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Current Changes

in

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Adult Education**

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Abstract

The subjects of this thesis are the current changes in adult education and their effects, focusing on the provision of local education authority (LEA) adult education.

I have discussed the past century of adult education and related more recent policies to a case study of an adult education centre. LEA management structures of five counties were analysed and linked to their adult education provision. Within these counties I have investigated LEA adult education providers' partnerships, particularly those with secondary schools and further education (FE) colleges. Structured interviews were conducted with students, county administrators and a Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) adult education policy team leader.

Lifelong learning is high on the political agenda throughout Europe, both for its alleged ability to improve national competitiveness and for the promotion of social cohesion. Yet at the same time LEA adult education has been marginalised as a direct result of government policy. Legislation weakened local authorities and divided the curriculum which left only the, so called, 'leisure' classes for adults to be organised by LEAs. Moreover, marketplace competition between providers has inhibited collaborative partnership.

In the 2000 Learning and Skills Act, LEAs have the opportunity to make a 'key contribution' to the provision of adult education. The results of my research suggest that some LEAs must restructure and then cultivate harmonious partnerships in order to play a major part in developing a learning society.

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Glossary

ALF -	Average Level of Funding - per FEFC unit
CATS -	Credit Accumulations and Transfer Scheme
DETR -	Department of Environment, Transport and Regions
DES -	Department for Education and Science
DfEE -	Department for Education and Employment
DLE -	Demand-Led Element - FEFC funding to encourage growth
ECA -	Educational Centres Association
EI -	External Institution outside the FE sector
FE -	Further Education sector
FEDA -	Further Education Development Agency
FEFC -	Further Education Funding Council
FEU -	Further Education Unit - this transformed into FEDA
HoC -	House of Commons
HE -	Higher Education
ILA -	Individual Learning Account
IPPR -	Institute for Public Policy research
JSA -	Job Seekers' Allowance
LEA -	Local Education Authorities
LMS -	Local Management of Schools
LSC -	Learning and Skills Council
NACETT -	National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets
NAGCELL -	National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
NATFHE -	The University and Lecturers' Union
NFER -	National Foundation for Educational Research
NIACE -	The National Organisation for Adult Learning
NVQ -	National Vocational Qualification
NUT -	National Union of Teachers
OCN -	Open College Network - validating agency for credit-based qualifications
OECD -	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofsted -	Office for Standards in Education
PAT -	Policy Action Team
QCA -	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
RB -	Responsible Body - comprising universities, WEA and LEAs for providing adult education
RSA -	Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacturing and Commerce
SED -	Scottish Education Department
SEU -	Social Exclusion Unit - created by the Cabinet Office
SME -	Small or Medium-sized Enterprise
TEC -	Training and Enterprise Council
UDACE -	Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education
Ufi -	University for Industry
U3A -	University of the Third Age - voluntary study circles for the elderly
WI -	National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI)

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Introduction

I started teaching at the Hironnelle Adult Education Centre in Daisy County in 1986. I had taught in secondary schools before, but had no previous experience of this sector of education. Immediately I was taken by the welcoming atmosphere of the centre and also by the appreciation shown by a whole variety of students. This made me wonder why adult education was almost ignored rather than being treasured as a national asset. It was this notion, which I could not resolve, that inspired me to begin this research project.

In this investigation I will begin by reviewing the history of local education authority (LEA) adult education and relate its influences to the adult education centre where I work.

The theories associated with my research and the accompanying research methods will be explained. This will be followed by two chapters based on the analysis of my interviews with adult education managers and students. The majority of the interviews took place in the county where I am employed. I also interviewed heads of service in four other counties, a regional representative of Open College Network and a member of the Department for Education and Employment Adult Education Policy Team.

Of the various problems of adult education, two emerged from my investigations which appeared most prominent and interesting. Firstly, there was the different county structures for administering adult education. Secondly, the relationships that LEA adult education formed with their partners, particularly schools and further education (FE) colleges.

In its almost 100-year history LEA adult education has had mixed fortunes. The powers of LEAs reached their peak in the 1970s with their

control of schools, FE colleges, polytechnics and community education (adult education, youth work and family education). However, adult education provided by the LEA, arguably, never had the esteem accorded to it that other education sectors received. Much of the reason for this is because adult education was segmented into technical, vocational, academic and recreational. LEAs were responsible over the course of their history for the different segments of adult education which, at the time, had the lowest status. Consequently, LEA adult education attracted the lowest funding, causing it to share premises - particularly with schools, and latterly form unequal alliances with FE colleges.

Much of this weakness is related to the vague legislation instigated in the 1944 Education Act where LEAs had a, 'duty to secure adequate provision,' for adult education. In particular, the word 'adequate' was never defined. As Legge (1982) points out, LEAs could therefore not be prosecuted for providing a skeletal service or even allowing another sector to run it. As a result, adult education was mistakenly assumed to be discretionary and hence it attracted no hypothecated funding. LEA adult education not only had to compete for funding with other local authority priorities, it was vulnerable to cuts every time there was a financial crisis.

At its inception adult education was a radical social movement which has transformed to its present condition of a business-like public service. Spurred on by New Right market-driven policies, which almost executed the demise of LEA adult education at the beginning of the 1990s, it had to adapt to the new regime which valued academic and vocational learning to improve national competitiveness. Now New Labour's lifelong learning policies, matched by those in many European countries, recognise the worth of recreational learning for nurturing a civil society. It is in this arena where LEA adult education with its egalitarian ideology and its life-

affirming values may flourish again.

Just how this may happen has been legislated for in the 2000 Learning and Skills Act. This removes the remaining funding for adult education from local authorities to a new Learning and Skills Council with its 47 local arms located throughout the county boundaries. The local authorities will now have a 'duty to contribute' to adult education within a coherent national structure for post-16 learning.

This realignment of LEAs, where they have to present lifelong learning plans and bid for funds, might standardise what had been described during the last decade as an inconsistent and patchy service throughout the different LEAs. In some local authorities there is a distinct service with a Head of Adult Education, in others it is blended with Community Education. Sometimes adult education might be delivered by another local authority department such as Leisure and Recreation Services.

Traditionally, LEA adult education was partnered with the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) and university extra-mural departments to form what were known as the Responsible Bodies. The three provided the whole range of adult education. Shortly before the Second World War, Henry Morris's Village College model to reinvigorate rural life was modified and replicated by several local authorities. This vision eventually mutated into community colleges where adult education was loosely integrated into secondary schools. Some of the difficulties of mixing school management with that of community education will be described, along with the problems of sharing school resources.

The other major partners in adult education have been the FE colleges which were given independence from LEAs after the 1992 Further and Higher Education (FHE) Act. The legislation confirmed post-16 education as a commodity to be bought and sold in a competitive market. In order

for LEAs to provide any other type of adult education than 'leisure' courses, they had to apply for funding through an FE college. There were two methods of gaining funds from the newly-formed quango the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Initially there was fairly benign sponsorship which provided comparatively low funds. Then franchising was introduced. This attracted much higher funds in exchange for the LEA adult education provision being absorbed into the college. Again, massive problems arose and now franchising is ending; in addition the FEFC's duties will be taken over by the Learning and Skills Council.

I intend to show that the partnerships with schools and FE colleges during the past decade have been strained not only by burgeoning bureaucracy, but also by aggressive business tactics encouraged by government policies engendered by the New Right. Above all, the egalitarian ethos of adult education, with a tradition of working with the marginalised in society, became subservient to two different educational cultures. On the one hand, there was the culture of schools with their function to educate children. On the other were the FE colleges concentrating their energies on 16 - 19 year-old full-time students, generally operating in competition against any other post-16 provider (Leathwood, 2000).

The present Labour Government is keen to revive neighbourhood spirit through the encouragement of lifelong learning in a variety of settings - including the on-line learning centres of the new University for Industry. I intend to show that the LEAs can draw on their own rich history of providing the whole range of adult education to rise to this new challenge of lifelong learning for economic and social regeneration.

Literature Review

Introduction

Adult education provided by the Local Education Authority (LEA) should have a clear focus and set boundaries, but this is not the case. This type of adult education is in a state of flux between being a leisure pursuit (DES, 1991a), an initiation for academic and vocational learning (Boswell, 1993) and valued for its own sake (DfEE, 1998b); all views of politicians and policy makers. Even the term 'adult education' is an anachronism for the favoured 'adult learning'. Now it is being subsumed within the discourse of 'lifelong learning' which seems to be all encompassing (Edwards,1999); a title referring to any type of institutional learning from 'Books for Babies' within Family Literacy and Numeracy to the voluntary study circles for the elderly in the University of the Third Age.

In parallel with these changes, the role of the LEAs has shrunk from a leading player in all post-compulsory education up to the late 1980s, to merely a proposed 'contributory' part, devoid of financial responsibilities, in 2000 Learning and Skills Act for enforcement in April 2001.

I intend to set out a framework for my research within these bounds, which inevitably will be selective. I have chosen to emphasise topics which, to me, are relevant, interesting and important in the development of this type of education for adults. The most recent dramatic changes have occurred since the White Paper, *Education and Training for the 21st Century* (DES, 1991a) and subsequently the *Further and Higher Education Act* (1992). Market forces, competition and most notably, the academic/vocational and leisure divide in adult education were established through this legislation. These statutory measures so

debilitated LEAs that even though they still had limited adult education duties:

... it does not detract from the bitter, perhaps shocking, realisation, as to just how close we came to seeing the British liberal adult education tradition in local authorities consigned to the dustbin of history by narrow economic determinism. (McGill, 1996, p75)

It is therefore this decade's policies and the ensuing discussions which will be reviewed predominantly, although a trail of the changes can be traced back to the Callaghan Government of 1974 -1979 (Elliot, J. 1999) and to the Russell Report (DES, 1973) and on back to the turn of the century. Therefore, in order to place my study in context, the history of LEA adult education should be reviewed. (See Appendix I for a succinct review of 20th. Century Legislation and Historical Landmarks in the Development of LEA Adult Education in England.)

A short history of LEA adult education in England

The 1902 Education Act created LEAs and permitted them to use income from rates to aid or supply evening classes for adults without limiting the curriculum range. The unification of secondary and adult education under a single set of authorities brought administrative coherence and possibilities for wider co-operation to a 19th. century legacy of an adult education tradition that believed it should contribute to political and social action (Fieldhouse, 1996a). With this funding from the LEAs, which also included work of voluntary bodies and institutes, formal boundaries began to define adult education (Raggatt and Edwards, 1996).

In addition, there was a technical and vocational bias which the government's Board of Education tried to balance by offering grants to a

range of academic and liberal (non-vocational) courses taught to an advanced level. These efforts were unsuccessful because:

... with the exception of crafts, the potentialities of the LEAs in liberal adult education remained greater than their achievements.

(Harrison, 1961, p314)

After the First World War, adult education was given greater prominence.

1919 Ministry of Reconstruction: Final Report

The 1919 Final Report of the Adult Education Committee confirmed that by concentrating on technical studies, the LEAs were merely interpreting '... the utilitarian spirit of the times' (Ministry of Reconstruction, 1919, p104).

It was this nurturing of the artificial divide between vocational and non-vocational, a uniquely British phenomenon, which has hampered adult education throughout this century.

... adult education carried into the twentieth century a tradition and practice which greatly undervalued, if it did not despise, utilitarian, technical vocational education.

(Fieldhouse, 1996a, pp. 44 - 45)

The change of emphasis in LEA adult education has been, however, from a technical vocational bias at its inception to a duty only to secure 'leisure' classes in the 1990s. Now at the end of the century the curriculum divide will be obliterated in the proposed legislation (DfEE, 1999a) which has been described as:

... the best White Paper for adult learners since the magnificent report of the Ministry of Reconstruction adult Education Committee in 1919.

(Tuckett, 1999c. p43)

Both documents shared the determination to put learners at the heart of the system. The great strengths of adult education were recognised in the Final Report of 1919 seeing it as a crucial part of the reconstruction, after the war, of British society which depended on the creation of more intelligent public opinion (Jackson, 1995). It produced, '... a blueprint not only for adult education but for a free and fully participatory democracy', (Fieldhouse, 1996a, p47). It could be argued that the two go hand in hand with the present interest in active citizenship and community regeneration. The Final Report not only stresses the social purpose of adult education, it even uses language that would have been radical then but not out of place in any current policy document:

... adult education is a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship and therefore should be both universal and lifelong.
(Ministry of Reconstruction, 1919, p5)

It was this vision, according to Fieldhouse (1996a), which laid the foundations of the democratic style which became the hallmark of much of British adult education. However, it did warn that in the absence of adequate child education:

... experiments in adult education too often... resembled an attempt to roof a house before the walls were completed.
(Ministry of Reconstruction, 1919, p10)

This Final Report, according to Kelly (1992), was the first and still the most comprehensive survey of the organisation of adult education in this country, and Fieldhouse (1996b) claims that it was '... an incredibly important statement of the social, political and civic values of adult education' (p118). Conversely, he also asserts that much in the Final Report was damaging to the development of British adult education

including the undervaluing of LEA activity. This is explained in more detail:

The 1919 Report was, in essence, a social policy document of broadly Fabian persuasion in its stress upon liberal, non-vocational provision by voluntary bodies it betrayed a suspicion of adult education provided at public expense through agencies of the state. (Griffin, 1987, p233)

This lack of appreciation of the worth of government subsidised LEA adult education set a trend for most of the century and was echoed by the New Right in the 1980s. Other organisations providing adult education generally fared better than the LEAs.

Responsible Bodies

In 1903 the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) was formed and, along with the university adult education classes, was supported by the LEAs through grants, accommodation, and even the provision of classes (Kelly, 1992). In 1924 Responsible Body (RB) status was conferred on the universities and the WEA which allowed them direct government grants. In an introduction to these new regulations, the Board of Education also stated that the LEAs '... should assume the main financial responsibility for work of a lower standard' (BoE quoted by Fieldhouse, 1996a, p80). This was a reference to the vocational and recreational work done by the LEAs, but it also implied an inferior status to that of the more prestigious providers of liberal and academic education.

A collaboration continued, however, and was strengthened after 1944 until the RB status was abolished in 1989. During this period the LEAs were the major players of the three (Fieldhouse, 1996a). This triumvirate of organisations so dominated adult education, according to Edwards et.al. (1998), that they marginalised forms of adult learning taking place

elsewhere, like in the home, clubs and the workplace. It is a convincing argument in the light of today's encouragement of a learning society. Nonetheless, others say that these partnerships along with voluntary organisations, '... provided a rich variety of adult education' (Fieldhouse, 1996a, p396).

Today the WEA is one of the few organisations to be funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) for its liberal (non-Schedule 2) courses. This happened even though the WEA had just 100,000 students at a time when LEA centres alone catered for 1.6 million students (DES, 1991b) - (see Figure 2. on p. 26). The usual remit of the FEFC is to fund academic and vocational courses (Schedule 2) solely; those LEAs which provide them can receive funding indirectly only through a FE sector college. This will be discussed in more detail later, but it might reveal the esteem shown to the WEA and certain other institutions in comparison to the low status foisted on LEA adult education. In fact, although LEAs were stripped of their powers, at the same time the WEA began to question, '... whether it had lost all control over its ethos and purpose' (Fieldhouse, 1996a, p195). Perhaps the one institution is more susceptible to control than the other?

By 1927 - 1928 more than one million students attended LEA evening classes, '... but their distribution was very uneven' (Legge, 1982, p23). One of the characteristics of LEA adult education distinctive throughout this century is that '... its quality and volume varied considerably from authority to authority' (Fieldhouse, 1996a, p78). The LEA Adult Education Audit conducted by the DfEE (Audit Commission, 1999) also showed just this patchy provision between LEAs across the country.

Evolution of Community Colleges

Another development which has resounded to the present day was the establishment of the first Village College in Cambridgeshire by Henry Morris. He had a utopian vision to reinvigorate rural life with each college to serve a cluster of villages as a community centre for the neighbourhood. He predicted that toddlers would start classes and continue into extreme old age (Kelly, 1992). Additionally: 'The dismal dispute of vocational and non-vocational would not arise in it' (Morris, 1924, p9).

In the following years Cambridgeshire added more Village Colleges and other counties imitated and modified the model to suit local conditions (Legge, 1982). It was from Morris's vision of an all-embracing community centre where: '...education authorities often assisted with premises, teachers and materials,' (Kelly, 1992, p300), that the existing community colleges evolved. From September 1999 all LEA schools have had the term 'community' added to their name following the 1998 Schools Standards and Framework Act. Community colleges, however, in Daisy County, and certain other LEAs, provide secondary schooling and cater for community education (adult, youth and family work) within the same establishment. This system has provided a community venue with economical use of buildings but with structural and administrative problems that were exposed more than 20 years ago (Mee and Wiltshire, 1978) and are still prevalent now (Cara, 1999). These difficulties will be discussed in detail in the chapter on the relationship of LEA providers with other partners.

Tensions in adult education as a social movement

At the same time as Village Colleges were founded, LEAs were making a substantial and expanding contribution through their evening institutes: '... they were enlarging the concept of adult education and bringing it within reach of an ever-widening circle of people' (Kelly, 1992, p289). This growing adaptability to people's needs was going to be in greater demand to account for the changes in community, according to the government's adult education committee report.

There is in fact a new society coming into prominence, dependent on daily work for its economic existence, but with considerable leisure, and rapidly acquiring the mental characteristics of the older leisured classes.

(Board of Education, 1930, p29)

It is an interesting contrast that the state was beginning to set its own social priorities at the same time as Morris's innovative ideas continued the transforming tradition of adult education as a social movement. This government intervention has perpetuated over the decades so that now:

Adult education in Britain is a classic case of social policies addressed to the needs of society and justified in the name of the needs of individuals, and there is every reason to suppose that if this ceased to be the case, public funding would cease too. (Griffin, 1987, p227)

The picture of adult education being metamorphosed from a social movement to the present professional service due to its dependency on state funding is a little more complex than this. Social movements have endeavoured to create a better world, particularly for the less well off, since the flourishing of the Enlightenment in the 18th. century. Adult educators have involved themselves with movements which have petitioned the government to :

- make more educational opportunities

available and open to more people - from liberal to vocational education;

- provide education as a right to all in the same way as other welfare provisions;

- allow greater democratic participation by citizens in policy decisions as people become more educated. (Jarvis, 1997, p157)

Now many of these aspirations have either been met or they are on the government's agenda to be addressed. Others, and this indicates the contradictory nature of government policy and intentions, have actually been undermined by legislation. For example, the introduction of tuition fees in higher education goes against the grain of providing education as a right. At the same time adult education has had to adopt a system and language of business which naturally tends to be more concerned about finances than social responsibilities. If it is a service, then does it serve the participants, the state or both? Tensions like this permeate adult education.

The Second World War was still being fought when a major educational milestone was created.

1944 Education Act

This was a turning point for LEA adult education as it imposed:

... a statutory duty, as distinct from an enabling power, for which no provision had been made in the education acts of 1902 and 1918.

(Ministry of Education, 1954, p9)

Throughout the country the LEAs became major providers of adult education but an inherent vulnerability resulted from the vague terms used. Section 41 of the 1944 Education Act decreed:

It shall be the duty of every local education authority to secure the provision for their area of

adequate facilities for further education.

This was repeated in the 1988 Educational Reform Act (ERA), Section 20. At the introduction of the FEFC, it was included in the 1992 Further and Higher (FHE) Act, Section 11. It was paraphrased in the 1996 Education Act, Section 15, and the 1998 Teaching and Higher Education Act, Section 36.

Within this key sentence there are three points of contention which, from one perspective, have encumbered adult education for more than half a century.

1. **'... secure the provision...'** This does not necessarily mean that the LEAs must provide adult education. Since the 1992 FHE Act, LEAs are now responsible only for 'leisure' courses. In a recent survey (Sims and Blenkinsop, 1998) 54 of the 63 responding local authorities stated that in their area FE colleges were the main providers of this type of education. Those LEAs have contracted out their duties to FE colleges from another educational sector and, more importantly, a different culture. By transferring LEA adult education in this way, 'The distinctive flavour is often lost along with its attraction for learners,' (Taubman, 1999, p23). The notion that LEAs provide a discretionary adult education service, even repeated by the Audit Commission (Audit Commission, 1999, p43), has made them vulnerable to funding cuts both from central government and local authorities. These actions may fulfil the legal requirements but are they ethical?

2. **'... adequate...'** All the different LEAs interpreted this word in convenient ways, '... and tended to reassess what it meant every time there was a financial crisis' (Fieldhouse, 1996a, p85). So LEA adult education can appear to be unnecessary and therefore vulnerable to being reduced or

even discarded without a clear meaning of 'adequate'.

After the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) an attempt to define what 'adequate' meant for the provision of LEA adult education was written by the Unit for the Development of Continuing Education (UDACE). It suggested that, 'An adequate service will be the product of a continuing dialogue between the providers and users' (UDACE, 1988, p6). Thus it began to shift the emphasis of adult education from the focus on the providers to a greater consideration of students' needs. The paper proposed that any description of adequacy should consider these main issues: needs, curriculum, accessibility, participation and support services. It probably initiated a stimulating debate but no statutory definition followed.

During the passage of the FHE Bill through the House of Lords there was an attempt to pin down the term, '... adequate means fit for the purpose,' (Belstead, 1992, col.12). This led to a semantic cul-de-sac with opportunities for philosophical discussions about the purpose of adult education. The 1992 FHE Act made a step closer towards an understanding of 'adequate', even though it contained the ubiquitous word 'reasonable'. It conferred a duty on the new FEFC:

to secure that facilities are provided at such places, are of such character and are so equipped as to meet the reasonable need for education... [and] to take account of the different abilities and aptitudes of persons among that population. (Section 18)

After this the Further Education Unit (FEU) published a framework for adequate provision (see Fig. 1 over the page). By now the learner had moved to centre stage in considering: volume, quality, equity and accessibility (FEU, 1994).

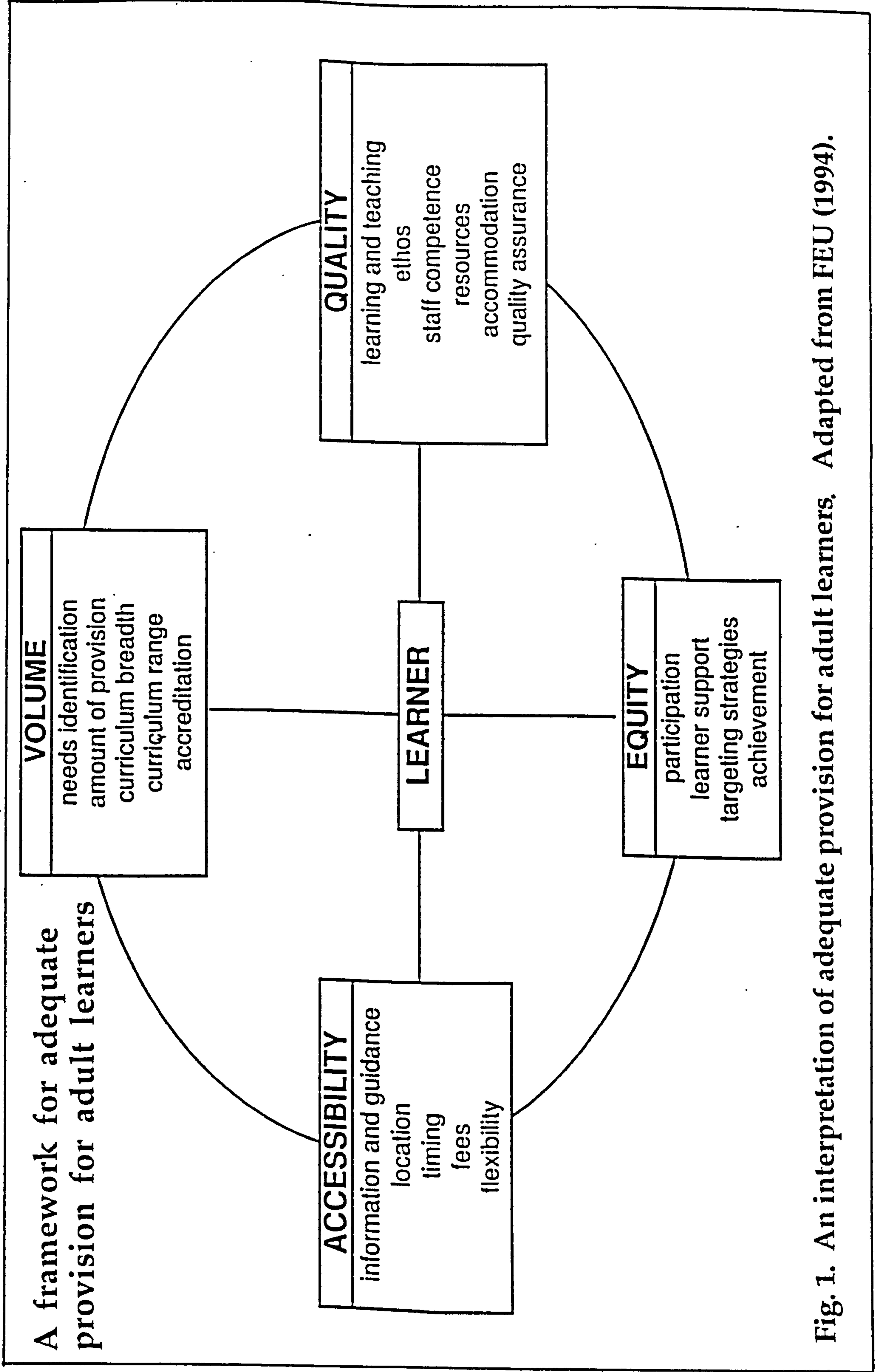


Fig. 1. An interpretation of adequate provision for adult learners. Adapted from FEU (1994).

Hopes were raised a few years later by the Labour Party Manifesto when the Shadow Education Secretary wrote:

Labour will protect and strengthen local authority adult education provision. We will consider the introduction of specified minimum levels of service necessary to fulfil the duty of LEAs to 'secure adequate facilities' for non-Schedule 2 adult education. (Blunkett, 1997, p2)

This possibility of a statutory definition of adequacy was a recurring theme at subsequent adult education conferences (Cara, 1997). Although another manual was produced to help LEA staff to define 'adequate' (Poole, 1998), no mention of minimum levels of service was made in the following Green Paper (DfEE, 1998b) or the White Paper (DfEE, 1999a).

After consideration, the government has probably concluded that it would be impossible to define an adequate minimum level of service applicable to both rural and urban settings. Already there were rumours that the forthcoming legislation may omit the word 'adequate' (Tuckett, 1999b). Nevertheless, a clear picture of LEA adult education provision might be drawn after an audit which was carried out by the DfEE in May, 1999. Information on finances, participation rates, curricula and other local data was requested from all LEAs. Perhaps definite service requirements can be made after the array of structures are clarified.

The silver lining on this 'adequate' cloud of confusion has been those benevolent authorities at one extreme of the definition, '... who declare that it means the provision of all types of facility' (Legge, 1982, p100).

3. '... further education.' An ambiguity arises from the imprecise use of this term. (i) 'Further Education' (FE) is a specific sector, originally being largely work-related education and training for young adults but which now includes a majority of mature (over 25s) students. (ii) 'further

education' can mean additional education taken after compulsory schooling. It might include any post-16 educational activity, apart from higher education. It is this linkage of adult education with FE which:

... has attracted the assumption that it, too, is largely vocational and work related and the approaches adopted by Further Education are adequate for adults, which often is not the case.

(Boshier, 1997, p9)

And it is this latter assumption which has produced difficulties in the 1990s with franchising and contracting out adult education provision to FE colleges. The arrangements are discussed in the chapter on LEA adult education and its partnerships.

The 1944 Education Act also proposed new county colleges for compulsory part-time education for school leavers, first broached in the 1918 (Fisher) Education Act. Although this policy was never implemented, it had the effect of concentrating vocational education in FE colleges. Meanwhile, the adult classes mainly in evening institutes became increasingly non-vocational.

Thus the 1944 Education Act ... contributed to a uniquely British separation of vocational FE from non-vocational recreational and leisure adult education. (Fieldhouse, 1996a, p87)

It would be almost 50 years later when the 1992 FHE Act would set this divide on the statute books.

The 1944 Education Act expected LEAs to assume a much more positive role within the community as a whole, 'to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community,' (1994 Ed. Act, Section 7). This was all within a statutory framework which allowed the possibility of creativity to flourish through a deliberate use of vague terms, as indicated in a pamphlet published three years later.

The Education Act of 1944 allows great freedom for initiative and experiment, and it is the Minister's hope that this freedom will be used fully in any direction that offers promise.

(Ministry of Education, 1947, p12)

This optimism created not one overall system but as many different structures as there were LEAs - more than 100. It therefore provided a basis for a greater central control of policy and practice. Also, this decentralising of power in LEAs:

... creates space for variety, flexibility and innovation, but also for inertia meanness, reaction and sloth. (Elsdon, 1994, p321)

Perhaps the latter behaviour could be corrected by a nationally guided common purpose? A Learning and Skills Council is now proposed for 2001 which will amalgamate the duties of the FEFC and the LEAs, plus other post-16 education and training organisations, to bring cohesion and coherence to the adult education system. However, LEAs must still be puzzling over the persistent use of enigmatic language of their own new role and that of the Learning and Skills Council:

The Government therefore proposes to introduce legislation that would:

- give the new Council the national duty to arrange *adequate* and *sufficient* adult and community learning provision.
- give to local authorities a changed duty to *contribute* to arrangements for provision at local level. [my italics] (DfEE, 1999a, para. 7.35)

'Arrange' has replaced the obsolete 'secure' but 'adequate' has remained, so far, along with those indeterminate quantitative terms 'sufficient' and 'contribute'. How much will be sufficient? To what extent will LEAs need to contribute to arrangements within the local authorities? Therefore, will an overarching system of adult education be able to

alleviate the uneven provision existing across the country?

The 1944 Education Act seemed to, '... make it difficult for any LEA to shirk full responsibility for the education of adults', (Lowe, 1970, p43). Therefore, it is not surprising that the number of LEA evening institutes doubled between 1947 to 1950 (Fieldhouse, 1996a). Financial pressures forced a rise in fees, reversing the expansion, according to Kelly (1992), and causing an overall decline in attendances of 30 per cent. By the late 1960s and early 1970s a period of optimism had returned (Thomas, 1991) in which there was both a growth of academic courses and scholarly writing in adult education.

To some extent this stemmed from the influence of the sixties culture on a new generation of adult educators who brought a more positive attitude and confidence of purpose into adult education.
(Fieldhouse, 1996a, p62)

This buoyant time for adult education was reflected in a visionary report.

Russell Report 1973

This was commissioned in 1969 by a Labour Government but it reported to Margaret Thatcher as Secretary of State for Education. Its uplifting conclusions declared:

The value of adult education is not solely to be measured by direct increases in earning power or productive capacity or by any other materialistic yardstick, but by the quality of life it inspires in the individual and generates for the community at large. (DES, 1973, p.xi)

These policies based on quality of life goals would be considered unmanageable (Quigley, 1993) in the market model later introduced by Thatcher's Conservative Government.

An example of Russell's foresight is his recommendation of a partnership of providers: voluntary organisations, the health and social services, and the police force, led by the LEAs, informing a National Development Council. With the addition of employers, this is just the proposal in the latest White Paper on adult education (DfEE, 1999a) for the formation of local Learning and Skills Councils. Russell's plans failed, it is said, because, '... LEAs were too defensive of their role and most importantly of their budgets.' (Tyler, 1997, p32).

The most serious weakness of the report was its brief, 'To assess the need for and to review the provision of non-vocational adult education,' (DES, 1973, p.V). The value of this type of education was justly recognised but the needs of the economy and the relations between education and training were barely addressed. Jackson (1995) claims that another weakness was that the distinction between education and social service was blurred, but it may now have taken a more significant form and have different ramifications. This resulted, he felt, in a failure to challenge sloppy thinking about how, '... "developing independent judgement" or "increasing powers of decision making" were actually being achieved,' (Jackson, 1995, p187).

The great strength of the report was that it acknowledged the variety of ways in which adult education provided opportunities for personal development and more effective citizenship. It also identified a range of disadvantaged groups whose needs might be met by adult education.

Although it encouraged the 163 LEAs to develop their roles as direct providers, no extra funding or legislation followed. This was due to a recurrent feature of policy development work with adults, according to Powell and Foster (1996), where a proposed national strategy is rejected by

central government.

The Ruskin Speech

During 1974 - 75 local government was reorganised leaving 116 local authorities in Great Britain (Legge, 1982). It was at this time that many LEAs had to reduce some of their innovative work due to financial difficulties, '... paradoxically making adult education less accessible to the disadvantaged,' (Fieldhouse, 1996a, p392). A Labour Government prime minister, James Callaghan, confirmed in his Ruskin Speech that those calling for further increased resources would be disappointed:

But that surely cannot be the end of the matter.
There is a challenge to us all in these days and a
challenge in education is to examine its priorities
and to secure as high efficiency as possible by skilful
use of existing resources ... and there is a need to
improve relations between industry and education.
(Callaghan, 1976, p333)

This speech made a firm link between education and economic investment. Some, like Parrott (1997) and Elliot, J. (1999), interpret this as heralding the beginning of instrumentalism in LEA adult education. Certainly in the late 1970s the government's Manpower Services Commission (established under the 1973 Employment and Training Act to publicly fund industrial training) introduced a host of private providers into training (Edwards et. al., 1998) to compete with the FE colleges. Also:

Manufacturing industry was beginning to decline
and the traditional apprenticeship system had
collapsed. This posed a major problem for the
further education colleges which had built their
provision around the day-release system.
(Hamilton, 1996, p152)

Callaghan's speech additionally had repercussions for the whole compulsory education system. It signalled the government's intention to

prescribe the school curriculum (Crombie-White, 1997) and, more significantly, states Broadfoot (1996), reinforcing accountability through the introduction of provision for national assessment.

During 1979 - 1980 about 3.5 million adults attended courses provided by the LEAs, mainly in evening classes. By this time, the LEAs had also developed a network of 600 FE colleges and 31 polytechnics (Legge, 1982). They were at the height of their influence. A consequence of the election of the Conservative Government in 1979, was its reduced contribution to local authority spending from 59 per cent to 42 per cent by the end of Mrs Thatcher's premiership (Tuckett, 1991). An ex-Cabinet colleague, Sir Ian Gilmour, was bellicose about Mrs. Thatcher's legacy to lifelong learning.

... the Thatcher government was unable to understand the concept of intellectual investment, because it does not produce immediate cash returns. An under-educated society will in due course become socially unstable and economically inefficient, but Thatcherites were too blinkered to appreciate that simple point. For them, immediate economies and tax cuts were far more important than the long-term future of the country.

(Gilmour, 1992, p175)

In addition to this lack of investment in adult education substantial financial cuts were made. Also, the grudging acceptance of LEAs' powers during the 1980s, asserts Ball et. al (1997) was to be replaced by more overt hostility to LEAs. This was manifested in legislation.

1988 Education Reform Act (ERA)

A reduction of the powers of the LEAs ensued. The abolition of the Inner London Education Authority, the 'jewel in the crown' of LEAs (Tuckett, 1991), ' was a totally negative message for all LEAs attempting innovative work for disadvantaged groups.' (Fieldhouse, 1996a, p392). It

also began the process of removing FE from the control of LEAs by delegating responsibilities for finance, management and development to college governing bodies (Randle and Brady, 1997). A separate and smaller budget for other LEA adult education was the aftermath. This happened, Greig (1989) suggests, because most LEAs had rejected the opportunity to steer adult education in FE colleges in favour of part-time and more flexible modes of delivery. Their powers were further reduced by giving schools the right to opt out of LEA control and for school governing bodies to manage school premises outside normal school hours.

So, as a result of the ERA, both colleges and schools were able to compete with their LEA as a provider, and inhibit its use of premises for adult education. On top of this, the Act removed polytechnics, and therefore any higher education, from LEA control. Despite many protests, this left adult education in a weak legislative position.

When this weakness encountered the lethal fall-out of actual or threatened poll-tax capping ... the results were catastrophic. Formerly sound, active purveyors of good services of community adult education were savaged by elected members desperate to avoid central government's 'capping' axe poised over their heads. It was an appalling comment on our times when an almost totally discredited local tax legislation was able to assault and ruin so many worthwhile features of local life and community. (Stock, 1996, p19)

This plundering of adult education coffers to compensate for an unrelated poll-tax threat was yet another blow to its esteem. The accumulation of events from the ERA onwards, in Grace's (1998) opinion, was a deliberate attempt to transform the nature of education, its institutions and the power relations within them, through an educational market place which corrupted accepted values. Before time was given to

embed these changes, planning for a new White Paper began.

1991 White Paper - Education and Training for the 21st. Century

Sheila Lawlor of the Centre for Policy Studies, a representative of the New Right position and critic of comprehensive education generally, published a scathing attack on local authority provision for adult education. She proposed that:

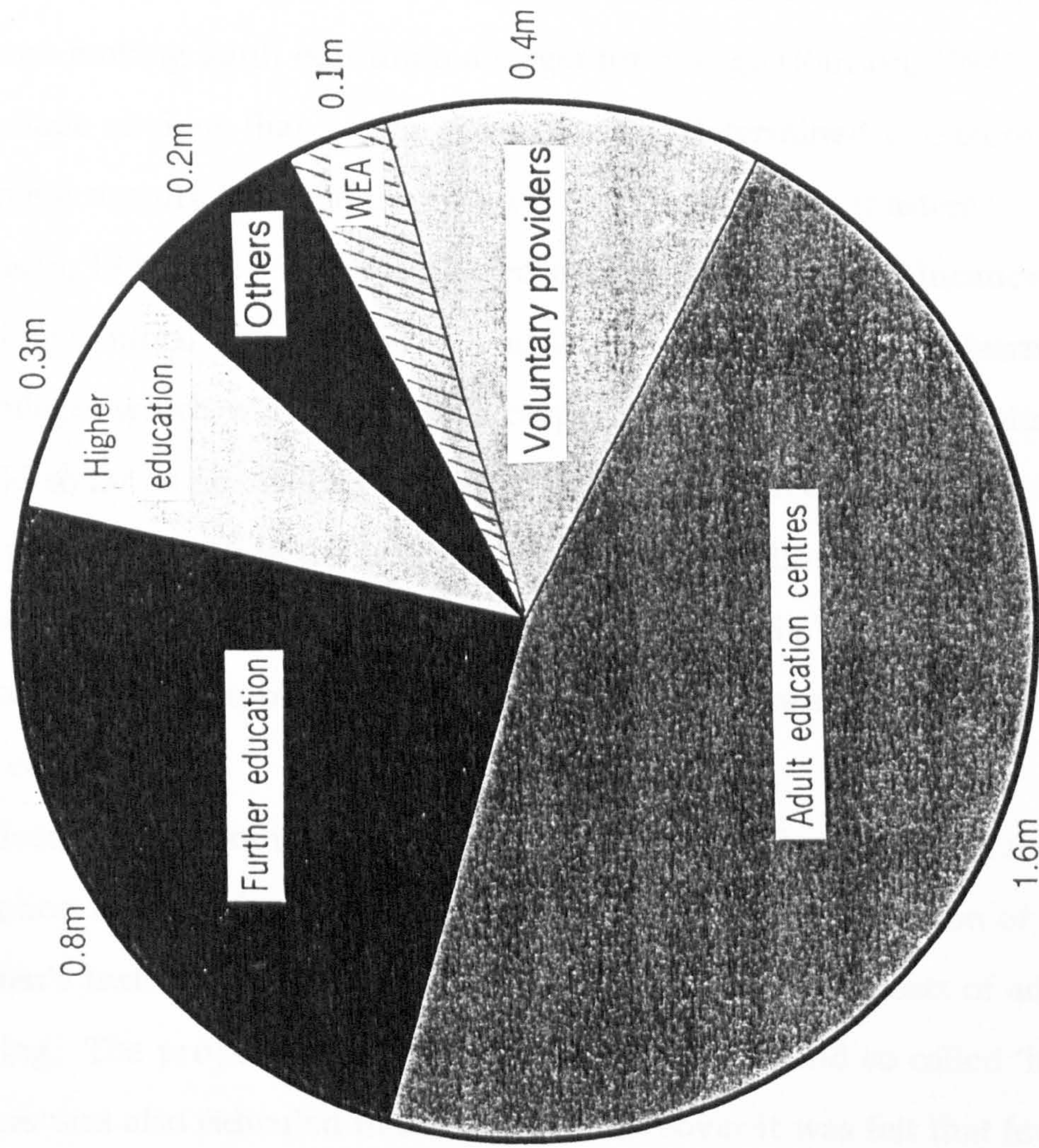
- provision for adults was withdrawing money from schools where it belonged;
- adult education centres should be financed through fees paid by students; and
- competition between different institutions would maintain high standards and lower fees.

To promote this, the responsibility of the LEAs for providing adult education should be ended (Lawlor, 1988). Her proposals formed some of the policies in the subsequent White Paper. This was published as **Education and Training for the 21st. Century**, (DES, 1991a) in May. The two volumes devoted just two pages to adults. This is the opening clause (3:1) in the 'Education for Adults' section:

Further education for adults comes from a wide range of providers. The bulk of full-time work takes place in FE colleges. Much other provision is also made in colleges, but some is made in adult education centres; in schools; in adult residential colleges; and by the WEA and other responsible bodies. (DES,1991a, p8)

Around the same time as the White Paper was circulated, the Department of Education and Science (DES) published a review of LEA adult education (DES, 1991b) produced by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (H.M.I.).

Education of Adults by Provider Enrolments in England and Wales 1987 - 1988



Estimated total enrolment of 3.4 million adults

Fig. 2. Enrolments by provider ~ showing that LEA adult education centres provide education for nearly half of the participating adults compared to Further Education colleges which enrol approximately one quarter. Adapted from **Education for Adults: a review by HMI (DES, 1991a)**

It is clear from the pie chart (see Figure.2 on the previous page) that the largest proportion of the 3.4 million adult learners were to be found in adult education centres and not in further education colleges as the White Paper implied. It also failed to recognise that the majority of literacy and basic skills work was carried out in adult education centres (Tuckett, 1996a).

A burden of £2 billion of expenditure was to be removed from local revenue making adult education a target for change (Ranson, 1994). It was also made obvious that, '... the government is determined to ensure a complete rupture between the colleges and their present masters,' (Johnson, 1991, p4). A new unelected quango, the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), was to fund vocational and academic learning in FE colleges which were to be given corporate status. 'Other provision should so far as possible be supported only through fees,' (DES, 1991a, p8). Any provision outside the funding list (see Fig. 3, following page) was considered as courses for the 'leisure interests of adults'. Lawlor's prescription for stripping LEAs of their duty to secure adult education had been endorsed.

Meanwhile, there was a public outcry about funding liberal adult education through fees. Every branch of the National Federation of Women's Institutes wrote to complain of potentially high costs of adult learning. The proposed division between vocational and so called 'leisure' courses was also ridiculed in the media. Moreover it was felt that fewer courses would be available at local level and that many learners would have to curtail their studies if the proposals were implemented (Powell, 1993). M.P.s received a larger postbag on this topic than on the Poll Tax (Tuckett, 1996a).

The vocational and 'leisure' funding divide

1991 White Paper proposals

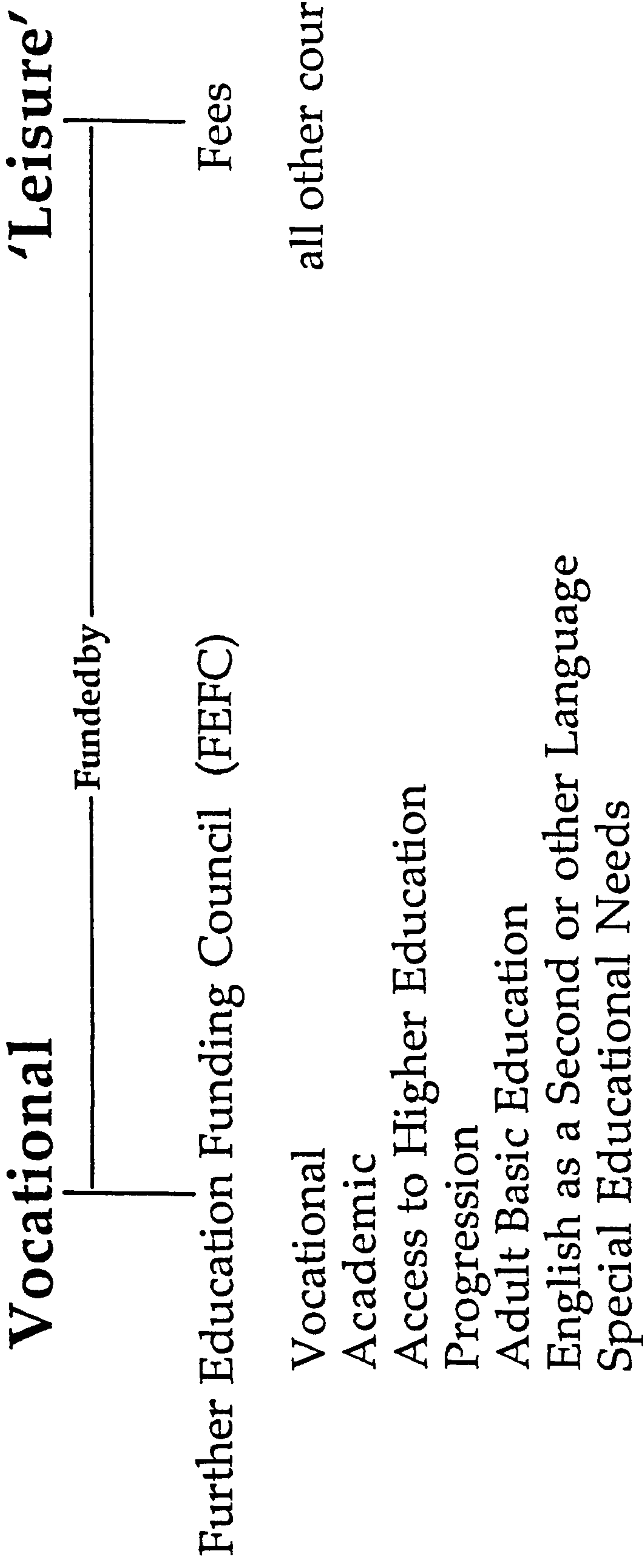


Fig. 3. The funding proposals in Education and Training for the 21st. Century

This lobbying and a national petition led to a climbdown by the Secretary of State when he announced in September that:

LEAs will retain their existing duty to secure the provision of that part of further education which will not fall to the duty of the new funding councils. Recreation and leisure courses should not be knocked... I intend that LEAs will also retain resources and flexibility to respond to the pattern of demand in their areas. ...they will charge fees as they always have, but they will be able to take account, as they always have done, of students' ability to pay those fees. (DES, 1991c, p1)

Paradoxically, by exposing the vulnerability of LEA adult education its strength of affection was highlighted. Two months later, in November 1991, the Further and Higher Education Bill was published. While allowing LEAs to retain some powers for the provision of adult education, the division between leisure courses and vocational/academic courses was retained. This occurred despite widespread support both inside and outside Parliament for amendments to annul the split curriculum and the sectoral divide (Powell, 1993). The Chair of the Management Committee of the Hironnelle adult education centre, where I work, had his letter of protest read in the House of Commons, during the debate, by the member for Leeds Central, who added:

... the Minister of State referred to Schedule 2 work as being 'national priority work'. ... Once Schedule 2 work has been transferred to the Further Education Funding Council, local authorities faced with scarce resources will then make money available to support local education. (Fatchett, 1992, p191)

This latter point that adult education would be contending for finance against greater local authority priorities was confirmed by the Minister of State, Baroness Blatch, during the debate in the House of Lords. She did not regard it as the government's duty to:

...tell local authorities what they must spend on their remaining responsibilities for adults. That is for them to decide in the light of local circumstances. (Blatch, 1992, p208)

Further debate was curtailed, however, as the Bill was guillotined in time to be on the statute books for the 1992 general election (Powell, 1993).

1992 Further and Higher Education Act

The FHE Act became law on 1st. April, 1993. At this time all FE institutions, with at least 15 per cent of their students enrolled on full-time courses, were automatically transferred to the new sector as incorporated institutions. All Schedule 2 courses (see Fig. 4 over the page) were funded by the FEFC. It was also given the power but not the duty to fund 'leisure' courses, now called non-Schedule 2, for adults. Conversely, LEAs could have the power but not the funding to secure the provision of Schedule 2 courses.

If an LEA institution chose to adopt this power and provide Schedule 2 courses, in order to obtain funding for them from the FEFC it had to apply through an FE sector college. Thus to maintain a balanced curriculum and to avoid total reliance on insecure funding for 'leisure' courses, many LEA adult institutions opted to provide Schedule 2 courses and sought funds. The other option, for which there are some variations, was for FE colleges to deliver the Schedule 2 courses previously provided by the LEA and also, in some cases, the non-Schedule 2 courses. During this time, '... many local authorities took advantage of the confusion to cut their recreational programmes altogether,' (Adkins, 1997, p136). These new associations between FE colleges and LEA adult education providers ranged from amicable to hostile depending upon the exercise of powers invested in those sector colleges. Discussion about this continues in other chapters.

The vocational and 'leisure' funding divide 1992 Further and Higher Education Act

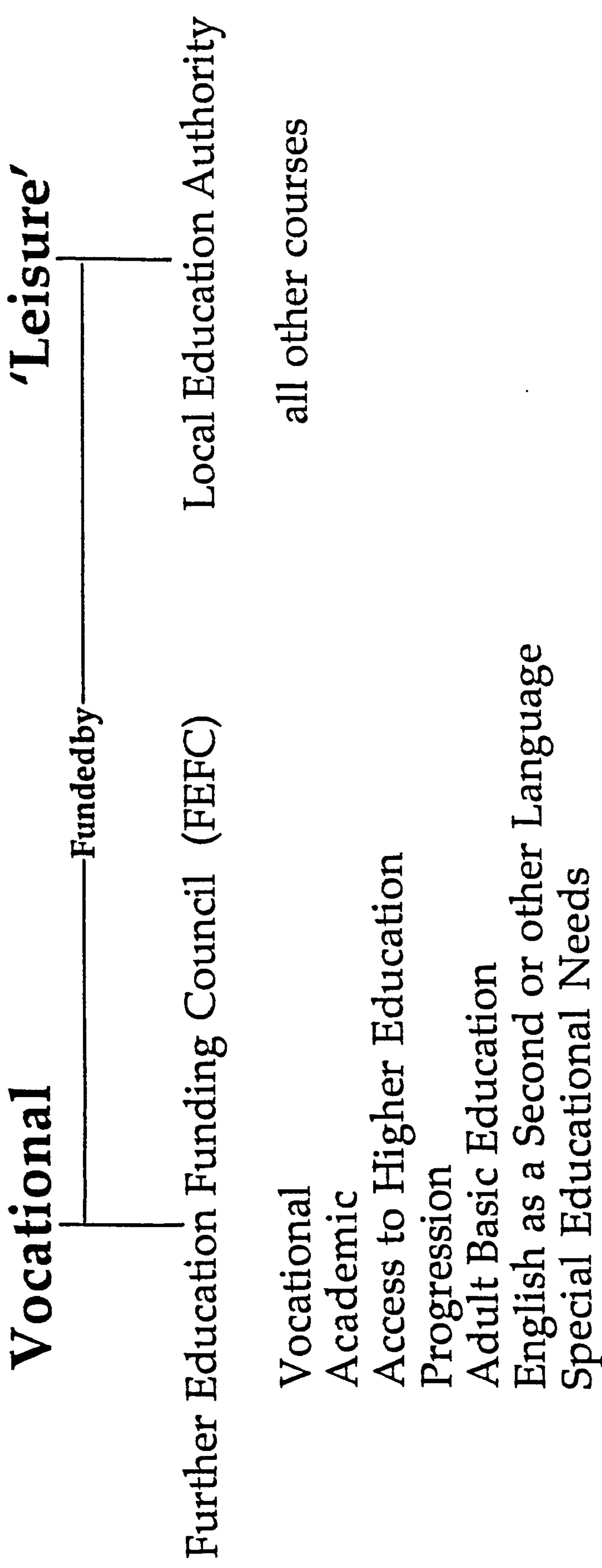


Fig. 4. The funding statutes in the Act of Parliament

Now, the LEAs, which had adopted proposals in the Russell Report for the provision of basic skills, Access to HE courses, ESOL and for adults with special needs, '... were considered unfitted to secure this provision,' (Fieldhouse, 1996a, p105). Instead, this work along with academic and vocational courses, entitled Schedule 2, was transferred to the FE sector, which was also encouraged to take on non-Schedule 2 work if they could make it pay.

This Act gave a wholehearted commitment to an economic dynamic rather than the social dynamic discussed in the Russell Report.

... the reservoir of human and material resources to which Russell referred is to be released by the FEFC for the good of the economy not the good of society, assuming implicitly there is no distinction of significance. (Jackson, 1995, p186)

It was this assumption that what benefited the economy also benefited society which was embedded in Conservative ideology for the remainder of their administration. The thrust of the 1992 FHE Act has caused a number of changes.

- It has introduced competition between providers vying for students, which in turn weakens collaboration. A key finding of Munn, et al. (1993) was that collaboration between providers was an important factor in helping adults participate in education for the first time, and in sustaining participation by enabling adults to move onwards and upwards to other provision.

- It has firmly placed market principles into adult education.

Consequently for administrators this means that to:

... manage a budget and to achieve the public service equivalent of a profit has become the central concern of a whole stratum of people who previously thought of themselves as committed to providing a social service. (Rustin, 1994, p76)

Moreover, as Ranson (1994) has claimed, markets act to advantage the stronger interest groups in society.

- It ignored the educational needs of a large section of the population who are neither conspicuously deprived nor able to afford to pay (Lawson, 1998). Integrated with the FEFC funding mechanism is a subsidy for anyone receiving a listed state benefit. For those on 'leisure' (non-Schedule 2) courses these subsidies are unavailable and fees are likely to be, in comparison, more expensive. Therefore:

In recognising the power and contemporary primacy of the market it also had to be emphasised that markets, for all their flexibility and dynamism, do not distribute goods according to the need and do not protect the vulnerable. (Usher et. al, 1997, p3)

There needs to be a fundamental challenge to these inequalities, of both income and opportunities, argues Brown and Lauder (1996), in order to ensure the wealth of the nation.

- It had introduced a New Managerialism (Randle and Brady, 1997) to deliver the three E's of economy, effectiveness and efficiency, using a discourse of business and sporting metaphors. Undisguised cynicism is a typical reaction to these changes:

And under the reality shaped by such language, a comprehensive system of curriculum outcomes is created - of attainment targets, behaviours, competences - which embraces every aspect of learning from cradle to grave, all recorded in a National Record of Educational Achievement, to be presented to St. Peter in the hope that one may finally share in the heavenly banquet.

(Pring, 1995, p142)

As a result of these changes, the assumption that quality and efficiency are being produced has, according to Jarvis (1993), little justification in educational research.

- Consequently, it challenged the conviviality and engagement which characterises popular education (Jackson, 1997). By being coerced into behaving in a more business-like way, adult tutors might feel less inclined to spend time on developing the important but unmeasurable social aspects of adult classes.

- It weakened LEAs leaving the adult provision more vulnerable. Ball (1994) believes that this reduction in influence of intermediate democratic institutions such as LEAs is occurring because, 'The agencies ... are seen as distorting or inhibiting market relations.' (p107).

- It has increased centralisation, putting the power of funding with an unelected quango, '... which dispenses funding with a mix of stiff growth targets, reduced budgets and competitive incentives,' (Foster, 1996, p157). The FEFC is a single, cohesive funding body directly controlled by the DfEE:

... where colleges can be dependent on total annual funding from the government of between 70 percent and 95 per cent of their budgets.

(Chadwick, 1997, p306)

This funding, can be reduced at an instant, either by the FEFC - for example Circular 99/37 (FEFC, 1999c) which announced a one-third cut in franchisees' funds - or by the college. Any reductions were passed on to adult education.

- It has justified vocational activities as an 'investment' whereas non-vocational are a 'consumption' (Raggatt et. al., 1996). The ideology of the Act is that technological developments have created a demand for a better educated, more thoughtful and flexible workforce to develop a spirit of enterprise and initiative.

This has resulted in a redefinition of the cultural base on which education rests, away from the humanistic tradition towards an industrial culture.
(Black, 1993, p39)

Therefore, liberal adult education has now become, '... a leisure time commodity for those who are interested in purchasing it,' (Jarvis, 1993, p91). And for those who can afford it.

- It has created a massively bureaucratic procedure for LEAs to claim back money deducted from them. For example:

The implementation of the FHE Act curriculum divide meant in essence that central government removed £800,000 from the Surrey LEA and gave it to the FEFC. (Norris, 1996, p71).

The effects of the Act were not entirely negative. It recognised the value of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), introduced in 1986, and equated them with academic qualifications by offering the same funding.

This was the most serious attempt so far in UK educational policy to breakdown the divide between education and training, between academic and theoretical on the one hand and the vocational and practical on the other. (Jackson, 1997, p50)

It would also reverse decades of failure to invest adequately in training which, according to Gleeson (1996a), has left Britain with a vicious circle of low skills, low wages and low productivity and with one of the least educated workforces in the industrial world. Although the changes in the balance of provision and funding mechanisms increased opportunities for some learners, it excluded others especially women and older learners (Fieldhouse, 1996a). Sadly, therefore it did little if anything to challenge the stubborn inequalities that have bedevilled the system of education.

In contrast to the Russell Report which received no funding support, the government demonstrated its serious intent by increasing the finances

of the FEFC by 25 per cent over the following three years (Jackson, 1997). As Tuckett (1996b) points out, these new opportunities have overwhelmingly benefited adults who now comprise 80 per cent of the FE learners.

Of the 60 per cent of LEAs which still provided 'leisure' (non-Schedule 2) courses, fees for these classes had to rise (Powell, 1993). However, with the allure of higher funding from the FEFC, many courses were accredited and transferred to the Schedule 2 category. The notion that you can tell a learner's intention from the course chosen had already been ridiculed in the White Paper protests and later accepted by Ministers (Tuckett, 1996a). For example, is that flower arranging student learning for recreation or business prospects? This concept justified the accreditation of an array of 'leisure' courses, particularly crafts, languages and humanities, through various examining bodies, but most significantly through Open College Networks. (More discussion about OCNs in the section on the Kennedy Report.) This trend was sanctioned by the Under-Secretary of State for Education who said, 'I don't pretend that the government has been encouraging a shift of focus towards accredited courses,' (Boswell, 1995, p260).

Additionally, previously non-Schedule 2 courses which, '... lacked assessment procedures, clear goals and any tangible evidence of learning,' (Trodd, 1996, p189) were subject to close scrutiny under the new funding regime of Schedule 2 courses. A new business-like atmosphere permeated the whole of adult education. Similarly, there were other trends arising from the FHE Act which included fewer adult education sites and concessionary fees becoming less widespread (Powell, 1993). Also:

The prospect of becoming little more than a franchising agent for the FEFC in their adult work was facing many LEAs. (Fieldhouse, 1996a, p107)

These factors combined to cause many LEAs to severely reduce post-16 education staffing. Within this adversity opportunities arose, suggests Rae (1998), to shrug off the Big Brother of the old LEA and create a network of collaborations. This is just the type of structure being recommended in the latest lifelong learning White Paper, *Learning to Succeed* (DfEE, 1999a), which proposes a restructuring of post-16 administration into a web of partnerships. But can true partnerships be forged in the face of market-driven competition? This will be discussed in the chapter on partnerships.

Targets and Training

Along with prioritising utilitarian education in the light of reports such as *Learning Pays* (Ball, 1991), the government adopted in 1991 National Targets for Education and Training. These were first advocated two years earlier by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) concerned by the serious skills gap that existed between the UK and a number of foreign competitors (DfEE, 1997a). All organisations were encouraged to become 'Investors in People' by the CBI (CBI, 1995), government and the Trades Union Congress: 'Effective training and development has to be linked to organisations' business objectives,' (DfEE, 1996b, p17).

Investors in People is a system of kitemarking which enables Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) to invest in companies with a training culture (Fieldhouse, 1996a). The standard was initially administered by the Department for Employment but as demand grew, even with some overseas interest, the company Investors in People UK was formed in 1993. Now 12,000 employers have the Investors in People (IIP) standard (HoC, 1999).

The 78 TECs, founded regionally in 1989, contract educational

institutions and training companies to provide programmes for employers. These TECs, which are controlled by employers, have a fairly low level of involvement by unions and workers. Also:

Adult education with its historical links and expertise in trade union education, would be well placed to intervene in the new process of democratisation and worker participation, but thus far its expertise has been marginalised by the new training initiatives. (Westwood, 1991, p47)

Community-based LEA adult education continues to be excluded from this training which the government states, '... takes place in a free market. Employers and individuals decide what investment to make in skills,' (DfEE, 1999e, p2). This has been interpreted by Edwards (1997) that Investors in People is yet another initiative to confirm the constant failure of the government to formulate a coherent training policy with a firm legislative base. A partial solution would be to create policy:

... across traditional government department boundaries since the problems themselves are so multi-faceted and inter-linked, often lying outside the labour market as such.

(Haughton, 1993, pp138 - 139)

Although the present government is attempting to bring coherence within both central and local government departments, Tuckett (1999d) accuses New Labour of continuing the Conservative project. Certainly the National Learning Targets, which are overseen by the National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets (NACETT) for the DfEE, have been embraced by this government. This is confirmed by a statement in the prospectus for the Learning and Skills Council:

Central to everyone's concern is the importance of maintaining progress against the National Learning Targets and assure quality of provision.

(DfEE, 1999f, para. 6.14)

The targets were revised in 1995 after a nationwide consultation by NACETT and they were amended downwards again in 1999. These targets for 2002 have been adapted following the government's consultative document *Targets for our Future* (DfEE, 1997a). The Targets for Organisations are:

1. 45 per cent of medium-sized or large organisations recognised as liP.
2. 10,000 small organisations recognised as liP. (NACETT, 1999, p3)

The small organisations, many of which complained that the bureaucracy was 'burdensome', are limited to those with 10 to 49 employees because:

... the 'Investors' standard does not benefit organisations to the full until they are large enough to have put in place a formal management structure; they typically reach that stage when they have roughly ten staff. (NACETT, 1998, para. 7.7)

However, growth in the economy is concentrated in the small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) where one in two people now work (Bewick, 1999). For example:

The 10,000 curry houses in Britain turnover £1.5 billion between them and employ 60,000 to 70,000 people - more than steel, coal and shipbuilding combined. (Glendenning and Brunt, 1996, p231)

Because these curry houses employ an average of 6 to 7 people, they are smaller than Investors in People will recognise and therefore they cannot benefit from the training of their staff. How many other small or developing businesses are omitted from the training structure?

Moreover, the liP standard has been criticised for being, '...concerned more with the support of organisational goals than with the appropriateness of the goals,' (Owen, 1999, p21).

A recent survey (Ingham, 1999) has demonstrated the centrality of

training within the whole post-16 education system in that 41 per cent of all face-to-face teaching is carried out in the workplace or in employer-run learning centres. This compares to just 22 per cent of equivalent teaching in further education, higher education and adult education combined.

But this is where the comparison should end, a House of Commons select committee warns:

We understand the reasons for bringing together both education and training under the banner of learning but, notwithstanding the desire to accord them greater parity than has existed in the past, some important distinctions remain. While training will help improve individual's skills and thus their employability, education contributes to employability and more. Education has value in itself. (HoC, 1999, para. 44)

This distinction between education and training has been debated for many years. Lawson (1979) argues that the concept of training tends to be narrowing and confining (as we train lions and roses) and leads to standard performances. In a later account he contrasts the two:

'Educated' is a term with especially powerful connotations, as when contrasted with 'ill-educated', and 'education' in some contexts contrasts with (an allegedly) lower status term such as training. (Lawson, 1998, p106)

These boundaries between education and training, and a third concept, leisure, are important within the adult education field, according to Edwards (1997), not least because they are inscribed in policy and the funding of learning opportunities by the state. However, the nature of training is changing and blurring its boundary with education because of a:

... trend away from on the job training in favour of the acquisition of more acceptable portfolio qualifications... This formalization of training provision masks a major break with the interpersonal contract associated with traditional

apprenticeships and is a powerful expression of the increasing dominance of formal certification in hitherto less formal realms of education provision.
(Broadfoot, 1996, p31)

This trend can be associated with the 'risk society' (Beck, 1992) which is emerging in Britain where one of its defining characteristics is accelerating change leading to greater job insecurity or, what is euphemistically termed, 'a flexible labour market,' (NACETT, 1998). Indeed, the pace of change is such that many currently employed young people could be working in fields as yet unimagined before they retire (Uden, 1996). Therefore, within this evolving world of work it is not sufficient for employees to do an existing job well.

They need the transferable skills - and qualifications that attest to those skills - that will enable them to move to another job or even another employer.
(NACETT, 1998, para. 6.3)

Nevertheless, employees with these vocational qualifications will continue to earn less over their lifetime than those with equivalent academic qualifications (Uden, 1996).

Employer investment in training is estimated at £15 billion each year (DfEE, 1999f) yet a survey has suggested that only 8 per cent of employers set aside a budget for training (Glendenning and Brunt, 1996) even though 79 per cent of employers consider it a priority. This investment is voluntary. One of the initial Lifetime Learning Targets was, 'By 1996 all employees should take part in training or development activities,' (NACETT, 1992, p2). This target was later abandoned, probably because employers have no statutory obligation to contribute to their employees' learning. Besides, as Forrester (1995) argues, education facilities and resources are the first to be curtailed in a period of contraction.

Additionally, firms may be reluctant to train workers who, once qualified, might seek employment elsewhere (OECD, 1996) but this notion has been refuted, 'When firms do provide training it may lower staff turnover,' (HoC, 1999, para. 35). Finegold (1993) proposed that all companies should declare in their annual reports what they spent on training.

A meeting of the Education Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development suggested a policy solution of, '... taxing companies that fail to provide a sufficient quantity of training,' (OECD, 1996, p158). A British trade union supported this notion by proposing that all employers be required to invest two per cent of their wages bill in training (Edmonds, 1998). Perhaps such drastic measures may be unnecessary if recent research results were well publicised:

... 'leading edge' organisations out-performed other organisations, and that the defining characteristics of these organisations were spending on training per employee and innovative training practices.

(HoC, 1999, para. 34)

Tony Cann of NACETT (Individual Learning, 1999) has emphasised the need for greater employer involvement because 80 per cent of adult learners are in work. Moreover, most of the formal learning people do is related to their current or possible future jobs, according to the Campaign for Learning survey (1998).

Lifetime Target 1, the proportion of the workforce to have a Level 3 qualification (equivalent to A level), was raised in 1995 from 50 per cent to 60 per cent by the year 2000. The amended target for 2002 (NACETT, 1999) put the target back to 50 per cent. (See Fig. 5 on the next page.) Similarly, Lifetime Target 2 for the proportion of the workforce with a Level 4 (equivalent to degree level) qualification was introduced at 30 per cent for the year 2000. Now it has been reduced to 28 per cent for the year 2002.

Progress towards the National Learning Targets for 2002

<u>National Learning Targets for Adults</u> (Employed or actively seeking employment)	<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>		<u>All</u>	
	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997
50 per cent of adults with Level 3 qualification (Equivalent of NVQ, GNVQ or 2 A-levels)	45	46	34	36	39	41
	48		38		42	
28 per cent of adults with a Level 4 qualification (Equivalent of NVQ or bachelor degree)	24	24	23	24	24	24
	25		25		25	

Fig 5. Progress towards the National Learning Targets for 2002 (adapted from Social Trends)

The adjustment of these figures was aided by NACETT commissioning the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to produce a report on achieving the targets (Schagen, 1998). It concluded that projected achievement rates would fall well short of the Lifetime Targets for December 2000. As a result, NACETT produced its revised targets for 2002, but it has been criticised for its prudence.

We do not understand the caution in setting challenging aspirational goals. Since a key message of *The Learning Age* [green paper] is that responsibility for creating a learning society lies with individuals, communities and employers as well as with the state it is important to set demanding targets early, and to explain that whilst some government measures are unlikely to have a significant impact until 2000 or 2002, there are things everyone can do to change the culture now. (NIACE, 1998b, para.5)

This call for action to change the culture to create a learning society is unlikely to be channelled by Lifetime Learning Targets because research by Gorard et. al (2000) found little evidence that these targets have had any impact:

Despite considerable downsizing of equivalent targets from 1991... there must be considerable doubt whether any of the Targets will be achieved by 2002 or, or even 2004. (Gorard et. al., 2000, p19)

Besides, the NACETT targets for training are aimed only at those between 19 - 59 years of age who are in work. Jagger et. al. (1996) found that the growth of qualifications for those already of working age was negligible. Although NACETT concedes that this limited target group would need to be widened in the future, it adds:

On the other hand, focusing on a target group of limited size enables scarce resources to have a substantial impact on raising levels of skill and qualifications, and on making Britain more

competitive. (NACETT, 1999, para. 6.13)

There is a clear tension here between the thrust of the economy and the promotion of equality in widening participation. Despite the emphasis on competition, much of the investment in training, Uden (1996) argues, fails to take account of the changes in employment, where for example there is a trend towards part-time and short contract work.

Employers are, therefore, more likely to invest in the training and development of their full-time (usually male) permanent employees, who in fact represent a declining proportion of the active workforce... one effect of this is a continuing discrimination against part-time and temporary woman workers. (Uden, 1996, p24)

Although current participation in training for the five million part-time workers has risen to 29 per cent (Tuckett and Sargant, 1999), one-third of all employees has never been offered any training (Bewick, 1999), nor do they have any recognised vocational qualifications. In evidence to the Select Committee on Education and Employment, Professor Francis Green also argued that the problem of training in Britain was not its volume but its inequality. He added:

... those people in the lowest status jobs, those people who previously had little education or no education beyond the age of 16 have a relatively low chance of getting exposed to any training. (HoC, 1999, para. 24)

This statement was reinforced by the the M.P. for Bury North, while presenting a Private Member's Bill to introduce Paid Educational Leave:

There are 13 million people in jobs with no access to training. More than a quarter of adult workers have literacy skills that are so poor that they cannot read basic instructions.

(Chaytor, 1999, col. 386)

Conversely, research from the Institute of Fiscal Studies (Blundell, 1997) confirms that those who receive the most work-related training are the already well educated. With advances in technology many occupations are becoming de-skilled, adding to the demand for low skill or no skill jobs (Uden, 1996). Additionally, 73 per cent of full-time employees receive 'vocational learning' compared to just 33 per cent of those not in work (La Valle and Finch, 1999). The quantity of work-based training during the 1990s, Gorard et. al. (2000) found, remained static and may even have declined.

Even those who can benefit from training may not be content. A MORI poll conducted in Daisy County showed that 62 per cent of users were dissatisfied with the training service. A rider to this statistic explained, however,

These results reflect less on the quality of training, in our experience and more on the trainee's chances of getting a job. (MORI, 1998, p28)

It is essential that the training given is appropriate, at a suitable level and relevant to both the learners' and employers' needs. If Investors in People is to continue to be the success it has been accorded (NIACE, 1999b) it must also try to accommodate more small firms. Several training schemes are incorporated within the kitemark, including Modern Apprenticeships and Employee Development Schemes (DfEE, 1999e). Unemployed people can receive training through the New Deal programme. However, as research has shown that many of the least qualified are still not being trained, more must be done to reach those who until now have been classed as non-learners. The paramount importance of education and training was well documented in the Kennedy Report.

There has been a growing acceptance by economists of the centrality of human and social capital in economic success. Today, capital is increasingly in the knowledge and skills of human beings rather than in factories, machinery or plant.

(Kennedy, 1997, p6)

There is, even so, a central contradiction of economic success, states Williamson (1998): that firms will become more competitive by shedding labour, thus exacerbating social exclusion. And this has been coupled with the market forces introduced in the 1992 FHE Act, to prompt the policy director of the National Training Organisation National Council to state:

The current system, which began with the creation of TECs and the incorporation of FE colleges, has presided over a social fabric and skills base eroded by the forces of unfettered competition.

(Bewick, 1999, p22)

And this system operating in the post-16 sector has failed to achieve the Lifetime Learning Targets which are now being slowly met by qualified school leavers entering work and the less qualified older workers retiring. This has been described as a 'conveyor belt' effect, so that:

... there is little suggestion that the qualification of adults, while they are adults has improved much since 1991. The progress that has taken place appears to be unaffected by the setting or monitoring of targets. (Gorard et. al., 2000, p20)

Therefore new pressure has been placed on education and training providers to plan how they intend to meet these national targets within their locality. Their provision must meet the quality standards set by the Learning and Skills Council in order for funding to be passed on (DfEE, 2000b).

An additional Learning Participation Target was included in the latest targets aiming at a, 'seven per cent reduction in non-learners,' (NACETT,

1999, p3) for those aged between 16 - 69. It was this latter target that reflected the social inclusion element in a strategy that was otherwise designed to improve competitiveness.

Competitiveness

Shortly after the start of John Major's premiership, when NACETT was formed, a strong inclination was noted in national debates about education, training and employment, '... to compare and contrast British practice with that of our overseas competitors,' (Keep, 1991, p24). A competitiveness report was jointly published, a few years later, by the CBI and the Department for Trade and Industry (CBI/DTI, 1994). Three competitiveness White Papers followed (DfEE, 1994; 1995b; 1996c).

It was this concern that the government had for competitiveness that prompted it, so Coffield (1999a) believes, to commission a Skills Audit. As a mark of its importance, the report was published jointly with the Cabinet Office (DfEE/Cabinet Office, 1996). It examined the UK's comparative performance on qualifications for employment with four competitors: France, Germany, USA and Singapore. Following the increase of international business mobility, the report argued, a country's economic performance depends more now on the relatively immobile human capital of its population:

As a result education and training may become more important determinants of a country's economic growth.

(DfEE/Cabinet Office, 1996, para. 2.14)

Attention is shifted, in this argument, from structure and on to the human capital of individuals (Coffield, 1999a). But then how, or to what extent do levels of skills determine productivity or competitiveness? Rather than tackle this problem, the link is assumed:

It has not been the purpose of this audit to explore how skills levels are related to competitiveness; we have taken that as a given.

(DfEE/Cabinet Office, 1996, para. 1.3)

This is an assumption, which has no substantive support, being treated as a fact. Also, it was in this climate where, 'Learning is commodified as a private good and a national resource,' (Macrae, et. al., 1997, p500) that the government launched its **Lifetime Learning** consultation document (DfEE, 1995a) followed by a policy framework.

Lifetime Learning : a policy framework 1996

It contained six recommendations (DfEE, 1996a, pp12 -13) :

1. *Employers are to invest in the training and development of employees.*

An unwillingness by the government to legislate for this investment was justified by:

Experience in Britain and abroad has shown that compulsion does not work. Effective and lasting investment will result only from an appreciation by employers themselves that a skilled and learning workforce brings about greater productivity, competitiveness and profitability. (para. 5.1)

Instead the government pledged to continue to fund TECs in their support for Investors in People and other existing training initiatives. The present Labour administration has maintained this policy.

2. *Strategies are needed to improve individual commitment.*

Support for organisations such as the RSA's Campaign for Learning would persist along with NIACE's Adult Learners' Week, broadcasters' projects and certain research and development programmes. Individuals, on the other hand, were offered only the continuation of Career

Development Loans. Suggestions from the consultation to broaden tax relief from investment in training to more general learning and to relax the benefit rules for unemployed learners were dismissed. Also Individual Learning Accounts, piloted by the Labour Government in 1999, were then rejected because, 'The administrative complexities of any national model would be huge and costly,' (para. 6.6).

3. *Educational guidance and advice should be freely available.*

The document realised that information, advice and guidance '... for adults is both variable in its quality and coverage,' (para. 7.1). It suggested examining the idea of a national helpline at a time when no such phone service existed, although there was a well publicised National Cones Hotline for reporting surplus road traffic cones.

4. *Access to learning should be enhanced.*

More needed to be done to offer tailor-made courses locally in familiar environments which also offered child care. The document welcomed the suggestion of a National Record of Achievement for Adults coupled with a robust and recognised single system of qualifications. These ideas have not come to fruition.

5. *Basics skills participation should be widened.*

A review of government policies to tackle low achievement in basic skills was proposed; these included family literacy and training for the unemployed. Clearly, at this time, the extent of the problem was not realised. Just a year later a report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 1997) revealed that Britain had the third lowest literacy rate in a group of 13 developed countries.

6. *Strategic partnerships should be developed.*

The document stated:

... policies aimed at creating a learning society will only be effective if all those concerned work together. (para. 10.1)

Partnerships at national and regional level were advocated and, 'Locally, colleges and LEAs need to work together to plan and deliver co-ordinated programmes,' (para. 10.4). No explanation was offered as to how, in the face of competing with one another for FEFC funding, co-operation could be achieved. Nevertheless, this is exactly the strategy being developed by the present government. It has created 103 Lifelong Learning Partnerships, generally within county or local authority boundaries (DfEE, 1999c).

The rank order of these recommendations emphasised the concerns expressed in the Skills Audit; on gaps to close in basic literacy and numeracy, in qualifications at Levels 2, 3 and 4, and in work-related key skills - all in comparison with the UK's competitors.

There was a change of heart in the policy framework for the consideration of lifelong learning and for the recognition of adult guidance, even though the recommendations ignored the benefits of learning for pleasure. Described by Professor Fryer as a, 'narrow, insipid document,' (Fryer, 1998, p10), the National Organisation for Adult Learning (NIACE) was also disappointed:

.. its patchwork of government initiatives, and its suggestions for the future fell far short of a strategy to address the vision. (Adults Learning, 1996, p1)

This vision expressed in the document was that, '... people of all ages and from all backgrounds acquire the learning habit,' (para. 2.3). The

European Year of Lifelong Learning, declared in 1996, emphasised the need to create a learning culture. A more detailed report, emphasising a change in culture, was soon to be published.

Kennedy Report

The Widening Participation Committee, chaired by Helena Kennedy QC, was set up by the FEFC in December, 1994. The FEFC were sensitive to the fact that the providers in the sector were increasing participation amongst their traditional adult clientele (Tremlett and Park, 1995) which may have led to narrowing the range of the population involved in learning. The FEFC formed the committee to find out how this participation could be widened. Their report, *Learning Works*, was published in June, 1997, just one month after the new Labour Government was elected. The committee drew up a 12-point Agenda for Change (Kennedy, 1997, pp13 - 14). At the top of the list was the creation of a 'learning nation'. To do this it advocated the development of a learning culture where:

'Learning Gain' should be on par with getting fit
and just as ready a subject of conversation.
(Kennedy, 1997, p7)

The purpose of this ideal was because:

... learning is central both to economic prosperity
and the health of society. We believe that the
achievement of economic goals and social cohesion
are intertwined. (Kennedy, 1997, p16)

Here was a Labour project wishing not only to create a learning society but to change social relations towards greater community spirit and solidarity (Avis, 1998). This was the first report in more than 20 years to restate the values of Russell (DES, 1973).

The report recognised that legislation from the ERA of 1988 and the 1992 FHE Act ended what was perceived as education provider dominance and substituted principles of the market and competition. It acknowledged that these changes had enhanced efficiency:

However, there is also growing disquiet that the new ethos has encouraged colleges not just to be businesslike but to perform as if they were businesses. (Kennedy, 1997, p3)

This criticism was not restricted to the 'turf wars' between colleges or to the dominance they exerted over many LEA institutions which required their co-operation to receive FEFC funding for Schedule 2 work. It included censure of a system where the measurement of learning is so prevalent that other qualities of education can be ignored, like:

... public service values, which have been the pulse of further education, are finding little articulation in the language of the market. (Kennedy, 1997, p5)

A deceleration, or even a halt, to the changes begun almost ten years before was being recommended, yet the government gave a mixed response (DfEE, 1998a).

The thrust of the report was to prioritise widening participation in post-16 education. The Russell Report had observed that the lower middle class constitute the largest proportion of adult learners (DES, 1973), also the less privileged are under-represented (Fieldhouse, 1996a). Now the Kennedy committee wanted to attract many of those 37 per cent of people who have done no learning since they left school (Tuckett and Sargent, 1999). The committee were aware of the funding mechanism known as the Demand-Led Element (DLE), since abandoned by the FEFC, which gave extra finances to colleges which increased their enrolments year on year. Rather than attempt to encourage 16 - 19 year old non-participants, it was

easier for colleges to compete with other providers for adult learners by 'predatory poaching,' (TES, 1994). This qualified colleges for extra funding and increased participation but it did not widen it. Therefore:

... the drive for expansion in FE has led to an opening up of many more opportunities for adults across the curriculum. Yet the concomitant losses borne in the local authority sector have led to contraction, higher fees, and losses of infrastructure which have had dire consequences for groups like older people, those living in remote areas, those wishing, for whatever reason, to study without accreditation. (Uden, 1996, p8)

Sadly, in the three years since Uden's policy paper was written, there has been a 20 per cent fall in participation by retired people (Tuckett and Sargant, 1999). There would be no reason to assume that the other factors he mentioned in the LEA adult education sector have improved. But, in its response to *Learning Works*, the government announced an Adult and Community Learning Fund specifically for projects which widen participation:

'The Government will make £5 million available next year to match contributions from trusts, charities and businesses. (DfEE, 1998a, p13)

The administration of these funds were split between NIACE and the Basic Skills Agency.

However, these funds, both then and now, would not support another Kennedy committee recommendation which was to establish a lifetime entitlement to education up to Level 3 (equivalent to A level standard). This was to be free for young people and those who are socially and economically deprived. Unfortunately, the government not only rejected Kennedy's plea for a public subsidy in this form (DfEE, 1998a), it also turned down a similar proposal two years later. The

National Skills Task Force unsuccessfully called for free education and training leading to their first Level 3 qualification for all under 25 year-olds (DfEE, 2000e). However, generally, in Daisy County where I work, all basic skills provision, the equivalent of Level 1, is free for learners. Also, anyone receiving welfare benefits is eligible for substantial fee concessions on Schedule 2 courses.

Another method of widening participation recommended by the Kennedy committee was to reform the FEFC funding mechanism to recognise levels of previous achievement, and social and economic deprivation. This commendable suggestion was partially enacted by providing extra funding for students from deprived areas. However, it further complicated a system which needs simplification. A book, *How to Apply for Funding*, revised annually, plus more than 100 pages of additional guidance explains how the funding methodology works. This FEFC system has been described as, '... a machine of Byzantine complexity that very few people understand,' (Zera, 1999, pV). And this is just for the Schedule 2 courses.

The Kennedy commission supported what adult educators had been protesting since the 1992 FHE Act, that all types of learning are valuable.

It has always been difficult to define 'vocational' and 'non-vocational' learning and these concepts are fast becoming less and less valid.

(Kennedy, 1997. p17)

In the latest White Paper (DfEE, 1999a) the government proposes to dissolve FEFC and the TECs to create a single funding mechanism for all post-16 education. Will all learning then be valued equally, sweeping away nearly a century of learning divisions, or will the more prized courses attract a higher funding tariff? In which case, will the funding

mechanism be any less complex?

Whichever kind of learning is done, the Kennedy committee was keen to have it accredited and form part of the learners' progression through the lifelong learning structure. The report recommended that a credit accumulation system be launched and operative within five years. Within this unitised scheme a 'Pathways to Learning' was to be created to recognise achievement.

Currently at least three types of accreditation co-exist:

1. CATS (Credits Accumulation and Transfer System) which is used for academic credit.
2. NVQs (National Vocational Qualification) which is a competence-based unit accumulation; and
3. OCN (Open College Network) credits awarded for the achievement of learning objectives.

These different but often complementary accreditation schemes existed before the 1992 FHE Act, but it was this legislation which prioritised certificated learning. A CATS framework for 16 - 19 years olds was first advocated by the Further Education Unit (FEU, 1992). This trend was continued by the Dearing Review of Qualifications for 16 - 19 years olds published in March 1996, which recommended the introduction of three grouped awards. (This was very much what Kennedy was advocating in her Pathways to Learning for those adults with low levels of attainment.) Five months later, Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, issued a consultation document on Dearing's recommendations (DfEE, 1996b). In October 1997, just four months after the election of a new Labour Government, another consultation paper was published on the future of post-16 qualifications. The foreword by the Secretary of State,

David Blunkett, stated:

Our goal is to lay the foundation of a qualifications system for the new millennium. (DfEE, 1997b, p2)

No mention was made in the document of Open College Network (OCN) credits. During the previous academic year there were more registered learners on programmes accredited by OCN than the combined total of all other learners over 18 studying GCSEs, A levels and GNVQs (FEFC, 1998a). Subsequently, Dearing's (DfEE, 1996b) ideas were gently dropped because, it is thought, that the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), '... is under Ministerial pressure not to sanction anything that would endanger the integrity of A-level,' (Williams, 1998, p7). Yet as Wragg (1993) argued, about one-third of A-level students do not receive a certificate - and they were the successes of the GCSE system, therefore:

A levels are predicated on failure... Many adults wrongly believe they are stupid, simply because school was a place of failure. Continuing education needs to emphasise 'success' and 'can do', not hark back to failure. (Wragg, 1993, p63)

Achievement is emphasised in a credit system. The needs of adult learners were being ignored, but not for long. The QCA has recently published two documents. The first (QCA, 1999a) is a 64-page plan for changes in GNVQs and A/AS levels for 16 - 19 years olds. The second (QCA, 1999b), primarily on unitisation and credit in 'adult and vocational learning' was just three pages long. The relative sizes of the documents might suggest their comparative importance, however they follow the distinctions set out in the White Paper, **Learning to Succeed**, which states that:

The needs of adults are different. They are more likely to be motivated by being able to take small

steps towards a qualification.

(DfEE, 1999a, para. 5.27)

It appears that a separate credit accumulation system for adults will be implemented, probably not what Kennedy had originally envisaged. Now it is time, as Wilson (1999) exhorts, to focus debates on the nature of credit-based qualifications.

Part of this system will be the University for Industry. The Kennedy committee recommended that employers provide learning centres linked to this new concept. A national network of computer-based guidance and learning centres, called the University for Industry (Ufi), was first devised by the Institute for Public Policy Research (Hillman, 1996). The onus of provision has now been changed in its prospectus (DfEE, 1998c) to a public-private sector partnership of regional hubs co-ordinating community-based learning centres. The Ufi will be launched in autumn 2000 at a cost of £10 million, the most expensive advertising campaign in education history (McGavin, 1999a). It may require this vast sum, and more, in order to attempt to change the culture and to create a learning society. As the Associate Director of NIACE sardonically commented:

Perhaps the Ufi will be able to learn from television advertising, the lottery and catalogue shopping, and market education and training in a thoroughly disgusting way which might be effective.

(Cara, 1998, p3)

The whole lifelong learning structure, the Kennedy Report proposed, would be supported by a network of strategic partnerships. Their functions would be to identify local need, stimulate demand, respond creatively and promote learning. One of the reasons behind this notion is that:

The priority for some providers has been to improve their market share rather than to improve

the market for learning. (Kennedy, 1997, p37)

I believe that to encourage trust, to allay fears of competition, and to retain a local flavour, the LEAs should co-ordinate the partnerships. Most importantly, they have the necessary experience. For example, in the summer of 1998, following the offer of funds for pilot schemes of strategic partnerships to promote the value of learning, a meeting was called by the regional Open College Network. Representatives from colleges, Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), private providers, employers and adult education centres from the region met. Not one of the several LEAs in the region were represented. Other members were too widespread with divergent interests to come to any decision. A sub-committee was formed but no reports have been issued. I understand that the idea was abandoned.

To enhance partnership formation, a Learning Regeneration Fund was proposed which, '... supports the development of lasting partnerships, achieves coherence locally and minimises bureaucracy,' (Kennedy, 1997, p49). Alternatively, bureaucracy could be reduced by disentangling the internal market in education and training. This would also save substantial sums of money as the 460 FE sector colleges each spend as much on management as most LEAs did six years ago (TES, 1998). In their response to the Kennedy report, NIACE warned:

We feel that it is important that this move towards partnership does not result in a chaotic series of partnerships overlaying a chaotic funding and delivery structure. (NIACE, 1997, para.5)

What NIACE was probably referring to is the present bidding system. Temporary partnerships of convenience are formed to tender for a project then they are soon dissolved. Will this system continue? The White

Paper, **Learning to Succeed** has followed the Kennedy recommendations and planned, '... local Learning Partnerships in which local authorities would make a key contribution,' (DfEE, 1999a, para. 7.36). Will the balance of power remain with the FE sector colleges? A more fundamental question is whether partnerships should be equal? These and other questions will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on partnerships.

Whatever structures are formed for the provision of lifelong learning, a major message in this report was that the interests of adult learners should come before other narrow boundaries and institutional interests. This was to be achieved by a new Charter for Learning:

It should explain in simple terms what every learner is entitled to in terms of advice and guidance, funding, support, teaching and the quality of education and training.

(Kennedy, 1997, p106)

In essence it would define 'adequacy' in adult education legislation. The main reasons why governments have avoided this particular statute are: the potential high cost, the difficulty in providing an equal service in both urban and rural areas, and the belief that dictating minimum levels of service would stifle creativity.

The creation of this proposed learning nation would be funded from the profits of the National Lottery, released after the completion of millennium projects. This was a laudable idea of the Kennedy committee. It was taken from research revealing that the majority of lottery ticket buyers were the least well-off, who would also be most likely to benefit from learning. Nevertheless, this plea to reinvest punters' money was rejected by the government.

At the heart of the Kennedy proposals within her report was the dictum, 'If at first you don't succeed... you don't succeed,' (p21). Those who

have not achieved by the time they leave school tend to shun any further forms of education. It is these people particularly who ought to be attracted to learning.

Before the government issued its response, another committee report was published.

The Fryer Report I

The National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning (NAGCELL) was formed by the Secretary of State in June 1997 to advise him on the preparation of the White Paper on Lifelong Learning. Chaired by Professor Bob Fryer, the group reported 17 months later.

Most of the Kennedy report recommendations were endorsed with embellishments. The major difference in this report was the lack of FEFC bias. For instance, the Fryer group suggested that LEAs should have direct access to FEFC funds instead of receiving them through a sector college (para. 12.23). The 1919 Report was quoted in detail in association with the value of community-based education, and the vital role of local authorities was stressed.

They still constitute the only major local bodies with democratic accountability and they reach into the lives of all individuals, households and communities locally. They provide £60 billion worth of services every year to local residents and employ over 12 per cent of the country's labour force. In each of the services that touch people's lives there is scope for lifelong learning to make a contribution. (Fryer, 1997, para. 11.48)

And it advocated that local authorities should take the lead in convening local Lifelong Learning Partnerships (para. 12.10). A notable shift in the focus is made here from LEAs to the broader duties of local authorities in line with the 'joined up thinking' in government policy.

It too recommended a statutory broad definition of 'adequacy' in adult education, but firstly for the government, '... to require each local authority to publish a Development Plan for lifelong learning,' (para. 11.52). This latter recommendation was enforced nationally 18 months later with financial assistance from central government Standards Funds.

The audit of local learning needs, also suggested by the Fryer group, was elaborated by the government into a national audit of LEA adult education conducted in April 1999. This was essential for the government to find out the nature of adult education services, if any, that LEAs provided. However, time was running out, because while the Fryer group's recommendations were being discussed it was reported that many LEAs' adult education budgets were too small to cut.

The danger is that by the time a proper framework is put in place, poor besieged adult services will in too many places be too weak to benefit.

(Tuckett, 1998a, p3)

The only major criticism of the report came from a union leader who was appalled that training should be left to the voluntary efforts of employers. 'It was awful - no it wasn't as good as that,' (Edmonds quoted by Macleod, 1998, p.iii).

The Learning Age - Green Paper (1998)

The Fryer report was to have been an immediate prelude to the White Paper, but the publication date was delayed from autumn to January. A specific web page for the impending White Paper promised publication details. During a telephone call to the DfEE office, I was told the issue date of 10th. February. On this day Dr. Kim Howells, Minister for Lifelong Learning, was to address a Daisy County Community Education conference.

Plans had been shelved for months, with high hopes for what promised to be the most important document on adult education for a quarter of a century. Suddenly dreams were shattered by the headline, 'Plans ... torn up,' (Nash, 1998, p1), just four days before its anticipated publication. In an Orwellian twist, the White Paper web site was obliterated and replaced on 11th. February by a web page referring to a 'Consultation Paper on Lifelong Learning'. The press lambasted the government for reneging on promises (Observer, 1998; Tysome & Thompson, 1998; MacLeod, 1998; THES, 1998; Nash and Crequer, 1998) and mocked the document's fraught gestation period, 'Redrafted ten times, rejected by Tony Blair, demoted from White to Green Paper...' (Hackett, 1998, p6).

At the conference Dr. Howells denounced the 'lying media' for accusing Treasury intervention when there were, 'so few financial implications'. He implied that it was never intended to be more than a consultation document anyway. And, he added in a subsequent letter to the press, 'The first and only date announced for publication was February 25,' (Howells, 1998, p24).

All this was a fascinating insight into the complications and internal tensions of policy making. A little more would be revealed during an interview with an Adult Education Policy team leader from the DfEE discussed in later chapters.

A fortnight later, a government response to the Kennedy Report (DfEE, 1998a) was issued with **The Learning Age Green Paper** (DfEE,1998b) which incorporated many of the proposals from the Kennedy and Fryer Reports. An opening paragraph stated:

As well as securing our economic future,
learning has a wider contribution. It helps make
ours a civilised society, develops the spiritual side

of our lives and promotes active citizenship.
(DfEE, 1998b, p7)

This extract from the foreword embraced the value of learning rarely expressed by a Secretary of State for Education. It echoed the OECD (1996) notion that lifelong learning should be for all because, in the light of worldwide trends, it was in everyone's best interests: for individuals, business and the whole country:

For the nation learning is essential to a strong economy and an inclusive society. In offering a way out of dependency and low expectation, it lies at the heart of the Government's welfare reform programme. We must bridge the 'learning divide'... which blights so many communities and widens income inequality. (DfEE, 1998b, para.13)

It was statements such as these from the introduction of **The Learning Age** which, as Griffin (1999) indicates, clarify the role of lifelong learning in the social democratic welfare tradition of the country and link it to other policies of welfare distribution. This was a notable change in policy from the previous Conservative administration's market model, where it was considered a breach of freedom to insist that taxpayers should subsidise adult learning. Closer policy ties could not be made, however, between lifelong learning and compulsory education because of a limited capacity to determine the outcomes:

We cannot force anyone to learn - individuals must take responsibility for themselves - but we can help those who want to develop a thirst for knowledge. (DfEE, 1998b, para.24)

At the same time, lifelong learning appears inevitable in the face of global changes in information, competitiveness, employment and society:

We have no choice but to prepare for this new age in which the key to success will be the continuous education and development of the human mind and imagination. (DfEE, 1998b, para.1)

There was also an added threat of the price to pay if lifelong learning was ignored, where potential talent would be, '... wasted in a vicious circle of under-achievement, self-deprecation and petty crime,' (DfEE, 1998b, para.13). Criticism of this change in emphasis on to the duty of the individual to learn was not restricted to education journals. Just days before the Green Paper was published a Sunday newspaper leader column argued:

'Lifelong Learning' appears simply to shunt responsibility for education away from the Government and educators on to the public.
(Observer, 1998, p24)

So, despite the redevelopment of education as social policy, the prominence of individual learning as a government strategy could be associated not only with the forces of globalisation and new technology, but with the changing roles of the state and its reluctance to fund lifelong learning.

My suspicion is that there is a growing movement in education which purports to privilege empowerment of the individual learner, alongside large-scale policy initiatives on the part of multi-national industries and governments, thereby clouding the real impact of government policies of the Right throughout Europe and elsewhere which are anti-educational in that they are in effect disempowering learners through resource starvation, market driven policies and sycophantic campaigns which offer the illusion that action is being taken to promote learning.

(Elliot, G. 1999, p26)

The New Labour Government has been criticised elsewhere (Shain, 2000) that, despite the rhetoric, it is continuing the previous Conservative Government's principle of more work for less money. However, whether its subsequent learning campaigns have been an illusion or not, The

Learning Age presented a vision built on six principles:

- investing in learning to benefit everyone;
- lifting barriers to learning;
- putting people first;
- sharing responsibility with employers, employees and the community;
- achieving world class standards and value for money; and
- working together as the key to success. (para. 25)

There is a clear impression that the burden of creating a learning society will not be shouldered by the government alone. Within this vision there were four big ideas: University for Industry (Ufi), Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs), Accreditation and Widening Participation.

There were doubts about whether the government really would be strong enough to champion the weaker in society (Taylor, 1998). There was dismay that the document concentrated on individual aspirations rather than what we learn together (NIACE, 1998a). Inclusion initiatives were well received but there were concerns about the lack of new money to pay for them (McNair, 1998). A warm welcome was given by an LEA Director of Education to the acknowledgement of learning being a rich and diverse experience which could not be confined to categories of social usefulness (Ely, 1998). He also enthused about the learning potential of new technologies, but warned:

There is a danger that we shall lose sight of the distinction between information and knowledge, and that we shall forget the value of human chemistry, nuance and intuition in the learning process, if we place more reliance on the technology than it can reasonably bear. (Ely, 1998, p12)

This warning was clearly aimed at the University for Industry initiative with its plans for on-line learning and virtual teaching using e-

mail. Despite these criticisms, there was general approval that it was a vital step towards reviving the importance of all types of adult education, and most would agree with the Director of NIACE, 'The best thing about the paper is it provides a framework for serious debate,' (Tuckett, 1998b, p33). It was important that all providers and learners responded to the questions in the document. However, despite many feeling jaded about another consultation (Smith, 1998) when after months, even years, of discussion and debate some key proposals were ignored, 3000 individuals and institutions responded (Crequer, 1999). This compared to just 480 respondents to the **Lifetime Learning** consultation (DfEE, 1995a), revealing not only a higher profile for lifelong learning, but also a firmer belief that now positive changes could be made in adult education. This belief could be unfounded, because as I will show, the consultation process can serve as a subtle form of social control. Fundamental change is rarely produced by consultation which has now become a hollow concept.

More than a year would pass until the publication of the White Paper. During this time the government confirmed its serious intentions towards adult education within lifelong learning. In response to adverse comments, a small consultation document on guidance was issued (DfEE, 1998d); as a result £50 million would fund Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults. The government also offered: £9 million to assist production of Lifelong Learning Development Plans, £25 million to establish Lifelong Learning Partnerships, £12 million for a Trade Union Learning Fund and, '... £800 million New Deal for Communities will fund initiatives in the poorest neighbourhoods,' (Tuckett, 1998d, p3).

In addition, it pledged up to £150 for each of the one million Individual Learning Accounts as long as every learner invested £25. This

consumer credit model demonstrates a shift from a straightforward participation system of attempting to attract more learners into post-16 education, to what Smith and Spurling (1997) call, '... a new mass culture for lifelong learning,' (p.xi).

Additionally, two more reports were published before the promised White Paper.

Moser Report

The Working Group on Post-School Basic Skills, chaired by Sir Claus Moser, was convened to advise the government on how it could help 500,000 adults a year by 2002. The report was issued on the same February day as the war in Kosovo began, which muffled the public impact of its shocking opening sentence:

Something like one adult in five in this country is not functionally literate and far more have problems with numeracy. (Moser, 1999, para.1.1)

About 7 million adults were thought to need help. Among the report's 21 recommendations was a National Basic Skills Strategy to be implemented locally by the Lifelong Learning Partnerships. The remit for these partnerships had been documented in the previous month (DfEE, 1999b). Fears that Adult Basic Education (ABE), now FEFC funded, would be subsumed in FE college provision as learning support and so lose its community base (Hamilton, 1996) may now be allayed. Further national developments for basic skills were to be announced later that year.

Final advice before the publication of the White Paper came in April.

Fryer Report II

The title of the report, **Creating Learning Cultures**, indicated its priorities to make learning a part of everyday life; a change which should

be reflected in institutions. It stated:

Without such changes in culture, we believe that many well-intentioned, and often well-resourced initiatives risk failure. (Fryer, 1999, para. 3.8)

This culture shift is to be instigated through national campaigns and government support to break down barriers to learning and then by 'infiltrating' learning opportunities into people's lives.

Six groups contributed to the report by preparing working papers on: cultural change; stimulating demand; lifelong learning and the Benefits System; family learning; community, citizenship and society; and effective partnerships. This was a notable change in emphasis from the more instrumental **Lifetime Learning** (DfEE, 1996a) report of the previous government. Many of the initiatives in the previous Kennedy and Fryer reports were endorsed, along with the progress made since **The Learning Age** was published more than a year before. It suggested that the consequence of the Green Paper was an initial phase to change and reorient the field of lifelong learning:

... if the first stage called for imagination and creativity to redefine the agenda and signal a decisive shift in values, the second demands practicality, progress and real achievement.

(Fryer, 1999, para. 2.5)

This latter sentiment was put in sharp focus by a NIACE survey published a month later which stated that, '... the Learning Society is still a distant dream,' (Tuckett and Sargant, 1999, p5) because there had been no change in learning participation since the last survey three years before. Just how this 'real achievement' was going to be accomplished was soon to be revealed.

1999 White Paper - Learning to Succeed

By now the new Labour Government had been in office for a little more than two years. During this time its approach to compulsory education had been led by an urge to raise education standards through centralised strategies and regulatory systems. In contrast, argue Hodgson and Spours (1999), post-compulsory education and training had been treated more cautiously and tentatively. Piecemeal initiatives to rectify the Conservative legacy of division and competition, such as Individual Learning Accounts and the Adult and Community Learning Fund had been instigated in preference to tackling the reform of the whole system. This strategy was to change. The White Paper proposed a single coherent framework for all post-16 education and training, excluding higher education.

Learning to Succeed, published on the 30th. June, was a pleasant surprise, even though it incorporated many of the recommendations from previous reports, and its more radical proposals had been signposted clearly in the press. A national Learning and Skills Council (LSC) would replace the FEFC and oversee 40 - 50 local Learning and Skills Councils. The Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and the hubs of the University for Industry (Ufi) would also work closely with these local LSCs. Local Lifelong Learning Partnerships would consult local LSCs and assist them with planning (see Fig. 6 on the next page). Each of these new bodies would include members from businesses, colleges, local authorities, voluntary organisations and other providers. The national Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and its local arms would have a majority membership representing consumers of education and, 'Employers will form the largest single group,' (DfEE, 1999a, para. 3.9).

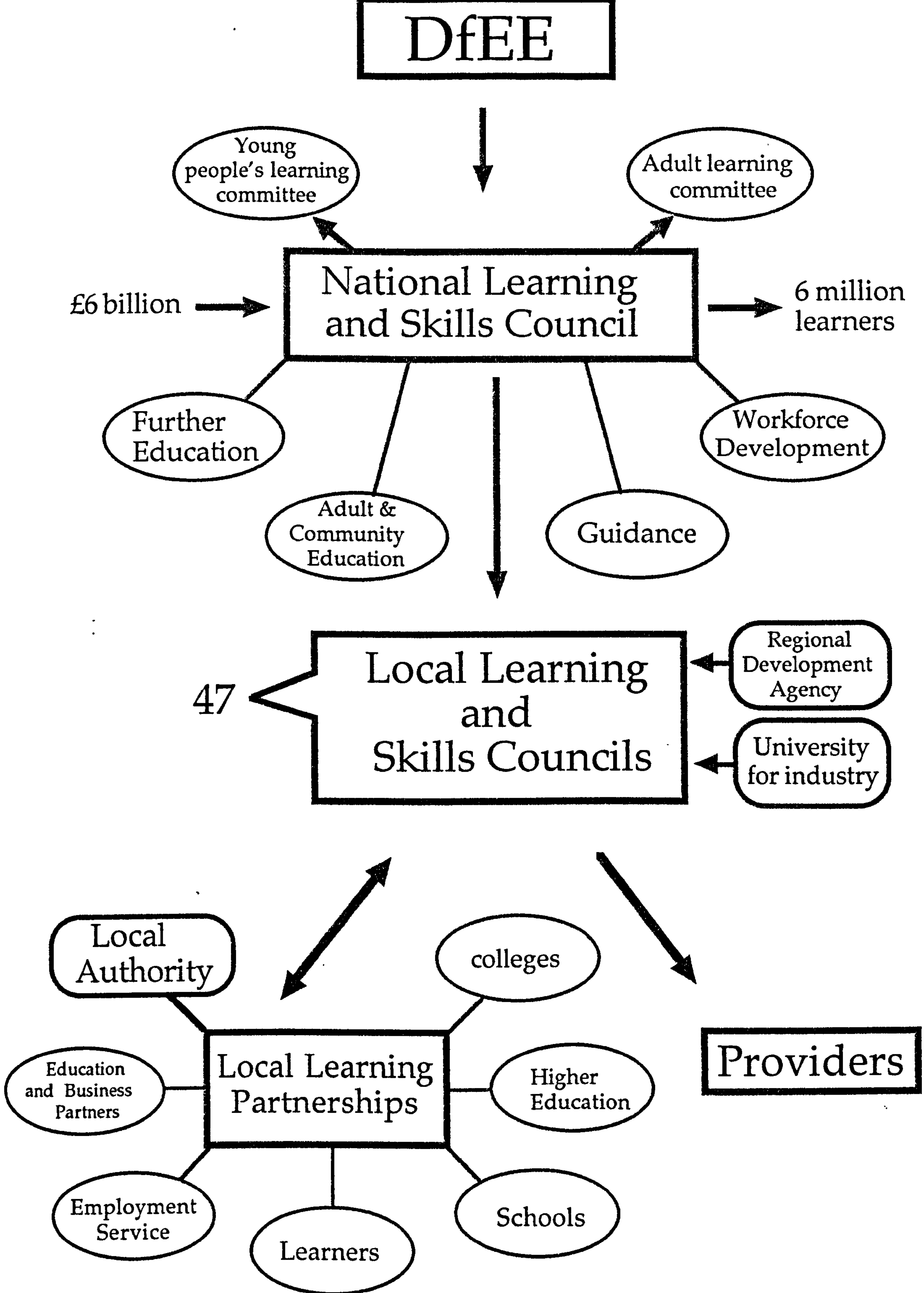


Fig. 6 The proposed new structure for adult and community learning
Adapted from Learning to Succeed - White Paper DfEE (1999a)

LEAs would no longer be responsible for securing the provision of recreational classes (non-Schedule 2) as this, '... awkward and artificial distinction... will no longer be needed,' (para. 5.28). Instead, the block grant (Standard Spending Assessment) that the LEAs received from the government for adult education would be transferred instead to the LSC. The local LSCs were to set out the role local authorities would play in securing provision for adult education, (DfEE, 1999f). This transfer was interpreted as the adult education service being, '... taken out of the capricious hands of the LEAs and thrust into the bureaucratic market,' (Low,1999a, p39). However, as a counterbalance, local authorities were to have a new direction:

Through representation on the local Learning and Skills Councils and as key partners in the local Learning Partnerships, the new arrangements for post-16 learning will give them greater influence over a broad range of education and training opportunities than they have at present.

(DfEE, 1999a, para. 4.24)

Quite what this 'greater influence' of local authorities will be has yet to be established. However, Lifelong Learning Partnerships had been established before the White Paper was published.

A **National Partnership Protocol** (DfEE, 1998f) was drawn up between the Association of Colleges; the Association of Principals of Colleges; the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA); the FEFC; the Local Government Association, and the TEC National Council. The DfEE supported the protocol which stated:

We believe that a national framework of partnership should help to create the conditions within which local partnerships can develop effectively. (DfEE, 1998f, p1)

This protocol proceeded to describe how the local partnerships would

function. A series of bullet points describing the duties of the partnerships included:

- Regular feedback to Ministers to advise them ...
- Work with government officials to identify core outcomes to result from local strategic partnerships. (DfEE, 1998f, p3)

A **Lifelong Learning Partnerships Remit** (DfEE, 1999b) was published two months later. It appeared that these new Lifelong Learning Partnerships would adopt a major role, as recommended in the second Fryer Report.

At the local level the key responsibility should be given to the new strategic Lifelong Learning Partnerships. In other words, what we recommend is closer to something of a 'movement' rather than a conventional marketing or publicity campaign.

(Fryer, 1999, para. 3.15)

However, this movement was stifled by the subsequent White Paper **Learning to Succeed** (DfEE, 1999a) which announced the Learning and Skills Council and its local arms. It left the remaining duties of the Lifelong Learning Partnerships in doubt. Nevertheless, the White Paper emphasised the importance of these partnerships:

Lifelong Learning Partnerships have a key role in driving forward the improvements in the quality of provision and bringing greater coherence at local level. (DfEE, 1999a, para. 3.27)

But, this key role was not defined until four months later at a national Learning Partnerships conference. (By this time the 'Lifelong' term had been significantly dropped.) The Minister for Education and Employment in the Lords, Baroness Blackstone, defined their two major functions:

- Provide the new local Learning and Skills Councils with invaluable information and advice...
- They will continue to provide a forum for

collaboration... (DfEE, 1999g, p1)

This compared unfavourably to their original functions, stated in the **National Partnership Protocol** (DfEE, 1998f), where local partnerships would directly consult Ministers and other government officials. This new diminished duty did not go unnoticed:

The once-trailblazing Lifelong Learning Partnerships appear to have lost their hands-on role - relegated to being merely advisers.

(Waterhouse, 1999, p.II)

However, the 104 Lifelong Learning Partnerships were set up (DfEE, 1999c) one month after the White Paper was published, and the 47 local Learning and Skills Councils will be established in April 2001. Both of these organisations will promote local partnerships.

The DfEE is to invest £6 billion in their new coherent lifelong learning system, serving 6 million learners, and still save £50 million in administration costs (Veale, 1999). For example, the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), due to be abolished, spent between 6 per cent and 35 per cent of their income on administration during 1997 - 1998 (DfEE, 1999a, para.4.2). The responsibility for work based learning would in future be transferred to the Employment Service. Providers of education and training, both public and private organisations, were to be funded by the LSC as long as quality standards were met.

Overall, the paper proposed a framework where, '... power and decision making can flow up and down the system,' (Tuckett, 1999c, p43). If this is not an over-optimistic reaction, it is an exciting prospect for small providers who have been overpowered by large corporations and for learners who have often been considered merely as units of funding.

Learning to Succeed, although a White Paper, had a green tinge in that

it incorporated 17 questions as part of a consultation process. Therefore many organisations made detailed responses, including a 45-page document from the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA) and a 20-page report from NIACE.

Generally, the new framework was welcomed but the National Union of Teachers (NUT) thought the bureaucratic arrangements were unnecessarily complex (McGavin, 1999b). The Educational Centres Association were concerned that there was too much emphasis on structures and too little evidence that these were capable of delivering the required agenda (ECA, 1999).

The White Paper made it clear that the purpose of education and training was to encourage a better skilled and more competitive workforce, and this was stressed by the dominance of employers on the Learning and Skills council and its 47 local arms. But the inclusive nature of learning is vital, therefore:

In this respect we question the ability of business leaders to fully appreciate the agendas of some of the most socially disadvantaged groups.

(ECA, 1999, p9)

The ECA were also concerned that the strategic input from business and industry should not be given a disproportionate profile on the councils and other planning bodies to the exclusion of community, cultural and non-vocational interests.

The White Paper introduced a new term for adult education - 'Adult and Community Learning', but as with the previous White Paper, **Education and Training for the 21st. Century** (DES, 1991a), it gave the impression that further education takes place almost entirely in FE colleges.

Three million adults are already learning, usually

part-time, in FE colleges. Further education gives many the first chance to learn since leaving school. Many other people learn in other settings, including within the voluntary sector. (para. 7.27)

There are specialist adult colleges run by LEAs, which in this context could be confused with an FE college. For instance, there are three LEA funded adult colleges in Lancashire, one of which was inspected by Ofsted whose main findings began, 'This is a centre of excellence,' (Ofsted, 1995). The learning opportunities that local authorities provide for two to three million learners (DfEE, 1999f) were not recognised in the White Paper. Consequently their achievements were unnoticed, for example in reaching under-represented groups:

LEAs currently have the highest success (88 per cent) in recruiting widening participation students to their FEFC courses. (NIACE, 1999a, para. 6.2)

The potential to continue the marginalisation of LEA adult education is a cause for concern which must have been expressed by the respondents to the consultation questions. The following May a **Second Technical Consultation Paper** was published which corrected its earlier bias towards FE colleges, and explained the provision of 'adult and community learning':

Local authorities are by far the most significant provider... LEA adult education spending supports some 1.6 million learners, and associated spending by other local authority departments might put that figure up to 3 million. (DfEE, 2000c, para. 4.32)

This was an encouraging example of the consultation process appearing to alter opinions if not policy.

The White Paper explains that the block grant for adult education, which can be spent on other sectors as the local authority sees fit, is currently £120 million - half the amount given five years ago. Now this

money will be transferred to the new local LSC, which could share the money more evenly than than the local authorities did. Their spending varied between 50 pence per head in one authority to £25 in others (DfEE, 1999a, para. 7.31). The local LSC should encourage greater financial flexibility, but will the funds be distributed fairly?

Community based adult learning would not be well served if the result of this flexibility were to be the transfer of a discretionary budget, which survived the risk of being spent on roads or schools, to a new Council where it risked being spent on a workplace learning initiative.

(NIACE, 1999a, para. 26)

In addition, the ECA (1999) feared that with the removal of the block grant, LEA provision could be destabilised as the future of its buildings may be in doubt.

It was difficult to discern the government's intentions when there was such a mixture of messages within the White Paper. With LEAs' finances for adult education forfeited and their new duty merely to contribute to provision arrangements, the document added:

Local authorities also have a comprehensive view of their local communities and a strategic and key role to play in tackling issues of social exclusion.

(DfEE, 1999a, para. 4.23)

No details were given about this key role or the nature of their influence. Could it be as Unwin (1999) advocates that all adult education be provided by FE colleges, with local authorities in an advisory role? Local authorities would not have even this derisory role if the Prime Minister's education policy adviser has his way. Andrew Adonis, who claims 'paternity' for both the White Paper *Learning to Succeed* and its successor the *Learning and Skills Bill*, has:

... an elegant contempt for LEAs... and had no doubt that they could be written out of the script of post-16

education and training and lifelong learning. The local government leaders, whom he views as a relic of Old Labour, could be bought off with a few seats on the learning and skills councils.

(Low and Tysome, 2000, p24)

So the vague and ambiguous language of 'duty to contribute' and 'key roles' might be a sop to LEAs to disguise their imminent demise.

The Learning and Skills Council Prospectus (DfEE, 1999f) was published in December, two months after the end of the consultation period. The status of external institutions or franchises, which the LEA providers had to organise in order to obtain FEFC funding through FE sector colleges, was not mentioned. Both systems allow FE colleges considerable power and franchising earns them substantial funds. Would the new LSC allow this form of sub-contracting where money is diverted away from learners to FE college overheads? This was partially answered one month later:

These problems can be overcome when there is only one intermediary between the LSC and the learner. (DfEE, 2000a, para.2.30)

Although it ambiguously added, 'However, we do not wish to preclude one level of sub-contracting,' (para. 2.32). The document, published while the Learning and Skills Bill was being debated in the House of Lords, was entitled **Learning to Succeed - Post-16 Funding and Allocations: First Technical Consultation Paper**. More details than had previously been given were set out in a proposed funding framework accompanied by 19 consultation questions.

For the first time in post-16 education an on-going consultation process appeared to be gradually forming the policy particulars on a framework contrived by a consensus of committee reports. Is this democracy at its

most sophisticated where anyone with an opinion on lifelong learning can be listened to by people in power? An example of this occurring is the subsequent correction to the initial published impression (DfEE, 1999a) of FE colleges providing all the adult education.

Or is this consultation process an elaborate smokescreen for a fixed agenda already chosen by the government? For example, two separate inspectorates have been chosen; Ofsted for 16 - 19 year-olds and an Adult Learning Inspectorate for older learners. Yet:

... 249 out of 250 responses to last Spring's consultation argued for a single post-school inspectorate... Courtesy of Number 10 we have two inspectorates. (Tuckett, 2000, p6)

Therefore the consultation process could appear to allow respondents to influence policy, while the important government decisions have already been made.

When the final policy details emerge, it is unlikely to please the whole range of providers, particularly as, 'There is a danger that the greater numbers of providers will compete for more cost-effective areas of provision,' (FEDA, 1999, para.8). As Daisy County County highlighted in its response (DCC, 1999a) unsuccessful bidding could leave local authorities with widening participation within the community, a task which is difficult, time consuming and not always successful.

Although the White Paper **Learning to Succeed** observed that Britain is still a long way from being a learning society. It is thought that progress can only be made if it were, '... at some point, to tap into the psychological and social motivations of learners and groups,' (Davies, D., 1999, p8). The mass participation in adult education through encouragement and satisfying learners' needs will be the major problem to overcome in the

creation of a learning society.

Nevertheless, as, '... the system is driven by individuals and business,' (DfEE, 2000a, para. 1.4) the test of the success of lifelong learning policy will be in creating a more cohesive society of learners, who by achieving National Learning Targets with their improved skills make Britain also a more competitive nation. Meanwhile policy details emerge as the process of building this national education and training structure continues.

Conclusion

'The rise and fall of LEA adult education' might have been an appropriate title for this chapter. Power and influence grew unsteadily in LEAs until at the end of the 1970s they controlled their own adult education institutions, further education colleges and polytechnics. After this, funding was withdrawn, not as in the past with a good year following a bad year, but with relentless cuts in financial support for adult education.

Vague terms which encapsulated LEAs' duties in the 1944 Education Act allowed for imaginative and creative provision but also introduced a vulnerability to the service. Whenever cuts were necessary, the local authorities could withhold money from adult education because their 'duty to secure adequate provision' had never been defined. The assumption that adult education was optional for LEAs prevailed. In addition the 1988 Education Reform Act, and the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act almost dismantled the responsibilities of LEAs for adult education.

At their inception LEAs were responsible for what was then considered inferior technical and vocational education. Now 'leisure' courses are the

only type of adult education that can be directly funded by the LEAs, but even this money can be drawn upon by other local authority departments. These policies confirmed that the government considered only academic and vocational learning worthwhile. In doing so adult education was transformed from a social movement for the many, to an instrumental form of learning to raise skills for improving business competitiveness. This divided curriculum that had dogged LEA adult education for the whole century was confirmed in law and marketplace efficiency dominated.

Government policy on adult education has been influenced, to a greater or lesser extent, by committee reports during the century. The 1919 Ministry of Reconstruction Final Report, which laid the foundations for the democratic style of adult education, is still being discussed today. The Russell Report (DES,1973) emphasised the value of non-vocational education and stimulated LEAs to creatively widen participation even though no legislation followed.

These influences have not always been good for the LEAs. They almost saw the demise of their responsibility for adult education after a report, entitled *Away with LEAs* (Lawlor, 1988), from the right-wing think tank, the Centre for Policy Studies was published.

During the intervening period information and communication systems have blossomed so that mass consultations are practicable. True democracy, with interested parties having their opinions acknowledged, could evolve. Consultations on lifelong learning and the responses to them have increased since the Labour Government came to power. Most policy decisions might appear to be shaped from this process, but this is not the case.

For example, *The Learning Age Green Paper* (DfEE, 1998b) preceded the *White Paper Learning to Succeed* (DfEE, 1999a) which proposed a single framework for post-16 education. Although many of the proposals for discussion in the consultation process were included, the new coherent structure itself was imposed without previous public debate. This action prompted the policy director at the National Training Organisation National Council to comment:

Politicians and senior officials must learn the difference between coherence and the dead hand of central control. (Bewick, 1999, p22)

Despite these serious doubts about the democratic process, adult education policy has emerged from the *Lifetime Learning* report (DfEE, 1996a) concerned with national competitiveness through an amalgamation of committees and consultations. It is uncertain whether they have influenced the framing of the 2000 Learning and Skills Act which whilst emphasising the imperative of training and work-related learning, seems to recognise the value of learning within communities.

The competition between providers for learners and the recent interest in lifelong learning has tended to shift provider dominance. Instead of generally putting on courses at the institutions' convenience, providers are considering more carefully students' needs in terms of curriculum, timetabling and location. Creches are also often provided along with other more appropriately adult facilities. At the same time, the responsibility for learning is being transferred gradually to the learner through, for example, an Individual Learning Account. This shift in responsibility should not go too far so that lifelong learning becomes a threat and not a promise. Perhaps it is already too late:

The days when adult students could be regarded as volunteers for learning are past. We might now

conceive of many of our clients as engaged in more or less compulsory forms of lifelong learning.
(Tight, 1997, p24)

A hardening of attitudes towards those whom surveys depict as 'non-learners' may also be occurring if many share this lecturer's opinion: 'The enduring characteristic of the ineducable is arrogance,' (Iphofen, 1996, p237). However prevalent these opinions may be, they are neither increasing nor widening participation. Instead, NIACE (1999c) argues, a greater rift is forming between those who recognise the importance of participating in learning and those who believe that education and training is for other people.

So, although we are possibly experiencing the most profound changes in adult education that have occurred during the whole history of the LEAs, the solution as to how we create a learning culture is elusive. It was this notion essentially that impelled my research, from which two overarching question emerged.

1. What roles should LEAs play?

During the past 100 years have the barriers enclosing the field of adult education been trampled down to form what Usher et. al. (1997) call a moorland? Therefore can adult education be defined within the realms of learner entitlement to a minimum level of service, or be related to the elusive term 'adequacy'? If some types of learning are to be privileged, then what should they be and why? Is lifelong learning, although a radical idea according to Williamson (1998), in danger of merely effectively reproducing the existing social orders rather than challenging them?

What are the successes and the problems of LEA adult education? Is there a more effective model within the present varied structures of LEA

adult education?

2. Can true partnerships be formed from the existing market-driven competitiveness?

What is the nature of the relationships between LEA providers and other partners? What part has the marketplace played in these partnerships and within what has been called, '... the commodification of culture,' (Lauzon, 1998, p318)?

Several questions have arisen which have ultimately formed just two, each of which will be discussed in a separate analytical chapter whilst relating them to the concept of the creation of a Learning Society. This should be a cohesive, inclusive and, of course, democratic society. However, according to a leading American communitarian (Lasch, 1993), its evolution will be problematic unless it is based on moral obligations.

Additionally:

To build a democratic society is an art which does not originate from the state or from the market but from the citizenship of a civil society. If the key institutions of society do not support this art it will be destroyed. (Korsgaard, 1997, p23)

The nurturing of a civil society occurs in all kinds of community organisations. However, as learning is considered an important element of a dynamic and healthy society, I have chosen to discuss in the next chapter the development of the community-based adult education institution where I work. This intends to illustrate some of the problems and successes of a local LEA adult education centre. It should also show some of the difficulties in current national and local policies which are intended to benefit learners.

The Hironnelle Adult Education Centre

Background

Dale Valley, in the eastern corner of Daisy County, is a rural area of 80 square miles which borders both Snowdrop and Daffodil counties and has a southern coastal strip. About one-third of the 23,000 population are over 65. The Hironnelle Adult Education Centre attracted 10.7 per cent of adults in the catchment area during 1997-1998, compared to a county average of 7.2 per cent (DCC, 1999e). There are two towns - Seatown and Churchtown; two secondary schools - a Grammar School and Dale Valley Community College. The nearest FE college is 25 miles away, therefore there is little direct competition for students.

Hironnelle was built as a grand Edwardian three-storey house in 1912, in Seatown, and it remained a private home until a group of Franciscan nuns bought it to use as a school. In 1953 it opened with just six pupils. As numbers expanded, a large kitchen was refurbished, and an assembly hall and laboratory were built. However, like so many independent schools of the time, numbers began to decline rapidly until it was forced to close in July, 1970. A member of the teaching staff, who was also friendly with the Chief Education Officer, persuaded the county council to buy the property.

Hironnelle was established as a community centre in 1971. Even though it does not share its facilities with a school, the premises are used for six or seven days each week, during the daytime and evening, with 2106 enrolments (DVCEC, 1999a). The main house is carpeted throughout, has soft chairs, local artwork on the walls, and a profusion of potted plants. It is welcoming with adults in mind. There are six teaching rooms within the three-storey main building. Of these, three have comfy chairs, the

others have work tables. The ground floor has one combined classroom and kitchen plus a main office and a reception/administration room.

Behind the house is a large hall with a licensed bar. The hall is used by travelling theatre companies, musicians, local clubs and societies as well as craft and exercise classes. Although Hironnelle is fairly central, there is plenty of parking around the front and side of the house, as well as a Victorian building next door (see plan - Fig. 7 on the next page). This ex-primary school building houses a network of more than 30 new computers in two large rooms. In here there is also a small room with seats and a drinks machine plus a cosy meeting room. One large carpeted room is dedicated as a daytime creche. Between these two buildings is an art studio, which used to be the laboratory, and a garage converted into a small pottery studio. The resources are not as extensive as those in any secondary school, but most importantly the whole institution has an adult ethos.

The principal is the only full-time member of a 50-strong staff, most of whom are hourly-paid. This structure is what Handy and Aitken (1990) call a club culture, which they say is well informed, friendly, supportive and efficient. Daisy County LEA provides adult education through six free-standing centres, like Hironnelle, and 21 community colleges (secondary schools) where the school principal is also line manager. Hironnelle and the other free-standing centres have one less layer of bureaucracy and therefore have the potential agility to adapt more quickly to the relentless changes.

In the early days domestic classes predominated, like dressmaking and later cookery. Then, as foreign travel became popular, language classes were in the greatest demand. Now there are waiting lists for all aspects of computing.

Site plan showing existing used buildings and proposed new sports and community centre

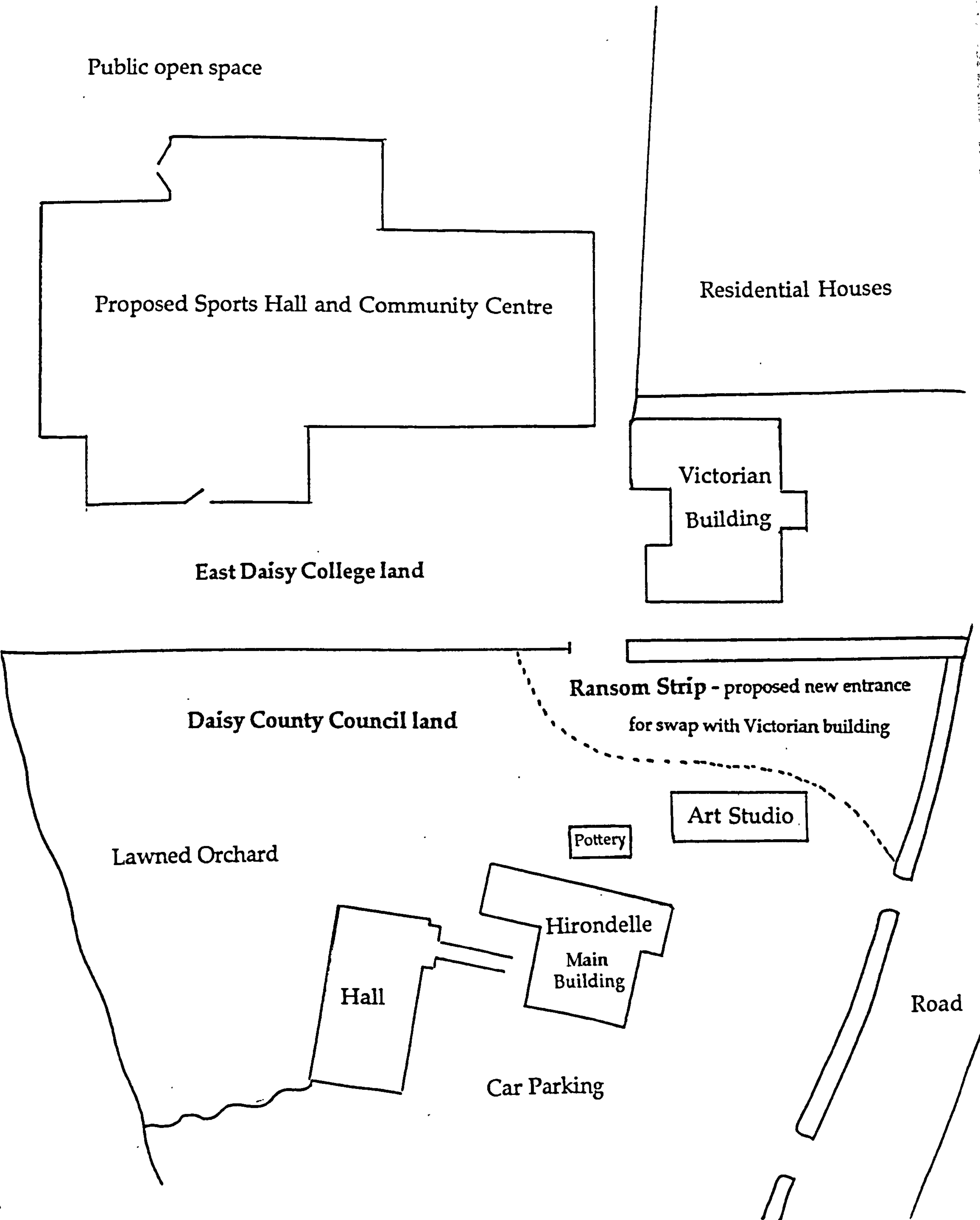


Fig. 7. Plan of the Hirondelle Adult Education Centre with the failed proposal for a Sports and Community Centre

The principal has always been willing to try different ideas as well as new courses. In earlier times there were residential courses in spinning and local lace making where students from outside the area would stay in local family homes. Ideas have included: specialist courses and entertainment; sheltered craft workshops for disabled people; in preparation for Care in the Community there is cookery for those with learning difficulties; plus the affiliation of numerous clubs and societies. Children's films were shown monthly in the hall and a youth employment scheme began. A cross-section of the community has always been involved with the Hironnelle centre where an extensive and varied programme has attracted a wide spectrum of people. Something in which a small locally-based centre excels, compared to larger institutions such as FE colleges. A Policy Action Team report confirmed this:

The most effective work we have seen with disadvantaged people has been delivered by local community and voluntary organisations, who usually have a much better understanding of local people's needs - and more credibility with them - than larger more flexible organisations in the public sector. (PAT, 1999, para. 52)

A Daisy County inspection report praised the centre, 'There is an extremely well developed local curriculum', (DCC, 1997, p14) but this is not without its problems. Lawson (1982) suggests that a typical adult education curriculum is the embodiment of passive citizenship which is what a capitalist society needs and therefore provides. Also the Senior Community Education Officer in County Hall wrote to all adult tutors warning them to limit the curriculum to safe, tried and tested courses:

As a rule of thumb, I would ask you to consider whether a course is likely to attract vulnerable or damaged individuals for whom we could not offer appropriate support mechanisms. Several 'alternative' courses may do so. (Letter, 30. 10. 97)

These notions do not sit comfortably with widening participation high on the government's agenda (Field, 1999). Who do we want to attract into the centre, and for what purpose? Local learning targets will soon have to be met, within the proposed new structures (DfEE, 1999a), probably with the incentive of funding. But we must also remember what the Russell Report affirmed:

The mitigation of loneliness and the creation of such opportunities for social contact are important subsidiary functions of adult education centres.
(DES, 1973, para. 182)

People participate in courses at Hironnelle, and other centres, for many reasons besides learning. These valid social needs must be recognised and satisfied.

Limited participation in adult education, however, is a problem which is not necessarily linked to unsatisfied needs, a restricted curriculum or even high fees.

The working class or the disadvantaged show a stubborn lack of interest while the middle class gobble up the provision. (Fieldhouse, 1996a, p.400)

This concurs with the findings of Uden (1994) that a large proportion of the population considers education as totally irrelevant, or, as Tuckett (1994) found, one in five of the public thought they were too old to learn. Additionally, a MORI poll discovered that:

... 49 per cent [of the adult population] admit that they are not likely to participate in any taught learning activities in the next year.
(Campaign for Learning, 1998, p12)

Sadly, a general weakness of adult education is that it is not reaching the majority of those who would most benefit. Perhaps the predominant ideology of needs meeting is over simplistic.

The liberal hope of changing the context and process of education to make it more responsive to

the needs of the disadvantaged is a vain one
without corresponding and significant changes in
the organisation and control of economic life.

(Thompson, 1980, p.96)

The alleviation of poverty is believed to be the most effective remedy for social disadvantage, however the context of education is now being changed. Competition is being discouraged in favour of partnerships.

Partnerships

The Open University started teaching its first 25,000 students in 1971. A few years later it used Hironnelle as a support centre. In 1973 the Responsible Bodies (a university and the local branch of the WEA) began teaching at Hironnelle; the extra-mural department of a university ran free courses in European Furniture and the Workers Educational Association (WEA) offered Musical Appreciation.

Schools, colleges, the universities, social services and businesses, would converse and support each other. Minutes and reports of the time indicate a spirit of co-operation amongst providers of education in East Daisy County which seems less apparent today. Now that the government has established local lifelong learning partnership regions (DfEE, 1999c) perhaps more co-operation will displace some of the current competition.

Within a couple of years Hironnelle was a well established adult education centre and a focal point for community activity. A thriving set of 14 societies were affiliated to the centre including: drama, conservation, indoor games, the British Legion, and the Electors' and Ratepayers' Association. This indicates that the centre was establishing itself within the community, bolstered by a new monthly newsletter and popular Saturday evening recitals and sing-a-longs.

New partnerships continued into 1975 as a course in Accountancy for

Small Businesses, by a lecturer from an FE college, was financed by Seatown Chamber of Commerce. A six-week Youth Theatre Workshop was organised by two actors, and children's Suzuki violin classes began.

This apparently innovative approach to widening education opportunities within the community was part of a national strategy, in the wake of the Russell Report, which has continued into the 1990s.

... just as important as curriculum change was the practice of taking learning opportunities to where the people were and of working with voluntary agencies and other bodies.

(Raggatt and Edwards, 1996, p.155)

Links are still made with Social Services, the Adult Guidance Service, the Job Centres, libraries and some other education providers, including trained volunteers who teach basic skills. It is this variety of provision which earns Hironnelle the affection and essential support so clearly demonstrated in the **Seatown Regeneration Report** (Jackson, 1996) - researched and compiled by a voluntary group concerned with the town's development. Public consultation concerning the town's leisure and community facilities revealed that an extension to the Hironnelle Centre was much requested.

This support by the population of Seatown and the Dale Valley for Hironnelle was demonstrated tangibly when the caretaker was threatened with redundancy. This threat in the late 1980s to the supportive nature of the Hironnelle centre was posed in the form of the Local Government Bill. It proposed the privatisation of local authority services, including caretakers.

Traditionally, any caretaker at Hironnelle does more than clean and secure the buildings. He is the handyman. For example, a coffee bar area was built in one classroom, a large store shed constructed outside,

workrooms converted, and many other tasks all done by the caretaker. In addition he is a friendly face who directs the parking, guides new students to classrooms, and helps teachers with heavy equipment. The legislation threatened the replacement of our caretaker by contract cleaning staff. By June 1988 a petition of 1200 signatures demanding the retention of the caretaker was collected. His job was restored. Another battle against market forces over learners' interests had been won by intelligent tactics and solid community support.

Finances

When Hironnelle first opened the financial system was run on a finite budget from Daisy County Council. The centre was given funds with which to run the programme, and to pay the wages and travelling expenses of all part-time teachers. All the other costs were paid from LEA central funds, however, fees from classes had to be returned to County Hall. Funding was a continual problem even during these early years. Often the length of courses was curtailed, fees had to rise and self-financing programmes were put on.

A change in LEA policy in 1979 allowed community education centres to retain all the rents charged for letting premises. As there were 20 affiliated societies using rooms, as well as Social Services, this was a welcome boost to finances.

The introduction of net budgeting, where there was an annual block allocation of funds from the LEA, began in 1980. Although this put Hironnelle on a firmer financial footing, in the following year a decrease in block allocation coincided with a rise in teachers' pay.

Another potential financial blow dissipated when the Treasury reviewed the idea of imposing value added tax (VAT) on education in

1985. After much protest education was exempted. Despite this reprieve, fees had to rise again in 1987 to recoup some of the shortfall in the block allocation which left Hironnelle £2,000 in the red. One significant aspect of net budgeting was that County did not take into account the large proportion of pensioners in the area. Hironnelle could no longer give automatic concessions to this group.

The Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1988 required LEAs to include institutions which offered full-time further education (FE) into a local scheme for planning and funding this learning. In order to maintain previous arrangements for adult education provided outside FE colleges, a separate budget was allocated. This resulted, in almost all cases, in a lower unit of resource for adult education compared with 'mainstream' further education (Powell, 1993). Fees had to rise at the Hironnelle centre.

This 1988 Act also weakened LEAs as it allowed schools to become grant maintained from central government, therefore opting out of local control. Moreover, the Local Management of Schools' (LMS) budgets was introduced. Rents on schools' premises for evening classes in outlying areas rose dramatically.

LMS has had a particularly insidious effect on accommodation for adult learners in a public sector with very few buildings to call its own.
(Hull and Cohen, 1991, p.11)

During 1993, the block allocation was replaced by a delegated budget from the LEA to the newly formed Dale Valley Community Education Team. This budget covers youth work, family education and adult education and includes all costs of minor repairs and part-time wages.

Tuition fees have gradually risen above the inflation rate. An average course fee of £1.50 per hour was charged in 1999/2000. This is the same category as the average fees three years before when 80 per cent of LEA

centres charged between 70p. and £1.60 per hour (Winkless, 1997). Even so, these high fees may deter some potential learners, particularly those low earners who may benefit most from learning. Government marketplace economics is blamed by Elsdon (1994) for creating these pricing policies. However, many courses, including adult basic education, are free. Also, Hironnelle operates a discretionary hardship fund to waive the fees for students in need. Now, although Hironnelle manages its finances with just 17 per cent of its income from the LEA, it spent the largest amount of any Daisy County institution on adult education per head of population (DCC, 1999e).

Further Education Funding Council (FEFC)

When the Further and Higher Education Act came into effect in April 1993, FE colleges were automatically incorporated into a new FE sector which received funds directly from the new FEFC. External institutions, such as adult education centres, could receive FEFC funding for Schedule 2 courses (academic and vocational) only by applying through a sector college. (The strategies outlined here are discussed in more detail in the chapter on partnerships).

In preparation for this Hironnelle had to enact two strategies.

1. In order to attract FEFC funding, many of the so called 'leisure' classes were accredited to convert them to Schedule 2 courses. Much of this was done through the local Open College Network (OCN).
2. A sponsoring sector college was found.

This benign and distant relationship merely channelled vital funds to the Hironnelle centre. Hironnelle, however, was given an average level of funding of only £1.50 per unit of activity. A unit is defined as:

The volume of education and training for which an institution receives funding from the Council.

(FEFC, 1995b, p.1)

This very low funding rate resulted from miscalculations by County Hall. Hironnelle was unable to alter it, and thus started the new funding era with a baseline which was unworkable. The only way around this problem was to become a franchisee of an FE college and immediately receive £14.50 per unit for exactly the same work.

As a franchisee, Hironnelle's students were officially designated as the franchising FE college's students, and any documents had to include the FE college's logo. Otherwise the Hironnelle centre had operational control of the curriculum. About a year after Hironnelle had entered this franchise with an FE sector college in neighbouring Snowdrop County, the FEFC circular *Franchising* (FEFC, 1996) was published. This imposed stringent regulations on the franchisee or 'collaborator', Hironnelle. The college was given control of Hironnelle's programme, staff and students associated with Schedule 2 courses. A distinctive mood change suffused Hironnelle as the college shifted its generally supportive inspections to critical scrutiny. Obviously, this was part of a national strategy by the government:

Centralist curriculum prescription, managerialist controls and market forces are the blunt instruments by which the government is attempting to reform post-16 education in Britain.

(Bloomer, 1996, p.140)

In particular, this entailed the exercise of operational control of the Access to Higher Education course by an unsympathetic manager from a different educational culture. This is obviously not necessarily a localised problem. A research project into FE colleges has shown that:

... there has been a shift from an FE management environment marked by 'gentlemanly paternalism'

not untypical of the style of management found throughout local authority run institutions, to one punctuated by aggressive competitive masculinity.
(Deem, et. al., 2000, p235)

The friendly, easy going atmosphere of Hironnelle was shocked by the combative approaches of the FE college management. Inevitably huge problems followed. The most devastating has been dismissal, by the FE college, of one of Hironnelle's Access tutors after a misinformed and untrained OCN moderator discerned apparent lack of organisation in students' files. This episode not only sees assessment being used as what Broadfoot (1996) calls surveillance, but also:

... formal assessment, located as it is at the end of a complex process, is the key to the control of the curriculum. As such, it can become an arena for disputes which have their origins in conflicting views about the purposes of education.

(Parker, 1995, p.173)

It is just this purpose of education which has been so fiercely debated after the 1992 FHE Act blatantly valorised learning for competitiveness.

Adult education in the 19th. century thought it had a moral mission to educate the dispossessed. Although this is not now appropriate - if it ever was - some notion of developmental education which goes beyond mere half-hearted training to a genuine vocationalism, and dedicated to a social purpose and spiritual independence might occupy the minds of adult educators. (Steele, 1994, p.131)

The prevailing ethos at the Hironnelle centre was just this encouragement of learning with a social purpose in mind. Confrontational tactics by the FE college managers practising, '... an aggressive thrusting entrepreneurial managerialism' (Leathwood, 2000, p163), with a different purpose of education in mind, left Hironnelle staff confused and hurt.

Meanwhile, a report about the problem with the franchise, written by

the principal, was sent to the Chief Education Officer for Daisy County, who came to Hironnelle to discuss it. He was interested in the circumstances of the sacking of one of his employees by a sector college from another county. However, the steady erosion of LEAs' powers may be the reason why nothing has been done, not even to support their employee at her industrial tribunal. (This will be discussed in the chapter on partnerships.) By contrast, in some counties such as Surrey and Kent, the LEA co-ordinated franchising arrangements and could therefore exert some control. This did not occur in Daisy County where individual providing institutions had to make their own arrangements to obtain FEFC funding.

In addition to these problems, Hironnelle was being forced to abandon its tailor-made Access programme designed to satisfy local needs and adopt the college's own programme in order to standardise the curriculum.

I wrote to a selection of quangos concerned with the quality assurance of post-compulsory education. My letter suggested that uniform standards of quality in courses was essential, but the standardisation or uniformity of courses was undesirable. The FEFC was non-committal; the Higher Education Quality Council insisted that it was the responsibility of the Authorised Validating Agency (AVA) which approves Access courses.

The National Open College Network, which controls AVAs stated,

... if accreditation systems are to support, rather than determine, the individualised and rapidly changing needs of future learning opportunities for adults, they will have to be built on principles of diversity rather than uniformity in the curriculum. (Letter, February, 1997)

Hironnelle's situation is not a local anomaly, but a national strategy, of which we must be wary to maintain this diversity if a national credit framework is to be introduced.

... the development of accreditation over the past decade has been primarily a story of increasing standardisation, centralisation and prescription. (Wilson, 1996, p.167)

The parties worked around the problem by removing the Access course from the franchise and thus reducing funding. Hironnelle wanted to find a more sympathetic sector college as a franchisor, but the FEFC had made it clear that it intended to restrict franchising arrangements. During the summer holidays it proposed a funding mechanism to cut all franchises' payments by one-third (FEFC, 1999c). Before this, colleges had been dissuaded from entering new franchising arrangements ever since the student expansion funding, called the Demand-Led Element, was withdrawn by the government early in 1997.

Even though Hironnelle provides the largest amount of Schedule 2 work of any LEA institution in the county, the FE college arbitrarily retains half the funding it receives for the centre from the FEFC. As was reported in the minutes of the Hironnelle Centre Annual General Meeting, 'This means [the franchising FE college] pockets £124,000 of income generated by our activities each year', (Hironnelle, 1998). This sum is arbitrarily decided by the FE college annually. Nevertheless, Hironnelle has been financially strengthened by franchising, but its autonomy and integrity have been weakened by what the Daisy County Head of Lifelong Learning, Marmaduke, called, 'This master and slave relationship between FE colleges and their franchisees' (DVCEC,1999b)

Community Education

In Daisy County, adult education and youth work were amalgamated under one Community Education Area Office in 1982. Although, I believe, the two are distinctly incompatible, it has offered the opportunity

to emphasise the diverse nature of adult education under the broad umbrella of community education. As such, links with other educational establishments, employers, voluntary groups and other local services might be more easily forged. There have been successes:

At its best, a community-based adult education has taken account of local inequalities, celebrated cultural differences, initiated new educational processes and forms of participation for non-participant adults and developed a dialogue and an educational way forward with a variety of learner citizens in a locality.

(Usher et. al., 1997, p. 35)

Along with a range of partners, it is in this direction of attempting to widen participation in adult learning throughout the local community that I imagine Hironnelle will develop. Although, it is much easier simply to provide courses for those already committed to learning.

An amalgamation of the secondary modern school in Churchtown and the Grammar School to form one large Dale Valley Community College was proposed in 1984. Adult education was to be absorbed within the structure which would conform to the preferred county framework for community education provided within a secondary school.

This merger offered no obvious advantage to community education participants. On the other hand, the LEA would no longer need to pay for the upkeep of Hironnelle; it could benefit further by selling it. The head teacher of the school would have a substantial increase in salary, currently ten per cent per annum, as line manager for community education. Hironnelle's management committee was determined to fight for the right to exist. The chairman wrote to County Hall opposing any decision unless the centre was involved.

Adult education could not be improved by taking executive power away from those who were committed to it and handing it over to those who

are not. (Letter, 3. 3. 1984)

The management committee insisted that if the community college was to have control of running adult education it should do it through Hironnelle, even though this meant another layer of bureaucracy and the likelihood of the centre being stripped of its finances. These fears were not unfounded because,

... this has been the history of the 'community college' in a variety of countries in the North and South where the discourse of community adult education or non-formal education has been incorporated into and overwhelmed by that of conventional schooling.

(Usher, et. al., 1997, p.37)

At the Dale Valley Community Liaison Council, which consisted of representatives from schools, youth groups, East Daisy College and Hironnelle, the centre's chairman of the management committee said:

We firmly reject the idea of changing the structure for any other reason than improving the service.

(Minutes, 11. 10. 1984)

It was hoped that the question of community colleges versus free-standing adult education centres could be resolved when an audit of LEA adult education was carried out for the Department for Education and Employment in May (DCC, 1999e). When the results were collated, the 27 different providers were indicated in the statistical charts using numbers and letters. Individual institutions alone were informed of their identity. It would have been an opportunity for the LEA to distinguish between the performances of community colleges and adult centres (called Teams) while maintaining the anonymity of the providers. This matter was discussed at the Annual General Meeting.

We wished to know whether there was a link between performance and structure - in crude terms do Teams perform better than Community

Colleges? Although the question had been raised in early August, it has been evaded rather than answered. Dr. W. [Chair of the Management Committee] was of the view that the Audit papers were public documents and the requested information should be given.

(Hirondelle, 1999, p.2)

The LEA has refused to grant this request. This will be discussed in detail in the chapter on LEA structure.

Expensive plans for the new school had been drawn for both the Churchtown and the Grammar School sites. Whilst wrangles continued about the choice of location, the 1988 Education Reform Act became law. The Grammar School balloted its parents and was subsequently one of the first schools to opt out of LEA control and become Grant Maintained. The secondary modern was given comprehensive status and became The Dale Valley School. The 'Community College' name tag was conferred on the school in September 1996 but not with the usual Daisy County status of having control of community education. Now it is a partner in the Dale Valley Community Education Team.

Since FE colleges left LEA control in 1993, adult education administrators tend to be promoted from a school background. For example, both the past and present Heads of Lifelong Learning in Daisy County were principals of secondary schools. They therefore have greater empathy with a community college than an adult education centre. For no other reason than political will, Hirondelle is likely, eventually, to be run by the Dale Valley Community College, unless people in Seatown protest. An alternative would be to declare independence from the LEA and bid directly to the new Learning and Skills Council for funds.

Opportunities for Expansion

When in 1980 the Seatown Primary School moved to a new site, Hironnelle was hoping that it could grow into the vacant neighbouring premises to form one large campus. A paper from Hironnelle's management committee to County Hall explained how desperately more classrooms were needed for the centre.

Already there have been sessions when every available room is in use and the office has been cleared for a classroom. (14. 3. 1981)

It had already been suggested that the Daisy County Council should provide a new library for the town; the Victorian main building of the school would have been ideal, particularly with its close proximity to the adult education centre.

The management committee paper explained that to meet the increasing needs of the growing population there needed to be development of the old school site. This proposal included:

- four classrooms including two workshops - a pottery and sculpture studio, and a large light classroom for thread craft. Also accommodation and storage space for affiliated societies;
- one existing classroom block to become a medical support unit and a day care centre run by the local authority;
- the other classroom block for a collaborative East Daisy partnership of community education for work projects and training courses aimed at young people and adults, funded by the Manpower Services Commission;
- The Victorian building to become the new Seatown library.

This opportunity to transform the Hironnelle centre into an integrated multi-purpose community centre was quashed by local politicians at County Hall. Instead, an annexe of East Daisy Further Education College,

known as the FE Unit, moved onto the site in the summer of 1981. The new Seatown Library was situated half a mile away, in much smaller premises, owned by a local politician who was both a governor of East Daisy FE College and chairman of Daisy County Council libraries committee. This blow was compounded by having a rival institution, with its main site 30 miles away, setting up in competition next door. This occurred despite appeals from the Hironnelle centre which, '...does not want to see two points of reference for community use on the same campus' (letter to Daisy LEA, 21. 3. 1981).

Assurances from the principal of East Daisy College insisted that, 'plans would not frustrate community aspirations' (Letter, 1. 6. 1981). But, at the same time, he apologised for the lack of liaison during the planning stages and for not inviting the principal of the Hironnelle centre to meetings, 'as some members thought it inappropriate.'

Subsequently, as no collaboration was instigated, the Hironnelle programme clashed in parts with courses put on next door, yet their were firm assurances from the chairman of the East Daisy Education Committee: 'There is no intention to duplicate the courses at present run by the adult education centre', (Letter, 21.2. 1981).

A huge sum was spent at the FE Unit on a large workshop, an industrial kitchen and student restaurant, a trainee hairdressing salon, also new typewriters and computers. In spite of these resources, the primary school buildings in a quiet seaside town failed to attract viable numbers of 16 to 19 year-olds.

In July, 1990, a working party to assess post-16 education had been set up by the LEA. A report was sent to East Daisy College, but not to Hironnelle. In reply, the college proposed a merger with Hironnelle.

It appeared that there were two options:

1. closure of the Further Education Unit;
2. closure of Hironnelle.

A council officer assessed both institutions then rang Hironnelle to say that option 1 - the incorporation of the FE Unit *into* Hironnelle - was the decision. Her report, however, was unaccountably delayed and, when it was finally produced, no copy was sent to Hironnelle. Moreover, a leaked copy was sent to the press which recommended option 2 - the closure of Hironnelle.

An investigation revealed that the college had successfully lobbied at a political level and that the report had been tampered with in draft. A major controversy ensued. Shortly before a working party was due to meet in the summer of 1991, the college withdrew from consultations and requested that the process be halted. Consultation took place but the status quo was maintained. Indeed, the Further Education Unit closed four years later.

The government had published its White Paper (DES, 1991a) which proposed that all FE institutions be removed from local authority control. Within this, the government had recommended the transfer of all buildings and land used by the FE sector from the LEAs to college assets. Daisy County Council protested under the terms of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (Section 23: Transfer of Property) about giving away land which was bequeathed to the people of Seatown. The appeal was turned down.

When the college left the site, Hironnelle was able to lease, at an annual commercial rent of £8,800, the small Victorian school building. This allowed vital expansion for the popular computer suite and a large creche. The district council funded a feasibility study for a sports centre on the old school site between Hironnelle and the neighbouring cricket pitch

and tennis courts. Seatown is the only town in East Daisy without a sports centre. A multi-purpose integrated community centre was the most desirable development requested by the town's population in the Seatown Regeneration Report (Jackson, 1996). (Refer to the site plan, Fig. 7. p.87.)

However, there was a major drawback. East Daisy College, through incorporation in the FHE Act, was granted possession of the several acres of land that has been publicly owned for almost a century. After the closure of the FE Unit, East Daisy College sought planning permission for a housing development on its Seatown land. A county councillor's letter in the local newspaper stated:

This was a direct result of Conservative Government policy which effectively stole from Seatown something which had been given to it and which the district council is trying to buy back.
(Rogers, 1998, p5)

In addition, Daisy County Council agreed to obtain the Victorian building for Hironnelle's use in 1995, but now negotiations for this facility are in limbo. The only access to the land for heavy machinery used in building work is through a strip of land belonging to the Hironnelle centre. The local authority want to swap this land, known as the 'Ransom Strip', in exchange for the Victorian building. The FE Unit property had been derelict for so long that not only did rumours circulate about the college's withdrawal from the land sale (Bennett, 1999a) but also vandals rendered the remaining buildings a safety hazard. Members of Seatown Development Trust picketed an open evening at East Daisy College to protest about the neglect of its land. Finally, the college assured that the remaining unused buildings would be bulldozed (Bennett, 1999b) although a sale had not then been agreed.

East Daisy District Council bid for the land, then it lowered its offer after

property prices began to fall (Midweek Herald, 2000). Subsequently a small property developer bought the land on which to build houses. A blend of fury and despondency was expressed by a member of Seatown Regeneration Group in a letter to the local newspaper:

So, we shall have more houses and no sports centre in the town. Clearly local people are swimming against a tide of bureaucracy, money and vested interest. The encouragement of community goodwill and voluntary effort is a confidence trick. Not only do authorities exhaust this goodwill by making realistic fund raising almost impossibly difficult, they are prepared to castrate it for political gain. (Kelf, 2000, p4)

Yet, just one month before, a document issued by Daisy County Council stated:

The government has identified the necessity to build communities' self-confidence and capacity and to promote good citizenship and regeneration. We need to consider how Daisy County can broaden the offer of support within communities.
(DCC, 2000b, para. 3.5)

This appears to be merely empty political rhetoric after years of voluntary effort by the people of Seatown to secure a community facility. If, in addition, the Hironnelle Centre were to be evicted from the Victorian building, local people would again be denied a valuable asset and 50 per cent of the centre's income would be lost.

Conclusion

During its brief history Hironnelle has won the affection and loyalty of the local community by providing a friendly, high-quality service which responds to their needs (DCC, 1997). Much of this is to do with its structure, but more especially with the pivotal influence of the principal, Cecil, who says, 'It's like working with a group of chums'. Of course this

creates a happy atmosphere but we must beware of any hint of exclusiveness of a club culture. Hironnelle has provided a broad adult education service which contrasts with government policy that has valued only instrumental forms of learning and promoted the marketisation of education creating competition between providers at the expense of collaboration.

Further education colleges typically have a role culture (Handy and Aitken, 1990); usually quite different from the external institutions or franchisees to which they have been allied by the FEFC through sponsorship or franchising. For example, a major part of the problem of negotiations about the Victorian building and land owned by East Daisy College is their management's anger at Hironnelle franchising with another FE college. This is a demonstration of an educational institution more concerned with empire building, with the aid of political skullduggery, than the welfare of students or the general community. It does not bode well for local lifelong partnerships even though there has been a change of government since this was written:

Commitment to collective action and belief in a more egalitarian society are forced into the background of the mosaic by more urgent imperatives which stem from the Government's, and hence the funding bodies', vision of education.
(Benn and Burton, 1995, p.444)

Many associated with the collective community action of the Seatown Regeneration group feel disheartened and despondent about the sale of land which the FE college insisted, under the instructions of the FEFC, that they had to sell for the highest price. The value of the land as a community asset could not be considered by the FEFC.

LEAs may be in the best position to co-ordinate and support their community education centres, but experience at Hironnelle shows that

LEAs might be so enfeebled by the removal of finances and political power that defending their adult education institutions or employees would be avoided. Moreover, Daisy County LEA administrators have favoured schools to organise community education.

A fairly autonomous LEA community centre such as Hironnelle has survived drastic funding cuts and fended off threats to its very existence. The development and resolution of these episodes mirrors the problems of adult education nationally. If the centre can continue then it is obviously well placed to respond robustly to proposed new changes.

This account of a LEA adult education centre will have shown, I believe, how national policies are implemented and interpreted at a local level. It also illustrates political manoeuvrings which do not have the interests of the learners or the community at heart. It was this effect of national policy on LEA providers that I chose to research. My motivations and methods for this investigation along with the difficulties and successes are discussed in the next chapter.

Methodology

Introduction

When I first began my project entitled *Current Changes in Adult Education*, I had little idea of those revolutionary shifts which have happened since, or the enormous reorganisation which is likely to come. I had witnessed the tremendous change in emphasis in adult education since the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, which included new funding arrangements, weakening of LEA powers, and the diminishing importance of liberal education - or learning for fun.

I felt strongly about these changes and the accommodations to them. I had come across many people, like a nurse tentatively returning to learning by joining a calligraphy class, who had greatly benefited from a 'leisure' course. She continued through Maths and English GCSEs, to Human Biology and Psychology A levels. She is now, after several promotions, in a highly responsible management post in the Health Service. Would this still occur with the liberal classes attracting higher fees and lower status compared with the accredited, FEFC-funded Schedule 2 courses?

I realise that this example demonstrates the importance of liberal adult education which LEAs have a duty to secure. Nevertheless, I believe that adult education is so much more than a gentle transition to academic or vocational learning. Adult education offered in local centres is an essential part of community life. I wanted to know why this form of adult education, and the democratic LEAs which controlled it, had been marginalised.

At the same time, the almost genteel image of the Hironnelle adult education centre where I work was being galvanised into a more efficient

and alert service. Several questions needed to be examined. For example, was this a similar picture locally or even nationally? Were these changes in policy reflecting changes that society wanted or needed? As far as the tutors were concerned, many generally felt that the quality was being raised, although the rapidity of these changes required diligence and percipience. At the same time they had to work hard to maintain a cosy, welcoming institutional image even when very busy. The students were generally unaware of structural policy changes apart from certain financial aspects. Many Access to Higher Education students needed extra financial help or at least more official encouragement to study while claiming the Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA).

It was at this point that I began my policy research from the perspective of an advocate of a dynamic adult education system. I knew that this was going to be a wide-ranging and difficult task, but I was later encouraged by a concluding remark in a paper on qualitative research.

There is a clear need for sound, critical research that recognizes, and engages with, the complexities of contemporary educational policy and practice. Such an approach may draw on 'partisan' approaches but will be more than a simple assertion of sectional interests or macro-political ideology.

(Gillborn, 1998, p53)

This problem of neutrality, or lack of it, I became increasingly aware of throughout my research. It is something which will be discussed in more detail later, but at the time I knew I had to look at adult education from many different perspectives.

Reasons for Research

Although I guessed that as many questions would be raised as would be answered, a predominantly qualitative study of policy initiatives in adult

education was the research I chose. It arose from personal and professional interest in my field of work, hoping that it would give me a broader and deeper understanding of adult education reform and why it was happening. This stance, known as policy scholarship, has been characterised in these terms:

The perspectives of policy scholarship examine the historical processes of policy making, processes which demonstrate the centrality of concepts of conflict and struggle... Policy scholarship brings back into the analysis an historical and contemporary sense of the power relations which shape and pattern education policy.

(Grace, 1998, p204)

The historical processes of policy making have already been detailed in the literature review. The struggle between the dominance of the academic/vocational and the recreational (liberal) curriculum is beginning to be resolved. In turn, nationally, with the dissolution of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), the FE colleges' power may be diminished. This will enable other providers to collaborate on equal terms or to compete. Locally, in Daisy County, the community colleges (comprehensive schools) might become the sole providers of LEA adult education and therefore absorb the few remaining free-standing adult education centres.

I felt well placed to carry out this study as both a teacher and a manager, for two reasons. Firstly, as Hammersley (2000) advocates, education practitioners themselves should carry out research. Secondly, the majority of research in this field had been based on university extra-mural adult education (Field and Taylor, 1995).

As a self-funded individual I was constrained neither by sponsors nor funding agencies, which as Grace (1998) argues could threaten the integrity of the research in three ways: by controlling agendas, hurrying through

short deadlines, or imposing a system of performance indicators that could affect the funding and status of institutions and research teams. Clearly I am aware, however of other constraints that relate to my supervisor and the production of an externally assessed piece of work.

The content and method of my research was likely to be useful to my institution mainly due to the quantity and rapidity of suggested policy changes. I am able to pass on concise information about this to my busy principal and to the management committee. Any aspirations of a wider application are justifiably limited.

The use of qualitative research in a policy context is, in my view, likely to amount to a much more modest exercise than that to which the dominant tradition has aspired during the last 150 years; but it is also more viable, more intellectually challenging and more ethically justifiable. (Finch, 1986, p232)

At the very least I should develop personally and disseminate my findings to the Hironnelle centre where I work, to cluster meetings of LEA adult education providers in the area, and to my education students. Now I had to consider the literature associated with the research process.

Research Theory

As to the process of my research, I liked the idea of a spiral which could not only be entered at any point, but which inferred a progression. This concept has been developed into a metaphor of a Swiss Roll or a Jam Roly Poly Model of Research.

... this image expresses the continual interleaving of context and specifics, as well as the multiple possibilities for inter-connections between them. Thus, the jam roly poly can be sliced at any point to give a stratified mixture of jam and pastry, or, by analogy, research data and theory and context. These relationships hold throughout the length of the jam roly poly, suggesting a thematic approach to research,

running from beginning to end. And the image allows for different conceptualisations: there could be different proportions of jam and roly poly, different flavours of jam and different colourings used. (Hughes and Tight, 1996, p56)

I had little idea of how much filling there would be or the flavour of the jam, but the theme of adult education policy running throughout the research process and the conjunction of data with theory or context was essential. A background knowledge of research theory was required which meant plenty of historical and contemporary reading.

One of my interests in adult education policy is a concern to understand how it could become more effective. For this I am taking the perspective of the learners. For example, how can effective policy encourage more learners, particularly those who would not normally participate, and enable them to enjoy and thrive on their learning? The process would have to be traced from the institutions which deliver learning, to the administrators in County Hall, to policy from central government. The term 'Learning Society' has been adopted by the government as a target for a culture where learning is valued by all. Therefore, the monitoring of social change must also be an aim of my research, even though this may not be feasible. I assumed from extensive reading about research theory and methods that the critical paradigm is most suited to this research pathway.

It was this third critical paradigm that Habermas (1971) argued should be added to the scientific (positivist) and interpretative (phenomenological) paradigms which had previously been the two dominant ways of trying to find truth. For Habermas truth can only be acceptable if it is based on situations where:

- i. all relevant evidence has been brought into play;

ii. nothing apart from reasoned arguments counts.

Critical theory is the title given to the philosophical stance of the Frankfurt School owing its foundations to Hegel and Marx.

Critical theory ... typically seeks to found critique on an epistemology which reveals truths obscured from conventional viewpoints, and which promises a social transformation that realises human values. (Hammersley, 1995, p33)

It is just this approach that I have tried to use in my research, yet this definition is not without its problems. Hammersley (1995) points out that the word 'critical' is itself ambiguous or, 'has a range of conceptions' (p35). In some cases 'critical' means fault finding yet this method of critical research is applauded. In Marxism 'critical' has combined two senses of, firstly, the implication of reflection on the presuppositions and conditions of knowledge, and, secondly, the political criticism of social forms. This perspective is not without its detractors who believe that as a result in social research:

... the label 'critical' has lost any cognitive value it may have had: it is an empty rhetorical shell. Its use amounts to an attempt to disguise a particular set of substantive political commitments as a universal position that gives epistemological and moral privilege. (Hammersley, 1995, p43)

Others are not so scathing, but tend to agree that, 'the word 'critical' is somewhat overused' (Gillborn, 1998, p51) or there are those who believe that critical research emphasises negativity or carping. However:

Readings like this are give-aways that those making them have not read themselves into the meaning of 'critical' as expressed in the sociological literature.

(Shacklock and Smyth, 1998, p2)

This could be the key to the integrity of the research process by overcoming these problems about 'critical'. By being reflective and

evaluative about my own research endeavours of consciousness-raising, any hidden difficulties should be exposed to open examination. This self-consciousness, or reflexivity as Delamont (1992) calls it, must permeate the whole research process. This will be discussed in more detail in the section on Writing.

Critical Social Research

I studied many papers, journals and books about research projects and their methods. Some were useful manuals like Bassey (1995), Delamont (1992) and Finch (1986) discussing the theories associated with research and the actual methods used. Ontology and epistemology associated within the research process were discussed using a variety of books and papers in our student research group seminars. Some methods were more applicable than others to my research questions and the data I needed to generate. For example, although I soon realised that ethnography would not be suitable for my policy study, I enjoyed Aggleton (1987) for its writing style and novel approach to research.

From my range of reading and discussions, the most appropriate approach to my studies seemed to be critical social research. This is defined by Harvey (1990) as a way of attempting to dig beneath the surface of historically specific, oppressive social structures. He has identified eight elements which can be drawn together in a process of deconstruction and reconstruction. I will briefly review these and relate them to my own research.

- **Abstraction** - this attempts to reveal underlying structures which specify the nature of abstract concepts. For example: investigating the academic/vocational and 'leisure' divide of the curriculum.

- **Totality** - implies that components are interrelated into a coherent

structure, and empirical detail to a structural and historical whole. For example: investigating the policy changes and those proposals which did not reach the statute books. Do these policies relate to a coherent development of adult education?

- Essence - this is the fundamental element of an analytic process, or the key to the deconstructive process. For example: trying to define adult education, carefully analysing the changing needs with technology and the new demands of lifelong learning.

- Praxis - practical reflective activity. For example: what can be done at the Hironnelle Centre to adapt to changes in policy and in society?

- Ideology - this is considered in the Marxist sense in that it serves to obscure relations. For example: is adult education liberating in the sense of Freire (1973) or a form of social control suggested by Tett (1996)? Or is it neither of these?

The purpose of education is less a matter of liberation or domestication than negotiating the terms of participation in a learning process and a society in which subjection and autonomy co-exist. (Usher, et. al., 1997, p29)

- Structure - this is viewed holistically as a complex set of interrelated elements which are interdependent and can only be adequately conceived in terms of the complete structure. For example: the diverse elements in adult education, such as part-time tutors, and students who are strangers to each other (unlike school), who interreact to form a coherent whole. More generally, I will investigate the structure of adult education within the Daisy County LEA and compare it to neighbouring counties.

- History - this involves, in this case, two elements: grounding of generalised theory in material history; and reconstructing history as an active interpretation. For example: the important elements of the history

of adult education can be interpreted in terms of social policy.

● Deconstruction and Reconstruction - these locate a central concept and critically analyse it. From that, other concepts can be reconstructed. For example: the part played by LEAs in adult education. What powers should they have, and why? More particularly, what is the nature of partnerships and with whom are they formed?

I have found this approach valuable because it is important to emphasise the history of policy making from a critical perspective, as I have done in the literature review, in order to understand more fully the present situation and to contemplate the future in an informed way. The various elements of critical social research fit the areas of work which interest me and link to form a cohesive framework.

Beginnings

I was pleased to have been invited to continue my studies after completing my M.Ed at the University of Sheffield and delighted that my same supervisor offered to guide me through my research. Agreements were made to meet at least once per term and I could contact him at any time. After our initial meeting I recorded my first research diary entry on 2nd. October 1995 indicating how I should get organised and start to do plenty of thinking and reading.

I already knew a member of the library staff at the University of Sheffield who was willing to assist me from a distance. Through my teaching, I am a member of the education libraries of two universities, both about 25 miles from my home. Each of these libraries has a fairly comprehensive selection of books on adult education dating back about 30 years. One library has an excellent range of journals and the other has an array of CD-Roms containing references, newspapers and journal abstracts.

Along with their collection of pamphlets, reference books, unpublished theses and Acts of Parliament, these accessible specialist libraries are an indispensable asset which I use frequently.

I selected my first book from the shelf and read it, but just five weeks into my research I can only smile at the impatience indicated in my research diary.

This is taking a while to get off the ground. I have read Jarvis, P. (1993) **Adult Education and the State** and made notes. This has given me a notion of just how wide my brief is... In the meantime I'll start reading Westwood, S. & Thomas, J. (1991) **The Politics of Adult Education**. I must also start to investigate the history and progression of adult education before I can begin to expound on the changes finally introduced in the 1992 FHE Act. Of course the progression of changes after this will also have to be addressed. (12.11.1995)

The next volume I read was Kelly's (1992) **A History of Adult Education in Great Britain**. This gave me plenty of avenues to explore. At the same time I had used the electronic referencing system, ERIC, in one of the libraries, accessing 1,374 references of which about ten per cent were relevant to my studies. This selected list not only revealed a vista of reports and authors, but an array of journals and newspapers to find out about.

Learning about the theory of adult education and research from the literature.

I now had plenty of references to read and was well aware that each piece could lead on to more reading. The range of sources varied from current education news to carefully considered critiques of the ideology of education policies in quarterly journals. Any bias was made clear in the newsletters of various educational organisations. For example, **FE Now!** is

published by the Association of Colleges, and *The Lecturer* is the newsletter of the University and College Lecturers' Union (NATFHE). Other partialities were clarified as I came to understand the preferences of some of the more prolific authors.

Education policy changes, whether minor amendments or major legislation, have occurred more frequently during this decade than at any time this century, it is argued, '... precisely because education can be seen as a means for promoting integration and conformity in a rapidly changing world,' (Mayo, 1995, p16). Moreover, interest in adult education and lifelong learning is reflected in the long list of specialist journals, both national and international.

The internet is the ideal tool for reading and downloading up-to-the-minute information from the various government agencies and education organisations. Some of the websites that have been especially useful are listed in Appendix V. This was created from a small address book of educational websites which I have visited over the years.

The principal of the Hironnelle adult centre encourages me to use the web frequently so that I can inform him of any current changes which might affect the institution. It is stimulating and enjoyable to speculate with him about the effects of any proposed reforms and their possible alternatives.

My reading became an act of faith; a leap in the dark. Often connections between topics would be made by following up a reference or two in that current paper or book. I had an open mind about where it was going to lead me and I read voraciously. I continued to make notes on the books and papers I read. Highlighter pens were kept handy for photocopies and my own journals. A card index list of references was started for every potentially useful article, journal, paper or book that I read. Any apt

quotations were copied and carefully referenced with page numbers.

Reading widely was a conscious decision, despite warnings from various sources to postpone reading about theory until after the collection and analysis of data, for example (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p37). This review of the literature, it is said, should be delayed for two reasons:

Firstly, such prior reading is likely to create pre-existing categories and concepts which may then be inappropriately imposed on the data... Secondly, many of the categories emerging from qualitative data are likely to be unanticipated ones and therefore researchers will be unaware of which themes on the secondary literature to pursue until their data analysis has been completed.

(Vulliamy & Webb, 1992, p221)

My reaction to the first point is that although I might have imposed unsuitable categories on my data, I had to grasp the theory before I was able to structure adequately the questions which would divulge the information that I believe was required. Moreover, some respondents remarked on how invigorating it was to discuss current policy and practice in adult education; something I could not have done without thorough preparation in my background knowledge. And secondly, yes, unanticipated themes did evolve from my data which entailed further reading and investigation, but none that made any previous work superfluous.

As my reading progressed, I put my notes and photocopies in alphabetical order of author's name into a file which quickly expanded into two files. Reading, therefore, was not merely a matter of finding out more, I had to consider, digest, assimilate and try to form a network of concepts. It required plenty of thinking and questioning. Sometimes connections would surface at unexpected times - in the shower or during a morning run - so a notebook was not always handy to capture these

notions. I became more comfortable expressing thoughts in my research diary as time progressed although it was sometimes too alluring to agree with myself. Playing mind games with different mental characters, such as Detective, his friend Patternmaker, the constantly babbling voice of Chattering Monkey, and the argumentative Awkward Sod, was recommended by Minkin (1997). These internal voices would attempt to shake out any complacent conclusions. I still found discussing concepts with a colleague or friend was the most fruitful way of encapsulating theories by dismissing irrelevancies and arguing away the rough edges.

News programmes along with political and social radio documentaries such as *Analysis* and the education programme *The Learning Curve*, are ways I employed to relate adult education to current affairs. Talking and listening played an important part in my study, not only through collecting interview data, which I will discuss later, but by interaction through work, conferences and research seminars.

I meet with practitioners of community education from across the county several times a year at seminars to discuss a particular topic. As an Open College Network moderator I visit other adult education institutions and discuss with colleagues at panel meetings about quality control and the curriculum, and talk to the students concerned. Both of these gatherings present an opportunity to catch a glimpse of a broader local picture through formal and casual discussions. At conferences, national and sometimes international speakers can be heard and there are chances to meet practitioners, researchers and administrators for a national picture to be drawn.

I attended the launching of *The Learning Age Green Paper* at the FEDA conference in London in February, 1998. Later that year, as Britain held the Presidency of the European Community, there was a big Lifelong

Learning conference in Manchester, to which I was invited. The European delegates emphasised the international importance being given to adult education and indicated that similar policies were being pursued in each country.

This was a thread that I was able to follow as the only delegate from England in a Socrates sponsored European programme for adult educators, called I.M.I.T.A.T.E. The acronym stands for Innovative Methods in Teaching Adults Today in Europe. Twenty participants from 12 countries met on four occasions during the two-year programme to evaluate a training course for adult tutors. We met in Gothenburg, Nottingham, Bavaria and Lausanne. The modules were written and delivered by experts from seven countries. To discover more about the structure of adult education in other countries, from the teachers and participants, and to visit some of the institutions was for me the most fascinating aspect. I contributed a section to the resource book entitled *Personal Intercultural Learning*, on my experiences as a participant.

This work was peripheral to my main research but it enabled me to see adult education from an international perspective and to bolster my background knowledge. However, amassing large amounts of information from reading, meetings, seminars, conferences and discussions soon became complicated and messy. I attempted to relate my new understanding of national policy to local policies and to gauge how these were interpreted in institutions, with their eventual effects on the students. My enquiries were often haphazard in that I did not follow a set plan. If a trail was interesting, I would follow it through a variety of sources until it became unnecessarily detailed or until it had been traced as far as it could reasonably go. For example, this occurred in my investigations into the constitution of the governing body of community

colleges. Apart from my interviews, I read legislation, pamphlets and papers; letters and phone calls were exchanged with different officers at County Hall; two letters were sent from the DfEE. No firm conclusion was drawn but my enquiries, I sensed, could go no further without irritating those concerned. This is discussed in detail in the chapter on partnerships.

On being both an employee and a researcher

The huge volume of information now being categorised was becoming too cumbersome. I felt that it was time to relate it to everyday practice in adult education, both in the present and the past. The next step was to investigate the institution which employed me.

Hirondelle Adult Education Centre was founded in 1972; just one year later the Russell Report (DES, 1973) was published. Perhaps connections could be made?

The present principal arrived in 1975 so he contributed the majority of the initial information, then I pored over ledgers containing minutes of the inaugural meeting through to all the subsequent committee meetings. Business letters relating to management committee matters were also in these ledgers. Pages of notes were completed and added to my own notes and minutes from my attendance at committee meetings during the last ten years. The archives also contained a scrapbook of local press cuttings about Hirondelle, which I augmented with my own recent cuttings. Although little in the local press was related to policy matters, some items were noted.

I could have made a more detailed study by formally interviewing the major players involved in the foundation and development of the institution since its inception. It would have been fascinating to glean first-hand information from the founder, but sadly she died before I had

that opportunity. However, a detailed case study of the history of the institution was not my main aim. A critical policy study concentrating on the past decade, was my concern, using Hironnelle as an example of the historical development of adult education and a model for the interpretation of national and local policy. This was written as a draft chapter soon after the collection of sufficient data.

Hironnelle could rightfully be called a learning organisation as most of the managerial and administration staff, plus many of the tutors, are studying part-time for education qualifications or other academic courses. Therefore I immersed myself in this learning culture which shows an interest in, and encouragement for, each others' studies.

Neither was there any tension in my dual role as an employee and a researcher at County Hall. Three county officers granted my request for an interview, a fourth did not reply, but any further interest in my research, conference visits or my involvement in the I.M.I.T.A.T.E. European programme, was absent. This apathy was part of a trend. With a colleague, I had written an 7,000 word paper, entitled *Changing Pace*, commissioned by a senior education officer at County Hall. The paper was aimed at school teachers in community colleges who planned to teach adult classes. We had hoped to develop the paper into a short training course, but we received only an acknowledgement from the officer concerned. (This was the same officer who failed to reply to my request for an interview.) Therefore, although disappointed, I was not surprised at the lack of interest in my findings, especially once I found a probable explanation as to why LEAs' influence or interest in adult education research had declined.

Local education authorities' overall budgets and functions have both been reduced dramatically by central government since 1979, and their capacity to conduct research, as well as their interest in

outcomes, has declined considerably as a result.
(Field & Taylor, 1995, p250)

I felt fortunate to be encouraged at my place of work and to have the co-operation of my employers but how would this affect my research?

The problems of neutrality

... what often passes for neutrality in social research is no more than a mask which hides taken for granted partisan notions of what constitutes 'good' research. It is partisan because it ignores the possibility of diverse systems of knowledge production and multiple interpretations of social phenomena. This diversity does not exclude the importance of agreeing that every researcher needs to be guided by ethical codes of conduct. (Blair, 1998, p20)

The problems are that my perspective is obviously not neutral and part of that ethical code of conduct is to admit this. According to Becker (1966) it is not a question of whether we takes sides, but rather whose side we are on? From my position as a community education tutor where I have teaching, administrative and managerial duties, it is easy to view adult education as weak and vulnerable because it has no clear statutory foundation. This frailty can appear to lead to bullying from further education colleges, to being taken advantage of by administrators, and to being shunned by policy makers. One of the purposes of my research is to show that adult education should be more esteemed, but, of course, in my position I would say that, wouldn't I?

A 'Hierarchy of Credibility' is proposed by Becker (1966) where members of the highest group, which in my case are the policy makers, have the right to define things the way they really are. Then, he says, we accuse ourselves of bias only when we side with the subordinate or underdog, which I am doing in this study.

We take sides as our personal and political commitments dictate, use our theoretical and technical resources to avoid the distortions that we might introduce into our work, limit our conclusions carefully, recognise the hierarchy of credibility for what it is, and field as best we can the accusations and doubts that will surely be our fate. (Becker, 1966, p246)

But is he not unjustly assuming that by taking sides I will always be opposed to the other side, in this case the policy makers? There have been effective policies that enhance adult education which I will critically applaud. A more pertinent question to ask while analysing my data should be: whose interest does this serve?

In reply to Becker's paper, Gouldner (1973) accepted that all standpoints are partisan, but suggested that some could be more liberating than others. Therefore, he believed that the task of researchers was to investigate situations in a mode that would enable them to view things not normally seen by the participants involved.

This does not mean that the sociologist should ignore or be insensitive to the full force of the actors' standpoints. But it does mean that he himself [sic] must have a standpoint on their standpoint. Objectivity is indeed threatened when actors' standpoints and the sociologist's fuse into one. (Gouldner, 1973, p57)

Therefore it is not merely the information that I have to analyse, but there are various questions that must be asked concerning its source. Where did it come from? Who was the source? Who was the intended audience? Why was the data created? In what context was the data created? This is part of a reflective stance towards others and myself which is an essential element in critical research. The generation of questions is an important task in this process but developing them is difficult, as I discovered in my research project that, 'Questions become

exits to many new entrances' (Minkin, 1997, p68).

Now I had to consider the type of data needed and the analysis required.

Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

Discussion about qualitative analysis has suffused most of this methodology chapter so I will briefly discuss this. 'A core function of qualitative research is to identify the form and nature of a phenomenon' (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994, p188) which in this study is LEA adult education. It is this descriptive and interrogative process which most suits critical policy research. Moreover, it is the depth and richness of the data which gives strength to qualitative research, believes Cocklin (1996).

Finch (1986) describes some of the specific advantages of policy-oriented qualitative research which include:

- (i) a concern for process as well as outcome;
- (ii) a capacity to study processes over time, including the policy making process itself; [Consultative reports as well as Green and White Papers were published during my research period.]
- (iii) an ability to provide descriptive detail which makes situations 'comprehensible'; and
- (iv) a capacity to reflect on the subjective reality of the people being studied. [In my case these are my interview respondents.]

(Finch, 1986, p225)

Despite this vigour of qualitative analysis, Finch (1986) explains that quantitative work is traditionally favoured by policy makers who prefer description and surveys using administrative rather than social science categories. Clearly this is demonstrated in data on fees and funding as well as the numerous participation surveys conducted during the past few

years. Evidence from the recent adult education audit which the LEAs have submitted to the DfEE will drive policy to '... give to local authorities the changed duty to contribute to arrangements for provision [of adult education] at local level' (DfEE, 1999a, p60). Unfortunately these figures gleaned from the audit will not reveal their context or background which, to the policy maker, is a key role of qualitative research, '... in providing insights, explanations and theories of social behaviour' (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994, p174).

I would suggest that qualitative and quantitative approaches can have a complementary role. I used a small-scale quantitative survey to sensitise myself to a range of insights and information, and to provide a stimulus which I intended to follow through in more in-depth qualitative work.

The Questionnaire

Widening participation was emphasised by Helena Kennedy (Kennedy, 1997) in her committee's report for the FEFC. People who would not normally participate in post-compulsory education, she said, needed to be attracted back into learning. Learning surveys provided much of the information (McGivney, 1990; Uden, 1994 and 1996; Beinart & Smith, 1997, Campaign for Learning, 1998) about participation and learning needs. In order to justify the local accent to my research I felt it necessary to conduct a small-scale survey in a nearby town to discover more about who was or was not participating and what their learning needs might be.

Before planning the design of the questionnaire, I read the relevant sections of some research manuals. The most appropriate information was found in Judith Bell's (1993) book, possibly because I had attended a lecture of hers on designing questionnaires. In essence, I had to know what information needed to be gleaned, then consider which questions to

ask, how to frame them, and in what order. Lucidity, simplicity and brevity were vital for ensuring completion of sufficient forms, yet ease of analysis of the information had to be considered.

The draft questionnaire was shown to the principal and colleagues who made helpful suggestions about the wording and question order. To encourage completion of the survey forms, a learning voucher worth £50 was to be offered as a prize to an entry 'out of the hat'. This offer of a free course might also have stimulated people to reflect more thoughtfully on their own learning needs. Hence they may have taken a little more care in completing the questionnaire.

Churchtown was to be targeted. This is the nearest town to Seatown and within the Dale Valley, yet comparatively few people participate in adult education. So, this was an opportunity to find out why. I believe that I was careful to follow the advice which applied to the collection of all my primary data that:

... precautions for a researcher are to have thought reflectively about one's sampling and chosen one's site or population in the light of reading already done. (Delamont, 1992, p78)

The double-sided sheet of ten questions was slipped into the free local newspaper, placed in the public library and included as part of the community college's newsletter to parents (see Appendix II).

I had expected more than just 85 responses but this was an adequate and manageable amount of data to work with. The pre-determined categories were analysed as numbers and percentages. This was a laborious task, but I believe this quantitative analysis made an interesting comparison with national surveys. Perhaps the questionnaire might also have raised the profile of adult education in the Dale Valley? The principal, Cecil, disagreed, which exemplifies the complexity of the

research process, as he had hoped for more tangible results from the needs analysis. With a knowing smile Cecil told me:

This was a waste of time. We put on all the courses requested by your respondents, like gardening, yet insufficient numbers of people turned up to allow them to run.

Although this was not my primary purpose for conducting the survey and did not in any way restrict what I, as a researcher, wanted from the survey, it does cast a shadow of doubt on the validity of some of the information received. This was probably partially caused by a flawed questionnaire. For example, I had hoped that the limited selection of choices offered might stimulate fresh ideas for courses from the public. Instead it might have given the false impression of a limited curriculum.

I was disappointed. I decided to treat the survey as a pilot exercise and reflect on the structure of questions and the problems of analysis as a guide for my interview fieldwork later on.

Before I completed any further work on this I was asked by my supervisor to write a summary of the landscape of my research so far.

Defence Paper

This 10,000 word account included a general history and brief policy study of adult education, a synopsis of Hironnelle and its development, a section on methodology, two crucial research questions to be posed and a timetable of fieldwork to be done.

It was beneficial to make myself marshal the information, concepts and ideas, which at times seemed to be an overwhelming miasma of disconnected facts and theories, into a coherent framework. It was good discipline to write in chapters, which I regret not doing more often, and to winnow my thoughts into a clearer direction.

After the final draft was acceptable I met with two experts in the field, and my supervisor, to discuss this 'defence paper'. I had to explain, or defend, my work and the two experts offered advice and opinions about how this could be developed. I taped the hour-long session then painstakingly transcribed it by hand into my research diary using an ordinary tape player - something I would avoid in the future.

Pitfalls were pointed out, for example:

A standard weakness is a feeling that you must do justice to everything you've read. You've got to keep these under control and manipulate them for the purposes of your argument.

I had to select and distil my information more carefully and consider my writing style:

The strength of your thesis is going to rest quite strongly on your narrative sophistication you bring to bear to the historical side you're interested in.

Searching questions about the study and my perspective were also made. Some, like this one, were difficult to answer:

Are we in a big moment of change, or might it just be a different context for the continuity of adult education?

Questions like this made me address my research more critically and highlight areas for development. Fieldwork was also discussed and further references for information given. This was the impulse to begin more detailed planning for the collection of further primary data.

Primary Sources - Interviews

Collection and analysis of primary data was the most satisfying part of my research for two reasons. Firstly, it was my information and not somebody else's research. Secondly, I was able to confirm or challenge my

background theory through this collection of data from other sources - a form of triangulation.

There was a sense of a fresh start as I first considered who I wanted to interview, bearing in mind that:

Critical research begins with and works from the knowledge and skills of the subjects of our research. (Jordan and Yeomans, 1995, p401)

I also had to select carefully because time and space were limited. In order to discover more about policy, planning and their effects, I decided to interview heads of adult education services in several counties, as well as heads of institutions and practitioners within my county. If possible, I wanted to also interview a national policy maker and an inspector from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) which is the body responsible for the inspection of quality assurance in LEA adult education. This was a fair spectrum of people associated with policy but it would provide an exclusively expert view. So, there needed to be more insider accounts:

... one of the basic requirements of critical qualitative research [is] that, where possible, the perspectives of a range of participants should be sought and included in the analysis.
(Gillborn, 1998, p52)

I had to interview students, not only to find out the views of those affected by the policies, but as Gillborn (1998) adds, those in 'subordinate' positions may understand more than their 'superiors'. So, I felt it important to gain insights from perspectives of the learner.

One method would be to select a number of students at random, but I chose a cohesive group of 24 Access to Higher Education students whom I taught. I asked for their views on learning and motivation, as well as on their achievements and goals using questionnaires and informal one-to-

one discussions. In-depth, transcribed interviews were completed with seven students. It was very pleasing that all the students were willing to co-operate with me. Interesting experiences of the pains and pleasures of adult education were recounted, however, as my students were generally unaware of adult education policy matters, their views had limited use in my research.

The heads of service were chosen from neighbouring counties for their proximity. Only one county, Sunflower, was more distant. This was chosen because its Director of Education was previously the Deputy Chief Education Officer of Daisy County. These counties provided, I believe, a sufficiently broad range of structures, management styles and relationships with partners. If this had not been the case I would have continued my investigations in other counties.

I wrote to a selection of administrators, mentioning my work and my research, requesting a taped interview. In the letter I explained how:

Anonymity will be maintained and a transcript of the interview will be sent for your verification. If any part of the interview is written up, then pseudonyms will be used. (Letter. 2. 9, 1998)

These sentences were repeated at the start of each interview and therefore formed the beginning of the transcript. It was essential to gain the trust of my respondents through open, ethical practices in order to allow them to be candid with me.

I was pleasantly surprised to receive five replies, one of whom declined my request as he was new to his post. The other four asked me to telephone their offices to arrange a meeting. Similar procedures followed as I requested more interviews with other people.

After these initial interviews I found information gaps and asked for interviews from people whom I thought might fill them. For example,

two of the community tutors (managers) from community colleges were content in their posts, but one made particular comments about isolation and stress experienced by colleagues. A few weeks later at a county meeting of community tutors, there was an irate outburst from Oswald, a community college tutor: 'My principal is pilfering my budget and no one from County will do anything about it.' (6.1. 1999). When, after the meeting I asked him for an anonymous interview, he exclaimed; 'I don't care who knows.'

One other discontented community tutor, Percy, from a community college was interviewed, so to balance the picture I requested, and was granted, an interview with a community college principal.

A total of 24 people were interviewed, (see Appendix III) 7 of whom were students. There were 11 females and 13 males making a fair gender balance, but 6 of the females were students. The widest age range of 23 - 66 years was within the student group.

Three people who granted me interviews were unable to find a convenient date to meet; one was the lady from Ofsted who had inspected the county adult education service of one of my respondents. Apart from a senior education officer, two others failed to reply. Both of them were community tutors, from community colleges, undergoing disciplinary hearings for alleged financial impropriety. Their silence was disappointing but expected.

From my reading and reflection on existing literature and research, two questions, or areas for investigation were identified and provided the basis for my interview questions (see Appendix IV). These questions were all open questions such as, 'What do you think about...?' Leading questions, which might encourage respondents to answer in a way they thought I wanted, were avoided. I tried to formulate these questions around the

categories from my reading topics for ease of analysis. However, it was quickly apparent that respondents would interpret the question in their own way and often discuss topics from other categories. For example, a question on the adequacy of adult education might contain in the answer comments on funding. A consistent approach in each interview was maintained but questions were slightly tailored for each respondent's situation or post. I had initially aimed for an interview to last for 30 minutes, but the average was 50 minutes long. If the interview extended to more than an hour then some questions would be omitted. Broad questions opened and ended the interview sandwiching more detailed questions in the middle. Subsidiary probing questions were added if needed.

As a trained journalist and through my present work I had experience as an interviewer, but this study required a different technique. Again, I read relevant sections in research manuals but Walford's (1994) **Researching the Powerful in Education** was most useful. For example, simply reading out similar questions to each respondent to maintain uniformity was unsatisfactory:

... it may be necessary for the interviewer to challenge the assumptions of power and take an active part in the structuring of the interview.
(Walford, 1994, p226)

A tactful and courteous yet firm approach would be required. For example, Norbert had already hinted that financial discrepancies in the use of his budget at the community college were causing him problems. Yet, after my first question about funding issues he avoided specific issues. A more direct approach was needed. In my second question I asked him if it had been difficult to obtain funds through the community college. Again he seemed to duck the issue. It was only after my third question on

that topic, when I asked for specific examples, that he divulged his views about budget mismanagement.

Although I tried to maintain control of the interviews, this was not always appropriate. For example, chatty respondents, like Luthor and Ivan, appeared to stray from my line of questioning. Ivan, for instance, was especially fond of recounting conversations in detail. I would usually hesitate from guiding them back by interrupting their flow in case they revealed a nugget of information which would otherwise be lost.

All the administrators interviewed were kind and pleasant. Three came to see me, the others I visited at their offices, or, in one case at home. I was quickly put at my ease at the beginning of each interview, although I was conscious of appearing alert but relaxed. I would remind myself of the advice that the interview becomes:

... an encounter in which both parties behave as though they are of equal status for its duration, whether or not this is actually so.

(Fontana and Frey, 1998, p47)

During the interview I read my questions and probed with others, making no notes that might distract or inhibit the respondent; I simply relied on the tape recorder. As soon as possible afterwards I would note down details of anything significant including the mood of the respondent, any surprising reactions, and comments made before and after the interview. For example, after my first interview I noted in my research diary:

After the interview was over she accused herself of being bad tempered and inarticulate... Her bad temper was very mild but this shows that I don't know her very well. Possibly I touched a raw nerve of a feeling of helplessness stuck in a man's world of County Hall away from the action. On the other hand, I think she relished the opportunity to discuss the passions and frustrations of AE [adult education]. (Agnes - 9.10. 1998)

This is an extract from a page of comments completed after each interview to assist putting the respondent's replies into context.

Using an audio-typing tape machine with a foot pedal control and headphones, I transcribed all these interviews myself into my computer. Each transcription took approximately six times longer than the length of the interview; therefore if the interview lasted one hour, the transcription would take about six hours. After that each transcription would be read while listening to the tape. Reasonable touch-typing ability was a boon.

Pains were taken to ensure accuracy. However, with the exception of occasional chuckles (which I indicated with [laughter]), I recorded neither tone or register of voice nor pauses. Instead I relied on my post-interview notes. These were often appended after listening to the tape two or more times for intonation, underlying meanings, or any point that I should follow up or clarify.

Aware that the respondents had allowed me to use their time to extract their ideas, I wanted to treat those transcripts with the respect and dignity they deserved. Therefore it was with some discomfort that I read:

When you are transcribing, it is important to write the actual words spoken by your informants however repetitive, slangy or ungrammatical.
(Riley, 1990, p.25)

By transcribing from the spoken word to the written word I had already made assumptions about the punctuation, which is an essential element for revealing meaning. Through exercising this role I believed it pointless to expose some of the warts of everyday speech and indulged myself in an occasional hint of cosmetic enhancement without altering the precision of the text. The instances when this happened were as follows:

- A full stop was put where the sentence was left hanging;
- Redundant words like 'actually' or empty hooks such as 'you

- know' which were frequently repeated were sometimes omitted;
- Luthor launched himself into a long analogy about how learning was like a good meal. The feast was described in lip-smacking detail. An ellipsis was inserted and the three courses were excised;
 - Slips of the tongue were not uncommon. For example, Marmaduke was discussing the foundation of village colleges by Henry Morris, but he called him William - who was the artist and poet. I was not quick enough to correct him on tape but allowed him to say 'Henry' in the transcript.

By making these occasional minor alterations, I let my respondents maintain their dignity. Also, many of them, some of whom I work for, could have withdrawn their goodwill, from me and subsequent researchers if they perceived themselves as foolish from the transcript.

In doing this I have tiptoed along a narrow ledge of veracity where I could easily have slipped and stumbled into the mire of tampering and fundamentally changing the meaning. Walford (1994) had nothing to say on this matter so I raised the problem at our research student seminar group. An interesting discussion ensued where it transpired that I had overestimated my respondents' vanity and underestimated their sense of humour. In the future I will be even more wary of straying from Riley's dictum.

A letter of thanks was sent to every respondent with a clean transcript copy for them to verify or amend if they wished. Just four of them were returned. Three of them included typographical errors and minor amendments where the meaning was not quite what they had intended. Doris, an Open College Network Administrator, included a closely typed three-page letter beginning, 'Dear Phil, There are moments of sheer hell in

everyone's life.' She explained what a wearing time it had been before the interview, near the end of the day, and clarified what she had intended to say.

Data Analysis of Interviews

It was now time to analyse the interviews in more detail. All the interview transcripts were kept in a large file on the inside cover of which I wrote down most of the major categories already used in the secondary sources, drawing a different coloured bar by each one. The purpose of this was to draw a coloured line under the section of speech which corresponded to that category. As I read, I made comments in the margin on further thoughts and connections to other categories. After analysing 15 transcripts in this way it was obvious that unless I cut the extracts and collated them into their separate colours, the categories would still be dispersed. As some excerpts referred to more than one category, this analytical classification would be unsatisfactory. I had, I thought, carefully structured the questions so that they could easily be classified for analysis. However, my respondents' replies often ranged over several categories for a single question. For instance, if I asked a question about partners, the reply might also mention student participation and the problems of 'adequacy' of the service. This data analysis method was abandoned.

I had read about two other methods in Vulliamy and Webb (1992). The first was 'cognitive mapping' which was summarising the interviewee's ideas in diagrammatic form. The second was 'dilemma analysis' seeking out key themes by identifying dilemmas. The first idea sounded too unwieldy but the second I incorporated in a broader approach.

I bought a new card index box. On the reverse of the alphabetical index cards I wrote the category titles, for example, FUNDING, FEFC, LIFELONG

LEARNING, and so on. Again, I read through the transcripts. When a topic or category was discussed the quote, or gist of it if lengthy, was written on the appropriate index card. As a reference, the initials of the respondent and the page number of the transcript was written by the quote. Therefore, if I used a quote by John Smith from page 5 of his transcript, then JS 5 would be written by it.

Occasionally I had a further meeting with, or made a telephone call to, one of the respondents. Notes from our discussion were taken and added to this analysis, along with comments, thoughts and links to other categories. Other sources such as letters, and notes from conferences and meetings were categorised within the secondary sources. It was important to keep my respondents' views separate from other voices.

Analysis of Secondary Sources

By this time several extra shelves had been added to my work room at home to accommodate the increase in books and files; journals were placed in separate magazine boxes. Occupying the spare corner was another filing cabinet with further wallet files of information from organisations associated with adult education. Although I had tried to control this information by notetaking, highlighting, diary entries and classification, the quantity made me anxious, mainly because I was beginning to forget what I had already read and written.

Analysis consisted of grappling with key issues, extracting tensions and concepts, searching for negative instances of hypotheses already formed, forging links between theories and practice, refining data and constantly driving the argument forwards. This process is aptly described as:

... one of interrogating the data for relevant material according to criteria of relevance which are themselves only developed during the process of analysis. (Turner, 1994, p209)

A careful distillation of data was needed. My concertina file had each sleeve labelled with a different category. Using a cutting board and scalpel only pithy quotes and notes were inserted. If additional notes were added then that piece of data would be glued to a sheet of paper. This long and arduous process continued until I had analysed all my notes, photocopies and journals. It was essential to relegate surplus information, to refresh my understanding and to stimulate new insights. However, a further refinement was made to each major category by creating sub-categories to form a more intricate web of strands linking hypotheses and concepts. For example, the major category of Local Education Authorities had its data sub-divided into labelled plastic pockets. These labels like 'challenge and change', 'structure', 'systems', and 'emasculatation' arose from this process and further notes were made.

Writing

Unlike quantitative work, which can carry its meaning in its tables and summaries, qualitative work depends upon people's reading it...
Qualitative research has to be read, not scanned; its meaning is in the reading. (Richardson, 1998, p346)

This encapsulates the importance of writing which has to be meaningful, clear and interesting. How do I create a text which is gripping and has vitality? Richardson (1998) suggests that this can be achieved by treating writing as a method of discovery and analysis. By writing down ideas that had been swirling around my mind, whether in prose or as a diagram, either crystallised the concept, or highlighted errors or holes I had not spotted.

Research textbooks, such as Riley (1990) stress the importance of regular writing of sections throughout the research period.

It is fatal to leave output writing until the data

collection and analysis are completed and vital to write as you go along. (Delamont, 1992, p52)

I cannot entirely concur with this suggestion. Although I did write a considerable amount as I went along, which was essential, there was still plenty of output writing to do once data collection and analysis was completed.

However, the stage before final writing is planning. For this I used a mapping technique requiring a large sheet of paper around A2 size; an end of a wallpaper roll would do. I stuck this on my cutting board and wrote the title of the section or chapter in the middle with related sub-headings scattered over the rest of the sheet. Notes, bits of quotes, the essence of theories and concepts from each category or sub-category already analysed were jotted below each heading. When the process was complete I scrutinised the plan and added any further links. By being able to see all the relevant data on one topic, it was easier to visualise a coherent writing plan. Numbers were appended to each sub-heading in order of writing to form a logical and cohesive map for the writing strategy.

I always write in pencil on a narrow lined A4 pad, skipping every other line. Pencil is easy to erase, additional notes can be written between the lines and there is space for arrows to insert an extra example or paragraph. It is proof read for clarity then typed onto the word processor. What appears as a smooth and seamless process from my description is in practice awkward, jerky and complicated. References need to be checked, quotes require carefully blending into the text, a clear path needs to run through the writing. I have attempted to use sub-headings as signposts with occasional reminders of where we have been and the terrain to come, and even indications of where I got lost. Only by reading and re-reading the text written can I construct extra stiles, or linking sentences, to join two

footpaths, or themes. By walking to and fro over the landscape, the journey can be checked for clarity and interest.

I found it amusing and helpful to think in metaphors because, 'Metaphor is the backbone to social science writing', (Richardson, 1998, p351). However, she warns a little later that metaphor usage has become so familiar that, '... they can do partisan work in the guise of neutrality, passing as literal' (p352). This could be true of the unwary reader, but metaphors can clarify a complex concept and they will soon begin to breakdown if over elaborated. Bridge building was the metaphorical image that Shaw (1994) uses effectively to describe the writing process where a solid structure with a network of connecting girders is built.

Whichever metaphor guided my writing, I had to ensure that I was the construction worker on that bridge or that hiker on the track; I had to be in the centre of that process. This is because:

The downplaying of the self as a writer is a crucial aspect of the neglect or outright denial of the importance of reflexivity in research.
(Usher et. al., 1997, p216)

This indicates the prominence self-reflection should have in the research account, however reflexivity is more than that:

Reflexivity in research is built on an acknowledgement of the ideological and historical power dominant forms of inquiry exert over the researcher and the researched.
(Shacklock and Smyth, 1998, p6)

It is through this acknowledgement of this exerted power that the researcher, according to Shacklock and Smyth (1998) can, by possessing critical knowledge of the research process, be empowered to identify and transform the limitations in it. They say that reflexivity is an element of ethical maturity and honesty in the research process. This may include

compromises and acknowledgement of some things that cannot be done.

Social and educational researchers agree that the unveiling of the research process is a good thing, states Troyna (1994), for two reasons:

- (i) it aids the socialisation of the neophyte researcher;
- (ii) it corrects the opinion of the researcher as a mere technician.

So, a straightforward definition may be that:

Reflexivity operates on the basis of a dialectic between the researcher, the research process and its product. (Jordan and Yeomans, 1995, p394)

For me the forum for this dialectic is my research diary. It is here that I can talk to myself about the process and the product, and slowly my written voice has evolved. I felt awkward and self-conscious at first whilst writing fairly superficial commentary on my progress:

I feel quite excited about this project especially as there are so few papers in this field. Things are looking good. I need to work steadily, read avidly and note all references. (21.11.95)

Nevertheless, comments like this reminder and the noting of milestones in the research process and product provided great buoyancy when I felt that I was sinking under a deluge of disjointed information.

Gradually as I became less sensitive to the diary as a link between private thoughts and public research, I used it not only to note down my own and other people's thoughts, but to reflect on them as well. For example:

Could AE [adult education] actually be enhancing class distinction? Participation surveys show that few in the lowest socio-economic groups (D and E) ever join in. Therefore, are the middle classes by taking advantage of AE actually widening the gap between those socio-economic groups who participate least? (16. 2. 98)

By transferring ideas like these from my notebook, often after

discussions at a research seminar, conference, or with colleagues, it encourages me stop and look around the landscape of my research. At this point I can begin to make connections with diverse ideas and perhaps wander across terrain I would not normally traverse. For example:

Just thinking about broadcasters. In the 1990 Broadcasting Act, the duty to provide educational programmes was removed. But, FEDA [Further Education Development Agency] wants broadcasters more involved in changing the learning culture. This notion accepts the powerful influence of broadcasters. Perhaps they could combat the feminisation of AE? It seems okay for women to learn - 70% of learners are female. Men probably choose to learn in less formal settings. Could broadcasters change the image of AE for men to make it more acceptable? (11. 7. 98)

As confidence in the worth of my diary increased, I would add diagrams of funding streams, for example, mull over thoughts from meetings and begin to be more playful in my writing. For example, here I rehearsed a metaphorical description of data analysis by planning a structure on a large sheet of paper:

This is the second major distillation of data where a blend of information is added to make connections under various sub-headings and the refinement of more focused questions. This distillation process, as in the production of any fine spirit, involves selecting the finest and most appropriate ingredients. It involves asking questions. How does this information bolster the argument? Does it add a counterbalance? Will it make a connection to another area of discussion? And so on. By constantly being aware of this cohesion and coherence, the final product, with many elements such as colour, clarity and zest, should be smooth with no awkward flavours. I think this metaphor is breaking down. I prefer the landscape analogy. (12. 8. 99)

So, above all, the value of my research diary has been to create a pool of

ideas. Theories can be skimmed across, concepts can be tossed in, the ripples observed, and reflections can be carefully considered.

Conclusion

I have described the development and progress of this research project from my initial curiosity through to the final stages of writing about my findings. During the period of my research there have been some policy reversals as well as eventful reports, consultations, proposals and legislation. Initially it was clear to me that the impact of the 1992 FHE Act would be central to my investigations. However, I was aware of the importance of following interesting trails and investigating pathways. Sometimes these led to a broad terrain, rich in varied information. Other tracks pursued occasionally ended abruptly. Therefore, my early studies were consciously somewhat haphazard.

After amassing a certain amount of secondary data, I realised after careful investigation that critical social research was the approach I would use for my analysis. As the term 'critical' was ambiguous, I ensured my understanding of its precise meaning in this context. Critical analysis entailed not only interrogating the veracity of my information but also analysing its source and any possible motives of the writer or speaker.

My own partiality or lack of neutrality was another problem which I had to address by being open and ethical about my stance. However, there were no perceived difficulties at my being both an employee and a researcher. The management of the Hironnelle Centre was encouraging and supportive. County Hall administrators were co-operative but otherwise lacked interest in my research.

Nevertheless, practices are changing, according to Delamont (1997) who suggests that in the present postmodern era there are fuzzy borders

between, for example, the researcher and the research. Some of these overlaps do occur in my roles as tutor, administrator, manager and researcher, as well as the different expectations of the products of my investigation between me and my employer, the Hironnelle principal. I must remain conscious of these fuzzy borders and prevent any unheeded intrusion of them into the conduct or product of my research.

A pilot study of a local participation survey was attempted and analysed. It was a useful, if flawed, exercise - particularly in preparation for my interview fieldwork - but the investigation bore little relevance to my subsequent research questions. So, although I presented no quantitative data of my own, the qualitative research I was undertaking would rest, I was told when presenting my Defence Paper, on the sophistication of my narrative writing.

Before this I had to categorise carefully and analyse all my primary and secondary data, applying techniques adapted from research literature. This process, rather than being a tidy linear exercise, was jumbled, perplexing and often exasperating. These struggles and any successes were annotated in my research diary along with miscellaneous thoughts, reminders and playful attempts at writing styles. In this diary I was able to rehearse my writing 'voice'.

It is on this basis of reflexivity and adaptability which I will attempt to account critically for my research. I have just described certain research theories and processes, now in the following two chapters, the products of my predominantly primary research, through interviews, are revealed. At the same time I will compare and contrast my respondents' views with each other and with concepts from secondary data in the literature. In the next chapter I intend to show how the diverse county administrative structures are related to the variety and quality of provision for learners.

The relationship between LEA structure and its adult education provision.

Introduction

The range, variety and purposes of adult education were discussed in the previous chapters on the History of Adult Education and the Hironnelle Centre. Now I would like to consider how the structures of LEAs are presently related to their provision.

A recent review of LEA services reported that most (56 out of 63 LEAs) had adult education within their education departments. Other departments identified as having this responsibility were Community Benefits and Rights, Performance and Standards, Leisure and Community Services and Cultural Services (Sims and Blenkinsop, 1998). In another survey of local authorities by the Campaign for Learning, one question asked for the title of officers who would receive information about lifelong learning. Chief Education Officer/Director of Education scored 50 per cent with Head of Adult Education at 24 per cent; it continued:

A number of titles are particularly interesting:
Economic Development Officer, Policy Review
Manager, Head of Leisure Services, Chief
Neighbourhood Resources Officer.

(Lucas et. al., 1999, p.9)

Although these surveys show the diverse administrative interpretations of adult education within local authorities, unfortunately they did not quantify adult education as a specific service or the number of authorities which amalgamated it within another department. Should there be a specific, autonomous adult education service, or is it better combined with other services?

Within the chosen structure what is the most effective form of

management? Three different structures were apparent in the five counties I studied. These were:

1. all management decisions are taken in County Hall;
2. power is devolved to area managers; or
3. each institutional provider is given a budget and semi-autonomy.

What part had been played by the most important factor in adult education - funding? Local authorities in Britain spent an estimated £123,299,000 on adult education in 1997 - 1998 (Cara, 1999). A number of questions can be raised and in terms of this analysis the following are important:

- What influence, if any, has this funding had on these services and structures?
- Conversely, how have the different models responded to obtaining finance?
- How have the different LEAs responded to government requirements to produce an audit of adult learning and to devise a Lifelong Learning Development Plan?

I will look at each one of these in turn.

The administrative arrangements of LEA adult education in some counties

I interviewed education managers from five counties. A single head of service was interviewed in each of Cowslip, Daffodil and Snowdrop Counties. The Director of Education and an Area Manager were met in Sunflower County. In Daisy County, the Head of Lifelong Learning, the Adult Education Co-ordinator, a retired Area Community Education Officer, a community college principal and five managers of adult education were interviewed. I also met with Head of an Adult Education

Policy Team at the DfEE. A full list of interview respondents is in Appendix III.

Daisy County has a Head of Lifelong Learning, Marmaduke who reports to the Director of Education, supervising community education, libraries, museums and the arts. The Senior Community Education Officer declined my request to be interviewed but her assistant, Agnes, responsible for adult education, acceded:

County, for me, means run centrally and with some sort of accountability directly back to the centre. We've got 27 different units with 27 different governing bodies who are charged with locally relevant curricula and not a lot of comparison between them. So, to call it a county service would be difficult.

All these centres, or units, should provide Daisy County's definition of community education which entails adult education, youth work and family education. Many centres are run by just one Community Education Tutor (manager) responsible for all three services. Community Education Area Managers formed a tier of administration between County Hall and principals of adult centres or community colleges until they were all made redundant after reorganisation of Daisy County local authority in 1997. The lack of coherence described by Agnes was vigorously defended by the Head of Lifelong Learning, Marmaduke:

Do you wish to have a semi-autonomous point of delivery where you have freedom of decision and operation, or do you wish to be centrally controlled? If your desire is to have one unit for the whole of the county then you are also signing up to being centrally controlled. If you wish to have the right to interpret community education in your geographical area, then the disadvantage, if you like, that comes along with that is there isn't a mechanism that allows us to voluntarily have all those organisations together.

The present semi-autonomous system in Daisy County, as I will argue, lacks the support required from County Hall. As Marmaduke quite rightly emphasises, this structure allows freedom to adapt community education to suit the needs of the locality. Yet he maintains that central control would prevent this. If this is so, then surely a more flexible county administrative structure could be developed? Marmaduke's arguments for Daisy County's loose structure can be applied to LEA adult education nationally:

... by not having a strong system there has been flexibility in adult education but, at the same time, the lack of a single system has resulted in uneven provision across the country. (Elsdon, 1994, p321)

By contrast, Sunflower County, with a higher population than Daisy County, retained area management with a broader remit but tighter control. Finbar, Area Manager for Community Services, explained:

We have combined libraries, youth service and adult education into a single managerial unit and I would say politically of those three services, adult education has the lowest priority.

Despite this inferior status of adult education Finbar was proud of Sunflower County having what he described as 'a very considerable infrastructure' including:

... 23 free-standing, dedicated, adult education centres. Buildings, that is, not institutes in the organisational sense, but dedicated buildings for adult education.

Surprisingly, I was soon to discover that many of these buildings were to be sold to raise finance and restructure provision in Sunflower County.

Hector is the Snowdrop County Community Education Officer who reports to the Deputy Director of Education. He explained about the distinctions in his service:

Snowdrop County took the decision in 1990 that to respond to the needs of young people there should be a discrete service... It is budgeted separately and has its own management structure... I don't know if it's unique but it's unusual actually to have a Youth Service and a Community Education Service.

It is a telling approach to separating the services that the effect of a discrete youth service on the rest of Community Education was not discussed. I believe that this is another example of adult education's low status which is related to the fact that Hector began his career as youth worker and therefore he favours the Youth Service. I will return to this point shortly.

A meeting was being held immediately after our interview, Hector explained, between:

... the senior management team, the youth service and the community education senior management team to take stock of where we are in our respective services and how we could be working more collaboratively within the county council. [We will be] looking at common areas of interest: the 19 to 25 age group where you can argue that the youth service and the community education both have a core responsibility to look at the needs of that particular age group.

Hector told me that after a recent meeting with the Snowdrop County Lifelong Learning Board, Family Learning was separated as a key area from Adult Learning. The three other areas forming the Community Education Service were the Arts, Sports Development, and Play and Young People's Activities. As a recent National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) report confirmed:

Snowdrop County's Education Service aims to integrate all aspects of educational provision into lifelong learning. (Capey, 1999, p11)

However, despite this array of services the bias is towards youth work, as Hector explained:

So, a number of our community education centres run large programmes like non-vocational provision aimed at young people as opposed to adults.

Nevertheless, a complex web of community education activity was staffed by Hector in what seemed a comparatively simple way:

We have moved towards a system of 23 full-time Community Education Co-ordinators geographically covering the whole of the county, based very often in community schools which tend to be based in the larger towns... Those co-ordinators have a responsibility to organise an Adult Learning programme as well as a programme of Family Learning and other elements of community education which would be defined as such in Snowdrop County.

This system of organisation of adult education within the Snowdrop Community Education Service extended to actually providing adult learning opportunities in rural areas only. Hector clarified this:

... we still have a very good relationship with the FE colleges so that in the larger towns we still contract with them to organise non-vocational adult education.

Hector gave the impression of being a dynamic and knowledgeable manager of a highly structured service which was flexible enough to adapt to past changes and those to come. His area community education co-ordinators, however, appeared to concentrate on youth work with adult education filling in the gaps in provision outside towns. Again, as in Sunflower County, adult education seemed to be less favoured than family learning and youth work within a general community education service.

Ivan described himself as Head of Adult and Continuing Education in

Daffodil Education Authority. I wanted to discover more about the advantages, if any, of a discrete adult education service.

Phil: Some LEAs call themselves County Adult Education Services and some call themselves Community Education Services. So some have a more holistic approach and some have a more specific approach to adult education. What is appropriate in Daffodil County?

Ivan: Yes. What's in a name?

After this evasive reply I sought some clarification.

Phil: So within Adult Education is there Family Learning and Parent Learning?

Ivan: Yes. We were running family literacy schemes last summer. We haven't done a vast amount of work in that area. We do training for pre-school playgroups. Family literacy - we have not got heavily into that. As I said earlier, there are good things to be taught by other authorities. This is one of the things I am sure we can learn.

I was hoping for more detailed answers, particularly from someone so voluble. This was an occasion when I felt my questioning technique should have been more focussed and forthright. He did, however, reveal a robust management style in the shaping of an administrative structure for adult education in Daffodil County.

... we had a £400,000 overspend that I inherited, after making all the cuts I could with one determined aim - not to cut provision to the public. Protecting that but making savings in all sorts of other directions, which we duly did, we actually came up to a point where there were no obvious ways we could go apart from actually moving staff. Because I knew the structure of the existing service well, there was a whole tier of staff who were the area principals, as they were called, of the nine areas of Daffodil County. We effectively lost nine area principals in a single go. They were acting as filters between the staff... We went straight from people who were assistants to these principals, to them running the service locally and they reported directly to central staff. This was missing out a whole tier of management, a very costly tier of

management, needless to say, but the information flowed that much more quickly... That structure has served us exceedingly well. The large growth since 1995 is quite staggering, it's just going up and up and up. Whereas quite clearly these other people had their own particular agendas and were not really adding value to the organisation, is the quickest way of putting it.

In my post-interview notes I wrote: 'Hector seemed an open and jolly man - obviously powerful, who likes to be in charge of his domain.' Now, restructuring the national framework for post-16 education to excise layers of bureaucracy, in order to save £50 million is the proposed strategy of the present government (DfEE, 1999a).

Could a champion for adult education, like Ivan as the head of a specific adult education service, be more effective than an officer for a more general community service, like Hector? Or, does a specific adult education service lack the co-operation required between the different LEA departments or the coherence needed across the whole local authority? I asked Edna of the Adult Education Policy Team at the DfEE if she had any performance indicators on the two structures - specific or general:

No. You are raising an interesting point. I think it is going to be one more point for our audit... I suspect that the very basic indicators that we have, and we only have the two sets that we use very commonly: one is the amount of expenditure and one is the participation. I suspect you could draw inferences from that.

Since that interview an Adult Education Audit has been published (Audit Commission, 1999) with the two indicators that Edna mentioned, but the structures of the 150 LEAs were not indicated.

The fifth and final county I visited was Cowslip County where I met Kelvin, Head of the County Adult Education Service, which was a part-time post. I asked him if there were advantages to being a specific service

for adult education rather than a general community education service.

I don't think structure is that important. In the previous job I was responsible for the Youth Service, the Adult Service, Careers and all of the others as well, and ensured that they all talked to one another. I felt that there is considerable strength in having an advocate for each service. I think that the danger when you put them all together is that whoever ends up as being Head of the Community Education Service, if that person is an adult educator then the Youth Service may get a rough deal out of it.

This point was made more graphically by Cecil, principal of the Hironnelle adult education centre in Daisy County. He described a situation in the Community Education service which he called the 'Holistic Chain of Ignorance'. Here the line of generic managers, from a community institution to County Hall, might all have a background in the youth service yet would have to deal in a specialism, like adult education. If none had suitable experience, chaos could result.

Boundaries of adult education are not always easy to define. The ages of the learners, their purposes for learning, and the content of provision can overlap into more traditionally designated sectors of training, youth work, social work and health care. Broad experience must be advantageous for any adult education manager, but so must a clear focus on adult education. As Cecil insisted, 'Lack of specialist knowledge could impose mediocrity on the system'.

I talked to Percy, the sole community education tutor (manager) in charge of all three specialisms - adult education, youth work and family education, at a small community college in Daisy County. Percy was under pressure:

I think we need more leadership and ideas from County. To leave Adult tutors in the centre to pick up on every new idea that comes out from County, government or where; it's just too much. We need

- you know we cannot cope with the amount of paperwork, new ideas that are coming in all the time. We need somebody sifting through, sorting out and then supporting. There is a lot in an area like this.

Lack of leadership from Daisy County Hall was frustrating for small providers faced with a range of tasks alone. Percy was in a community college where the principal was his line manager. This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter on partnerships.

Similarly, like Percy, Oswald was a community education tutor at a small community college in Daisy County. A Youth Worker used to help him, but that post disappeared in the 1992 re-organisation. Now Oswald manages all three specialisms, but with a large budget deficit he was now worried about the viability of his own job:

... if you look at the Community Education budget then the most expensive commodity is me. So if you get rid of me you make a huge dent in the deficit. But who is going to run the show? The assumption is that you just get two or three secretaries who are paid a pittance to run the show. What's that going to do for your Adult Education? Who is going to negotiate the curriculum? Who is going to decide when dealing with other agencies what the priorities are?

Percy's fear of losing his job was quite justified when compared to what was happening nationally:

Some LAs [local authorities] have kept community education sections while some have sacked outright all staff in education departments.
(Duman, 1999, p131)

Perhaps an alternative to struggling alone under pressure would be to form a supportive cluster with neighbouring providers where collective tasks could be shared.

Putting aside this aspect of County Hall administration, I asked various

managers within Daisy County if they preferred the existing community education structure or a separate specific service for adult education. I went to visit Luthor, the retired Area Manager for East Daisy Community Education. He told me:

I'm all in favour of specialisms but I am not in favour of separating out different services because you end up with too many people who are in charge of their particular specialism and you go away from collaboration rather than promoting it... Communities are amazingly important. I think adult learning has got its contribution to make there too. Which is why I wouldn't have a separate adult education service. I would keep it as a whole Community Education.

Again, it is only in the larger providing organisations where specialist managers can be employed within Daisy County Community Education Service. Norbert is just such a community education tutor (manager) with specific responsibility for adult education at a large community college. Like Luthor, he preferred the existing broad structure in Daisy County for its potential to embrace the whole community:

At this present state of play, I would feel that community education would be safer - adult, youth and family and the other bits - would be safer under a county umbrella. On the holistic or community model, in fact, what we are doing already with our collaboration with libraries and so on. It has a lot to be said for it because people in the town are much more likely to feel that it belongs to them and also, inevitably, it's the busy who get things done. You're likely to come across the same people on the various committees that deal with the various facets of the whole presentation. That is a great strength because the best thing one has in this job, the best thing one's likely to have, is the recognition and support of the actual clientele and the potential clientele.

So, a broad community service is likely to attract and involve a greater variety and volume of participants. On the other hand, Jocasta, an

assistant principal at a community college discussed the advantages of a holistic service from the perspective of the tutors:

...there are quite close overlaps between activities [in a community education service] and there are some part-time staff who work for us who have a range, if you like. So they are quite capable of doing youth work/family work/adult work. I think those people are particularly useful in widening participation type of adult education... The model or the structure has facilitated that overlap and that development which if it had been in a discrete service then it wouldn't have been quite so possible to do.

Staff who have the ability to deal comfortably with a broad cross-section of the public and who have a wide knowledge of the service are a great asset. However, it is most unusual to employ a tutor, leader or teacher to deal with participants across the range of services. To comply with quality assurance indicators, these staff would need to be suitably qualified in each discipline. But, in small rural institutions these multi-skilled tutors may be necessary.

There seemed to be a general agreement within Daisy County that a community education service was the preferred model to a specific adult education structure. I think many would agree with the Head of Lifelong Learning, Marmaduke:

Community education is about the community and it's about a natural integration between formal education and youth work and adult education and community activities and even the political aspirations of the community. Sometimes, I think, by putting specific labels on, although I know we have to, there's a danger that we put them in cart tracks.

At the same time, however, many agreed with Percy's opinion that more leadership and support, by the providers, from County Hall was needed. In the other four counties, structures related to urban and rural

situations, staffing, historical measures and funding regimes. The proclivities of heads of services and institution managers, however, appeared to be the most important factor.

Whether the structure is a specific service for adults or general community education, a champion for adult education is an advantage. This is particularly so in a community education service, as in Daisy, Sunflower and Snowdrop counties where adult education could have a low priority. When a review on the shape of future funding of the post-16 sector was announced, Lifelong Learning minister, George Mudie, urged a NIACE conference to ensure that the government developed a coherent strategy for community learning, as:

... the failure to explore policy links between adult, youth and community development policy weakens common voices.

(Mudie, quoted by Tuckett, 1999f, p3)

The complexity of these links and patterns of provision offered would have formed elements in the White Paper (DfEE, 1999a) which proposed drastic reforms to post-16 funding structures.

An additional element is the style of management chosen. For example, the degree of control and/or support from County Hall could be gauged by the type of programme brochure (listings of adult education courses) published. Daffodil County produces just one county-wide brochure. Snowdrop, Sunflower and Cowslip counties publish a brochure for each of their geographical management areas - ranging from four to eight. Daisy County, on the other hand, expects each of its 27 providing institutions to produce its own brochure. This, I believe, demonstrates a spectrum from tight autocratic control in Daffodil County, a less centralised control being delegated to areas in Snowdrop, Sunflower and Cowslip counties, and finally the loose, semi-autonomous provision in

Daisy County. (See Figure 8 on the next page.)

Does Daisy County epitomise a model where providers have been allowed the freedom to creatively adapt themselves to local conditions within a rapidly changing regime? Or, does it show that compared with the other counties which have a more refined management structure, Daisy County providers have lacked guidance required from the centre?

In order to explore this issue further, more information is required, particularly about funding.

Funding

Perhaps the most convincing test of the political commitment to education and training is whether it is regarded as a cost to be contained or as a social investment, and on this the evidence for the former has been overwhelming.

(Esland, 1996, p44)

A dynamic realist of a manager like Ivan of Daffodil County would agree with this, but not by simply accepting that costs are to be contained, rather by seeking funds from outside of the LEA's 12 per cent contribution to his adult education service. Ivan added that his service is:

... to a large extent independent of the county council. In very many ways we don't consider ourselves to be an LEA service, although quite clearly we are.

The notion that LEA adult education should be a self-supporting leisure activity rather than a publicly funded service was a policy shift noted more than 20 years ago (Mee and Wiltshire, 1978). Soon after the present Labour Government came to power it recognised adult education also as a social investment.

Comparison of adult education services within different county structures

County	Management Structure	Type of service	Distribution of LEA 'leisure' provision
Daisy	27 semi-autonomous institutions managed by the Head of Lifelong Learning reporting to Director of Education	Community Ed. - adult ed., youth work and family learning	County-wide
Cowslip	Single head of Adult Service with limited area delegation	Adult Education Service	Rural areas
Snowdrop	Area Community Services reporting to Director of Ed.	Adult and family learning linked to Youth Service	Rural areas
Sunflower	Area Community Services reporting to Deputy Director of Ed.	Community Ed. - libraries, adult ed. and youth work	County-wide
Daffodil	Single head of Adult Service - centralised organisation, reporting to Director of Ed.	Adult Education Service	County-wide

Figure 8

David Blunkett [Secretary of State for Education] has promised an extra £150 million for adult education... [he will] ensure that this money is spent in ways that show how the 'learning society' is as much a social goal as an economic necessity.
(Martin and Shaw, 1997, p11)

Legislation will soon end the Schedule 2 (academic and vocational courses financed by the FEFC) and non-Schedule 2 ('leisure' courses supported by the LEA and fees) division of funding. The Schedule 2 courses are nationally funded by FEFC's set tariffs. The non-Schedule 2 funding from the LEAs is arbitrary and usually at a much lower rate. A central government Education and Employment Select Committee recently agreed:

... the FEFC has to prioritise funding and we believe it should favour the key areas we have identified. Non-vocational courses can be funded from other sources, eg local authorities, and by students themselves. (HoC, 1998, para. 87)

Whether from internal political pressure, or lobbying by NIACE, the WEA and community education providers, it took just one year for the same committee to change its mind:

... there is a good argument for funding some kinds of community-based learning which may not lead to qualifications but which can contribute to personal self-confidence, social inclusion and the rebuilding of local communities.
(HoC, 1999, para. 91)

Whichever influences prompted the change of heart, this notion has had a long gestation period, after the need to invest massively in lifelong learning was urged in two major national enquiries - Social Justice Commission (1994) and National Commission on Education (1993). As Head of Adult Education in Cowslip County, Kelvin, explained the financial problems:

I think the biggest frustration, going back to

something I said earlier, is uncertainty about what one's level of funding is going to be for next year; who is going to change this? I think adult education needs a period of stability to build up its confidence.

Ann Risman, the principal of Richmond Adult and Community College, the largest of its kind in the country, warned that day and evening classes could collapse unless local authorities stopped reducing funds and raising fees:

It has to be top priority for the Government to address this problem. History shows that local authorities cannot be relied on to subsidise courses.
(Risman quoted by Tysome, 1998, p19)

This idea was extended by Daisy County community education tutor, Jocasta:

I don't think the LEA considers carefully enough the amount of funding that is required and I think that there has been a feeling, certainly over the years that I have been here, by some county councillors that adult education could actually generate its own income which is a dreadful way to look at adult education.

Within the LEAs' 'leisure courses' (non-Schedule 2) for adults, reliance for funding has rested on fees. Ivan of Daffodil County suggested that adult education should be free like the library service. Jocasta agrees:

... my ideal would be high quality adult education available free of charge. I think this is something that a caring community and country should provide for its people.

In contrast, Bell (1996) argues that fees from customers are a natural characteristic for a sector which always was, and will be, in a marketplace. However, if Ranson's (1994) statement, that markets advantage those with already existing resources, is accepted then it is surprising that a survey showed that people would be happy to have adult education course fees

raised. It revealed that there was:

... agreement across all social classes, among current participants and non-participants, rich and poor, old and young, that the taxpayer should be asked to bear a smaller share of the cost of study, and that individuals and their employers should pay more.
(NIACE/MORI, 1994, p2)

This presents adult education managers with a dilemma. Raising the cost of courses might bring in more funds, but as Daisy County community education tutor, Oswald, lamented: 'Of course, you know that by putting your prices up you are actually putting barriers up for some people.' This fact is well documented:

Fees for participation have been raised by such a large multiple of general inflation that it has now been priced beyond the reach of all but the well-off on the one hand and the conspicuously deprived (e.g. the unemployed) on the other. The majority of the population falls between these two groups, and has disappeared from adult education.

(Elsdon, 1994, p327)

Finbar, from a fairly wealthy county, agreed that adult education was serving two ends of the economic and social spectrum, however he told me:

We have the highest fees in the country, as far as I am aware. Certainly they are high and most people in Sunflower County are able and willing to pay. But, as you say, no doubt there are many middle-income people who are not able or willing to pay yet they do not qualify for the very inexpensive courses.

Yet these high fees, despite creating barriers to participation, did not compensate for the budget reductions. In fact, Godfrey, the Director of Education for Sunflower County told me that because of his frustrations with relentless cuts, he was taking drastic action:

... we are incredibly fortunate if you look at the number of centres of libraries, adult and youth. A

very rich pattern but one which has hardly changed in 30 or 40 years which is why we become very attached to those buildings. What we are doing, our conviction, is to try and persuade the Sunflower public that we want not only to maintain but to improve a number of those services but to offer them in very, very different ways. The opportunity is there through getting out of some of these expensive buildings, through using old building stock much more wisely and getting a lot more out of information and communications technology. So we really are wanting to bite on this bullet and have a reorganisation of the network of centres so that we don't have to return to this year on year with the associated demoralisation of the services.

This sell off of buildings in Sunflower County was made even more poignant when Ivan, of Daffodil County wistfully exclaimed: 'I feel we could do so much more if we had some more real estate.'

Godfrey described how the government grant (Standard Spending Assessment or SSA) for Sunflower County, which would be increased that year by £20 million, was divided into various blocks. The whole increase, he told me, was to be absorbed by schools. Godfrey added:

... there is actually a reduction in the other education block of about £1.5 million; and what is in that other education? Youth service, adult education, music, performing arts; the frustration is that all of these are the lifeblood of the communities. The total dissonance between what is being said to be a national priority and what is actually being delivered and the battle that we have, and we had, here is for survival at a time when we have been reducing budgets quite dramatically. The battle I think is to convince people.

These cuts and the subsequent sale of adult education buildings were lamented in the press:

Despite clear signals that local education authority adult education is a statutory duty to which Government attaches importance, Sunflower County, for example, is gaily planning to decimate

public support for its service. (Tuckett, 1999e, p32)

The problem here is that local politicians believe that their statutory duty to 'secure adequate provision' for adult education is in fact discretionary. Even an Audit Commission report misleadingly stated, 'Local Councils have no statutory duty to provide these adult education programmes', (Audit Commission, 1999, p43). Additionally, as the term 'adequate' has never been defined, some authorities can justify spending little on adult education. Moreover, the SSA is not hypothecated, or ring-fenced, for an adult education fund, instead it can be spent at the local authorities' discretion. Agnes of Daisy County clarified this point:

We've got an awful lot of roads and that may well rob the budget for adult education because there are uncomfortable choices to make... So, not only do we have to repair the potholes but we have to sand and grit the roads in bad weather. So those choices about what we use our money for - well, uhm - what would people like? Would they like a class or would they like their road repaired?

Even these 'uncomfortable choices' are more difficult than they appear after duties associated with securing adequate provision of adult education were detailed in a guidance report for LEAs:

For institutions other than schools that they maintain or assist, LEAs also have a duty to keep under review the quality of education provided, the educational standards achieved and whether the financial resources made available are managed efficiently. (DfEE, 1998e, para. 10)

Within Daisy County Community Education Service an average of 28 per cent of funding is received from the LEA (DCC, 1999a). This renders the service fairly reliant on the SSA passed from the central government to the local authority and therefore sensitive to financial cuts. This is a national problem which also stems from the 1992 FHE Act when academic

and vocational courses (Schedule 2) were withdrawn from LEAs jurisdiction.

The Government took the view that it was up to the LEAs to decide how best to use their assessment [SSA]. For this reason and also because the LEAs has lost much of their vocational work which had previously offered an opportunity to cross-subsidise other adult education, this residual provision was even more vulnerable than before.

(Fieldhouse, 1996a, p105)

Therefore it is essential that those powerful government voices supporting lifelong learning are heard in County Halls so that local politicians will be advocates for adult education. Otherwise, does finance for the service have to reach a minimum level below which county council members fear voters' opposition? This situation exists in Daffodil County, as Ivan explains:

It has got to the point now that for each hour of tuition, the LEA puts in £2.50. Now it doesn't take a genius to work out that on a 40 hour, two term course you will save £100. So each two term course you save £100, so ten two terms courses you will save £1,000. Well £1,000 is not worth saving, you will want at least £10,000. So you are talking about ... 100 classes dropping from the programme. Now 100 classes is about 1,200 people, and 1,200 people make an awful lot of noise when they get upset. In consequence I have only got to say, "Well if you want to save £10,000 you are going to have 1,200 people writing to you." The immediate reaction is, "We can't do that," so they back off.

It is a shameful situation when adult education finances can be protected only when further cuts might cause trouble for local politicians. The link between local politics and national education policy is unlikely to be decoupled. However, probably because adult education has such a low priority within local authorities, the government is withdrawing the remaining financial control for post-16 education (apart from sixth forms)

from LEAs.

LEA expenditure on adult education also varies from 50p to £24.50 per head of population between counties (DfEE, 1999f) and this, 'current spending amounts to... half of what it was five years ago', (DfEE, 1999a, para.7.31). Reflecting this, enrolments declined by 16 per cent in three years (Mudie, 1998). As Edna of the DfEE commented:

Yes, it has been very unfortunate that we continue to see a decline in expenditure and that is a great concern for me. It is something that I will be keeping an eye on over the next six to twelve months and thinking what are the arrangements that should exist.

Funding for adult education is a tiny proportion of the LEA education budget. For example, in Gloucestershire, a fairly typical shire county, 0.8 per cent of the education budget is spent on adult education (Buffton, 1998). Even these small funds are vulnerable to cuts if County Councillors choose to protect the schools' budget. As Ivan explained, 'This usually means that efficiency savings have to come out of the other services.' The fears expressed during the debate on the 1992 Further and Higher Education Bill have come true in that the:

... LEA use (or misuse) of their standard spending assessments was endangering the future of LEA adult education. (Fieldhouse, 1996a, p106)

To avoid bankruptcy of their service, adult education managers, whether in semi-autonomous adult education centres or heads of service, have used various strategies to become less reliant on LEA funding. They have: passed on their non-Schedule 2 courses (leisure) to FE colleges, accredited existing recreational courses to attract FEFC funding, franchised their Schedule 2 programme, sold infrastructure, made successful bids for projects, sacked staff, raised fees and reduced unprofitable parts of the

programme. This resulted in a national trend where, 'Overall specific adult education enrolments have fallen, as has direct spending,' (DfEE, 2000a, p30). Crisis management is clearly not succeeding.

In Daisy County where the budget is apportioned for community education, Agnes, of County Hall told me how adult education may have a lower priority than the youth service. In this case it has little to do with the manager's specialism, rather the nature of the participants. Agnes explained:

... money doesn't necessarily get to what is quite an under-represented, quiet group of people who are busy getting on with their housework, or busy getting on with their lowly-paid jobs and wouldn't argue for their fair share of resources in quite the same way as we look at youths sitting on street corners being a nuisance.

In addition to possibly receiving a lower share of the community education budget than the youth service or family education, adult education funds can subsidise youth work. Reginald, principal of a Daisy County community college, admitted, 'We're actually slowly shifting our budget across to Youth because we recognise a need there.' Similarly, Jocasta, a community education tutor told me:

Money that has been generated from what has been primarily adult activity has actually gone to prop up and support and develop the youth service.

Percy, another Daisy County community education tutor, believed that because adult education generated money, then this finance was transferred to other areas apart from the youth service. This could be avoided if adult education were a discrete service, Percy stated:

I think it needs to be split because I can see that... as well as the school using Adult Education as a funding source, then Youth has done and can do - use Adult Education as a funding source.

There is only one solution to this problem as far as Jocasta is concerned, she told me that the LEAs had to meet the challenges of attracting more funding. When I asked Edna of the DfEE what she thought was a challenge for LEA adult education, she also agreed that it was finance:

... dealing with government funding streams. This is an area of clear concern. My own personal view is that over time we will start to see new ways developing and emerging. I feel sure of that... I think that what we are seeing is this extraordinary sort of melting pot of different strands of funding and different responsibilities within a framework that actually looks fairly rigid.

Apart from the LEA block grant (SSA), funding is not passively given to institutions. Instead, different sources of finance have to be actively sought, often in competition with other providers. Edna was aware that a single, simpler funding framework needed to be developed. However, as she explains later, she did not foresee the merging of funds from the FEFC, TECs and LEAs to be distributed by a new Learning and Skills Council, which should be more effective than the present system. An NFER review of LEA adult education discussed this range of funding sources which also includes ESF (European Social Fund) and SRB (Single Regeneration Budget).

This situation draws into question how far such multi-sourcing can be an efficient and effective use of public resources. For example, to what extent does it lead to well-targeted, coherent adult education, or is there evidence of overlaps and gaps in provision? (Sims and Blenkinsop, 1998, p10)

Rather than be concerned about this possibly uneven provision or the lack of targeting, the problems associated with actually attracting these funds were uppermost in the minds of the managers I spoke to. I asked Kelvin of Cowslip County Adult Education Service about funding streams. He had already told me that he received £1.2 million from the

FEFC then he listed figures from the top of his head:

Cowslip County Council puts in, in this current year, exactly £600,000. Then we get tuition fee income. We get some money from Europe, bits here and there. We get some money from the Basic Skills Agency for our basic skills work, and other bits of money. So, we end up with an overall turnover of just over £3 million.

By comparison in Daisy County with its 27 semi-autonomous community education providers, Agnes of County Hall gave an almost panic-struck reaction to funding streams:

So, you have a core business, you have a core budget and then you put alongside that bits of money and I think the size one has to be in order to not go totally nutty in those circumstances if you have core budget from Daisy County Council, FEFC money, which is nothing, ESF [European Social Fund], you could have SRB [Single Regeneration Budget], you could have Rural Challenge. I mean, you could have five or six major pieces of money coming in, all of which was going to benefit the locality. They're all different audit trails, they're all different evaluation frameworks, they're all different management expectations. It's a nightmare in terms of accountancy yet it's all work that can benefit a locality. So, I think on the whole, we do miss a lot of tricks. I think as an LEA, as a county council, we miss a lot of tricks because we ought to have project management up there.

The disappointment in her voice was palpable. In my post-interview notes I wrote, 'Gradually as the interview proceeded Agnes relaxed and became a little outspoken revealing... frustration about important decisions being made in what she called "a closed club of men in suits"'. Agnes appeared to believe that she was in a post of responsibility that lacked the power she needed.

Kelvin, as the head of a discrete county service, calmly had figures at his fingertips. In contrast, for Agnes the system was a 'nightmare' which

she seemed unable to control. She admits herself that the loose Daisy LEA management structure, which devolves financial responsibility to providers, is failing to attract some funding. This conclusion was confirmed by Edna of the DfEE who stated:

The best local authorities put in the time and energy to put in the bids and get the money. Over the longer term, hopefully it won't be like that, but in reality it is like that.

I had asked about funds in all interviews, with some answers more detailed than others. For example during the brisk interview in Snowdrop County, Hector knew exactly how much the LEA was receiving from FEFC funds, but we did not discuss bids. To the managers in other counties I asked:

Phil: How do you approach bids for funds, say, from the Single Regeneration Budget, TECs [Training and Enterprise Councils], the Adult and Community Learning Fund or the £9 million released by the Standards Funds? Is there some co-ordination within your service, or is it done by each provider?

Finbar: It's a mixture. Some things are done by the whole LEA... One of the assistant directors of education co-ordinates funds across the whole education and community services department for things that are regarded as a whole department priority. Others are still done for the whole adult education service, the community services by one officer acting on behalf of all four areas - we have four managerial areas in community services. So, an example there would be European Social Fund money for Returners to Work. So we would nominate someone who would pull together a bid on behalf of all four and then, if all our areas provide, they would have to get all of our information back to claim our money. Still other bids are single provider and others again are beyond the LEA. A very significant grouping at the moment is what's called the Joint FE Planning Group which is all the college principals that is: the 7 sixth forms, the four FE colleges, together with a number of senior officers of the county council. The director of education chairs the meeting and one of his assistant directors, who is the head of community services, is a member and one or two other officers. They, for example, are bidding for some of that new money that you described for putting together lifelong learning plans... So, it's a mixture.

It was impressive to hear not only that a fairly complex system was working throughout the Sunflower local authority, but also that Finbar had a comprehensive understanding of it. A similar response came from the Head of Adult Education in Daffodil County.

Ivan: We identify opportunities and we seek to find partners to bid with if it's a partnership type bid, otherwise we go direct. We talk to people at the TEC; if it's SRB it's a partnership bid inevitably. What happens is that one of the senior managers gets involved in meeting one of the other people involved in the project and decides what we can do or what we are able to contribute and then the bid gets written and off it goes... Essentially where we see an opportunity we talk to the other people who could potentially be partners and formulate a bid then somebody writes the bid.

Phil: So you have a co-ordinated team, do you?

Ivan: ... It is very much a network activity. We do have co-ordination meetings across the county which brings together the major providers.

The opportunistic, almost entrepreneurial, nature of these composite bids clearly brought Ivan much pleasure. I was particularly aware that he enjoyed his autonomy yet he was happy to enter into partnerships.

The Head of Adult Education at Cowslip County had a more relaxed approach to bidding.

Phil: Do you co-ordinate bids, or do you let centres just get on with it?

Kelvin: It depends. The answer is that we do both. I require always to be told if any centre wants to pursue anything, primarily to ensure that we don't have one of our centres competing against another, or two centres putting in bids for virtually the same thing to an external body. So that if there was an interest in more than one centre, I would co-ordinate it... We run basic education throughout the county and we have a principal who is responsible for basic education. I have said to her, because none of our other centres do any basic education, it is all done through her service. She could pursue whatever funding she likes for that purpose and is incredibly successful in doing so. So we only co-ordinate it when it is necessary to co-ordinate it. The last thing we want to do is to stifle anyone's initiative, but equally we don't want the nonsense I have described of centre H. putting in a bid and our F. centre also putting in a bid and somebody sitting in [regional office] saying, "What on

earth is this? Don't know their left hand from right hand!" I wouldn't let that happen.

These four counties dealt with bids in different ways yet all were apparently co-ordinated and organised in their approach. In these counties I spoke to just one senior manager associated with adult education, with the exception of Sunflower County where I also interviewed the Director of Education. By contrast, in Daisy County I talked to two administrators in County Hall as well as supervisors of various providing institutions throughout the county. Thus, a more detailed and possibly more accurate picture of the situation could be drawn here. I will start with the Head of Lifelong Learning, Marmaduke, whom I asked about bidding arrangements.

Marmaduke: It is very difficult to get your head round it all, isn't it? But what we've created here as well is a bidding team. Now it's far too small but it is absolutely invaluable. So there is a bidding team and that bidding team therefore will assist other sections to access funding and to prepare the bids for funding. What you can also do is to buy in the team if you so wish... You probably know that the bidding team produces regularly the Daisy Funding News [a bi-monthly bulletin of grants and contacts] and that is an attempt, we may not have got it all right, but it's an attempt to take some of the headache out of the local units as well.

When Marmaduke referred to 'headache' it was about trying to relieve the pressure from providing institutions attempting to bid. His tone and language denoted a view of bidding which was problematical - a stark contrast to the reactions of the managers in the other counties. Agnes, despite admitting earlier to difficulties in coping with various funding streams, was not entirely in agreement with her boss. In addition, the bidding team he mentioned, according to Agnes, had been abandoned before Marmaduke took his post.

Phil: Yes, how do you as an LEA approach bidding for these funds?

Agnes: Well, there has been a bidding structure within the county council and I was seconded into a bidding team two years

ago to basically chase funds and we were reasonably successful at it.
... the bidding team hasn't been in existence since.

Phil: How do you bid for these funds if you don't have a team doing it? How are you going to access these funds?

Agnes: On the whole individual places will bid, so it is self-determinism which isn't terribly useful.

Phil: Is there any advantage to co-ordinating bids, do you feel, then?

Agnes: I think there is in that you build up expertise and I think you have to learn how to write bids... I don't think we've got bidding right, because the other issue for me is that bidding is a piece of cake; getting money in is a piece of cake. The issue is managing the budgets there after.

So, although Daisy Funding News details news of grants to bid for, there is no funding team which Marmaduke believes still existed. Agnes is convinced from her experience that bidding is a 'piece of cake' yet each of the 27 providing institutions have to bid individually. I wondered if managers enjoyed this autonomy. The principal of a community college, Reginald, voiced a common opinion amongst providers: 'The bid culture is fraught with difficulties and wasted energy.' A similar point was made by Cecil, the principal of the Hironnelle centre: 'One of the great problems of bids is that you spend a lot of time getting your bids together.'

Oswald, sole community education tutor at a small community college, has to satisfy the school governing body who are responsible for his finances:

I often say to governors, "Look, I've got application fatigue from fund raising." They all sort of look at me and I'll say, "You know I'm pumping out these applications left, right and centre and it's gruelling." Because often your success rate is ten per cent or less, and that demotivates you.

An adult education manager at a larger community college, Norbert,

suggested some solutions when I asked him how he approached bidding:

Well, with great difficulty because bidding has become a specialised skill of its own and here again on a county level we ought to have something smart going on here because there is that chap... who is a funding expert. He should have a little department, with a couple of girls (sic) in there, whatever, who write submissions everyday for their work. That would be a superb economy of time and effort because a submission written by a total amateur, like myself, has an 80 per cent chance of failure. Whereas a submission written by somebody who is in the environment and knows the jargon and has not only written them before but has read many others, has got an 80 per cent chance of success.

None shared Agnes's opinion about the ease of bidding. This suggests a worrying lack of contact by her with the institutions, also an inability to seize the advantages of being part of a network within the adult education system she is employed to co-ordinate. As a NIACE briefing paper on local authorities stated:

Being part of a local authority has meant access to funding streams outside education and to closer working with economic development departments, social services, housing departments, libraries, and museums, giving added value to quite small amounts involved in direct funding for adult education. (Cara, 1999, p2)

This rather rosy picture of money gently flowing between local authority departments was not apparent in any of the counties that I investigated even though four of the counties appeared to be fairly well co-ordinated.

The most important source of external funding has been from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) which was conceived by the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act.

The Aftermath of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act

The FEFC was created in April 1993 by the FHE Act. This legislation split the post-16 curriculum into two areas. The first area was academic and vocational courses, with adult basic education, forming the Schedule 2 list funded by the FEFC. The other area was, so called, 'leisure courses for adults' (non-Schedule 2) to be the responsibility of the LEAs. This curriculum divide is vividly described by a Workers' Educational Association (WEA) tutor:

Schedule 2 qualifies you for training and work.
Non-Schedule 2 provides quality of life, the very
stuff of life itself. (Howard, 1998, p29)

Additionally, FE colleges, having been removed from LEA control, were incorporated into an FE sector. Only colleges within this sector could access funds directly from the FEFC. Other providers of Schedule 2 courses have had to form an alliance with an FE sector college which then passes on FEFC funds. The nature of these alliances will be explored in the next chapter, but the effects of this legislation on LEA structure and funding will be looked at now.

Although I discussed FEFC matters in each of the counties visited, figures were not requested specifically but most volunteered these funding statistics.

Ivan of Daffodil County said:

At the moment we have got exactly a 50:50 split.
When we started FEFC work in 1993 it was 38 per
cent FEFC work. We don't see it moving
significantly from that.

The increase in FEFC-funded Schedule 2 work reflects not only a higher rate of remuneration than for LEA-funded non-Schedule 2 courses, but also the slightly more reliable source.

Kelvin of Cowslip County told me that he receives about £1.3 million

from the FEFC, amounting to 35 per cent of adult education income. Finbar and Godfrey of Sunflower County were more concerned with budget cuts than funds, but 20 per cent of their adult education income came from the FEFC (The Lecturer, 1999). Hector of Snowdrop County says he receives between £500,000 - £600,000 from the FEFC.

Neither Agnes nor Marmaduke of Daisy County would have known these figures due to the semi-autonomous structure of providers. However, a later audit of each of the 27 LEA providers of adult education in Daisy County showed that FEFC income varied from zero, in one institution, to £150,000 at the Hironnelle Centre. The Daisy County average was just under £50,000, which extrapolates to an FEFC income similar to Cowslip County.

I spoke with some Daisy County institution managers about the significance of FEFC funding. Jocasta explained:

After the FEFC funding, for the first time we have had some money. It sounds so awful really, it sounds as though we are chasing courses just to get the money, but I think it has to be said that we are, because we realise that enables us to do so much more and to improve the quality of our facilities, resources and provision. I think that has accounted for some of the growth in numbers. We have not changed courses deliberately, we have more looked at other opportunities for expansion... So the breakdown of our figures is approximately 30 per cent of our enrolments are FEFC funded and 70 per cent are non-FEFC.

The FEFC funded courses therefore provided a higher finance tariff than non-Schedule 2 ('leisure' courses). This deliberate policy of the state was generally interpreted as:

... an insistence that the curriculum should be related to paid work rather than the development of the whole person. (Challis, 1998, p28)

And this was generously financed by the government:

Perhaps the biggest fillip to adult participation in vocational and academic education followed the 1992 FHE Act when the Government agreed to fund an increase of 25 per cent in the numbers taking programmes funded through the FEFC... The new opportunities have, overwhelmingly benefited adults, who now comprise three in four of the FE student body. (Tuckett, 1997, p8)

Surplus cash from the Schedule 2 courses enabled providers to cross-subsidise recreational courses and improve the facilities in their institutions. This mildly subversive reaction to government statutes became official policy in Daisy County:

Adult education has responded to the funding opportunities available within the FE sector by increasing the number of courses associated with vocational and accredited forms of learning. As other budgets have become squeezed 'non-vocational' adult education learning has been supported through fees or cross-subsidy.

(DCC, 1999b. para. 1.5.3.)

Reginald, the community college principal, was not only enjoying the extra money but also the creative freedom that entailed, although there were disadvantages:

And we find now the FEFC funding methodology is – well, the paperwork's a damn nuisance but we know where we are and we know how to target it and in a way we are using that very creatively to get what we think the town needs.

However, what was a 'damn nuisance' for the head of a huge institution was simply impossible for a sole community education manager like Oswald who complained, '... we didn't have the staff to come to terms with the bureaucracy.'

Other county heads made no comment about administering these funds, but then this would have been done centrally or in a few areas, rather than in every single institution as in Daisy County. I asked Agnes about

the possibility of alleviating this workload by restructuring the Daisy County adult education. She answered:

... uhm, I think it's too little too late. I think in 1992 we had an opportunity to run things centrally and to keep hold of the negotiating machinery.

The chairman of the Hironnelle Centre management committee wrote to the then Director of Education for Daisy County asking him to co-ordinate bids to the FEFC from all county adult education providers:

My management committee would like to suggest, or support the view if it is already under consideration, that the LEA makes a composite bid to the relevant Funding Council on behalf of all Centres under its control. (Letter, 29. 11. 1991)

Although this was written almost 18 months before the FEFC began operating, nothing was done. The point was reiterated by an institution manager, Norbert:

In fact from the outset of FEFC there ought to have been far more mutuality between the centres and the authority, both on what the changes meant on actually affecting the thinking and decision making inside the FEFC and on the straight practical matter of obtaining funding. Whereas, as we know, there was none. Everybody was reinventing the wheel all over the place and in a state of bewilderment and dismay. This went on for years.

Cecil, principal of the Hironnelle Centre, took the argument of centralisation a stage further. Instead of LEA institutions having to obtain FEFC funds through an FE sector college:

LEAs ought to be able to negotiate directly with the FEFC on behalf of their institutions... I can see no reason why an LEA should not be treated as if it was an FE sector college.

When I suggested this alternative structure to Finbar of Sunflower County, he was not entirely enthusiastic:

That would certainly solve the problems of

relationships and inequitable funding. It wouldn't solve the problems of competition and I do think that there is a serious problem with competition.

This is true, but it is hoped that through government intervention, competition will be reduced by encouraging collaboration and partnerships. Notwithstanding competition, if it could settle relationships between LEA institutions and FE colleges as well as equalise funding - which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter - surely it would be a good policy? Therefore, I asked Edna of the DfEE policy team if she had considered this.

Phil: Do you feel that the LEAs should have responsibility to obtain funds directly from FEFC for the Schedule 2 work that they do?

Edna: Don't they already?

Phil: No, they have to go through a sector college.

Edna: Ah, right. Well, I really don't know enough about the mechanisms to comment on that. I know there are issues about the external institutions and about the relationship with the FEFC but I don't know enough about how that works.

Even though Edna explained that she had been in post for just six months, her candid admittance of ignorance about a crucial policy concept initially surprised me. On reflection however, this is possibly a revealing insight of how policy details might be contracted out to experts, leaving DfEE officials to devise the broader initiatives. Others may have a less accommodating attitude:

... what is the kind of knowledge needed by policy makers? There are several levels of knowledge which are relevant. They are: knowledge directly relevant to macro-decisions, on the overall objectives and structure of the system; and knowledge concerning the processes and outcomes of work at practitioner level. In between, there are several intermediate kinds of knowledge, for example, about the ways in which local authorities

or governing bodies work. We could add to these concerns evaluation of the efficacy of government.
(Kogan, 1999, p15)

Problems of knowing and understanding policy changes is not restricted to central government. How different counties coped with the impending policy changes in 1992, the most dramatic upheaval of adult education in the 90-year history of the LEAs, was described by Cecil of the Daisy County Hironnelle Centre. A series of briefing meetings were held throughout the country, however, as Cecil recalls:

[Daisy] County Officers did not attend such meetings... They had abdicated their responsibility at an early stage and as a result you would get in any of these meetings about a dozen people from Daisy County institutions all looking totally shocked and bewildered. Meanwhile there would be a chap in a smart suit and a briefcase with glasses on the end of his nose, notebook in hand, looking completely on the ball, nodding his head sagely. This was the chap from Daffodil County, Ivan.

Cecil did admit, however, that institutional strength could arise from this seemingly haphazard structure in Daisy County:

If that is done for you and you are spoonfed, it may well be that overall you don't get as high a quality as if the people who are having to do it for themselves. Daisy County didn't sit down and think that out... Out of that policy vacuum there may have emerged street-wise, sharp adult educationalists working at unit level, whereas the same thing may not have happened in Daffodil and Cowslip Counties.

These 'street-wise, sharp' unit managers of Daisy County are likely to have emerged only from the larger institutions where they could delegate their duties. As a retired area manager of community education in Daisy County, Luthor, succinctly argued:

...there needs to be more support from the local authority. Perhaps there needs to be an officer, a person, who is there as the FEFC source of

information, advice, help, a calculator, know the best way.

Clearly this occurs in all the counties investigated except Daisy County. Agnes recognised some problems with the lack of central support in Daisy County:

The difficulty now is that we tend to get engulfed when it goes wrong and the places that are okay don't want anything to do with the LEA. Autonomy is good in the good years...

This statement was echoed by Jocasta from the perspective of manager of a providing institution:

I think that has been a source of stress to a lot of my colleagues. I think that they expected that the LEA would help with this and feel most let down that such help was not forthcoming.

Apart from these bureaucratic difficulties in obtaining FEFC funding, no consensus of opinions was expressed about the curriculum divide and the marginalisation of LEA adult education. Cecil, principal of the Hironnelle Centre in Daisy County, believed that:

The challenge for LEAs is to convince the government that the division in the curriculum, the adult education curriculum, between Schedule 2 and non-Schedule 2 is false. It shouldn't be too difficult to do that, everybody knows it's daft.

During the passage of the Further and Higher Education Bill, an Education Minister was already admitting the value of non-Schedule 2 ('leisure') courses from which funding was being withdrawn.

... many students will go from these courses into the basic tree of progression for which the Funding Councils are responsible. (Eggar, 1991, p1)

Statements like this, argues Bradley (1997), suggest that policy implications of dividing the curriculum between valued academic and

vocational courses, and neglected 'leisure' courses had not been fully considered. The time for changes is long overdue.

A real alternative is to shift public policy emphatically away from education and training for UK plc towards education and training for a democratic society, in which political, social and cultural activity is given the same status as activity in the labour market. (Jackson, 1995, p193)

Luthor, the retired area community education officer for Daisy County agreed, although he misunderstood a basic fact:

All learning is equally important. The whole Schedule 2 and non-Schedule 2 bit made one set of adult learning more important than the other set in lots of people's eyes. There are lots of people who work hard to make sure that doesn't happen and therefore there isn't a divide amongst people. They don't see a divide at all. The divide is only with the providers rather than the people who receive what we are providing.

His sentiments may be difficult to disagree with, yet not even within Schedule 2 provision does all learning have equal value; there are FEFC funding tariffs. More highly valued courses receive higher rates of funding. He rightly emphasised how providers try to conceal the complications of the Schedule 2/non-Schedule 2 split from students. I asked Edna of the DfEE what she thought ought to be done about this curriculum divide:

I don't get the feeling that ministers intend, or want to at the present time, to change the structure that we have... I could certainly say to you that they have other legislative priorities apart from anything else. And I think, in many ways, what we can see is that there have been some very positive things to flow from the 1992 legislation. It hasn't been all bad.

Edna was advocating the status quo just seven months before the Learning to Succeed White Paper (DfEE, 1999a) proposed the demise of the

FEFC and the end of the Schedule 2/non-Schedule 2 divide. Can drastic policy changes be made this quickly, or were recalcitrant ministers eventually persuaded to alter their opinions by overwhelming evidence from the field?

When I asked if this curriculum divide should be removed, Kelvin of Cowslip County affirmed:

If anyone could afford to do it then the answer is yes, definitely. It's a nonsense. We do everything within our power to pretend that it doesn't exist... I'd be delighted if it would go, but I'm not sure how they are going to do it.

This is a clear example of a finance-led curriculum which perches on an adult education tradition of learner-led approaches. Opposition to this curriculum divide highlights the problems of favouring qualifications above a broad definition of learning:

For policy makers, it raises new questions about the link between qualifications, funding and public accountability: how to value learning outside the system without bringing it inside; how to measure diversity without constraining it by definition; how to publicly value learning without measuring it; how to fund learning which they cannot measure; how to distinguish between measuring learning and counting qualifications. (Davies, P., 1999, p18)

The doubt about how the divide could be removed was expressed by Percy, sole manager of a providing institution in Daisy County:

You make your money on the Schedule 2 courses, not from the students but from the money that you get... from the FEFC.

In order to capitalise on FEFC funding, 'leisure' courses can be accredited through the National Open College Network or validated through an examining body like RSA or City & Guilds. As Reginald, principal of a community college in Daisy County, explained with some

hyperbole:

There was quite a bit of game playing, wasn't there, too? You could make, I don't know, Raffia Making into a GCSE subject and claim the units, and this sort of thing.

Next, however, students must be persuaded to undergo assessments or sit an examination for a course which they might be attending purely for pleasure. This is where Kelvin of Cowslip County admitted a blemish on an otherwise exemplary inspection report:

Like many people, we abused it, if we were honest. We started to move some courses out of non-Schedule 2 into Schedule 2 purely to get the FEFC money. I know that Ofsted picked this up, quite rightly, when they talked to some of the students who said, "We don't really want to do this but they made us do it."

Increasing government sponsored Schedule 2 courses, and therefore persuading students to take them, had been officially sanctioned in Daisy County policy (DCC, 1999c) and probably in many LEAs throughout the country. However, this tactic and its associated discourse is unlikely to foster a learning culture.

The language of defined learning outcomes, particularly when linked to funding regimes, is not altogether helpful in promoting lifelong learning. Indeed, it may encourage the thought that lifelong learning is a life sentence from which there is no escape: 'you shall learn this because otherwise my college won't get its funding units!'

(Payne, 1999, p11)

Despite the complicated funding intertwined with these curriculum manipulations, the managers of adult education in Sunflower, Snowdrop and Daffodil Counties were happy for the legislation to remain. Hector of Snowdrop County believed that he had achieved a comfortable balance in providing the divided curriculum:

... there is a need to recognise strengths and weaknesses and I can understand the argument for FE colleges saying that they ought to be doing all the FEFC-funded work and the LEA should be doing the non-Schedule 2.

Ivan of Daffodil County expressed his approval of the curriculum divide through his entrepreneurial zeal:

I believe a wider portfolio is a bit like betting on a stock market, shall we say. It is better to have shares in two companies than a share in one company. If one company goes down you have still got something else... I don't think there would be any great advantage to bring it all together at all. All I can see is potential disadvantages.

Finbar of Sunflower County produced the most comprehensive reasoning for not abandoning the division:

I am a very unusual adult educator in thinking that I wouldn't like it to happen and I do see logic in it. I was very unusual in seeing sense in the White Paper that preceded the 1992 FHE Act. Personally, I do see differences in structured learning which is designed to lead to a qualification and learning that is not, that is essentially learner centred. I think there is a great deal of sense in capitalising on the adult education traditions of learner centred education of a negotiated curriculum, teaching between equals as it was sometimes described. I don't think that the Schedule 2 education is easily provided in that way. So, first of all I don't think it is a particularly desirable thing to combine. I think they are valuable in their own rights, Schedule 2 and the non-Schedule 2. Regrettably, funding and political priority has not been associated in recent years with non-Schedule 2 or non-vocational adult education. I think that is the biggest difficulty and that is probably why a lot of professionals, misguidedly in my view, have tried to push the two together and shoe-horn non-vocational curriculum into the Schedule 2 format. Personally I think it has been a damaging process.

A fundamental cause of trying to 'shoe-horn' liberal adult education

into an academic and vocational regime is precisely this lack of funding. It is also about a lack of recognition for what most LEA adult educators consider is vital work. As a NIACE briefing paper argues:

Local authority officers would see what they offer as ... a lifeline in rural communities; as providing for older people with little interest in progression, as helping to regenerate communities, and as a first safe step into learning for the many whom education has not been a joyful or encouraging experience. (Cara, 1999, p1)

In addition, the government's Lifelong Learning Targets for 2002 (NACETT,1999) envisage a reduction of non-learners by seven per cent. Most of these potential learners are likely to be attracted by recreational, unaccredited courses. Therefore, secure and equitable funding must be provided. I believe this is why the curriculum divide is being removed from the statute books. Nevertheless, many have agreed with Finbar, Ivan and Hector that the curriculum divide has some merit.

Yet the White Paper *Learning to Succeed* announced the scrapping of the Schedule 2/non-Schedule 2 curriculum division. However before publishing the proposal, the government needed to know the nature and quantity of adult education being provided by local authorities. An audit was instigated in 1999.

Audit of Adult Education in Local Authorities

This audit was initially proposed by the first Fryer report (Fryer, 1997) and then recommended in the subsequent *Learning Age Green Paper* (DfEE, 1998b). I asked Edna of the DfEE to tell me more about it:

One of the issues that we will definitely want to ask our contractors to consider in framing the questionnaire is any long-term information needs that we may develop as a result of using this audit... We must not forget that the local authorities job is only to secure it. So I think that we are going to be looking to the audit to start to

give us a better idea of what sort of questions... we might be asking local authorities. This might give us a better feel, not just for the quantity of provision they are offering but the quality.

Some of my respondents told me of the good things they thought would be revealed by the audit. Agnes of Daisy County said of the advantages:

Oh, I think we'd argue richness and diversity. I mean, that's the flipside of adequacy, that everywhere is responsible for developing its own local curriculum so, you know, we can uniquely focus in on the needs of Little Piddleworth as opposed to Widemouth.

Beryl, a Daisy County community education tutor at a community college, viewed the audit as a vehicle for promoting the value of adult education:

I think we do well with the students we get. I think we are quite poor on blowing our own trumpets sometimes and saying how well we are doing.

The Head of Lifelong Learning for Daisy County, Marmaduke, unwittingly added:

It will also make sure that we know precisely in Daisy County what is there on the ground, because even though we have reasonable intelligence, I would have to say to you that we could improve on that, and I look forward to the audit from that point of view.

Should a compulsory national audit be the incentive for a head of service to discover what adult education provision exists? Adult education managers from the other four counties were more proactive. Hector of Snowdrop County was proud to rise above the challenge of an audit:

Snowdrop County have put themselves forward for a more detailed survey of adult learning provision because I think it is important that we go

beyond the purely easily quantifiable adult learning. So we have a very sophisticated management information system which will do a very accurate track of all of our enrolments in both Schedule 2 and non-Schedule 2 adult learning. It'll do a breakdown into gender and age groups, and also it will do a breakdown in terms of people with learning difficulties and so on. So in terms of pluses, what we will be able to demonstrate, because we can also do post code analysis, is that we are reaching into each of the communities in the county. So adult education, adult learning as we prefer to call it, in Snowdrop County, is accessible to all people and it isn't simply in certain concentrations around large towns.

A similarly bold embrace of the forthcoming audit was taken up by Ivan of Daffodil County:

I have personally offered my services as a pilot if they wish to get involved, because I do collect an awful lot of statistical data.

Finbar of Sunflower County already knew what the audit would reveal:

One of the obvious things would be the great variation in volume, in quality and the sheer differences in different parts of the country, I'd guess... I think that will be a finding of the Adult Education Audit, and of course the negative side of that is that people won't like to see this, and the positive side is that maybe people can do something about it.

Kelvin of Cowslip County was also hopeful of the audit's use, although he was wary about the effectiveness of the questionnaire:

The forms [AE1] that have been used so far to collect information by the DfEE, the November returns, and so on, are totally inadequate. I hope that a comprehensive audit will be able to illustrate quite clearly what there is. The plus side then, of course, is that we should be able to make some comparison. This is what lots of people are looking for. I know quite clearly what we are doing in Cowslip County. I don't know if we are offering as

much or as little even as our neighbouring authority, Daisy or Snowdrop Counties.

This comparison between local authorities would indicate the nature of the uneven provision across the country. Jocasta, assistant community college principal in Daisy County, expressed similar concerns to Kelvin about the paperwork:

We have in Daisy County a budget for community education which includes adult, youth, family and community development work... it is actually quite difficult to disaggregate an aggregated budget... I would have to question its accuracy as all these things often done in a hurry by overworked staff leads to a debate about how accurate they are.

Cecil did enter into this debate and questioned Marmaduke, Head of Lifelong Learning in Daisy County, about the accuracy of the data in the audit (Audit Commission, 1999). Daisy County had emerged as the LEA which spent most per head of population on adult education of all local authorities in England. In his letter of reply Marmaduke explained discrepancies in the calculations. As might be expected, the usefulness of the audit data had a mixed response in Daisy County. Oswald, community education tutor, enthused:

... the audit would highlight success in terms of curriculum development because I genuinely think that not enough people know about how much breadth and depth there is in the curriculum which is on offer to local communities.

Luthor, a retired area community education officer for Daisy County was more circumspect about the audit:

An audit is good because it takes stock of what is going on, but it... doesn't indicate a lot because it doesn't say anything about the quality of the learning.

It is this limited information gleaned by an exercise such as an audit, as

compared to detailed research, which is of national concern:

If, however, education depends substantially on consultancy, or inspection or audit for its knowledge without the testing and refreshment of concepts provided by curiously driven research, in the end it will be banal and purvey no more than received wisdom. (Kogan, 1999, p17)

Norbert, the community education tutor at a community college, also expressed serious reservations:

...obviously it has the potential to be a miraculous breakthrough, but human nature being what it is there is a very large likelihood that a lot of people will abuse it. Yes, who will be putting together the performance indicators? Who will be making the definitions on what the characteristics of effective adult education are? Will it be tied in closely with changes in employment profiles? Will it be tied in with progression routes, people going on to further studies or higher education with the restrictions on what we've been talking about in relation to grant availability? Will it be judged by either for itself or as a servant to other political or economic desires or intentions? ... Also, is it a real audit? Is it really wanting to find out, or is it simply wanting to provide support for conclusions which already exist, in the same way as the Youth Audit did?... So yes, the audit will happen but I don't trust it in the slightest.

Norbert's views have wide support. There are particular concerns about the new business language of outcomes, inputs, targets and indicators which have little connection to the quality of the learning experience.

However plausible, the new language was proving even less relevant than the old. In place of muddled and competing values we were being offered no values at all - at least none that were recognisably educational. (Parrott, 1997, p28)

And perhaps Norbert was right in his suggestion about 'support for conclusions which already exist'. The government's use of the audit

statistics was to propose legislation to remove funding of adult education from the parsimonious grasp of the local authorities. As a NIACE briefing paper on Local Authority Adult Education explained before the audit findings were published:

Almost every authority in the country has made cuts to its adult education provision, but the rate and the amount by which services have been cut varies considerably. In the current round of local authority budget setting cuts vary between 0 - 42 per cent, but for most authorities this year's cut comes on top of a succession of previous cuts.

(Cara, 1999, p2)

A new source of funding, which is likely to be more stable and reliable, will come from the proposed Learning and Skills Council, on the understanding that each LEA has drawn up approved Lifelong Learning Development Plans for adult education.

Lifelong Learning Development Plans

The local authority adult education audit had to be completed for the Spring Term of 1999. The DfEE deadline for Lifelong Learning Development Plans was for October of that year. To assist the construction of these plans the government pledged a Standards Fund grant of £9 million for local authorities. A guidance book stated:

Each local authority should put in place a Lifelong Learning Development Plan which covers their statutory responsibilities to secure the provision of adult education and describes how the local authority is going to use the grant available to develop new adult learning provision and initiatives. (DfEE, 1998e, para.3)

Therefore the audit had to quantify existing provision as a basis for evolving and creating an improved adult education service through these plans. The Head of Lifelong Learning of Manchester City Council believed

that the plans should cover a broad remit:

Lifelong Learning Development Plans must cover all relevant council department contributions and the work of other agencies. (Corbridge, 1999, p13)

The Daisy County Lifelong Learning Development Plan confirmed that it would be used as, '... a tool for raising awareness, identifying aims and stimulating joint approaches' (DCC, 1999c, p12). This appeared to be just the boost that the long-neglected LEA adult education needed.

Nevertheless, were there any less explicit reasons for asking local authorities to develop these plans? Edna of the DfEE described to me:

Some of the new unitaries [authorities] apparently have now developed a lifelong learning approach and it's about getting their act together with others in the local area and about exchanging plans - and this is what I always hear that people keep their plans very secret. This has really got to end and we need to get together a clearer framework.

Plans are kept secret because of the prevailing competitive ethos. So, an implicit factor in the development of these plans was to stimulate a more open and collaborative environment. Educational managers face a dilemma neatly encapsulated by the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) Director of the Learning Society Programme:

Education must deepen its co-operation with business, provided that the great moral purposes of education aren't reduced to responding to the demands of business. (Coffield, 1999b, p30)

Hector of Snowdrop County believed that, along with this dilemma and accompanying problems the government was openly challenging local authorities:

We have got to justify ourselves - that's the challenge. We have been provided the vehicle through the Lifelong Learning Development Plan. We have now got to demonstrate that LEAs uniquely can act as, not necessarily the key

provider, but that we are in a position to be involved in the needs analysis, to meet learning needs where it is appropriate but for us to also, in terms of capacity building and best value. [For example] show that we are working with the WEA who are providing a lot of adult learning opportunities. We are working with the WI [National Federation of Women's Institutes] who have got 160 - 200 branches in Snowdrop County and who are providing thousands of adult learning opportunities to one particular sector of the community. We are engaging with the FE sector and the HE sector as well. So that's the challenge we have got, it's quite clear really, over the next 12 months. Either use it or lose it.

Kelvin of Cowslip County also viewed the creation of these lifelong learning plans as a justified threat to the existence of LEA adult education provision:

I think we are on trial and rightly so given what has happened. I don't think local authorities are treating adult education that well.

In one respect both Hector and Kelvin are correct. Since they spoke to me, the government has recommended that LEA providers of adult education will receive funding, when the new structures are in place in 2001, only if their Lifelong Learning Development Plans are approved and the quality of adult learning is assured (DfEE, 2000a).

Edna of the DfEE was understandably enthusiastic about the plans:

What most excites me is that we are doing something about it and that we do have a national programme. Although people have said, "Oh gosh! Not another plan." What I have said is that it is the only plan for adult education and lifelong learning.

Predictably Hector of Snowdrop County with his youth work background and broad approach to community education disagreed with this limited remit of the plans:

The danger is with the plans is that we are going to

be pigeon-holed a bit. For me, I want to break out of that and work much more horizontally... What we need to be looking at is a proper Lifelong Learning Development Plan starting with Sure Start initiative at one end and going right through to the needs of older learners at the other end but incorporating early years, child care and school improvement and so on.

In the same way Luthor, the retired area education officer from Daisy County, with his experience as a youth worker and with family education, agreed with Hector. Luthor suggested that there should be:

... opportunities from cradle through to grave and that they are very much linked in and a part of, or in partnership with the providers that are schools, primary or secondary, and colleges. So that the whole thing is much more closely interwoven.

These views were dismissed by Cecil, principal of the Hironnelle Centre:

Lifelong learning in Daisy County seems to me in part a pragmatic way of making efficiency savings by amalgamating various services as much as possible... there is a culture of "let's look at these artificial and outmoded divisions" which, I think masks a simply pragmatic desire to sack people and have one person doing two jobs.

These comments expose a tension between those local authorities and providers who would choose to focus on adult education and those, like Hector of Snowdrop County, who view it as part of a web of services.

Hector believes in a holistic approach to adult education:

I suppose the frustration is that we have talked about lifelong learning in its broadest sense and there are all sorts of connections that could be made if only you had the time and the resource to actually make them.

And in addition to these 'connections' and collaborations, will existing problems be addressed? Very little has improved since Her Majesty's

Inspectors from the Department of Education and Science (DES) reported on LEA adult education.

Among the weaknesses are management deficiencies resulting from the low ratio of full to part-time staff; a predominance of barely adequate accommodation and equipment; inadequate machinery to plan, monitor and evaluate provision; and the wide variation in the amount of provision made by different LEAs.

(DES, 1991b, p.vii)

So, how would these Lifelong Learning Development Plans be produced: by consultations or behind closed doors in County Halls? Cecil, of the Hironnelle Centre was adamant:

I wouldn't want a lifelong learning statement to be written by the people who wrote the other ones [post-1992 FHE Act reorganisation in Daisy County]. I'd like a model to be presented by government and for that to be presented in draft form for people to put their pennyworth in.

With 27 semi-autonomous providers in Daisy County, community education tutor, Beryl, feared a lack of coherence:

What I don't want to see is us being all told individually, "Develop your own plan, give it to us and we will put it in as one major package." ... At the moment we are all going our own sweet little way, if you like, and you don't need to meet anyone else unless you have to; unless you make the effort these days.

When I asked Agnes, the Daisy County adult education co-ordinator, she flatly told me to talk to the Head of Lifelong Learning, Marmaduke, about how the Lifelong Learning Development Plan would be produced. He explained:

We have actually produced a Lifelong Learning Development Plan for Daisy County. All we have to do with the government plan is to adapt ours, oddly enough, to make it narrower than ours is at the moment. So in fact the hard work we did, I

hope, last year, and it was interesting what we did, if you remember was to put out for consultation to every unit Towards a Development Plan which tried to state a philosophy, which tried to state some ambitions, and invited people to comment on that. Then on the basis of that we produced a very specific action plan.

It is commendable that these discussions had already begun. However, the actual consultation used for the Plans occurred in the autumn term, when Marmaduke had retired. This consultation consisted of each community education institution manager completing a two-page form. Other counties chose a broader consultation process. Kelvin of Cowslip County explained:

As you'll know, the first stage we have to write back to the DfEE by the end of January to tell them in outline what we are going to do. I have already held meetings with a number of our partners in the colleges, colleagues and one or two others.

Hector of Snowdrop County described similar arrangements:

The consultation exercise for **The Learning Age** began a process which hopefully we are going to be continuing now with the writing of the LEA Lifelong Learning Development Plan. When **The Learning Age** was published, we pulled together a working group made up of LEA, FE and Snowdrop County TEC [Training and Enterprise Council] who together undertook the consultation... We'll then sit down with our Community Education Co-ordinators to discuss the needs of the community.

Ivan of Daffodil County described a ten-month consultation period:

... between January and October the actual development plan has to be lodged with the DfEE. We will create the draft plan by going and talking to people on a dialogue basis individually. Once we've got the plan together then we will put it out and bring in a forum and discuss it, which needs everybody to comment on the total plans to see how it hangs together so we can knock off all the

rough edges, so it will be in place in good time.

He also sent a newsletter to all of his 15,000 students mentioning the Lifelong Learning Development Plan.

The limited consultation conducted by Daisy County compared to its neighbouring local authorities was reflected in the brevity of the final document. For example, just two sentences were devoted to the six FE sector colleges which form an alliance with providers of adult education in the county. Oswald, community education tutor, was disappointed in the Daisy County Lifelong Learning Development Plan for its obscurity.

Now you have to make that more cohesive and be able to say to the public and community you serve, "This is what it means for you." I think the County needs to appreciate that. Instead of giving us things like this [several closely typed pages with small print tables - called Lifelong Learning Plans]. I've just read this at lunchtime which is all very well, but it's jargon. My job is to convert this jargon into lay terms for local people.

I have not seen the Lifelong Learning Development Plans for the other counties investigated, so it would be unfair to criticise those for Daisy County alone. However, having discussed the consultation arrangements with other heads of service, their final documents are likely to be more comprehensive, collaborative and indicative of the needs of the community.

Nevertheless, however limited or otherwise these plans may be, they will raise the awareness of adult education. It could possibly place adult education more firmly within a scheme of services rather than continuing the marginalised status it has often assumed.

Conclusion

I have investigated the LEA structures and stances taken by five different counties after the 1992 FHE Act. From this legislation, Martin and Shaw (1997) suggest that there have been three major developments. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

1. *Vicious spending cuts have been exacerbated by the 'emasculatation' of local government.*

'The annual local government expenditure for education for adults per person dropped from £22.9 in 1984 - 5 to £11.7 in 1993 - 4', (Duman, 1999, p132). By 1997 - 1998, just three years later, it had plummeted to just £3.7 (Audit Commission, 1999). Kelvin told me that the adult education spend per head of population in Cowslip County was, '... less than £2 per head of LEA money. It was substantially higher, but there was a big cut three years ago; it was sliced in half.'

In addition to this withdrawal of finance for LEA adult education, the 1988 Education Reform Act had already begun removing powers from local authorities. This trend was continued in the 1992 FHE Act by incorporating further education colleges into an FE sector, leaving LEAs the duty to secure the provision of 'courses for the leisure pursuits of adults' (DES, 1991a, p9).

During the 1990s as the state became more centralised (Jackson, 1995) arguments emerged that the requirements for a learning society could not be engendered by demolishing local autonomy (Duman, 1999). My respondents have related how whole tiers of adult education management were disbanded. Additionally, in Daisy County, lone managers are left responsible for all three community education specialisms. 'For many LEAs these moves have also meant that the locus of strategic planning

involvement and expertise disappeared,' (Powell, 1994, p14). At the same time, argue Ball et. al. (1997), political accountability and local democracy were being marginalised. Hence there was no authority at local or regional level with responsibility for coherent, strategic planning for the education of adults (Foster, 1996). Central government made no attempt to draw together the various educational opportunities for adults offered in various sectors (Stuart, 1999). This lack of policy co-ordination accounts for the diverse structures within the LEAs studied in this investigation and in other studies such as the East Midlands Survey conducted by Summers and Glazier (1991).

2. Systematic marketisation of adult education accompanied competition between institutions.

There has always been a tension in adult education policy, states Griffin (1987), between the liberal individualism of the market economy and the collectivism of socialist ideals. During the administration of the Conservative Government, the Residual Welfare Model of social policy (Titmuss, 1974), which favoured self-help and minimal state intervention in the market, flourished.

... the welfarist model of adult education contributing to social improvement has been displaced by a market model as a condition for economic competitiveness. (Edwards, 1997, p93)

The 1992 FHE Act divided the curriculum. State finance was passed to the FEFC to fund courses (Schedule 2) which would improve national competitiveness, although there are doubts about the link between this form of education and the economy (Carvel, 1998). Within the FE sector, colleges, and the LEA providers who chose to run these better-funded courses, are encouraged to compete between institutions to attract learners. An FEFC circular to providers urged:

... well-targeted and effective marketing can be as important as high quality teaching.

(FEFC, 1998b, para. 7)

This is an example of the endorsement of the government's market policy principles where education institutions, argue Usher et. al. (1997), become enterprises selling knowledge as a commodity, in competition with others.

The paperwork involved in retrieving FEFC funding was hard to cope with in the semi-autonomous structure of Daisy County. Marmaduke, Head of Lifelong Learning, told me, 'Only the bigger units can spare the time to do the bureaucracy'. But, it was worth it, according to assistant principal, Jocasta, 'After FEFC funding, for the first time we had money.' Some of the smaller units were left to struggle, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

Non-vocational, or liberal, education was left to LEAs to secure adequate provision. 'It is for each LEA to define adequacy as it sees fit,' Finbar of Sunflower County told me. With no definition of 'adequate' or any earmarked (hypothecated) funding, the provision of these non-Schedule 2 courses relied heavily on fees. These rose from 95 pence per hour (pph) in 1990 to 144 pph in 1994 (Winkless, 1997), well above the annual inflation rate. As some of my respondents explained, they had to manage their budgets to achieve the equivalent of a profit. These changes altered the nature of their jobs and transformed the ethic of a public service:

Seducing and cajoling the public sector middle class into the embrace of the market has been a key objective of public service reforms.

(Rustin, 1994, p77)

Although these changes included some financial advantages, among the many losses was the worthiness of liberal adult education espoused in

the 1970s.

... it is necessary to maintain vigorously a critique of the full implications of market-driven policies for adult education. What appear to be gains, for example the possibility of new resources, a welcome integration of education and training, or attention to outcomes, can continually be reviewed in relation to the social and human values we recognised in the Russell Report.

(Jackson, 1995, p199)

As Jocasta succinctly expressed, 'How can you develop the curriculum when everything is finance led?' Although an extensive survey (McGivney, 1995) affirmed the value of liberal adult education, this form of learning was virtually ignored by the government. Martin and Shaw (1997) described this as, '... a disastrous loss of vision, narrowing of interests and technicisation of the curriculum,'(p12). This marketisation of adult education, where learning becomes a consumption good, was readily accepted, argues Parrott (1997), because it is easier to dominate a passive consumer than an active citizen.

3. Subjection to the discourse and discipline of competence, technical rationality and quality assurance.

Changing the significance of language to empty economic meanings has been an important part of the political ideology, for example:

... 'equality' [is] an opportunity to compete...
'Efficiency', the master signifier of the New Right, is elevated from a means to enhance productivity - itself a means to improve general welfare - to an end-in-itself. (Briton, 1996, p35)

The burgeoning bureaucracy of this regime ushered in a new language which assumed that learning could be straightforward and measurable. Moreover, this quality assurance was not necessarily in the learners' interests.

Despite this new rhetoric of charters, action plans

and entitlements, we were actually becoming less accountable to real life students... as we were forced to become more preoccupied with accountability to the abstract 'taxpayer'. (Parrott, 1997, p28)

Described by Esland (1996) as the New Right's political strategy to enforce a narrow concept of efficiency on educational providers, this tight discipline on local authorities continued with New Labour. Since their election in May 1997, Best Value - a new standard in local government services - was introduced (Henke and Ward, 1998), a Beacon Council Scheme to promote best practice (DETR, 1998) was initiated, and the Secretary for State for Education warned that contractors would take over any key functions of failing LEAs (Blunkett, 1999). This concentration of central power is defensible if it is in the interests of society rather than the Treasury. However, Ranson (1994) has warned of the dangers of, '... eroding the authority of the engine of social democratic order - local government,' (p72).

As Pring (1995) observed, the returns accruing from investing in a vibrant educated community are more likely to bring about improvements in cultural and economic growth than those parochial forms of market individualism which currently prevail. If those investments were made in LEA adult education then the role of local authorities must be in '... generating understanding of the conditions and processes of learning that will release the powers and capacities of adults,' (Ranson, 1994, p122). In addition, 'LEA adult education should be integral to social regeneration policies,' (Corbridge, 1999, p13) and '... be made aware of their vital role as facilitators and catalysts with adult learning partnerships,' (Price, 1999, p23).

I would suggest, therefore, that the administrative structure of the service may not directly affect the quality of provision but rather its ability

to coherently anticipate and rapidly adapt to both national and local changes. This is particularly true of Daisy County's minimal response to the 1992 FHE Act compared to the forthright organisation which occurred within the other counties investigated. Finbar of Sunflower County asserts that factors other than administrative structure dominate an effective service:

I think it's more to do with the resources and the commitment. There are authorities that have an integrated youth and adult service that have the characteristics I've just described, and equally there are others that don't. I think it is to do with commitment, numbers of professionals, numbers of buildings, resources, position within the LEA as well.

Finbar emphasised commitment. The lacklustre answers given by Marmaduke and Agnes of Daisy County contained inaccuracies, misunderstandings and general perceptions of their adult education duties as arcane. In contrast, the managers of adult education from other counties were well informed, embedded within a network of services and organisations, as well as being willing, and apparently able, to vibrantly and energetically embrace change.

I have tried to give a flavour of the situation in different counties where the voices uncover, or even obscure, the stories behind the statistics. I am aware, also, that only in Daisy County did I talk to the managers of providing institutions. Thus I gleaned more details which were a different perspective from, and possibly more accurate than, those disclosed to me by the County Hall managers.

It was through talking to the providers in Daisy County that I can endorse Finbar's opinion of the importance of commitment. However, this is not a synonym for enthusiasm. It means also having sufficient numbers of suitably trained staff to be able to devote the necessary time to

adult education. Although I am wary of pinpointing Daisy County for particular censure, as I investigated this county more thoroughly than the others, I am not alone in my reservations. A letter from a Joint Union Group of community education managers was sent to the chairman of Daisy County Council, with a copy to all elected members. Its judgement of the management of the community education service was damning:

The general feeling of the staff group was that we are working for a Community Education Service which has become progressively more disparate and inconsistent. A service where staff are supported or managed differently or in some cases, not at all. A service which no doubt will have to see significant changes over the coming 18 months due to recent Government Legislation, yet a service ill equipped to respond to those demands.

(Man et. al., 15. 7.1999, p1)

The senior manager of community education in Daisy County was about to take an ill-timed, six-month secondment. Also, Marmaduke had just retired. He was replaced as Head of Lifelong Learning by a principal from a comprehensive school in another county. Considering the enormous structural changes in post-16 education that the government has announced, I believe a more appropriate appointment could have been made. Therefore, compared to other counties investigated, Daisy County is less well placed to respond to changes imposed by the government:

If a local education authority does not secure the provision of education and training in accordance with provisions in a plan... the Secretary of State may direct the authority to do so.

(Learning and Skills Bill, 1999, cl. 23)

Daisy County cannot, then, remain as a fragmented service but how will it reorganise its structure? Avis (1996) purports that there are two types of organisations: -

1. Mechanistic - bureaucratic, rigidly hierarchical with clear organisational structures and fixed division of labour. Associated with early 20th. century mass-production methods of the Ford motor company.
2. Organic - flatter hierarchy, a less clear division of labour, team working and greater flexibility.

It is the organic organization that is to be generalized in post-Fordist economics, since it is this which provides for quick responses to changed circumstances... It is here that post-compulsory education and training is to play a key role.

(Avis, 1996, p76)

Circulars, guidance, conferences, consultations, new funding rules and forging links, combined with government regulations and information from numerous organisations associated with adult education - all contribute to the changes which demand quick responses. It is the speed and volume of these changed circumstances since the 1992 FHE Act that Ivan, of Daffodil County, finds so challenging:

It is a totally fascinating time to be involved in adult education, it's moving faster now than it did. I was under the same Head of Service from 1975 to 1992 and life was so predictable. You could see everything happening way before it came over the horizon. Now you've got to have your eyes on the horizon all the time because these things come towards you at a frightening speed.

Although Ivan relishes the challenge of almost perpetual change within adult education, his control shows tendencies towards the mechanistic model. The more organic organisation of Cowslip, Sunflower and Snowdrop counties would be favoured. In these counties area structures are preferred. This was the model recommended in a letter from the Hironnelle Centre management committee to the new Head of Lifelong Learning. It stated:

... a Daisy County structure that is not clearly related to national criteria and expectations will not survive... a specialist Adult Education Service should be established forming consortiums of units.
(Letter, 20. 1. 2000, p2)

Work could be shared between groups of providers, conforming to Avis's (1996) organic model, which would provide the flexibility and quick responses required for an effective service. Past problems, Jackson (1995) argues, are the result of applying notions and methods of industrial Fordism to public domains. They have not worked because they are inappropriate.

Alternatively, post-Fordism can be defined in terms of the state as a 'strategic trader' shaping the direction of the National economy through investment in key economic sectors and in the development of human capital. Therefore, post-Fordism is based on a shift to 'high value' customized production and services using multi-skilled workers. (Brown and Lauder, 1996, p5)

Although post-Fordist policies are more appropriate, they need to be adapted before applying them to lifelong learning. Gleeson(1996b) warns that the post-Fordist vision of society is so flexible that the Left and the Right wings of the political spectrum have adapted it to fit their ideologies:

In doing so both perspectives are able to idealise education and learning as necessary co-determinants of economic change, enshrined in such concepts as the learning society, skills revolution and stakeholding. (Gleeson, 1996b, p518)

Post-Fordism, therefore, appears to encapsulate a series of politically uncontested concepts which include, according to Kumar (1999), not only decentralised forms of work and organisation, but a society based on cultural diversity and a high degree of individual choice. Consequently, those involved in consultation processes of the unfolding post-16 education structure should resist the stress of the present instrumental

interpretation of adult education with its concentration on human capital. Instead, policy should be equally directed at three intertwined elements for:

- economic progress and development;
 - personal development and fulfilment; and
 - social inclusiveness and democratic understanding and activity.
- (Aspin and Chapman, 2000, p17)

Before providers, particularly those in Daisy County, can re-align themselves within a new structure to respond to changing policies, they must untangle some of the partnership webs, many of which have been woven over several decades. New, more equal forms of collaborations with organisations both within and outside the education sector will be nurtured.

In the next chapter the two major partnerships in LEA adult education, secondary schools and FE colleges, will be examined. There are distinct advantages of these collaborations but the nature of these relationships are problematic. This will be related to the implications for the formation of a network of national and local partnerships.

LEA adult education partnerships

Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed how the LEA structure related to its provision of adult education. Now I want to show how these different county structures for administering LEA adult education relate to the formation and maintenance of their partnerships with providers from other sectors. This, in turn, is linked to the provision of adult education - particularly its funding, its availability and the learning environment in which it takes place.

LEAs have interpreted their statutory duty to 'secure adequate provision' in different ways, and made diverse arrangements for adult education.

Local authorities deliver adult and community learning through around 200 dedicated centres and at least 4000 to 5000 other buildings, mostly schools
(DfEE, 2000c, para. 7.17)

A survey of 74 local authorities during 1994 - 1996 reported on the structure of this provision.

A third run free-standing services, whilst a further third make some provision themselves and work in association with a range of providers. In a fifth of authorities adult education is part of an integrated community education service and/or is offered through community schools. A small number of authorities either make minimal provision themselves or have decided that their obligations are fulfilled by funding fee remission for certain categories of adults attending further education colleges. (Ofsted, 1997, para. 1)

So, two-thirds of all local authorities form a variety of direct partnerships with other providers to deliver adult education. These are particularly important as the new Lifelong Learning Partnerships have

been formed to stem the rampant competition and 'turf wars' (Kennedy, 1997) between providers in the post-16 education sector. Marketplace policies introduced in the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) and continued in the 1992 Further and Higher Education (FHE) Act have been blamed for this lack of collaboration. These Lifelong Learning Partnerships are a major part of New Labour policy: 'Partnership and collaboration are essential to achieving the Government's goals for economic prosperity and social cohesion,' (DfEE, 1999b, p1). In the National Partnership Protocol drawn up between six national post-16 organisations and supported by the DfEE, a framework for collaboration was proposed:

Good practice in existing arrangements should be encouraged to evolve on a voluntary basis into wider strategic education and training partnerships at a local level. (DfEE, 1998f, p2)

It is the nature of existing arrangements of providing LEA adult education that I would like to analyse. The two partnerships, which have had the most impact on the provision of adult education are:

- Community colleges (secondary schools)
- FE sector colleges.

Investigations into these partnerships will be discussed. I will then consider the government's attempts to galvanize partnerships both nationally and locally in order to discourage competition and to foster a lifelong learning culture.

LEA adult education and community colleges

The concept of the community college system, as I discussed in the earlier chapter on the History of LEA Adult Education, evolved from the establishment of a Village College in Cambridgeshire in 1930. It was inspired by the local authority Secretary for Education, Henry Morris:

The village college would change the whole face of

the problem of rural education. As the community centre of the neighbourhood it would provide for the whole man (sic), and abolish the duality of education and ordinary life. It would not only be the training ground for the art of living, but the place in which life is lived, the environment of a genuine corporate life... It would be a visible demonstration in stone of the continuity and never ceasingness of education. (Morris, 1924, p9)

This was the original vision of true lifelong learning within a single establishment. During the 1930s Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Cumberland, and Coventry imitated this notion of the Village College. However, according to Fieldhouse (1996a), many of the post-war community colleges, based in secondary schools, bear no more than a superficial resemblance to Morris's plan.

Morris had intended village colleges to serve all age groups in the community, but the commitment to post-school education may be a narrow one as Further and Higher Education tend to be excluded from school premises.

From the point of view of adult education, this means that it is disconnected from those sectors of education with which it might seem to have a more natural affinity and connected instead with a sector of education (the school) with which, because of its age range and compulsory nature, it might seem to have least affinity. (Mee and Wiltshire, 1978, p20)

As is typical of an LEA community college system, all of Daisy County's community colleges are based on large comprehensive schools, one of which is the largest community college in the country. This leads to the question:

Is a large comprehensive school the right sort of base on which to build a community college? By present day standards the first village colleges were small and some have suggested that the right base would be a primary school. (Legge, 1982, p107)

Parents and grandparents naturally visit and sometimes help in a primary school. Certainly much Family Work in Daisy County is carried out through primary schools. In addition, a Council of Europe report states:

... evidence favours a co-ordinated system of small centres close to communities they serve, over the more centralised, larger-scale approach.
(Bogard, 1994, p70)

This also exactly describes typical free-standing adult education centres with their outreach provision in village halls.

It was understood nearly 30 years ago that what was needed was, '... a radical new concept for the comprehensive school which demands a building deliberately designed for the community,' (Poster, 1971, p106). One community college in Daisy County has invited Year 10 pupils to evaluate proposed designs for a new sixth form block (Midweek Herald, 1999, p8). This is a commendable idea but no such invitation was extended to the adults or any other members of the community who will be invited to learn there. Actions such as this one have, in the past, prompted a description of a community college as a place where:

... more or less extensive facilities are brought together on one site or campus to which the name community college... is then attached, although without much degree of precision.
(Legge, 1982, p105)

However, its ethos is more than about merely sharing facilities on a single campus:

... the origins of the movement are rooted in a communitarian ethic and a progressive tradition that run directly counter to the current atomization of education and the values of enterprise.
(Jeffs, 1992, p17)

This was written during the Conservative administration's drive to

establish a market within post-16 education which valued academic and vocational learning for improving national competitiveness. It was during this period, argues Martin (1992), that the government challenged thinking about the relationship between the individual and society, the market and the state, and self-interest and community interest. 'In effect it was an attempt to legitimize possessive individualism as the moral basis for social action,' (Martin,1992, p30).

Despite the contradiction of national policy, part of Morris's concept to create a new kind of public education service for local communities has endured:

This core commitment has remained at the heart of local authority policy development in community education, which is fundamentally about mediating the relationship between lifelong learning and the focus of everyday life in communities.

(Martin, 1992, p28)

Since the Labour Government came to power, a Policy Action Team has been formed by the Cabinet Office to find solutions for reinvigorating communities (PAT, 1999). Also, an increased emphasis on the benefits of learning for personal fulfilment and social cohesion has been made (DfEE, 1998b). Edna, the head of an adult education policy team at the DfEE told me:

We can hark back and take inspiration from what happened in Cambridge with the Village Schools... In fact I think it's very easy for my colleagues in schools to forget that one of the department's aims is also lifelong learning for everyone... We have got to use the resources that are available to us. We can't just keep saying well this is adult education as it was. Rather let's make use of the new national initiatives and let's reinvigorate use of schools. This is still being used by adult education but let's think of new ways to use them. Let's get schools themselves more engaged in that process.

Edna stressed the use of schools' resources but realised that 'new initiatives' had to be devised to overcome the barriers between schooling and adult education. It is these barriers that I would like to consider now along with the advantages of using school premises for adult education.

The community college system

All five of the counties which I investigated used secondary school premises for providing adult education. However, the relationship between the adult education providers and the school management ranged from simply renting classrooms to an integration within the school organisation.

Ivan, Head of the Adult and Continuing Education Service in Daffodil County, explained:

We don't have community colleges in Daffodil County. In my coming through the system, so to speak, I have not had any experience with community colleges... There are some schools at the moment in the county of Daffodil that are called community schools. They don't do anything more than an ordinary county school does anyway because the adult education service makes all the provision in county schools, not solely in county schools, but there are no LEA schools which run their own adult education provision.

The Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) inspectors clearly approved of these arrangements between adult education and the use of schools and other premises:

In Daffodil County a review of venues for small programmes or single classes by the local authority reduced overall accommodation costs.

(Ofsted, 1997, para. 23)

Similar arrangements existed in Cowslip County as Kelvin, Head of the Adult Education Service, described:

Our schools are called Community Schools and

some of them call themselves Community Colleges. Our schools can call themselves what they like, but they don't have any money to provide a youth service or an adult education service. None at all.

Ofsted inspectors also praised Cowslip County Adult Education Service for its 'creative and imaginative' daytime programme using a variety of venues, including hotels and pubs. However, the use of schools was limited and sometimes unwelcoming:

There is little available accommodation in community schools during the day, therefore these are used mainly for evening classes... although the majority of schools have activities taking place on evenings used for AE [adult education] classes, in some schools heating is switched off early, leaving a cold environment. In one class students were working in their coats. (Ofsted, 1998, para. 95)

It is understandable that schools would strive to protect their budgets through savings on heating bills. However, surely making a learning environment physically uncomfortable for students is unacceptable? It also indicates the low opinion in which adult education is held by some schools.

Neither Ivan nor Kelvin expressed any desire to form closer ties with schools as, for example, Hector, the Snowdrop County Community Education Officer, had:

Traditionally Snowdrop County in the 80s, as you may well be aware, put a lot of money into community education and invited communities to put together a plan of their learning needs and to submit them to county council community designation. That resulted in a thousand flowers blooming in Snowdrop in terms of community schools. The problem was that not all the flowers bloomed equally across the whole county. Very clearly the philosophy was that the school belongs to all of us ... the role of the community school in meeting the learning needs of the whole community, from cradle to grave, the seamless

robe, and so on.

Clearly the provision was controlled by community education rather than the school, but this co-ordination could not provide a service of uniform quality. The communities around the 23 different community schools in Snowdrop County obviously submitted plans containing varying requirements for what they considered to be lifelong learning. Their ideas may have been at odds with Hector's literal interpretation of cradle-to-grave lifelong learning:

... the philosophy, which still I would argue, pervades in Snowdrop; that you can't split learning and education into neat little boxes. It is something that people come in and out of at different times in their lives. As a local education authority we have a responsibility to respond to those needs.

The uneven response to community plans for lifelong learning might also have resided in the different community schools' willingness or ability to provide accommodation for the learning requested.

In Sunflower County the community education service rents space in schools. Here, Finbar, the Area Manager for Community Services - responsible for the libraries, adult education and youth service - wanted a more creative relationship:

We think that there is more to do there in terms of partnership, in terms of finding out what schools can really offer to their community; what they want to offer, even to the extent of entry of being providers like community schools as I believe that you have in Daisy County.

However, Finbar was in the enviable position of also possessing 23 centres dedicated to adult education. Finbar told me:

There is a lot of daytime work because of the dedicated centres. An unusual facet of Sunflower's provision is the sheer volume of daytime work: 40 per cent, in fact a little more than that, nearly 50 per cent is actually during the day which is unusual.

Therefore, because of the plentiful daytime classes, it did not matter that any liaison with schools would result in evening only provision.

The Director of Education at Sunflower County, Godfrey, used to be Deputy Chief Education Officer at Daisy County where he attempted to reorganise community colleges within rural and urban areas. Godfrey told me:

When I say I wanted to modernise the service it was, it was a very disparate service - which is no bad thing for that - but the authority was never quite sure whether it wanted community schools or whether it wanted a free-standing adult education service. In fact it had both and more. So, what I attempted to do was to organise a pattern which was the correct solution for a given community... I suppose I have an over-simplistic view of it which is that in a rural community, the cradle-to-grave local schools' centre of the community works superbly well, but there are better examples when you go to an urban setting.

In Daisy County community education is provided by a mixture of 21 community colleges (secondary schools) and six free-standing centres. The Head of Lifelong Learning in Daisy County, Marmaduke, is an ex-principal of a community college, hence his opinion of them is predictable:

If you really want me to be honest with you, it is a pity perhaps that from the very onset every secondary school wasn't designated a community college.

He fervently believed in the original concept of Village Colleges founded by Henry Morris to combat rural deprivation. Marmaduke continued:

So in fact, the specific purpose of the community college was to help large rural areas rather than urban environments and that's one of the main reasons why you have the units [free-standing centres].

However, despite Godfrey's attempt at 'modernisation' in the early 1990s, political intervention ensured a fairly random distribution of both community colleges and free-standing centres in urban and rural areas within Daisy County.

Now the government is encouraging all local authorities to include the use of schools for adult education within their Lifelong Learning Development Plans.

There are some common aspects that feature in many programmes... adapting measures to encourage participation such as... using community schools. (DfEE, 1999e, para.13)

This was echoed by Edna of the DfEE in the context of widening participation. She wanted local authorities to consider:

...use of schools as community centres in ways that are creative and really do genuinely bring in some of these non-participants. It is not just schools, it is about using all their resources.

Edna framed three intractable problems. Firstly, attracting learners back to a school where they may have considered themselves failures. Secondly, making schools' resources available, probably during an evening, at a time which might not be convenient for those learners. Thirdly, apportioning the costs of allowing school equipment to be used by the general public.

Community schools were used to provide adult education in all five counties, but only in Daisy County was the management of this provision given to schools. The principal (originally called the Warden after Morris's Village College concept) also manages community education for which he or she is awarded a salary enhancement from community education funds. The Director of Education for Daisy County reminded community college Chairs of Governors in a letter:

As you are aware, the Governors of your Community College have discretionary powers to grant the Principal a supplement of up to ten per cent of his/her basic headteacher salary, in recognition of community education responsibilities. This additional payment, which is subject to annual review, is funded from the budget devolved to your school for the provision of community education. (Smith, DCC, 1999)

Agnes, the Daisy County Adult Education Co-ordinator, expressed her doubts about the efficacy of this structure.

... I think they [the principals] ended up there rather than being strategically placed... I think particularly difficult members of the community aren't well catered for within the schools that have their eye on league tables and middle class catchment areas.

This lack of faith in the community college system was first disclosed in a Daisy County report. The 'Review of Reviews of Community Education' is an occasional collation of summaries of reviews and inspection reports which stated:

Community Colleges are constantly seeking ways to merge the school and the community aspects of their role and this brings both great flexibility and some **technical, ideological and legal difficulties**.
[my emphasis] (DCC, 1996, p5)

I would like to consider each one of these difficulties in turn.

● *Technical difficulties*

Problems of sharing accommodation were identified more than 20 years ago.

The present difficulties of sharing and of attitudes to adult education in multi-purpose institutions must raise serious doubts about their stated advantages both in terms of the resources available and of their effective use... Adult education is still too often the unwelcome borrower of other people's premises or alternatively the unequal partner in a sharing situation.

(Mee and Wiltshire, 1978, pp.77 - 79)

Yet this is a major problem which is still to be solved today. Beryl, a community education tutor at a community college told me:

I work in a school therefore we have have no daytime premises of our own, apart from the AE [adult education] centre. Which means that specialist rooms are not available during the day to offer courses that people might like.

Similarly, Percy, the sole community education tutor at a small community college bemoaned the fact that: '... the school comes first during the daytime, adults can have what's left over at night.'

These problems associated with sharing accommodation and equipment occurred even in a larger community college, as Norbert, the community education tutor for adult education, explained:

There are always difficulties about parity of maintenance and expense, and of course the main maintenance and replacement crises are derived from the use of expensive equipment by unsupervised sixth formers.

These technical difficulties of sharing, among other problems, were noted in a review of adult education by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI):

... adult education in many community schools or colleges is limited in range and small in scale. Limited factors are access to daytime accommodation, poor planning and the view that such work is marginal to the school's main concern, the education of children.

(DES, 1991b, para.10)

Almost a decade later these difficulties have not been overcome. Following the recent Daisy County Audit of Lifelong Learning for the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), a list of Areas for Improvement include, 'Lack of accessible and appropriate daytime provision,' (DCC,1999b, p13). This problem, which clearly refers to community colleges, occurs because:

Where there is identifiable community-use

accommodation, the school, pressed for accommodation for statutory work has usually taken this over during daytime.

(Mee and Wiltshire, 1978, p70)

Tension generated can engender a pervasive disharmony within the community college and lower the morale of community education staff because:

... when operating inside host institutions, or when simply borrowing school premises, practitioners often face situations which markedly limit their autonomy and diminish their self-respect.

(Mee, 1980, p39)

Problems concerning the sharing of staff have also arisen. Oswald, the sole community education tutor at a small community college complained that this sharing was part of the guise of a co-ordinated community education service.

I think the Daisy County model of having community colleges is a convenient one because you are using, in the main, the facilities of the college outside of normal schooling hours, but I don't think that the management in those colleges appreciate community education. Very often I meet senior managers from community colleges whose understanding of a holistic service is, "Oh, we can use your colour printer. Oh, we can use your secretary, we need someone."

On the other hand, school managers may believe that community education administrative costs are absorbing the school budget. The business manager from the community college where Norbert is the community adult education tutor reported:

A recent review of administrative support has revealed that... over 450 hours per annum are undertaken by College staff in supporting Community Education... at an annual cost of £3,750.

(Report, 17.03.1998)

He complained that a little more than one-third of this sum had been

claimed from the Community Education budget.

According to Oswald, the bursar at his community college expressed less restrained concerns about community education tapping into the school's budget when he suggested that community education was, 'immoral as it is taking away from children.' As Oswald lamented:

It's very difficult to think that you're paying for somebody's services that are working totally - their personal convictions on Community Education are totally opposed to mine or to what Community or Adult Education is.

It was the Alexander Report (SED, 1975) which recommended for Scotland that LEA adult education should be integrated into a wider youth and community service. This cohesion was intended to render adult education more relevant and accessible. However:

Like the Russell Report [DES,1973], Alexander encouraged the use of adult and community centres and further education colleges, rather than children's classrooms, for adult education.

(Fieldhouse, 1996a, p95)

This recommendation has less to do with the ubiquity of classrooms or the constraints discussed, rather, '... the accommodation needs an ethos which welcomes adults' (Powell, 1994, p56).

Schools are encouraged to share their premises with adult education classes in order to maximise the use of publicly owned facilities. This powerful economic argument ignores the suspicions created between the school staff and the adult education organisers over the availability of the school's resources and their use by the general public. The question of whether a school is an appropriate environment for adult education is discounted. This, however, should be considered more carefully.

● *Ideological difficulties*

Compulsory schooling and adult education comprise two different cultures.

In institutional terms, the school is an intrinsically problematic base for adult education because its power relations are inevitably so unequal. In ideological terms, the democratic ethos of adult education does not fit well with the authoritarian culture and hierarchical structure of British schooling. The outcome for adult education can be very precarious. (Martin, 1996, p118)

As schools can also be regarded by some as places of failure, Jocasta, community education tutor and vice-principal of a large community college, told me:

There is a whole section of the community... who would not on any account wish to return to the school which they have left.

I asked some of my Access to Higher Education students about their experiences of school. Verity, a lady in her sixties studying Art told me:

We weren't encouraged to ask questions. Teachers were strict, often sarcastic and unapproachable.

She did admit that after her experiences learning on this course that, 'It's changed so much since I did my learning at school.'

Yona, in her thirties hoping to study occupational therapy, remembered:

Not being able to relate to the teacher or the way of teaching. I do think more about learning now, but when I was at school I was doing it because I had to.

Wilma, who was still in her early twenties, had spent several years travelling abroad. She was taking Health Studies with the intention of also studying to be an occupational therapist.

I didn't like school much. They didn't seem to have a lot of respect for you... I know now that I

want to do it whereas at school I didn't see the point, but when I went to college I still found, because it was bigger groups, they didn't really help you. If you weren't sure of something you couldn't say, "Can you explain it?"

Una was another well-travelled young lady who intended to study complementary medicine at university. She struggled with dyslexia which disrupted her spelling and produced mixed responses from her teachers:

I remember teachers being too much like your best friend and never encouraging you to work, or domineering.

Zak, in his forties, had been made redundant from a glass fibre works and was looking for a change in career. He told me:

You see I had quite a varied school life because my father was always ill so there was a lot of the time I didn't spend at school because my mother was going off to work and I was stopping at home with my father. It actually frightened me. My wife and myself talked about it and it frightened me to think that I was actually going to go back to school [the Hironnelle Centre] again because school probably wasn't the best years of my life but with a little prompting from [my wife] I was convinced that it would be the best thing.

Zak then admitted the reason for his fright at returning to learning:

It was an eye-opener not studying for, what would it be... nearly 27, 26 years not actually ever having done any study whatsoever. Not reading more than two books in 26 years, to actually go to school [Hironnelle Centre] one morning and to have to do... Well, it knocked me for six for about the first couple of weeks but I got straight into it after that - it was good. I enjoyed it.

The reason that I have included these quotes from my students, chosen at random, was to show the problems of using schools for adult learning. The students either lacked confidence or suffered poor experiences at

school. And these are the more self-assured students, many of whom have few if any recent qualifications, who decided to tackle an intensive course of study at a specialist adult learning centre. There are many reluctant learners, lacking any confidence, who would not return to a school to learn. A MORI national survey of attitudes to learning confirms these views:

... adults are divided in their views about how school prepared them for learning in their life today. Although 48 per cent agree that school prepared them for learning, a similar proportion (42 per cent) disagree and 10 per cent are undecided.
(Campaign for Learning, 1998, p19)

It is this reluctant sector of the population who are unconvinced of the efficacy of schooling that Marmaduke, Head of Lifelong Learning in Daisy County, believes should be attracted back to learning. Marmaduke suggested that a function of adult education was:

... about helping people who are nervous, alienated and worried to have the confidence to participate and be welcomed into adult education.

And, despite his advocacy of community colleges, he admits that adult education provision in schools has been hindered.

I also have to say to you that as an ex-principal and headteacher, one of the things that worries me is that the whole movement in formal education to standards and target setting sometimes has had the effect, in some schools, of restricting the community work that the school naturally did.

Under these circumstances, as Norbert, an adult education manager at a community college explained, the dominance of the school:

... puts community education into a competitive or prioritising dilemma with school education. In an equation like that school education is always going to come out on top and community education is always going to lose.

The ideology of using schools for community education, Martin (1996) argues, is associated with the need to combine expansion of educational opportunities with economic imperatives and to satisfy a progressive vision of education through a socially redistributive model.

... in those authorities most committed to comprehensivisation... integrated provision for the whole community came to be seen as the logical expression of the comprehensive principle.

(Martin, 1996, p115)

Attempts to integrate the community within a central forum are commendable, unfortunately the use of school classrooms for adult education might not only discourage non-participants, it could alienate existing adult learners. As Ivan, Head of the Daffodil County Adult Education Service, assured me, '... the public, in my perception, is becoming very much more assertive in terms of the quality it expects to see.'

In order to overcome constraints which could inhibit participation in learning, Smith and Spurling (1999) suggest that new learning environments will attract and retain learners.

In a lifelong learning society, community-based learning centres would be a common feature of housing estates and residential centres, possibly as part of shopping centres and health centres. They would offer customized arrangements for quiet study, as well as facilities for group learning.

(Smith and Spurling, 1999, p107)

This could be an expensive alternative to using school classrooms, but even the Lifelong Learning Minister, Malcolm Wicks, has endorsed alternative learning venues:

The projects which work best are local in inspiration. We must not be precious about where we think learning has to happen.

(Wicks, quoted by Kingston, 1999b, p1F)

In addition, the Council of Europe has recognised that:

... learning outside the confines of the school has the advantage of circumventing learners' memories of scholastic failure, and of bringing education into the 'real world' of the adult learner. This in turn enables adults to make learning venues 'their own', all the more so if the teaching team takes the trouble to make them pleasant, well-equipped places (with creche facilities, access to telephones, photocopiers and so on). (Bogard, 1994, p6)

Adult learners cannot make their learning environments feel 'their own' if they are shared with a school. Even in the heyday of community colleges, the Chief Education Officer for Daisy County admitted:

Perhaps in a more nearly ideal world Community Colleges would never have been set up until all these obvious provisions had been secured.
(Owen, 1977, p11)

Provision of well-equipped community facilities which are comfortable and welcoming to adults could be set up in certain school classrooms or in an annexe. It would require political will and financial support accompanied by clear and explicit management guidelines.

● *Legal difficulties*

The difficulties of the management of community colleges was discussed in the quarterly magazine *Daisy Governor*.

In extreme cases there have been real difficulties. Overspends on Community Education budgets have raised fresh questions about how clear we are about the roles of Governors, Principals, County Officers and Community Education staff.
(DCC, 1999f, p6)

The 'extreme cases' referred to were three community colleges which accumulated combined deficits of £168,000. The Director of Education for Daisy County Council explained in a report:

All three colleges' governing bodies and school

managers have spent considerable time and effort understanding the complexities and differences between how the school operates and how Community Education budgets need to operate.
(DCC, 1999d, para.3.2)

One of the reasons for amassing these deficits was suggested in an earlier report:

... devolving budgets to Community Education has put some fieldwork staff under management pressures for which they were not originally trained. (DCC, 1998, para.2.2)

Moreover, the complicated formulae required for claiming FEFC funding for academic and vocational (Schedule 2) courses was also blamed. However, the real culprit, according to Reginald, principal of the largest community college in the country, was lack of support and co-ordination by County Hall:

... some community colleges are not as clear or as straight thinking in terms of how they apportion their budgets as others. We see a very clear responsibility to provide for the whole community. I think that's where the service level agreement comes in, frankly.

Some of this lack of clarity in apportioning school and community education budgets is rooted in legislation from the 1980s. In particular, the 1988 ERA gave governors the responsibility to manage their schools' budgets. As Luthor a retired Area Community Education Officer for Daisy County remarked:

The legislation over the last decade or two moved everything away from there being a community school... If you need anybody else in the school then they have got to pay... You are immediately excluding those people who don't have access to a lot of money because the hire of schools is quite expensive.

Beryl discussed the arrangements at the community college where she

is community education tutor:

... when I started organising you could use any school, it was all paid centrally, there was no payment to schools. Schools were a facility of the Daisy LEA that was available for people of an evening. Now it's not. Now schools will bill us individually. We can't always afford it and there's a lot of paperwork involved.

However, Beryl confirmed that strict divisions between the school budget and the community education budget are adhered to:

The school cannot touch our budget and we can't touch the school budget. We are run like another entity in the school. It's not as directly linked as it used to be.

The distinctiveness of these financial borders varies from school to school. Where Norbert is community education tutor, he feels powerless to question the amount of rent the school demands:

...the school regards adult education as a lodger now, and of course lodgers have to pay the rent, don't they? ...having over three years asked for a formula on which rooms, including my office, are actually let to adult education, I have failed to be given that information. The sum increases every year by percentages which aren't small and I am not really allowed to know why that is either.

The sole community education tutor, Percy, at a small community college is also concerned about this drain on his financial resources,

...the worry of having to pay the rents to the school, the worry of the pressure of the school versus Community Education. Those are the day to day things that we're having to face.

Added to these anxieties is the free access the school management has to his budget:

I could give example after example of when the school needs something then that money has been taken from the Community Education budget without consultation. I've got documentary

records going back to 1984 of that happening: carpets, curtains and things.

One of Percy's examples was especially noteworthy:

A hospitality bill appeared on the Community Education accounts for £92 I think it was, either £92 or £96. When I made enquiries it was the principal who had taken out a local businessman to lunch... When I queried that. "Aah, we'll reap the benefits later from that businessman. It's an investment and we will get things back for the community on that." You can't argue.

Oswald faced a similar but more serious situation at his community college which was one of the three with overspent budgets. His community education budget was more than £21,000 in the red when I spoke to him. The following day he was to endure a disciplinary hearing invoked by his community college principal. Oswald was bitter about his experiences:

I mean, we purchase all sorts of things here which have got nothing to do with the community but everything to do with the school: PE lockers - a classic example - Maths stuff for the school; I purchased unofficial cricket strips, paint and decorating programmes, extra floodlighting - at the same time as being charged for the use of the premises: because the boss [school principal] says.

Even though the actions of his principal were legal, Oswald was angered by the immorality:

Oswald: It has to be stopped because you are asking a community to pay twice. They are paying once already for an educational service. Okay, it might not be brilliant, but then you are taking whatever they generate and recycling that back into the school again.

Phil: What does County Hall do about it?

Oswald: Nothing. The Finance Officer has to keep his mouth shut because the principal is a powerful person. It is all down to

the power relations.

Oswald could foresee a bleak future, knowing that by sacking him, the deficit would disappear through the saving of his salary. A letter, from the Head of Lifelong Learning in Daisy County, to principals referred to Oswald's disciplinary hearing and confirmed his fears:

... the governors used their disciplinary powers to take appropriate action... We are pleased to report that [the community college] has virtually recouped the deficit. However, it has been at some cost to service provision. (Letter, 20. 12. 1999)

This 'cost to service provision' meant Oswald being removed from his post as community education tutor and not replaced. Commenting on these events, Cyril, the principal of the free-standing Hironnelle adult education centre remarked, 'Funding is always at risk in another organisation with adult education not at heart.'

In response to this accusation Reginald, principal of a community college, said, '... you've got these free-standing centres who always consider principals as the robber barons.' Nevertheless, he believed that the use of school funds and community education money should be open and subject to an agreement from County Hall:

We should be absolutely accountable and people should be able to audit and challenge and to ask us but we ought to be running the two under the same sort of structures, I think. And that means the centre [the LEA] releasing, delegating not devolving, but then us being absolutely dead straight with them in terms of what we are delivering, and delivering according to an agreement.

It is just this lack of contractual obligation from the LEA that is continuing the financial and territorial conflicts between Daisy County community colleges and the adult education they manage.

Twenty years ago, the community college system of providing adult education was described as, 'Adult education on the cheap', (Wallis and Mee, 1983, p8). However, community education is being charged rent plus an enhanced salary payment for a line manager (the school principal) and, in addition, the school management can demand, if it wishes, further reimbursements. These costs can be justified as repayments for the use of rooms, resources and administrative services.

Ways to merge schools with community activities are being sought, although I have highlighted these serious technical, ideological and legal difficulties which appear insoluble. Lifelong learning is considered by some, like Hector, to be from cradle-to-grave, but there are some seemingly insurmountable obstacles between compulsory schooling and voluntary adult education. If, as it seems, the government insists on the community use of schools, major changes in attitudes towards lifelong learning will need to be accompanied by legislation with firm financial support. In addition, the schools' staff and governors will need to embrace wholeheartedly this culture change.

It is illegal for the school to subsidise community education, yet do the school governors have the powers, or the will, to foster a more amicable climate for adult education?

Governance of Community Colleges in Daisy County

By the time the Chief Education Officer wrote his book about Daisy Community Colleges (Owen, 1977) they had existed in the county for 25 years. He explained that although the governors were responsible for the letting and general use of the school premises, they were not involved in the detailed operation of community education.

On the other hand the Warden [school principal] is required to function in close partnership with, and indeed largely as a servant of, a co-ordination

committee. An active link between this committee and the Governors is clearly needed, so two additional Governors are appointed to represent the adult and youth functions of the College. These Governors also sit on the Co-ordinating Committee, which is for many purposes regarded as a special sub-committee of the Governors, with delegated powers to further the work of the Community College. (Owen, 1977, p10)

A little more that 20 years later, the requirement for community governors on the boards has been dropped and adult education has been sidelined, as Beryl explained:

... there is a problem with governors, because most governors come in to run the school as a governor thinking about 11 - 18 education. And their interest is not naturally for adult and particularly youth work... I think we lack something in not having governors that are necessarily interested in community education.

However, this lack of enthusiasm for community education by community college governing bodies is not a new phenomenon:

... there was a uniformly low rate of adult user involvement in decision-making, allied to a tendency for school governing bodies to see the school's interest as both separate and dominant.
(Martin, 1996, p117)

Oswald was not so much concerned with lack of interest; what bothered him was lack of representation:

... in the ten years I have been here, it's rare for our governing body for Community Education to have anybody on it who has a disability; anybody who's a student; anybody who's a tutor - so where's the community representation? I don't have a say on it.

A similar story was told by Percy who, like Oswald, is the sole community education tutor at a small community college.

Percy: As Community Tutors we only get access to the governors at the Community Sub-Committee

level. There is no way of us following it through and giving a presentation or representation after that initial Sub-Committee. So, if there is, sort of, a disagreement of interest or anything like that, then the only person who would go with that would be the principal. So, again, principals rule.

Phil: So are you saying you don't sit on the governing body?

Percy: No. No, only on the sub-committee. Again, we've got no voting rights.

Therefore the governors are not necessarily interested in adult education and the community tutor, the manager of the adult education, has no representation and no voting rights. Even worse, Norbert, community education tutor at one of the larger community colleges, suggests that governors could be hostile to adult education. He told me:

We had a visit from a lady who presented herself as a financial consultant... She put it to me that the future of community education was all profitable sides being hived off onto the private side and what she called 'your arty farty' courses simply disappearing because nobody really needed them... I laughed at this and said that it was simply a very good indicator of how little she knew about adult education or the public that it served. However, she did put me in a learning curve because I had to recognise that that is a viewpoint of many of the people who are involved in business and who are successful there and who consequently find themselves on the boards of school governors.

Norbert's fears were confirmed in a viewpoint about the community use of schools which was blatantly business oriented, expressed by a governor in the **Daisy Governor** magazine:

As governors we are like landlords in charge of desirable properties. We have the power to sub-let to the community and have a lettings policy in place. (Brown, 1999, p6)

This governor's statement revealed no inclusive ethos to benefit the

community, even though Daisy County is one of the few counties to have a community college policy. This has serious implications not only for the governance of community colleges, but also for the membership of the 47 local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs). Forty per cent of the members of these local LSCs will come from the business community. The response by the Further Education Development Agency to these recommendations in the White Paper (DfEE, 1999a) proposed that:

... care must be taken to ensure that they are well informed about a range of complex issues such as qualifications and what they mean in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding.

(FEDA, 1999, para.61)

They must also be informed about the lonely, worried and reticent people who could benefit greatly from community education. Yet these current non-participants should not be subjected to the rigours of market principles such business representatives might wish to impose.

Governing bodies at all local authority schools have changed following the 1998 Schools Standards and Framework Act. The new categories are: Parent, Teacher, and Staff governors, all of whom are elected. Co-opted governors are appointed by members of the governing body who are not themselves co-opted. With the addition of the Head, there are four or five (depending on the size of the school) LEA-appointed governors. A government circular explaining the new Act confirmed:

Local authority governors, as all others, should primarily be appointed to raise standards at the school. (DfEE, 1998g, p18)

Is community education included in schools' standards? From my enquiries, I fear not. In a letter to the School Framework and Governance Division of the DfEE I described the present situation of the community education tutors in relation to the governance of the school:

They are usually responsible for employing a larger number of tutors than there are teachers in the school. Also, they generally cater for more members of the community than the number of students in the school. Nevertheless, at the moment, the senior community education tutor has no right to sit on the governing body.

(Letter, 14.07.1999)

The reply informed me that the community tutor could be elected by and from the non-teaching staff at the school as the Staff Governor. Alternatively, the LEA could make the appointment for the position as one of the LEA Governors. However, the letter continued:

Local authorities may set their own criteria as to how these vacancies are filled i.e. they may choose to fill these posts to reflect the local political balance, but they are not obliged to do so. Governing bodies may consider making a recommendation to the authority regarding the appointment, however it is at the authority's discretion whether they choose to accept the recommendation. (Bowlby, 3.08.1999)

I discussed this DfEE letter in a telephone call with the Head of Governor Services at Daisy County Hall. I read an extract: 'LEA governors are appointed by the local authority which maintains the school', (Bowlby, 1999). The Head of Governor Services replied that now schools are locally managed, LEAs cannot insist on the appointment of particular governors. She refuted the claims in the letter saying, 'The DfEE are not practitioners.' She added, 'Anyway, Community Education should be treated as any other school department', (5.08.1999). This final comment, in particular, clarified the County Hall attitude towards the perceived low status of community education tutors and adult education provided by secondary schools.

Therefore it seems unlikely any longer that governors will be appointed to represent youth or adult work, or that the senior community

education tutor is elected in preference to members of the school staff. It is a big step away from the governor representation approved by Daisy County in the 1970s (Owen, 1977) and a great distance from Morris's original democratic vision of Village Colleges on which community colleges are founded.

Principals of Community Colleges in Daisy County

I asked Reginald, the principal of the largest community college in the country, about community education tutor representation on the governing body of community colleges.

I can't answer for the others. We are very keen here on open management which means that information is open... Similarly with governors' meetings; we're not very formal here so there is open access to governors' meetings. This, I think, smacks of divide and conquer, the other way of doing it, doesn't it?... Well what we do here is we have a full governors' sub-committee, which is equivalent to finance and budget and curriculum, which is devoted to Community Education. That isn't just a matter of a few governors it also has users on it and feeding into that we have Youth Advisory and Adult Advisory. So we've got a really good structure feeding in from the grass roots through to the governors.

The attitudes of the principal and the senior management of the school towards the school depends, it is argued, on their strategic management plan which is defined as:

... a key process by which senior management articulates a vision and a direction for the college and seeks to make this operational. How this is done reflects the management style of the principal, the existing culture of the college and the organisational culture the principal and the senior management wish to create. (Levacic, 1997, p9)

Although this statement refers to management in FE colleges,

Leathwood (2000) argues that during the past two decades there have been major changes in management throughout all public organisations.

A New Public Management has been identified, characterised by a reduction in the distinctions between the public and private sectors and an emphasis on efficiency, measurable performance, outputs and competition. Others have referred to these new management practices as new managerialism, emphasising the ideological aspects of what is presented as neutral, rational business practice. (Leathwood, 2000, pp. 163 - 164)

Therefore the school principals and their senior management team not only decide the ethos and the culture of the school, but are under pressure, by using new managerialism practices to run their institution like a business. As, arguably, educating children is their sole 'business', which even books entitled *The Learning Society* (Ranson, 1994) and *Lifelong Learning* (Longworth and Davies, 1996) do not dispute, why would schools want to integrate adult education into their organisation?

Although adult education is quite different from educating pupils, Everard and Morris (1990) argue that a school's management task is to look after all its stakeholders which include employers and the local community. They also suggest, however, that even though a principal is subservient to the LEA, he or she has, '... a right and duty to resist demands that seriously upset the health and balance of the organisation,' (Everard and Morris, 1990, p154). It is this perception of unbalancing the school, I would suggest, which is the reason why some principals resist the integration of adult education into their schools, whereas others, such as Reginald, see community participation as a benefit to the school.

Therefore even if the community education tutor cannot vote or sit on the governing body, the principal can allow community education representation. The status of the community education tutor is clearly the

prerogative of the principal of the community college. A community tutor, Beryl, at another community college told me:

As I say, we are lucky... we integrate quite well with the school, but in other community colleges it doesn't happen quite so well. And a lot of it depends on the attitude of the principal.

At Reginald's community college, the senior community education tutor was promoted to the position of Assistant Principal. Similarly, Jocasta, the community education tutor at another large community college had the same status conferred. Understandably, she approved of her community college:

I think the community college model is good because I don't feel when we are working on the main college site, I don't feel that I am a lodger, a stranger or intruder.

Jocasta's enthusiasm for the community education model, she explained was developed by her previous experience:

I worked in a big Leicestershire community college... We worked very closely with two local schools, but relationships were so close and so tight that we were able to use facilities during the daytime, so it worked well.

This model worked well because Leicestershire Community Colleges, during Jocasta's time there, as Legge (1982) explains, allowed each community to run its own college. So instead of an autocratic management style which many community college principals enjoy, there was true participative management:

By the use of participative management the needs of communities are defined and programmes created to meet them. Active and effective dialogue with the community should also encourage the maximum use of plant as organisational barriers are removed.

(Wallis and Mee, 1983, p25)

Although Leicestershire's interpretation of participative management involving the community is much broader than that practised in Daisy County, some community colleges, like Jocasta's and Reginald's, do allow community education tutors (managers) to be part of the senior management team. Norbert, the adult education community tutor at a community college since 1974, explained that this was the intention of all Daisy County community colleges:

Yes, there was a second Working Party Report, which was about 1971 or 1972 and it was a beautiful blueprint... it provided a model whereby the adult education tutor and the youth tutor each enjoyed deputy head status and salary, and it didn't include wardenship. That was set aside in favour of the format, as it was then, of the headteacher, now principal, sort of lord of all.

I visited five community education tutors at different community colleges throughout Daisy County. It was interesting to observe that their status and hence their contentment was reflected in the size and position of their offices. Oswald and Percy were the most disgruntled. Oswald had a small, windowless, narrow room off a long school corridor. Percy, who started at the school as a full-time teacher in 1972, worked in a converted store room in the corner of the school hall. Jocasta, on the other hand, who had been in post just nine years, was in a separate building with a spacious upstairs office overlooking the harbour. Although having the same job as Oswald and Percy, she had been designated an Assistant Principal with equivalent salary. Jocasta predictably remarked, 'I think community colleges are brilliant.' She then added:

Our principal is very pro-community education, due to my own involvement through other sides of the school and through the SMT [senior management team], I do think we are becoming a true community college.

The status of the organising community tutor has, of course, repercussions for adult education provision:

Negative attitudes on the part of college or school principals and senior staff can quickly create conditions unfavourable to the organisation of an imaginative provision for adults, and the latter can become mere 'hangers-on', receiving left over resources when other needs have been met.

(Legge, 1982, p109)

It can also leave community education tutors in this situation with a sense of impotence for which they may make compensations.

One consequence of this feeling of vulnerability... is that community staff sometimes take on school duties over and above any formal expectation in their contract. (Mee, 1980, p38)

Percy, although angered that a 'Joint-User Fund' in which he had accumulated £4000 from adult education takings was spent on school resources without his knowledge, told me:

I contribute to the school by doing a recreation activity one afternoon a week. When it's cross-curricular week I usually give one or two days taking parties on field trips around. We don't charge the school for that service. If the school grounds get a little bit over grown, I'll bring my hedge trimmer in one Saturday morning and cut the hedges or something like that. So, it's goodwill.

Yet, from what he told me, little of this goodwill was reciprocated. It is the principals who are able to empower or subjugate their community education tutors. The principals are at the heart of the community colleges, so that:

Just as Morris saw the Warden as the epicentre of his project, so today. These demigods still dictate the pace of change and possess the power of veto.

(Jeffs, 1992, p18)

And, the principal's supremacy may not necessarily assist the

promotion of community education, instead, '... unitary management under the headteacher skews power decisively towards the school interest', (Martin, 1996, p118).

The values, intentions and outcomes to be achieved by school management may be so entrenched that they might be resistant to any change towards community involvement:

The senior members of the organization may be so steeped in a traditional culture that their every comment, reaction and judgement serve both to embody that culture and to reinforce it.

(Claxton, 1999, p314)

It should be stressed that the principal might have little choice in these management preferences, because:

... in a climate which encourages atomization and competition, many schools have little option but to be concerned for their own survival, and if necessary take actions which may be detrimental to their 'competitors' and members of their local community. (Ball et. al., 1997, p151)

Some would argue that this climate of 'atomization and competition' is slowly changing as, '... the current Labour administration... attempts to make some strategic turns to the 'supertanker' that is post-compulsory education,' (Kerfoot, et. al., 2000, p157). Among these strategic turns is the fostering of lifelong learning in schools:

Many schools will find the objectives for the lifelong learning school at odds with aspects of the current formal learning culture. In particular the traditional concepts of schools as special spaces - separated off from the rest of community life - will dwindle. (Smith and Spurling, 1999, p59)

So, although this new climate might persuade schools' senior management to be more inclusive towards the community, currently schools' interests are dominant, and may be even unfavourable to

community education interests. Nevertheless, for their community education line management duties, principals in Daisy County have an enhancement of salary. The effectiveness of this supplement was disputed in an open letter to the chairman of Daisy County Council from a union group representing community education tutors.

Across the county these enhancements amount to a sum in excess of £120,000. It is our view that £120,000 would fund a far more consistent, informed and effective managerial structure for community education in Daisy County.

(Man et. al, 1999, p1)

I asked Agnes, the adult education co-ordinator for Daisy County, about the jurisdiction of community college principals over community education. She told me that the principals prevented the community education budget being stripped, as was happening in neighbouring counties:

Whereas the advantage of what we've got at the moment in terms of the 27 units is because we are attached to big secondary schools. If you asset stripped community ed./adult ed. you would, in effect, be falling out with big secondary schools. And we have a Chief Education Officer who doesn't want to do that. I see the principals of community colleges in quite an interesting gatekeeper's role in terms of making sure that there is a base budget for community ed... But that makes the service much less vulnerable to cuts than a stand alone county service would be.

So the apparent lack of coherent structure for adult education in Daisy County compared to other counties investigated, as discussed in the previous chapter, is actually a financial advantage. It also explains the seemingly invulnerable position of principals even when, for example, one community college adult education budget was almost £120,000 in deficit (DCC, 1999d), the tutor alone was disciplined. As the Head of

Governor Services remarked to me:

When things have gone wrong in the past a noose has been put around the neck of the senior community education tutor even though the principal is the line manager. (5. 08. 1999)

This situation might not be unique to Daisy County alone, but it could be typical of the community college movement which:

... has expanded the resources controlled by headteachers in terms of staffing, funds and facilities without seriously extending democratic accountability to colleagues, users or the wider community. (Jeffs, 1992, p18)

Some of this power of the principals may be derived from the 1993 Education Act. This legislation proposed a Funding Agency for Schools (FAS) which would take over LEA responsibilities once a sufficient number of schools in that local authority had opted to become grant maintained. LEAs might have offered school principals incentives, which may have included greater powers, to encourage them to retain their schools within local authority control. Even this tentative conjecture cannot account for Torrington and Weightman's (1988) research, five years earlier, which found that the power and status headteachers enjoyed was almost unique in British organisations. Moreover, the tension between the autonomy desired by some principals and the prevailing influence of local authorities continues (Johnston, 2000).

Reginald, a community college principal, told me, 'I'm slightly mistrustful of the LEA.' He explained why:

What I'd like it to do is to try and get out of the interfering with the day-to-day management of Community Education and get into the strategic planning so that it keeps us up to date with what's happening nationally and what needs to happen... I think the LEA needs to get into the two ends of the process: the strategy and the measuring the outcomes, but actually the day-to-day management

needs to be in the hands of the [community] colleges.

Unlike the other local authorities in my investigation, Daisy County had, what Cecil termed, 'abdicated' from their role of overarching control. Therefore it was left to the 27 individual LEA providers of adult education to deal with the effects of national policies and for Daisy County officers to oversee the more mundane administrative tasks. However, it is likely that any principal would want more autonomy and there are some advantages gained by adult education in community colleges being controlled by principals, but these are outweighed by the numerous disadvantages. Agnes, the Daisy County Adult Education Co-ordinator, was adamant in her opinion:

I don't have have anything against community schools calling themselves community colleges and offering their plant of an evening basis. I don't think community education is best served by giving the management of those operations to the heads of those institutions.

This appears to be the crux of the problem in Daisy County. In other counties school premises were used for adult education, but management rested with the community education organisers.

An obvious alternative to renting school classrooms or hiring premises would be for the LEA to run its own free-standing centres.

Free-standing adult education centres in Daisy County

The activities of the Hironnelle Centre, a free-standing adult education centre, were detailed in an earlier chapter. There are two major advantages of providing adult education in this form. Firstly, accommodation availability does not compete with school classes. Secondly, the management committee, unlike school governors, is

concerned primarily with the education of adults at the centre.

However this structure may have problems. In a community college, as a principal Reginald explained, there can be a blend of strategic planning and day-to-day management between the principal and the senior community education tutor. Reginald continued:

... the poor old head of a free-standing centre has to do all these things and feels quite isolated in doing them, particularly now that we've lost the area structure.

Nevertheless, this detachment from a school can allow for greater flexibility and adaptability to changing situations. The effects of the 1992 FHE Act were discussed by Cecil, principal of the Hironnelle Centre:

We had a specialist adult education person, myself; we had a dedicated free-standing set up; we were able to exploit various other opportunities... The problem with community colleges is that there are lay people - people who are not particularly concerned with the specialities but probably quite good at running businesses and other things.

Although the community college system does not exist in Cowslip County, Kelvin, Head of the Adult Education Service, favoured dedicated adult education centres, 'The free-standing centres score very highly on that customer care.'

A Daisy County audit of its contribution to lifelong learning for the DfEE (DCC, 1999e) included five bar charts indicating the performances of the 27 providers of adult education in the county. The bar charts compared the income, expenditure and local population learner participation for each providing institution. But, the type of provider was concealed. Individual institutions were not named, instead each was given a letter or number on the charts. Every community college or free-standing centre was allocated the code to identify itself only. The

Chairman of the Hironnelle Management Committee wrote to the local District Councillor requesting further information about the two types of provision to be revealed:

... is it possible for Daisy County to analyse its data with a view to establishing whether or not there is significant relationship between performance and structure i.e. as between Teams [free-standing centres] and Community Colleges?

(Letter, 12. 08. 1999)

This was refused, even though Daisy County could have allowed each provider to retain its anonymity by revealing only whether it was a community college or a free-standing centre. The executive chairman of the Daisy County Council Lifelong Learning Committee, in her letter, replied:

Where the system is designed to provide local flexibility there is inevitably a variation in what is delivered. However, there is no significant correlation between structure and performance.

(Letter, 7. 09. 1999)

The chairman offered no explanation or evidence to support her conclusion. Perhaps lifelong learning administrators wanted to hide nothing more than the inaccuracy of the data? The Daisy County Council compiler of the DfEE audit statistics explained in a letter to adult education tutors:

As some of the questions were rather vague or ambiguous, I have, where necessary, supplied figures for those questions left blank, and 'massaged' others in order to give a more accurate representation. (Letter, 28. 05. 1999)

We will never know why Daisy County refused the chance to distinguish openly the effectiveness of the two providing structures. Agnes, the adult education co-ordinator for Daisy County, had already described her views:

I think there are good community college providers of adult education and there are lousy and unimaginative community college providers of adult education. Similarly in teamwork, in teams [free-standing centres], there are bad providers, dull and unimaginative providers of adult education. So no, it isn't the structure.

One interpretation for this refusal to reveal the findings might be that free-standing centres are in fact not only more effective in attracting a wide range of the adult population into their centres, but also better at providing an efficient service. After all, few if any community colleges can offer classes during the daytime or at weekends. There could also be problems with computers or other equipment, as Norbert described, mistreated by unsupervised school pupils.

LEA administrators in Daisy County are lobbied by a powerful group of school principals - Daisy Association of Secondary Heads (DASH), Norbert informed me. I would suggest that these principals want to retain the community education management brief for three main reasons. Firstly, it enhances the prestige of the school within the local population:

... this community setting, this openness to the world outside the school, can be a very good thing for the school. So it is not surprising that we sometimes had the impression that the community work was valued mostly for the indirect contribution it made to the life of the school.

(Mee and Wiltshire, 1978, p109)

Secondly, the heads have more power by presiding over community education as well, rather than the school alone. Thirdly, the community education line management by the headteacher is accompanied by a ten per cent salary enhancement.

The present Head of Lifelong Learning in Daisy County, who is an ex-secondary principal herself, has stated that she would prefer a uniform structure of community college providers throughout the county. Cecil,

principal of the Hironnelle Centre, recently declined yet another offer, by the Head of Lifelong Learning, for Hironnelle to be managed by Dale Valley Community College, six miles away. The Head of Lifelong Learning then asked Cecil, 'Well, do you want to become independent?'

The Hironnelle Centre's future, along with the other five free-standing centres in Daisy County is in the balance. Should it consider becoming a private provider with all the concomitant risks, or should it safely be subsumed into a community college and relinquish its autonomy? Remaining as an LEA adult education provider would be the safer option.

LEA adult education providers ~ a summing up

Of the five counties, only Daisy County has community colleges with adult education management integrated within the school. Only Sunflower County adult education administration wanted a closer partnership with schools. Although Henry Morris's original vision of an autonomous community centre for lifelong learning is now a mirage, I believe most of my respondents would agree, its concept is laudable:

The community school movement, whatever its failings, was an attempt to provide an alternative to crude individualism. (Jefferies, 1992, p25)

Nevertheless, the difficulties of attempting to integrate within one institution such diverse ages and interests create tensions in which the school will always dominate. Even if Daisy County had disclosed more of its audit information, perhaps there are too many variables to judge the more effective form of provision. However, research into the community college system more than 20 years ago reached an unequivocal conclusion:

On all counts, the Specialised Institution, with its own premises seems to provide the best base for adult education. (Mee and Wiltshire, 1978, p10)

This type of free-standing adult education centre might not be economical in rural areas where there is a sparse population. Therefore, using a variety of local premises for learning, including schools, as Cowslip County has done successfully, could be a partial solution. Schools, of course, are valuable resources, incorporating classrooms and specialised teaching rooms, a variety of appropriate equipment and expert teachers. As Marmaduke, the head of lifelong learning in Daisy County, pointed out to me, schools are under used:

How much are schools used, Phil, during the year? What percentage? What is their capacity? It's about 35 per cent. Therefore what we ought to be looking at is how we use that plant more. School is the name but there is equipment in there which should be for everybody, especially ICT equipment. Therefore, we should be far more radical now. We should be looking at schools as community centres.

Accommodation during the day is available if adults are willing and able to fit in with the school timetable. Reginald, the community college principle, enthused about these arrangements:

I enjoy the interchange between our sixth formers particularly and the adults. There's nothing quite like a couple of adults in an A level class to show the students, my students - the children, what motivation's about.

Research has shown that this is a fairly typical response to adults sharing classes with school students:

Indeed, Community School headmasters (sic) stress the benefits to the school more frequently than they do the idea of continuing education as such, largely in terms of the effects which adults have on the standards of behaviour among pupils.

(Mee and Wiltshire, 1978, p86)

In a briefing paper on Local Authority Adult Education prepared for an All-Party Parliamentary Group in Adult Education, the National

Organisation for Adult Learning (NIACE) observed:

A recent Ofsted report on an authority which delivers adult education through community schools points to the difficulties in co-ordinating quality services to adults in a service effectively delivered by schools. (Cara, 1999, p5)

The use of schools for adult education is problematic for many reasons, as I have suggested, but overall:

... the ways in which most schools are structured and run militate against the presence of any group other than children and young people, for whose educational needs and interest they are seen as being primarily established... and tend to lead to the exclusion of most other groups, particularly adults.
(Chapman and Aspin, 1997, p189)

But, these inherent difficulties were recognised a long time ago when:

... it is argued that the concept of the community college or school is thus faulty in the late twentieth century, a relic of ideas which are now outdated and that some new basis for the education of adults should be developed. (Legge, 1982, p108)

This new basis for adult education could be the concept introduced into the Learning Age Green Paper (DfEE, 1998b) of lifelong learning revitalising communities. As Edna of the DfEE told me:

Our job here in the DfEE is to support and facilitate people so that they can get local democracy working in a way that is positive and helpful and helps promote the government's initiatives and supports equally and fits in with all the local priorities.

Part of supporting that local democracy could be the formation of a separate community council, as Marmaduke, Daisy County Head of Lifelong Learning, suggested:

What I would like to see far more is the notion of community groups becoming trusts - and they would actually take responsibility for the building when it is not being used for formal [compulsory] education.

In this way it would satisfy other ideals:

Community education must place at the heart of the project such concepts as fellowship and community. (Jeffs, 1992, p25)

Although school principals, may agree with this sentiment, they might be unable to act on it, as Cecil the principal of the free-standing Hironnelle Centre, observed:

... principals have not only dedicated their lives to the work of secondary schools but are perhaps in one of the most challenging jobs there is - running a school, and whose time and energy is quite limited.

Although many of these difficulties appear insoluble, if schools are contentious partners for adult education providers, no less problematic are further education colleges.

Further Education Colleges

Before April 1993 education was not a commodity.
(Longhurst, 1996, p49)

The 1992 Further and Higher Education (FHE) Act became law on 1st. April 1993. It removed all 425 further education (FE) colleges and 115 sixth-form colleges from local authority control, introduced self-management for these colleges and sought to promote a competitive market for further education (Chadwick, 1997). A quango, the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), funded FE colleges for their vocational and academic (Schedule 2) courses. Section 3 of the 1992 FHE Act stated:

... LEAs have a duty to secure the provision of adequate facilities for courses outside Schedule 2 (mainly those of a recreational nature).

These courses were to be funded by fees and subsidies from the local

authority. The main effect of this legislation, it is argued, was:

... to weaken the powers of the LEAs, relieve them of control of colleges, and to give these a specious independence which, in reality, placed them completely in the power of government-appointed funding bodies, and central government itself.

(Elsdon, 1994, p.325)

In order to receive any finances for providing Schedule 2 courses, LEA institutions, and any other providers outside this new FE sector, had to align themselves with an FE college. Some LEAs, like Cowslip County, which had maintained close relationships with the colleges they used to control found that their funding came by a different route, but little had changed (Johnson and Schagen, 1994; Powell, 1994).

However for many LEAs, including Daisy County, the new law was devastating. Funding for recreational (non-Schedule 2) courses decreased year on year (DfEE, 1999a) and consequently fees had to rise (Winkless, 1997). Finances for Schedule 2 courses were determined by complex formulae in fixed-rate monetary 'units'. Each FEFC unit is based on a course tariff, as well as enrolment, retention and achievement of each student.

External Institutions

In order to obtain FEFC funds for teaching Schedule 2 courses, providers outside the FE sector had to apply to become an External Institution (EI) through sponsorship by a sector college. If EI status is agreed, FEFC funds would be sent to the FE college then passed on to the EI provider of adult education. These FEFC funds must be passed on in full and the administration costs absorbed by the FE college (Yeomans, 1999). Section 6 (5) of the FHE Act detailed the mechanism by which the EI would apply to the FE sector college, called the 'sponsoring body', for

financial support from the FEFC. Three types of these sponsoring arrangements were identified in an FEFC circular (FEFC, 1995a):

- College-led ~ the sponsoring sector college takes an active part in promoting funds for the EI.
- LEA-coordinated ~ bids for funds from the FEFC are organised by the LEA through one or more sector colleges.
- Autonomous external institution ~ an EI independently seeks funding from a sponsoring sector college.

Although none of the five counties in this investigation arranged college-led sponsorship, only Daisy County became a collection of independent, autonomous EIs. The adult education co-ordinator of Daisy County, Agnes, bemoaned, 'It's too late now. We had the opportunity to run things centrally but gave it away.' As many managers of adult education in Daisy County have already explained, they would have preferred a co-ordinated LEA service bidding as a single EI. Some years later, in a letter to all Daisy County adult education providers, Agnes clarified the reasoning for the chosen structure, 'This would have compromised our LEA role as a facilitator of adult education rather than as a manager,' (Letter, 12. 9. 98). So every one of the 27 LEA adult education providing institutions had to make its own arrangements with a sponsoring FE college to form an EI, with no support from Daisy County Hall.

Within the other counties investigated, each LEA co-ordinated their EIs. Only Snowdrop County allowed every provider to become a separate EI, but this was an initial mistake, as Hector, the community education officer, explained:

So we were in a position in Snowdrop where at the time of incorporation we established 23 different external institutions which was like an administrative, bureaucratic nightmare and

ludicrous when you consider that other authorities, like Birmingham, were one external institution.

As this structure was organised before Hector was in post, he was soon able to change it.

What we moved towards after a couple of years was four external institutions based on each of the four major [FE] colleges in Snowdrop County which broke down the bureaucracy and hopefully improved the planning. What we have done now is moved to one external institution for the whole of the county. So with the [FEFC] units we have got we can actually plan strategically across the whole of the county.

Consolidation such as this partially explains the national reduction of EIs from 550 after incorporation of FE colleges to 230 in 1998 - 1999 (Yeomans, 1999).

Daffodil County Adult Education Service chose to be sponsored by two sector colleges, Ivan told me, then after county reorganisation, continued as an EI with just one FE college.

Kelvin, of Cowslip County, had what he described as a 'special relationship' with his local FE colleges as he was involved, in the past, with the appointment of principals. (This was when the LEAs controlled the FE colleges, before the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act.) Kelvin, who chose just one sector college as a sponsor, discussed its relationship with the Cowslip County Adult Education Service EI.

All of our dealings are direct with the FEFC apart from the fact that each year we have to put in our claim through a sector college and we receive our monthly cheque through the sector college. That in itself causes no difficulty. They act purely as a postbag; there is no issue and no hidden agenda in it. It is very difficult to see what benefit there is either, because the principal of the college simply signs our application and I put it in an envelope and send it off.

This was unusual as the FEFC directed that each sponsoring FE college should take a dominant quality assurance role:

The Council expects each external institution to consult its sponsoring college in preparing its strategic plan. (FEFC, 1995a, para. 21)

Certainly for LEAs other than Cowslip County, this new relationship with FE colleges created potentially awkward distractions from the job of securing adequate facilities for adult education:

... much energy has had to be diverted into forging and sustaining relationships, and resources have had to be channelled into supporting and reporting on FEFC-funded activity. (Powell, 1996, p15)

Because EIs could vary in size from a small individual provider to a large metropolitan area, some of these relationships were fraught. Ivan of Daffodil County was aggrieved that the LEA could not bid directly to the FEFC for funding.

Given that I am the ninth largest single bid in the country for an external institution, I would argue strongly that institutions of my size ought to be able to bid, as we are very close in size to a local college in Daffodil County, and yet we have to go through a college to get our money.

Finbar of Sunflower County complained of competition for students between the LEA adult education providers and the FE colleges which sponsored the county service:

As an external institution the difficulty there was that there was really no encouragement to either the college or the LEA to collaborate. The arrangement is sometimes called a 'post box arrangement'. They just passed on a request for funds and gave the funds to us. There was nothing there to encourage them not to compete with us.

Competition was not the only problem with the alliance between sponsoring colleges and their EIs. One concern through the passage of the

FHE Bill was the right of the college to overrule a bid from an EI. This was overcome, Tuckett (1996a) states, by an amendment allowing an appeal to the FEFC. A community education tutor from Daisy County, Jocasta, who found her institution in this situation, explained how difficult it was to resolve:

We stayed as the one and only EI in north Daisy until we had a very unpleasant experience in that I made our application for sponsorship to North Daisy College and it was refused. We therefore found ourselves without a sponsor. We obviously contacted the regional office of the FEFC and explained our dilemma...There were no signs of this appeal being resolved. In fact they [FEFC] indicated that the FEFC had not finalised its structure for dealing with such appeals. They also informed us that whilst the appeal was progressing there would be no funding because we didn't have a sponsor... I contacted all the Daisy FE colleges and was told that they knew of the circumstances and it would not be 'appropriate,' was the word used in most cases, for them to sponsor me because they still worked as a team with the other FE colleges in Daisy County. So after an afternoon of telephone calls it was apparent that I must look outside the county. That is what I did. What happened in the first instance was that ... Cowslip College actually sponsored us.

So, the resulting relationships between LEA EIs and their dominant sponsoring FE colleges ranged from indifference to animosity. Little collaboration was evident, as a Further Education Development Agency report for the Education and Employment committee states:

One of the casualties of the Incorporation of colleges has been the weakening of links between the planning of further education provision and the planning of local authority services.

(FEDA, 1999, para. 17)

Additionally, the different ethos and culture of a large FE college compared with a small local community centre was not recognised in the

FHE Act, yet it was identified in an HMI report at the time.

Participation rates tend to be higher in LEAs which provide this general and basic AE [adult education] through AE centres than those where it is provided in colleges. (DES, 1991b, para.7)

So EIs are offering provision to learners who are otherwise unlikely to participate in education. For example, EIs had the greatest percentage of childcare units in 1996 -97 and a higher proportion of fee remissions for disadvantaged students than FE colleges (Yeomans, 1999). And EIs are attracting these 'hard to reach' students yet receiving less money per unit than FE colleges get from the FEFC. The main reason for this is:

External Institutions are not able to obtain capital funding from the FEFC, so although the accredited part of many programmes have grown there has been no money to enhance accommodation.

(Cara, 1999, p5)

Another reason is historical errors. When the FEFC was conceived, each LEA had to estimate the level of provision of Schedule 2 (academic and vocational) courses and send the figures to the FEFC so that the Average Level of Funding (ALF) per unit could be calculated. However, mistakes were made, as the principal, Reginald, of a community college in Daisy County, reiterated:

... the LEA got their sums wrong and claimed that nobody was in in the summer holidays to talk to... So we ended up getting about, I think about £2 a unit to start with. We had a long battle with the FEFC and it threatened our operation. No question about that. We're now up to about £8 a unit.

To put this figure in perspective, the ALF (average level of funding) for EIs and FE colleges will converge in 2001 - 02 to £17.20 per unit of activity (FEFC, 2000). Finbar of Sunflower County told me of a similar situation:

Regrettably the officer who was responsible for the division between the LEA and the FEFC in the first instance got his sums wrong and our unit of

resource, our Average Level of Funding, was very low.

Even now with a much increased level of funding, EIs believe that their operations are being hampered.

Current funding levels are perceived by EIs as having an adverse effect on quality and their ability to respond to the widening participation agenda.

(Yeomans, 1999, para. 16)

However, after a year of minimal finance, which enfeebled many LEA EIs, a new and more lucrative conduit for funding was introduced in 1994 (HoC, 1998). It was initially called franchising.

Franchising

The providing institution as an EI maintains its independence by simply receiving FEFC funds through a sector college which merely approves its strategic plans. This rate of funding, as I have discussed, is lower than the sponsoring college receives for the same provision. By amalgamating with the FE college, the EI would transform its relationship to a franchisee and simultaneously hugely increase its funding for doing exactly the same work. Jocasta, assistant principal of a Daisy County community college, expressed her frustration at this anomaly:

I would defy anybody to give any logic to the fact that you can have a higher funding to provide adequate provision to your community if you are in a franchise than if you are not.

Hector of Snowdrop County was not tempted to change from a single county EI into a franchise, even though his funding would have increased, 'Our ALF at the moment is about £9-10. Colleges are obviously on £16 -18.'

Kelvin, Head of the Adult Education Service in Cowslip County was equally adamant about remaining as a single county EI. I asked him if he

had ever considered entering a franchise agreement with one of the FE colleges.

No, not at all. Because you are not master of your own arrangements then. I would be very, very reluctant to go down the franchising route, even though financially it had a lot of attractions and even now, because our unit of resource is still quite low, it's under £10 per unit. There is no doubt that the college would give me £12 or £13 per unit tomorrow. I could do a deal with any of the colleges over that. I still think that we provide a better deal for our adults by having this freedom and autonomy than having to comply with college arrangements... I am very much on the inside of the colleges, but we have so much more freedom and flexibility than they do.

Both Hector and Kelvin as heads of their counties' services were aware of the sacrifices they would have to make to their independence and powers of decision making if they were to franchise their provision. Even so, the financial temptations were great.

On the other hand, Ivan, Head of Adult and Continuing Education in Daffodil County explained to me that ten per cent of his provision was franchised to other institutions. Daffodil County LEA was the franchisor.

That's why I say we are unusual in EIs. At this HOLEX meeting, Heads of Large External Institutions, who do FEFC work, we were asked to write down how much franchising we do, how many units were involved. By the time I put mine in, at the time I was the largest. Once you get above ten per cent the FEFC start looking quite hard at you. So we have kept it below ten per cent. Interestingly I would have had a contract, I had it ready to go, for Daisy and Cowslip Counties.

Using his entrepreneurial skills, Ivan had turned a situation which other LEA providers found frustrating to his own advantage. He almost extended his empire across another two counties.

The only two counties which signed franchise agreements with the FE

colleges were Sunflower and Daisy Counties. These were also the two counties which had an initial low level of FEFC funding due to miscalculations. Finbar, Area Community Education Officer of Sunflower County, told me about his franchise arrangements:

We have quite a considerable Schedule 2 provision which is under contract to four colleges. We are now a franchised provider rather than an external institution.

Unlike many Daisy County providers who joined franchises to increase their funding, Finbar wanted a more fruitful relationship with the FE colleges:

We got into the franchise situation essentially to try to build in a win-win situation where our success and the college's success were bound together. Now regrettably that hasn't happened either... In principle the franchise should have produced far more helpful relationships, in practice it hasn't.

Daisy County providers in a franchise were also dismayed with their relationships with their FE college partners, however they did not have their LEA supporting them. Because of the semi-autonomous nature of the 27 Daisy County LEA adult education providers, they were free to choose the type of alliance - sponsorship or franchise - they had with whichever FE colleges. The alliances were made without reference to County Hall officers. This degree of freedom also meant that when things went wrong, community education officers were unable or unwilling to assist.

For several providers franchising gave them the monetary lifeline which rescued them from terminal underfunding as sponsored EIs. Cecil, principal of Hironnelle Centre was one of those providers. He explained the situation in a letter to the then Minister for Lifelong Learning, George Mudie:

... we received as an external institution about £1.50 per unit of activity for our extensive academic and vocational curriculum ... we were forced to move into a franchise arrangement with a local FE college and our funding leapt up to £13.75 per unit.

(Letter, 28.08.1998)

Oswald was in the same situation and similarly took advantage of it:

As an external institution we received £1.39 per unit. We were offered £10.40 per unit to franchise, so I grabbed it... We always have this idea of widening participation reaching more people, getting more people more access to education. One of the ways I see of doing that is to reduce the cost of entry, reduce the barriers. I quickly identified that if you franchised you got far better remuneration, therefore you could pass that on and we did.

Despite the attraction of a massive increase in funding, Reginald, a community college principal, refused to be absorbed by an FE college:

... we don't actually want to become directly franchised by an FE college. We looked at that and we talked quite hard with an FE college and when we were told that we would have to have their logo on our letterhead and that they would have to approve our planning. That was outrageously provocative. So we are not franchised, we are sponsored but that meant we got very little money.

It is quite understandable why the principal of the largest community college in the country would refuse to have the logo of an FE college imposed on the school, but FE colleges were soon able to exert more power than this over their franchisees. This was the result of an FEFC circular (FEFC, 1996) published two years after the introduction of franchising. The franchisor was given control of the curriculum, the students and the staff of the providing franchisee. For Finbar of Sunflower County this strained the collaboration that he was hoping for:

The relationships have rather been one-sided, almost a bullying relationship from the college telling the LEA what they have to do.

In Daisy County, these new franchising powers enabled one of the managers at the franchising FE college to enact a personal vendetta and sack one of Hironnelle's staff. Cecil, principal of the Hironnelle Centre, conveyed his concerns in a letter to the Minister for Lifelong Learning:

The problem is that we are dissatisfied with our current arrangements, but the existing rules and politics of franchising place us in so weak a position that we are unable to do much about it.

(Letter, 28. 08. 1998)

Because the franchising college owns the providing institution's FEFC units of activity, it is difficult to dissolve a franchise contract. However, Percy, a community education tutor at a community college, with the help of the then existing Area Community Education Officer, managed to do just this.

We were being bullied, pressurised; we were being threatened... We found that we'd got to accept it. There was severe bullying going on by the principal [of the FE college] and by the FEFC administrator. I've seen members of our team, North Daisy Community Education, in tears over the treatment that they'd had. It was affecting people's health. I personally had been to the doctor's about this because it was just getting me down - the pressure that they were putting on, the rudeness, the abuse. ...things did get worse and the finally the Area Officer gave tremendous amount of support to all community colleges and briefed their governors about what was going on. And in the end the governors took our recommendations that we should remove ourselves from the franchise agreement with North Daisy FE College, and we seek franchise agreements elsewhere. So, we looked around and of the seven community colleges that were left franchising in North Daisy, five pulled out in one lump.

This aggressiveness of FE college management towards their franchised partner is quite typical, according to Leathwood (2000). She investigated the emergence of 'macho' management styles after the government put

tighter financial constraints on FE colleges by imposing a regime of 'more for less'. Many of her research project respondents described the discourse of this new managerialism in FE colleges. 'Words such as "dictatorial", "bullying" and "macho" were frequently used to describe management styles', (Leathwood, 2000, p177).

The providing community colleges in north Daisy gathered the power to remove themselves from the franchise by being co-ordinated, not by County Hall, but by the now disbanded Area Community Education Office. Crucially, they gained the support of their school governors. However this was not the end of their ordeal, as Percy told me:

There was vendettas, I would say is the best way to describe it, from North Daisy FE College. They did try to disrupt things for us in many ways; trying to set up alternative courses to knock ours. A classic example is from last year's brochure. They were advertising courses that we were advertising on at the same time, with no tutors mentioned. And then we found out that they were actually telling people that they were using the same tutors that we were using. And these tutors had never ever been spoken to.

These spiteful management tactics are not an isolated incident or even a localised problem, because since the incorporation of FE colleges:

... the sector has witnessed some of the most blatant and rampant examples of 'macho' management to be seen in any sector, public or private, in the UK over the last 10 years. (Kerfoot, et. al., 2000, p158)

Oswald, a community education tutor at a community college discussed some of the problems with his franchise. One of these was perceived competition between community education and the FE college.

So, we have their agreement that we can deliver vocational training courses here that they sanction... If their staff see it as competition we don't get their authority, even though we say to their hierarchy, "Look, our community find it

bloody difficult to get over to your establishment.”
They want it in their own community and we leave
that problem with them but very little progress is
made on that.

Thus, competition can occur even when the FE college is situated away
from the LEA provider’s community.

Cecil, the principal of the Hironnelle Centre wrote to the new
incoming Minister for Lifelong Learning, George Mudie, about problems
of, ‘LEA centres in a franchise battling against mediocrity and predatory
top-slicing’, (Letter, 10. 7. 1998). The reply by Mr. Mudie was unwilling to
accept criticisms of franchising:

Perhaps I can start by saying that we recognise the
many potential advantages to franchising. It
enables further education to be delivered flexibly
and efficiently to many different types of learners
and may make an important contribution in
helping to draw people into learning opportunities.
(Letter, 7. 8. 1998)

Mr Mudie’s reply had been written before the Education and
Employment Committee’s report on Further Education (HoC, 1998) had
been published. This obviously influenced his attitude towards
franchising as his views had changed when interviewed a few months
later:

Colleges have been encouraged up till now to live
by the law of survival of the most ruthless... They
franchised courses outside their region, at any cost,
and if they saw any chance of pinching somebody
else’s work, they did it. That sort of nonsense must
come to an end. (Mudie quoted by Low, 1999b, p31)

This signified a reversal of the government’s espousal of franchising.

Another difficulty with franchises is that, unlike sponsorship of an EI
which has a fairly fixed rate of funding, the college can pass on an
arbitrarily calculated ALF per unit of activity at a time which suits them.

The college will *usually* make a payment to the

external provider often based on a set amount per FEFC unit. [my emphasis] (Dominey, 2000, p12)

Oswald was concerned that the FE college informed him of his rate of funding after he had published his programme listing the courses on offer and their fees.

I have an annual contract that my governors sign with South Daisy College. It doesn't come out until very late in the academic year, sometimes August. And bang, if they decide to knock down the rate of remuneration, you are lumbered.

Withholding information in this way rendered financial planning almost impossible if the LEA provider did not know what rate of funding would be received. Additionally, Jocasta received funding from her franchising college which bore no relationship to FEFC funding units:

... their proposal in terms of funding was closet, if you like; it was completely opaque. I expected to see something that showed us receiving a percentage of the funding per [FEFC] unit that they got. Instead you could not relate the offer they were making to us to the FEFC documentation.

These difficulties had to be endured with little or no help from Daisy County Hall. When I asked Marmaduke, the Head of Lifelong Learning, about franchising he did not seem to understand why LEA providers were impelled to enter franchising arrangements or the fact that there were no benefits to the franchise other than extra funds.

... many of our [community] colleges in Daisy and our [free-standing] units in Daisy have elected to franchise because they would wish the FE college to go through all their misery of bureaucracy.

In fact, the LEA provider may lack the trust to allow the franchising FE college to deal with the administration. Jocasta, assistant principal at a Daisy County community college, discussed this with me:

I certainly spent a lot of time reading FEFC papers

and I subscribe to them and have all their documents sent to me; I believe it's £200 per year from our budget. At least it enables you to 'keep up to speed' - a terrible FEFC expression, but somehow you needed to do that in order to make sure that you were not ripped off.

Nevertheless, because individual providers were in such an enfeebled situation, careful scrutiny could not prevent what would be seen in hindsight as the inevitable drop in funding. The uncertainty of the level of funding rendered financial forecasting and hence programme planning little more than guesswork. One of the reasons for the £120,000 deficit in the adult education budget at one Daisy County community college was because FEFC funding from its FE college plummeted within two years from an initial £13.75 to just £8.50 per unit of activity. The franchising FE college retained the remaining sums given by the FEFC. It appears that this was standard practice throughout the country.

David Eade, Chief Executive of Barnsley College, ... reported that his FE college had been able to cross-subsidise its in-college provision by more than £2 per unit as a result of the surpluses earned on its franchising activities. (Styles, 2000, p24)

This is a modest amount considering that about £40 million was given through franchising to just 15 colleges to subsidise their own costs, according to Styles (2000). Massive sums of money were flowing into franchising FE colleges at the same time as LEA providers were being underfunded to do the difficult and costly work of trying to attract and retain otherwise reluctant learners. Although local authority and voluntary providers comprise 24 per cent of franchising activity (HoC, 1998). '... these organisations have seen a marked diminution of investment over the last ten years,' (NIACE, 1999c, para.8).

Cecil, principal of the Hironnelle Centre, sent a letter (16. 10. 1998)

about the problems of franchising to the director of NIACE, the national organisation for adult learning. The Associate Director of Programmes and Policy, Sue Cara, replied:

... at the last meeting of the External Institutions Working Party I raised the problems that some franchised institutions were having and the effects that unreliable and low level funding could have on provision for students. I knew that colleagues in Lincolnshire have experienced similar problems to those you outline. (Letter, 29. 10. 1998)

It was reassuring to learn that not only were difficulties with franchising being discussed, but also that the experiences of Daisy County were not an isolated problem.

Franchising was responsible for much of the growth in the FE sector. In 1994-95 only 5 per cent of students in the sector were franchised; this grew to 19 per cent in 1996-97 (HoC, 1998). It was praised in the Kennedy Report:

We are clear that the use of public funds for franchising ... opens up new opportunities for learning and learners. (Kennedy, 1997, p49)

Within four months of the publication of the Kennedy Report, the auditors KPMG were commissioned by the FEFC to collect information about the relative costs of direct provision of education and training by FE colleges and franchising - which was now euphemistically called 'collaborative provision' (FEFC, 1997). During the interim period the FEFC inspectorate conducted their own investigation of franchising. The introduction to the report stated:

One of the main findings of the survey is that there are no inherent weaknesses in collaborative provision [franchising]. (FEFC, 1998c, p.i)

The KPMG audit (FEFC, 1999a) was the sixty-seventh document concerning franchising to be issued by the FEFC in less than six years. It

found that direct provision of education and training by FE colleges was 37 per cent more costly than the same work done by their franchisees. Or to put it more plainly:

The profits that were made on franchising - typically buying work at £6.00 - £9.00 that was being billed to the FEFC at £15 - £17 - meant that the normal work of the [FE] college was actually much more expensive than the competition, not less!

(Perry, 2000, p71)

Shortly after the KPMG report was issued the FEFC published a circular (FEFC, 1999b) announcing that franchising funds would be cut by one-third. The Chief Executive of the FEFC, David Melville, said, 'Colleges undertaking substantial franchising should not receive a windfall financial benefit,' (Melville quoted by Nash, 1999a, p27).

Ironically some FE colleges did not benefit from this windfall as, 'the number of financially weak colleges increased from 6 per cent in 1994 to 27 per cent in 1997,' (Crequer and McGavin, 1998, p35). Other FE colleges, tempted by huge sums to be made through franchising, made fraudulent claims and incurred vast debts: Halton £6.4 million, Bilston £12 million, Gwent Tertiary £7 million and Stoke-on-Trent £8 million (Kingston, 1999a). By this time FE colleges even had their own column in the satirical magazine *Private Eye*. As a Professor of Education at the University of Liverpool observed:

Since further education colleges were freed from local authority control they have been hitting the headlines for all the wrong reasons.

(Smithers, 2000, p17)

The Secretary of State for Education, David Blunkett, has called a halt to franchising (Nash, 1999a) which is likely to occur when the new Learning and Skills Council takes over the funding duties of the FEFC and the LEAs. I e-mailed Edna of the DfEE to request a little more information

about the future of franchising. Edna replied:

So you see we are moving away generally from franchising and external institutions and for layers of sub-contracting except in the most exceptional cases of need - how it works in practice will be another matter! (e-mail, 18. 1. 2000)

Now that franchising is disappearing, its folly can be judged:

... how bizarre that a massively over-audited sector let this dragon, unsupervised, out of its lair, where LEA 'sloppiness' had prevented it for years? It stands proud alongside BCCI, Robert Maxwell and Nick Leeson in the auditors' hall of fame.

(Perry, 2000, p69)

Yet, LEA providers of FEFC-funded courses, despite their subordinate relationship with FE colleges, did benefit from increased finances. Now structures must change.

Can genuine collaborative partnerships between providers in the post-compulsory education sector now be formed? I needed to investigate other partnerships with LEA adult education providers.

Partnerships

These accounts of LEA adult education providers' relationships with community colleges (secondary schools) and FE colleges show that they have often been riddled with difficulties. As a consequence of this the needs of the learners have been subsumed within a deliberately fragmented post-16 education and training structure, Ryley (1997) argues, in which the previous government promoted the alleged benefits of competition and market forces. The director of the think tank Demos, Tom Bentley, elaborated on the problems for further and adult education providers:

One of the things that happened over the last ten years was that we got into a much more openly

competitive situation with a series of players or interests who were also heavily institutionalised... and the danger in that kind of situation when lobbying and policy discussion takes place is that it turns into a zero sum game [one person's loss is another's gain]. (Bentley, 1999, p41)

This situation was graphically described by the Head of the Adult Education Service in Cowslip County, Kelvin:

The problem is going to be, and I don't think anyone should minimise this, breaking down some of the barriers and breaking down also that element of suspicion of competitiveness that was engendered during the time of the last government.

The present government claims to be attempting to offset these damaging effects of competition by fostering lifelong learning partnerships throughout the country (DfEE, 1999b) to promote learning within localities. The other major reason for encouraging collaboration is to promote sharing between partners.

No single agency can meet the varied learning needs of adults and collaboration with others can offer stronger more effective ways of using existing resources. (Sargant, 1998, p2)

These shared resources would include not only buildings and equipment but also the breadth and depth of available expertise. I wanted to discuss these concepts of partnership with my respondents. I asked managers of adult education in the five counties studied how they would define partnership. Ivan of Daffodil County appreciated the advantages of working collaboratively despite the obvious hazards:

Well, as far as I am concerned partnership has to be to the mutual benefit of the partners. Colleges are very keen to talk about partnership which is just a euphemism for how we can get our hands on your provision.

However, he added that partnerships are now working:

Last year we started doing things more collaboratively. Quite clearly it has had this effect, but prior to that it was every man to grab as much cherry tree as possible.

Kelvin of Cowslip County was similarly chastened by his experiences of partnerships:

I'll be positive in a moment. The more cynical view of partnership is that a few of you come together to bid for something, get some money then go away and do your own thing...

Sargant (1998) also discusses these bad experiences of partnerships formed solely for bidding requirements. Kelvin then described an ideal collaboration:

Real partnership, I think, is where people genuinely come together because there is some added value to them being together.

Hector of Snowdrop County described some of this 'added value':

Yes, I think it's recognising strengths. It's respecting the role that each of the partners can bring to the partnership or the collaborative venture. I think now in the new culture it is actually necessary to say, "Yes, you are better at doing that than we are, please take it on and we'll do something else." So it's moving from the continuum of competition, vulnerability and protecting one's own back to trying to be a little more grown up and open and actually recognising where the expertise lies.

This notion that the LEA and its providers of adult education should admit their weaknesses and concentrate on strengths was elaborated by Finbar of Sunflower County.

It means partly sharing with and capitalising on other people's assets and abilities. It means being able to do less as a county council without reducing the opportunities for the participants, for the students and the potential students. So it means to me finding others who have an interest in adult

learning and seeing to what extent we can do things together or we can facilitate and encourage them to do things, rather than doing them alone ourselves.

By contrast with managers in the other counties, Marmaduke, Head of Lifelong Learning in Daisy County, avoided giving a definition. However, Agnes, in charge of adult education, seemed disillusioned with the whole idea of partnership:

Well, I do sigh deeply because it's one of the FEFC buzz words. Everything has got to be done in partnership, and what it actually means is competitive partnership because you'll still be up against everybody else and you'll be up against full time funders. But, it's the kernel of a good idea... I do worry about all the senior officers whose jobs it is to go to partnership committees in various guises in Daisy and Cowslip counties... Quite what happens after they've all had their cosy lunches, and what the curriculum enrichment genuinely is when you put those senior officers around the table, because they aren't necessarily very aware of what the local possibilities might be.

She was clearly painfully aware that partnership policy was discussed at both a physical and spiritual distance from the localities in which the learning occurs. Ranson (1994) suggests that to combat this bureaucratic centralization the principles of polycentrism and partnership from the social democratic past should be restored.

... public services need to acknowledge plural centres of power - centre, locality, institution and community - which must collaborate if the needs of all are to be met. (Ranson, 1994, p114)

The difficulty with the partnerships that I have described so far is that they have unequal power relationships, with the dominant partner oppressing the weaker adult education provider. A desirable factor in forming collaborations is for all partners to accept a diminished autonomy for the greater good. Although hazards within this relationship are

recognised:

There may also be risk factors for institutions that give up some autonomy. A cynical description is 'sleeping with the enemy to get money'.

(Schuller, 1998, para. 11.2)

This description, despite being cynical, encapsulates, for example, the reality of franchising, described earlier, between the Daisy County adult education providers and the 'enemy' FE colleges. In his second report on lifelong learning Professor Bob Fryer offered a different approach to partnership formation.

Powerful and well-resourced partners in particular need to declare what they bring to the partnership as much as what benefits they expect to derive from it and be generous with their dealing with smaller and less well-resourced contributors.

(Fryer, 1999, p29)

The notion of equality in partnerships is therefore demoted in favour of magnanimity by more powerful associates. Norbert, an adult education manager in a Daisy County community college gave an intriguing definition of partnership incorporating this concept:

Norbert: It's like people who race motor bikes and sidecars. One of them has to pilot the motor bike and the other one has to be in the sidecar, but if the sidecar passenger doesn't know exactly what he is doing on the bends then the whole thing is going to flip over. So it's different skills, but each skill interlocking to provide balance and elegance.

Phil: That's a very interesting metaphor because the accepted definition of partnerships would be equal partners, but you say no.

Norbert: Because there is no such thing as an equal partnership. I believe there was until not many years ago... The skill in running a partnership is sometimes by reining back your own strength in one area if it is going to over balance the whole set up.

Norbert had perceptively interpreted the current ethos of partnership - a vital process according to Edna of the DfEE, ' ... getting a handle on the psychology of partnerships is really going to be crucial to local authorities.'

Edna continued:

It's about getting their act together within the local authority. Some of the new unitaries apparently have now developed a lifelong learning approach and it's about getting the act together with others in the local area and about exchanging plans, and this is what I always hear that people keep their plans very secret. This has really got to end and we need to get together a clearer framework.

So the government is requiring local authority services to work together and be represented at a network of partnerships throughout the country. Edna explained this new structure:

What we are talking about is partnership fora across England which will involve the LEAs, further education colleges and TECs [Training and Enterprise Councils] and which will be tasked with helping achieve these National Targets and with some other key areas that the government deems of particular importance, including basic skills.

These fora were to be known as Lifelong Learning Partnerships which were discussed in the chapter on the History of LEA Adult Education.

The nature of partnerships

Hector of Sunflower County reflected on these changes:

It's like new territory, or new ground, that we are entering and there is a lot of baggage still from the past that we have got to work through. So we have got to be more open but we have got to be realistic as well. It is forming those relationships. The most effective way of making progress is through trust and individual relationships with key people within each of the organisations.

Similarly, Cecil of the Hironnelle Centre in Daisy County described the

kind of relationships he wanted:

What I would value is partnerships with sympathetic and imaginative partners who are able to provide things which we could not provide ourselves.

With his entrepreneurial skills, Ivan of Daffodil County had engendered some of these virtues within his partnerships, but he still perceived other complications:

The only problem with partnerships is that they have got to be formed for the right reason otherwise they won't stay together if it's solely financial.

There may be many 'right reasons' for forming partnerships depending upon the perspectives and interests of each partner. For example, Ursula Howard, a director of the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA), believes that LEA adult education has endured through forming alliances, presumably with institutions within the FE sector which she supports.

Local authority provision has survived where it has been possible to change the structure and forms of AE [adult education] by creating working relationships with organisations who approach learning with different sets of interests and structures of accountability. (Howard, 1996, p5)

Assumptions in this statement should spur further research on collaborative relationships, as Agnes of Daisy County suggests:

And there's a dreadful given in the notion of partnership, that the organisation is of sufficient size, or the individuals within it are of sufficient commitment to what they are doing to be able to put the time into exploring where the common ground is to make a partnership flourish... I think there is a role for exploring how organisations can work together and get smarter at the money that they spend.

There is more than a hint of irony in requesting more co-operation

between organisations when Agnes presides over a semi-autonomous, fragmented Daisy County community education service. Nevertheless, Agnes is correct. For example, Oswald, the sole manager of community education in a small Daisy County community college found the commitment of his large partner FE college lacking:

So, partnership restricts. At the current moment it restricts us rather than promotes us. We have been in partnership with South Daisy College for five years now and for five years I have been saying, "Let's develop the curriculum for the community." And for five years they have turned a blind eye because they are more worried about their own establishment.

The restriction of smaller providers within the new local partnership structures has already been observed:

In the experience of the best local learning partnerships over the past year show that strategic planners with cash in their pocket can co-operate to improve the mesh of learning support at local levels. But many... small providers feel excluded from this process. (Tuckett, 1999a, p.VI)

Evaluation of the European Socrates Adult Education programme shows that relationships take time to build between partners and this requires stable funding, therefore:

... there is a tendency for existing partnerships to be at an advantage and to (continue to) gain competitive funding rather than encourage new partnerships with new players.

(Schuller, 1998, para. 11.1)

So, if small adult education providers feel excluded now, they are unlikely to be invited to join existing partnerships in the future. Thus the present network of collaboration should be investigated.

Partnership Formation

A Council of Europe report has emphasised the importance of learning providers stepping out of the education network to form partnerships:

Education requires that educators give up their monopoly on education. The common ground of all projects is their drive towards bringing education into multi-partnerships.

(Bogard, 1994, p64)

This notion of educators relinquishing their 'monopoly' of education is just what Finbar of Sunflower County is planning:

We think there is a lot of scope in the voluntary sector, with voluntary organisations which have an educational dimension. In my own area I can think of several: the Abbey is an arts centre, Church Arts Centre is another one, then there is Priory Education Museum. All of those are primarily cultural institutions which have an educational dimension and we think that with a bit of encouragement from us they can develop their educational side. So as our own budget reduces we think perhaps we can encourage others to do more.

This form of lateral thinking in partnership formation is being encouraged by the government but I wondered if this might dilute the existing provision of adult education. It appeared that Sunflower County was the only county not to restrict its partnerships to education and training providers.

I asked Marmaduke Head of Lifelong Learning in Daisy County who, significantly, is responsible to the Director of Education, Arts and Libraries, about partnerships. Because of the semi-autonomous structure of Daisy County adult education provision, he named just one partnership between local authority transport and an FE college. However discussions were in progress in a:

... 16 plus working party. It's convened by the LEA, by myself, and that consists of all the FE providers in Daisy County, the universities - higher education

providers in Daisy, FEFC, the TECs and schools.

These were all restricted to education providers, just as in Snowdrop County, although Hector described a more creative list of partners:

We have a group called CALF, which is the County Adult Learners' Forum, which comprises of community education representatives, representatives from each of the six tertiary FE colleges in Snowdrop County as well as representatives from the voluntary sector - the WEA [Workers' Educational Association] and the WI [National Federation of Women's Institutes]. We also invite some HE representation.

Hector also explained an interesting relationship with primary schools:

We are involved in Communities Education Development Centres, SHARE parental involvement project; so we are now working in 13 primary schools on the SHARE parental involvement project, which again I see as adult learning/widening participation.

Therefore the educational partnerships that Hector fostered within the education network were outside the typical post-16 range.

Ivan was content with his partnerships although he did not specify the range:

We have got over 20 partners at the moment and that is without any government particularly breathing down our necks saying, "Look, if you go into partnership, we will give you some extra money."

Ivan was obviously cynical about forming partnerships purely for financial gain, so he was delighted to tell me about a true collaboration:

We have got a partnership which we just generated with [an FE] College to make provision.. partly to do with the social deprivation. That college has approached it from a remarkably realistic point of view. We have had no trouble agreeing figures. It is absolutely true, there is nothing negative about this. It was a joy that we were talking to another

organisation that was being perfectly real about the monies involved.

Kelvin of Cowslip County, who had not experienced this joy of a 'realistic' partnership, held some disillusioned views about the viability of partnerships:

You can get the head of an organisation to come to a meeting here at County Hall, whether it's the WEA, the area secretary of the U3A [University of the Third Age], a college principal, whatever, and you can agree something there but, of course, it's what happens on the ground that counts. The person who is attending the meeting doesn't always, for whatever reasons, necessarily ensure that what has been agreed centrally is what is carried out locally, for all sorts of reasons, I don't know why that happens. We have got a lot of duplication even in this county which isn't blessed with provision in many ways.

Therefore this duplication of provision is another reason for adult education providers to consider, as Bogard (1994) argues, loosening their hold on education and allowing other organisations to provide.

Some creative and genuine partnerships are working within the LEA adult education structure. However, certain managers are understandably cautious about associations with other organisations when they are still smarting from soured relationships within partnerships.

Conclusion

The problems of LEA adult education within partnerships have arisen from its comparatively lowly status. Adult education has a reputation of being a part-time hobby for both learners and tutors. It has never had its professionalism recognised or received the prestige of other educational sectors. During the last decade, the life-enhancing qualities of adult education were virtually ignored in favour of courses which led to

qualifications. Because LEA adult education's previously vibrant role as a social movement has diminished, its cosy domesticating function appears prominent. It is therefore vulnerable to bullying by more virile, wealthier and better co-ordinated partners.

Some of these difficulties I have described between LEA adult education partnerships with schools and FE colleges can arise from misconceptions.

Education sectors are notorious for their turf wars and for talking down each others' traditions. Schools know there is no pastoral care in FE, just as FE is convinced that schools know nothing of the world of work: both sectors are however united in the knowledge that adult education is a mixture of unfocused Trotskyism and flower arranging.
(Perry, 1996, p142)

A better understanding of the work done in each of these three sectors by all partners will contribute to the trust and respect needed for the foundation of any partnership.

FE colleges and the LEAs never had a history of working well together, argues Fieldhouse (1996a). Relationships between them were strained even more by the deliberate emasculation of LEA adult education after the 1988 ERA and the 1992 FHE Act. The latter divided the curriculum allowing only FE colleges direct access to FEFC funds for post-16 education. And it was this FE sector:

... that was to determine the contours of the delivery, structuring and governance of adult learning. The plight of community education within the FE sector is rather typified by the managerialism in whose grip that sector is increasingly held and by the technocratic approach to the organisation and practice of community-based learning. (John, 2000, p16)

Both this managerialism and the FE sector's technocratic approach to

community learning did not bode well for the LEA adult education partners. As the Lifelong Learning Minister of the time commented about FE colleges:

The last Government gave them an agenda of survival at any cost, regardless of what you did to your neighbour. (Mudie, 1999, p20)

Even if this competitiveness ceases, there remains a clash of cultures between the FE sector and LEA adult education. For example, it appears that the FE sector concentrates its energies on the 16 - 19 age group when 79 per cent of its students are adults studying part-time (Reisenberger, 1997). Investigations show that, '90 per cent of courses designed for 16 - 19 year-olds have students over 19' (Nash, 1999b, p.III). And the reason for FE colleges favouring younger learners resides in the funding methodology bias towards full-time students (Lucas, 1999). The Secretary of State for Education and Employment in the previous government admonished FE colleges for ignoring the predominance of adults in their institutions:

I am not sure that this change in the student population is recognised even by those working in the colleges... Certainly there is some evidence that not all institutions and their staff yet follow the best practice in, for example, adapting their teaching programmes and opening hours to take account of this. (Shephard quoted by Ingham, 1996, p247)

However, as dominant partners, FE colleges are continuing to impose this emphasis of younger learners onto the LEA adult education sector. The Further Education Development Agency produced a video (Dixon and Moorse, 1998) for peer assessment of teaching practice in which an FEFC inspector gives a graded assessment on each of the teachers observed. Of the three observation sessions filmed, two classes contained exclusively 16 - 19 year-olds. Yet this instructional video is used as a good teaching practice guide for FE colleges and their partners, including LEA adult

education providers for which it is inappropriate. It has been long understood that, 'The characteristics of adult students are different from 16-19 year-olds' (McGivney, 1991, pp.289 - 290). Unfortunately, some FE colleges are still not accepting this message. A recent Audit Office report (NAO, 2000) has revealed that FE colleges with a high proportion of adult students have poor rates of retention and achievement.

I have also outlined the problems of using schools for adult education. These difficulties are not just about the evening only provision which obstructs those on shift work, the burgeoning part-time workers:

... and for anyone whose work or or lifestyle makes it impossible to reach the centre at that time.

(Legge, 1982, p103)

These obstacles of sharing accommodation and resources, as a comparatively feeble partner in a school, are minor when set against the managerial interference by the principal and governing body. This situation was obliquely referred to in a Daisy County Council document concerning the future of adult and community learning:

Secondary schools can cost effectively contribute to learning provision for adults as well as for young people who are their core business. The commitment of the headteacher and governing body to this wide role underpins their contribution.

(DCC, 2000a, p3)

Administrative conflict between schools and adult education occurred only in Daisy County which allows the school headteacher to manage the local community education. Cowslip County rented space in schools; both Daffodil and Snowdrop Counties were developing adult learning centres in redundant primary schools and in purpose-built institutions. Because it was selling its adult education buildings, Sunflower was the only county that was looking for a more 'creative' partnership with schools.

A Social Exclusion Unit report (SEU, 1998) outlining a strategy for neighbourhood renewal commits the DfEE to assessing a variety of approaches to attracting learners from deprived communities. Among its proposals is the use of schools as a focus for adult education and other community services.

There is no doubt, however, that both the physical and intellectual resources of schools should be used more imaginatively. Consequently, there must be an adult-friendly ethos along with facilities for the maturer learners. This can apply equally to primary schools which are traditionally more welcoming. The benefits primary schools can bring to adult education have already been recognised in an HMI report (DES, 1991b).

Adult learning, however, need not be restricted to schools, colleges and adult education centres:

The whole notion of educative venue must be reviewed now that any venue, any workplace, library or public building may become a venue for education. (Bogard, 1994, p66)

To achieve this, partnership between organisations is being endorsed:

The Government expects institutions to collaborate rather than compete. Enterprise in FE is now about institutions planning and collaborating to meet the needs of an identified market, normally within a local area. (FEDA, 1999, para. 11)

Local Learning Partnerships have been established to nurture this collaboration, but there has been no clear delineation between their roles and those of the local Learning and Skills Councils.

... the role of local learning partnerships within the family of organisations needs to be explicit, and clear boundaries established... There is a danger currently that impetus will be lost due to uncertainty about their future role.

(FEFC, 1999b, paras. 76 - 77)

As a result of these uncertainties the DfEE commissioned research to support these Learning Partnerships which is now published as a guide for key issues and good practice for the implementation of consultations (DfEE, 2000d).

One of the major tasks of the local Learning Partnerships is to attempt to meet the National Targets for learning. Currently, slow progress is being made in meeting these targets. Tony Cann of NACETT, the organisation which sets the targets, while addressing a conference on Learning Partnerships let slip that:

He believed that if Partnerships were to be effective they should be led by employers rather than people from 'the exchequer-supported system'.

(DfEE, 1999d, pp. 1 - 2)

Unfortunate use of belligerent language such as this may inhibit the harmony that any viable partnership demands.

LEA representatives have a place on these Learning Partnerships and local authorities will be given a duty to contribute to adult and community learning (DfEE, 1999a). As Edna of the DfEE stressed, 'Local authorities must respond to the gauntlet that is being thrown down on partnership'. But will there be a voice in there for adult education? Cecil of the Hironnelle Centre in Daisy County thinks not:

Despite the fact that LEA representatives form the majority of those on advisory committees, LEA adult education specialists are hardly represented at all. This is because the majority of community education units in Daisy County - that is fund-holding community colleges - are managed by another sector.

Martin (1992) predicted problems with partners and the resulting perverse mutation of community education which evolved after legislation introduced new funding regulations:

... reflecting the neo-liberal elements of New Right

ideology is that of entrepreneurial post-Fordist schools and colleges selectively hijacking the rhetoric of community education as a public relations exercise to ensure their own survival - and to hell with the rest! (Martin, 1992, p32)

Thus, schools and FE colleges have no incentive to collaborate on equal terms with other providers. The only advantage for the LEA adult education providers to enter a partnership is money, as Oswald observed, 'Often it pays dividends but it increases the bureaucracy incredibly.'

Elsdon (1994) believes that the major weakness has been the absence of a system, or a central policy or even any national consensus about what adult education is or should be. As Agnes of Daisy County bemoaned:

I think that adult education is seen as generally a good thing but that we don't celebrate it or argue for it enough and it is seen as something the rest of us do to fill in a bad night on the telly. As opposed to anything that is a bit more life affirming.

With this attitude towards adult education, or even lifelong learning, it would be difficult to plan a reliable level of provision over the whole country. Edna of the DfEE explained that LEAs should no longer try to provide all types of adult education:

... it's not all about local authorities doing all the providing anymore, it's about local authorities being much more focussed about where they can add value and about using informal groups, community groups, clubs and also making good use of FE, working together with FE for the benefit of the local community.

Monitoring this co-operative provision will be the Learning and Skills Council and its local arms. This is a structure which Elsdon (1994) recommended where national and local fora for the development of adult education should ensure both rights of access and duty of provision. And:

... the kind of institutional ethos that should arise... would be that of a 'collective for learning' as

opposed to notions of control, imposition, profitability and regulation (Elsdon, 1994, p328)

Even with an optimistic outlook on the forthcoming national and local adult education structures, this kind of institutional ethos engendered by partnership already appears no more than a utopian vision.

I have attempted to reveal some of the difficulties associated with LEA adult education partnerships, particularly those with schools and FE colleges. My respondents concur with evidence from the literature that market driven policies imposed during the last decade have militated against true collaboration. Macho management practices in some institutions, an adjunct to government policies of wanting more learning for less money, have further dissipated the loyalty and trust required for co-operation amongst partners. Now the government has proposed that different providers will in future be treated equally:

There must be a level playing field for all the different types of provider, sector and area of the country - it should not be harder for providers to get into one area than another. We are bringing together all the different sectors of learning provision with the aim of treating them on a consistent basis. (DfEE, 2000b, para. 5.19)

It would be fascinating to know just how this is going to work in practice. Is there the political will to treat partners consistently, or is this another example of empty rhetoric? Time will tell.

Now that I have analysed my findings from my investigations, I would like to draw together the notions and concepts which have arisen concerning LEA adult education and the fostering of a learning society.

Conclusion

I have immersed myself in a profound learning process during the last few years and followed various forms of enquiry. Sometimes these lines of investigation have proved unsuitable and I have had to let them go. At other times the sheer volume of information, which was often conflicting, left me confused and apprehensive about being able to find a clear focus. However, from my data two obvious questions concerning LEA structures and partnerships emerged which I was able to explore.

Obvious limitations to my dissertation concern the range of respondents, the restricted geographical location of my chosen counties and the confines of the breadth and depth of my enquiries. However, I have attempted to provide accounts of the interpretation of official discourse and policy, and their local implementation, in a wider context.

A theme which threads throughout my investigation is that LEA adult education has never received the recognition it deserves. It has been generally considered as a hobby for both the students and the teachers.

Vague legislative language has allowed the erroneous suggestion that adult education is a discretionary service to gain credibility. Hence within central and local government it has tended to have a low political and financial priority. This has occurred particularly during the last decade when the curriculum has been split. Academic and vocational learning has been valued for its alleged potential to boost national competitiveness. All other types of learning, called 'leisure pursuits for adults,' have had to be supported through fees and limited subsidies from the local authority.

The strength of affection shown by learners for adult education, both locally and nationally, means it has effectively resisted government attempts to dismantle its provision by LEAs. Even so, LEAs will no longer

have any financial obligations for adult education or the statutory duty to ensure its provision after the 2000 Learning and Skills Act comes into force in April 2001. Despite promises in the legislation for key contributions by local authorities, this deliberate withering of LEA powers for adult education is strongly opposed by the Local Government Association. 'Taking this service out of local government will not achieve a more even delivery,' (LGA, 1999, p1).

It was this latter statement, a condemnation of government policy, which contributed to a consultation on the **Learning to Succeed** White Paper. My findings tend to show that consultation is a misleading process which has little or no effect on policy. The Labour Government has disregarded the pleas from the LGA and others to maintain adult education within the remit of the LEAs.

In its broadest definition, adult education has been ignored also by academics. A Professor at the University of London Institute wrote, 'Education is simply upbringing... bringing up children or young people', (White, 1982, p5). Even the foremost institution in the country for educating adults, the Open University, scorned an initial proposal to introduce a course on the theory of adult education (Bell, 1996). Yet it is adult education provided by the LEA and its former partners the WEA and university extra-mural departments which has innovatively influenced other kinds of education:

Adult educators were at least a generation ahead of mainstream colleagues in embracing discovery methods and student-centred techniques, for example. Cultural Studies and Local History were pioneered and developed by adult learners long before they entered undergraduate or school curricula. (Parrott, 1996, p46)

Similar claims about its influence are made by the WEA adult

educator, Raymond Williams:

That shift of perspective about the teaching of arts and literature and their relation to history and to contemporary society began in Adult Education, it didn't happen anywhere else. (Williams, 1992, p260)

These innovations are continuing to influence other education sectors. Now Key Skills, a mixture of Communications, Application of Number and Information Technology have been introduced into the revamped 16 - 19 Curriculum 2000 (OCR, 2000). Yet Key Skills were incorporated into Access to Higher Education courses back in 1978 when the DES asked seven local authorities to pilot the schemes (Fieldhouse, 1996a).

In spite of these pioneering approaches, adult education has had, arguably, the lowest status of any educational sector. Consequently it has been in subservient relationships with secondary schools and FE colleges both of which embody quite different learning cultures. Now, the 2000 Learning and Skills Act distinguishes between education provided as an entitlement for 16 - 19 year olds which must be 'proper' and that for adults which needs to be merely 'reasonable'. The search for the definition of 'adequate' provision began after it was introduced into the 1944 Education Act. The unravelling of the enigmatic word 'reasonable' was attempted during the Lords' Committee Stage of the Bill (Hansard, 2000). Further searches for its meaning are likely to be accompanied by all the previous problems of bureaucratic interpretation of 'adequate' quality and quantity at the minimum funding levels.

Bell (1996) asserts that Britain is wrong not to assume that adult education is a national essential like schooling, as it is in other parts of Europe. This prevailing lack of recognition for adult education within lifelong learning might have its origin in attempting to be too broad:

Lifelong learning quite properly encompasses many different levels, purposes, contents, outcomes and

motives for learning... But precisely because of this, there is always an accompanying danger that the field will become so all inclusive that it inhibits sharpness of focus. (Fryer, 1999, para. 2.4)

Adult education centres might provide one hundred courses or more and people attend these classes for as many different reasons. Perhaps attempts to embrace such a wide range of learning has diverted attention away from the purposes of adult education.

The Purposes of Adult Education

Adult education within a learning society has, according to Gorard et.al. (1998), three strands.

1. *A cultured arena for a civilised life.*

Some of these factors include -

- 'One of life's pleasures', (Kennedy, 1997, p1)
- An alternative to a, 'descent into a new dark age of the human spirit', (Longworth and Davies, 1996, p145).

This is part of the historical view of liberal adult education as a social movement which encourages a spirit of community.

2. *A way of promoting greater inclusiveness in society.*

In this strand adult education is said to be:

- Vital for good health (DoH, 1999).
- Likely to increase self-confidence and self-esteem (Aldridge and Lavender, 2000).
- Essential for an equal society and a participatory democracy (Benn, 1996).

It is this view of adult education to encourage the inclusion of the disadvantaged which was emphasised by the Russell Report (DES, 1973) and more recently by the present Labour Government.

Both these strands form the traditional aspects of adult education

which have now been challenged by a third global economy agenda.

3. *An economic imperative.*

It is this factor, the most problematic, which has dominated during the last decade to the detriment of the other two strands. It is only this instrumental form of adult education that has been comparatively well funded by the FEFC.

Training is generally aimed at those in full-time work, leaving aside part-time workers and the unemployed. Investors in People, a kitemark for organisations which encourage staff development, is given only to those with ten or more employees. A large proportion of the population is employed in these small enterprises, therefore there is little incentive for these employees to be trained. National Training Targets for employed 16 - 59 year olds are not being met by improved education and training, but by a slow conveyor-belt effect. Well-qualified school leavers are joining the workforce and less qualified older workers are retiring. Only recently (NACETT, 1999) has a widening participation target been added to reduce 'non-learners' by seven per cent. Even so, by emphasising this economic imperative, which the present Labour Government continues, causes difficulties:

... the trend toward work-oriented adult education is encountering a growing contradiction; while the knowledge intensive economy generates new needs, the parallel steady decline in jobs and massive downsizing of the workforce constitutes an anti-learning enterprise.

(Belanger and Valdivielso, 1997, p165)

The aftermath of this enterprise is apparent from a survey in which 55 per cent of adult respondents say that, 'they are very or fairly unlikely to take up any learning in the future', (Sargant et. al., 1997, p.vii)

In spite of this growing gap between the learning employed and the

'anti-learning' unemployed, there are three major themes which support this economic argument for continuing post-16 education and training.

- Competition, in what Thurow (1992) calls the dominant 'brainpower' industries of electronics, technology and communications, is rife. These industries potentially can be located in any country in the world able to organise sufficient expertise.

- Life-span of knowledge is inexorably decreasing within these rapidly changing industries. The Campaign for Learning (1999) describes this tapering spiral as a 'knowledge shelf life tornado'. At the beginning of the 1990s half of what most professionals knew when they had finished their formal training was outdated in five years (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991). Apparently, now this knowledge shelf life is even shorter.

- Economic growth at, 'an annual rate of at least three per cent,' (NIACE, 2000, p3) requiring a highly skilled workforce, was promised at a Lisbon summit meeting of European Union partners. To put this figure into perspective, if all the countries in the world were to raise their living standards by three per cent until 2070, the total economic output would rise to 110 times what it is today (Trainer, 1999). This advance is neither feasible nor desirable.

Each of these three economically-oriented themes of education and training tend to benefit those already qualified and in work. Hutton (1995) has described the present 30: 30: 40 segmented British society. The first 30 per cent are the disadvantaged, the next 30 per cent are marginalised and insecure. The final 40 per cent, he argues, are the privileged whose market power has increased since Thatcherism began in 1979. Therefore the structure and provision of adult education must be reconsidered to avoid it contributing:

... irreplaceably towards perpetuating the structure of class relations and simultaneously legitimating it,

by concealing the fact that scholastic hierarchies it produces reproduce social hierarchies.

(Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p205)

Therefore to prevent preserving and bolstering the status quo of the rich and privileged, Thompson (2000) urges that adult educators must take the side of the poor and powerless. It should be this inclusive purpose to cater for the disadvantaged and marginalised majority that guides adult education policy. These generally reluctant learners, often lacking confidence, need to be attracted carefully back into learning. After all, it is argued, in the present condition of society this is a vital function of adult education:

In this risk society, therefore, handling fear and insecurity becomes an essential cultural qualification, and the cultivation of abilities for it become an essential mission of pedagogical institutions. (Beck, 1992, p76)

By attempting to accomplish this 'mission', the widening gap between the fearful, insecure, reluctant learners and those who are confident and well qualified should be closed. This new emphasis for adult education, and its possible influence on other education sectors could create:

... an educated democracy in which good education ceases to be a competitive prize and becomes the basis for an economic, political and cultural order from which no one is excluded. The prize becomes a more human and defensible view of individuals and their capacity to join together as a human society. (Tomlinson, 1994, pp8 - 9)

It is this worthy prize of instilling a culture of learning into society which this government should pursue.

Engendering a Learning Society

Making learning as much a part of everyday life as keeping fit was the aim for creating a learning society in the Kennedy Report (Kennedy, 1997).

This seemingly admirable goal, however, transfers responsibility to the individual learner:

More recently adult education has reflected the more fragmentary ideology of post-modernism in locating most problems in the individual rather than in the nature of society and attempting to resolve them by meeting individual 'needs' or correcting their deficiencies.

(Fieldhouse, 1996a, p339)

Attempts to offload these social responsibilities on the family, the community as well as the individual, Ledwith (1997) proposes, are obvious from the New Right's misappropriation of the language of liberation such as 'active citizenship' and 'empowerment'.

As Austin (1998) comments, if individuals were to take responsibility for their own learning, it would be more economical for the state. This proposal ignores and alienates the dependent, poor and low-resourced majority of the population who could be denied state support for learning. It is why, Wain (2000) argues, that the bulk of the populace willingly comply with the substitution of education by constant entertainment. So, for the largest section of the population, education must compete for their money and time with leisure:

The upshot is that adult education is now one amongst many cultural producers in a situation where there is little clear differentiation between education, leisure and entertainment - and where it has to sell its products by being better at meeting the desires of consumers. (Usher et. al., 1997, p.vvi)

At this extreme, adult education provision is vying for attention within the burgeoning leisure and entertainment businesses. At the other extreme, for those employed in the information industries for example, adult education is becoming compulsory:

... learning is a necessary precondition for keeping a job and your capacity to keep learning may affect

the job security of others... Many people are beginning to believe that learning is now a lifelong commitment if not a lifelong sentence.

(Tuckett, 1998c, p33)

This latter statement was later criticised by the Chief Inspector for Ofsted as having, 'dangerous overtones of moral authoritarianism,' (Woodhead quoted by Mansell, 2000, p.I). However, as management hierarchies get flatter and more team working occurs, the individual and collective responsibility to continue updating learning grows heavier. The government is well aware of these pressures to learn in order to keep a job:

While the foundation for success is laid in schools, making a reality of lifelong learning is key to an individual's continuing employability.

(DfEE, 1997c, p1)

Thus, the learning society needs to foster a culture of lifelong learning which has to encompass the whole spectrum of attitudes towards adult education from public indifference to employer compulsion. Of course, most participants tend to come from between these extremes. Nevertheless, it is in this broad landscape, or moorland, which adult educators must operate.

The plethora of meanings given to adult education is probably symptomatic not only of the failure of our profession to mark out its boundaries distinctly, but the presence of the ghost of immaturity haunting us. (Oduaran, 1993, p219)

Perhaps it is time to mark out the boundaries of adult education and, as some of my respondents suggested, allow other providers to cope with their own specialisms. This may lead to adult education with more of a fixed purpose and a definite goal. Hence the profession might gain a 'maturity' and therefore the esteem it deserves. In order to cope with these and other changes the structure of LEA adult education

organisations must alter.

LEA structural changes

LEA adult education is facing a turning point in its history. It will now have a 'duty to contribute' to educating adults with no direct financial responsibilities.

Since the 1992 FHE Act, many LEAs handed their adult education provision to colleges. More LEAs are likely to follow this example, especially as other providers, public or private, are able to be subsidised from the new Learning and Skills Council. Popular courses, such as information technology, could attract many bidders competing for funds. Less popular or more demanding courses, on the other hand, might be shunned. Gaps in provision, particularly in sparsely populated rural areas, could result.

LEAs have many resources, the most treasured is a wealth of experience in providing an array of adult education. Unless LEAs are organised and prepared to compete in bidding for funds they could be left with the sole remit of widening participation. Attracting reluctant and unconfident adults back into learning is a worthy objective, it is, however, difficult, time consuming and not always successful. Thus, in this learning market, more prestigious and lucrative parts of the curriculum could be given by the Learning and Skills Council to other providers. LEAs, in the meantime, could be left with a residue of perceived menial provision. Clearly, LEAs with their experience, and locations within the community are best placed to fulfil this widening participation remit. Yet specialising in this way would alter the ethos of adult education, although perhaps this is just the direction in which adult education is being steered:

Adult education in the future will be more an instrument of broad cultural policy than an instrument of social policy. It will deal with

survival problems (environment, technoscience) and existential problems (personal growth, giving meaning to life) as well as social inequality. (Jansen and Van der Veen, 1996, p134)

If LEAs are to guide this broad cultural policy, structures for provision of adult education must change. My research indicates that committed and dedicated managers with a range of experience, which includes adult education, is essential. Since FE colleges were taken away from LEA control, heads of service for community education are less likely to come from the post-16 sector and more likely to be promoted from schools. Yet this head of service must have a broad knowledge of community education, particularly its finances, and be a champion of adult education.

In Daffodil County, Ivan's autocratic, entrepreneurial approach produced, through adversity, a financially sound service. However, this style of management may not have allowed the creativity and adaptability that was prevalent in some Daisy County providers, for example. Here in Daisy County there was a quite different management regime which gave providers semi-autonomy. Larger centres, like Hironnelle, had a chance to flourish away from rigid County Hall bureaucracy, but at the same time smaller centres with few staff were pressurised to cope with an enormous range of tasks. This was exacerbated when area structures were abandoned after Daisy County re-organisation in 1997. Support was no longer available from the now redundant community education area officers. In the other three counties this area tier of management remained, allowing for sharing, which included workloads and problems as well as any innovations.

Therefore, my investigations would suggest that the optimum county structure has a head of service committed to, and well briefed in adult education with a range of relevant experience and knowledge, plus a

vitality to monitor constant change. She or he would supervise several area managers who would organise mutual support between providers.

Speculation about LEAs' new role 'to contribute' might prompt the notion that since they will no longer need to 'secure provision', local authorities' influence would shrink. At the moment, the Daffodil County LEA contributes just 12 per cent of the adult education budget, and the Hironnelle Centre in Daisy County attracts only 17 per cent of its funds from the local authority. Many would argue that these funds are already insufficient, some would disagree:

Much has been said about budget cuts in local authority adult education nationally and each time emotive language such as 'decimation' and 'destruction' is used to describe the effect of reductions. Over the years, however, there appears to have been little appreciation of the firm base the LEA funding can secure and how it can be used as a launch pad to find matched funding from other sources. (Davey, 1996, p262)

The value of this base funding is surely undisputed, but the Learning and Skills Council no longer needs to fund local authorities after April 2003. This meagre finance could be in jeopardy if another provider could run classes at a cheaper rate. Simultaneously this would further diminish the powers of the local authority. Moves such as these would satisfy the mission of the government adviser Andrew Adonis (who drafted both the 1999 White Paper and the subsequent Learning and Skills Bill) to stifle LEAs' control in post-16 education (Low and Tysome, 2000). The general impact of New Labour policies are not promising as LEA adult education still appears to be as vulnerable as ever. Nevertheless, some believe this pessimism concerning the future of LEA adult education is simply yet another scare, or even a manifestation of paranoia and arrogance:

Paranoid because we have predicted the collapse of our service almost on an annual basis and yet we

are still here... Worse, we have often been arrogant believing that we held the sacred grail of 'proper' education. (Tyler, 1997, p30)

Possibly it is arrogant to believe that adult education is special and cannot be entrusted to another sector. However, I would argue from my investigations that sometimes neither schools nor FE colleges have had adult education at heart. Therefore, in order to shield itself from possible terminal obscurity, LEA adult education ought to choose carefully some empathetic and protective partners.

Partnership

It is just such a partnership with schools that Agnes of Daisy County insists has prevented the community education budget being plundered for other causes. It has not stopped however, huge budget deficits in three community colleges, managerial interference by certain principals, and a provision generally limited to evenings. Other counties in my investigation used school premises for adult education classes, but only Daisy County integrated its management into the school. Here, those community tutors (managers) who were given high status, such as deputy principal like Jocasta, and had access to the board of governors, were content. Without this high status, community tutors managing adult education, particularly those like Oswald and Percy working alone in small community colleges, had little control over the organisation and finance of their provision. If adult education is to be integrated into schools' management then it must be an equal partner.

Benign sponsorship arrangements with FE colleges to access FEFC funds for Schedule 2 courses occurred in Cowslip, Snowdrop and Daffodil Counties. Each of these counties had retained a fairly close relationship with the FE colleges that they used to control. In Daisy County and

Sunflower Counties franchising with FE colleges attracted a much higher rate of funding, but it was accompanied by bullying management stimulated by government marketplace policy. Neither sponsorship or franchising suppressed competition between providers. Collaborative partnerships are essential, as the policy director at the National Training Organisation National Council states:

Institutions must collaborate, knowing that the destinies of business, individuals and the community are inextricably linked.

(Bewick, 1999, p22)

Desirable partnerships will therefore recognise the strengths of LEA adult education but at the same time defend them from the ravages of competition. In this type of partnership providers would work together to satisfy all the objectives of adult education, with the stronger partner reining in some power to maintain balance and cohesion.

FE colleges have had excessive pressure to satisfy business ideals. At the same time they have developed macho management styles which are incongruous with the patience and understanding required for their students. FE colleges are obvious partners, but attitudes must change for harmonious relationships to develop between them and other providers of adult education.

If LEA adult education were to form collaborations with other local authority departments like social services and the health service; agencies like the job centre and guidance services; when these are combined with organisations in the voluntary sector, a formidable team could be created. Leading this team could be the equivalent of the head of the adult education service at County Hall. The succinct reasoning behind this proposal was expressed by Hector of Daffodil County:

I think that the strength of LEAs is in the fact that we are democratically accountable. For a start we

have a county-wide strategic view where we are looking at the best interests for the whole of the authority.

These 'best interests' would not necessarily have the present biases of business and competition. If the distinct bureaucratic difficulties could be overcome, this team would make strong and beneficial partners for schools, FE colleges, universities and private organisations. Further research in this area would show how much the policies of this present Labour administration progress towards true partnership.

The future for LEA adult education

My investigations have described a struggle over values, visions and priorities of adult education. This is inevitably political because it is about apportioning resources and the consequences for those involved and for the wider society.

For instance, the government has now made a clear distinction between education for 16 - 19 year olds and adult education, or what is now called 'adult and community learning'. It is this latter type of learning, provided by an LEA-led team of providers, which could fulfil its identified task:

... Government is clear that adult and community learning is a vital part of the Government's plans to drive up achievement, widen participation in learning and to strengthen community confidence and capacity. It has a key role to play in improving basic skills, in providing opportunities for families to learn together, and in creating access to further and higher education. (DfEE, 2000c, para. 7.19)

This is a broad remit which a supportive network of provision could satisfy, if only it could attract those learners most in need. This may not require students meeting in an institution. In Cowslip County, for example, classes met in hotels and pubs. The government is encouraging

learning centres to be opened in more frequently-used public spaces like shopping centres. Already people who are housebound or lacking in confidence are being taught in their own homes on a one-to-one basis. Also, an impetus to mentoring schemes began during the annual Adult Learners' Week some years ago with a television programme and an accompanying booklet (Channel Four Television, 1995). Additionally learning on the internet can occur in many ways including the new University for Industry organisation called 'learndirect'. So learning is becoming accessible to more people.

However, often adults with few or no qualifications may lack confidence in their abilities, as I discovered when I interviewed some of my own students. Perhaps this barrier to continuing learning in adulthood could be overcome by promoting a different perspective to learning at the end of compulsory schooling.

Ideally, the end of extrinsically applied education should be the start of an education that is motivated intrinsically. At that point the goal of studying is no longer to make the grade, earn a diploma and find a good job. Rather it is to understand what is happening around one, to develop a personally meaningful sense of what one's experience is all about. From that will come the profound joy of the thinker.

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1992, pp. 141 - 142)

Most of the learners in LEA adult education participate to have their intrinsic motivations satisfied. It is this, my research suggests, which is the true speciality of adult education. If the promise of the rewards of the 'profound joy of the thinker' could be disseminated amongst reluctant learners, with other government incentives to encourage them to participate in this learning society, then it could herald a new pivotal role for LEA adult education.

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## Appendix I

### **Twentieth Century Legislation and Historical Landmarks in the Development of LEA Adult Education in England.**

**1902** - LEAs were formed and given powers to support and supply adult evening classes. The courses had a technical and vocational bias.

**1903** - The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) was created with the encouragement of the government's Board of Education to provide liberal (non-vocational) adult education.

**1918** - Education Act (Fisher) required the LEAs to provide for the development and organisation of education. Proposed part-time compulsory education for all school leavers up to the age of 18.

**1919** - Final Report of the Ministry of Reconstruction argued that LEAs should play a greater part in adult education.

**1921** - Adult Education Committee of the Board of Education had objectives to foster collaboration between LEAs and other providers. It later retreated from its proposals to make all adult education, except university extra-mural classes, the responsibility of the LEAs.

**1924** - Board of Education regulations gave the WEA districts and the universities (and other appropriate organisations) 'Responsible Body' (RB) status allowing them direct government grants for adult education. These RBs provided mostly liberal classes and the LEAs largely vocational and recreational courses. RB status ended in 1989.

**1930** - First Village College opened in Cambridge. LEA Community Colleges offering education for children and adults were later based on this model.

**1933** - Report on 'Adult Education and the LEAs' noted expansion in participation was mainly due to the filling of gaps in the public education system.

**1944** - Education Act (Butler) enshrined a duty for LEAs to secure adequate provision for further education for adults.

**1954** - Ashby Report on 'The Organization and Finance of Adult Education' averted the threatened financial cuts to the expanding adult education classes.

**1971** - Open University enrolled its first students. Some LEA institutions were used as support centres.

**1973** - Russell Report 'Adult Education: a plan for redevelopment' recommendations included provision for under-represented adults.

**1974 - 1988** Lifespan of the Manpower Services Commission which had the remit to co-ordinate nationally the employment and training services. This included adult education projects.

**1975** - Adult Literacy Campaign, backed by the BBC, led to the establishment of the Adult Literacy Resource Agency. It is now the Basic Skills Agency.

**1976** - Prime Minister Callaghan's Ruskin Speech began the 'great debate' on education. His desire to improve relations between industry and education is said to have introduced instrumentalism to the system (Parrott, 1997).

**1981** - Access to Higher Education courses, for adults without qualifications wanting a direct progression route, were established.



**1988 - Education Reform Act generally weakened LEAs. Polytechnics were removed from LEA control. Schools were given control of their budgets and could charge for the use of their premises for evening classes. FE colleges were given separate budgets leaving diminished finances for other LEA adult education.**

**1989 - Training and Enterprise Councils' (TECs) formation announced. A network of 80 employer-led TECs to take over training and business assistance programmes previously run by the Employment Department.**

**1991 - The National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets (NACETT) was formed to set national learning targets adopted by the government.**

**1991 - White Paper 'Education and Training for the 21st. Century' proposed the artificial divide between academic/vocational and non-vocational learning. It unsuccessfully mooted the withdrawal of financial support for LEA adult education 'leisure' classes.**

**1992 - Further and Higher Education Act removed FE colleges from LEA control. Academic and vocational courses were to be funded by the quango Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). LEAs were left with the responsibility for securing 'leisure courses for adults'.**

**1996 - Lifetime Learning Report published after a consultation process. It stressed the importance of adult education to maintain national competitiveness.**

**1997 - Kennedy Report 'Learning Works' for the FEFC encouraged widening participation among its proposals.**

**1997 - Fryer Report (I) 'Learning for the 21st. Century' called for a greater organisational role for the LEAs in adult education.**

**1998 - Green Paper (consultative document) 'The Learning Age' proposed Individual Learning Accounts, the University for Industry and emphasised the importance of a lifelong learning culture.**

**1999 - Moser Report 'A Fresh Start: improving literacy and numeracy' indicated that 20 per cent of adults in Britain are functionally illiterate and far more are innumerate.**

**1999 - Fryer Report (II) 'Creating Learning Cultures: next steps in achieving the Learning Age' advocated policy interventions to build learning into people's everyday lives.**

**1999 - White Paper 'Learning to Succeed' heralded the demise of the FEFC to be replaced by a Learning and Skills Council. The divide between academic/vocational and non-vocational learning is to end. LEAs are to have a duty to contribute to local arrangements for adult education, with no direct financial responsibilities. They no longer have a duty to secure the provision of education for adults.**

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Appendix II

Survey of Adult Learning in the Dale Valley

If you are 20 years old or more, we would much appreciate your answers to the following questions. Please tick the box by your answers and place a comment in the spaces indicated.

FREE VOUCHER ~ worth £50 to take to a Daisy County Adult Education Centre anywhere in the Dale Valley, will be given to any one individual picked at random from the pile of completed questionnaires.

Name Tel. Number.....

Please send your completed questionnaire to:

P. Bayliss
Hirondelle Adult Education Centre
Seatown
Daisy County

Do you currently take part in any adult education activities?

No ¹ Yes ²

If you answered 'yes', please tell us:

What do you study?

Where?

Please tell us if any of the following put you off adult learning:

Cost <input type="checkbox"/> ³	Childcare <input type="checkbox"/> ⁴	Transport <input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
Lack of time <input type="checkbox"/> ⁶	Day of the week <input type="checkbox"/> ⁷	Time of day <input type="checkbox"/> ⁸
Location <input type="checkbox"/> ⁹	None <input type="checkbox"/> ¹⁰	

Other.....
.....

Would you be interested in using a computer on a drop-in basis at a time convenient to you?

No ¹¹ Yes ¹²

If 'yes', which would interest you?

Word processing ¹³ Internet ¹⁴ Databases ¹⁵ Spreadsheets ¹⁶

Other (please state):.....

What sort of adult education courses would you like to see on offer?

Art <input type="checkbox"/> ¹⁷	Photography <input type="checkbox"/> ¹⁸	Pottery <input type="checkbox"/> ¹⁹	Woodwork <input type="checkbox"/> ²⁰
Metalwork <input type="checkbox"/> ²¹	Stained glass <input type="checkbox"/> ²²	Car maintenance <input type="checkbox"/> ²³	Sugarcraft <input type="checkbox"/> ²⁴
Sport <input type="checkbox"/> ²⁵	English GCSE <input type="checkbox"/> ²⁶	Maths GCSE <input type="checkbox"/> ²⁷	Aromatherapy <input type="checkbox"/> ²⁸
Cookery <input type="checkbox"/> ²⁹	Keep Fit <input type="checkbox"/> ³⁰	Languages <input type="checkbox"/> ³¹	Yoga <input type="checkbox"/> ³²
Tai Chi <input type="checkbox"/> ³³	Music <input type="checkbox"/> ³⁴	Line Dancing <input type="checkbox"/> ³⁵	Child care <input type="checkbox"/> ³⁶
Navigation <input type="checkbox"/> ³⁷	Poetry <input type="checkbox"/> ³⁸	Gardening <input type="checkbox"/> ³⁹	

Others (please state).....

.....

Would you be prepared to travel to?

Seatown ⁴⁰ Churchtown ⁴¹

Sex? Female ⁴² Male ⁴³

Age?

20-29 ⁴⁴ 30-39 ⁴⁵ 40-49 ⁴⁶ 50-59 ⁴⁷ 60-69 ⁴⁸ 70-79 ⁴⁹ 80+ ⁵⁰

Employment Status














Employed full time ⁵¹ Employed part time ⁵² Retired ⁵³





Unemployed ⁵⁴ Studying full time ⁵⁵ Studying part time ⁵⁶

Unwaged with family to care for ⁵⁷

List of interview respondents

Administrators

-  **Agnes** - Adult Education Co-ordinator - Daisy County
-  **Beryl** - Senior Community Tutor at a community college - Daisy County.
-  **Cecil** - Principal of Hironnelle adult education centre - Daisy County.
-  **Doris** - Officer at the regional Open College Network.
-  **Edna** - Head of an adult education policy team at the DfEE.
-  **Finbar** - Area Manager for Community Services Sunflower County
-  **Godfrey** - Director of Education for Sunflower County. Used to be Deputy Director of Education for Daisy County
-  **Hector** - County Community Education Officer Snowdrop County
-  **Ivan** - Head of Adult and Continuing Education Daffodil County
-  **Jocasta** - Senior Community Tutor at a community college - Daisy County. She is also Assistant Principal.
-  **Kelvin** - Head of Adult Education Service Cowslip County
-  **Luthor** - Area Community Education Officer (retired) - Daisy County. He was made redundant when area posts disappeared when the county was realigned for unitary authorities in 1997.
-  **Marmaduke** - Head of Lifelong Learning (now retired) - Daisy County

-  **Norbert** - Senior Community Tutor (adult education) at a community college - Daisy County
-  **Oswald** - Senior Community Tutor at a community college - Daisy County.
-  **Percy** - Senior Community Tutor at a community college - Daisy County.
-  **Reginald** - Principal of a community college - Daisy County

Students

These were some of the 24 Access to Higher Education students at Hironnelle Adult Education Centre - Daisy County who all gave me their views about adult education. The following students allowed me a formal recorded interview.

Serena

Tabatha

Una

Verity

Wilma

Yona

Zak

The other students have gave less formal accounts.

Interview Questions for Administrators

Reminder Anonymity will be maintained. A transcription of the interview will be sent for your verification. If any parts of the interview are written up, pseudonyms will be used.

- What is the title of your position?
- May I ask you how long you have been in your post?
- What previous experience have you had in adult education?
- How would you define adult education?
- LEAs have a statutory duty to secure adequate provision for adult education. How would you define adequate provision in your county ? (Probe - Should there be a more explicit definition of 'adequate provision' by central government?)
- If there was an audit of Adult Education in your county, as there has recently been for Youth work, what would be the pluses and the minuses?
- The Kennedy Report *Learning Works* encouraged widening participation in adult education. How do you feel that this applies to LEA adult education? (Probe - Do you target particular categories of learners?)
- This is a rural county with a higher than average proportion of elderly people. How does this affect your provision of adult learning?
- What does partnership mean to you in the context of adult education?
- Collaboration and partnerships are being urged throughout education by the government. How would you like to see partnerships being formed? (Probe - What role can you foresee for the LEA?)
- What part can you see the LEA playing in the new Regional Development Authorities?
- Have you considered an Adult Education charter outlining standards of provision to which community residents are entitled? (Probe - either - Why not? or What form would it take?)
- Some LEAs call themselves County Adult Education Services. Would this be appropriate in Devon which has a more holistic approach to lifelong learning? (Or what advantage is there to being a County Adult Education Service?)

- I believe Devon was a forerunner in the formation of Community Colleges. Most of these Community Colleges also provide adult education. Are there any changes you would like to see in this structure?
- Although the LEA is responsible only for non-Schedule 2 courses, should the LEA have a responsibility to mediate in arrangements for obtaining FEFC funds through sector colleges?
- Do you know if the numbers of adult learners in your LEA centres have been maintained since the 1993 Further and Higher Education Act?
- Do the Lifetime Learning Targets recommended by NACETT (by the year 2000, 60 per cent of the workforce to have achieved two A levels or their equivalent) have any effects on your policies for adult education?
- LEAs have carried out regular inspections of their various adult education provision. Have you found that there is a correlation between the structure of a centre and the quality of the adult education it provides?
- How do you approach bids for funds from the Single Regeneration Budget, TECs, the Adult and Community Learning Fund or the £9 million released by the government for Adult Education in early October? (Probe - Is there any advantage in co-ordinating bids?)
- Funding seems to be a perennial problem in LEA adult education. What solutions would you like to be put in place?
- According to the recommendations in the *Fryer Report* and the *Learning Age Green Paper*, LEAs will be asked to produce Development Plans for Lifelong Learning. How are you intending to approach formulating these plans? (Probe - Is there a strategic development forum, or its equivalent? Is this how policy is usually planned?)
- There were three major reforms recommended in the *Learning Age Green Paper*. Could you comment on the possible effects of each in your authority?
 - i. University for Industry.
 - ii. Individual Lifelong Learning Accounts.
 - iii. Improved Adult Guidance.
- Do you have a policy on training for adult educators?
- What challenges do you see for LEA Adult Education now?
- What most frustrates you about current developments in adult education?
- What most excites you about current developments in adult education?

Thank you. Is there anything else that you would like to say?

Interview Questions for Students

Personal

1. What formal learning have you done since you left school?
2. What interests or experiences, both in work and leisure, have you found useful to draw upon in your learning?

The course

3. What motivated you to apply for the course?
4. Did you receive any advice or guidance, outside this institution, before the course?
5. What progression plan did you have initially? [Probe: has this changed?]
6. What were your initial expectations of the course?
7. Have these expectations been met or are your expectations now different?
8. You intend to achieve an ... Access to Higher Education certificate made up of National Open College Network credits. Do you feel that this qualification is sufficiently recognised?
[Probe: what qualification system would you have preferred?]
9. If you could, what would you do to improve your course?

Attitudes to Learning

10. What does adult learning mean to you?
11. What difference is learning making to your life?
12. What benefits are there to learning?
13. What drawbacks are there?
14. What difficulties or barriers to learning have you encountered?
15. How do people close to you react to your learning?
16. If you were to recommend a course of formal learning to a friend, what advice would you give?
17. Can you see an end to your learning?

General

18. Are there changes you would like to see for adult learners generally?
19. Is there anything else you would like to say that I haven't covered?

Appendix V

Addresses of some useful Websites

Most large organisations now have a website. This is a selection of the most informative about adult education.

- **Basic Skills Agency** - www.basic-skills.co.uk - information about adult literacy and numeracy. Publishes a quarterly magazine *Basic Skills*.
- **Campaign for Learning** - www.campaign-for-learning.co.uk - an organisation founded in 1994 by the Royal Society of Arts to encourage lifelong learning with a vocational bias. *Learning to Live* is the quarterly newspaper.
- **Department for Education and Employment** - www.open.gov.uk - has a lifelong learning webpage with news and articles. This is essential for press releases. Green papers and White papers are published on the website at the same time as printed copies are released.
- **Demos** - www.demos.co.uk - a left-wing think tank which publishes research and critiques of social policies.
- **Further Education Development Agency** - www.feda.ac.uk - news, reviews, research abstracts and publication lists.
- **Further Education Funding Council** - www.fefc.ac.uk - this quango produces several circulars and reports each month on funding implications and quality assurance.
- **Institute for Public Policy Research** - www.ippr.org.uk - a left-wing think tank where the University for Industry was conceived.
- **National Foundation for Educational Research** - www.nfer.ac.uk - research abstracts and reports on all aspects of education plus a quarterly newsletter *nfer NEWS*.
- **National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education** - www.niace.org.uk - reviews of policy documents, briefing papers, plus monthly news and comment pages.
- **National Open College Network** - www.nocn.ac.uk - the largest credit-awarding body in the UK. Includes information about the curriculum, assessment and quality assurance.
- **Office for Standards in Education** - www.ofsted.gov.uk - includes an evaluation framework for adult education plus inspection reports on institutions and LEAs.
- **Policy Studies Institute** - www.psi.org.uk - arranges seminars and publishes books and reports on social policies.
- **Stationery Office** - www.hmso.gov.uk - lists all government publications.
- **University for Industry** - www.ufild.co.uk - latest news on the development of a national computer network of learning centres for education and guidance.