnomer. We can dangle jobs and training like a carrot to entreat participants, but we cannot mandate learning, and all the aphorisms in the world are not going to change that fact" (p. 25).

Two conclusions emerge from the debate on mandatory continuing education. First, licensing boards will continue to use mandatory continuing professional education as a strategy to protect the public and ensure a minimum level of participation in knowledge and skills maintenance for purposes of relicensure. Second, the New York State study notwithstanding, there seems to be inconclusive evidence that mandatory continuing professional education can be linked positively to improved performance. Certainly, a need exists to further research this educational strategy, especially its capacity to provide greater accountability for marginal to incompetent professionals and to provide consumers with protection against providers who fail to keep up to date.

Elements of Good Competency Assurance Programs

Competency assurance strategies, to be successful, must develop and employ effective implementation methods. While the technical requirements for practitioner competence will be specific to the particular profession addressed, there are two elements which research and practice have found to be generic to all good competency assurance programs. These are: focusing the elements of the program on the actual context in which the professional works; and involving the individual professionals as well as their organizations and regulatory bodies in the process of assessing deficiencies and identifying needs.

Focusing on Context. Everyone does what they do in an environment that affects the way they do it. This truism has led to widespread acceptance of the idea that professional competence must encompass the context of practice, in addition to technical knowledge and skills, in order to determine professional strengths, weaknesses, needs, and deficiencies. Competency assurance programs which focus on the context of practice emphasize a definition of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent practice and a system for self-assessment to help the individual practitioner evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses. As skill or practice deficiencies are identified, continuing education programs will then be custom designed to target and correct them. Thus, continued competency begins with a definition, accepted by the members, of what constitutes a minimum level of competence. An assessment instrument is then developed and administered to a professional member. The results of the practice analysis could lead to a professional member voluntarily participating in continuing professional education to enhance any skill deficiency. Or, if there are critical practice skills involved and a reluctance to voluntarily participate, then mandatory education might be used.

The Pennsylvania State University, in its work with the pharmacy profession, pioneered the *Practice Audit Model*, a design for competency assurance which assesses practitioner competence within a practice setting. According to Queeney and Smutz (1990), continuing professional education programs using this approach would assist practitioners in maintaining competencies through

- Identification of professional practitioners' learning needs through performance assessment;
- Design of practice-oriented programs based on identified needs; and
- Collaboration between educational institutions and professional organizations with regard to program development and delivery (p. 166).

The strength of the Practice Audit Model is that it is based on assessment center technology—it uses practitioner groups to provide the framework for identifying professionals' performance deficiencies and developing and delivering programs to address them.

Involving Practitioners in Assessment. Because context can vary depending on where an individual professional works and because one of the goals of assuring

competence is the self-development of the individual professional, it is important to enlist practitioners as active participants in their own process of improvement. This means using educational strategies such as peer reviews, self-directed assessments, and self-managed programs of learning.

Peer reviews in competency assurance programs are frequently called quality reviews. In them, the actual performance of the individual scheduled for review is measured against identified standards or principles of good practice by a selected group of professional colleagues. These colleagues may be randomly selected from among members of the profession in good standing, or the reviewers may be a specially selected group of examiners. After a process which usually includes interviewing the examinee and observing him or her at work, the peer reviewers make suggestions and formal recommendations. The suggestions address areas of practice where improvement is needed and may include educational interventions. Formal recommendations refer to the question of whether the examinee is to be recommended for recertification or relicensure (if the peer reviewers possess that authority) or if mandatory self-improvement is indicated.

Self-assessments consist of both practice evaluations and inventories of strengths, weaknesses, goals, and needs. They are conducted by the individual practitioners themselves at intervals over the career and may be voluntary or mandatory. Like peer reviews, self-assessments can result in identifying learning needs and recommendations for pursuing continuing professional education.

One self-assessment strategy that has met with practical success is *Self-Managed Professional Development*, designed by the same Penn State team that developed the Practice Audit Model (Smutz and Queeney, 1990). It is a systematic strategy utilizing multiple educational resources and expert advisors to guide and assist the professional in a comprehensive self-learning program. Participants focus on professional development by determining the types of learning activities that they should undertake, based on a comprehensive evaluation of their wants, needs, and goals. They then design a program of self-improvement activities with the assistance of expert advisors.

Summary. Continuing professional education has achieved recognition as *a* means, if not *the* means, of maintaining professional competence and is a key element of every contemporary quality assurance strategy. Thus, assuring continued competency in the professions challenges educators to develop creative and innovative educational strategies. As regulatory agencies and professional associations increasingly turn to educational strategies, whether voluntary or

mandatory, to address continued competence, the result is that greater importance is placed on the quality of the educational program and the effectiveness of the provider of the educational experience.

Assuring High Quality: Considerations and Obstacles

Even as professionals are increasingly seeking, or being required to undertake, continuing professional education, they must justify time spent away from their organizations and private practices for participation in such education. Since justification for participation must come from expected program benefits, participants should be assured of high program quality (Grotelueschen, 1986). Systematically evaluating the worth and relevance of a program and determining the reputation and integrity of the program provider are essential elements in educational accountability. Assessing and meeting client and consumer expectations are no less important when the service and product are professional education. Thus, quality assurance in continuing education for the professionals is a fundamental expectation that must be responsibly addressed by continuing professional educators and the providers of educational programs.

Despite its importance, continuing professional education is in an anarchic position that limits the ability of anyone to monitor its quality and effectiveness. The state of the field is characterized by

- A multiplicity of educational providers, each claiming its legitimate right to assist the practitioner in remaining competent;
- Various degrees of unmet needs among professions and professionals;
- Lack of educational standards that define quality of teaching and quality of educational programs;
- Wide divergence among professional groups as to what their members need to know in order to maintain their competence;
- Dissension as to who should pay for continuing professional education; and

- Controversies regarding who should decide on the level of participation, what should count as continuing education, and what should be the frequency of professional participation (Azzaretto, 1990).

These problems reflect a system of continuing professional education that can be described as

> *often elementary, sporadic, and reactive. Educators respond to the learning needs of professionals in a haphazard manner, without integrating the education into an overall scheme of lifelong learning. Nor do educators move out of their own professional domains to learn about professional education in other fields* (Cervero, Azzaretto, and Tallman, 1990, p. 2).

In light of these criticisms of current systems in continuing professional education, Leonard Freedman (1987), in his award-winning book, *Quality in Continuing Education*, provides a rationale for the lack of more concentrated efforts regarding quality assurance. Speaking of continuing higher education in general, Freedman indicates that the reasons for the lack of some progress in quality assurance are

- The difficulty of obtaining agreement on a standard of quality applicable across an enormously diverse field;
- Intrinsic methodological obstacles to defining and measuring educational quality;
- The pressure of the marketplace;
- The concern that quality is a code word for elitism; and
- Defensiveness in the face of criticism from the academic establishment.

In addition, as Houle (1980) and Cervero (1988) have noted, there are important similarities and differences among the professional fields regarding quality assurance in educational programs.

Assuring High Quality: Market Influences

The providers of continuing professional education, first categorized by Houle (1980), are generally identified as belonging to one of the four following types:

1. Universities and professional schools;

2. Professional associations;

3. Employers; and

4. Independent providers.

The different types of providers, while important, are only part of the complexity of the picture. As Tallman (1989) has noted, continuing professional education is strongly segmented by professional affiliation rather than by function. For instance, there are continuing medical educators, continuing legal educators, continuing judicial educators, etc., oftentimes due to the fact that these individuals come from within the ranks of the profession itself. Moreover, each provider has its own distinctive strengths and quality standards in developing educational programs for professionals. Thus, not only are continuing professional education providers differentiated by type but also by the professions which they serve. Since different types of providers and different professions are regulated by different bodies—or not at all—the problems of developing consistent and measurable standards are considerable. A market thus fragmented and segmented is difficult to serve effectively, cannot realize much economy or efficiency, and presents problems of adequate quality control and regulation.

In addition to the complexity of the provider market, there is also the fact that the consequences of such complexity are poor cooperation among providers—even to the same profession—and poor integration of such services by consumers. The rapid growth and development of continuing professional education, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, provided individual practitioners too many choices in meeting their educational needs. Providers have been responsive to the educational needs of their constituencies, within the framework of their own organizational or institutional goals (Cervero & Young, 1986). This segmented approach, however, has been criticized for its lack of integration and cooperation among providers (Cervero, 1988). Houle has noted that

Many people are growing irritated by what seems to be a mindless proliferation of courses and conferences, each of which may be valuable but which are not collectively undergirded by any unifying conception of how education can be used in a mature, complex and continuing way to achieve excellence of service throughout the lifespan (Houle, 1980).

Others have likewise advocated for continuing professional education to be organized in a more systematic and cohesive manner to realize fully its aims for the learner (Hohmann, 1985; Nowlen, 1988). Why does segmentation and fragmentation characterize the field when the logic of experts calls for integration and systematic educational programming?

The answers are power and money. Intense competition exists among providers. Part of the reason is money: the normal incentives of a lucrative market operate to a great extent. But the regulated character of professions also plays a role, as does the regulated character of education. A regulated environment means that providers of different types compete for recognition—for "licensure" as providers—as well as for the opportunity to sell their services. Stern (1983) writes, "...hordes of potential adult students, most of them well enough off to pay substantial fees, and with many of their fees paid by employers or government units, have become the object of eager attention by continuing education providers" (p. 5). Organizations which traditionally provided education saw new providers entering the market to satisfy the increased demand. Debate as to who ought to function as the primary provider arose. Competition quickened as more and more money was made available for continuing professional education. Issues concerning programmatic boundaries and "turf" were raised. Providers were forced to take each other into account, by competing directly, by cooperating with one another, or by instituting procedures which regulated the provision of education programs to their "own" constituencies (Azzaretto, 1987, 1990).

A competitive marketplace among continuing professional education providers affects the quality of educational programs in several ways. Each provider has distinctive strengths and resources upon which to draw in serving the educational needs of professionals. Competition generally leads to greater organizational and management efficiencies. However, Freedman (1987) notes that, especially in university continuing education programs, as the pressure of the budget and bottom-line mentality takes over, academic quality is adversely affected. For instance, decisions on course offerings are likely to be affected more by profit potential than they are by need or social relevance. This could lead to educators holding down the

number of programs considered academically desirable but financially questionable. In an expanding market in which substantial revenue may be generated, influence is exerted, and institutional prestige is at stake, providers of continuing education may inevitably be forced to make some compromises in educational quality. Moreover, some educational providers see the potential for profit in continuing professional education and enter the marketplace with an eye more toward earning than educating.

A need exists to examine the competitive marketplace of continuing professional education and its effects on program quality. Such studies should also examine whether and how cooperation among providers and consumers can affect continuing professional education quality and cost. It is probable that providers will increasingly discover advantages in working cooperatively. Tallman (1989) describes the interorganizational context of continuing professional education and analyzes the conditions which could lead to provider interdependence and cooperation. A strategy of cooperation and collaboration among providers may become more important as the costs associated with quality programs increase and it becomes more difficult for professionals to pay for continuing professional education [see the paper by Ronald M. Cervero in this volume]. It is also possible that, in the future, continuing professional education will benefit from public or private funding support, through grants or other means. Such support mechanisms could encourage provider and consumer organizations to work cooperatively and to provide quality educational programs, by means of financial incentives.

Assuring High Quality: The Importance of Competent Educators

Continuing professional education itself is emerging as a separate professional field of practice. Its origins can be traced to adult and continuing education and to continuing education within individual professional fields. Lately, human resource development professionals in government and business and industry have also identified with the body of theory and research that has come to define continuing professional education. Continuing professional education is thus increasingly differentiated from preprofessional education, human resource development, and adult and continuing education and has come to be defined as a separate professional field (Cervero, 1988). Assuring that the professionals who deliver continuing professional education—the instructors, evaluators, and advisors—are competent to do so is increasingly important and is often distinct from the problem of assuring the overall quality of provider organizations.

The segmentation and fragmentation of the provider universe, not to mention the consumer professions, complicates the process of assuring the quality of provider personnel. There are strengths in this diversity, among them being the different perspectives and the richness each profession brings to the development of its own continuing education practice. Yet, these same strengths may also be viewed as weaknesses. The professions themselves are very different, and the way continuing professional education is organized in each profession differs. Furthermore, continuing professional education practice is influenced as much by the context of professional practice and organization in a given field as it is by the commonalities of the educational process. Continuing judicial educators or continuing medical educators, for example, are likely to identify with the culture of their particular practice setting and the educational approaches consistent with its culture, rather than with the interests they share as educators.

In his book *Effective Continuing Education for Professionals*, Cervero (1988) advocates for continuing professional education as a separate and distinct field of practice. According to Cervero, the bond that unites educators from the many diverse professional contexts is the goal of providing quality educational programs that assure competent practice and enhance performance. This bond becomes the basis for the unique practice of continuing education for the professions. Within the professions, the traditional view has been that the continuing education function must be directed by its own members. Cervero asserts that an emerging view is that individuals trained in the field of continuing education have the most appropriate background for this function. Addressing specifically the knowledge base of continuing professional education as a professional field of practice, Cervero notes:

> *To build the strongest conceptual base for practice, it is important to blend what we know about adult education and learning, human resource development, the structure and content of preservice preparation, and the context of professional practice.* (Cervero, 1988, p. 17)

Two recent developments provide interesting illustrations of continuing professional education's emergence as a unique practice field. Both consisted of major grants to university-based continuing education programs for the express purpose of developing and implementing continuing professional education services and the applied research to support such services. These grants, given by the Kellogg Foundation to the University of Georgia and the Pennsylvania State University, explicitly recognized continuing professional education as an educational

activity distinct from other forms of continuing education, one worthy of attention and support in its own right.

The first Kellogg Foundation grant was to the University of Georgia in 1984. A component of that grant provided seed money to establish a "Council for the Improvement of Continuing Education for the Professions." Approximately 15 organizations coalesced around a mission statement for the Council: To provide leadership for interprofessional collaboration to support and enhance continuing education for the professions in Georgia. Goals developed in support of the mission included

- Identifying and proposing solutions to problems that cut across professional lines;
- Providing communication and networking opportunities;
- Sharing useful and innovative ideas and programs in continuing professional education;
- Investigating and promoting continuing professional education as it affects performance; and
- Upgrading the competencies of Georgia's leaders in the provision of continuing education to the professions.

The experiment to bring together education representatives from different professions met with varying degrees of success. However, the success of this Council or other similar boundary-spanning organizations depends on whether educators view themselves as competitors serving dissimilar constituencies or whether they can identify the ways and means to share with one another the techniques and practice of continuing professional education which benefits them in their work with their respective professional associations.

A second Kellogg Foundation grant partially funded a multi-year continuing professional education study effort under the guidance and support of The Pennsylvania State University. Seven focus groups began their work at the conclusion of a 1986 National Conference on Continuing Professional Education and presented their reports at a fall, 1990 National Meeting of Continuing Professional Education Groups (1990). One focus group in particular addressed the question: "What kind of educators do professionals need?" from the learner's

angle. They developed what members termed a Competency Matrix Model which projected five competencies continuing professional educators need to educate tomorrow's professionals and which members hoped could frame a curriculum designed to train and certify continuing professional educators. Focus group members identified the knowledge, skills, and qualifications needed for the community of continuing professional educators in the following competency areas:

1. Researcher/Theoretician;
2. Administrator/Manager;
3. Instructor/Facilitator;
4. Program Developer/Learning Consultant; and
5. Needs assessor/Evaluator.

The focus group concluded that the professional practice of continuing professional education should emphasize that the way in which programs are conceptualized, designed, and delivered is equally as important as the content being taught. Continuing professional educators of the future could best serve their professional constituencies by mastering the educational process; in other words, designing, developing, and delivering quality educational programs that can lead to effective performance by professionals.

Developing Standards for Providers

At present, no uniform standard exists to guide the professional practice of continuing professional education in the area of quality control. Some fairly widely recognized sets of criteria for guiding provider behavior exist, such as the Council on the Continuing Education Unit's (CCEU) report entitled *Principles of Good Practice in Continuing Education* (CCEU, 1984). This statement was the result of a 3-year cooperative project by a group of noncredit continuing education providers. It, in turn, was based on a background study (House, 1983) that revealed that 93% of respondents to a survey of noncredit providers believed that written standards aimed at enhancing quality assurance should exist. The CCEU report offers 18 general principles and 70 "elements of good practice" in the areas of learning needs, learning outcomes, learning experiences, assessment of learning outcomes, and administration.

Some authorities, such as Grover Andrews (1980), believe that "we do need to develop, somehow, a single national system of either certification or accreditation . . . for continuing education" (p. 128). However, others, such as Mezirow (1984) assert that establishing uniform principles for the field is a misguided aim which would "reduce continuing education to a training ground for production and consumption and they reduce adult education to a technology divorced from any responsibility for social change and serving to maintain the status quo" (p. 28).

While there is some evidence that noncredit, noninstitutionally based providers are not opposed to the idea of organized standards in continuing professional education, the idea of a set of standards to help distinguish between good and poor quality programs has met with resistance among college and university-based providers. Evidence of this resistance surfaced when the National University Continuing Education Association (NUCEA), the largest umbrella organization of institutionally based providers, failed to reach a consensus on informal guidelines for determining program quality. The rejected draft report, "Guidelines for Assessment and Evaluation of Instructional Programs of Continuing Education," had been the product of a multi-year effort to develop acceptable program assessment standards. Such divergence of interest between institutional and noninstitutional providers raises the daunting prospect that no one single set of standards can adequately serve a field as diverse as adult education.

Some professional associations have established quality control standards and procedures of their own. They exercise quality control through accrediting bodies, such as education committees, that set standards for acceptable continuing education programs for their memberships; recognize providers who comply with their standards; and authorize members to satisfy their continuing educational needs and requirements through these recognized programs.

A good example of a quality assurance model is that of the American Council on Pharmaceutical Education (ACPE). The ACPE does not provide education but rather accredits those organizations which do provide programs. Educational standards are contained in the ACPE *Criteria for Quality* and address a broad range of criteria, such as organizational structure, the qualifications and continuing professional development activities of the educational administrator, program promotion and recordkeeping, program delivery methods, facilities, education testing, and program evaluation (Kenny, 1986). Organizations which demonstrate their capability to comply with the ACPE quality standards are designated as ACPE Approved Providers and as a result achieve nationwide acceptance of their programs by both pharmacists and licensure boards. According to ACPE Associate Executive

Director Robert Kenny (1986), there were 250 ACPE Approved Providers as of 1985, including colleges and schools of pharmacy, professional associations and societies, pharmaceutical manufacturers, publishers, hospitals, government agencies, and private educational corporations.

The field of continuing professional education is diverse, and a lack of a uniform standards reflects the influence of multiple organizational providers, each applying its own definition and standard of quality control. However, the similarities involved with quality continuing professional education provide a compelling rationale to further develop continuing professional education as a profession and establish principles or standards of practice. Whatever their base of operation, educators of professionals have much to learn from each other about program design, instructional methods, program evaluation and impact, and about quality.

Finance and Quality

From the provider's perspective, continuing education for the professions which takes place outside of organizations has been expected to pay for itself or even be profitable. Thus, the current system of financing continuing professional education is borne by participants' registration fees and by organizations that sponsor the education and development of professionals. Little or no public funding is involved, except when government agencies sponsor the further education of their own employees.

Fees are the primary funding mechanism for noncredit continuing professional education. Though some funding exists for public service and extension activities at land-grant universities, by and large "there is little funding for the considerable proportion of continuing higher education that falls outside the degree framework." (Freedman, 1987, p. 7). The Kellogg Foundation has been a generous supporter of continuing education programs and facilities. In the past, a special emphasis of the Foundation was on funding programs of interprofessional collaboration and those that link education to improved professional performance. But, funding in continuing higher education in noncredit programs is fee driven, and because of this, large continuing professional education needs go unmet.

Continuing education and work-force training have become increasingly important for American corporations as well. Knowledge of technology, markets, and administration has always been essential to business success. "Today's

corporate leadership," according to Hofstader and Munger (1990), "is probably more concerned with its ability to respond to change—and thus is more concerned with maintaining a highly skilled and informed work force—than at any previous time in history" (p. 80). In their thorough account of corporate continuing education, Hofstader and Munger estimate that employers spent $30 billion yearly on formal courses and, when also considering informal training as part of the organizational and employee development process, corporations generally average 2 to 5 percent of their total income on education and training (p. 83). Similar studies by Gerber (1987) and Carnevale (1986) attest to the tremendous resources targeted to education in the workplace.

Despite this seemingly considerable current investment, it is not enough; the demand for continuing professional education is expected to increase. The American Society for Training and Development (1990) cites new research which shows that about 42 percent of the workforce will need additional training over the next decade to stay qualified for their changing jobs—and that they won't get such training if present trends continue. The additional learning needed would increase the $30 billion annual training by 50 percent. The ASTD report cited, *Train America's Workforce*, concludes by calling for a 3-year effort to address the problem of how to increase the amount and quality of training provided workers.

Susan Kinsey (1990), Associate Dean of the American University of Paris, provides a global perspective to the issue of financing continuing professional education. She maintains that continuing professional education is probably the main growth sector in higher education in the European Community member nations. And, though policies toward continuing professional education vary from country to country, she indicates that European Community workers have fairly easy access to some form of it (depending on the country), access that is subsidized by either the government, the local unions, or the employers themselves. She does note, however, one important difference when comparing U.S. and European versions of CPE. The self-financing, income-generating US approach to financing CPE creates a short-term response to market demands at the expense of long-term critical programs and the exploration of their wider social and economic effects.

European nations and Japan assume as their national responsibility the provision of assistance to workers who, through no fault of their own, need additional training to maintain or enhance their knowledge and skills to remain effective participants in the workforce. In the United States, however, this responsibility remains largely with individuals, local or state governments, or the private sector. With the exception of the foreign service and national defense, "we

have no national policy which recognizes the need to invest in human resource development in order to strengthen the employability and productivity of its workforce" (Grotelueschen, 1990, p. 65).

In fact, *Workforce Development Strategies* (1990), a newsletter for the National Network for Education, Training and Economic Development (NNETED), suggests we are moving in the direction of a national workforce policy. In the same issue of the NNETED newsletter, a review is presented on the U.S. Congress's Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) report entitled *Worker Training: Competing in the New International Economy*. The report examines employee training options the federal government should consider to enhance its competitive global position. The OTA report outlines options that could form a basis for a national policy in four areas:

- Reducing Barriers to Company Training;
- Upgrading Individual Workers' Skills;
- Providing Training and Technology Assistance; and
- Enhancing the Quality and Effectiveness of Training.

The need for a national policy, according to *Workforce Development Strategies* (NNETED, 1991), stems from an emerging new world economic and political order, new technologies and accompanying management theories, demographics, and a recent history of neglect of our educational infrastructure. The OTA report went on to describe eight public policy strategies that could help improve the quality of continuing professional education, and its availability, by addressing the need to set standards and stabilize the financing of such programs. They include:

Capitation to professional schools. A grant system could be developed, depending on the human resource need and education priority, under which professional schools would become eligible for federal grant assistance in accord with their involvement and success in providing continuing professional education to its professional community.

Tax incentives for individuals. The members of specially targeted professional groups could receive preferential federal business income

tax incentives for their participation in continuing professional education.

Tax incentives for corporations. Corporations employing significant numbers of professionals could receive business tax incentives for providing inservice continuing professional education opportunities for their professional employees.

Federal reimbursement program premiums. A policy offering premium payment on federal reimbursement programs could be offered where, for example, Medicare reimbursement payments might be higher for institutions with established and accredited continuing professional education programs.

Malpractice insurance premium rebates. Companies supporting professional participation in continuing professional education, including practitioner partnerships, could become eligible for preferential rates by companies offering professional malpractice insurance.

Preferred loan opportunities. A program could be established to give preferential loan rates to professionals who demonstrate specified participation in continuing professional education.

Nationally mandated programs. National participation in continuing professional education could be mandated by an agreement between the states and the federal government that whenever a two-thirds majority of the states mandates continuing professional education participation for a given profession, a federal law shall be passed making an agreed-upon minimum number of instructional hours a federal requirement for all practitioners in that profession.

National standards for continuing professional education. A set of national standards for continuing professional education could be established, and all of the previous policy recommendations be restructured and incorporated into such standards in order to promote participation in high quality programs with national recognition and support.

In addition, OTA suggested three potential sources of revenues for accomplishing the above policy objectives:

> **A professional service tax,** consisting of a federal sales tax on professional services, the revenues from which would be reinvested in the development of professional human resources;
>
> **An employee benefits tax,** which would be levied on the benefits of employees above a prescribed income level and the revenues from which would be reinvested to support continuing professional education; and
>
> **A national training payroll levy,** which would give employers a choice between spending a specified percentage of their payroll (say 1 percent) on particular types of training, or contributing that percentage to a national fund for training initiatives.

Freedman believes that strong public policy arguments can be made for subsidizing continuing education:

> *Its career programs have made an important contribution to state and national economic growth, and the potential is still larger. Continuing education for the health science professions improves the quality of health care. Through public service programs, continuing education can address state and local community problems* (Freedman, 1987, p. 7).

He goes on to observe, however, that as the costs of higher education escalate, the tendency for both state and federal governments is to direct resources to the education of the young. Older adults will continue to be required to pay for most or all of their further education. This may not be in our best long-term interest.

The question of who derives the benefits and who pays the cost is fundamental to a national policy initiative in developing our professional resources. At the very least, a role for the federal government is to serve as a repository of vital information on CPE. Presently, no national repository of statistics exists that describes the number of providers, the number of participants, or the amount of money spent for continuing professional education (Cervero, 1988; Stern, 1983). Furthermore, a clear need exists for the federal government to assert a leadership

role in clarifying the benefits, beneficiaries, and costs associated with workforce training in general, and specifically, the public interest which could be served in providing incentives to professionals and organizations that are committed to a strategy of lifelong learning.

Conclusion

While continuing education programs for the professions cannot guarantee enhanced professional performance, consumers of these educational programs should be guaranteed that

- Persons responsible for the learning activities are qualified;
- Educational programs are designed to meet client needs and that there is integrity to the learning interventions used in meeting these needs;
- There is an effort by the continuing professional education provider to link together the planning, designing, teaching, learning, performing process into a developmentally integrated experience;
- When education is used as a means by which to achieve greater professional accountability, then educators of professionals must likewise be held accountable to consumers for the educational products they deliver; and
- There is an ethical foundation for responsible continuing professional education practice.

Those in continuing education responsible for guiding the growth and development of professionals face the unique challenge of assisting professionals with maintaining their competency through quality educational programs. They must be knowledgeable about the particular context of the profession and its approach to the education and development of its members. An equally important factor, however, is that continuing professional educators must be prepared for the new breed of learner—the self-directed adult whose primary purpose is to effectively apply new learning to the workplace (Azzaretto, 1984). This requires the continuing

professional educator to be skillful in planning for the most effective learning experience possible.

The nature of professional education is far different now than it was 10 years ago, and it will be significantly different in another decade. It used to be sufficient for professionals to "punch their academic ticket" for passage into a field of practice and then periodically (and casually) update themselves as time, circumstances, and desire permitted. However, technological advances, the exponential growth of knowledge, concern for malpractice and professional liability, and societal demands for greater professional competence and accountability have contributed to a compelling need to reexamine continuing professional education.

Significant questions that suggest further policy research remain. They include:

- What are the appropriate roles for government, professional associations, universities, practicing professionals, and clients in mandating, sponsoring, providing, evaluating, and funding continuing professional education?

- What is the appropriate role for clients and consumers in ensuring the quality of continuing professional education?

- Is preparation for continuing professional education practice more a function of experience and training in the professional field, or are those prepared in adult and continuing education more suitable to serve professional constituencies in planning and developing lifelong learning activities?

- As knowledge becomes more highly specialized, what is the obligation of the continuing professional education practitioner to facilitate interprofessional and interorganizational collaboration to help solve societal problems that span many different professional areas?

Future systems of continuing professional education will be shaped by the answers to these questions. If we consider the "state" of continuing professional education to be similar to what pre-service education was at the turn of the century, then advocates for a strategy for lifelong learning have enormous potential to shape future concepts of professional competence and performance. By asserting their

leadership, continuing professional education practitioners may translate the idea of lifelong learning from theory to reality.

Toward this end, continuing professional educators will assume new responsibilities. Instead of simply delivering programs, they will manage the learning, change, and development process. The design and planning of the educational program are intervention tools used by continuing professional educators to accomplish this purpose. The ability to plan, design, and implement educational interventions to maximize participant learning and the professional's effective application of knowledge are the essence of this consultation approach (Azzaretto, 1986). The role of the traditional educator shifts to that of a facilitator of the learning process—removing obstacles, creating a conducive climate, artfully applying intervention methodologies, processing effective relationships and conflict, and ultimately giving the learner every opportunity to convert experience, knowledge, and learning into effective action. In addition to emphasizing quality programs, the continuing professional educator's effectiveness will be measured by the individual and client group's capacity for learning. Thus, responsive and responsible CPE in the future should equip the professional to develop linkages between thought and action and knowledge and behavior.

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Cooperation and Collaboration in the Field of Continuing Professional Education

by

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With a bit of hindsight, we can claim that the 1980s marked the emergence of continuing professional education as a distinct area of practice and study. Beginning with the publication of Cyril Houle's landmark study *Continuing Learning in the Professions* (1980), the decade witnessed a stream of books, national conferences, and high level proposals in many professions seeking to improve the ways that continuing education is currently conceptualized, organized, and delivered. The issue of collaboration among providers of continuing education is a crucial part of nearly all of these discussions.

This chapter has three major parts. First, collaboration is defined and placed within a typology of interorganizational relationships that are used to develop continuing education programs. Second, the literature is reviewed regarding the extent to which collaborative relationships are formed and what arguments are used to promote them. Third, a framework is outlined that can be used to understand the conditions under which interorganizational relationships are established.

A Typology of Interorganizational Relationships

One of the problems in discussions about collaboration and cooperation in continuing professional education is the lack of clarity about the terms themselves and the concepts behind them. Nowhere is a definition of competition among providers given although many people appear to assume it means the absence of cooperation. Relationships among providers have been described by many terms such as cooperation (Beder, 1984a), collaboration (Cervero, 1984), partnerships (Nowlen & Stern, 1981), and interdependence (Fingeret, 1984). Schermerhorn (1975) notes that the lowest common denominator among these concepts is

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organizational interdependence. Litwak and Hylton (1962) consider two or more organizations interdependent if they take each other into account in pursuing individual goals. Taken together, these ideas suggest an interorganizational continuum, ranging from a very low to a very high degree of interdependence.

Based on the idea of a continuum, a typology has been proposed that identifies six distinct orientations or strategies toward interdependence (Cervero and Young, 1987). They are: *monopoly*, *parallelism*, *competition*, *cooperation*, *coordination*, and *collaboration*. Although finer distinctions could be identified within the six, the typology is intended to include all possible practical ways that providers of continuing professional education can relate to one another. The typology does not assume that greater interdependence is a more highly valued or successful action strategy than less interdependence. As described below, the six strategies range from those which involve the least to the greatest degree of interdependence.

Monopoly. In this orientation a provider is the only one of its type, such as a university or a professional association, in a service area or is the sole provider of programs in a certain content area in a certain location.

Monopolies in continuing professional education occur because of circumstances or tradition, or they can be mandated by a higher authority, such as a board of higher education. For example, the state may mandate a specific program and contract with a single institution to exclusively provide it. This occurred in Illinois when the Department of Registration and Education had suspended the licenses of a group of physicians for substance abuse. The Department required them to participate in a continuing education program sponsored by a specific university to address this problem before renewing their licenses. In this orientation a provider need not take any other provider into account in planning a continuing education program.

Parallelism. This condition occurs when two or more providers are independently delivering the same services to the same market, but are either unaware of one other's activities or are unconcerned and are not deliberately reacting to or anticipating one another's actions. Cross suggests that continuing education providers:

> *. . .can run parallel operations. In the beginning, the relationship between collegiate institutions and other providers of education services was essentially parallel. . . .Each went along its well-defined*

paths. Many educators still act as though parallelism still predominates. Plodding along their own paths, they pretty much keep to themselves quite unaware of travelers on other pathways. (Cross, 1981, p. 2).

Occasionally, a provider finds that others are offering the same kinds of programs, but continues on the assumption that the market is large enough for more than one provider. For example, many types of providers may be offering a program about AIDS to health professionals at about the same time in a major metropolitan area. In this strategy, there is almost no interdependence, and what does occur results from chance encounters among providers.

Competition. In this orientation, two or more providers offer programs on a specific topic and aimed at a specific market, with full knowledge that others are doing the same, and react to or anticipate one another's initiatives. Many cite competition as a possible action strategy for continuing education providers (Baden, 1987; Beder, 1984b; Cross, 1981).

An example of this strategy occurs often in management development programming in which independent consultants, employer training departments, professional associations, university business departments, and continuing education units could all be offering courses with full knowledge that others are offering similar programs (Azzaretto, 1987). Where there is a substantial number of potential participants, no provider will suffer program cancellations or loss of prestige. However, in many cases there is a limited number of participants and conflict among the providers results. While the providers are not working together to achieve mutual goals, the acts of one organization can obviously affect the others in an immediate way.

Cooperation. Cooperation refers to a strategy whereby providers assist each other on an *ad hoc* basis (Whetten, 1981). For example, an association may sell its membership list to a seminar business or a university may recommend several of its faculty for a program being developed by a CPA firm. This represents a greater degree of interdependence than points 1 through 3 because the two providers are working together, albeit on a limited basis, in offering a program. Although cooperation appears to be a common form of interaction among continuing professional education providers, its incidence has not been systematically researched.

Coordination. In this orientation, providers ensure that their activities take into account those of others on a consistent basis (Lindsay, Queeney, & Smutz, 1981). The coordination of educational services can occur by mandate from a higher authority, by interorganizational agreements, or by what Cross defines as a second form of parallelism:

> *It is the model in which each provider performs a unique function within well-defined boundaries. . . . In the jargon of the trade, this is known as seeking the "market niche" which means simply that providers who are potentially competitive will seek the unique service where competition is weak or non-existent. . . . Parallelism can be maintained only through conscious and sustained effort and by careful definition of non-overlapping functions.* (Cross, 1981, p. 3)

For example, Kiener (1989) describes an approach for university-based continuing nursing education program development that is based upon market segmentation and positioning strategies. A different kind of coordination occurs when two universities agree to program in non-competing content areas, such as electrical and mechanical engineering. In this case, each provider would seek to develop programs in the area in which their faculty are the most prominent. This strategy requires a high degree of interdependence among providers. The only major difference between this orientation and collaboration is that, in the latter, the providers work together on a single program.

Collaboration. Collaboration refers to providers: ". . . working together jointly and continuously on a particular project towards a specific goal" (Lindsay, Queeney, & Smutz, 1981, p. 5). When people speak of high degrees of interdependence, this is the form of interaction that they usually have in mind.

The most common example of this strategy is cosponsorship of a program by two or more providers. For example, a professional association, state department of energy, and university engineering department might cosponsor a program on nuclear plant construction for engineers. However, there is a great deal of variation in the nature of the agreements between providers, depending on their degree of formality and the organizational level at which they are negotiated (Lindsay, Queeney, & Smutz, 1981; Marrett, 1971). Thus collaborations may be bound together by informal agreements or legal contracts.

Why Collaboration Is Important

Two fundamental reasons lie behind the emergence of collaboration as an issue in continuing professional education.

First, many practitioners see the need to better organize existing profession-wide systems of continuing education and integrate these into a continuum of life-long professional development. Several professions, notably engineering (Bruce, Siebert, Smullin, & Fano, 1982) and medicine (Dryer, 1962), have already proposed schemes by which their continuing education systems could be organized and coordinated. These proposals address the fundamental issue of how universities, professional associations, and workplaces are to collaborate and coordinate their educational activities to produce the most effective system.

While there appears to be widespread support for more coherent systems of continuing professional education, disagreement often surfaces when the issue is raised of who will be in charge. For example, in the most recent incarnation of this debate in continuing medical education, different authorities have supported the specialty societies (Madigan, 1989; Storey, 1988), medical schools (Kristofco, 1989), and leaders from among the existing pluralistic system of providers (Felch, 1989; Wilbur, 1988) as the preferred locus of power. Collaboration offers a way around impasse on the issue of controlling the organization of continuing professional education.

Second, for a variety of reasons, collaboration is seen as a desirable and necessary programmatic strategy for the delivery of continuing professional education. There is a need for providers to collaborate to provide the greatest opportunity for improving the performance of professionals (National University Continuing Education Association, 1984; Nowlen, 1988; Smutz & Queeney, 1990). The rationale is that professional associations, universities, and workplaces each have unique strengths that should be combined in collaborative efforts to developing programs. In addition, the increasingly competitive environment in which educational providers work creates economic incentives for collaboration (Baden, 1987; Cervero, 1984). In an environment where the number of providers is growing constantly, one cannot guarantee a steady supply of participants by going it alone. In this sense, forming collaborative relationships with other providers is a key strategy in both immediate and long-term program development efforts.

The relative value of cooperation and collaboration among providers of continuing education has been discussed in the context of many professions,

including teaching (Ferver, 1981); engineering (Bruce, Siebert, Smullin, & Fano, 1982); and medicine (Derbyshire, 1983). By contrast, there appears to be only a small amount of support for encouraging competitive relationships. Although competition may be a common mode of operation at the present time (see below), the literature overwhelmingly supports the need for greater cooperation among providers of continuing professional education.

Most of the arguments for greater cooperation promote its desirability without being specific about the ends it serves or the form it should take (Berlin, 1983; National University Continuing Education Association, 1984; Ryor, Shanker, & Sandefeur, 1979; Stern, 1980). Berlin provides some insight in support of cooperative relationships as a general good:

> *Cooperative or collaborative arrangements have a beguiling appeal, sustained at least in part by the rhetoric of the idea and its apparent political correctness.* (Berlin, 1983, p. 127).

Others are more specific about the form that collaboration should take. Several authors propose developing a superordinate body to coordinate the provision of continuing education in the professions. Eurich (1985) proposes a "strategic council for educational development" to coordinate the programs offered by the multiple providers. Lynton (1983) suggests forming "human resource councils" to perform this function. Bruce, Siebert, Smullin, and Fano (1982) propose a council that: ". . . insures speedy development of lifelong cooperative education by aggressively promoting and supporting collaborative efforts by industry and engineering schools" (p. 46).

Finally, several authors have suggested that collaborative relationships are helpful toward achieving a specific end, such as manpower development (Shelton & Craig, 1983), improved performance of practitioners (Houston & Freiberg, 1979), and improved patient care (Derbyshire, 1983).

In discussing the reasons that cooperation among providers should be encouraged, a number of authors have identified benefits that each provider should expect as a result.

- By collaborating with employers and associations, higher education institutions improve their access to potential students (Lynton, 1981; Smutz, Crowe, & Lindsay, 1986) and their

ability to identify learning needs (Smutz, Crowe, & Lindsay, 1986).

- Professional associations improve their access to faculty, obtain the use of better facilities, and decrease their program development costs by collaborating with higher education (Smutz, Crowe, & Lindsay, 1986).

- Employers can provide education in a more cost-effective manner by buying what they need from higher education than by developing and delivering it themselves. Furthermore, they also enhance their employees' regular access to new knowledge (Lynton, 1981). It is both difficult and expensive for employers to duplicate the structure and service of a tax-supported higher education system. By collaborating with associations and higher education, an independent provider can share their aura of quality as well as their nonprofit privileges for mailings (Suleiman, 1983).

Obstacles to Effective Collaboration

In spite of powerful forces supporting collaboration, there is no lack of critics and of problems. Some observers proclaim that competition, not collaboration, among providers can produce higher quality education (Bloom, 1983; Kost, 1980; Griffith, 1983). Their argument is: "Let the various providers do what seems best and the test of the marketplace will prevail" (Houle, 1980, p. 194).

Almost all those who support competition among providers base their arguments on the "free market" system of the economy, wherein only the highest quality (Bloom, 1983; Kost, 1980), best managed (Stern, 1983), and most effectively delivered (Griffith, 1983) programs would survive. Kost (1980) presents the most direct argument for competition when he says: "Competition is needed to drive up the quality of such programs or to replace them in the marketplace. Competition is also needed to produce more innovative approaches in curriculum planning, program development, instruction, and program delivery" (p. 42). In a different type of argument for competition, Curran (1983) believes that professional associations in banking should reduce cooperative relationships with universities because of previous negative experiences in which universities take control of program content and delivery. No one believes that competition should be the only principle

governing relationships among providers. Even those supporting competition, such as Kost (1980) and Bloom (1983), see the need for the coexistence of competitive and cooperative relationships.

While these critics are an annoyance for those who wish to further the cause of collaboration, their impact pales in comparison to the actual problems encountered in trying to organize collaborative arrangements. These problems derive from the fact that successful collaboration must overcome fundamental intra- and interorganizational relations of power. Collaborating with other providers is basically a political action. Even in the best scenario, where all parties seek collaboration, negotiations about who will give up what to get what are a delicate and difficult endeavor. Thus, it is imperative for those seeking to facilitate interorganizational collaboration to have a clear understanding of the conditions necessary to bring about success.

There are other problems associated with the development of cooperative relationships. Several authors have noted that efforts to develop relationships between providers are likely to fail if their only basis is the belief that such relationships are the right thing to do (Eurich, 1985; Lynton, 1981). For most collaborations to be successful they should be in specific areas that are congenial to the needs and capabilities of both providers.

A number of specific deterrents to the formation of interdependent relationships between higher education and other providers have been noted. Smutz, Crowe, and Lindsay (1986) explain that there are deep-seated value differences between higher education and other providers. For example, whereas higher education is primarily concerned with individual development in its continuing education endeavors, employers use continuing education primarily to develop their organizations. Employers criticize universities for being too inflexible in the time, place, and format of their offerings. Moreover, universities offer continuing education that is both too narrowly focused on the cognitive domain and too theoretical. Finally, employers often complain that universities do not know how to teach adults properly (Lynton, 1981).

In sum, the evidence does not show that collaborative relationships are necessarily any better than competitive relationships in producing desirable outcomes such as higher quality, more program accessibility, or more effective continuing professional education. The view expressed by others (Beder, 1984b; Eurich, 1985; Lynton, 1981) that collaborative relationships do not necessarily produce the best programs is the most defensible at the present time. The formation

of relationships is simply a means to an end in the organizational decision-making process. Only when the desired ends are defined in a given situation, and the effectiveness of the resulting strategies are evaluated, can we know whether collaboration works. And only after such strategies (and the others) are tested in this way over time and in a variety of circumstances will we know whether collaboration is worth promoting as a general strategy in continuing professional education.

The Frequency and Benefits of Collaboration

Several studies have used national samples to answer the question about the extent to which providers form collaborative relationships with one another (Knox, 1982; Nowlen & Stern, 1981; Younghouse & Young, 1984). In addition to these systematic studies, there are literally hundreds of actual collaboratively developed programs described in the literature. Little research has been done regarding the frequency of collaboration as opposed to other strategies such as competition, although the nonresearch literature suggests that the most common strategy in continuing professional education is competition.

How Much Collaboration Takes Place. One of the few studies to address this issue (Cervero, 1984) found that the continuing education programming unit at the University of Illinois Medical Center cosponsors 70 percent of its programs with other organizations. Although this figure may be high when compared with the typical continuing education provider, both the national surveys and institutional descriptions suggest that collaborative relationships are formed with much greater frequency than the nonresearch literature indicates.

Other research on the frequency of collaborative relationships has included a 1979 study of association/university collaboration efforts across 110 professional associations and 136 universities (Nowlen & Stern, 1981). This study found that 48 percent of the associations and 85 percent of the universities had undertaken collaborative programming. A national study of all accredited medical schools in the United States found that approximately 70 percent cosponsor ongoing continuing medical education programs with community hospitals (Younghouse & Young, 1984).

In addition to these comprehensive studies of collaboration, there is no shortage of descriptions of particular collaborative programs. Several examples come from the fields of teaching (Davies & Aquino, 1975; Ferver, 1981), medicine

(Manning, et al., 1979), and accounting (Cruse, 1983). Eurich (1985) also provides several examples of collaborative programs between universities and employers. Seattle University's School of Engineering, with assistance from Boeing, has started a new master's degree for software engineering to accommodate Boeing's employees as well as other students. Fifteen universities from the Association for Media-Based Continuing Education for Engineers together with 12 leading corporations have developed the National Technological University (NTU). This university operates by satellite to reach engineers in corporate classrooms for advanced professional work leading to NTU's master of science degree (Eurich, 1985, p. 17). Cross (1981) describes four models of university/industry cooperation and gives several examples within each. These models lie on a continuum ranging from industry's control over what content is taught and how it is taught to higher education's control over these important educational functions.

The Benefits of Collaboration. The Younghouse and Young study of accredited medical schools (1984) reported what continuing education deans and directors felt to be some of the beneficial consequences of their collaborative arrangements. These included

- Fulfilling part of the medical schools' missions and goals;
- Increasing the medical schools' image and visibility;
- Providing visibility to new medical school faculty; and
- Increasing referrals to the medical schools' teaching hospitals and clinics.

An earlier but more comprehensive national study of collaboration in continuing professional education examined the problems and benefits of such strategies across five fields—medicine, pharmacy, social work, education, and law (Knox, 1982). This study found that while small programs seemed unconcerned about working with other providers, large programs depended on effective relationships with other providers for maintaining the size and diversity of their efforts. They did this by cosponsoring programs that would have had less attendance if provided independently. While these university units collaborated with other types of providers, they tended not to form relationships with other university units:

In each of the five fields there were many examples of cosponsorship and other forms of collaboration between the office and associations and employers . . . Most of the CPE offices in medical schools had established relationships with cooperating hospitals, which included provision of CPE, opportunities for internships and residencies for medical students and sources of patient referrals for teaching and research. The most noteworthy examples of collaboration illustrated the importance of mutual benefits. There were few examples of sustained collaboration with other professional schools in the same field, in part illustrating the lack of complementarity on which sustained cooperation usually depends. (Knox, 1982, p. 122)

The chief benefits of collaboration for universities, as reported in the 1982 study, were

- Strengthened awareness of university capabilities (88 percent);
- The collegiality thus generated (88 percent);
- Improvement in the quality of the association program (85 percent); and
- That as a result of this experience one or more additional professional groups approached the university to explore cooperation (83 percent).

On the other side, the professional associations involved in the study believed that they had benefitted more from the relationship financially than did the universities. Additionally, the associations perceived that the chief benefits to them included

- An improved association program (90 percent);
- A greater awareness of university capabilities (79 percent);
- Improved professional competence (70 percent); and
- The generation of collegiality between association and university personnel at various levels (70 percent).

This study also found major problems encountered in these collaborations. Among the associations, the chief problems reported were

- "Turf" definition problems, that is, who was responsible for what (48 percent);
- Inadequate university business procedures (25 percent); and
- Unprofessional university faculty behavior (10 percent).

The professional associations were not the only complainants. University respondents cited the following problems in dealing with the professions:

- "Turf" definition problems (43 percent);
- Difficulty with on-campus accommodations provided to professionals enrolled in the programs (36 percent); and
- Higher than expected costs to provide the programs (26 percent).

One of the most mature and comprehensive examples of collaborative programs is the Continuing Professional Education Development Project. This was begun in 1980 as a 5-year research and development effort funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Pennsylvania State University, and 14 participating professional associations (Lindsay, Queeney, & Smutz, 1981). A major goal of the project was to establish collaborative relationships between the university and the professional associations for the purpose of strengthening the development and implementation of continuing education programs.

Collaboration was implemented by developing a "profession team" for each of the five selected professional groups: accounting, architecture, clinical dietetics, clinical psychology, and gerontological nursing. Each team included representatives from national and state professional associations, regulatory agencies, Penn State University faculty members from appropriate academic departments, and project staff members. By the completion of the project, programs had been developed collaboratively for each of the professions using the seven-step practice audit model (Queeney & Smutz, 1990).

The work thus begun has continued to the present in a collaborative venture between Penn State's Office of Continuing Professional Education and one of the

original cooperating professional associations, the American Institute of Architects (Smutz & Queeney, 1990). This project has focused on the development of self-assessment instruments to enable individual practicing architects to assess their own learning needs. Upon the completion and scoring of these instruments, the architect would receive from A.I.A. a list of educational activities that could help him or her address identified weaknesses or develop new skills.

Penn State has also sustained a long-term relationship with the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA), which has had an impact on how the association organizes the continuing education of its members. Working with the university, ASHA is currently developing self-assessment modules "so that members can better manage their continuing education efforts toward a directed goal rather than selecting courses 'cafeteria style'. . ." (Carney, 1991, p. 30). These highly successful efforts by Penn State provide demonstrable evidence that higher education can work with professional associations to have an impact on continuing education.

Analyzing Motivation and Incentives for Collaboration

Much of the discussion and research on the topic of relationships among providers has been prescriptive and descriptive. That is, the focus is on the desirability and frequency of use of different interorganizational strategies. Yet, we are at a fairly primitive level in understanding *why* providers find it necessary or desirable to work with each other. This is not an optimal situation because practice is most effective when it proceeds from a clear understanding of why educators choose to engage in certain actions and not in others. Provider collaboration in continuing professional education could be more effectively stimulated or facilitated if we had a knowledge base that provided insight into why decision-makers engage in such relationships.

A framework has been proposed that describes the conditions under which continuing professional education providers choose to form different types of interorganizational relationships (Cervero & Young, 1987; Cervero, 1988). Since the previous publication of this framework, three major research studies have been completed testing its usefulness among a variety of continuing professional education providers in various professions.

The fundamental assumption of the framework is that providers *decide* to engage in cooperative relationships with one another (Schermerhorn, 1975).

Specifically, individuals are seen as mediators of providers' decision making about strategies for interorganizational relationships. These individuals make decisions under constraints imposed by organizational and environmental conditions. The logic of the framework is that certain motivating conditions exist that can create a need for a decisionmaker to engage in the types of relationships described earlier as cooperation, coordination, or collaboration. If none of these conditions exist, the decisionmaker is likely to use one of the other three strategies (monopoly, parallelism, or competition) in relating to other providers. This need, however, is necessary but not sufficient for the decisionmaker to view the formation of cooperative relationships as a preferred action strategy. For this to occur, the need must be developed into demand, subject to the conditioning effects of potential associated costs and other organizational and environmental influences.

Types of Incentives and Motivators

Schermerhorn (1975) has identified three important motivators, or motivating conditions, that promote cooperation. Once these motivating conditions exist, decision-makers find themselves in a cost-benefit dynamic wherein the need for collaborative relationships are balanced against 1) the costs of entering such relationships and 2) the actual possibilities presented to them within their specific organizational and environmental context. If the benefits exceed the costs, collaborative relationships become a preferred action strategy that the decisionmaker seeks to implement in developing a specific educational program.

Adversity. Providers will seek out or be receptive to interorganizational cooperation when faced with situations of resource scarcity or performance distress (Schermerhorn, 1975, p. 848). This is well supported in the general organizational literature (Mulford, 1984) and is consistent with practice and research in continuing education (Lindsay, Queeney, & Smutz, 1981). Schermerhorn suggests that providers may be favorably predisposed toward cooperative relationships where there is a need to 1) gain access to otherwise unavailable resources, 2) free internal resources for alternative uses, or 3) employ existing resources more efficiently. These conditions often motivate universities to seek cosponsorship arrangements with employing institutions such as schools, hospitals, or social service agencies. These institutions can "deliver" a regular flow of participants as well as information about their needs, thereby eliminating the need for the university to expend human and financial resources on marketing and needs assessment.

Positive Value Associations. Providers will seek out or be receptive to interorganizational cooperation when "cooperation" per se takes on a positive value (Schermerhorn, 1975, p. 848). This positive valuing may arise from internal organizational conditions or from norms in the external environment. As indicated earlier in this chapter, there is a general feeling among many providers that cooperation with others is intrinsically good. As a result, many providers are receptive to or actively seek out relationships simply because it seems the right thing to do. This is the factor that Beder (1984b) terms "goal orientation" and was found by Cervero (1984) and Fingeret (1984) to influence the extent of collaboration among continuing professional education providers.

External Pressure. Providers will seek out or be receptive to interorganizational cooperation when a powerful extra-organizational force demands this activity (Schermerhorn, 1975, p. 849). Such demands may stem from governments or third-party organizations such as insurance companies. Fingeret (1984) found this to be a powerful motivator when the Nuclear Regulatory Commission forced utility companies to cooperate with universities in training their engineering employees.

Disincentives

Once decisionmakers are motivated to consider the possibility of forming interorganizational relationships, they begin to identify costs that potentially might be associated with cooperative activities. Three major ones are reviewed below.

Loss of Independence. Participation in interorganizational cooperation may involve a loss of decisionmaking autonomy (Schermerhorn, 1975, p. 849). This is particularly true in the strategies of cooperation and collaboration where obligations, commitments, or contracts with other providers place constraints on each provider. Because there is a commitment for joint decisionmaking regarding future activities, limits are placed on unilateral decisions. This can become a severe problem when one partner makes demands that the other does not agree with in areas such as the location, cost, or content of the program being developed.

Image Problems. Participation in interorganizational cooperation may involve unfavorable ramifications for organizational image or identity (Schermerhorn, 1975, p. 849). Cooperative activities with certain organizations may adversely affect a provider's prestige, identity, or strategic position in the marketplace. The clearest example is the reluctance of many universities and

professional association to form relationships with the for-profit independent providers. By cooperating with the for-profit sector, many decisionmakers in these institutions believe they tarnish their image of credibility. At the same time, they damage their strategic position in the market by adding credence to future programming efforts by that specific for-profit provider. In its subsequent marketing efforts, that for-profit provider would probably list the university or association as a previous cooperating partner.

Increased Expense. Participation in interorganizational cooperation may involve costs by requiring the direct expenditure of scarce organizational resources (Schermerhorn, 1975, p. 850). In most cases, it takes more time and energy to develop and implement a cosponsored program than to develop the same program alone. In addition to the time required for meetings to develop the program, there are actual direct expenditures such as for transportation and communication activities. Many providers may simply not have the resources to invest in such cooperative ventures. As Knox (1982) found, the large continuing education offices in universities were much more likely to engage in cooperative activities than were small offices. They have more slack resources to invest upfront in cooperative activities.

Organizational and Environmental Influences

A second balancing set of factors that decisionmakers must consider is the organizational and environmental capacity to support cooperative endeavors. Three primary ones are described below.

Organizational Openness. To the extent that providers' boundaries are open and permeable vis-a-vis the external environment, they are more likely to employ interorganizational cooperation as a strategy (Schermerhorn, 1975, p. 850). The Penn State project (Smutz & Toombs, 1985) provides strong evidence for this proposition in its study of boundary spanners. These are individuals who cross their organizations' boundaries to link with other organizations in the environment. They found that of the two types of providers in the project, domain-protecting ones were much less likely than domain-expanding ones to seek cooperative relationships. Thus, each type of provider strategically selected boundary spanners who were most likely to support their orientation. In working with the other organizations in the project, domain-protecting providers used individuals with low level positions in the organization whereas domain-expanding providers selected individuals who were influential within their own organization (Smutz & Toombs, 1985).

Mutuality. Under conditions where two or more providers experience and recognize some mutual need or purpose, and organizational domains are not sensitive issues, they are more likely to employ interorganizational cooperation as a strategy (Schermerhorn, 1975, p. 851). For this to occur, two conditions need to be met. The providers' domains or official goals must be complementary rather than similar. Schermerhorn (1975) explains: "Since official goals relate an organization to specific input and output domains, goal similarity at this level might well imply competition as opposed to cooperation" (p. 851). As an example of this principle, Cervero (1984) and Knox (1982) both found that universities generally do not collaborate with each other even when they have extensive relationships with other types of providers. Schermerhorn continues:

> *Given that domains are not a sensitive issue, however, divergent operating goals would seem to offer little basis for cooperative relations. Thus, interorganizational cooperation appears more likely in situations where organizational domains are not sensitive issues (complementary official goals) and where mutual performance objectives are perceived (common operative goals)* (Schermerhorn, 1975, p. 851).

For cooperative activities to flourish, both providers must benefit. The key to the perception of mutual need lies in a reciprocal relationship where both partners exchange resources valued less for resources valued more (Beder, 1984c).

Opportunity and Means. To the extent that physical opportunity for interorganizational cooperative activity exists within the provider or its external environment, it is more likely to use interorganizational cooperation as a strategy (Schermerhorn, 1975, p. 852). The geographical proximity of potential partners was found by Cervero (1984) and Beder (1984c) to be an important correlate of cooperation among continuing education providers. An important determinant at the interorganizational level is a provider's internal capacity to build and support cooperative activities. Schermerhorn suggests that the relevant factors for this determinant include a provider's existing level of cooperative activity, the availability of slack resources to build and explore cooperative ventures, and the ability to mobilize these resources for application to interorganizational cooperation. For example, if a professional association has only a single person managing the educational unit, this individual may have time only to perform the basic functions of developing a yearly conference, with no other time available for long-term program development efforts.

The Cost-Benefit Dynamic

The framework's fundamental proposition is that the motivators are a necessary but not sufficient stimulus to engage in collaborative relationships. There is a complex decision-making process that occurs regarding the potential costs and benefits of forming interorganizational relationships. Often, this process occurs unconsciously or without any formal discussion within an organization. These decisions may be made in the following ways.

- First, if none of the three motivating conditions are present, a decisionmaker would have no interest in forming cooperative relationships. Thus, the provider would most likely engage in the strategies of monopoly, parallelism, or competition.

- Second, if at least one of the motivating conditions is present but the decisionmaker perceived high potential costs or a lack of organizational and environmental capacities, the provider might see the possibility of forming highly cooperative relationships but would not receive that extra push to view them as a preferred action strategy. Thus, the decisionmaker would most likely engage in monopoly, parallelism, or competitive strategies.

- Third, with the presence of at least one motivator, a low risk of incurring costs, and sufficient organizational and environmental capacities, the provider would seek out or be receptive to collaborative relationships. This provider would be likely to engage in the strategies of cooperation, coordination, or collaboration. As more motivators, fewer costs, and greater organizational and environmental capacities are present, the likelihood of entering collaborative relationships increases.

Evaluation of the Framework

Since the original publication of this framework in 1987, three major research studies have tested its usefulness for explaining the formation of interorganizational relationships in continuing professional education. Even as the studies support the importance of the framework's political orientation, they all offer important insights that can extend and modify its various dimensions.

Colgan (1989). The most focused of the three, this study examined the formation and ongoing activity of eight continuing education programs for engineers that were collaboratively designed by universities and corporations. Among the programs were a video-based master's degree program in electrical engineering and an on-site master's program in mechanical engineering. The study, which involved 50 in-depth interviews, sought to profile the goals, implementation strategies, and incentives for collaboration as perceived by those involved in these programs at five universities and nine corporations. In terms of the framework, the study examined only the most highly interdependent form of relationship—collaboration—and sought an understanding of why the organizations entered into these relationships.

The study found that the principal goal of the collaborative programs in engineering had more to do with promoting the long-term survival of the universities and corporations involved than it did with improving the competence of individuals engineers. Although the respondents believed that the programs were needed to assist engineers in coping with technological changes, "the continuing education of engineers was not a sufficient, or perhaps even primary, goal in building these complex relationships. Collaboration for both sectors was driven by larger institutional issues" (p. 50). For universities, this meant that the programs

- Provided a mechanism to secure research contracts and faculty consulting;
- Provided means to secure student internships and to recruit and place students; and
- Generated profits to subsidize other institutional functions.

For corporations, the benefits included

- More direct and regular access to university faculty and research; and
- Access to university students as employment prospects.

Colgan also found that the organizational influences were strong enough in each case to provide a strong rationale for the formation of these collaborative relationships.

The organizations involved in the Colgan study had complementary, not similar, goals for entering the relationships. Access to university resources can help corporations improve their primary mission—competitiveness in the marketplace—while the primary mission of these major research universities—maintaining their position in the elite circle of higher education—is likewise promoted by regular access to corporate support for research activities.

In addition, the study concluded that the organizations had permeable boundaries because they appointed a "product champion" who ". . . took leadership in the design and implementation of these collaborative efforts" (Colgan, 1989, p. 67). These people, called boundary spanners in earlier research (Smutz & Toombs, 1985), were necessary to promote the idea of collaborative programs because of their ability to use personal relationships and informal mechanisms to implement programs until success was established.

The findings of the Colgan study clearly support the importance of the framework's "adversity motivator," which focuses on situations of resource scarcity driving organizations to collaborate.

Ferro (1989). This study researched the interorganizational relationships used by the eight seminaries of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to develop continuing pastoral education programs. It differed from Colgan's in several respects. The study included only one type of provider, professional schools; it examined all the ways the seminaries relate to other organizations in developing programs, instead of collaboration only; and it asked about general organizational strategies in contrast to Colgan's, which focused on the development of actual programs. Ferro's study, which included case studies of three seminaries followed by written surveys to the other five, was designed to discover the various orientations towards interdependence used by the seminaries and whether the motivators and organization/environmental influences could differentially predict use of these strategies.

Ferro found that each seminary related to other organizations in all six ways posited by the framework, from monopoly to collaboration. For example, they were found to have strong collaborative relationships with local Continuing Theological Education Centers, which were set up by the national church board to be the primary agents for the delivery of continuing education for the clergy. In contrast, the seminaries were found to operate in a parallel mode with other agencies not affiliated with ELCA; that is, they really did not know what continuing education these other agencies were delivering.

The study also found all of the framework's motivators and organizational/ environmental influences present in the seminaries, although to different degrees. Perhaps this should not be surprising given that the study asked about the general organizational situation as opposed to the conditions which existed for a specific program. Of course, because there was no variation in the independent variables of motivators and organizational influences (that is, all six variables were present for all providers), he concluded that they could not predict which specific mode of interdependence each seminary would use. He concludes that the framework's cost-benefit dynamic does not hold in that the accumulation of motivators and environmental influences ". . . does not, in and of itself, move institutions toward the cooperative, coordinating, and collaborative modes of interdependence" (Ferro, 1989, p. 191). His major conclusion is that the framework needs a third dimension, the type of organizational partner, in order to be predictive.

This conclusion really serves to highlight one of the major assumptions of the framework, namely that the decisions about interorganizational relationships are not made in the abstract but rather in terms of specific and concrete possible activities. That is, any number of motivators, potential costs, and environmental influences may exist at the same time in an organization, but what really matters is how they relate to a real program at a particular point in time. Given this, we can now understand why the continuing education directors in the eight seminaries chose to work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Continuing Theological Education Centers in their region. This was a mandate passed by the national church body in setting up the entire system of pastoral education. This conforms to one of the motivators, which states that providers will seek out or be receptive to interorganizational cooperation when a powerful extra-organizational force demands this activity.

Tallman (1989). Like Ferro, Tallman also looked at the full range of interdependent orientations and sought to determine which factors are related to use of which type of orientation. However, her study examined a range of providers, including three universities, four state professional associations, three employers, and four independent providers (such as a pharmaceutical firm and a national health-related foundation). The methods for the study were primarily in-depth interviews with the person responsible for continuing education in the organization.

As the first comprehensive study that examined a range of providers, several interesting findings emerged.

- First, the extent of collaboration (defined as cosponsored programs) depends on the type of provider. This study supported previous empirical studies that reported high levels of collaboration in university continuing education (about 60 percent of the programs at the universities were cosponsored). Equally high levels of collaboration were reported by the independent providers (from 60 to 80 percent). However, the study found few collaborative efforts by employers (none to 10 percent) and by professional associations (about 15 percent).

- Second, Tallman found that defining interdependence as the extent to which providers take each other into account was not really useful in examining the actual interaction. For example, the three categories of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration were really a continuous dimension, creating difficulty in distinguishing among them. Thus, although she found evidence for all but one of the orientations, she choose to define interdependence in terms of a single variable, *intensity of interaction*. This means that intensity could be determined by the ". . . investment of each organization in the risks and benefits of the program, and the level of responsibility that each organization had in sponsoring it" (Tallman, 1989, p. 151). Thus, high intensity relationships in this definition are characterized by an essentially symmetrical level of involvement by two or more organizations.

Tallman uncovered a major factor not found in the framework that motivates organizations to engage in cooperative relationships, namely the extent to which the decision-makers perceive themselves to be in a competitive environment with regard to providing continuing education. In other words, providers collaborate with certain organizations to gain a competitive edge with regard to other organizations—competitive motives can, in fact, engender collaboration. Generally, organizations will cooperate with others that have complementary goals, such as the university/corporation relationships found by Colgan (1989), to compete against organizations that have similar goals (such as other universities).

The study also found strong support for two framework motivators, resource scarcity and the positive value attached to cooperation. Only one provider was mandated by an extra-organizational body (the third motivator) to coordinate continuing education with other university providers. Resource scarcity in terms of access to expertise for a program, financial support, and assistance in marketing the

access to expertise for a program, financial support, and assistance in marketing the program was a primary motivator for many of the organizations. Likewise, both organizational *and* individual beliefs about the value of cooperation. Prior experience has given these decisionmakers the belief that cooperative activities are likely to result in substantial benefits to their organizations.

Two of the three costs (called "perceived barriers" in Tallman's study) associated with collaboration were identified: loss of decision-making autonomy and the increased expenditure of scarce resources. No evidence of the third cost, negative image factors, was found. While not necessarily preventing cooperative relationships from developing, the cost factors were reported as taken into account when respondents decided to form or continue relationships.

The Tallman study strongly supported Colgan's (1989) central finding that any understanding of collaboration has to recognize the larger organizational goals being pursued through the formation of such relationships. Tallman (1989) concludes that most of the providers in her study do not "offer their courses with the primary goal of improving practitioners' knowledge and practice. . . . For some providers, [continuing professional education] was an instrumental means for accomplishing larger organizational goals" (p. 175). For example, one hospital viewed continuing education as a way to recruit nurses and a pharmaceutical company provides education in hopes of increasing its product sales. In supporting the framework's political orientation, Tallman argues that discussions about the dynamics of cooperation and collaboration need to be broadened to ". . . allow for the ways it is used to accomplish the larger organizational agendas" (p. 175).

Conclusions

Collaboration among providers is a strategy that has been used extensively and will continue to be used to develop educational programs in continuing professional education. Examples of collaboratively developed programs exist for nearly every provider in every profession because of the strong forces promoting it. As has been demonstrated by numerous reports, it can be an effective and powerful approach to developing programs, can benefit organizations in a variety of ways unrelated to the continuing education program itself, and may be a necessary ingredient in the survival and vitality of organizations' continuing education unit. However, experience and research has shown that there are many costs involved in setting up these relationships, and there are many instances where it is simply better for organizations to develop programs on their own.

It is essential for decisionmakers to distinguish clearly situations in which collaboration is desirable from those for which it is not. Because it is difficult to set up and maintain collaborative relationships, those responsible for continuing education should be clear about the conditions under which they should seek collaborative opportunities or be receptive to overtures from others. It is not enough to proceed from a belief that collaboration is the right thing to do. Any astute decisionmaker recognizes that the formation of interorganizational relationships is fundamentally a political process in which costs and benefits must be clearly weighed, including those involving organizational agendas other than those connected to the continuing education function. Ignoring this political process in setting up programs would have the same result as walking across a crowded intersection with your eyes closed. After all is said about why collaborative relationships should be pursued in continuing professional education, real educators in real situations must determine whether they are appropriate at that place and time. The framework and research presented above are a first step toward clarifying the central elements that these educators should consider in setting up collaborative relationships.

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Continuing Professional Education:

Comparative Approaches and Lessons

by

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This paper summarizes the current state of continuing professional education (CPE) in four European countries: the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Sections on each individual country, as well as a brief description of CPE-related activities by the European Community, are followed by a discussion of the principal policy-related issues pertinent to the United States that follow from these country analyses. The countries examined were chosen in part because the author is familiar with their postsecondary educational systems as well as with useful individual contacts and sources; and in part because each case presented interesting and illuminating examples of different approaches to encouraging, developing, and supporting the provision of continuing education for professionals and others.

The published literature on continuing professional education in European countries is quite limited. Until a few years ago, most of the research and reports focused on initial and continuing education for occupational levels below those commonly designated as "professional" in the United States. This situation resulted, in large measure, from a viewpoint that regarded continuing education primarily as an issue of social policy toward the disadvantaged. The focus of continuing education programs was toward providing second-chance education for dropouts and persons who had failed national examinations at one point or another; providing useful occupational skills for individuals of low ability; and providing upward educational mobility for immigrants and other people seeking to achieve a school qualification which they did not already possess. More recently, with a shift in national foci toward economic policies, attention has been paid to the lifelong educational needs of the upper ranks of the workforce, including professionals.

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Public commitment to continuing professional education in the countries examined varies widely, both in degree and type of support. The French government, for example, requires mandatory contributions to the continuing education of employees, in cash or in kind, by all employers of 10 or more persons. Among the allowable choices available to French employers are providing educational opportunities themselves, contributing support to one or more approved regional or sectoral providers, or making payments to a national continuing education fund. The total amount of any contribution—internal or external—must equal at least 1.2 percent of the firm's annual payroll. None of the other countries studied has made as strong a governmental commitment to continuing professional education as has France. In the United Kingdom, the government operates a well-funded and apparently quite successful public program called PICKUP, which funds pilot continuing professional education programs, needs assessments, staff development, and infrastructure. Germany and the Netherlands provide far less direct public support to continuing education.

Despite these differences in support for continuing professional education, as well as differences among the national systems of postsecondary education that—in part—provide such opportunities, it is interesting to note that the current status of CPE in all four displays more similarities than differences. These points will be discussed fully in the conclusion to this paper, including the key observation that the catalytic role of government in "priming the pump" with start-up funds and infrastructural support appears to have a positive effect on the development of continuing professional education programs.

Part One: The United Kingdom

As in all industrialized countries, both interest and activity in continuing professional education in the United Kingdom has increased sharply during the past decade. There is every indication that this trend will continue in the years ahead.

The Historical Background

The evolution of British continuing professional education can be described as having occurred in three phases. During the first and longest phase, which lasted until the early 1980s, a gradual recognition of the distinction between continuing professional education and traditional adult education emerged. There had been a long tradition of general adult education in Britain, much of it provided by well-

established and well-regarded so-called "extra-mural departments" at British colleges and universities. As is the case elsewhere in adult education, the focus of these educational activities was—and continued to be—on individual self-improvement and enrichment. The traditional extra-mural programs permitted qualified individuals to pursue postsecondary education off-campus, either full- or part-time, and frequently through correspondence and special examination arrangements. More recently, the United Kingdom has seen the development of "second chance" educational opportunities for persons prevented, for one reason or another, from pursuing postsecondary educations in the traditional manner or sequence. The best known component of the British "second chance" system is the Open University (created in 1969), a distance learning and examination institution by means of which thousands have obtained a university degree or other qualification.

During the sixties and seventies, an increasing number of Britons came to recognize the need for organized instructional programs in order to maintain professional competence in the face of rapid technological, economic, and organizational change. They also realized that such a reason for education was quite distinct from the self-enrichment and second-chance rationales for adult education. There was a great deal of vigorous debate in many professions as to the need for continuing professional education, but also a growing recognition that reliance on prior, or pre-entry, education was not a sufficient basis for career-long practice.

The focus of the British debate shifted in the eighties as a public educational policy concern was added to what had started out as an issue within the professional community. Whereas both the extensive system of extra-mural adult programs at traditional institutions, as well as the newer Open University and other second-chance activities, had always been viewed in terms of *social* policy, the British government now began to realize that skill maintenance and upgrading of the workforce had become a matter of *economic* policy. This public recognition of the economic importance of a highly educated and trained workforce was not unique to the United Kingdom—the same recognition has occurred in the United States and other countries. What was unique to the British situation was the competition that British professionals would soon face from their colleagues elsewhere within the European Community, a problem arising from the fact that British pre-entry programs for professional degrees and qualifications are typically shorter than those offered in Continental countries.

The PICKUP Program

In 1982, the British government launched a program called by the acronym PICKUP, standing for "Professional, Industrial, and Commercial Updating Program." Its purpose was to be the direct and indirect stimulation of continuing professional education activities. PICKUP became, as intended, a "pump-priming" catalyst which provides funding for start-up costs, needs assessment, development, and instructional staff training for continuing professional education programs.

PICKUP has enjoyed success from the beginning. A 1987 report issued by the Department of Education and Science (DES) states that the program had, even by then, "played a notable part in the progress of in-career vocational training," and that as a result:

> *[m]any of the more enterprising colleges and universities have adopted, with great benefit, a new style and approach to the provision and marketing of courses for industry and commerce. For their part, increasing numbers of firms recognize that investing in updating and retraining their workforce is essential to their future competitiveness; and are ready to release emplyees and pay a proper price for a good product* (DES, 1987, p. 12).

In a more recent report from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), that Department describes its efforts to promote continuing professional education as working to

- *Tackle the financial and administrative disincentives to PICKUP so that employers meet with a quick, flexible, and cost-effective response,*
- *Encourage new learning methods and approaches to the planning of training and updating activities, and*
- *Increase awareness, particularly among employers, of the crucial need to invest in adult training* (DTI, 1990a, p. 32).

During 1988-89, approximately £ 13 million were distributed by the PICKUP program as grants in the following categories:

- *Organization*—to help provider institutions market and coordinate their services;

- *Development of training programs*—to assist in the assessment of training needs and the development of appropriate course materials; and

- *Staff training*—to equip instructors and other staff with the knowledge and skills needed for effective adult education.

In addition to continuing its pump-priming support to educational institutions, PICKUP has in recent years provided start-up funding in two other areas related to continuing professional education. One area has been the establishment of a national network of *Technology Centres*, as stated in the DES Report, in order to

> . . . *encourage greater collaboration between industry and education and provide a flexible response to the training and related processes of technology transfer* (DES, 1987, p. 12).

The second area receiving appreciable government subvention through PICKUP has been the development of telecommunications capabilities so as to encourage and facilitate distance learning. The PICKUP program also maintains and distributes the *Training Directory*, a widely used national resource on continuing professional (and sub-professional) education opportunities. It is available through an on-line access computer network, on diskette, in microfiche form, and as a printed publication.

A recent, generally favorable evaluation of PICKUP activities carried out for the Department of Education and Science by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom (CVCP) (Gaele, 1990) provides interesting information about the growing involvement of postsecondary educational institutions in continuing professional education. Statistical information, according to the report, is as yet unreliable, yet "[o]ne interpretation of the available evidence suggests that, in 1987/88, PICKUP comprised about *six per cent of all university teaching*, and that this was double the amount of a decade earlier" (Gaele, op.cit.,p.5).

Figures compiled by the Universities' Statistical Record (private communication) show an increase in UK university income from short courses increasing from £ 13.5 million in the 1981-82 academic year to £ 71.5 million in

1988-89. Drake (p.53, OECD 1991/2 c,) reports that by 1988-89, the latter sum amounted to almost 3 percent of total universities income. In addition to this five-fold increase in income from educational programs that include continuing professional education, the Report also discusses the universities' increased activity in planning and constructing facilities for such programs; the hiring of new instructional staff and the upgrading of staff positions for these programs; and the growth of stronger central institutional support mechanisms.

However, the Gaele Report indicates that PICKUP activities, though gradually becoming "embedded" in universities as regular parts of the total range of educational offerings, are still far from being integrated or mainstreamed into university life. Commitment to the design and implementation of continuing professional education at the departmental level is still extremely uneven, and—surprisingly—there exists as yet little indication of collaboration between university-based continuing professional education activities and universities' increasing liason with industry and commerce in other areas, such as research and consulting (Gaele, 1990).

Continuing professional education in the United Kingdom receives some government support in addition to PICKUP through the Training Agency of the Department of Employment. One of the purposes of the Training Agency is to assist companies to meet their future needs for skilled workers by encouraging company-sponsored training programs, many in collaboration with higher education institutions. The Training Agency also sponsors postbaccalaureate training in skill shortage areas.

A third ministry, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), is also encouraging greater participation of postsecondary educational institutions in the provision of continuing professional education as part of its general support for closer postsecondary education–university relations. DTI distributes a number of publications which describe best practices with regard to joint activities.

The activities of these governmental units are directed, as well, at employers, encouraging them to pay more attention to the continuing development of their employees. Changes in employer attitudes are indicated by a marked trend toward "closed" courses developed by universities and polytechnics under contract for employees of specific firms and toward more provision of offerings at the work site.

Current Developments

The third phase, to date, of the development of British continuing professional education is only just beginning. This consists of a focus on what should drive continuing professional education, the agenda of work or the agenda of learning. For the first time, basic questions are being asked about the nature of continuing professional education, its providers, and its consumers.

Since its inception, much of continuing professional education in the United Kingdom has been *knowledge based*, particularly that portion provided by universities and colleges. Knowledge-based programs emphasize the acquisition of new information, skills, and methodologies. Increasingly, however, suggestions are being made that continuing professional education should be *practice based*, so that —as one observer put it—"learning agendas follow on from work agendas." The question of focus goes beyond details of content. It affects the overall approach to continuing professional education as a learning activity and is also related to basic conceptions of what constitutes effective professional practice. In the United Kingdom, as elsewhere, ideas formulated by scholars such as Donald Schön of M.I.T. are beginning to take hold: effective practicioners reflect as they practice, continuously adapting their approach to the specific circumstances and constraints of a given situation, rather than applying a set, pre-determined method of problem solving. If continuing professional education is to improve the capabilities of the "reflective practicioner," it must be shaped by examples from work situations or simulations of actual practice.

Practice-based continuing professional education is also likely to extend beyond narrow technical expertise. The growing complexity of actual practice situations increasingly requires an understanding of contextual factors, such as economic, political, and social circumstances; the interrelationship with other professions and the underlying technical principles that link them together; and the legal and ethical aspects of one's professional role, methods, and conduct. The range of expertise needed for competent practice is also broadened by the growing emphasis, especially in relation to European Community regulations, on ecological and environmental factors.

The new debate in the United Kingdom has resulted in growing attention being paid to defining work-related competence. Considerable progress has been made at the lower occupational levels, and attention is now shifting—in consort with the knowledge/practice debate—to higher occupational levels. Some professional bodies, including the engineering and psychology societies, are making

strong efforts to define practice-based competencies and develop ways to assess them. Others have lagged, and in some cases expressed suspicion of competency definition and assessment, preferring to continue relying on traditional knowledge-based approaches and related academic or quasi-academic testing. In general, British professional bodies have concentrated on the provision of continuing professional education and on process, rather than certification and assessment, so the uneven acceptance of practice-based learning is not surpising.

A Description of British Continuing Professional Education

In the United Kingdom, as everywhere else, continuing professional education activity is distributed on a bipolar model. On one end exists a great variety of short courses, ranging from seminars and workshops of a day or less, through weekend or multiple day programs, to intermittent programs extending over several weeks or months. The other end consists of longer programs, most of which require part-time study over many months or years, which cover extensive ranges of subjects in depth, and which may culminate in major qualifications. It is difficult to obtain good quantitative measures of the extent of continuing professional education activity in Britain, especially with regard to short courses. The data are sparse, incomplete, and difficult to interpret in the absence of uniform or consensual definitions. One point on which all observers agree is that the total amount of continuing professional education activity has been steadily increasing, both in terms of available offerings as well as participation.

Some sources indicate that, as of 1988-89, short-course FTE (full-time equivalent) enrollment for continuing professional education purposes constituted between 5 and 6 percent of total university enrollment, while long-course continuing professional education represented an additional 5 to 10 percent of total FTE enrollment. On this evidence, continuing professional education programs were enrolling between 10 and 15 percent of all FTE students in British universities by the end of the 1980s, and indications are that this percentage continues to increase.

The providers of British continuing professional education fall into the same categories as in other countries. A large amount of continuing professional education, particularly of the short course variety, is provided in-house by employers, using either their own staff or outside experts. Postsecondary educational institutions also provide a significant amount of short course continuing professional education, and they dominate the provision of longer courses. Private, for-profit providers are important at the high end of the continuing professional

education spectrum, where cost appears to matter little. Professional bodies provide some continuing professional education on their own, but in Britain they focus mostly on promotion and encouragement.

Among the barriers to access and provision of continuing professional education, as elsewhere, are qualifications, financing, delivery systems, and information. Qualifications are probably the least important barrier because formal entrance requirements—even to longer courses—are flexible, and in many cases transitional or remedial stages are available. Affordability is a much greater problem. In the United Kingdom, all *short-term continuing professional education* (as defined by the government) provided by postsecondary institutions must, by explicit national policy, be self-supporting. Fees or tuition, which are therefore quite high, must be paid by employers or by the individual participants themselves. Self- or unemployed individuals must cover the entire cost without outside support, and among employers there is a growing trend toward sharing the cost with the benefitting employee (unpaid release time or partial payment are the most popular). A growing amount of *long-term continuing professional education* is also becoming self-supporting. This trend is intensifying the access problem because, with few exceptions, British universities, polytechnics, and colleges provide few opportunities for part-time study (traditional extra-mural programs are not continuing professional education). Paid educational leave is virtually unknown, and individuals who are able to enroll somewhere on a part-time basis are not eligible for regular government educational grants. Hence, the financing of continuing professional education constitutes a substantial barrier to participation. The situation is improving, however, since the passage of the 1988 Higher Education Reorganization Act, which allows universities and polytechnics to use government funding to aid part-time students. As a result, part-time enrollments are beginning to grow.

Another barrier to participation in continuing professional education has been the structure and delivery of educational programs. Short courses do not always correspond to the kind of educational opportunity needed, and in many cases, they result in neither a qualification or transferable credit. These problems are being remedied by the evolution of three mechanisms: modular educational units, a system of transferable credit, and a method for validating employer-provided education and training.

An example of advances in modular education and transferability is provided by the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE), a professional body that is active in supporting continuing professional education. The IEE has designed a modularized master's degree program in which the engineering curriculum of this long course is

subdivided into instructional modules that can be individually taught. Interested postsecondary institutions are invited by IEE to design and develop individual modules. The Institute approves these together with the institutions, keeps the central records, and certifies program completion. Institutions may only offer modules in areas in which they possess faculty expertise and which they can easily update as required. Employers and students enjoy flexibility in terms of choice of modules to take, scheduling, and convenience, since the entire course need not be taken at the same location or in the same sequence. In addition, transferability of credit is guaranteed by the arrangements between IEE and the cooperating institutions. Modules are usually offered in intensive 2-week sessions, which is the period viewed by industry and the profession as the most convenient time of absence from work for a professional engineer.

A related component of enhanced educational flexibility is increased interest in validating employer-provided continuing professional education, as well as progress toward a system of evaluating experiential learning. In principle, any provider of continuing professional education can turn to the Council on National Academic Awards (CNAA) for an assessment of academic equivalence. The CNAA has made this process more formal and convenient by launching a national *Credit Accumulation and Training Scheme*. It should be noted, however, that this Scheme —together with the increased attention being given to assessment—has invigorated the national debate on knowledge-based *versus* practice-based standards.

The fourth problem affecting participation in continuing professional education in the United Kingdom is the lack of transparency of the system. Most individuals—as well as most small and medium sized employers—have difficulty obtaining adequate information about the bewildering array of offerings and providers. The DTI *Training Directory* provides some assistance, but probably not enough. Access to continuing professional education for employees of small enterprises, or self-employed practicioners, remains problematic. It is difficult for small enterprises to cover for key personnel in their absence; to realize sufficient income margins to allow investment in personnel development; or to risk having the newly trained or updated employee leave to join a rival firm. Both the Departments of Education and Science, and Training and Industry, have initiated special measures to encourage the participation of small businesses in continuing professional education.

An interesting innovation in the United Kingdom has been the development of consortia of educational institutions and employers to improve the provision of continuing professional education. One noteworthy example of such a consortium is

CONTACT, formed in 1986 by five postsecondary educational institutions in and near Manchester. CONTACT undertakes joint activities in all forms of advanced continuing education and training taken by individuals after an interval following their initial education. This can include all kind of continuing education, but the program descriptions indicate an emphasis on continuing professional education and on close collaboration between employers and educators.

CONTACT is highly unusual in bringing together very disparate types of institutions: the Victoria University of Manchester, one of the major "Red Brick" universities created in the nineteenth century; Salford University, a post-war institution founded originally as a College of Advanced Technology; the University of Manchester Institute for Science and Technology, a technological institution affiliated with the Victoria University; Manchester Polytechnic, one of a series of national postsecondary technical and engineering schools; and Manchester Business School, a recent private foundation offering American-style management education. CONTACT is intended to

- Serve as a single "one-stop shop" access and information point for employers and employees seeking continuing professional education;

- Collaborate with other providers and interested organizations to market and promote continuing education and training services;

- Represent the common continuing professional education interests of the five member institutions at regional, national, and international levels; and

- Carry out joint projects to identify and increase demand for instructional services or improve the efficiency of the delivery of these services.

CONTACT has also started a system of Continuing Professional Development Awards (CPDA) which make it possible for individuals to accumulate credits toward an eventual diploma—a CPDA—by means of individualized combinations of six modules of 20 hours credit each. The CPDA program is designed to benefit both employers and employees. Employers can use CPDAs as a way of planning skills development and technical updating goals in line with the identified needs of their enterprises. Individual employees will obtain a recognized certification of their

educational progress which they can use both for internal advancement as well as in changing jobs.

Another example of a recently created continuing professional education consortium is JUPITER (Joint Universities and Polytechnics Industrial Technology Education and Research). JUPITER brings together a large number of leading corporations, universities, and polytechnics on the basis of a common interest in state-of-the-art technologies rather than geographic proximity. It is a nationwide network. Corporations and educational institutions work together in JUPITER to identify areas in high technology fields where continuing professional education is needed, develop appropriate offerings, and make them widely known and available. One example of a JUPITER-sponsored activity is a listing of research opportunities and course offerings in software engineering available at 56 universities and 37 polytechnics.

Conclusion

Any description of existing continuing professional education activities in the United Kingdom tends to focus on the positive achievements, rather than on the great deal which still needs to be done. The progress made in a comparatively short time, chiefly in the 1980s, has been impressive, and appears to be due to a considerable extent to a number of effective government initiatives. Such an active and highly visible role for government not only appears to have had substantial success—the PICKUP program has essentially created modern continuing professional education in Britain—but stands in marked contrast to the prevalent policy of recent Conservative Party governments toward state intervention and subsidies.

Despite progress, the United Kingdom, like most other countries, has a long way to go before it can be satisfied with its system of continuing professional education. Enough time has not yet passed for old educational attitudes to be transformed or for policies toward encouraging and regulating continuing professional education to mature. Still missing, in the words of one observer, is a "strong pro-training industrial culture" and a more systematic use by government of "tax policy, company law and employment law so as to bias the decisions of individuals and employers in favour of heavy investment in continuing professional education" (OECD, 1991/2c, p. 63).

Part Two: France

The emergence of continuing professional education as an important activity in France dates, in large measure, from 1971. Continuing professional education received a major boost in that year with the passage of a dramatic and precedent-setting piece of national legislation, the Act of 16 July 1971. (It is customary in France to designate major legislation by the date of passage.)

Background to the Act of 1971

French continuing professional education legislation grew out of discussions and negotiations between what, in France as in other Continental European countries, are known as the *social partners*: unions, professional associations, employers, and the government. The use of this term is highly significant and characterizes a fundamental distinction in political culture between most European countries and the United States. There exists on the European Continent a sense of a commonality of interest among the institutional actors in society, despite frequent adversarial clashes such as those between unions and employers. No concept of an essential and permanent antagonism between government and the governed, or among the "social partners," permeates political philosophy or national attitudes and behavior. This sense of partnership, of shared teamwork, is probably strongest in the Scandinavian countries, but it is very pronounced as well in the rest of Europe, including Germany and France—in spite of the substantial ideological dichotomy between labor unions and employers which exists in those countries. The situation in the United Kingdom is closest to that prevailing in the United States (about the only place in Europe that is), where one might observe a lot of actual cooperation among political actors, but rarely hear symbolic rhetorical expressions like "social partnership."

At the time that the Act of 1971 was passed, it was seen primarily as an important component of national *social* policy. Its explicitly stated purposes were

- To provide a remedy for social inequalities by giving a "second chance" to individuals excluded from further progress in the highly selective French educational system;

- To provide what would now be called "empowerment," and was then described as giving individuals greater control over their lives by improving their level of education and training; and

- To enhance employers' ability to accomodate change by facilitating the adaptation of employees to new skill requirements.

Only the third of these three original purposes related the Act to economic, as differentiated from social, objectives. The year 1971 was a time of substantial prosperity and economic growth in France. Subsequent economic downturns would result in the emphasis for implementing the Act shifting decisively from social equality to the economic necessity of insuring continuing occupational development of the workforce.

Provisions of the Act of 1971

The Act, which is still in force, contains the following key provisions:

- It establishes the right of all salaried workers to take training leaves, i.e. to attend developmental activities during working hours; and

- It establishes the obligation of all employers with more than 10 employees to participate in the financing of continuing vocational training (*Formation Continue*) to the extent of at least 0.8 percent of their total payroll (an amount later raised by amendment to 1.1, and then 1.2, percent).

(It is interesting to note, as a historical footnote, that the individual most responsible for the conception and passage of this legislation is Jacques Delors, then the Principal Assistant to the Prime Minister and now Secretary of the European Community.)

The Law of 1971 is intended to create incentives rather than to promulgate prescriptions. It requires the expenditure of the indicated fraction of employee expenses on training activities but leaves the choice of activity to the employer. An enterprise can spend part or all of its obligated amount on in-house programs; can contribute to regional or sectoral organizations that provide training; can support regional or sectoral funds set up to finance training activities; or it can make payments to the central government.

Developments Since 1971

In recent years, the Act of 1971 has been supplemented by further legislation and by implementation decisions that have expanded, but not altered, its basic purposes. The shift in emphasis from social to economic goals occurred in 1981 when the Mitterand government assumed office and promulgated a new education and training policy. Henceforth, education and training were to be viewed as integral components of a national strategy for economic growth and employment, not as a form of "welfare activity" to deal with unemployment and social dislocation. A difference may be noted here between this French policy direction and that pursued in the United States, where a succession of federal job- and training-related legislation, such as CETA and JETP, have continued to view occupationally related education as a "welfare activity" rather than an instrument for economic growth.

Over the years, the implementation of the Act has led to the creation of two kinds of organizations specifically intended to facilitate participation in continuing professional education by employees of small and medium-sized enterprises. One of these is a nationwide series of *Fonds d'Assurance de Formation* (FAF—training insurance funds), organized by economic sector. The funds support a variety of continuing education programs available to enterprises within a given sector that pay into a fund and, in turn, receive membership benefits. In some cases, membership as well as a contribution of at least a portion of the required minimum corporate training expenditure to the fund has been made mandatory for all enterprises belonging to that sector. The second category of new organization to emerge consists of the *Associations de Formation* (training associations), which are organized in each of the French Regions. They carry out regional training needs assessments, identify demands for types of programs, initiate program development, and frequently organize and deliver educational and training activities. The *Associations de Formation* may also be supported by interested enterprises as a means of fulfilling their obligations under the Act of 1971.

To facilitate participation in the various continuing professional education activities available as part of *Formation Continue*, a network for disseminating advice and information has been developed. National funds collected under the auspices of the Act of 1971 are used to support the *Centre d'Information sur la Formation*, known by the acronym *CentreInffo*. This is a national center for occupational training information which maintains an up-to-date database of available courses and programs. It is nationally accessable by personal computer via the French *Minitel* electronic network, which now reaches over 2.5 million sites

in homes, offices, and public buildings (libaries, employment offices, schools, etc.). Minitel operates by means of a telephone hookup and allows users not only to tap into CentreInffo but also to access a wide variety of databases and information networks ranging from movie and theatre program schedules to sports events. In addition, CentreInffo publishes a series of newsletters, brochures, and other materials designed to provide detailed information on specific continuing education programs and opportunities.

The national CentreInffo data bank is supplemented by an extensive network of local and regional information outlets and counseling centers. Many French town halls, as well as department and regional government buildings, have offices to which individuals and employers can turn for advice on what is locally available and their optimal strategy, in view of their needs, for pursuing or providing continuing professional education. Other sources of counseling include local chambers of commerce, national and local union offices, and professional association chapters. CentreInffo sits at the hub of this information network and coordinates the flow of information among all the cooperating components.

Since its implementation, the Act of 1971 and subsequent elaborations have made continuing occupational education a permanent and significant feature of French economy and society. Between 1972 and 1988, the annual percentage of French employees at all levels participating in training almost tripled, rising from 10.7 to 29.7 percent. Employer's average financial contributions to training programs doubled during the same period, going from 1.35 percent of payroll to 2.77 percent—substantially more than the mandated minimum. Interestingly enough, however, the average length of time that employees participated in training decreased, from 62 hours per year in 1972 to only 47 hours per year in 1988 (CEREQ, 1989, p. 11).

Current Continuing Professional Education Patterns

The national data cited for the period 1972-88 are aggregate numbers and national avaerages that cut across all economic sectors and all levels and types of employment. Disaggregation is necessary in order to gain an impression of the position of continuing professional education (as defined in the United States) in this picture, as well as to identify patterns and issues that are important in the French context.

Once the data for French continuing training activities are disaggregated, substantial imbalances and disparities in the distribution of activity appear. Certain sectors of the French economy—particularly the banking and transportation industries—participate in continuing training at a rate of about 3 percent of payroll costs, more than twice the mandated minimum support rate. At the other end of the scale, the consumer goods sector and the wholesale and retail trade sectors participate barely enough to qualify as obeying the law. In these latter cases, the reason apparently is that the notion that continuous updating of worker skills by means of formal education and training has not yet become accepted as part of the sectoral work cultures. Enterprises in these sectors continue to rely on external labor markets (occasional hiring), experience rapid employee turnover, and rely on on-the-job training to impart needed skills to hirees. They do participate in apprenticeship programs and in special employment projects to combat youth joblessness. Participation in continuing training is thus closely related to the characteristics, traditions, and needs of particular industries and their workforces.

Substantial differences in access to continuing education and training exist as well according to the level of employment within an industry. Nationally, for example, 45 percent of all engineers and management professionals tend to annually participate in continuing training; and 49 percent of all technical and supervisory personnel. By contrast, 21 percent of workers in skilled trades and occupations, and only 12 percent of semi- and unskilled workers, participated in any annual continuing education or training. (CEREQ, 1991, p. 3)

The size of an enterprise also relates to the degree of participation in *Formation Continue*, as might be expected from the special efforts made to promote such participation by smaller employers. As of 1988, the percentage of salaried employees in an enterprise taking some form of annual training ranged from an average of 8 percent for those with 10-19 employees to 49 percent for those employing more than 2,000. The 1988 national average was 29 percent of all employees, regardless of enterprise size. Two out of every three small firms had no training participants at all, while virtually every large firm (over 2,000 employees) did (CEREQ, 1991, p. 3).

These patterns of participation are very similar to those reported in other countries, including the United States, and they persist in France in spite of the mandatory financial participation requirements of the Act of 1971. French reports on continuing occupational training attribute the uneven degree of participation, especially by small and medium-sized enterprises, to

> . . . *the management and* [business] *strategies of small firms. For the SMEs* [small and medium enterprises], *the legal obligations quickly became a tax levy, which only accentuated the disparity between the norm defined by lawmakers and their spontaneous behaviours. For these forms, on-the-job apprenticeships are the preferred way to develop skills. Nor can they easily part with their employees to send them to training courses. Thus far from favouring SMEs, the intermediate institutions* [the training insurance funds and the training associations] *have in fact put them at a disadvantage by limiting their financing to predefined training activities that are hardly compatible with their organizational makeup* (CEREQ, 1991, p.4).

Other reports, as well as conversations with French experts, reinforce the impression that the system of *Formation Continue* is not used effectively by small and medium-sized enterprises who, as a result, seem to pay more into the system than they receive from it. Instead of being, as intended, a progressive system which helps smaller employers offset the handicap of limited size and resources, the current approach turns out to be regressive, providing relatively more benefits to large and wealthy firms than to those it is intended to assist.

In the larger enterprises, by contrast, continuing professional education, especially for upper level employees, has evolved from being merely an obligatory expense to an integral and accepted component of organizational operations and strategy. According to a recent CEREQ report, large firm training activities have

> . . . *become a veritable organizing principle of work. Indeed, the most innovative firms now place training at the centre of their industrial development programmes, where it can be actively mobilized at every phase of transition. . . . In the current phase of innovation, vocational training is becoming more operational, both through renewed links with work and employment and through its concrete integration into decision-making processes.*
>
> *In this new organizational model, continuing training becomes a necessary condition for ongoing adaptation to internal change . . .* [and] *is no longer a stop gap measure to be mobilized in emergencies . . .* [but] *has become an active variable in the structuring and management of the firm* (CEREQ, 1991, p.4).

An important feature of this changing attitude toward training has been a strong trend toward decentralizing the training function within large firms. Employee development is no longer the sole purview of a central human resource office, but is increasingly becoming the responsibility of middle managers, both with regard to the definition of needs and the design and delivery of programs.

Conclusion

The Act of 1971, together with subsequent amendments, is currently under review and is likely to be superseded by new legislation by the time this paper is published. Two major changes are expected. First, the system of employer contributions will be made variable, so that the size and the economic sector of an enterprise will affect the percentage of its payroll costs that is has to dedicate to formal continuing education and training activities. Second, the new law will incorporate *co-investissement*, a joint investment strategy in which the costs of training activities are shared between the employer and the employee. In addition, there is discussion about requiring a commitment by any employee participating in a continuing training activity to remain with the sponsoring employer for a certain length of time after completing the program.

These issues are subjects of some contention among the French "social partners," and they must come to an agreement before any statutory changes can be made. Many observers expect the unions and professional associations to agree to the concept of *co-investissement* only on condition that any education or training program to which an employee has contributed become "portable," or capable of being of continuing value if the employee changes jobs. In essence this would mean the development of some form of certification, and perhaps a system of assigning transferable credits—something which is also being actively discussed in the United Kingdom. Portability is an issue that has substantial bearing on both the future content and organization of continuing professional education in France. Such an innovation could help to offset the prevailing trend toward short, *ad hoc* fragments of continuing professional education and promote more coherent modularization. However, if credits and certification were to be granted through the offices of existing postsecondary educational institutions, it could also result in continuing professional education becoming more knowledge based and theoretical than now, with a resultant content gap between it and the requirements of practice.

In sum, it can be said that the Act of 1971 has resulted in much greater attention by French employers to the continuing development of their workforce

than appears to be the case in some other European countries. Many problems and shortcomings still exist, prominent among them being the difficulty of encouraging smaller enterprises to provide continuing professional education opportunities for their employees, and the need to expand access to continuing occupational education for individuals at lower occupational levels. Furthermore, the substantial growth of French continuing professional education has taken place within the context of a focus on short-term economic benefits and skill remediation of skill and knowledge gaps, rather than assessment of long-range changes in work-related educational requirements as related to economic and technological changes. In this, the French are not alone. Where France stands out is the degree to which the concept of continuing professional education, and other forms of inservice vocational training, has gained widespread acceptance as a component of economic and social policy.

Part Three: Germany

In Germany, as elsewhere, interest in and availability of continuing professional education has increased dramatically in recent years, for all the reasons which exist in other countries as well: for example, the growing economic value of a highly skilled workforce; the accelerating rate of technological and other change; and growing international competition. Germany also resembles other industrialized countries in that there exist both long- and short-term modes of continuing professional education. These are provided by the usual actors: postsecondary educational institutions; employers; professional associations; chambers of commerce and similar sectoral bodies; as well as private, for-profit enterprises. A further element of similarity with other countries is the lack of reliable and meaningful information regarding the scope of continuing professional education activity.

A Background Perspective

Germany has a long tradition of employer commitment to human resource development. The deservedly well-known German apprenticeship system (*Dualsystem*), in which about 70 percent of all German youth are enrolled at a yearly cost of close to $ 20 billion, is run and almost totally funded by the Chambers of Industry and Commerce, to which all German enterprises must belong and contribute. The Chambers also are heavily involved in continuing education at various occupational levels, including continuing professional education. Germany also has a system of strong and active professional and trade associations, which are

substantial providers of continuing professional education to their members. As in other countries, a number of large corporations also provide extensive continuing education opportunities for their employees, including professionals. Yet, in Germany as elsewhere, there is a strong correlation between participation and occupational level.

The best (yet still inadequate) information available about the state of continuing professional education in Germany exists with regard to that provided by higher education institutions. In the aggregate, they provide between 5 and 10 percent of currently available continuing professional education either directly or through separate institutions which we will describe presently. Germany, like most European countries, has a binary system of higher education which distinguishes between universities, on the one hand, and other postsecondary institutions, on the other. Universities offer traditional academic degrees in the arts and sciences disciplines, plus a few professionally oriented subjects—such as engineering, law, medicine, and theology—that require very advanced study over a long period of time, ending in the award of higher degrees, and that have been historically associated with university studies and research. The orientation of university education is toward theory and research rather than practical application.

Nonuniversity postsecondary institutions include such types as independent professional or vocational schools, technical institutes, institutions providing instruction in art and music, government training institutions, teacher training institutions, and theological seminaries. In Germany, the nonuniversity group of institutions consists mainly of the *Fachhochschulen (FHS)*, which are postsecondary professional and technical education colleges. *Fachhochschulen* range from small institutions specializing in one or a few cognate fields to large comprehensive establishments resembling universities. They award the rough equivalent of a first postsecondary degree in the subject or subjects offered, called a *Diplom-Fachhochschulen (DFH)*, which is also an entry-level certification of professional qualification. Shorter programs are also offered. The duration of the diploma course in a *Fachhochschule* is usually about a year less than the average of 6 or more years to a first university degree. Curricula are oriented toward professional practice and immediately transferable skills and include closely supervised periods of practical job experience alternated with classroom and laboratory work. Faculty qualifications for appointments to teach in *Fachhochschulen* include several years of industrial or other practical experience, as well as advanced degrees or equivalent credentials. Thus one would expect—and indeed one seems to find—a somewhat greater receptivity and stronger orientation toward continuing professional education in the *Fachhochschulen* than in the *Universitäten*.

In what follows both types of institution will be considered together, because there are probably more similarities than differences between them with regard to the topic at hand. For both, it can be said that their role in continuing professional education has, until recently, been very limited. Indeed, in spite of considerable recent growth in continuing professional education involvement by German postsecondary institutions, their participation continues to lag substantially behind the situation in the United States and also a good deal behind the *status quo* in the United Kingdom and France.

A major impetus for greater contribution of higher education to continuing professional education in Germany (then West Germany) came in 1976 when the federal government in Bonn passed a new so-called "Framework Law" for higher education. The primary responsibility for education at all levels in Germany (both former West and now united Germany) lies with the *Länder* (the federal states). The states' policies and regulations regarding higher education must, however, be formulated within an overall statutory "framework" established by the federal government. It is the responsibility of the federal government, and particularly the *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft* (Federal Ministry for Education and Science), to set overall national policies with regard to the mission of educational institutions, define classifications of academic employment, and set overall salary scales. The "Framework Law," which contains all of this, also specifies the responsibilities and workload of the professoriate (who are public civil servants) and places certain stipulations on outside earnings.

The new "Framework Law" of 1976 for the first time specifically called on postsecondary institutions to offer continuing professional education at an appropriately high academic level, as well as to contribute to continuing professional education programs provided by other organizations. The principal reasons given for this addition to the traditional tasks of *Universitäten* and *Fachhochschulen* were that

- Preparatory education, no matter how extended, cannot provide adequately for a lifelong career; and
- The development of continuing professional education could contribute to an abbreviation of preparatory study.

However, the 1976 Framework Law did not include teaching in continuing professional education programs as part of the official workload of a professor.

Obstacles to Institution-Based Continuing Professional Education

The impact of the 1976 mandate has, unfortunately, been quite limited, in part because of the exclusion of continuing professional education from faculty workload requirements but also for other reasons. In the universities and to a considerable extent also in the *Fachhochschulen*, continuing professional education remains very much a fringe activity. There is little awareness of its importance within the postsecondary academic community in spite of mounting pressures on the outside. Skepticism about and reluctance to engage in it are frequently encountered. The tradition and self-concept of German universities, in particular, make it difficult for them to pay serious attention to continuing professional education. As stated in a recent German report on the issue: "Even today, the prestige of continuing education at universities still cannot yet compete with that of research and teaching at the university level" (HIS, 1989, p. 9).

A further major obstacle to the development of continuing professional education as a central task of German postsecondary education has been the post-war baby boom. As a matter of national policy, Germany decided some years ago not to enlarge its postsecondary education sector, either in terms of numbers of institutions or enrollment levels, proportionally to the anticipated demographic bulge. German officials predicted—accurately as it turned out—that the bulge in the population of university age would be followed by a trough. The immediate consequence during the 1980s, however, has been a severe strain on postsecondary education facilities, resources and personnel due to over enrollment during the current "boom" phase. Coping with overcrowding has further diminished the institutional interest in new ventures into what appears to be questionable territory.

The contribution of German postsecondary education to national continuing professional education activity is very much less than that of US colleges and universities, and appreciably less than that of academic institutions in several other European countries. Yet most postsecondary institutions, albeit somewhat reluctantly, have now realized the necessity for continuing professional education and for their involvement in it. This realization has been enhanced by the simultaneous growth in technology transfer and other modes of contact and collaboration with business and industry.

It should be noted as well that a large number of individual faculty are actually involved, in a very lucrative way, as consultants in continuing professional education activities sponsored by employers and private providers—despite the skepticism and opposition of faculty as a group to the idea of including it in the

institutional mission. Overall, about two-thirds of all postsecondary faculty participate in some form of continuing professional education (this figure includes even a one-time appearance as a presenter in a workshop or seminar,) mostly under noninstitutional auspices. Participation obviously varies by discipline: over 90 percent of faculty in business, for example, but only 40 percent in physics are involved in continuing professional education activities.

Non-Institutional Developments

Whereas Germany is lagging in the area of direct provision of continuing professional education by postsecondary institutions, some of the *Länder* have used state funds to create excellent technology transfer mechanisms which could be a model for the United States and many other countries. The focus of these efforts is on providing practice-oriented technical assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises faced with adapting and integrating new technology and other advances. Transfer or Contact Centers located at individual institutions are the means by which this is being done. These Centers resemble American agricultural experiment and extension stations. They are usually specialized in one technical area of regional interest—such as textiles or biotechnology—and associated with an appropriate *Fachhochschule* or university which has substantial faculty expertise in the field as well as appropriate facilities. In addition to state-sponsored systems of such Centers which exist in a few *Länder*, there exists a federally supported organization—the *Frauenhofer Gesellschaft*—which builds and manages applied research and development centers in close proximity to and collaboration with universities.

In principle, technology transfer is closely related to continuing professional education and can indeed be viewed as a form of it. How far continuing professional education and technology transfer will become mutually reinforcing depends, of course, on the extent to which continuing professional education—in Germany or anywhere else—becomes practice- rather than knowledge-based.

The most interesting development with regard to organized delivery of continuing professional education in Germany has been the creation of a number of quasi-independent bodies, technically referred to as "private law institutions," somewhat resembling "authorities" in the United States. The Germans use the word *Weiterbildungsakademie* (academy for continuing or further education) to denote such an institution which, not being a state institution, is not bound by the regulations governing postsecondary education. *Weiterbildungsakademien* are able to provide supplementary pay to university and *Fachhochschulen* faculty for

participation in continuing professional education programs that they offer. In principle, the academies also have much flexibility with regard to the format and content of their offerings, but to date they have not been very innovative. The longer courses offered by *Weiterbildungsakademien* resemble traditional programs in the same fields offered by universities and *Fachhochschulen*: formal lectures, set syllabi and examinations, and minimal interaction or feedback. A large proportion of the shorter offerings also rely heavily on a lecture format. Almost all of the instruction is face to face, usually on academy premises but in some cases also at the workplace. Distance education and other learning technology are being introduced slowly and face considerable skepticism.

One can view the *Weiterbildungsakademie* development in two quite different ways. On the one hand, they can be hailed as an effective way of overcoming the inherent inertia of the higher education system and of constituting an new organization fully committed to the development and marketing of continuing professional education. The academies have the advantage—similar to that of divisions or schools of continuing education in the United States—of being able to respond to external demand with great flexibility and speed, being subject to few procedural and policy limitations and not requiring elaborate approval mechanisms. Both types of organization organize and deliver their own programs rather than brokering offerings by regular schools and departments. In addition, the academies can provide supplementary pay for full-time faculty, which state institutions cannot do. On the other hand, the academies can also be seen as reducing the pressure on traditional postsecondary education to change. Providing continuing professionasl education primarily through distinct units outside the *Universitäten* or *Fachhochschulen* further intensifies the isolation of such activities from the academic mainstream, limits the reciprocal interaction with the rest of postsecondary education, reduces the benefits for postsecondary institutions of closer contact with practitioners, and makes the likelihood of any impact on preparatory education remote. It also intensifies the trend to limit continuing professional education to subject matter of narrowly vocational content.

Supporting and Accessing Continuing Professional Education

The prevalent pattern for financing German continuing professional education programs is that of programmatic self-support on the basis of fees paid either by participants or their employers. German anti-trust laws seem to require that fees charged by state providers be competitive with those of private providers of

equivalent programs. A recent federal commission recommended as guidelines the following:

- A system of mandatory fees, preferably charged through the *Weiterbildungsakademien*;
- That state providers charge market prices if competing with private sector vendors;
- That low or no fees be charged if certain programs are deemed to be in the public interest; and
- That fees be reduced or waived for certain participants if it is in the social interest.

According to statute, there are no fixed admissions requirements for continuing professional education, and possessing a first postsecondary degree is not essential. In practice, however, almost all participants in continuing professional education programs provided by traditional postsecondary institutions either have a *Fachhochschule* or university qualification, or substantial work experience, especially if they are enrolled in a longer term program. The question of certification upon completion of a continuing professional education program—what sort of award it might be and what recognition it would carry—is a contentious one in Germany. Historically and legally, postsecondary credentials are closely linked to job level and salary entitlement and carry great social significance, as well as often being licenses to practice an occupation.

It is perhaps this linkage which provides at least a partial explanation for the relatively low level of continuing professional education activity in Germany. There exists a very strong tradition which creates a one-to-one correspondence between a university or a *Fachhochschule* degree and what is known as *Berufsfähigkeit*, the ability to carry out an occupation or profession. Without a degree in the appropriate field and at the appropriate level, the ability is simply not there, regardless of what mix of experience and formal education an individual has acquired. By the same token, the degree, as if by magic, confers that ability in a permanent fashion. Continuing professional education may thus be seen as either unnecessary or composed of trivial elements that would not be studied in a serious program. Any other interpretation threatens the sanctity of the degree.

This view of the diploma as both a necessary as well as sufficient condition for continuing professional competence is reinforced by the great length of first-degree programs in the universities (7 years is quite common) and only a little bit less in the *Fachhochschulen*. The strong correlation between formal degrees and occupational qualification is also indicated by the extent to which all types of postsecondary education, including continuing professional education, intended either to advance an individual's expertise or to broaden it, occurs in either formal degree programs or in settings that mimic formal academic study.

Conclusion

The low level of German continuing professional activity is particularly puzzling because there exists in that country, as mentioned previously, a very strong tradition of employer commitment to human resource development. Vast sums are spent by employers on Germany's elaborate and very successful apprenticeship program, and this is based on a complete acceptance by employers that such an investment is in their own best interest. (Apprenticeship programs exist for all levels of occupation, from the semi-skilled to the professional.) That attitude is also reflected in substantial expenditures for in-house programs of continuing professional education for employees in the larger corporations, but has not spread throughout the entire employment sector as one might have expected. As in other countries, employees of small employers have much less access to organized continuing professional education than those in larger enterprises. This imbalance is partially offset by strong emphasis in many smaller enterprises on what might be called supervised on-the-job training: a more systematic process of development than the traditional one of standing at the expert's elbow and learning by observing. Consistent with the German tradition of employer self-interest in employee development, much emphasis is placed on explicit mentoring. If one factors in the cost of such activities, German small and medium-sized enterprises spend more per employee on continuing professional education than do larger enterprises.

Part Four: The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, as in other industrialized countries, both government and employers are paying increasing attention to the economic importance of a skilled workforce and to education as an investment. Interest in continuing education activities, including continuing professional education, is clearly on the rise.

Development of the Dutch Approach

In December 1989 the Dutch "social partners" (government, employers, and the representatives of employees) signed a document outlining a policy framework for a concerted effort to promote employment. Almost one-fourth of this document relates to training and education, with emphasis on key items such as systematic needs assessment; employee mobility and versatility, both within and among companies; the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises; and a more equitable distribution of continuing educational opportunities to all occupational levels.

There now exists in the Netherlands a reasonable degree of consensus on how responsibility for training employees should be divided among employers, employees, and the government. The overall emphasis is on joint responsibility among the "social partners," with primary funding to be provided by the principal beneficiary. Government, for example, should be the principal funding source for general adult education and for programs aimed at the unemployed. Employers, singly or collectively, are responsible for continuing professional (and lower-level occupational) education, which is primarily to the benefit of them and their employees. A new Manpower Services Act has created a national board with regional sub-boards to identify training needs and to ensure that appropriate offerings are available.

Non-Institutional Continuing Professional Education

Currently, the majority of programs appear to be provided in-house by employers, primarily—as usual—by larger firms. Most employer-provided training courses are short and focused on specific, well defined skills, and most are intended for middle- and higher-level staff. This is the same pattern as that found in other countries.

One finds, as well, a growing tie-in of continuing education (professional and occupational) and collective bargaining. In 1989 two-thirds of the major collective bargaining agreements included a training and education component. In the banking sector, for example, a recent labor contract provides up to 5 days of paid leave per year for individual career development. This provision was accepted by the banking employees' union in lieu of a shorter work week. In the metals industry an agreement recently reached calls for an amount equal to 0.6 percent of each individual's wages to be available for further education and training.

The Role of Educational Institutions

The Netherlands, like Germany and—until recently—the United Kingdom, has a binary system of higher education (*hoger onderwijs—HO*), consisting of institutions of *wetenschappelijk onderwijs* (WO—higher research education), mainly the universities, and *hoger beroeps onderwijs* (HBO—higher occupational education), primarily technical and professional schools that range—as in Germany—from single-subject to comprehensive institutions. The participation of institutions in both of these educational sectors in continuing professional education is still quite limited, even as compared with other European countries. However, as everywhere else, considerable attention is now beginning to be paid to this issue and, as a result, continuing professional education activities provided by postsecondary educational institutions is on the rise. Their development, as in the United Kingdom, is being assisted by government funds made available for starting programs and infrastructure development.

The barriers to the participation of postsecondary educational institutions in continuing professional education are similar to those elsewhere:

- The absence of an administrative and organizational infrastructure within institutions which is "customer-friendly" and efficient;
- Statutory as well as budgetary barriers to enlarging institutional missions to include continuing professional education, as well as to the employment of faculty and staff in such activities;
- The inability to provide extra pay to participating faculty, even if they participate in continuing professional education provided under contract to a company; and
- Inadequate faculty pedagogic skills for instructing adults, as well as a lack of practical experience in designing and providing effective instructional programs to experienced adult audiences.

Two recent developments in Dutch postsecondary education should be mentioned, because both are related to continuing professional education. One is an increase in the availability of part-time study at the higher education level, particularly through the relatively recent creation of an Open University. The

second is the growing availability of what is classified as "post-initial" higher education, or what we would call graduate study. In 1982 the traditional Dutch first university degree, the *doctoraal/doctorandus*—a 6-year unitary diploma functionally equivalent to somewhere between an American master's degree or ABD status—was drastically shortened. It is now a 4-year program leading to something more like a British bachelor's degree. This *eerste fase* (first-phase higher education) is now followed by a number of 1- to 2-year *tweede fase* (second-phase) programs which are mandatory for practice licensure in professional fields such as medicine, law, and accounting. In addition, second phase programs are available in other fields. The attention of postsecondary educational institutions, particularly the universities, has to date been directed more at the development of these programs than at the so-called "post-academic" programs.

Educational/Employer Collaboration and the Future

The Minister of Education and Science appointed a Commission on Education-Employment which issued a report in June 1990. In it, the Commission called for greater collaboration between the educational system at all levels and the employment sector, mutually binding cooperative arrangements, and the development of integrated work-and-learning programs as the last phase, not only of secondary but also of higher education. These recommendations, which are still under consideration, will clearly have a substantial impact on the fu.ıher development of continuing professional education in the Netherlands.

Part Five: Developments Across the European Community

The European Community (EC) has steadily moved from being a dream—a utopian one to some, a nightmare to others—to becoming a reality. It is now taking a further major step in that direction with the creation of the Single European Market based on the Maastricht Accord of December, 1991. Community-wide consistency in many policies and procedures is now being implemented. The post-Maastricht policies are likely to affect education in various ways, although at this time one comes across differing estimates as to the nature and extent of the impact.

EC Activities Affecting Postsecondary Education

Already there exist a number of EC-sponsored programs which are directly related to postsecondary education. The best known among these is ERASMUS (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students), an information and processing network designed to promote and facilitate student and faculty mobility within the Community and to promote cross-national cooperation. ERASMUS not only supports faculty and student exchanges but has also been very active in designing and implementing the pilot phase of a Community-wide academic credit transfer system. In addition, it has been involved in moving toward reciprocal recognition of postsecondary awards and qualifications.

In this connection, it should be mentioned that after many years of unsuccessful efforts to bring about Community-wide recognition of professional diplomas (as distinct from academic ones) by moving toward harmonization of content, the members of the EC took the remarkable step of providing for reciprocal recognition on the basis of mutual trust. In principle, individuals certified as professionals—such as engineers or physicians—in one country can now practice their profession in all other member countries. One obvious exception to this development involves the practice of law, due to the existing differences in legal systems. How well this system will actually function in practice remains to be seen.

Another EC program, COMMETT (Community Program in Education and Training for Technology), focuses on enhanced cooperation between postsecondary education and industry on a local, national, and international level. It supports a large number of so-called *University-Enterprise Training Partnerships (UETPs)* to develop and strengthen cooperation in training workers for advanced technologies and encourages transnational exchanges between university and industry as well as transnational student internship placements.

A brand-new program, FORCE, focuses specifically on continuing vocational and professional education. Its objectives are

- To convince enterprises of all kinds that they need to invest in continuing training and then encouraging them to provide it;
- To ensure that enterprises can design and model their training activities based on up-to-date information and data on the best continuing training activities available;

- To encourage more innovation in training management, methodology, and equipment;

- To support transnational training projects and encourage wide exchange of experience and individual mobility; and

- To help training systems respond to labor market needs and changes by improving Community-wide forecasting of occupational and qualification needs.

There is every reason to believe that the cumulative impact of these programs, particularly of COMMETT and FORCE, will, like that of PICKUP in the United Kingdom, be substantial in encouraging joint action by employers and educators in the identification of needs and the development of appropriate vocational and professional continuing education programs. In addition, these programs are likely to enhance communication and dialogue across national borders both with regard to pertinent policy issues as well as to "best practices" and exchanges of experience.

EC Collaborative Initiatives

Two EC initiatives are specifically designed to further the goals of transnational collaboration among employers and postsecondary education in the occupational and professional fields. One is EUROTECNET, officially described as an "Action Program to Promote Innovation in the Field of Vocational Training Resulting from Technological Change in the European Community." EUROTECNET is intended to establish a Community-wide network of workplace knowledge and skills updating projects developed in response to technological changes. A second project consists of the establishment of a large number of *Euro Info Centers* specifically charged with providing information to small and medium-sized enterprises on the entire range of commercial and human resource issues, including matters of training and education. So far, 187 such centers have been established throughout the EC member countries.

One further aspect of the European Community may have important future consequences for continuing professional education in member countries, although it is far too early to make any real predictions. Among the basic documents being developed as part of the movement toward European unification is a so-called "Social Charter" which spells out the rights of individuals within the framework of

cross-national movement. Its principal focus will be on matters such as health and retirement benefits, working conditions, and the like. In addition, it is thought likely that the Social Charter, if and when it emerges, will contain a statement of individual rights to preparatory and further education, with an emphasis more on the availability of such education than on financial support for it.

European Initiatives Outside the EC Organization

Two further developments related to continuing professional education should be mentioned here because of their Europe-wide impact, although neither has any formal connection to the European Community organization. The first is *EuroPACE* (European Program for Advanced Continuing Education), which delivers educational television programs by satellite to a substantial number of corporate and university sites throughout Western Europe. At this time, about 25 courses of 5 to 10 hours' duration are available in six high-technology fields, such as advanced manufacturing technologies and expert systems. EuroPACE also organizes educational teleconferences.

It is also appropriate to list the existence of a number of advanced management schools providing executive training programs of varying lengths. These institutions are generally private establishments (a few are public), occasionally possess recognition by national authorities, and are modeled on American graduate schools of business administration. Among the best known are INSEAD outside of Paris; IMEDE in Lausanne, Switzerland; and the London Business School. All typically draw their enrollment from many different countries. That, and the substantial similarity in their basic approach to high-level, pre-entry and continuing management education, makes these institutions a European rather than a national phenomenon. According to a recent article in the *Economist* (1991), these schools now find themselves ahead of the most prestigious American business schools "in the race to provide managers with lifelong learning." Their success appears to be largely due to their willingness to develop company-specific courses and indeed, as stated by the head of INSEAD, to move from educating individuals to educating whole enterprises. Some of the schools supplement their courses with consulting services to help firms practice what the schools preach.

Part Six: Issues and Lessons

The state of continuing professional education in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, as well as in a number of other countries about which some information is available, indicates a number of basic issues which are not only common, to a greater or lesser extent, to all of these countries but are pertinent, as well, to CPE in the United States. Useful lessons can be learned from the different ways in which these issues have been handled in different countries.

Access

Among the policy-related dimensions of continuing professional education which are a matter of ongoing concern in all countries, probably the most basic and pervasive ones are the varied and complex issues related to *access*. These can be divided into two quite distinct categories corresponding to the two aspects of access: *affordability* and *availability*. We shall discuss each in turn.

Affordability. In considering access in terms of affordability, one must look separately at the problems of the individual participant, the sponsoring employer, and the provider. With regard to the *individual participant*, the situation is similar in every country under study: for employed participants for whom continuing professional education is directly related to the job, the employer usually picks up the tab or reimburses the employee upon satisfactory completion. The latter obviously creates more difficulties than do modes of pre- or non-payment of tuition and fees, but these difficulties do not appear to create major barriers to participation, nor does the expectation of some employers that continuing professional education be pursued on the employee's own time. Affordability is seriously affected when individuals have to carry most or all of their own continuing professional education expenses, especially (but not only) in the case of longer courses. Serious financial problems may arise when an individual in a relatively low-level job embarks on a continuing education program as a means for upward occupational mobility, or when someone is forced to change fields as a result of restructuring, and most of all when someone becomes unemployed. The availability of financial support in some form can become crucial.

Affordability can be enhanced not only by appropriate financial support but also by allowing employees to pursue continuing professional education programs during working hours—either by released time to take courses elsewhere, or by providing programs at the worksite. One or both of these appear to constitute the

prevalent pattern in most European countries, at least with regard to relatively short-term educational activities. It is not uncommon, as indicated by the example of the modular courses offered by the Institute of Electrical Engineers in the United Kingdom, to allow individuals to participate in a 1- or 2-week course on a full-time basis. However, one rarely comes across any consideration of longer term study leaves. The focus on short-term programs is probably connected to a shift in the prevalent conception of continuing education from a pattern of full-time, extended programs often leading to a degree or certificate, to a variety of short courses usually compatible with maintaining a full-time job.

The recognition that time constitutes as much of an investment as money cuts both ways. Recent discussions in France of the "co-investment" concept, under which employees would share in the cost of their continuing education, include the possibility that part or all of this employee investment be in terms of time, with employer-financed continuing professional education being pursued at other than working hours. A trend in recent French collective bargaining negotiations toward a shorter work week has had the effect of reducing the hours spent on the job but shifting some continuing professional education activities to the employees' own time (private communication).

In the context of the cost of education to the individual participant it is worth noting one universal aspect of continuing professional education—indeed of all forms of continuing and lifelong education—which has serious negative implications. In every country, "those that have, get more." Every survey shows a direct correlation between participation in any and all forms of adult education, on the one hand, and socio-economic status and occupational level, on the other. Much of this is likely to happen regardless of financial barriers, but certainly it is a matter of societal interest to offset this trend as much as possible by minimizing the problems of affording continuing professional education.

Affordability is also an issue for *sponsoring employers*. Here, too, there is a split between the "haves" and the "have nots." Large enterprises, with 500 employees or more, and especially the industrial and commercial giants with a workforce of many thousands, can afford to employ a special Human Resource Development staff to optimize the availability of continuing professional education both in-house and from external sources. Large employers can afford, as well, to release reasonable numbers of individuals to pursue continuing education activities during working hours and, perhaps most importantly from an attitudinal point of view, usually have a sufficient two-way flow of new hires and leavers so as not to worry if some employees leave to join a rival firm after benefitting from sponsored

programs. In European countries, as in the United States, the largest employers, especially in industries and businesses oriented toward the high-tech end of commerce, are quite active in ensuring the availability of continuing professional education for their employees.

But all of the factors which large enterprises can handle present substantial problems for small and medium-sized employers (SMEs). In every country studied, managers and professionals, as well as lower level employees in such firms, have substantially less access to appropriate forms of continuing education than individuals in similar positions in larger enterprises. The SMEs face a variety of problems. They find it difficult to cover for any prolonged absence of key personnel for off-the-job instruction. On-site programs, which might reduce that problem, are all but ruled by the lack of critical mass. Small firms rarely have special staff with responsibility for employee development, and their limited financial reserves make it difficult for them to embark on a systematic training program. The lack of staff also makes it particularly difficult for them to obtain adequate information about what continuing professional education offerings are available and which might be suitable for their own needs. In countries in which employer participation in and contribution to continuing workforce development remains voluntary, small businesses are reluctant to make the necessary investment, lest the upgraded employees then leave to join another firm. However, that this fear is not a dominant factor is indicated by the fact that in France, with a mandatory contribution by all employers to continuing education, SME participation is as limited as that in other countries.

Perhaps the most important factor leading to the low participation of SMEs in formal continuing professional education is an attitudinal one. The very fact of limited size may well create a greater emphasis on collaboration, mentoring, and informal training which, on the one hand, reduces the firm's interest in more formal and more expensive modes of development and, on the other hand, provides far more effective on-the-job training than is usually possible in larger, less collegial settings. Indeed, a recent study in Germany which includes the cost of training which is on the job but which entails more than just "working at the expert's elbow and observing" suggests that the expenditures on continuing professional education per individual is actually greater in SMEs than in larger enterprises. Even though the acknowledged emphasis on on-the-job learning in small firms may be very effective in introducing a newly hired employee to the methods and policies of the company, it cannot be used effectively to keep the understanding and knowledge of all employees up to date. Continuing professional education, therefore, remains a serious problem for SMEs.

Last but not least is the question of affordability for the *provider*, with particular emphasis on postsecondary educational institutions and other non-profit institutions or organizations. The all-but-universal provider policy with regard to financing continuing professional education is one of institutional fiscal self-support through appropriate tuition and fee income from individual participants, or through contractual payments from sponsoring employers. Such a policy is, on the whole, appropriate as well as widely accepted. However, various reports and interviews indicate that, if carried too far, it can create two very troublesome problems.

The first is how to pay for the necessary up-front investment which the vast majority of educational institutions and other non-profit organizations have no way of covering. Some organizational framework must be created, with at least minimal staff, appropriate needs assessment carried out, and programs designed and implemented without initial assurance of adequate return. It is evident that much of the rapid rise of continuing professional education in the United Kingdom is due to the availability of government funds for start-up and pilot projects under the PICKUP program.

The second problem arises from excessive reliance on a pure market approach, which is demand—rather than need—driven. Need may differ from demand both quantitatively and, perhaps more important, qualitatively. Demand will almost inevitably favor a quick, *ad hoc* approach to continuing professional education by filling immediate knowledge and skills gaps—a quick-fix approach which may be more economical in the short run but which, because of its fragmentary, incoherent nature, may be less cost effective over the longer term than a program based on strategic needs assessment. The continuing professional education alternatives for an individual or enterprise are analogous to those available for equipment and plant maintenance: reacting to problems as they arise as against a systematic program of maintenance and overhaul. Furthermore, a pure market approach is likely to be primarily reactive and will inhibit attempts at being more anticipatory and pro-active. Here too, the British PICKUP scheme provides a useful model: it helps to fund systematic needs assessments as well as long range planning for continuing professional education needs.

Availability. Financial issues also affect the availability of continuing professional education. Three factors are of particular importance in this regard.

The first factor deals with what in Europe is usually called the *transparency* of a complex system to a potential user. By now, the system of continuing professional education in most European countries, as in the United States, is

already very complex and likely to become more so in the years to come. It is increasingly difficult for the potential client, be it an individual or an employer, to "see through" the system (hence the term transparency) and to obtain an overview of the great variety of providers, the array of short, medium, and long courses, the multiplicity of formats, delivery mechanisms, and locations. Selecting suitable offerings from this variety is difficult for potential participants looking for themselves, and equally so for small businesses looking on behalf of their employees. There is a great need for sources of information and, preferably, for evaluation as well. The work of CentreInffo in France and the more limited activities of the Department of Trade and Industry in the United Kingdom are good examples of what might be possible in the United States.

The second factor affecting the availability of continuing professional education is the *mode of delivery*. Programs must be convenient to as well as for the potential user in terms of format, time, and place. Fewer but longer sessions, evening and weekend offerings, worksite delivery—all of these enhance the availability of continuing professional education from the point of view both of the employer and the individual participant. Also important is the proper use of distance learning through telecommunications. Not all continuing professional education can or should be provided as distance education, but program availability can be enormously enhanced by means of fiber optics, satellite, or microwave networks. Some learning at a distance can be provided within a limited radius by physical transport of videotapes, use of local cable networks, or direct microwave transmission. But systematic, geographically widespread delivery requires more in terms of equipment, networks, and coordination than any one continuing professional education provider can afford. Distance learning networks (and computer-assisted learning networks) need an infrastructure which cannot be developed without substantial consortial cooperation and/or government subsidies. In this, European countries lag well behind developments in the United States, where many state governments have assisted in the development of regional telecommunication networks.

A third factor in availability is *responsiveness*: making sure that what is needed is available when it is needed and, preferably, even before it becomes essential. An effective system of continuing professional education must move beyond *ad hoc*, quick-fix responses to skill needs after they arise. More systematic attention needs to be paid to anticipated changes in professionals' knowledge and skill needs as a result of technological, social, or political changes, so that appropriate program offerings can be developed before they are needed. In the past, attention has been too often limited to projections of quantitative changes in the

labor market profile: how many more nurses, or computer programmers, or engineers will the region or the country need? Rarely has there been a systematic attempt to project the qualitative changes in the work and, therefore, in the necessary competencies and expertise of these same nurses, computer programmers, and engineers. That is an effort which is essential to ensuring the adequacy of available continuing professional education. It can only be carried out through ongoing collaboration between employers, educators, and government.

All the measures necessary to enhance availability require a collective effort. These measures exist to a greater or lesser extent in the European countries studied; they are as yet inadequate in the United States. Thus the importance of some combination of collaboration and cost sharing by employers, on the one hand, and government support, on the other, to further such activities is a significant lesson to be learned from the European experience with continuing professional education. It is particularly interesting to find substantial use of public funds not only in France, a country that currently has a socialist government, but also in Tory Britain. The potential impact and pay-off of government initiative is strikingly illustrated in Germany by the current difference between the state of technology transfer *versus* that of continuing professional education. In a few German Länder, government pump-priming and start-up funds have resulted in the development of an effective and ultimately self-supporting system of technology transfer. By contrast, the lack of strong governmental support for continuing professional education has kept its development at a sluggish pace even in the very regions in which technology transfer is thriving.

Modes of Financing and the Role of Government

With regard to funding, the European countries which have been studied (and to the best of the author's knowledge most other industrialized countries as well) are very similar in their approach to the financing of continuing professional education. In all of them, the basic policy is that ongoing provision of such education by public institutions of postsecondary education, and other public bodies, should be self-supporting through participant fees or contractual arrangements with sponsoring employers. European policies of this kind create much sharper dichotomies between the treatment of pre-entry postsecondary education and in-service continuing education than do the generally similar policies of American state governments. Except in a few cases such as New York, postsecondary education has not been viewed in the United States as a full entitlement to be paid by the state. A portion of the cost of initial postsecondary education (a college degree) is nearly always to

be covered by tuition payments by the individual, and this proportion has substantially increased in recent years. European countries, by contrast, have a long tradition of free public postsecondary education, including, in many cases, additional student stipends to cover living expenses or highly subsidized food and lodging arrangements. Until recently, however, the notion of any entitlement for continuing professional education has been missing in Europe—mostly because such programs were not taken very seriously.

It must, however, be noted that the question of entitlement to *adult education* has been the subject of debate and action in many European countries for a long time. Within the context of social policy, many arguments have been advanced over the years that free or low-cost access should be provided so as to encourage self improvement, a second chance at further education, and upward socioeconomic mobility. The Scandinavian countries and a number of other countries in Northern Europe have a long-standing tradition of free "folk schools" at both the secondary and the postsecondary levels. In the United Kingdom, the creation of the Open University constituted a major national investment in second-chance education at a time when nobody thought seriously about workforce skill needs and the role of higher education within the context of economic development.

The view of lifelong educational entitlement as a matter of social policy endures in Europe and may, indeed, be incorporated in the forthcoming Social Charter of the European Community. But a strong surge in interest in continuing professional education and a growing recognition of its importance as an element of economic rather than social policy has taken place during the past decade. It has changed attitudes toward educational entitlement. The question is now being approached in most European countries within a new framework and with new views with regard to funding sources and government responsibilities. At the risk of some oversimplification, the following describes the currently prevalent attitude in all the countries which have been studied:

- Continuing professional education is a matter of national importance, and access both with regard to availability and affordability is a matter of public as well as individual interest;

- To the extent to which this public interest is translated into collective (rather than individual) support, the responsibility is shared between the state, employers and professional associations (which have a collective interest in the quality of the performance of their members); and

- The state's responsibility stops short of full financing of continuing professional education, but includes support for start-up costs; pilot projects; certain elements of infrastructure, including information networks and staff development; and other catalytic and leveraging activities.

The details of the state's role differ markedly from country to country. But a common characteristic of the role of government in all the countries studied is worth noting. Everywhere, the involvement of government in continuing professional education extends beyond the ministry or executive office specifically charged with education. In the United Kingdom, the Departments of Trade and Industry and of Employment supplement the activities of the Department of Education and Science. In France, all of the activities under the Law of 1971 are under the purview of the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Professional Development. In Germany, the Chambers of Commerce, quasi-public state and local bodies which play a key role in the apprenticeship system and continuing professional education, work with the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Conclusion: Some Conceptual Questions

In addition to operational issues related to access, funding, and the role of government, a number of basic conceptual questions with substantial policy implications are mentioned in many European reports and articles, and arise frequently in discussions. Three such questions are interconnected:

1. What is the proper balance between a tactical and a strategic approach to continuing professional education?

2. Should continuing professional education be primarily knowledge- or competency-based?

3. What should be the role of postsecondary educational institutions in the continuing professional education system ?

The Tactical or the Strategic Approach?

The first of these questions can best be illustrated by describing two extreme approaches to continuing professional education. One is to view it as needing to be

as systematic and coherent as the pre-employment phase of higher education leading to a first degree. This approach views continuing professional education as being a lifelong extension of an organized educational process in which each successive phase is part of a cumulative process and builds on prior learning. The opposite extreme is to view continuing professional education as consisting of many individual and substantially free-standing components, each of limited duration and directed at a well defined knowledge or skill deficit of immediate relevance. The former is basically a strategic, medium- to long-range developmental approach, trying to anticipate future requirements; the latter a more tactical, shorter range approach, responding to clear and present needs.

Of course the two approaches are not mutually exclusive, and every existing system of continuing professional education consists of some combination of both. In every country there exist offerings, usually of medium or longer duration, which are—or at least attempt to be—part of an overall developmental plan; as well as many short, *ad hoc* offerings developed to meet specific immediate needs. However, one finds in all countries a growing attention to the question of the proper balance between the two and concern about the country's ability to reach and maintain such a balance. There are two sets of pressures tugging in opposite directions.

As the need for continuing professional education becomes more widely understood and accepted as essential to the maintenance of professional competence and effectiveness, there is a growing understanding that this maintenance requires more than updating of factual knowledge and specific techniques. The changes with which the practicing professional has to deal increasingly include not just details but, indeed, the very fundamentals on which her or his expertise rests. Basic theories and paradigms become obsolete and must be replaced by new insights and new concepts, most of which cannot be acquired in a short weekend seminar. As was well-stated in an MIT report on continuing education for engineers:

> *Engineers are faced with the problem of learning, during their professional lives, what new generations of engineering students are currently learning in school* (p. 11, Bruce et al., 1982, p. 11).

One finds a number of interesting developments in the direction of coherent and systematic continuing professional education in several European countries. There is a strong trend toward *modularization*, which actually can be viewed as a trend toward greater flexibility of highly structured degree programs. The tendency in the United Kingdom and Germany, as well as elsewhere, is to begin to break up

these long programs into modular components and to encourage collaboration among a number of postsecondary educational institutions to develop compatible and complementary modules; and also to recognize achievement in modules taken elsewhere. An increasing number of countries are actively pursuing some form of credit transfer system so as to make it possible for individuals to complete programs and attain qualifications on the basis of components taken at different institutions and over a prolonged period. The current discussion in France with regard to greater investment by employed individuals in their own continuing education may also lead to greater emphasis on portability and accumulation of credits. It must, however, be emphasized that the issue of coherence is not the same as that of certification: the need for coherence exists quite independently from the possible rationale for degrees and from the desire for portable credits.

Concurrent with these trends there are strongly countervailing ones toward an increasingly fragmented, short course-oriented form of continuing professional education. The reasons as well as the pressures pushing this trend are obvious. In the first place, short-term continuing professional education is almost certainly less expensive, and will appear to be more cost-effective in the short term, than longer programs. It requires less up-front investment, and it is easier to accommodate within work schedules. But the advantages are not only financial and managerial. Short-term continuing professional education is also better able to deal quickly and flexibly with unexpected changes and developments, which are almost inevitable in an era of great technological evolution and societal fluidity.

Short-term continuing professional education also has severe disadvantages. By the very nature of its limited duration, it is likely to be narrowly skill oriented as well as unable to respond to the immediate needs it deals with in the context of real or anticipated medium- to long-range developments. Although apparently cost-effective in the short run, a predominantly *ad hoc* and fragmented approach to continuing professional education may well be more costly in the long run because it limits the economies made possible by a coherent and cumulative process of learning.

Knowledge- or Competence-Based Learning?

The second question revolves around the difference between defining and assessing a learning experience by the knowledge which has been acquired or by the operational competence achieved. Should continuing professional education consist primarily of the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and analytical skills which the

individual then applies to an occupational setting, or should it focus on dealing with practice-based situations on which an appropriate mix of concepts and methodologies are brought to bear? Should continuing professional education be primarily deductive or inductive? Of course, as in the previous question, this is not a matter of choosing between extremes, but rather of finding the proper balance.

In most European countries, there has in recent years occurred a strong trend toward a competence- and practice-based orientation of continuing professional education, made possible by—or perhaps leading to—more emphasis on work-based and work-site learning. This has been especially true in the case of continuing education for lower level occupations but is happening as well at managerial and professional levels. The trend for these is toward more use of what the French call *alternance*, by which they mean a coherent program alternating work and learning in a way in which the two are closely related and mutually reinforcing. A further dimension of this development is a recognition that the growing emphasis on work teams and other forms of collaborative work requires a similarly communal approach to job-related education and training, in which the groups which work together also learn together. An equivalent trend exists as well in the advanced management schools in Europe. These institutions increasingly develop courses which are not only tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of a given company but which are aimed explicitly at educating whole company staffs rather than just individuals. Their purpose is to trigger so-called "cascade learning" within a firm, with individuals at each organizational level responsible for mentoring the development of those reporting to them.

Together with these developments, one finds in some European countries a growing interest in assessing achievement and progress in continuing professional education on the basis of practice-based competencies rather than knowledge accumulation. This move reinforces the concern for a more coherent, holistic approach to continuing professional education and also suggests ways of dealing with difficult issues of connecting different components of a program or system and assessing their outcomes.

These developments reveal another trend. What is happening in many European countries is a shift on the part of employers away from a reliance on pre-packaged continuing professional education offerings marketed by higher education institutions or private sector providers and toward taking more initiative in working with these providers or their own in-house resources in order to develop programs tailored to their specific needs. This was begun by the very large and more

progressive corporations, but it is spreading as well to medium-sized firms. Much the same appears to be happening in the United States.

The evolution toward company-specific, work-based, competence-based continuing professional education carries with it some obvious dangers. Principal among these is that of making the learning activity too specific, too narrowly vocational, and too much geared, as mentioned earlier, to short-term needs and economies. Furthermore, it may well increase the handicap imposed on the small and medium-sized enterprises. This raises some interesting and complex questions as to ways in which a combination of government policies and collaborative activity can maintain proper balances.

What Role for Postsecondary Education Institutions?

The third of the basic questions, that is, the role of higher education institutions, is of course very much affected by the preceding two. Colleges and universities in general lack the flexibility to be adequately responsive to rapidly changing short-term demands. Furthermore, the ethos—and indeed the scale of values—of these institutions, and the expertise of most of their faculty are knowledge- rather than experience-based. On the other hand, higher education institutions are in the best position to take a longer range approach, to anticipate changes, and to develop modular programs which are both coherent as well as flexible. In principle, postsecondary educational institutions also constitute a major resource for cross-disciplinary programs and are capable, as well, of providing the breadth which is increasingly recognized as an essential part of professional competence. Except for a certain amount of training in organizational development and interpersonal relations, and, more recently, a growing emphasis on language training, the role of the humanities and the social sciences in continuing professional education is largely neglected in most countries. Postsecondary educational institutions can and should provide a significant counterbalance to the current overemphasis on narrow technical training.

A systematic approach to continuing professional education must, of necessity, include consideration of the preparatory part of professionals' education. One of the principal issues which are just beginning to be faced in European countries is the relationship between initial and continuing education: Can and should the content and length of the former be affected by the existence and availability of the latter? This is an issue of particular importance in most European countries because of the current length and monolithic nature of their first degree

programs. One example, but indicative of many others: it takes 6 years or more in Germany to obtain a first engineering degree, with most graduates being 26 years old or older by the time they enter the labor market.

But the issue goes beyond questions of study length. As stated in an interview by the former *Rektor* of the Technical University of Delft and currently one of the leaders in the development of continuing professional education for engineers in the Netherlands: "a systematic approach to lifelong continuing professional education cannot occur until we rethink the purpose of the initial education and sort out what should be its content" (private interview). There exist a number of serious barriers to the greater involvement of postsecondary educational institutions in continuing professional education. One finds references in many European reports and interviews to the *necessary adaptations of higher education institutions*, which fall generally into three categories:

- Changes in academic attitudes, values, and incentives so as to give participation in providing continuing professional education higher status and more rewards;

- Changes in institutional structure, both in terms of developing bridging and brokering mechanisms to the outside, as well as in terms of cutting across disciplinary and divisional boundaries inside the institutions; and

- Emphasis on faculty and other staff development, in order for them to acquire the competence needed to teach experienced adults.

One encouraging development which is related to the role of postsecondary education in continuing professional education is the growing emphasis on institution/business collaboration, which is being encouraged in all industrialized countries. To date, however, the growing industrial liaison activities of many universities have only rarely been directly linked to the development of continuing professional education activities.

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List of Individuals Interviewed

The Netherlands:	Professor De Weert, University of Twente Messrs. De Rooij, Desjans, and Van Ooijen, Ministry of Education and Science, Zoetermeer Mr. Stoltemans, Centrum-HBO, The Hague Professor Dirken, Technical University of Delft
France:	Dr. Bertrand, CEREQ, Paris Ms. Berton, CEREQ/CentreInffo, Paris Mr. Monod, CentreInffo, Paris Mr. Cerych, European Institute of Education and Social Policy, Paris Ms. Colardyn, O.E.C.D., Paris
Germany:	Drs. Holtkamp and Kazemzadeh, HIS, Hanover Dr. Schütze, Ministry of Industry, Hanover Professor Geipel and Drs. von Harnier, Berning, and others, Bavarian Institute for Higher Education Research, Munich
EC (Brussels):	Mr. Prosser, COMMETT Mr. D'Azevedo, Commission for the European Community

A Profession's Model of Continuing Professional Education: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

by

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(Ernst & Young)[*]

For over a century, accounting professionals have recognized the need to maintain professional competence through continuing education. Since the late 1800s, accountants recognized that practicing at a professional level required the performance and delivery of technically sound, reliable, and consistent services. Accounting professionals joined together in 1887 to form a professional organization, now known as the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA). Through the AICPA, members created professional standards that enabled the organization to attest to its members' competency and integrity. Continuing education became one of the primary conduits for accountants to maintain these standards.

However, formal programs of inservice education for certified public accountants (CPAs) did not exist until the 1940s. While early accountants appreciated the need for the continued education beyond traditional college and university degrees, they garnered the necessary information from texts and journals.

With the end of World War II and the explosive resurgence in the U.S. economy, CPA services were in great demand. Large accounting firms began placing new employees, primarily soldiers returning to the workforce and recent college graduates, in a series of training classes. These sessions introduced new methodologies used by firms and helped employees quickly learn all the necessary information for proper business performance. The classes not only helped the new

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staff brush up and hone unused skills but also eased the transition into the business world.

AICPA recognized that members of smaller accounting firms could also benefit from similar training sessions and began offering formal programs of learning to its membership in the early 1950s. These early programs were well received by AICPA members, and the increasing demand for more prompted the creation of an entire division of the AICPA devoted to providing continuing education programs to the membership.

With a meager appropriation of $50,000 and fewer than 2,200 participants, formal continuing professional education officially started in 1959 for the AICPA. In 1965—just 6 years later—enrollment was already more than 14,000 (Schlosser, Lee, Rabito, 1987, p. 243-244).

Initial Progress Toward Mandatory Continuing Professional Education

As the increased demand in continuing professional education programs indicated, many CPAs believed that participating in formal programs of learning was essential to maintaining their professional competence. However, continuing professional education in the 1960s was still voluntary. It was not until 1967 that Marvin L. Stone, the then president of the AICPA, made the first call for mandatory continuing education in his column in the November 1967 issue of *The CPA*. The column generated tremendous response, with a majority of those who wrote in indicating they were in favor of required education (Schlosser et al, 1987, p. 244).

The Iowa State Board of Accountancy was the first to heed Stone's call. In 1969, the board issued regulations requiring that CPAs holding an Iowa license must participate in a minimum of 15 days of continuing education over a 3-year period. Several states quickly followed suit, each establishing its own requirements. Today 50 of the 54 CPA licensing jurisdictions in the United States require completion of approved continuing professional education for license renewal.

However, one difficulty surfaced as a result of the widespread adoption of mandatory continuing professional education by state boards of accountancy. As each state board developed its own requirements, lack of consistency among states emerged. Among the 50 boards, 12 have a mandatory sponsor registration system and 13 others have a voluntary system. Since many CPAs hold licenses in more than one state, the lack of uniformity has produced significant administrative

conflicts and concerns. Many state boards have requested assistance from the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA). NASBA is a voluntary association of the 54 accountancy boards.

The AICPA and Mandatory Continuing Professional Education

The first step taken by the AICPA toward mandatory continuing professional education was in 1977 with the establishment of the AICPA Division for CPA Firms. The formation of the Division for CPA Firms was a major step toward self-regulation by the accounting profession. It enabled the AICPA to deal with firms, not just individual members, and recognized quality control compliance reviews and mandatory continuing professional education as essential elements of an effective self-regulatory program. (A description of the continuing professional education requirement for members of the AICPA Division for CPA Firms can be found in appendix 1.)

The second step taken by the AICPA toward mandatory continuing professional education occurred 10 years later. By 1987, the inconsistent continuing professional education requirements mandated by various state boards of accountancy presented problems for members of the AICPA across the country, especially those licensed in more than one state. So, in an effort to assure that all members maintain professional competence, the AICPA voted in an overwhelming majority to adopt a new continuing professional education requirement as a condition of membership.

Effective since January 1, 1990, all members except those in retirement are required to meet the AICPA's continuing professional education requirement. As a result of this action there now exists, for the first time, one uniform continuing professional education requirement for all AICPA members practicing public accounting. However, membership in the AICPA is voluntary and many CPAs practicing public accounting are not members. Hence, this uniform continuing professional education requirement does not extend to all CPAs practicing public accounting. (The details of these requirements can be found in appendix 2.)

Establishment of Quality Standards

Mandatory continuing professional education produced an even greater demand for continuing education programs and also a host of new issues to be addressed. What continuing professional education programs would qualify for fulfilling the requirement? How would program hours be measured? What information had to be maintained in order to demonstrate participation in, and completion of, a continuing professional education program?

Addressing these issues led the AICPA membership to adopt a set of standards dealing with continuing professional education program development, program presentation, program measurement, and reporting. These new standards, titled *AICPA Statement on Standards For Formal Group and Formal Self-Study Programs* (AICPA CPE Standards), issued in 1976, were accepted by users and many state boards of accountancy as well as developers of continuing professional education programs. In fact, many developers discovered they exceeded these standards based on their own self-imposed quality assurance standards. (Elements of the AICPA CPE Standards are discussed throughout this paper and a copy of the standards is included in appendix 2.)

These standards are currently undergoing revision. With consistency as a goal, a group was formed with representatives from the AICPA, state societies of CPAs, National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA), various state boards of accountancy, industry, federal and local government, and education. The group developed a revised set of standards, which have been widely circulated among professional organizations, government agencies, sponsors of continuing professional education programs, and anyone requesting copies. These revised standards should be in effect by the time this volume is published in 1992.

Enforcement of Standards by State Boards

State boards of accountancy, which license CPAs to operate within individual states, indicated that they have experienced difficulties in monitoring compliance of CPAs and continuing professional education sponsors with mandatory continuing professional education requirements. Some states have indicated they have insufficient resources to monitor compliance with their standards, particularly in identifying program sponsors and providers that do not comply with AICPA CPE Standards.

As mentioned earlier, many state boards of accountancy requested assistance from NASBA. In response, NASBA began to explore the concept of a centralized registration process. In 1989, NASBA designed a national registry of approved continuing professional education sponsors. The registry is intended to promote the uniform standards already established by the AICPA for the delivery and administration of high quality continuing professional education on a nationwide basis. Although the goal of the registry is applauded throughout the profession, its design and implementation has been controversial. As a result, only a few continuing professional education providers have actually registered with NASBA to date.

Compliance by CPAs

As previously mentioned, the various continuing professional education requirements imposed by state boards of accountancy have created an administrative burden for CPAs and their firms in monitoring compliance. Consider, for example, a CPA practicing public accounting in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Each state has adopted a different continuing professional education requirement, as shown in table 1.

Compliance with New Jersey's requirement does not satisfy Pennsylvania's or New York's requirements. Obtaining the necessary hours of continuing professional education to comply with Pennsylvania's and New Jersey's requirement over the mandated 2-year period will not satisfy New York's annual minimum requirements. All three states require the study of specific subjects; however, the number of hours required in the subjects as well as the subjects are not consistent. Finally, the reporting periods are different for each of the three states.

Maintaining evidence of completion of a continuing professional education program is an integral part of monitoring compliance with continuing professional education requirements on the part of both program participants and sponsors. These requirements are standardized in the reporting standards of the AICPA CPE Standards (see appendix 2). However, some state boards of accountancy have unique reporting requirements either in addition to or in lieu of the AICPA CPE Standards.

Table 1: CPE Requirements of Selected State Boards of Accountancy*

STATE	TOTAL HOURS REQUIRED	SPECIFIC SUBJECT MATTER REQUIREMENTS	CURRENT REPORTING PERIOD
New Jersey	48 hours each 2-year period	CPAs in public practice must obtain 1/3 of total CPE credits in subjects dealing with accounting and/or auditing.	October 1, 1989, through June 30, 1991
New York	40 hours each year -or- 24 hours each year in subjects dealing with auditing, accounting, and/or taxation	CPAs may reduce number of hours of CPE credit required to 24 hours if credits are obtained from subjects dealing with auditing, accounting, and/or taxation.	September 1, 1990, through August 31, 1993
Pennsylvania	80 hours each 2-year period	16 hours of CPE credits must be obtained in subjects dealing with accounting and/or auditing. 8 hours of CPE credits must be obtained in subjects dealing with taxation.	January 1, 1989, through December 31, 1991

*NASBA records of State Board reports, 1990.

As a result of the varying continuing professional education requirements imposed by state boards of accountancy, by the AICPA, and by others such as individual CPA firms, employers of CPAs have had to develop elaborate systems for maintaining continuing professional education records in order to assist their employees and monitor compliance. Ernst & Young's continuing professional education recordkeeping system is an example of such a system. Maintained in one location, the Ernst & Young system tracks and records the continuing education activity of approximately 20,000 professionals based on the requirements of the AICPA and the firm's policy. The system can readily generate an individual accountant's compliance requirements as well as a record of the hours of continuing professional education accumulated toward meeting that requirement. Separately,

each local Ernst & Young office's director of human resources maintains the background information required by the states in which that office practices. Such information may include continuing professional education program agendas and/or outlines, evidence of completion of a program, and other related information when not otherwise maintained at the national office.

It is uncertain whether uniformity among state boards of accountancy and other constituencies will ever be attained. The profession continues to make strides toward this goal through the AICPA, NASBA, the state societies of CPAs, state boards of accountancy, CPA firms, and practitioners. This ongoing endeavor, the continued efforts to refine AICPA CPE Standards, and the consistent surpassing of these standards by many providers demonstrate the profession's commitment to continuing professional education.

Formal Programs of Learning

The AICPA CPE Standards describe continuing professional education programs as both formal group and formal self-study programs, the fundamental purpose of which is to increase the CPA's professional competence.[1] These formal programs may include courses in a variety of subjects, as long as those subjects serve to maintain or increase professional competence. Delivery systems, or formats, generally fall into one of two categories—group programs or independent study.

Group Programs. Continuing professional education for CPAs initially took the form of group studies and conferences. Today, group study and conference programs continue to be the first choice of CPA participants in continuing professional education. Group programs are designed to permit a participant to learn through interaction with a leader/facilitator and other participants. These programs vary in length based on topic and learning objectives.

The leader/facilitator's role is key in group programs. Effective leader/facilitators are chosen on the basis of their background, training, education, experience, and ability to provide an environment conducive to learning. Also, the AICPA CPE Standards require leader/facilitators to be qualified "both with respect to program content and the teaching methods used" (AICPA, 1976).

Because of the significant role the leader/facilitator plays in the success of a continuing professional education group program as a learning experience, Ernst &

Young offers a unique development seminar for the firm's leader/facilitators designed to enhance their presentation skills. The seminar provides instruction and practice in the techniques and skills necessary for a successful group experience by highlighting the adult learning principles used in all the professional development programs provided by the firm. It provides actual facilitation experience, via role plays and videotaped sessions in classroom settings, and demonstrates the most effective use of presentation aids.

Programs designed to teach interaction techniques and skills, such as successful negotiations or improved team communications, are best presented in a group study format. These skills require immediate practice and feedback from others, which is provided in a group study format. Additionally, when case studies are used, the variety and quality of solutions is generally enhanced by learner interactions.

Group programs are also effective when it is desirable to build relationships among learners. Ernst & Young uses a group study delivery system for its Kellog program for just this reason. This program is designed to provide firm partners with exposure to current thinking in business and academia in areas not exclusively related to accounting or tax matters. Partners from different specialties and regions are provided an opportunity to interact, learn from each other, and explore different approaches to problem solving and business opportunities.

Another example of Ernst & Young's use of group study to build relationships is its international residents exchange program. This program is designed for those professionals transferring to the United States on temporary assignment. The relationships they establish during the program become a network of professionals with common experiences and with whom they may keep in contact during their residency. This network greatly enhances the experience these individuals have while in the United States.

However, because group programs are often held in a limited number of locations at specific times, they are not readily available to everyone. Also, the cost of conducting or attending a program must be carefully considered. The program's facilities and other arrangements require on-site administration, adding additional costs to a group program. Participants may incur travel and lodging costs, in addition to lost opportunity costs.

Independent Study. As the body of knowledge required to keep pace with the rapidly changing business environment grew, so did the demand for less time-

consuming methods of obtaining continuing educational materials covering a myriad of topics. No longer was it appropriate to present all continuing professional education programs in a group study format. During the late 1960s, initial efforts were underway to develop independent or self-study programs. The demand for self-study programs has grown dramatically since and today represents over 35 percent of total continuing professional education offerings of the AICPA. These programs allow participants to learn a particular subject without requiring a leader/facilitator or travel. They allow participants to study at their own convenience and pace. Independent study may be either print-based or computer-based.

Print-based programs typically include workbooks and, possibly, audio or video cassettes. Participants read the workbook, watch a tape, or listen to a cassette as the program warrants. Upon completion of the program, participants take an examination that tests comprehension of the program's content.

Computer-based programs are designed to use interactive learning methodologies. They simulate a classroom learning process using a variety of resources to provide significant ongoing feedback to participants about their learning progress. Furthermore, participants enjoy the benefits of studying at their own convenience. Successful computer-based program designs include frequent interaction between the participant and the computer system. The preferred interaction components involve computer question prompts and provide feedback tailored to the participant's responses. When properly designed, this delivery method is better than other independent study programs for achieving desired results because it involves the participant more extensively and manages the learning process more effectively. Development of effective computer-based training requires specialized knowledge and experience. The design and implementation of such programs constitute a meticulous, time-consuming process, including the provision of the proper specialized hardware and software required to enable learners to use and benefit from computer-based programs. Hence, a number of issues must be addressed before developing computer-based programs:

- Is there a large audience base for the program?
- Does the program content have a long shelf life? and
- How long will the technology remain stable?

Providers

Since the AICPA entered the continuing education arena in the late 1950s, it has become the single largest provider of continuing professional education to the profession. Presently, the AICPA provides over 400 programs in a variety of formats throughout the country. Group programs are distributed to the membership through the state societies of CPAs. Independent study programs are mailed directly to the membership.

Firms have also become significant providers, designing continuing professional education programs over a wide range of topics for their own professional staff. This is not, technically speaking, "workplace learning," which is less formal and more proximate to job performance. Rather, when a firm such as Ernst & Young offers programs to its professional staff, it is functioning as a quasi-formal educational institution.

The increasing demand for continuing professional education has brought many new providers to the market place. Many private organizations, such as Practitioners Publishing Company, MicroMash, and Professional Development Institute, provide CPE programs to CPAs. Other member service organizations, such as the National Association of Accountants, the American Bar Association, and the American Managers Association, are actively developing and targeting programs to CPAs.

The Role of Continuing Professional Education in an Organization

Continuing professional education is instrumental to an organization's effort to maintain competence while insuring that the quality and range of professional services meet the demands of the future. Opportunity costs, as well as mounting administrative costs associated with continuing professional education, demand a carefully planned and managed commitment to continuing education by an organization.

The commitment of an organization to continuing professional education is important. A written commitment to continuing professional education provides a clear message of the degree of importance placed on continuing education by the organization and is the link between continuing education and the organization's strategic goals and objectives. Ernst & Young published its own statement of

commitment to continuing professional education at the beginning of the firm's 1991 professional development catalog (see figure 1).

"At Ernst & Young, we have a commitment to service excellence worldwide that can be realized through the combined skills, efforts, and talents of each individual.

... Each individual in our organization, then, must have the knowledge, the integrity, and the power to make excellent decisions on a daily basis. Each person must be empowered with the ability to solve problems when they occur, to make intelligent and committed choices, to provide thought leadership for the industries and businesses we serve, and to act upon the strengths with which we are all endowed.

... To achieve this type of environment, we must provide our people with the tools, the training, and the opportunity to reach their highest personal and professional levels. Skills to meet challenges and make excellent decisions are products of involved and participative training. In our professional development programs, Ernst & Young encourages and provides support to empower professionals with the requisite knowledge and skills to supplement on-the-job experiences..."

Figure 1: Ernst & Young's Commitment to CPE

Policies and Procedures

The integrity of any commitment rests on the ability of an organization to integrate its message about continuing professional education into the organizational structure. Professionals should believe the organization supports its commitment. To ensure this, an organization establishes and enforces continuing professional education policies and procedures. The extent of these policies varies with an organization's size, complexity, and commitment.

A basic element of organizational continuing education policies and procedures is a *professional development plan* for employees. The plan should outline the educational needs of an individual as well as the individual's and organization's strategy for fulfilling those needs. A professional development plan integrates an organization's commitment with its attitude and culture. This plan also serves as the building block for additional policies and procedures regarding continuing professional education.

For instance, Ernst & Young policies provide for each professional to work with an assigned counselor in developing an education program that meets both the professional's goals and the strategic objectives of the firm. This plan, prepared and reviewed annually, enables the professional to monitor his or her development and

determine progress towards agreed-upon goals, while ensuring those goals match the firm's objectives.

Designing CPE to Support Achievement of Business Goals

CPAs select continuing education programs that satisfy their firm's business needs. Successfully matching CPE programs with business needs is significantly enhanced by an understanding of the CPE program design process. The design process involves

- Assessing whether CPE is the appropriate response to a business need;
- Defining desired outcomes of a CPE program;
- Determining whether the desired outcomes can be accomplished;
- Designing the program; and
- Ascertaining the effectiveness of the program in achieving the desired outcomes.

It is important, first, to recognize the circumstances where continuing education programs will facilitate business needs. Here are some examples of where it will:

- In the accounting profession, policies and procedures change continuously with new technical rules and regulations, such as accounting pronouncements, tax laws, and auditing standards. Individuals need continuing training to understand and apply the new policies or procedures.
- Organizations introduce new methodologies or services to address situations their clients face. Individuals need training to understand their client, their client's situations, and the new methodology or service.
- Individuals providing services in specialized areas need to understand the unique aspects of the specialized area, including

the nature of the business, pertinent regulations, and the types of services to be provided. Training facilitates that understanding.

- Professionals deal with complex problems in audit, tax, and advisory services. They need training to acquire the indepth knowledge and skills required to solve these problems.

However, when identifying a business goal, it is important to distinguish problems that can be resolved through training from those that can be addressed in some other way. For example, job aides such as checklists can be effective in reminding individuals of the steps involved in a procedure for which they have already received training.

Performance Objectives

Once an organization decides that training is the best solution for meeting a particular goal or satisfying a need, performance objectives must be developed that match the perceived business need. These objectives will be used to design and evaluate the program or programs developed to satisfy the business need. Good performance objectives are critical to success, and they will possess two essential qualities:

- Performance objectives will govern the outcomes sought from a continuing professional education program, and should specifically describe what individuals will learn from participation in a given program. AICPA CPE Standards require that the performance objectives of a program specify either the level of knowledge the participant should have attained or the level of competence one should be able to demonstrate upon completing the program.

- Performance objectives should be stated clearly and intentionally. Typically, objectives are described in behavioral terms: what participants will be able to do upon completion of the program. Well-stated objectives allow observation; they are measurable. The learner will be able to behave or act in a prescribed way if the objectives have been successfully achieved.

Consider this example of a performance objective: *To develop an appreciation for music.* Though it may seem that "to develop an appreciation for music" is stated in behavioral terms, it is not. What is the learner doing when he or she is appreciating music? Since the objective as stated neither defines nor precludes any behavior, it would be necessary to accept any of the following observed behavior as evidence that the learner appreciates music:

- The learner buys stereo equipment and $500 worth of compact discs;
- The learner correctly answers 95 multiple-choice questions on the history of music; and
- The learner writes an eloquent essay on the meanings of 37 operas.[2]

On the other hand, if the learner should be able to distinguish among sonatas, concertos, and symphonies, then a better-stated objective might be "to recognize the various forms of classical music." This objective tells what the learner will be doing when he or she is demonstrating that he or she has reached the goal.

Applicable Principles of Adult Learning

It is important, but not enough, for an organization such as Ernst & Young to establish guidelines for developing continuing education programs based on careful evaluation of various levels of objectives, the objectives' application to the program, and—if achieved—the business needs these objectives satisfy. The nature of the learning audience to whom these programs will be delivered must also be considered. Since the target audience of continuing professional education programs consists of adults, Ernst & Young builds these programs, beginning with the performance objectives, based on careful consideration of the characteristics of adult learners and the special requirements and dynamics of adult learning.[3]

- *Adults need to know "why."* In most cases, when adults are asked to do something or are presented with ideas, they want to know the reason for the request or how the learning experience will benefit them. "What is in it for me . . . for my client . . . for my organization?" Therefore, it is important to articulate a program's overall objective or purpose up front.

- *Adults want to have control.* Adults want to influence what happens to them and participate in decisions that affect them. They want others to listen to and respect their ideas. When these wants are satisfied, adults respond positively. Thus, how adults are managed through formal training programs influences their attitudes and their performance.

- *Adults have a wealth of life and technical experiences.* How these experiences are capitalized upon has an important influence on many behaviors and attitudes, including response to management efforts in training situations. In most cases, when a group of two or more is led, there is more collective talent in the group than the individual leading the group possesses. The task of a leader/facilitator is to bring out that talent through participative learning experiences.

- *Adults want to focus on real problems.* Adults look for relevance and immediate application in what they're learning. So, in training, they respond more positively to approaches that focus on what they will be expected to do on their jobs, rather than to approaches that focus primarily on subject matter. Experience shows that participants react favorably to programs that provide knowledge and skills they can use right away.

- *Adults perform best in supportive environments.* Supportive environments are those where individuals are given freedom to try out new ideas, are not criticized if the ideas do not work, and are recognized for their successes. When the program works well, they receive positive feedback and encouragement.

Assessment of Instructional Results

Measuring the success of instruction follows from defining the performance objectives. Both the objectives and the assessment process are criterion-referenced and performance-based. Finding out to what degree program objectives can be met is an essential component of continuing education programs and requires some kind of systematic measurement. Table 2 depicts some systematic ways of measuring specific learning.

In each case, the means of measuring instructional results—the assessment task—seeks to test whether participants can perform the action described in the program objective. During the program itself, satisfactory achievement of the learning objectives is ascertained informally by such means as answers to questions, mental steps taken to arrive at an answer to a case study or exercise problem, or demonstration of a skill or behavior. In addition, followup conversations or telephone calls are made to participants and/or their managers to find out if the skills learned are being transferred to job performance.

Once the measurement process is defined, the selection and design of the program content to achieve those objectives commences.

Table 2: Examples of Performance Objectives and Appropriate Assesment Tasks

Performance Objective:	Assessment Task:
Participants will be able to solve a case study problem with certain characteristics.	Present participants with a new case study that has those characteristics and ask them to solve it.
Participants will be able to distinguish terms used in the banking industry.	Present participants with multiple choice questions about specific banking terms.
Participants will be able to formulate open-ended questions using a candidate's resume to identify issues to be explored during a campus interview.	Present participants with a resume that they have not seen before and ask them to develop appropriate open-ended questions that they would ask the candidate.

Program Design

Program content is heavily influenced not only by performance objectives and means of measuring instructional results but also by the overall instructional design of the program. Instructional design is a plan that specifies the learning objectives of the program, the content of the program, and the program's delivery systems. It serves as the blueprint of a continuing professional education program. Instructional design ensures the program does not become merely an "information dump" but rather, a carefully timed, sequenced, interactive, and focused learning experience.

Powerful training designs maximize the likelihood of achieving the performance objectives, thereby meeting the underlying business needs. Therefore, effectively designed continuing education programs involve not only technical expertise in the program subject matter but also the application of highly developed instructional design skills. In fact, the AICPA CPE Standards require that continuing professional education programs be developed and reviewed by individuals qualified both in the subject matter of the program and in instructional design.

Ernst & Young provides instructional design expertise using educational methods professionals on each programs that it develops. These highly trained professionals are coupled with content specialists to form development teams. Once the decision is made to develop a continuing professional education program, the team works together, step by step, through the program's pilot test. This development process promotes quality. One early output of this process is a design document that serves as a blueprint for elaboration of the program.

Ernst & Young has established several checkpoints throughout the development process where formal reviews are made. The formal reviews are conducted by subject matter experts and educational methods professionals separate from the development team. These formal reviews ensure, among other things, that performance objectives are properly stated, the design and content of the program is appropriate for meeting the objectives, and the program content adheres to the principles of adult learning previously discussed. These checkpoints confirm that the end result will meet the firm's own quality standards, which far exceed the AICPA CPE Standards.

Techniques for Evaluating Program Effectiveness

The AICPA CPE Standards require all continuing professional education programs to include "some means for evaluating quality" (AICPA, 1976). Many program providers fulfill this requirement by using using questionnaires completed by both participants and leader/facilitators at the end of each program presentation. The results are used to analyze effectiveness and as a basis for making any needed revisions.

Ernst & Young has adopted a philosophy that "a large investment in training justifies an investment in learning whether the training made a difference" (Ernst & Young, 1990). So, in addition to obtaining participants' and leader/facilitators' reactions to a program, Ernst & Young stresses three additional types of program evaluation.

1) Determining whether participants actually learned what they were intended to learn.

2) Determining whether participants are using on the job what they learned in the program.

3) Determining the effect, if any, that the training has had on results in the field; that is, does the achieved training meet the identified business need?

Each type of evaluation uses different inputs and requires different approaches.

The Process In Action—A Case Study

The recent merger of Arthur Young & Company with Ernst & Whinney to form Ernst & Young created one of the most significant educational opportunities an organization might face. A new larger firm had to combine two separate audit approaches into one unified method and implement this approach worldwide within 1 year. Because of the commitment of both parent firms to continuing professional education, Ernst & Young was able to successfully meet this challenge.

First, continuing education was identified by the highest level of the firm's management as a key component in implementing the Ernst & Young Audit

Approach. A task force was created and charged with developing the new Audit Approach and the training to support successful implementation. Since continuing professional education already was established as an integral part of the plan, a professional development team was assembled and involved in the process from the outset. Appropriate performance objectives were developed by the team that were matched with the identified business needs of the merged firm (see figure 2).

At the completion of the Implementing the Ernst & Young Audit Approach program, the participants should be able to:
o Explain the basic concepts of the Ernst & Young Approach
o Explain their role in the Ernst & Young Audit Approach (including engagement team responsibilities, engagement economics, and audit quality assurance) and in implementing the approach on their engagements
o Efficiently implement the Ernst & Young Audit Approach on a complex engagement
o Recognize how to efficiently implement the Ernst & Young Audit Approach in smaller business situations
o Explain the features and benefits of the Ernst & Young Audit Approach, including alternative testing strategies responsive to risk and flexibility

Figure 2: Performance Objectives of the Ernst & Young Audit Approach

While the design of the audit approach was established, concurrent design of the education materials was well underway. The Ernst & Young Audit Approach necessitated extensive and timely communication between all members of the team. A pilot program was developed within a few months. The pilot was designed for partners and senior managers and instructed by selected members of the task force charged with developing the audit approach.

Feedback from the pilot indicated that program revisions were needed in the area of additional technical content, instructional design, and further consideration of adult learning principles in order to achieve a concise and effectively delivered program. One month later, the revised program materials were ready, complete with visual aids and video support. Video was incorporated into the program to provide for proper delivery of consistent messages and energy regarding the new audit approach.

However, preparation was not complete until a "train-the-trainer" program was held. The programs would require two leader/facilitators—one from each of the former firms. They had to be prepared to deliver the programs, and to coordinate with one another, prior to implementation of the programs. Persons were

selected as leader/facilitators in various offices throughout the world, and these individuals were gathered in Cleveland, Frankfurt, Singapore, and Miami for 4 days of intensive training. The training for leader/facilitators involved a detailed walk-through of the program materials.

The firm used regional distribution channels to provide this training. After attending the train-the-trainer program leader/facilitators worked with regional personnel to coordinate training throughout their region. The result was worldwide delivery of an educational program. The delivery system also took into account geographic differences among program users, such as regional and local variations in culture and professional practice rules and customs, and their effect on branch offices in different locations.

The importance of geographic sensitivity is illustrated by the need to apply the Ernst & Young approach to audit procedures, and official United States standards for auditing entities that receive U.S. monetary assistance, to the conditions prevailing in, and affecting, audits conducted for clients around the world. For instance, all overseas entities (corporations, governments, etc.) that receive A.I.D. funding must follow prescribed U.S. audit standards issued by th Agency for International Development. Ernst & Young conducts audits for a number of A.I.D. clients. To meet the needs of firm auditors working on A.I.D. projects in East Africa, a localized educational program was developed that provided audit-specific information in the context of the East African cultural, legal, and business milieu. The program was deliberately designed so that it could be used as a model, with appropriate content modifications, for presentation in other parts of the world.

The Future of Continuing Professional Education

In the future, continuing professional education in the accounting profession will continue to be based on the business needs of CPAs. To understand how such continuing professional education may change as a result of those business needs, it is necessary to consider some projections about the future.

Today's business environment is increasingly dynamic and complex, and there is no indication that this growth and change will reverse. In fact, the future will provide an even more turbulent environment as a result of continued globalization and heightened competition. CPAs will need to adapt and adjust. The ever-expanding body of knowledge will not only promote but necessitate

specialization by industry for CPAs. And, within those specializations, competition will necessitate CPAs becoming well-rounded business advisors to their clients.

The future promises numerous and extensive technological advances, including a new role for information technology as a key tool in the strategic direction of businesses. Ernst & Young recently participated in a 5-year research program conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, directed at identifying the role of information technology in the 1990s. One clear message of the research is that the role of management will change as a result of information technology and the competitive edge will rest with those managers that make the best use of information technology (Ernst & Young, 1989).

The research indicates that information technology has changed from a support mechanism to a strategic resource. Hence, the need for concrete knowledge about information technology at all levels of an organization will be profound, starting at the highest levels of management. That need extends to CPAs in their role as advisor to their clients.

Linking Pre-Entry and Continuing Education Requirements

The accounting profession is making significant strides to meet the challenges of the future by linking the future business needs of CPAs with the academic community. In 1989, the chief executives of the largest accounting firms joined together to provide their views on the skills and knowledge needed by tomorrow's practitioners. The overall consensus of these executives was that education for the accounting profession must produce graduates with a broad array of skills and knowledge, including strong communication, intellectual, and interpersonal skills.[4]

Their views and recommendations led to the establishment of the Accounting Education Change Commission to foster changes in the academic preparation of accountants consistent with the goal of improving their capabilities for successful careers in the future. The Change Commission is developing and disseminating information on successful curriculum modifications and awarding grants in support of those universities and colleges implementing the prescribed modifications. The grants were made possible from funds, totaling $4,000,000, provided by the largest accounting firms.

Similarly, in response to the expanding scope of services and body of knowledge that CPAs must master, the AICPA adopted a new membership

requirement. After the year 2000, individuals seeking membership must have 150 semester hours of education that includes a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and a concentration in accounting. In an effort to influence state boards of accountancy to follow its lead, the AICPA has developed model language for state statutes regarding the 150-hour requirement as a condition for licensure.

Approximately 12 states have passed legislation requiring 150 semester hours of education for candidates taking the CPA exam; 9 more are expected to pass similar legislation within the next 12 months. However, the desired consistency among states has not been attained. A few states have passed legislation prescribing the additional 30 hours of education be obtained from accounting courses. These stipulations do not directly support the need for broader-based skills identified as crucial to the success of future CPAs. Once again, the profession will struggle with the lack of consistency among the requirements prescribed by the state boards of accountancy and the AICPA.

The Impact of Changes to Pre-Entry Education Requirements

The effect of changes in the pre-entry education of professionals after the year 2000 will affect continuing education programs. Future continuing professional education programs must carefully blend the new educational achievements of those entering the profession in the year 2000 with the immediate demands facing professionals already in that workplace. Tomorrow's CPAs will demand continuing professional education in the least time-consuming, most relevant delivery methods possible. However, the profession should not allow compromises in the quality of training provided. Therefore, the success of continuing professional education programs in meeting the challenges of the future may rest in development of innovative delivery methods of training that are available to CPAs at the point in time the training is most relevant.

Ernst & Young has already begun to meet these challenges in its recent endeavors to develop and enhance the state of art for "desktop" learning. These programs will be comprised of modules of learning materials, designed to be segmented and available based on the immediate and precise needs of professionals.

Appendix 1:

AICPA Division for CPA Firms, CPE Requirement

I. Basic Requirement

A. The purpose of the basic continuing professional education requirement is to help professionals in member firms maintain and enhance their professional knowledge and competence. The requirement applies to all professionals in member firms, including CPAs and non-CPAs, who are in the United States. All such professionals are required to participate in at least 20 hours of qualifying continuing professional education every year and in at least 120 hours every 3 years.[1] Exceptions to this requirement are set forth in sections I. D and II, below. Compliance with this requirement will be determined annually for the three most recent educational years. Professionals are expected to maintain the high standards of the profession by selecting quality education programs to fulfill their continuing education requirements.

B. Persons classified as "professional staff" (including partners) in a member firm's annual report to the private companies practice section (PCPS) shall be considered "professional" for purposes of these continuing professional education policies.

C. Each member firm may select any year-long period (educational year) for applying these continuing professional education policies. The educational year may differ from the member firm's fiscal year; however, both periods are to be specified in the annual report filed with the private companies practice section.[2]

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[1] Compliance with mandatory continuing professional education requirements for state licensing or for state society membership is deemed to be compliance with the requirements of the section, provided such state or society requirements call for an average of 40 hours of continuing professional education per year and provided each professional in the firm participates in at least 20 hours of continuing professional education every year.

[2] When mandatory continuing professional education requirements for state licensing or for state society membership provide that the period to be used for determining compliance with those requirements shall vary by individuals (for example, the period might coincide

D. The following requirements apply to those professionals who were not employed by the member firm during the entire three educational years covered by the firm's annual education report:

1. Professionals who were not employed during the entire most recent educational year being reported upon are not required to have participated in any continuing professional education.

2. Professionals who were employed during the entire most recent educational year being reported upon, but not during the entire most recent two educational years, are required to have participated in at least 20 hours of qualifying continuing professional education during the most recent educational year.

3. Professionals who were employed during the entire most recent two educational years being reported upon, but not during the entire most recent three educational years, are required to have participated in at least 20 hours of qualifying continuing professional education during each of the two most recent educational years.[3]

E. Any professional who has not participated in the required number of continuing professional education hours during the period covered by the member firm's annual education report shall have the 2 months immediately following that period to make up the deficiency. Any continuing professional education hours claimed during the 2-month period to make up a deficiency may not also be counted toward the 20-hour requirement of the educational year in which they are taken. Further, any continuing professional education hours claimed during

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with the date of the individual's license to practice), such periods may be used for determining whether there was compliance with the section's continuing professional education requirements during the firm's educational year.

[3] Member firms have a responsibility to adopt policies and procedures that provide reasonable assurance that all professional personnel are properly trained. The nature and extent of training needed by part-time personnel depend on a number of factors, including the type of work they perform, the degree of supervision they receive, and the number of hours they work. A firm should be prepared to justify any decision not to require a part-time professional to participate in the required number of continuing professional education hours.

period to make up a deficiency may not also be counted toward the 20-hour requirement of the educational year in which they are taken. Further, any continuing professional education hours claimed during the 2-month period to make up any deficiency for the preceding three educational years may not also be counted toward the 120-hour requirement of any three-educational-year period that does not include at least one of the three educational years in the three-educational-year period for which the deficiency was made up.

II. Effective Date and Transition

Except as stated below, a member firm shall be subject to these policies as of the beginning of its first educational year. For each member firm, this year shall begin during the first full year after it becomes a member of the private companies practice section.

During a member firm's first two educational years, all professionals must participate in at least 20 hours of continuing professional education each year, except as provided in section I. D.

During a member firm's first five educational years, it or an individual professional need maintain or retain the records, data, or evidence of attendance or completion referred to in sections VI. B, C, and D, only since the beginning of the member firm's first educational year.

III. Programs Qualifying

A. The overriding consideration in determining whether a specific program qualifies as acceptable continuing education is that it be a formal program of learning that contributes directly to the individual's professional competence.

B. Continuing education programs of the type described in section III. C will qualify if

1. An agenda or outline of the program is prepared in advance and retained. The agenda or outline should indicate the name(s) of

the instructor(s), the subject matter covered, and the date(s) and length of the program.

2. The educational portion of the program is at least 1 hour (50-minute period) in length.

3. A record of attendance is maintained.

4. The program is conducted by a qualified instructor or discussion leader. A qualified instructor or discussion leader is anyone whose background, training, education, or experience is appropriate for leading a discussion on the subject matter at the particular program.

C. Attendance at the following formal group programs will qualify if the programs contribute directly to the individual's professional competence and meet the requirements set forth in B, above:

1. Professional education and development programs of national, state, and local accounting organizations;

2. Technical sessions at meetings of national, state, and local accounting organizations and their chapters;

3. University or college courses (both credit and noncredit courses);

4. Formal in-firm education programs;

5. Programs of other organizations (accounting, industrial, professional, and so forth);

6. Committee meetings of professional societies *that are structured as educational programs*;

7. Dinner, luncheon, and breakfast meetings *that are structured as educational programs*; and

8. Firm meeting for staff and/or management groups *that are structured as educational programs.*

Portions of such meetings devoted to administrative and firm matters often cannot be included. For example, portions devoted to the communication and application of a professional policy or procedure may qualify. However, portions devoted to member-firm financial and operating matters generally would not qualify.

D. Formal correspondence or other individual study programs which require registration and whose sponsors provide evidence of satisfactory completion will qualify in the year in which the program is completed with the amount of credit to be determined as specified in section V. B.

E. Writing published books and articles will qualify in the year in which they are published, provided they contribute directly to the professional competence of the author.

F. Serving as an instructor or discussion leader at continuing education programs will qualify to the extent it contributes directly to the individual's professional competence.

IV. Qualifying Subjects

The following general subject matters are acceptable:

Accounting
Auditing
SEC Practice
Taxation
Management Advisory Services
Computer Science
Communication Arts
Mathematics, Statistics, Probability, and
    Quantitative Applications in Business
Economics
Business Law
Functional Fields of Business, for example,
    Finance
    Production

Marketing
Personnel Relations
Business Management and Organization
Business Environment
Specialized Areas of Industry, for example,
Film Industry
Real Estate
Farming
Administrative Practice (see section III. C. 8), for example,
Engagement Letters
Economics of an Accounting Practice
Practice Management
Personnel

Areas other than those listed above may be acceptable if the member firm or the individual can demonstrate that the area contributes directly to the individual's professional competence.

V. Measurement of Continuing Professional Education Hours

A. Credit for participating in formal group programs of learning (that is, those specified in section III. C) that meet the requirements set forth in section III. B shall be determined as follows:

1. Only class hours or the equivalent (and not student hours devoted to preparation) will be counted unless the preparation meets the requirements in section III. D.

2. For university or college courses that the professional successfully completes for credit, each semester hour credit shall equal 15 hours of continuing professional education and each quarter-hour credit shall equal 10 hours.

3. Continuing education credit will be given for whole hours only, with a minimum of 50 minutes constituting 1 hour. For example, 100 minutes of continuous instruction would equal 2 hours; however, more than 50 minutes but less than 100 minutes of continuous instruction would count for only 1 hour. For continuous programs in which individual segments are less than

50 minutes, the sum of the segments may be considered one total program. For example, five 30-minute presentations equal 150 minutes, which would equal 3 hours of continuing professional education credit.

4. Professionals who arrive late, leave before a program is completed, or otherwise miss part of a program are expected to claim credit only for the actual time they attend the program.

B. The credit hours for formal correspondence or other individual study programs recommended by the program sponsor will be granted provided the requirements in section III. D are met and the sponsor has

1. Pretested the program to determine average completion time.

2. Recommended the credit be equal to one-half the average completion time.

If the program sponsor has not done both 1 and 2, above, a participant may claim credit, in whole hours only, in an amount equal to one-half the time actually spent on the program. For example, a participant who takes 600 minutes to complete such a formal correspondence or individual study program may claim 6 hours of continuing professional education credit.

C. Credit for 1 hour of continuing professional education will be granted for each hour completed as an instructor or discussion leader to the extent it contributes directly to the individual's professional competence.

In addition, an instructor or discussion leader may claim up to 2 hours of credit for advance preparation for each hour of teaching, provided the time is actually devoted to the preparation. For example, an instructor may claim up to 18 hours of credit for teaching 300 minutes (6 hours for teaching and 12 hours for preparation). Credit (for either preparation or presentation) will not be granted for repetitious presentations of a group program.

The maximum credit as an instructor or discussion leader (including time devoted to preparation) may not exceed 60 hours during any three-educational-year period.

D. Credit for 1 hour of continuing professional education will be granted for each hour devoted to writing a published book or article, provided it contributes directly to the author's professional competence.

The maximum credit for published books and articles may not exceed 30 hours during any three-educational-year period.

VI. Reporting and Supporting Evidence

A. Each member firm must file an annual education report with the private companies practice section within 4 months after the completion of each educational year. The report shall indicate whether all professionals meet the applicable continuing professional education requirements during the educational years being reported upon (see sections I and II). If not all of them did, the report shall indicate the number who did not. The report shall also indicate the number of professionals by level (senior, manager, partner, and so forth) who had not met the applicable requirements by the end of the 2-month grace period (see section I. E) and the reasons they had not met the requirements.

B. Except as provided in section II, above, each member firm must maintain appropriate records for each professional for its five most recent educational years. These records should contain the following information for each continuing professional education activity for which credit is claimed for the individual:

1. Sponsoring organization;

2. Location of program (city/state);

3. Title of program and/or description of content;

4. Dates attended or completed; and

5. Continuing professional education hours claimed.

C. Except as provided in section II, above, each member firm must retain for at least five educational years the following data for programs that it sponsors:

1. A record of completion or attendance, indicating the number of hours of continuing professional education credit for each participant;

2. An agenda or outline of the program, indicating the name(s) of the instructor(s), the subject matter covered, and the date(s) and length of the program;

3. The location(s) of the program (city/state); and

4. The materials (any reading materials, problems, case studies, visual aids, instructors' manuals, and so forth) used in the program.

D. For continuing professional education activities that are not sponsored by the member firm, either the firm or the individual professional must retain appropriate evidence of attendance or completion for at least five educational years, except as provided in section II, above. Such evidence might include

1. For a university or college course that is successfully completed for credit, a record of the grade the person received;

2. For other formal group programs, an outline and evidence of attendance or of having been the instructor or discussion leader;

3. For formal correspondence or other individual study programs, evidence of satisfactory completion provided by the sponsor; and

4. For published books and articles, a copy of the book or of the journal in which the article appeared.

VII. Program Development and Presentation

A member firm should consider and apply to the extent appropriate the standards of program development and presentation with respect to formal education programs that the firm develops or presents.

The standards for program development and presentation are

A. Development

1. The program should contribute to the professional competence of participants.

2. The stated program objectives should specify the level of knowledge the participant should have attained or the level of competence he should be able to demonstrate upon completing the program.

3. The education and/or experience prerequisites for the program should be stated.

4. Programs should be developed by individual(s) qualified in the subject matter and in instructional design.

5. Program content should be current.

6. Programs should be reviewed by a qualified person(s) other than the preparer(s) to ensure compliance with the foregoing standards.

B. Presentation

1. Participants should be informed in advance of objectives, prerequisites, experience level, content, advance preparation, teaching method(s), and CPE contact hours credit.

2. Instructors should be qualified with respect to both program content and teaching methods used.

3. Program sponsors should encourage participation only by individuals with appropriate education and/or experience.

4. The number of participants and physical facilities should be consistent with the teaching method(s) specified.

5. All programs should include some means for evaluating quality.

Appendix 2:

AICPA Statement on Standards for Formal Group and Formal Self-Study Programs ©

In recent years, CPAs have shown an increased interest in continuing professional education (CPE). In large part this interest is reflected by legislation and regulation adopted in many states requiring continuing professional education. In a greater sense, it reflects the recognition by individuals, firms, and state societies of the place of continuing education in today's rapidly changing professional environment.

To help ensure that CPAs receive quality continuing professional education, minimum standards are needed. With minimum standards, programs are less likely to vary in—

- Quality of development and presentation; and
- Measurement and reporting of credits.

Moreover, the large number of programs available throughout the United States and the mobility of participants in these programs create measuring and reporting problems that suggest the need for nationally uniform standards. The purpose of this statement is to provide such uniform criteria.

Throughout this statement, the term "programs" refers to both formal group and formal self-study programs. A group program is an educational process designed to permit a participant to learn a given subject through interaction with an instructor and other participants. When a group program complies with the standards in this statement it becomes a "formal" group program. All other group programs are informal. A self-study program is an educational process designed to permit a participant to learn a given subject without major interaction with an instructor. For a self-study program to be "formal," (1) the sponsor of it must provide a certificate upon evidence of satisfactory completion, such as a completed workbook or examination, and (2) it must comply with the standards in this statement.

"Sponsors" are the organizations responsible for presenting programs; they are not necessarily program developers.

I. Standards for CPE Program Development

Standard No. 1: The program should contribute to the professional competence of participants.

Commentary: The fundamental purpose of CPE is to increase the CPA's professional competence. A professional person is one characterized as conforming to the technical and ethical standards of his profession. This characterization reflects the expectation that a person holding himself out to perform services of a professional quality needs to be knowledgeable within a broad range of related skills. Thus, the concept of professional competence is to be broadly interpreted. It includes, but is not restricted to, accounting, auditing, taxation, and management advisory services. Accordingly, programs contributing to the development and maintenance of other professional skills also should be recognized as acceptable continuing education programs. Such programs might include, but not be restricted to, the areas of communication, ethics, quantitative methods, behavioral sciences, statistics, and practice management.

Standard No. 2: The stated program objectives should specify the level of knowledge the participant should have attained or the level of competence he should be able to demonstrate upon completing the program.

Commentary: Program developers should clearly disclose what level of knowledge and/or skill is

expected to be mastered by completing a particular program. Such levels may be expressed in a variety of ways, all of which should be informative to potential participants. As an illustration, a program may be described as having the objective of imparting technical knowledge at such levels as basic, intermediate, advanced, or overview, which might be defined as follows:

1. A *basic level program* teaches fundamental principles or skills to participants having no prior exposure to the subject area.

2. An *intermediate level program* builds on a basic level program in order to relate fundamental principles or skills to practical situations and extend them to a broader range of applications.

3. An *advanced level program* teaches participants to deal with complex situations.

4. An *overview program* enables participants to develop perspective as to how a subject area relates to the broader aspects of accounting or brings participants up-to-date on new developments in the subject area.

Standard No. 3: *The education and/or experience prerequisites for the program should be stated.*

Commentary: All programs should clearly identify what prerequisites are necessary for enrollment. If no prerequisite is necessary, a statement to this effect should be made. Prerequisites should be specified in precise language so potential participants can readily ascertain whether they qualify for the program or whether the program is above or below their level of knowledge or skill.

Standard No. 4: Programs should be developed by individual(s) qualified in the subject matter and in instructional design.

Commentary: This standard is not intended to require that any individual program developer be both technically competent and competent in instructional design. Its purpose is to ensure that both types of competency are represented in a program's development, whether one or more persons are involved in that development. Mastery of the technical knowledge or skill in instructional design may be demonstrated by appropriate experience or educational credentials.

"Instructional design" is a teaching plan that considers the organization and interaction of the materials as well as the method of presentation such as lecture, seminar, workshop, or programmed instruction.

Standard No. 5: Program content should be current.

Commentary: The program developer must review the course materials periodically to assure that they are accurate and consistent with currently accepted standards relating to the program's subject matter. Between these reviews, errata sheets should be issued where appropriate and obsolete materials should be deleted. However, between the time a new pronouncement is issued and the issuance of errata sheets or removal of obsolete materials, the instructor is responsible for informing participants of changes. If, for example, a new accounting standard is issued, a program will not be considered current unless the ramifications of the new standard have been incorporated into the

materials or the instructor appropriately informs the participants of the new standard.

Standard No. 6: *Programs should be reviewed by a qualified person(s) other than the preparer(s) to ensure compliance with the above standards.*

Commentary: In order to ensure that programs meet the standards for CPE program development, they should be reviewed by one or more individuals qualified in the subject area and in the instructional design. Any one reviewer need not be competent in both the program subject matter and in instructional design, but both aspects of a program should be reviewed. However, it may be impractical to review certain programs, such as a short lecture given only once; in these cases, more reliance must be placed on the competence of the presenter.

II. Standards for CPE Program Presentation

Standard No. 1: *Participants should be informed in advance of objectives, prerequisites, experience level, content, advance preparation, teaching method(s), and CPE contact hours credit.*

Commentary: In order for potential participants to most effectively plan their CPE, the salient features of any program should be disclosed. Accordingly, brochures or other announcements should be available well in advance of each program and should contain clear statements concerning objectives, prerequisites (if any), experience level, program content, the nature and extent of advance preparation, the teaching method(s) to be used, and the amount of credit to be given.

Standard No. 2: *Instructors should be qualified both with respect to program content and teaching methods used.*

Commentary: The instructor is a key ingredient in the learning process in any group program. Therefore, it is imperative that sponsors exercise great care in selecting qualified instructors for all group programs. A qualified instructor is one who is capable, through background, training, education, and/or experience, of providing an environment conducive to learning. He should be competent in the subject matter and skilled in the use of the appropriate teaching method(s). Although instructors are selected with great care, sponsors should evaluate their performance at the conclusion of each program to determine their suitability for continuing to serve as instructors in the future.

Standard No. 3: *Program sponsors should encourage participation only by individuals with appropriate education and/or experience.*

Commentary: So that participants can expect CPE programs to increase their professional competence, this standard encourages sponsors to urge only those who have the appropriate education and/or experience to participate. The term "education and/or experience" in the standard also implies that participants will be expected to complete any advance preparation. An essential step in encouraging advance preparation is timely distribution of program materials. Although implementing this standard may be difficult, sponsors should make a significant effort to comply with the spirit of the standard by

encouraging (1) enrollment only by eligible participants, (2) timely distribution of materials, and (3) completion of any advance preparation.

Standard No. 4: *The number of participants and physical facilities should be consistent with the teaching method(s) specified.*

Commentary: The learning environment is affected by the number of participants and by the quality of the physical facilities. Sponsors have an obligation to pay serious attention to these two factors. The maximum number of participants for a case-oriented discussion program, for example, should be considerably less than for a lecture program. The seating arrangement is also very important. For a discussion presentation, learning is enhanced if seating is arranged so that participants can easily see and converse with each other. If small group sessions are an integral part of the program format, appropriate facilities should be available to encourage communication within a small group. In effect, class size, quality of facilities, and seating arrangements are integral and important aspects of the educational environment and should be carefully controlled.

Standard No. 5: *All programs should include some means for evaluating quality.*

Commentary: Evaluations should be solicited from both participants and instructors. The objective of evaluations is to encourage sponsors to strive for increased program effectiveness. Programs should be evaluated to determine whether:

1. Objectives have been met;

2. Prerequisites were necessary or desirable;

3. Facilities were satisfactory;

4. The instructor was effective;

5. Advance preparation materials were satisfactory; and

6. The program content was timely and effective.

Evaluations might take the form of pre-tests for advance preparation, post-tests for effectiveness of the program, questionnaires completed at the end of the program or later, oral feedback to the instructor or sponsor, and so forth. Instructors should be informed of their performance, and sponsors should systematically review the evaluation process to ensure its effectiveness.

III. Standards for CPE Program Measurement

Standard No. 1: *All programs should be measured in terms of fifty-minute contact hours. The shortest recognized program should consist of one contact hour.*

Commentary: The purpose of this standard is to develop uniformity in the measurement of CPE activity. A contact hour is 50 minutes of continuous participation in a group program. Under this standard, credit is granted only for *full* contact hours. For example, a group program lasting 100 minutes would count for two hours; however, one lasting between 50 and 100 minutes would count for only 1 hour. A one-day program consists of 8 contact hours. For continuous conferences and conventions, when individual segments

are less than 50 minutes, the sum of the segments should be considered one total program. For example, five 30 minute presentations would equal 150 minutes and should be counted as 3 contact hours.

Sponsors are encouraged to monitor group programs in order to accurately assign the appropriate number of credit hours for participants who arrive late or leave before a program is completed.

Since credit is not allowed for preparation time for group programs, it should not be granted for the equivalent time in self-study programs. Self-study programs should be pre-tested to determine average completion time. One-half of the average completion time is the recommended credit to be allowed. For example, a self-study program that takes an average of 800 minutes to complete is recommended for 8 "contact hours" of credit.

Standard No. 2: *When an instructor or discussion leader serves at a program for which participants receive CPE credit and at a level that increases his or her professional competence, credit should be given for preparation and presentation time measured in terms of contact hours.*

Commentary: Instructors and discussion leaders should receive CPE credit for both preparation and presentation. For the first time they present a program, they should receive contact hour credit for actual preparation hours up to 2 times the class contact hours. If a course is rated as 8 contact hours, the instructor could receive up to 24 contact hours of credit (16 hours for preparation and 8 hours for presentation). For repetitious presentations the instructor should receive no credit unless he can demonstrate that the subject matter involved was changed sufficiently to require significant additional study or research.

In addition, the maximum credit for preparation should not exceed 50 percent of the total CPE credit an instructor or discussion leader accumulates in a reporting period. For example, if a discussion leader's state required 40 hours of CPE yearly, and he actually taught 16 hours and took 30 hours to prepare, the most credit he could claim would be 36 hours (20 hours for preparation and 16 hours for presentation).

IV. Standards for CPE Reporting

Standard No. 1: *Participants in group or self-study programs should document their participation including: (a) sponsor, (b) title and/or description of content, (c) date(s), (d) location, and (e) number of CPE contact hours. Documentation should be retained for an appropriate period.*

Commentary: This standard is designed to encourage participants to document their attendance at a group program or participation in a self-study program. State laws or regulations may dictate the length of time to retain documentation. In the absence of legal specifications, a reasonable policy would be to retain documentation for five years from the date the program is completed. For self-study programs evidence of completion would normally be the certificate supplied by the sponsor.

Standard No. 2: *In order to support the reports that may be required of participants, the sponsor of group or self-study programs should retain for an appropriate period; (a) record of participation, (b) outline of the course, (or equivalent), (c) date(s), (d) location, (e) instructor(s), and (f) number of CPE contact hours.*

Commentary: Because participants may come from any state or jurisdiction, the appropriate time for the sponsor to retain this information is not

dependent solely on the location of the program or sponsor. To satisfy the detailed requirements of all jurisdictions, a retention period of five years from the date the program is completed is appropriate. The record of attendance should reflect the contact hours earned by each participant, including those who arrive late or leave early.

Notes

1. As of the date of this paper, February 15, 1991, the proposed revised continuing professional education standards were not finalized. It should be noted, however, that the final draft scheduled for presentation to the AICPA Board of Directors in spring 1991 contains a revised definition of continuing professional education.

2. This example was found in Robert F. Mager, "Preparing Instructional Objectives," Belmont, CA: Fearon Publishers and Lear Siegler, Inc., Education Division, 1961.

3. These working principles for teaching adult learners are derived from Malcolm Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andogogy*, 2nd. Ed., New York: Cambridge Brothers, 1980; Patricia Lawler, *Workplace Education and the Principles and Practices of Adult Education*, Unpublished Dissertation, New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1988; and Robert Smith, *Learning How to Learn: Applied Theory for Adults*, Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1982.

4. These views and recommendations were published in a paper titled "Perspectives on Education: Capabilities for Success in the Accounting Profession." The paper reflects the overall consensus that education for the accounting profession must produce graduates with a broad array of skills and knowledge, including strong communication, intellectual, and interpersonal skills.

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