THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY:

A CASE STUDY OF THE OPEN COLLEGE OF SOUTH LONDON

By

MARGARET BIRD

ABSTRACT

An 'Open College' system derives from a policy designed to redress

educational inequalities among the inner city adult population. It is

a development in the post-school sector of education which brings

together different types of institutions in a quasi-federal structure.

Its aim is to develop course provision for adult returners which will

facilitate their progression to higher education, further education

and/or into employment. Whether or not a policy achieves what the

policy-makers intended, it is hypothesised, depends on the way in

which it is perceived by the key people within the organisation and

the action which they take to effect its implementation. Successful

outcomes are dependent on there being "commitment, communication and

capacity" at each level of the operation. A case study is an

appropriate means of examining the relative importance of the various

factors. It involves in-depth interviews with the policy-makers (the

politicians and administrators), the policy-implementers (the central

co-ordinators and principals in the institutions) and the

policy-deliverers (the co-ordinators and tutors in the institutions).

To ascertain the factors which ultimately make for successful outcomes

for those concerned, a longitudinal study of adult students in one of

the designated areas of course development was undertaken. An

eclectic theoretical research model is adopted, because no one

perspective is thought to be appropriate at all levels of the

processes of policy formulation and implementation. Attention is paid

to the political, social and economic context of London and Britain in the 1980s. The micro study in a macro framework also facilitates generalisation. In establishing what factors make for successful outcomes for a policy concerned with equal opportunitiees in education in a deprived inner city area, it is hoped that it might be possible to throw some light upon the factors which make for the successful implementation of policy more generally.

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There were a number of personal factors which prompted the undertaking
of this study. In relation to the subject matter, the study of a
policy designed to open up educational opportunities for the least
educationally advantaged sections of the population, it should be
noted that the researcher was a former adult returner to education
(through the Workers' Educational Association and the Open University)
and had experience of teaching and researching adult education.
Further, as a Fabian socialist, the author took the view that to
improve the equality of access and outcomes in education was generally
desirable. Research was seen to be a useful means of influencing
policy-making in the field of adult education.

The perspectives and methods adopted were influenced by previous
training and research experience in the fields of education and
industry. In particular, the undertaking of an MSc in Social Research
Methods in the department of Sociology at the University of Surrey led
to the adoption of sociological concepts in research projects which
were undertaken subsequently. Also influential were the personal
contacts maintained through the Social Research Association and the
British Sociological Association. It followed that, when the notion
of undertaking a PhD arose, supervision was sought from a person who

believed that research for social policy could benefit from employing sociological perspectives.

The central focus of the thesis, the implementation of policy, developed as a result of the individual's role as a research officer monitoring and evaluating a range of policy initiatives in a Local Education Authority (LEA). Over a period of some five years in post it had been observed that the outcomes of policies did not always match the objectives set by policy-makers. Organisational theory, it was found, could throw some light on this. At the time of undertaking the evaluation of a community school (ILEA: RS 1136/87), it was noted that there was a problem arising from the clash of professional cultures in an organisation involving the schools, adult education and youth service. The concept of 'definitions of a situation' was useful in explaining the difficulties experienced. When, involved at a later date, in undertaking an evaluation of introductory courses in new technology for the Open College of South London, similar problems were evident for much the same reason. 'Access' to education held different meanings for the professionals involved. An evaluation of policy outcomes required that the researcher look into the meanings of the action, or inaction, of the key people involved. This led to a focus on the process of implementing policy which was, until quite recently, a much neglected area of study.

Acknowledgements

There are many people to whom I am indebted in the writing of this thesis. First, and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the excellent academic guidance I have received from Dr. Martin Bulmer who in his writing and his practical supervision provides a model for the research of social policy. I would also like to thank Dr. Jim Sturgis of Birkbeck College, for his expertise and interest. Much professional help has been provided by the Research and Statistics Branch; I have particularly valued the experience of Andreas Varlaam the Deputy Director and the knowledge of Hazel Pennell, the Information Officer, the expertise of Andrew Fleming with graphics and Barbara Andrews, Bernie Elsome-Jones and Owen John with the technicalities of production. Most particularly, in the field, I owe a great debt of thanks to all those individuals - Members, Officers and professional colleagues in Colleges and Adult Institutes, who gave their time and who provided observations and insights into the implementation of educational policy within a local education authority. I also thank my family for their support and encouragement.

GLOSSARY

AE	Adult Education
ACACE	Association for Adult Continuing Education
AEI	Adult Education Institute
AFE	Advanced Further Education
ALA	Adult Literacy Agency
ALFA	Access to Learning for Adults
CAWLOC	Central and West London Open College
CEO	Chief Education Officer
CPVE	Certificate for Pre-Vocational Education
DES	Department for Education and Science
EEC	European Economic Community
EPI	Educational Priority Index
ESL	English as a second Language
FAST	Forum for Access Studies
FE	Further Education
GLC	Greater London Council
GLEAN	Greenwich and Lewisham Education for Adults Network
HE	Higher Education
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
JPB	Joint Planning Board
LA	Local Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NAB	National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education

NAFE	Non-advanced further education
NATFHE	National Association for Teachers in Further and Higher Education
NIACE	National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education
OCSL	Open College of South London
OU	Open University
REPLAN	A national programme for developing educational opportunities for unemployed adults
R & S	Research and Statistics Branch
SCOPE	Second Chance Opportunities for Education

Abbreviations used to refer to Key Actors

EO	Education Officer
DEO (Resources)	Deputy Education Officer (Resources)
DEO/FHCE	Deputy Education Officer for Further, Higher and Community Education
DEO (Post-Schools)	Deputy Education Officer Post-Schools
Chief Inspector (FHCE)	Chief Inspector for Further, Higher and Community Education
AEO (FHE)	Assistant Education Officer for Further and Higher Education
AEO (CEC)	Assistant Education Officer for Community Education and Careers
CC/New Technology	Central Co-ordinator for New Technology Courses
CC/Return to Learning	Central Co-ordinator for Return to Learning Courses
CC/Access	Central Co-ordinator for Access Courses
CC/Flexible Learning Opportunities	Central Co-ordinator for Flexible Learning Opportunities
PA/Director	Personal Adviser to the Director of the Polytechnic
Chair of FHE	Chair of the Further and Higher Education Sub-Committee

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The relationship of research

to policy-making

Much academic discussion and debate have taken place concerning the
nature and impact of research for social policy. Dissatisfaction is
expressed on a number of counts. Whilst empirical studies of specific
policies are designed to enable policy makers to solve specific social
problems, the results are often tentative, or inconsistent with
previous findings and subsequently disregarded by decision-makers. On
the other hand, it is clear that the concepts and theoretical
perspectives from the social science disciplines do permeate the
policy-making process at a conceptual level (Weiss, 1979, Banting,
1979). This process of "enlightenment", however, does not fit too
well with the empiricist tradition (Kallen, 1984), which is designed
to produce findings of maximum utility to policy makers. This kind of
research, the so-called "engineering model", is of limited value for
the purposes of generalisation. Its widespread use is seen to have
inhibited the development of explanatory theories which might "show
the policy process as a whole and reveal the relations of separate
problems to one another" (Pinker, 1971).

The divorce of theory from empiricism, Bulmer (1978) attributes, in part to the separation of sociology and social administration as discrete disciplines. Even if researchers do relate the one to the other, the research findings can not be addressed to the same audience. "If it is directed at a wide audience it is vulnerable to the professional hatchet men, if it employs a full range of conceptual and analytical tools it may please the professionals but will mystify and annoy the policy makers" (Shipman, 1972). In practice, research careers tend to follow either the 'applied' or the 'academic' route, with a subsequent loss of potentially beneficial interaction between theory and practice. Some attempts have been made in recent years to bridge this gulf in social research. Professional associations, such as the Social Research Association (SRA) provide a forum for discussion for researchers from different fields and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has developed a scheme whereby academics can take up temporary assignments in government departments.

The contribution which research can make to policy-making is further inhibited by the separateness of disciplines in social science. Political scientists have developed a model of a political system (Easton, 1965). (See figure 1.1, p.18) Whilst this provides a useful framework for identifying the stages and the process of policy making, it has some obvious limitations. It tends to be a 'top-down' view of the process of policy formulation; it sees organisations too much "from the viewpoint of authorities, it ignores the importance of motivation, differential perception and the distribution of power, and

it makes possibly unwarranted assumptions about the degree of

commitment and consensus to be found in organisations" (Silverman,

1970).   Brown's study (1978) of educational policy-making in the

Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) in the mid-1970s employed the

Easton model (see figure 1.2, p.19) and concentrated exclusively on

the process by which a policy went through the institutional

structure.   Whether it was effective in meeting students' needs was

not a question the researcher set out to address.

Equally it is evident that evaluations of educational outcomes with

little of no relation to the organisational structure or political

context are of limited value (McCormick, 1982).   Neither the

'top-down' nor the summative evaluation approach shed much light on

the process by which a policy is implemented and the way in which

policy objectives may be diverted by bureaucratic considerations and

vested professional interests.   What is needed, say Glennerster and

Hoyle (1972), is an interdisciplinary approach.   The placing of a

particular policy in an historical context, for example, is important

if policy-makers are to consider alternatives (Silver, 1983).

As research for social policy is centred largely on questions of

effectiveness, a much neglected area of study would appear to be the

implementation of policy.   As all policies are implemented through a

bureaucratic structure of one form or another, an appreciation of the

utility of organisation theory employing concepts common to

Figure 1.1

A dynamic response model of a political system
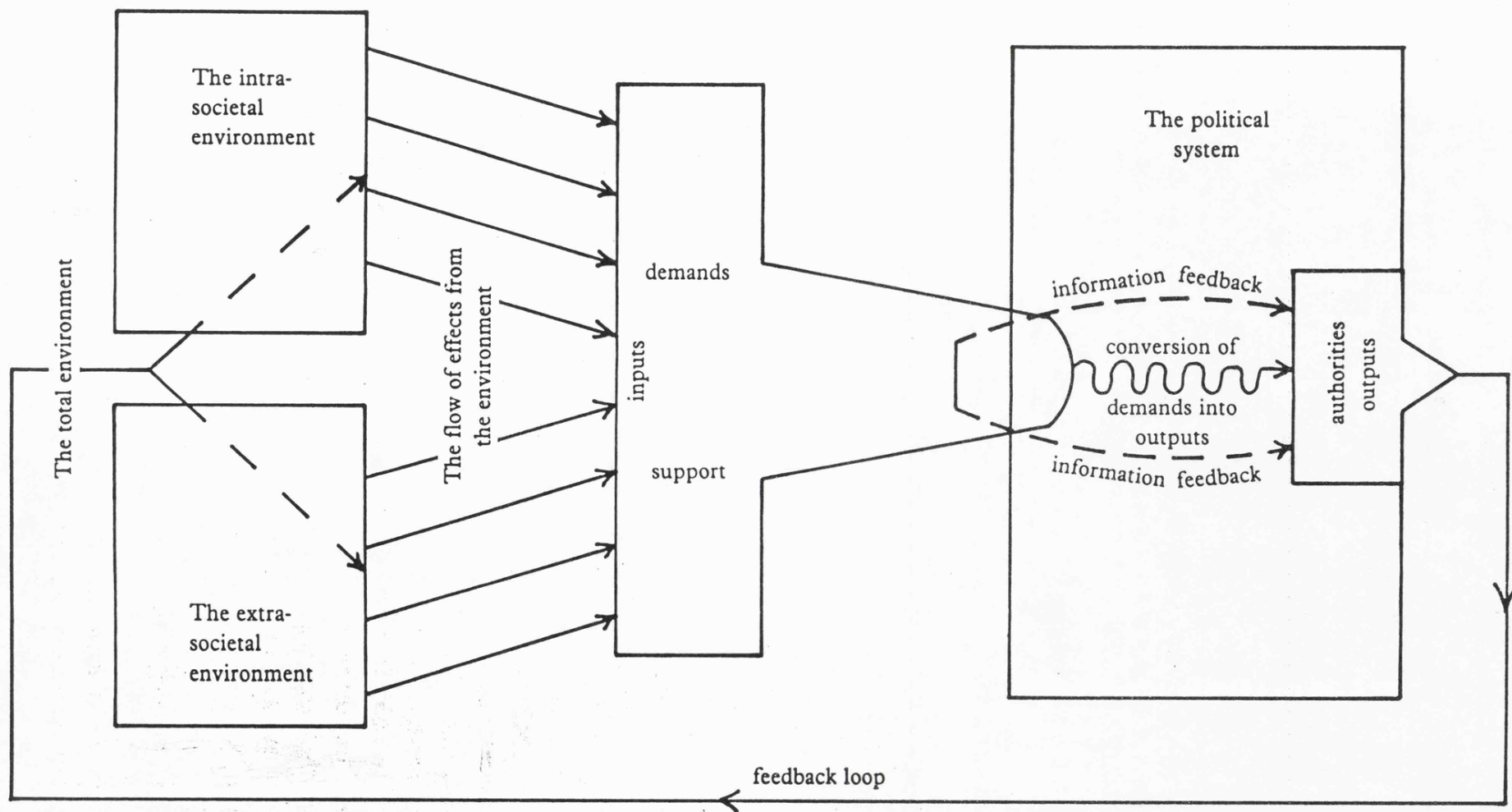
(*Source:* Easton, D. *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*, p. 30.)

Figure 1.2

The Inner London Education Authority as a sub-system.

FESC = Further Education Steering Committee.
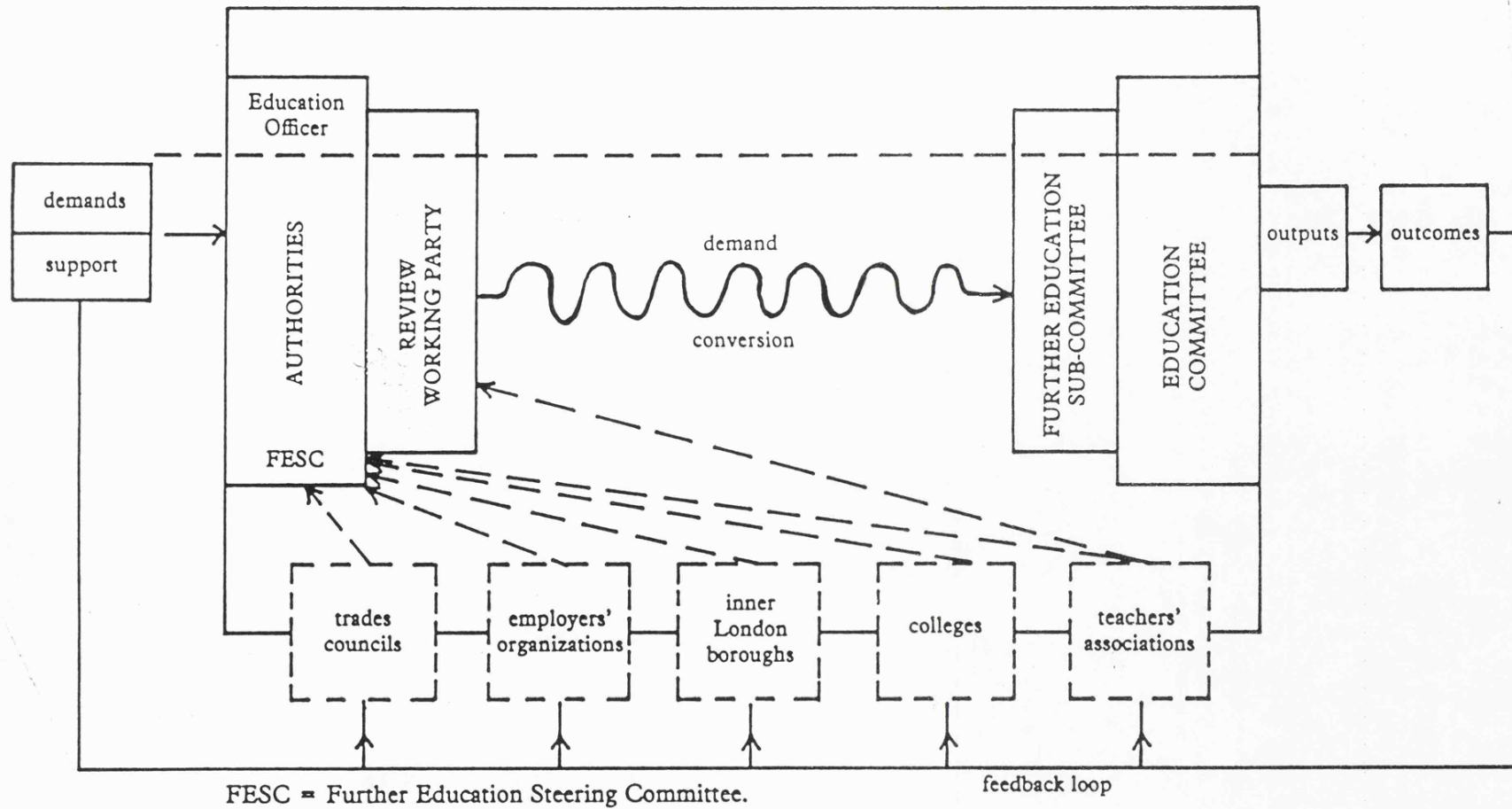
(*Source: Howell, D.A. and Brown, R. 'Educational Policy Making' p.25*)

organisations generally, might be helpful. The findings of one policy

implementation might thus provide insights more generally.

The study of policy implementation is, however, a relatively new

domain. Williams (1982) says, "the really important work on

implementation remains to be done", and notes that there is a dearth

of materials on strategies for studying implementation. A number of

those that have been recorded have drawn on the body of organisation

theory (Kirst and Jung, Narver and Williams, 1982). A feature of

these implementation studies was the employment of a variety of

research strategies over a period of time. This promoted

triangulation, which thereby led to a greater internal consistency and

validity of the data as well as facilitating interpretation.

A longitudinal study of the implementation of policy can either be

conducted by "forward mapping" or "backward mapping" (Elmore, 1982).

The weakness of the former is that (like the Easton model of

decision-making) it assumes the policy makers have control of the

organisational process. "Backward mapping", on the other hand, starts

with specific behaviour at the point of implementation, where the need

for a policy existed, and traces it back through the organisation, to

the point at which policy-makers directed resources. This method and

focus accord with the notion of "piecemeal social engineering"

(Popper, 1945) and the strategy of decision-making termed "disjointed

incrementalism" (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963).

Another common feature of implementation studies is the blurring of

the researcher role with that of the consultant. This, in part, has

arisen because of the unsuitability of survey techniques for studies

of the policy-making process and the close involvement of the

researcher in the organisation over a long period. Potentially there

is a problem of role conflict and observer bias. Provided, however,

that certain safeguards are undertaken, the close connection of the

researcher with the organisation has potential advantages. It enables

the insights provided by staff in the organisation to be fully

utilised and it enables ideas to be tested out over a period of time.

In providing 'feed-back' during the course of study, it can create an

environment for change, which the researcher is in a position to

observe (Narver and Williams, 1982).

The role and relationship of researcher to policy makers is a

sensitive one (especially in in-house research). If a researcher

disregards the political context in which decisions are made, the

research report will lack relevance to policy makers and will not be

acted upon. If it is directly relevant but has not potential support

within the political/administrative system, it will also not be acted

upon (witness the fate of the Educational Priority Areas recommended

by the Plowden report (Banting, 1979). On the other hand, if research

becomes "part and parcel of social enthusiasms" its significance and

value will be limited (Kallen, 1984). Value-laden terms, such as

'equal opportunities' have to be acknowledged as such.

In the light of past experience, the study undertaken, of the

implementation of an educational policy, draws on the concepts and

theories of organisations (discussed below) and employs a variety of

research strategies. Given the position of 'in-house' research, the

researcher's relationship with the organisation exhibits some of the

features of a consultant/researcher role.

The theoretical constructs employed

Theories of organisations abound but two broad perspectives are

distinguishable: the 'systems' theorists such as Taylor (1913),

Parsons (1949, 1951, 1961, 1964), Merton (1957), Etzioni (1961a) and

more recently, Pugh and Hickson (1973), Tannenbaum (1968), Hinings

(1973) who derive from the sociological tradition of Emile Durkheim

and Herbert Spencer; and the 'action' theorists such as Silverman

(1970), and Strauss (1973) and others, who derive from the Weberian

tradition. Alan Dawe (1970) has written of the two appoaches and of

the creative tension that exists between the two, sometimes noticeable

even within the writings of one person. Not wishing to forgo the

insights which might be available from either perspective, this study

will examine what each might contribute to a study of policy

implementation.

A 'systems' approach focusses on the structure of authority within the

organisation; the higher the level the greater the recognised right to

control the use of resources and the behaviour of others (Kaplan,

1964:14). Ensuring the compliance of members of the organisation is an important concern. Etzioni (1970a) identified three types of power (coercive, remunerative, normative) which are congruent with three types of involvement (alienative, calculative and moral). Systems theorists assume that the goals of the organisation are "explicit, limited and announced" (Udy, 1965:678). These, it is claimed, can be identified by examining written statements, by asking the leaders of the organisation (Etzioni, 1970b), by inference through studying behaviour of the organisation (Miller and Rice, 1967) and by examining the role requirements (Simon, 1964). Selznick (1966:10), however, who employed the systems perspective in his classic study of the Tennessee Valley Authority, found that goals were too vague as a guide to action. Whilst they served to legitimate action, behaviour, he found, was determined more often by conflict between the organisation and its environment. Albrow (1973:402) also commented that, "the notion of a specific goal as the origin and cause of an organisation is an unhistoric myth since "goals can be general, vague, multiple, or confused".

A systems perspective assumes that formal organisations have a "systematic ordering of positions and duties which defines a chain of command" (Firth, 1964). This ordering, it is anticipated, could be identified on a wallchart of the organisation and, because roles are explicit and stable over time, co-ordination is promoted between people in the organisation (Simon, 1958). This is most evident among professionals, who Perrow (1972:10) describes as the "ultimate

eunuchs". Pre-programmed by their professional training they will do
everything, he says, they have been trained to do and yet not
interfere with the goals of the organisation. Gouldner (1954), whilst
employing a systems perspective in his study of the gypsum mine,
questioned the shared orientations which Parsons said predicted
behaviour. He found that people's social roles and identities were
affected, in part, by their social experience outside of work and this
influenced their behaviour in the organisation.

General systems theory depicts organisations as organisms which
constantly adjust and adapt in order to survive in their environment.
Easton's model (1965) of a political system was used, to some effect,
by Brown (Howell and Brown, 1983) in a case study of the ILEA's Review
of its Vocational Further Education Service (1970-73). (See figure 1.2
p.19) The main contribution of this model to the research process is
that it indicates the principal features of policy-making which have
implications for the process of implementation. It reminds us of the
importance of the political, economic and social environment in which
the policy is conceived; it traces the origin of the policy and the
extent, and location of, the support for it. Finally, it illustrates
how through the feed-back mechanism, the policy outcome could be
influenced by research reports, both interim and final. Hence the
role of the researcher as participant observer is acknowledged.

While systems theorists emphasise what they regard as the objective
aspects of the organisation, its formal structure, goals and defined

roles, social actionists do not accept any 'givens'. Any structure
which they identify is one which is formed and re-formed in the
process of social interaction and negotiation between members of the
organisation, over a period of time (Silverman, 1970; Strauss, 1973).
They are also concerned with understanding action, not just observing
it. 'Social action' is best understood "as a method of analysing
social relations within organisations" (Silverman, 1970:147), not as a
specific theory.

Whilst systems theorists accept the organisation's definition of its
goals, the social actionists examine the way in which various
individuals and groups define their goals and values. It investigates
the way in which these are formed and re-affirmed in social relations.
It is observed that members of an organisation may have different
goals and differential power and opportunities to realise them (Sills,
1970:27-30). Gross (1969:278), notes that it is also important to
distinguish what a person desires for himself and what is desired for
the organisation. It is quite possible, says Silverman (1970), that
members of an organisation might seek and pursue their own sectional
interest rather than the generally stated goals of the organisation.
Michels (1949), too, through his exposition of the "iron law of
oligarghy" demonstrated that organisations may develop groups and
interests which are in conflict with the original basis of the
organisation. Whilst systems theorists emphasise the effects of
socialisation through professional training, Wilensky (1970:483-501),
in an action frame of reference, says that the professional ideal of a

disinterested service to clients is not always maintained. It is
sometimes in direct conflict with the rule-boundness of the
bureaucracy. In which case, a professional may well sacrifice the
clients's interest before his own. How a professional defines his
role will depend, in part, on his professional training, but also on
his frame of reference (Hughes, 1961:29).

This research will adopt an eclectic approach employing the concepts
derived from both social systems theory and the social action
perspective. The former is most useful in setting the scene,
providing a map and some signposts. It makes, therefore, an important
contribution to the research enquiry. Among the questions addressed
of the policy implementation are: what are the main inputs in terms
of resources? how does the Open College secure the involvement and
compliance of its member institutions? what are the measurable
outputs? what is the effect of the feedback through the report
mechanism? and what influence has the economic and social environment
on the policy outcome?

The contribution of the social action approach lies in the insights
which are to be gained from interviewing key participants in the
educational institutions concerned: eliciting the perceptions which
they have of their role as teachers and administrators; examining
their perception of the objectives of their own institution and those
of the Open College; and ascertaining their view of the Authority's
policy on equal opportunities. Furthermore, it is important to

identify the form of communication and social exchange between professionals in the member institutions, for if structure is formed and re-formed in social interaction then there must be some means of communication between the institutions concerned.

At the macro-level other theoretical approaches which were perceived to have some general application were those employed by political scientists - namely, pluralism, corporatism and Marxism. Pluralists suggest that there is a 'balance of power' between major groups in society who "compete through the electoral process for control over the actions of government" (Playford, 1968); a process which leads to the dispersal of power. Corporatists argue that there are competing foci of power and where interests do not coincide 'bargaining' ensues. On the other hand, Marxists perceive power to be determined by the unequal economic relations of groups in society (Marx, 1890). These theories will be employed where they offer insights and understanding. McPherson and Raab (1988) argue that there is a need for a study of policy which allies the historical, political and sociological perspective.

The focus of interest: The Open College

of South London

At the time of the study the Inner London Education Authority was a
large unitary LEA* providing education to some 450,000 students in the
post-school sector. Each sector of education had its own branch
structure (see figure 1.3, p.29) The polytechnics were also, at the
time of the research, administered by the LEAs, so inner London
polytechnics were the responsibility of the ILEA. The polytechnic
(HE), the colleges of further education (FE) and the adult education
institutes (AEIs) all came within the administrative orbit of
post-school education but whilst HE/FE was administered by one
Assistant Education Officer (AEO), the AEIs were administered by
another Assistant Education Officer, the one for Community Education
and Careers. Each sector, FE and AE, had an inspectorate who were
responsible to the Chief Inspector (CI) for Further and Higher
Education and ultimately to the Education Officer (EO). Policy in the
post-school sector was the province of the FHE Sub-Committee. Members
of the committee were nominated from among the elected Members to the
ILEA Education Committee. (Inner London at the time of the study was
unique among education authorities in Britain in having a committee
that was directly elected.)

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* Abbreviations in use throughout the text are given in a glossary at
the beginning of the thesis.

Figure 1.3

ILEA ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE (1985)

EDUCATION OFFICER

Deputy Education Officer
(Schools)

Deputy Education Officer
(FHE/CEC)

Deputy Education Officer
(Resources)

Chief Inspector

Assistant Education
Officer
Community Careers
Branch
(CEC)

Assistant Education
Officer
Further and Higher
Education Branch
(FHE)

Chief Inspector
Further, Higher and
Community Education

Senior Staff Inspector

Chief Inspector
Schools

FHE Sub-Committee
AFE Strategy
(Reviewing) Section

AEIs

Polytechnics   FE College

Inspectors
AE, FE

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│  O     O     O     ◎        │
│                 ┌──┬──┬──┐   │
│                 O  O  O  O   │
│                  (OCSL)      │
└─────────────────────────────┘
     I N L O C C
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→ policy

······> admin.

-----→ attends Committee

oooooooo> invited for annual
          review after 1986

O   Open College Co-ordinators

◎   Director of Studies

The Inner London Education Authority formally constituted the Open

College of South London (OCSL) in 1983. (See appendix 1.1, p.44) It

was a quasi-federation of three adult education institutes, four

colleges of further education and a polytechnic. Each institution

retained its autonomy and jurisdiction in its particular field of

provision but agreed to co-operate with the other member institutions

to improve the provision for adult returners. Each institution agreed

to allocate a half-lecturer post to co-ordinate the development within

their institution and to foster links with other member institutions.

(The cost of the other half of the post of co-ordinator was met by the

Authority.) The aim was to break down the barriers between different

sectors and institutions and to make post-school education more

relevant to the needs of those in the locality. It was hoped that it

would open up educational opportunities for those who had benefited

least from the educational system. (First Open College Report, 1984).

The aim was stated as:

> Promoting close collaboration between institutions of Higher,
> Further and Adult Education in providing access to designated
> programmes for those mature students (19+) who have benefited
> least from existing education provision.

> These programmes will fulfil one of more of the following
> criteria. They will: be intended primarily for mature students
> (19+); have no formal entry requirements; offer alternatives to
> traditional single subject public examinations; offer flexible
> hours and means of attendance, facilitate attendance by making
> creche and playgroups available and by making provision for
> disabled students; enable students to progress to more advanced
> courses where appropriate; be socially and educationally relevant
> to the students and involve them in the design of the schemes of
> work.

The Open College linked courses between institutions providing a means whereby adults returning to education could take related courses, or progress to higher level courses. For some, this could ultimately provide a means of entry to higher education, through a specially designed 'Access' course. Whilst there were no entry qualifications and therefore the courses were open to anyone who might wish to apply, it was hoped that the Open College would cater particularly for those who were among the most educationally disadvantaged, namely women and those from the working class and ethnic minority groups. It could therefore be judged on two counts: in the short term, as to whether courses met students' requirements; and in the long term, as to whether it provided a means of mobility through the post-school system.

Reasons for studying the Open College

There were a number of personal factors which determined the undertaking of this thesis, which are discussed in the preface. As these shape the foci, the theoretical perspectives adopted and the epistemological approaches employed, the relevant autobiographical details are given there.

Following from the personal, professional and political interests of the researcher, there were a number of questions which it was interesting to pursue in the undertaking of a study of the Open College development. In the first place, the long-held interest in

adult education and in policy initiatives designed to address

educational inequalities posed the question as to whether an Open

College system was an effective mechanism for achieving this end.

What made for successful outcomes and what contributed to failure? A

second focus of interest, resulting from the researcher's

'socialisation' and 'reference group', was that the research would

employ sociological theory and an eclectic methodological approach.

Given the concern that research findings be of value to policy-makers,

it followed that the application of research findings in the

policy-making arena would be noted. Ultimately, it was hoped that by

employing concepts and theories common to organisations and by placing

the case study in an historical context it would be possible to throw

some light upon the process of policy-implementation more generally.

A case study

The Open College of South London was selected as a case for

investigating the process of implementating a policy. It is important

to establish at the outset precisely what is meant by a case study, as

there is more than one definition employed by social scientists

(Platt, 1988). For the purpose of this study the definition which

most closely fits the undertaking is the one employed by Yin (1984:23)

who was a consultant specialising in case studies of organisational

processes. He defined a case study as:

> an empirical inquiry that:- investigates a contemporary phenomenon
> within its real life context; when - the boundaries between
> phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (cf. Stake); and in
> which multiple sources of evidence are used.

The Open College of South London (OCSL) was the phenomenon selected

for study. It was one specific case of an Open College within an LEA.

There were, however, four other Open Colleges in the ILEA at one

time[1] and in order to establish how generalisable are the findings

of the one Open College to other Open Colleges and to quasi-federal

structures more generally, some comparisons will be made with two of

the other ILEA Open Colleges. The OCSL is a 'critical' case study

(Goldthorpe and Lockwood, 1968). If opportunities for adults to

return to education were to be initiated in the early 1980s, they

would be likely to occur in a Labour-controlled LEA in an inner city

where there was a high level of social and educational deprivation.

The specific study of the implementation of an educational policy

through an organisational hybrid, such as the Open College, may, at

first sight, appear to have little relevance to the general

understanding of the implementation of policy. It had some of the

features of a quasi-federal structure, however, which is not something

unique in educational circles. Cuts in central government spending in

education and the long-term decline in the post-school population have

forced amalgamations between educational institutions. Moreover, the

marked departmental structure in many schools and colleges, reflecting

as it does, different professional orientations, gives some

institutions more of a quasi-federal character and less of a unitary

one. It is argued here that by studying the implementation of one

aspect of the education authority's policy of equal opportunitites in

the post-school sector, the process of implementation will not be

different in kind from the implementation of similar policies elsewhere. The quasi-federal structure may, in fact, make the process more highly discernible because differences in the efficacy of the policy between institutions and between departments within institutions may help to identify the factors which are most likely to promote the success of the policy. For example, within the structure of the OCSL were a number of institutions through which the policy was implemented and which were the foci of investigation. The various courses designated 'Open College' in different types of institution (AEIs, FE and HE), provided a means for testing the efficacy of the factors which influence successful policy outcomes. Educational policies, it is noted, are often implemented in more than one type of institution and the Open College is not unusual in that respect. It is a case study, therefore, of the implementation of a policy.

The unusual feature of the Open College development was that it was about a new organisation which was 'nested' in the existing structure. Therefore, it is, also, a case study of the 'birth' of an organisation in a bureaucratic setting. As such, it may offer insights into the nature of educational entrepreneurship.

Rock (1988) has identified some of classic features of the way in which change occurs in an organisational setting. In the first place an individual may identify the malfunctions, anomalies and bring it to the attention of others. A network develops in which "jarring occurs continuously" (Rock, 1988:126) and the actions of people may appear to

be contentious. DiMaggio and Powell talk of the "confused and contentious bumblers that populate the pages of organisational case studies" (1983:156). Successful networking is identified as an important phenomena if development is to be successful. It "is the building of a world around a project, a world defined by that project, its members knowing one another as participants in a common entreprise, exchanging information, extending each others' perspectives, experience and knowledge will then be mobilised time and time again" (Rock, 1988:136). An additional interest, therefore, will be the focus on the experience of networking and the 'birth' of an organisation in a bureaucratic structure.

The epistemological approaches and research strategies employed

The methods which were adopted were those thought to be most appropriate to the questions addressed. There were two stages to the research: the first question arose in the course of the researcher's role as an LEA employee in undertaking a study of the high drop-out rate among adults on introductory courses in new technology in courses designated as Open College courses.

The approach adopted in the first undertaking was influenced by the requirement for a fairly swift response to the problem of effecting a higher rate of course completions. It was also constrained by the nature of the.workload of a researcher in an LEA, where this was just

one of a number of studies for which the researcher had

responsibility. The initial proposal was for a questionnaire to be

given in situ at the beginning and end of the course and

administered by the course tutors (following up students who dropped

out by postal survey). An initial pilot indicated, however, the

impracticality of this proposal in the light of the tutors lack of

interest in the research. To have proceeded with the original

strategy would have led to a low response rate which would have been

unrepresentative of the opinions of the student population. Hence the

data was gathered by the researcher using a structured questionnaire

in situ. On occasion with students for whom literacy or language

presented a problem the questionnaire was used as an interview

schedule. Questionnaires were also given to course tutors. The

courses selected for survey were a random sample, structured by the

length of the course and the type of institution (FE, AEI and

polytechnic). (See appendix A.2 pp.388-401 for questionnaires given

to students and tutors). The questions largely replicated those used

on a national survey of the "mature student participation in adult

education" sponsored by the Department of Education and Science in

1979-80, which revealed a number of factors influencing adults'

interest and return to education (Woodley et al., 1987). In

establishing an Open College system it was ascertained from a reading

of the literature that important measures of success would be course

completions, 'going-on' rates and the movement of students between the

various institutions in the post-school sector. As the Open College

development was also to be judged in the light of the Authority's

policy on equal opportunities, success was also to be measured in terms of whether the institutions succeeded in recruiting from among the groups identified as likely to be the most educationally disadvantaged - namely women, ethnic minorites, the handicapped and those who came from the homes of manual workers. Hence, it was important to collect background data on each student.

Whilst undertaking the field work on this survey the researcher was made aware of the different conceptions which the various tutors held of the Open College and the different definitions which they held of their role within it. Following observations of the process of policy implementation in the course of evaluation of other LEA initiatives, this led to questions concerning the implementation process more generally and the eventual undertaking of an in-depth study.

The first question posed and the strategy adopted conform to some extent to the linear model of research, as depicted in Bryman (1988:20). It did not have any obvious roots in grand theory, although it could be seen that there was a functional relationship between a recession in the economy and adults desire to return to education. The concepts which underpinned the research were more in the middle range of theory. Even these were not made explicit at the outset but, retrospectively, it is clear that the concepts of 'role' and 'socialisation' were employed in the construction of the questionnaire. (See appendix A.2 p.378) Bulmer and Burgess (1986:256) and Bryman (1988:22) have noted the almost unconscious way

in which theoretical perspectives are often embedded in social

research.

The results of the questionnaire study and, particularly, the

experience of personally collecting the data in the various

institutions led the researcher to observe and reflect on the

different perceptions which tutors held of the Open College

development. This raised the second question which prompted further

study of an in-depth nature of the policy-implementation process. The

epistemology adopted to address the second question conforms more to

the analytic-inductive model, a term coined by Znaniecki (1934), which

is outlined in a sequence of procedures in Bryman (1988:82). The

research strategy devised was a modified version of the ideal-type

depicted. It involved, first, a "rough definition of the problem"

which was seen to arise from the role of professionals in institutions

and second, following a review of some of the literature relating to

people and organisations and reference to the growing body of

literature on research upon the implementation of policy, the

formation of an "hypothetical explanation of the problem".

Cleaves (1976) indicated that the "implementation involves the process

of moving towards a policy objective by means of political and

administrative steps". This observation suggests that it is possible

to identify particular stages in the process of implementing a policy.

Whilst it is not expected that these will be as easily

distinguishable, as in a classical model of decision-making, to try to discern the various steps is, at least, a starting point.

In relation to a policy of 'continuing education' for adults, four critical stages can be identified: the formation of a coherent and realistic policy; the operationalisation of that policy by the institutions concerned; the socialising function of the tutor in relation to adult students; and the existence of a system for evaluation, feed-back and policy review. Williams (1980:60) describes the implementation system as "bottom-heavy and loosely-coupled. It is bottom heavy because the nearer we get to the bottom of the pyramid, the closer we get to the factors that have the greatest effect on the program's success or failure. It is loosely-coupled because the ability of one level to control the behaviour of another is weak and largely negative".

A 'working' hypothesis

Successful implementation of a policy it is anticipated will depend, in part, on sufficient resources, in terms of finance and personnel, being made available to a development and on key people, at each stage, being aware of the policy objective and their role in relation to it. Objectives will need to be stated in clear terms for each organisation involved. If, however, the value orientation of the policy is not one shared by the implementers and does not 'fit' their definition of their administrative or professional roles they will

need to be motivated by some incentive, ideally 'socialised', in order

that their behaviour is adapted to facilitate the desired outcomes.

Good communication between all the parties concerned is a critical

factor in facilitating implementation: first, so that the objectives

of the policy are clearly stated, easily interpreted and

operationalised at each stage of the implementation process and

second, so that there is 'feed-back' through the organisation to

enable adjustments to be made where needed and to better secure the

desired objectives. As perceived by Walter Williams (1980:17) "the

implementation issue most straightforwardly concerns how to bring

together communications, commitment and capacity so as to carry a

decision into action".

To begin, however, it is important to place the origin of the policy

in its historical context and this will be the focus of the first

chapter. Each stage of the process of implementation is the focus of

attention and following a review of the relevant literatures specific

hypotheses are stated which provide the basis for analysing the data

collected from various sources (interviews, a survey, documentary

sources and participant observation). In the light of the concern of

the use of research for social policy, discussed earlier, whether or

not the key participants, consciously or unconsciously, employed the

insights from earlier research are noted. For a policy to be

successful, it is hypothesised, it has to be successfully implemented

at each stage of the process.

Following an analysis of previous studies and deriving insights as an in-house researcher able to observe the decision-making processes of the Authority, some prognosis can be made as to which factors will promote successful policy outcomes and which will detract and lead to failure. At the point at which the implementation of the policy is examined in relation to individual institutions the epistemology again reflects the analytic steps depicted by Bryman (1988:82) embodying the basic steps employed by Lindesmith (1968). Each institution provides a site for testing the general hypothesis as to what makes for successful implementation.

The whole proposition is also tested against the experience of two of the other Open College developments in London which enhances the possibility that it will be possible to reach some conclusions as to the nature of the implementation process more generally (at least within quasi-federal structures).

The research design is pragmatic; it is one which employs both major research paradigms because each, at different stages seemed to be appropriate. It, also, neither conforms to the 'backward mapping' nor to 'forward mapping' described by Elmore (1982). Again, the strategy adopted is the one most practicable: following the survey of students which was the origin of the study, it seemed more sensible to ascertain what were the original objectives of the policy-makers before proceeding with an investigation into the process by which the policy was implementated within the institutions.

The theoretical perspectives are also eclectic. Those most generally

insightful were drawn from the middle range theories of organisations.

The concepts were embedded in the questions in the in-depth interviews

conducted with policy-makers, senior officers, principals and

co-ordinators in the institutions. (Copies of the interview guides,

indicating the way in which concepts were operationalised, together

with the list of those interviewed, are given in Appendix A.1 p.376.)

Chapter II which will trace the origins of the policy on the Open

College which was designed to expand educational opportunities for

socially and educationally disadvantaged adults in an inner city in

the 1980s. Chapter III will examine the process of policy

formulation, Chapters IV and V the process of policy implementation.

Chapter VI is devoted to evaluation. There follows in Chapter VII an

account of the Authority's review of the policy, an internal review of

the management structure by the Open College of South London and an

external review and evaluation by HMI. Finally, in Chapter VIII,

there is a discussion of the measure of success of the policy and a

discussion of the possible outcome in the long term. The final

chapter will also address the wider issues and interests which gave

rise to the study and which have been outlined above.

Notes

1. At the time of the review of the policy on the Open College in
    the ILEA in 1986 there were four groupings identified: the Open
    College of South London OCSL); Access to Learning for Adults
    (ALFA); Central and West London Open College (CAWLOC); and Second
    Chance Opportunities for Education (SCOPE), formerly the Open
    College of the City and East London (OCCEL). An embryonic Open
    College grouping was also being developed in Greenwich and
    Lewisham which was to be known as the Greenwich and Lewisham for
    Adults network (GLEAN).

Appendix 1.1: Constitution of the Open College of South London, 1985

1. Membership

The Open College of South London (OCSL) is a consortium of institutions currently made up of Brixton College, Clapham-Battersea Institute, Lambeth Institute, London College of Printing, Morley College, The Polytechnic of the South Bank, South London College, Southwark Institute, Southwark College, Vauxhall College and Westminster College.

2. Aim

2.1 Promoting close collaboration between institutions of Higher, Further and Adult Education in providing access to designated programmes for those mature students (19+) who have benefitted least from existing education provision.

2.2 These programmes will fulfil one or more of the following criteria. They will:

> be intended primarily for mature students (19+);
>
> have no formal entry requirements;
>
> offer alternatives to traditional single subject public examinations;
>
> offer flexible hours and means of attendance, facilitate attendance by making creches and playgroups available and by making provision for disabled students;
>
> enable students to progress more advanced courses where appropriate;
>
> be socially and educationally relevant to the students and involve them in the design of the schemes of work.

3. Method of operation

The OCSL will pursue its aim by:

3.1 Promoting publicity, through the production and distribution of materials under the OCSL logo;

3.2 promoting recruitment, through the setting up and operation of a centrally co-ordinated recruitment procedure to supplement members' existing arrangements;

3.3 devising a comprehensive system of accreditation for programmes leading eventually to general 'credit transfer' arrangements;

3.4 devising and developing specially designed learning programmes which will improve access and transfer of students for use in member institutions;

3.5 issuing an Open College Student Card to students on recognised OCSL courses, which gives them access to facilities in member institutions;

3.6 fostering and establishing staff development programmes in member institutions;

3.7 liaising with local educational advice and counselling services for adults;

3.8 making use of informal education networks;

3.9 carrying out relevant research;

3.10 regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the curriculum.

4. The Joint Planning Board

The Joint Planning Board of the OCSL shall be responsible for general direction, academic policy, staffing and resources.

4.1 The Joint Planning Board shall consist of:

> one member of senior management from each member institution, nominated by the parent governing body, for a period of three years;

> four representatives of the Coordinators, two from Adult Education and two from Further Education nominated by the OCSL staff for a period of one year;

> two representatives of the central team, nominated by the OCSL staff for a period of one year;

> the Director of Studies;

> co-opted members, to be appointed in the first instance for one year, their number not exceeding one third of the total membership.

4.2 The Education Officer and Chief Inspector of ILEA shall be invited to attend all meetings.

4.3 The Joint Planning Board will meet at least 3 times a year.

4.4 The Joint Planning Board shall decide upon the appointment of a Director of Studies.

4.5 The quorum of the Joint Planning Board shall be 50% + 1 of the actual membership.

5. Amendments to the Constitution

5.1 Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed and seconded by members of the Joint Planning Board.

5.2 Any proposals for amending the Constitution must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Joint Planning Board at least 14 days before they are discussed.

5.3 Changes to the Constitution must be agreed by the Joint Planning Board.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE FORMATION

. . . .

OF POLICY ON THE OPEN COLLEGE

A 'systems' model of decision-making was developed by Easton (1965)

and was employed by Brown (1978) in an earlier study of policy

formulation within the ILEA in the early seventies. (See figure 1.1

p.18 and figure 1.2 p.19) The value of this approach is that it

identifies the different facets of the process of decision-making: the

effect of the environment in terms of the ideas and values that

predominate (the 'extra-societal' environment); the particular

circumstances that pertain (the 'intra-societal' environment); the

effects of these factors in terms of the 'demand' and 'support' for

the policy initiative and the impact which this has on the 'political

system', whether at a local or a national level. At the same time it

suggests, by means of a flow diagram, that each of these parts is

inter-connected and that the process is continuous over time. The

model is therefore a useful device, and a valuable starting point, for

unravelling the complexity of factors which influence the formation of

policy. Each of these facets will be examined in order to understand

the origins and circumstances in which a policy promoting equal

opportunities for adults in education was developed within a local

education authority.

The 'extra-societal' environment

An historical perspective of the formation of policy is essential, not simply to identify obvious 'milestones' in education such as the acts of 1870 and 1944, but in order to understand the social forces which influence and shape decision-making. Harold Silver (1983) advocates examination over a fairly considerable period of time in order to fathom the "dialectic of ideas and behaviour". A number of views may be evident and some will eventually dominate over others. If one studies only the decisions taken, as in Dahl's study of New Haven (1962), the process by which the power structure of a society limits the scope of decision-making may be overlooked (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962). It is therefore important to be aware of the options open to decision-makers and whether or not these are debated. There may indeed be alternatives which are never even voiced. The term 'hegemony' denotes a situation where some attitudes and values are so dominant that alternatives are never contemplated. Marxists believe this ensures "the consent of a subordinated population" and secures "the conditions of future capitalist production" (Education Group. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS); 1981:32).

Let us, therefore, examine the 'extra-societal' environment over a substantial period of time in which educational provision has been developed and investigate the ideas and values which were dominant, those which were not so apparent and did not gain popular support and, as far as this is possible, those which were never contemplated. To

search for the origins of a policy relating to equal opportunities and adult education one needs to look to the question of equal opportunities in education more generally for the term 'adult education' rarely features in the policy-making arena and on the political agenda.

In surveying the last decade or more since the 1870 Education Act three broad phases may be distinguished: first, there is a fairly long phase from 1870 to 1944, through to the 1950s in which the emphasis was on increasing access to education and the opportunity to progress on the basis of merit; second, there is a much shorter phase from the late 1950s, through the 1960s when the emphasis shifts from one of not simply equality of access but trying to promote equality of outcome; third, there is a phase from the late 1960s to the present day when it is clear that there is no broad consensus of opinion about the direction in which education should be moving and differing views and beliefs are evident. Whilst it is clear that certain attitudes and beliefs in a period come to dominate, others - albeit minority views - do not always disappear and sometimes gain momentum. Hence the importance of taking the long view advocated by Silver.

Let us then examine the three phases in question. In retrospect, the period 1870 to 1950 appears to have been one in which there was growing support for the extension of educational opportunities, initially for universal elementary education and, in 1944, for secondary education for all. The differences between various groups

were largely over the timing of changes not over the principle involved.

On closer examination, however, it was a period in which the way forward in education did not go unquestioned within the newlyformed Labour Party. Whilst the Fabian elements favoured selecting out pupils in the interests of "national efficiency" (Barker, 1972:16), others, trade unionists such as Will Thorne of the Gas Workers and General Labourers Union, saw selecting out as perpetuating class divisions:

> You will find this selection process, if it is to be made the substitute for the higher education of the people, will simply take certain individuals and put them through a class machine, in order that they might become effective guardians of the vested interests of the possessing classes of this country (Barker, 1972:8).

The National Association of Labour Teachers also questioned the proposal for different types of secondary schools believing that this would reproduce inequality. Their proposal was for multi-lateral schools (a type of streamed comprehensive), but they did not win the support of the Labour Members of Parliament (Barker, 1972:49).

One quite radical element was noticeable in the trade union camp and it prompted the breakaway of a group from Ruskin College in 1908 to form the National Council of Labour Colleges and its affiliated organisations, such as the Plebs League. It saw education controlled by the established order as restrictive and "a reflection of the economic inequalities resulting from the capitalist economy" (Barker,

1972:136). The Labour Party, in general, had little sympathy with
this view.

Some questions were never raised by the Labour Party in relation to
educational policy. For example, whilst in 1918, it declared itself
to be a Socialist Party it never, at any time, suggested the
nationalisation of the private schools or their assimilation into the
state system (Barker, 1972:34). Neither was the question of adults'
rights in relation to education ever raised and placed on the
political agenda.

In the inter-war years there was a gradual extension of rights to
education. This resulted, in part, from the Education Act of 1918
which abolished half-time schooling and enabled adolescents to
continue in school on a part-time basis but, also, from the
initiatives of some LEAs, not all of them Labour-controlled, which
introduced free secondary education in the 1920s. Influential within
the Labour Party on educational matters was an advisory committee
chaired by R.H. Tawney. A paper, largely written by Tawney,
'Secondary Education for All' shaped the content of the Hadow Report
(1926). This recommended the expansion of educational opportunities,
which had taken place in some LEAs, as "an official principle". The
Teachers' Labour League and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) put
forward a proposal for common schools but this idea was not widely
accepted within the party. In general, in the period between the wars
there was broad agreement between the parties as to the desirability

of the expansion of education; the differences were in the speed and

extent of the reform. The economic deprivation of the period fuelled

a sense of injustice and promoted a general consensus as to the

desirablity of the development of educational opportunities.

During the second World War interest in educational reform grew. R.A.

Butler, The President of the Board of Education in the war-time

Coalition Government, "has recounted in 'The Art of the Possible' how

he was able to get on with the drafting and the passing of the

Education Act, 1944, with hardly a flicker of interest from Churchill

and his Cabinet colleagues" (Kogan, 1978:28). Education was seen,

generally, as a means of personal fulfilment as well as being

important for social and economic reasons. When in 1944 the

Conservative government passed an Education Act, it had the general

support of the Opposition parties. On taking office the Labour

Government accepted the Norwood Committee's recommendations for the

establishment of a tri-partite system of secondary education (CCCS,

1981:59). It was evident that there was a desire among the population

at large for an educational system based on merit.

The second phase in the 1950s and 1960s was one in which the minority

views within the National Association of London Teachers and London

Labour Party began to gain ground, to the point at which, in 1951, the

Labour Party became publicly committed to the notion of comprehensive

schools. There was, however, "no agreement as to the form, manner and

speed of its introduction or what priority should be attached to it".

This, Barker says, reflected the "long dichotomy" in the Labour
Party's approach to secondary education (1972:96).

The 1950s was a period marked, perhaps more than anything else, by its
growing affluence when "the people" seemed relatively content (CCCS,
1981:71). It was in this context that Labour's educational programme
underwent a modest revision. (Whilst it favoured comprehensive
schools it was anticipated that these would be 'streamed' and, again,
whilst it supported the expansion of higher education it was in the
form of a binary system.) The opening up of educational opportunity
was seen as leading to greater social mobility and a lessening of
social inequality. The view of educational equality which dominated
Labour's thinking in this period was that of a meritocracy, with a
method of selecting pupils for different forms of secondary education.

Educational research at this time (Douglas, 1964; Halsey, Floud and
Anderson, 1961), however, began to reveal that equality of opportunity
in education did not result where there were gross inequalities in
children's social conditions and there was a general measure of
support for the idea of positive discrimination of resources in order
to promote greater equality of outcome. Whilst some argued for this
on the grounds of equity and justice, the arguments which won popular
support were those based on economic efficiency. Newsom said in 1963
that "never before had the cause of education had so much public
support". Even adult education was the subject of government enquiry.
(The Russell Report on Adult Education was published in 1973.) The

setting up of an Open University in 1970 was aimed particularly at
adults who had missed out previously in education.

Adult education through the trade union movement, under the auspices
of the Workers Educational Association (WEA) and the Extra-Mural
Departments (EMDs) of the universities continued and some adults,
albeit a small minority, progressed from part-time to full-time
education through the adult colleges such as Ruskin College and
Fircroft College) and thence to higher education (Killeen and Bird,
1981:81).

In retrospect, the ideas that predominated in the 1960s were reformist
and the solutions proposed were those of social engineers (CCCS,
1981:99). There was no recognition that inequalities in education
resulted from inequalities in social relations in the work situation.
As in the earlier period, no serious questioning of the desirability
of a dual system of public and private provision. Whilst education
was seriously debated, the most persuasive arguments were those which
were couched in terms of economic efficiency rather than those which
centred on a moral right to equality in education.

The third phase was noticeable for the growing disparity of views; the
political consensus was gradually eroded. On the one hand, the
momentum for continued expansion of educational opportunities, evident
in the 1960s, continued with a White Paper 'Education: A Framework for
Expansion' in 1972. Local Education Authorities (LEAs), some rather

slowly and reluctantly, moved from a selective to a non-selective

system of secondary education so that by the end of the decade the

majority of children in the state sector were in comprehensive

schools.[1] On the other hand, it was clear that a substantial and

influential minority remained opposed to comprehensive education and

in some Conservative dominated LEAs these views were so influential

that a system of comprehensive education was never implemented.

A growing voice, throughout the 1970s, was that of the radical 'right'

whose ideas were disseminated through a series of 'Black Papers' on

education from 1969 to 1977. They were responding to what they termed

the "egalitarian threat" to education. In the 'Fight for Education'

(Cox and Dyson, 1969) Angus Maude wrote:

> The quality of education is threatened by the equality of
> opportunity drive it will inflict fresh unjustices . . . . to try
> forcibly to prevent emergence of an elite will produce a
> mediocrity of thought more dangerous even than the mediocrity of
> attainments . . . . The pendulum has already swung too far. It is
> necessary to get very tough with the egalitarians, who would
> abolish or lower standards out of 'sympathy' with those who fail
> to measure up to them.

The papers read as a diatribe against the educational expansion of the

previous decade: standards were seen to be threatened (Pedley,

Sparrow, 1969); pupil-centred learning and "Spockism" in child-rearing

were seen to sponsor "social revolution" in higher education; and

teaching mixed-ability classes was seen to foster "self-delusion"

(Boyson, 1972). A whole series of papers on similar themes were

published throughout the 1970s, some citing research which claimed

that standards had fallen since 1964 (Boyson, 1972) and that the

notion of an untapped pool of ability in the working class was greatly

over-estimated. There was an increasing emphasis on a need to return
to "true and secure values". "Women's primary role was in the home",
said Rhodes Boyson (1972).

The views of the political right gathered momentum, and through the
media gradually permeated the public consciousness. An analysis of
all reporting on education in the 'Daily Mirror' and 'Daily Mail'
indicted that 60 per cent of all coverage of educational isues
presented school developments in an unfavourable light (CCCS, 1981:
210). Academics of the radical 'right' wrote critiques of
egalitarianism (Letwin, 1983). The notion of equality in one
dimension was, it was argued, incompatible with equalities in other
dimensions such as individual freedom and justice.

The attitudes and values towards education which had fuelled its
expansion in the 1960s were, in part, undermined by the revelations of
social research which indicted that successive policies to extend the
educational frontier had largely been unsuccessful in increasing, for
example, the proportion of working-class children who had proceeded
into higher education (Glennerster, 1972). The expansion of the
educational system, even the "alternative route" through further
education (Raffe, 1979), it was revealed, had largely benefited the
middle classes. Views in Britain were influenced by research in the
USA; schooling, it seemed, had little effect at promoting equality of
outcomes (Coleman, 1969; Jencks, 1972). Attempts to discriminate
positively in favour of working class children seemingly had had

little impact (Headstart in the USA; Halsey, 1972). Investment had

not equalised educational opportunities and even when it had it had

done nothing to enhance social mobility (Boudon, 1972). The consensus

which had fuelled the expansion of educational provision since the

second World War was no longer in evidence by the mid-1970s.

Other interpretations were offered but did not receive much attention.

There were caveats in some research reports (Halsey, 1972); and a

re-examination of Headstart in the USA (CCCS, 1981:177) indicated that

perhaps impact was related to the size of the resource input. In

Britain action researchers concerned with redressing educational

inequalities had found themselves involved in local communities

(Halsey, 1972) but the notion of 'empowering' people was not widely

discussed. Overall these findings received little coverage.

(Cockburn, 1977:127)

There were, therefore, no counterveiling views, except those of the

Marxists (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Persell, 1977; Braverman, 1974) who

saw unequal outcomes in education as an inevitable effect of unequal

social and economic relations in the workplace. This minority view

was certainly not embraced by the Labour Party. Indeed Callaghan in

his speech at Ruskin College in 1976 spoke of the need for a core

curriculum and national standards (CCCS, 1981;218). Certainly the

notion of "de-schooling" was never widely entertained (Illich, 1971).

The social democratic consensus in education had clearly broken down and egalitarians were forced into a defensive position. The 1970s, therefore, was a period when the values and attitudes at a national level which began to dominate were utilitarian rather than egalitarian. At a local level, however, in some Labour-controlled Authorities, the attitudes and values of the 1960s still held sway and continued to influence policy developments.

The 'intra-societal' environment

When considering the 'extra-societal' factors in relation to equal opportunities for adults in education, it was felt necessary to trace these back over a long period from the turn of the century; as far as the 'intra-societal' factors are concerned, it is suggested that those in the previous decade are likely to the ones most pertinent. These are identified as changes in the economy, technological developments, demographic factors, and social changes resulting from the greater ethnic mix of the population and the changing role of women.

Prior to the 1970s and continuing until the economic difficulties resulting from the oil crisis in 1973, there was an expectation and assumption that the expansion of the educational system was generally desirable and necessary for economic growth (although the emphasis was more on the latter). Much talent, it was suggested in the major educational reports of the previous era (Crowther (1959); Newsom (1963); Robbins (1963); and Plowden (1967)) was not fully developed.

The Crowther report, for example, revealed in a study of army recruits that 42 per cent in the top 10 per cent of the ability range had left school by the age of 16. The Newsom Report similarly argued that social reasons, rather than ability factors, were to blame for early leaving.

A whole new branch of economics which came to be termed "the economics of education" developed. Blaug (1968) said "it's now realised that improvements in the quality of the labour force can have dramatic effects on economic growth". Whilst strong arguments were made on economic grounds for the expansion of education, some warned that to justify the expansion purely on these grounds could rebound and that education should properly be regarded as consumption rather than an investment (Schultz, Blaug, Schaffer in Blaug 1961). It was, however, the strong economic arguments that legitimated increased government spending in the years 1953 to 1973, such that the total increase in spending in that period amounted to 265.6 per cent at real prices (Kogan, 1981:157). The number of full-time and sandwich students doubled from 192,000 in 1961-2 to 463,000 in 1971-2 and the number of part-time day students rose from 42,000 to 70,000 in the same period (HMSO, 1972). The optimistic assumptions that the expansion of education was good for economic growth continued into the 1970s. It was evident in the government's report entitled, 'Education: A Framework for Expansion' (1972) in which provision in higher education was forecast to expand from providing for 15 per cent of the 18 year

old age group to 22 per cent, requiring an increase in expenditure of

£433 million (HMSO, 1972 para. 167). It said in its introduction:

> the last ten years have seen a major expansion of the education
> service. The next ten will see expansion continue - as it must if
> education is to make its full contribution to the vitality of our
> society and our economy (para 1.).

Shortly after this, in 1973, the oil crisis occurred and the resulting

deceleration in economic growth influenced educational spending such

that it was held more or less constant in the period 1973-78.

(Average increase in real spending was 0.1% (Kogan 1981:158).) From

1979 educational spending by central government suffered a two per

cent reduction in line with the public sector as a whole. The

downturn in the economy halted the expansion of the educational system

but also, seemingly, apportioned some blame to it for having failed to

deliver sufficient scientific and technologically qualified labour to

sustain economic growth. Kogan commented that the climate which had

been favourable to the expansion of education ended in the period

1970-74 when Margaret Thatcher was Minister of Education. In the

words of one of her former colleagues, "she was not disposed to listen

to the unalloyed liberalism of the education service" (Kogan,

1975:44). There was, clearly, no longer a consensus between the

political parties on educational matters.

The arguments for greater expenditure on education had invariably been

aligned with the needs in the economy for skilled labour arising from

technological developments. During the period of educational

expansion from 1945 onwards the Government had taken a number of

initiatives to promote the development of a highly skilled workforce:

the funding of the Colleges of Advanced Technology as direct grant

institutions under the Ministry of Education; the setting up of the

Industrial Training Boards; and the regular forecasting of skilled

manpower needs using statistical models. Forecasts, however, of the

demand for scientific manpower in relation to continuing growth in the

economy always suggested a continuing shortage (especially of

technologists). But by the 1970s whilst changes in technology still

created new demands for skilled workers it also made others redundant.

In 1974 the Conservative Government set up the Manpower Services

Commission (MSC), under the direct control of the Department of

Employment, to facilitate the retraining under the Training

Opportunities Scheme (TOPS). Under successive governments the MSC

received massive injections of public revenue to extend adult

retraining and later in 1978 to develop youth training schemes for the

growing number of young unemployed persons (Caroline St. John Brooks,

1985). Unemployment in England grew from 3.0 per cent in 1971 to 5.2

per cent in 1979 and in the 1981 it grew even more steeply to 10.8 per

cent (Social Trends 13, 1983). Prior to the development of the Open

College of South London within the ILEA it was 11.5 per cent.[2]

An important factor in relation to planning for educational provision

which had important implications in the 1970s was the noticeable

decline in the birth rate. (This resulted from the widespead use of

the birth control pill made available under the National Health

Service in the mid 1970s.) The 1972 Government Paper acknowledging

the decline in the school population nevertheless envisaged that any

slack in the higher education system could be taken up by adults

returning to education (as evidenced by the take-up of Open University

places). The Government promised a careful study of the report, then

forthcoming, on adult education (The Russell Report, 1973). Its stand

was that "so far as resources allow the Government wish to see

advances made across the whole broad front" (HMSO, 1972:30).

The Government envisaged greater flexibility in higher education with

the construction of inter-disciplinary vocationally relevant degrees,

accreditation and the facilitating of movement between institutions.

It introduced a 2-year Diploma of Education Course which qualified for

a mandatory award thus facilitating the return of adults to education.

When the Government published 'Higher Education into the 1990s. A

Discussion Document' in 1978 it was evident that the increase in

demand for places in higher education had not materialised, but had

remained steady at 14 per cent. Some increase in demand, it was

thought, could still materialise, both from the greater participation

rate of children of manual workers who might be more likely to stay on

at school through the development of comprehensive schools, but also

from the fact that the birth rate for professional/managerial workers

had declined least and this group had the highest participation rates

in higher education (para. 31). Still maintaining the Robbins

principle of higher education for all those who sought and qualified

for it, the Government discussed the possibility that the demand:

> which is already beginning to make itself felt, to devote more
> educational resources to those already in employment might result
> in more systematic opportunities for recurrent education for
> mature students. Priority must be given at first to those, who

had missed higher education opportunities at normal entry age.
But this might not preclude more radical developments, such as a
systematic scheme for continuing education at an advanced level,
or indeed at a non-advanced level (para. 33).

The DES and MSC sponsored a national survey of 'Paid Educational

Leave' (PEL) and began to consider the financial implications of

making PEL more widely available to employees. Before, however,

receiving the results of this study (Killeen and Bird, 1981), the

Labour Government went out of office and was succeeded by a

Conservative administration which showed no interest in making

education (other than training) more widely available to educationally

disadvantaged adults in the population.

Another 'intra-societal' factor which began to influence policy

decisions in relation to education in the 1970s was the growing

multi-ethnic composition of the school population, particularly in the

inner city areas. A Select Committee on Race Relations and

Immigration published a report 'The Educational Needs of Immigrants'

(HMSO, 1974) which recognised the requirement of measures to address

the special needs of immigrant groups (children and adults) both for

their own "well-being" and for the "promotion of harmony between

different ethnic groups". It stated (para 5) that clearly new

initiatives would be required in the future by LEAs and drew attention

to the contribution of:

> further and adult education to the educational needs of immigrants
> (para 7) . . . . such provision will be for the sake of the adult
> immigrants themselves (to enhance their opportunities of
> self-fulfilment and of integration in our society), for society's
> sake (to assist racial harmony and enable immigrants to make their
> fullest contribution to national life), and for their children's
> sake (to increase the number of immigrant homes where English is

spoken). The Government therefore welcomes initiatives that have
been undertaken by local education authorities and voluntary
bodies and wish to encourage further developments (para 8).

It stated in its recommendation (15) that this requirement (8) be

considered in the light of the Report by the Committee of Enquiry into

Adult Education 'Adult Education: A Plan for Development' (1973).

Research was commissioned and other government reports followed (HMSO,

1981) which confirmed previous findings on the under-achievement of

children of West Indian origin. (The Report of the Committee of

Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups

'Education for All' was published in 1985.)

A further factor to consider in relation to educational policy

relating to redressing educational disadvantage of certain groups in

the population, of which immigrants is one such group, is the

educational disadvantage of many women:

> there are sex differences in almost every form of further and
> higher education. Although overall a greater proportion of girls
> go on to some form of education, boys generally go on to the more
> prestigious courses. More boys study for degrees, more girls
> enter colleges of education, nursing, secretarial and catering
> courses. In addition, approximately four times as many boys as
> girls are given block or day release by their employers (ILEA,
> 1983:12).

Educational disadvantage is reflected in the disparities in earning

power of men and women. (In 1970 women's earnings were 50 per cent of

men's manual gross weekly earnings (Routh, 1980). Although women's

participation in the labour force had increased greatly in the 1960s

and early 1970s, and even though the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination

Acts came into force in 1975, disparities in men and women's pay were

only partially reduced, largely because the vast majority of women

worked in a segmented labour market which inhibited the drawing of
comparisons between men and women's unequal rates of pay. In 1981
women's earnings, overall, were 74.8 per cent of men's. During the
1970s women increased their share of the white collar and professional
jobs but that trend was reversed in the 1980s (DE Gazette, 1981).
In defining two types of discrimination relating to the earnings
differential of men and women, the Confederation of British Industry
(CBI) said that the first concerned unreasonable prejudice and the
second, the most common, resulted from employees making a logical
appraisal of women as employees. Among the many problems which they
mentioned in employing women was their "lower levels of educational
attainment". To quote from the report: "a women's education and
upbringing is not usually designed to fit her for a lifetime of work
as an employee" (CBI, 1975). Many women, however, needed to support
themselves and their children; the number of one-parent families
increased substantially in the 1970s (Brown, 1986). Some, however,
with smaller families than those hitherto were wanting to re-enter the
labour market and a growing women's consciousness influenced others to
seek new outlets and interests by returning to education and/or
seeking new careers.

Within society in the 1970s, therefore, it was clear that certain
groups in the adult population were at an educational disadvantage in
relation to others. These were: adults of working-class parentage
(Registrar General Categories IIIb, IV and V) who still formed only
19.4 per cent of the intake to higher education (UCCA,1980); women

(the proportion of women was still 20 per cent lower than that for

men; adults of ethnic minority groups (ILEA, 1983:17) and those with

'special educational needs'. ('The Report of the Committee of Inquiry

into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People' which

identified the particular educational difficulties encountered by

disabled people was presented in 1978.) These identifiable groups

were, therefore, most vulnerable to unemployment during the economic

recession which developed in the 1970s.

The 'intra-societal factors' invariably connect and relate to the

'extra-societal' ones, the values and attitudes that pervade and

influence people's actions. Whether or not, these combine to

influence the political system depends on the level of demand and on

the perceived support for the formation of a new policy.

'Demand'

If a 'demand' for an expansion of educational opportunities for adults

was to be made, it would, perhaps, be expected to come from the groups

most educationally disadvantaged: the working class; women; black and

other ethnic minority groups and adults with 'special needs'. This

had not happened previously, for it is one of life's ironies that

there is an inverse relationship between educational needs and wants.

It has always been a problem for adult educationalists to redress the

imbalance of needs and 'demand' (Rubenson, 1983).[3] There are,

however, a number of 'intra-societal' factors which began to influence

the socially disadvantaged adults in the 1970s and to raise their awareness of the personal benefits of participating in adult education/training.

Let us examine each of these groups in turn. First, greater interest in training was evident in the trade union movement because of the new legal framework which began to influence workplace relationships between union and management in the 1970s. This led to a demand by unions through the Trade Unions Congress (TUC) for 'paid release' for training for shop stewards in matters such as 'Law in the Workplace' and 'Health and Safety'. A legal entitlement to this was conferred under the 'Employment Protection Act' 1975 (consolidated 1978).[4] With a substantial grant from central government, a massive expansion of trade union education took place. This brought thousands of working-class people back into education into Colleges of Further Education, the Workers' Educational Association and the Extra-mural University Departments, albeit, in most cases, for only one day a week over ten weeks.[5] For some workplace representatives, however, it led to more advanced courses and, for a relatively small number, it opened up doors to education more generally (Killeen and Bird, 1981:88). A Society of Industrial Tutors (SIT) had been formed in 1968 whose first aim was "to advance the general education of men and women in industry and commerce through day-release and similar provision in the spirit of the adult education liberal tradition". In 1976 the SIT collaborated with the National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) to obtain a research grant from the DES and MSC to

conduct a survey of 'paid educational leave' (PEL). An influential

factor in obtaining the grant was the fact that the Government was

subject to some international pressure from bodies such as the

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the

International Labour Organisation (ILO) to address the question of

adult 'continuing education' and PEL.[6] The final report

highlighted the unequal distribution of PEL (the more occupationally

advantaged received the most PEL), yet the survey of PEL students

indicated that the benefits of PEL were most evident among those

adults who were the least educationally advantaged. By the time the

PEL Steering Committee reported in 1979, however, a Conservative

Government had been elected and no action was taken on the research

findings. The report of a subsequent study 'The Mature Student

Participation in Education' (Woodley et al., 1987), also sponsored

by the DES under a Labour Government, suffered a similar fate.

Second, the interest of some individual women and that of women's

groups in adult education and training developed in the 1970s largely

because of the greater participation of women in the labour market.

Public attention was directed to women's position in the labour force

with the 'Equal Pay Act' and the 'Sex Discrimination Act' (1975).[7]

In particular, it highlighted through the reports of the Equal

Opportunites Commission the inequalities in pay and promotion

prospects which were allied to inequalities in initial education and

further training opportunities. Women's consciousness was raised

during this period. A 'Women's Rights Rally' took place at Alexandra

Palace in 1976. One of the leaflets distributed, entitled 'The Fight has just begun' put forward the notion of a 'Working Women's Charter'. Equality in the workplace, it had to be recognised, could only come about when there was "equality in the home and in the community". It made practical demands for "child care, maternity and paternity rights . . . equal educational opportunities" (International Marxist Group, 1976). Unions produced booklets and directed attention to the need for equality in the workplace.[8]

Through the formation of women's groups, women developed self-confidence and some began to move into the mainstream of the trade union movement and the Labour Party (Goss, 1984). Whilst, retrospectively, the impact of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination legislation would seem to have been limited in its effectiveness (Snell et al., 1981), it did serve to legitimise women's rights and to raise their consciousness such that some began to look to 'second-chance' educational opportunities.

Third, the considerable frustration experienced by the black community at the continuing under-achievement of their children in the British educational system led groups of parents and teachers to set up 'supplementary' schools, a partnership of parents, children and teachers. This was, in part, the effect of the 'Black Power Movement' which had enabled black people to express their pride in their culture and served to give them a strong identity:

> it created the political space for us to define our blackness and
> to develop a black perspective to inject into the broader

organisations and struggles in which we were involved, such as
over education or the trade union movement (Carter, 1986:81).

The 'Race Discrimination Act' (1976) was modelled on the 'Sex

Discrimination Act' (1975) which was to promote equality of

opportunity. Education was seen to be of critical importance to

members of the West Indian Community. Among the leaders of the black

community there was a consciousness of the need for a political

alliance:

> the challenge, for both the black people and white people, is to
> harness the struggle for race equality with the struggle for sex
> equality and the working class movement, so that an irreversible
> shift in society be won . . . . battles waged by black people,
> particularly in the field of education, have opened doors for the
> whole working class to challenge the values and methods of control
> which oppress us all . . . the black community has been an
> important catalyst for change (Carter, 1986:14).

Fourth, there were adults with 'special needs'. Some attention had

been given to their interests within the Open University but enormous

obstacles still existed for many such people in returning to

education. Their interests were expressed through a number of

voluntary organisations, each concerned with a particular handicap,

such as the National Association for Mental Health (MIND) and the

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB). Most of the

associations were concerned with a whole range of general welfare

issues rather than with a specifically educational one. The Deaf

Education Action Forum was an exception in this respect. Tomlinson

(1982) noted that the effectiveness of the various voluntary

associations tended to reflect the social composition of the

membership.

The wide-ranging enquiry into the 'Education of Handicapped Children and Young People' (1978) gave all the voluntary and professional associations and providers of special education an opportunity to express their views. Research sponsored in connection with the report indicated that handicapped young people, when compared to the non-handicapped, were very much more likely to be unemployed, were much less likely to remain in education beyond 16 years and, if 'staying-on', were most likely to be in non-advanced further education. Over a half of those those in FE were in some form of adult literacy class (Warnock, 1978:180). Among the recommendations which the report made were: that Local Education Authorities (LEAs) should provide a co-ordinated approach in Futher Education and that special provision should be made by universities and polytechnics for adults with special needs, in line with the provision made by the Open University and the University of Sussex.

Various groups could be identified, therefore, in the 1970s who were a part of the growing 'demand' from adults for access to 'continuing education': some for a specific purpose in relation to a particular role, such as that of a trade union representative; some for compensatory education such as adult literacy classes; others for non-standard entry into higher education.

<u>'Support'</u>

In order to consider what 'support' was forthcoming to meet this
'demand', it is important to keep in mind the 'extra-societal' factors
discussed earlier. The group which had the strongest 'support' were
the trade unions through the TUC. It was effective in putting
pressure on the Labour Government to legislate for PEL for the
purposes of trade union education. Further, it obtained a substantial
grant promoting the expansion of courses under the auspices of the
TUC.

The other groups did not have such strong political muscle. External
pressure existed on the government (through Britain's entry to the
EEC) in respect of women's position in employment and whilst this
resulted in the 'Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination' legislation, it did
not address the underlying inequalities which lay in the sphere of
education and training. What 'support' was in evidence to redress
inequalities, again, came through the trade union movement.
Meanwhile, the publications of the European Commisssion served to
highlight the continuing inequalities in pay between men and women.

The black and other ethnic minority groups exercised pressure in
relation to legislation on racial discrimination and this led to the
setting up of the Rampton Enquiry (which reported in 1981). Some
LEAs, of which the ILEA was one such, took action in respect of its

findings that, "West Indian children as a group were underachieving in relation to their peers" (Swann, 1985: viii).

Some 'support' existed for adults with special needs within LEAs and, again, the ILEA was one of the Authorities which took action in respect of the 'Warnock' report. There was, however, no effective co-ordination of the interests of the educationally disadvantaged groups within the adult population at a national level. The NIAE which was renamed the NIACE (National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education) in 1983, acted more in the capacity of the interests of providers of education rather than directly as a pressure group. It did, however, through the Association of Adult Continuing Education (ACACE) research the educational needs of adults and the state of practice in order to present central government with the information on which to base future policy decisions.[9] The ACACE was disbanded by the Conservative Government in 1983. It is observed that the one area in which the NIAE was successful in obtaining resources from central government was in the field of adult basic education. For three consecutive years (1975-78), the DES made one million pounds available for the Adult Literacy Agency (ALA).[10] It is interesting to note, therefore, that the two areas (trade union education and literacy) to which central government allocated grants could be seen to be related to the needs of the economy.

Whilst, overall, in the 1970s it would appear that the 'demand' for 'adult continuing education' was growing, there was not widespread

'support' for financing it in the population at large. The Labour

Government was clearly not sympathetic to expanding educational

opportunities for the least educationally advantaged sectors of

society, as was indicated in their discussion document' (The Future of

Higher Education, 1978). Also, as the Equal Opportunities Commission

complained, the Party almost totally neglected the position of women

in Higher Education (Lodge and Blackstone, 1982:208). Continuing

difficulties in the economy, however, inhibited positive action by

central government. To the extent, therefore, that 'support' was

forthcoming it was left to the individual LEAs, even in some

instances, individual institutions, to respond to local 'demand'. Let

us, therefore, examine the political system in some detail and, in

particular, the sub-system that constituted the ILEA.

The political system

By definition a system is never static and therefore the point at

which one begins to examine the ILEA as a sub-system might appear

somewhat arbitrary. The point selected, in this instance, is 1981

when Londoners elected a Labour administration to the Greater London

Council (GLC). The Leader elected by the Labour majority was Ken

Livingstone from the left-wing of the party in preference to Andrew

Mackintosh the 'right-wing' councillor. Elected members of the GLC

were nominated by their respective parties to serve on the ILEA.

Before, however, examining the educational sub-system (the ILEA) in greater detail, it is necessary to consider the relationship of the macro-political system to the micro-system (local government): first, in terms of the policies which emanated from the Department of Education and Science (DES) in the 1970s; and, second, most importantly, to examine legislative changes which brought about the greater politicisation of local authorities (LAs).

The nature of relations between central and local government in the 1950s and 1960s has been well-documented (Kogan, 1971, 1978, 1982). For the most part, during that period, education was not a politically contentious issue and it rarely featured in debates in the House of Commons. The 'tri-umvirate' (Kogan, 1971:234; 1975:23), the DES, the LEAs and the teachers' unions, generally shared a view over the desirability of expanding the educational service and recommendations arising out of the major reports ('Plowden', 'Newsom', 'Warnock' and 'Rampton') were implemented by the LEAs. In respect of the 'Plowden' report, the ILEA introduced an Educational Priority Index (EPI) in order to allocate more financial resources to those schools which were high on an index of social deprivation. Following the Government's White paper on the 'Educational Needs of Immigrants' (1974), the ILEA appointed a team of inspectors for multi-ethnic education and later, in response to the 'Warnock' report, it introduced advisers for 'special needs'. Sympathetic with the Labour Government's Circular 10/65, it had re-organised secondary education on comprehensive lines and introduced a system of 'banding' at the age of transfer to

secondary education in order to ensure balanced intakes to schools, in

terms of ability. Following a survey of adult education undertaken

for the 'Russell' report in the field of adult education (1969), it

set up a working party on Community Education to explore ways of

making the adult education service more accessible to the

educationally disadvantaged sections of the adult population. Through

its polytechnics and colleges of higher education, the Authority had

generally expanded provision and the opportunities for non-standard

entry. This was encouraged further by a letter from the DES to LEAs

inviting them to design "special preparatory courses to cater

particularly, but not necessarily exclusively, for suitable members of

the ethnic minority communities" (DES, 1978:1). Colleges of further

education, for example, began to develop 'Access' courses for higher

education making available some full-time maintenance awards to adult

students. It was, therefore, in the context of expanding educational

opportunities generally that the development of the Open College

system took place.

With regard to the second consideration, that of legislative changes

relating to local government, a factor that needs to be borne in mind

while examining this, are the changes which took place within the

Labour Party during that period (the 1970s). First, however, let us

consider the political ramifications of restructuring local government

and examine its impact on the local political system. Prior to 1972

the general understanding of how local government operated, conveyed

by observers (Donnison, 1964; Birley, 1970; Saran, 1973), was that

whilst "a good Chairperson" was the acknowledged Leader of the

Committee, "good officials" nevertheless had a lot of influence on

decision-making because they compiled and presented the information on

which decisions were made:

> a good Chairman, is a real leader of his Committee whereas a good
> official must be capable of combining several roles. He must at
> times be a committed nurse, at times its tutor, at times its
> conscience, at times its candid friend yet always its servant,
> never its master (Donnison, 1964:204).

Following the 'Bains' report in 1972, 'The New Local Authorities:

Management and Structure', a system of corporate management was

established by creating the post of chief executive and a management

team of chief officers. A policy and resources committee was

introduced which made it possible to establish a political direction

to policy. Partisanship was fostered by the reduction in the number

of Local Authorities from 1400 to 400 and by the focus of political

parties on the county system rather than the urban level of government

(Alexander, 1986:4). Changes were also taking place in the 1970s

within the Labour Party, in part because of grass-roots

disillusionment with the record of the Labour Government of the late

sixties but, also, because the Party became more radical following the

abolition of the list of proscribed organisations in 1971.

One further factor which fostered the politicisation of local

government was the introduction of attendance allowances which made it

possible for leading members to become full-time councillors, both

determining and supervising the implementation of policy. (From 1980

special allowances were payable for posts of responsibility.) The

overall effect of these reforms in local government was to give local

government a much higher political profile. Elected members were no

longer 're-active' but 'pro-active'. They came to office with a

programme based on an election manifesto which pre-empted an

'officer-led' agenda. In particular the much greater involvement of

full-time paid Leaders led them:

> to act as a political executive, being highly visible, commonly
> speaking publicly and to the media on behalf of the council and
> its policies and taking a leading part in the political and
> administrative management of the authority (Alexander, 1986:9).

What was true of local government, more generally, was also evident in

the management of education. In his book 'Education and Politics:

Policy-Making in Local Education Authorities' Jennings (1977)

concluded: "in the near future party political control is going to be

paramount" (1977: 202).

The social and economic factors in the 1970s (the 'intra-societal'

environment) which influenced the educational needs of the population

have been discussed in an earlier section of this chapter. The

particular levels of social deprivation in London, however, need to be

noted as these impacted on the micro-political system of the ILEA. By

the early 1980s the north/south divide in prosperity, but also the

urban/rural one, was more pronounced. The tables, drawn from the 1981

Census, (see appendix 2.1 p.87) illustrate the relative deprivation of

the inner city population in inner London when compared with other

parts of the country. In common with other large conurbations, the

ILEA was high on all the indices of social deprivation (poor housing,

large families, one-parent families and families in receipt of

supplementary benefit). It had, also, the highest proportion of

non-white population of any city (41 per cent of the non-white

population in Britain lived in inner London). In terms of "additional

educational needs", as measured by the DES, the ILEA was assessed as

the LEA most in need.

The borough of Lambeth within the ILEA is a case in point. Cockburn

(1977) describes the impact of the escalation in the price of land

because of Lambeth's location in relation to the city of London and

the impact that this had on the local economy, driving out

manufacturing industry and, with it, the skilled labour force.

Unemployment in the borough trebled (between 1968-1974), and local

authority expenditure rose from £7.2 million to £17.4 million. The

indeptedness of the borough increased threefold as the pressure on

local services (housing, social services and education) increased. In

1975 it was estimated that there were 1,000 unemployed school leavers

on the streets. Community relations with the police, already

weakened, broke down and were worsened when the Metropolitan Police

introduced a Special Patrol Group. This led to the formation of the

'Lambeth Group against Police Repression'. In 1981 violence erupted

on the streets and the Scarman report on racial disadvantage was

commissioned (Ouseley, 1984).

Meanwhile, within the micro-political system, the interests of black

groups and women were beginning to be voiced and heard on local

councils. Boddy and Fudge (1984) note that whilst there was an

observable long term decline in the Labour vote in 1979, there was an

increased vote for the party in local elections. New alliances were

evident in some cities (Marxism To-day, 1983) as women's groups, black

organisations, environmentalists, and radical elements in the public

sector unions (political consciousness had been raised as a result of

the 'winter of discontent' in 1979) joined forces. The imposition by

the Conservative administration in 1979 of new grant controls on local

authorities provoked a broad alliance of groups in defence of local

government and local democracy. Further, the large majority which the

Conservatives held at Westminster led Labour activists to seek

advances in socialism at a local level where they could, seemingly,

bring more pressure to bear. Some groups concerned with womens' and

race initiatives were already constituted within local authorities

(Goss, 1984; Ouseley, 1984). But a major step forward occurred with

the election in 1981 of the Greater London Council. The GLC set up an

'Equal Opportunities Unit' with a budget of £7 million.

Other factors which contributed to the politicisation of the council

were the co-opting of representatives of community groups onto the

Council and the involvement of full-time councillors in the

appointment of senior officers. It followed that the Members

appointed to the ILEA from the GLC in 1981 had a commitment to tackle

the social inequalities evident in the inner city. The Leader was a

former teacher and there was a substantial number of educationalists

who were elected or co-opted members of the education committee.

Research was requested from the Director of the Research and

Statistics Branch and in 1981 at a seminar held at the Festival Hall

the authority outlined its objectives:

> to maintain and improve the level of educational provision in
> London: to reconsider existing arrangements for the education of
> 16-19 year olds; to expand provision for the increasing number of
> unemployed school leavers; and to examine the question of
> achievement in education from the vantage point of working class
> children, black children and girls (ILEA, 1983:5).

A whole range of policies ensued from this statement (Morrell, 1984):

the administration set up an Equal Opportunities Unit with officers

responsible for race and gender issues; the inspectorate made a new

appointment for 'Equal Opportunities'; the multi-ethnic inspectorate

appointed a team of advisory teachers; resources were allocated to

develop new teaching materials; institutions were asked to produce an

'Anti-Racist Statement' and a range of developments in the curriculum

were initiated. The Leader said, of the 'Equal Opportunities Policy':

> it must be made to work . . . . we are determined to use the
> Inspectorate and the Authority's Research and Statistics Branch to
> evaluate progress . . . . Policies have been thrashed out
> between members of the Authority and with their officers (Morrell,
> 1984:207)

This, therefore, was the climate in which the development of the Open

College of South London was conceived. There were, however, other

policies which impinged on the adult sector of education which were

already in train. One relevant area which was kept under review was

the developments in community education projects. These involved

co-operation between the various sectors (adult, youth and schools) to

develop community schools (Bird, 1985).

Another whole area, that of Advanced Further Education, had been

subject to a formal review. In the light of the "impending fall in

the 18-year old population", the Education Officer's Report

recommended that the Authority improve access to higher education for

groups at that time which were under-represented and that a "ladder of

opportunity" be erected by developing "geographic groupings of

institutions which would link access in a systematic way" (ILEA,

1984:2). Whilst this report was not published until 1984, the

Authority was in the process of consultation with this sector over its

future, for some long period prior to the publication of the report.

This was the organisational context in which the Open College was

conceived. There was 'support' for such a development within the

AEIs, FE colleges and polytechnics.

The 'systems' approach (employing the 'Easton' model) is helpful,

therefore, in developing an understanding of the background to

educational policy-making. In focussing on the different facets

('extra-societal', 'intra-societal', 'demands' and 'support') at a

national level and their inter-connections it illustrates how, over a

fairly long period of time, a consensus developed which favoured the

expansion of provision (even if the justification for expansion was in

terms of the needs of the economy rather than in terms of the moral

rights of the individual). As a model it ceases to be of value once a

conflict of interests and values is evident and the consensus breaks

down at the national level. It still, however, has an application at

the micro-level in the formulation of policy within local government.

Within inner London there was a political climate which favoured the

expansion of educational opportunities for adults, a socio-economic

environment that necessitated it, 'demand' evident from the
disadvantaged sectors of the population and 'support' from the
educational institutions.

The limitations of the 'systems' approach is in its inability to
explain conflict either between systems or within a system. In order
to examine conflict other theoretical insights have to be employed.
Those which could have some application at a societal level are
identified by Grace (1984:34) as Marxist and Neo-Weberian. Hence the
trade union movement was able to pressurise the Labour government in
the early seventies to grant 'paid educational leave' for the purposes
of training for trade union representatives. Such insights afforded
are less useful, Saunders believes, at the local level where he sees
relations as based more on the vested interests of people as
consumers, rather than on their role in relation to production
(Saunders, 1984). Grace (1984) suggests that urban education can best
be understood in the context of urban theory (Pahl, 1977), the
political economy (Castells, 1977) and relations between central and
local government (Cockburn, 1977).

In terms of examining conflict within a system, this can best be
approached by employing a 'social action' approach. Within an
organisational structure this involves a questioning of people's
motivations as well as exploring differences in the perception and
distribution of power in the organisation. (This perspective was also
outlined in Chapter I.)

The following four chapters are directed to the analysis of how the

policy of the Open College - to promote educational opportunities for

adults to return to education - was conceived and implemented. The

foci will be on the policy-makers, the implementers and the

beneficiaries of that policy. It is anticipated that for a policy to

be successful certain conditions need to be met. Reference will be

made to the relevant literatures and specific hypotheses stated.

Whilst the most useful perspective employed will be that of social

action, insights afforded by other theoretical perspectives will be

used, as appropriate, to aid analysis and to promote understanding of

the process of policy formulation and implementation.

Notes

1. In 1983 90 per cent of all secondary pupils in the mainatined
    sector in England were in comprehensive schools. In Wales the
    figure was 95 per cent and in Scotland 100 per cent. Brian
    Simon, 'Breaking School Rules: Keith Joseph and the Politics of
    Education' Marxism To-day September, 1984

2. 1981 Census, reproduced in the DES Statistical Bulletin 13/84.

3. There are some success stories of which the miners' day-release
    courses are an oft quoted example. For some miners this
    experience led on to one of the residential adult colleges and
    thence to university. (PEL Source Book, Appendix 3b. 'A
    Survey of Trade Union Education').

4. Section 57 of the Employment Protection Act 1975 (Section 27
    1978) makes it a right for officials of independent trades unions
    recognised by the employer (only) to take time off in working
    hours for a variety of purposes. One of them is "to undergo
    training in aspects of industrial relations which is - (i)
    relevant to the carying out of those duties, and (ii) approved by
    the Trades union Congress, or by the independent trade union of
    which he/she is an official".

5. In 1976/77 21,288 students attended 1,540 day-release courses
    qualifying for grant aid, and a further 7,259 students attended
    278 residential courses qualifying for such aid. A postal survey
    of University extra-mural departments showed that in 1976/77
    2,159 students attended 'TUC' courses in that sector, and an
    additional 2,815 students attended other kinds of courses
    directed at trade unionists. Grant aided courses were not
    predominant in this sector. (Killeen and Bird, 1981).

6. The ILO Convention (140) concerning 'Paid Educational Leave'
    (1974) called upon each member state to "formulate and apply a
    policy designed to promote, by methods appropriate to national
    conditions and practice and by stages if necessary" the granting
    of PEL (Ghazzali, 1975).

7. Britain's entry into the EEC in 1970 had made it obligatory that
    the country adopt a policy on 'Equal Pay' (Snell et al.,
    1981:3).

8. One of these was entitled, Equality the Next Step. The Changing
    Role of Women in the Civil Service, Society of Public and Civil
    Servants (1982).

9. The Association for Adult and Continuing Education (ACACE), under
    the auspices of the NIAE, published a number of studies: A
    Strategy for the Basic Education for Adults (1979); Protecting
    the Future of Adult Education (1981; Continuing Education: From

Policies to Practice (1981); and Adults: Their Educational
Experience and Needs (1982).

10. This subsequently became the 'Adult Literacy Unit' (ALU) and,
     more recently, the 'Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit'
     (ALBSU).

Appendix 2.1: Indicators of Social Deprivation in Inner London

TABLE 2.1

PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN IN

	Families in Poor Housing	Large Families	Families on Supplementary Benefit	One-parent Families
ILEA.............	9.47	11.93	21.71	25.21
Birmingham......	9.88	18.85	22.59	17.08
Manchester......	8.24	16.62	28.42	23.60
Newcastle.......	4.43	8.84	20.36	16.13
Cumbria.........	2.68	6.63	8.15	11.01
Kent............	2.94	7.63	9.53	11.48
Surrey..........	2.12	6.42	4.05	10.00
England Average.	4.31	9.23	12.67	13.02

TABLE 2.2

PERCENTAGE OF NON-WHITE CHILDREN*

ILEA......................	34.85
Birmingham................	26.72
Manchester................	14.68
Newcastle.................	6.21
Cumbria...................	2.03
Kent......................	6.30
Surrey....................	9.02
England average...........	10.93

*Born outside the UK, Ireland, USA and Old Commonwealth
or in the households whose head was born outside those
areas.

TABLE 2.3

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (% OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION)

	All Age Groups	Aged 16-18
ILEA...........................	11.50	13.27
Birmingham.....................	15.11	16.01
Manchester.....................	16.57	16.14
Newcastle......................	14.09	15.26
Cumbria........................	8.53	9.60
Kent...........................	7.55	8.77
Surrey.........................	4.22	4.34

SOURCE: 1981 Census, reproduced in DES Statistical Bulletin 13/84

TABLE 2.4

ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

                              (AENs)

          ILEA..................... 121.48
          Birmingham............... 118.78
          Manchester............... 114.52
          Newcastle................ 74.05
          Cumbria.................. 48.10
          Kent..................... 51.47
          Surrey................... 39.56

          England Average.......... 66.52

Additional educational needs are the sum of variables used
by the DES in the Statistical Bulletin 13/84 ("School
Standards and Spending: Statistical Analysis - a further
appreciation"). The source of the data is the 1981 Census.
AENs are compiled from the following percentages of
children:

1.   living in households whose head is a semi-skilled or
     unskilled manual worker;

2.   living in households lacking the exclusive use of one
     or more of the standard amenities or living in a
     household at a density of occupation greater that 1.5
     persons per room;

3.   in families with more than 4 children.

4.   in households receiving Supplementary Benefit;

5.   in one-parent families;

6.   born outside the UK, Ireland, USA and the Old
     Commonwealth or whose head was born outside the UK,
     Ireland, USA and Old Commonwealth.

TABLE 2.5

THE GROWING LEVEL OF DEPRIVATION IN INNER LONDON

	Primary			Secondary		
	1983	1987	% change	1983	1987	% change
% eligible for free meals	36.8	49.2	+12.4	32.7	45.0	+12.3
% from single parent families	23.0	26.8	+ 3.8	24.0	27.9	+ 3.9
% with un- employed parents	18.8	28.0	+ 9.2	14.3	20.3	+ 6.0

SOURCE: ILEA EPI Surveys

TABLE 2.6

ETHNIC MINORITIES IN INNER LONDON SCHOOLS

	Primary			Secondary		
	1983	1987	% change	1983	1987	% change
% ESWI*	59.0	54.3	- 4.7	62.3	58.1	- 4.2
% Afro-Caribbean	15.7	17.3	+ 1.6	18.2	17.4	- 0.8
% Asian	8.5	11.9	- 3.4	5.9	10.5	+ 4.6
Other	16.7	16.5	- 0.2	13.6	14.0	+ 0.4

* ESWI = English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish

SOURCE: ILEA EPI Surveys

TABLE 2.7

LINGUISTICS MINORITIES IN INNER LONDON SCHOOLS

	Primary		Secondary	
	Linguistic Minority Pupils (LMPs) as % of roll	LMPs not fully fluent in English as % of roll	Linguistics Minority Pupils (LMPs) as % of roll	LMPs not fully fluent in English as % of roll
1981	16.1	10.8	11.5	3.8
1983	18.9	13.2	13.5	4.8
1985	21.6	16.0	16.8	7.4
1987	24.1	19.0	21.4	11.0

The number of languages spoken in the homes of ILEA school children has similarly increased: 128 in 1978
131 in 1981
147 in 1983
161 in 1985
172 in 1987.

SOURCE: ILEA Language Censuses

CHAPTER III

THE POLICY-MAKERS

A Review of the Literature

The previous chapter revealed something of the nature of the differing

roles of central and local government in relation to the making of

educational policy. The most commonly held assumption about the

educational system in Britain is that it is a national system which is

locally administered. Kogan (1971:234) identified a tri-partite

structure comprising central government, the LEAs and the teachers'

unions as forming the traditional partnership in the arena of

educational policy. In examining the respective roles of central and

local government, Lodge and Blackstone (1982) concluded from the

literature that the DES was the most important single force in

determining the direction and tempo of educational development (OECD,

1978). Saran (1973:260), also, depicted central government as the

"senior partner" assuming "fatherly roles: advising, moderating,

pleading, cautioning, and ultimately wielding the big stick of

refusing its approval to any proposals from the LEA which offend

against national priority as interpreted by the Ministry". On

balance, it appeared that the DES was a conservative force. Whilst it

could act as an interest group within government (Kogan, 1975:238), it

could not develop in a way opposed by central government. But neither

could it necessarily secure detailed implementation of centrally-taken

decisions. It tended to "suggest rather than direct. You say to one

man "Come" and he cometh not, and to another "Go" and he stays where

he is". (Lord Hailsham, 1975)[1] 'The Association of Metropolitan

Authorities', however, was of the opinion that consultation by the DES

was often an excuse for inaction, "a case of consulting into the

ground: it consults too little, too late and with too closed a mind.

It has plenty of channels open if it wished" (Lodge and Blackstone,

1982:70). In terms of equal opportunities it appeared there was a

dialectic within the DES between the notion of education for social

justice and education for investment (Kogan, 1971:123).

LEAs were also seen by Kogan in the 1970s as unashamedly "reactive

rather than innovative" (1982:101). Dearlove (1973:20), too,

commenting on Borough decision-making in the late 1960s, saw them as

more concerned with the maintenance of existing policies rather than

the initiation of new ones, but indicated there were: "firm grounds

for believing that local authorities are by no means the passive

agents of the central government but have scope to develop their own

policies".

Let us examine the nature of policy-making in local government. What

is known about the making of educational policy? Most pertinent to

this study in a local education authority is the work of Donnison and

Chapman (1963), Kogan and Willem van der Eyken (1973), Saran (1973),

Dearlove (1973), Jennings (1977) and Howell and Brown (1983). Other

sources, notably those which relate to the national context (Kogan,

1971 and 1975; Hill, 1972; Banting, 1979; Pollitt et al., 1979;

Salter and Tapper, 1981; Lodge and Blackstone, 1982; McPherson and

Raab, 1988) are also relevant, as are works which relate to

decision-making more generally (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963; Rourke,

1969; Rose, 1969; Dror, 1973).

Willem van der Eyken's study of the role of the chief education

officer in LEAs in the early seventies revealed the power which Chief

Education Officers (CEOs) exercised in moulding and determining policy

at the local level. He noted that it may not have been immediately

apparent what influence they exerted for they tended to adopt a

"self-effacing style of management", seemingly deferential to

committee control. But the committee, acting on the advice of the

CEO, would be "led to the right conclusion under the impression they

were arriving at it under their own steam" (1973:47). The study

concluded that although local councillors exercised a latent power

they were deemed to be the most effective when they had learned the

art of understanding discussions at officer level and gained the

confidence of chief officers (Lee in Kogan, 1973:40). The main axis

of authority was seen to lie between the Chief Officer of the LEA and

the heads of schools and colleges.

Undertaking a study at much the same period, Saran (1973) also

commented on the influence of professional officers on

decision-making, as had Donnison and Chapman (1965) and Peschek and

Brand (1966), earlier. The latter concluded that there was a "magic

circle" of educational policy-makers which, whilst it embraced

chairman and committee members, was dominated by the officers. This

view is supported by the observations of Hill (1972) that it was the

administrative model of policy-making which dominated within the LEAs

in the 1970s.[2] Saran (1973:8), too, whilst observing the great

influence of professional officers, pointed to the other factors in

policy formulation: the sensitivity of the issue locally and

nationally; the balance of power between the parties and the

effectiveness of organised pressure groups.

Rourke (1969) commented that: "Bureaucrats are in a commanding

position to influence the shape of public policy because they possess

the professional skills necessary to devise rational courses of

action, but also the ability to structure public attitudes to which

policy decisions are supposed to respond". He described their role in

decision-making as "strategic" (1969:136); in terms of their ability

to act as a "veto group" there is an enormous capacity for

non-decisions. In providing the reports on which Members make

decisions, officers also influence outcomes (Birley, 1970:171). It is

noted that there are various constraints on the power of officers:

they may share control with other bureaucratic elites; they are

restrained by their socialisation in the role of public servant; and

they may be influenced by Members who acquire formidable credentials

in the field. Prior to the mid seventies, however, one concludes, the

power of Members was "more illusory than real" (Birley, 1970:171).

Interestingly, by the late seventies, the interview study of

councillors and officers, undertaken by Jennings (1977), indicated the

growing influence which political party control was having on the

decision-making process in LEAs. He concluded that it was

increasingly a "closed system" which was characterised by party

political control (1977:182). This had the effect of making the

direction of the LEA both more predictable and observable by the DES.

The Jennings study found that, within the administration, officers

were generally considered to be expansionists with vested interests

which they were good at protecting. The research explored the process

by which educational policy was formulated. It was found to be

initiated by officers (particularly the CEO) and after consultation,

and the discussion of alternatives, it was finally legitimated by

Committee. Implementing policy was seen to be the responsibility of

officers who consulted with institutions. According to the officers

interviewed this was when the policy could be eroded (Jennings,

1979:178).

One of the most directly pertinent studies of educational

policy-making to the study undertaken is the case study by Brown

(1978) of the ILEA'S 'Review of its Vocational Further Education

Service 1970-73'. This involved the application of Easton's systems

theory:

> demands set up a disturbance, the system feels the impact, its
> members respond or fail to do so and the resultant state of
> affairs reveals the effectiveness with which the system has

managed to cope with the strain so occasioned. (Easton, 1965;
20:21)

The Easton theory was employed in the study of educational

policy-making, both to review the general societal context in which a

policy relating to adult education was conceived but also to examine

the particular circumstances in which it came about. Its application

is of value in identifying the principal features of policy-making.

It suggests that support for a policy could be generated through links

between sub-systems such as that derived from over-lapping membership

of various political communities (Howell and Brown, 1983:114). It

also illustrates that the feed-back response may not simply be the

last link in a cyclical process but can act to modify demands

following consultation after a pilot study. It is a continual

operation enabling the organisation to modify and adapt to needs and

aspirations. In this sense policy-making is more of a process rather

than a "once and for all act" (Rose, 1969); what Dror (1968:14)

described as, more often than not, "a general guide" for action rather

than a complete policy per se and what Braybrooke and Lindblom termed

"disjointed incrementalism" (1963:Ch.5). The Easton model is a

dynamic model of the process that incorporates policy implementation.

The feed-back mechanism is illustrative of policy review following an

initial allocation of resources. Assuming an initial decision (even

if unconscious), the feed-back mechanism enables the organisation to

respond more concretely, or with greater or less commitment. In this

respect, it also incorporates P.H.Levin's "ingenious theory of

decision-making", which suggests that, "all decisions can be measured

on two scales: commitment and concreteness". It suggests that "timing

and feasibility" could be crucial elements in the process of making

policy (David, 1977).

Whilst the decision-making model focusses on the formal roles within

the organisation, it does not rule out obtaining accounts of

individual's behaviour from the actors involved. It is important to

examine the views of people responsible for implementation and

feed-back (Howell and Brown, 1983:120). Apart from the general

theoretical insights which the Brown research affords, it is also

helpful to the study undertaken in so far as it specifically concerns

the ILEA. It depicts the Authority as an exceptionally large and

complex organisation, each branch constituting a sub-system (Howell

and Brown, 1983:38). This suggests:

> a policy sub-system . . . a distinctive set of issues, which form
> the specialised concern of a distinctive set of officials,
> interest groups, experts, advisory committees, commentators and
> others (Self, 1978:154)

Brown's study, which concerned the ILEA's 'Review of the Organisation

of its Vocational Further Education Service (1970-1973)', offers very

useful insights into the key role taken by senior officers in

initiating changes in the administration of the service. It

confirmed, what Donnison and Chapman (1965) had noted previously, the

strategic role of the Chief Education Officer (CEO) in determining

resources for future development, in conveying the authority's image

and sense of direction and being able to forsee the pattern of the

service longer-term. Also identified as important was the role of the

Deputy Education Officer (DEO) in occupying a central position in

seeing through reform. As far as Members were concerned the Leader of

the majority party was seen as occupying a very influential position,
as were the Chairs of the Sub-Committees. Senior officers were in
constant touch with senior Members (the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of
Sub-Committees). Other Members were not seen as influential and the
back-bench majority party Members were as isolated from policy-making
as were the Members of the minority parties (Brown, 1978:432). The
ILEA was described by one sub-committee Chair, who had knowledge of
other LEAs, as "the most chairman-dominated authority". Among other
influential roles within the Authority identified by Brown (1978:412),
was the role of articulate and perceptive individuals within the
union. Significant, too, was the role of the principals who, as
'gate-keepers' were seen to wield considerable power over the
direction of resources (Brown, 1978:419). Teachers, it has been noted
(Donnison and Chapman, 1965:234), also shape the service and have a
"central and crucial role . . . (as) they create and continually
modify the service" and influence "the pace and character of its . . .
development" (Tipton, 1972).

Central to this research, in more than one respect, is the work of
Walter Williams (1976, 1980). Williams (1976) was concerned with what
made for effective policies and he believed that more attention needed
to be given to how they were converted into "viable field operations";
hence, the main focus of the study is on the implementation aspects of
policy. Second, he believed, "the real benefits come from studying
the process from the higher echelons of the bureaucracy to local
project"; hence, the research design employed here is a case study

which is concerned with the whole process of policy from conception to outcome. Third, Williams saw the key to understanding the complexity of the implementation process in the "forces of politics and bureaucracy (rather) than from statistical issues" (1976, Ch.1); hence, the use of concepts in this research drawn from organisation theory. Because Williams' observations were based on studies and experience of policy implementation in a wide range of policy settings, it is hoped that in employing the approach he recommends the research findings will be generalisable to other situations.

There is one further insight which the work of Williams affords which is worth noting. It concerns the notion of "shared governance" in a federal system, where it is frequently necessary for the government to concede control to local officials. This, he observes, sometimes impedes progress for the disadvantaged group. He concludes that what is needed is greater political accountability. Whilst the research undertaken here is not within a federal governmental structure, nevertheless there could be some useful parallels with a large and complex organisation with separate branches for different parts of the service. It could be that the sheer size of an organisation such as the ILEA necessitates greater delegation of authority and increases the problem of managerial control. It is worth noting, therefore, that in a federal system the pivotal spot of linkage is where resources are needed for active involvement. Hence, central control is at its maximum prior to decisions on the allocation and distribution of resources.

The value of the perspective afforded by Williams is that it sees implementation as an integral part of the decision-making operation as depicted in the Easton model of decision-making (see figure 1.1, p.18); it is seen as a dynamic process in which the policy is 'negotiated' by the key people concerned. Hence, he points to the importance of the commitment of individuals and their ability to communicate.

This brief review of the most relevant literature indicates some important lines of inquiry in the study of an Open College system: exploring changing relationships between the Authority's Members and officers in the making of educational policy; examining differences in viewpoint between the various administrative branches; assessing the impact of the equal opportunities issue and the possible effect of organised pressure groups; determining whether or not the allocation of resources was significant; ascertaining the connection between senior officers and institutions and exploring, at some point, the cyclical process or feed-back mechanism which enables the Authority to review and modify the policy.

The literature review indicates that the key people most concerned in the formulation of policy are likely to be the Chief Education Officer and the Chair of the Education Committee, the Majority Party Leader (Jennings, 1977). Within a very large unitary authority, however, such as the ILEA, it is more than likely that the initiative, for a particular policy, will lie within the appropriate branch and with the

Chair of the relevant sub-committee. In the case of the development

of an Open College this would be officers of Post-Schools Branch which

comprises 'Further and Higher Education' (FHE) and 'Community

Education and Careers' (CEC) (Figure 1.3 p.29). The relevant

sub-committee would be that for 'Further and Higher Education' (FHE)

and AFE Strategy Section. The inspector responsible for policy

developments in this field would be the Chief Inspector for Further,

Higher and Community Education (FHCE) who would have inspectors from

both Further Education and Community Education responsible to her/him.

The 'main axis' of authority is said to lie between the LEA's Chief

Officer and the heads of schools and colleges (Kogan, 1973). In the

case of the ILEA and a development in the post-school sector the

'axis' would most likely lie between the Deputy Education Officer for

Further and Higher and Community Education (FHE/CEC), the Assistant

Education Officer (FHE) and the Assistant Education Officer (CEC) and

the institutions; colleges of further education; the polytechnics; and

the adult education institutes. Consequently the key people

concerned, in post at the time of the development of the Open College

and interviewed within County Hall, were key Members (the Leader and

Chair of the FHE Sub-Committee) and the senior officers (the Education

Officer[3] and Deputy Education Officer (Resources), the Deputy

Education Officer for Further, Higher and Community Education and the

respective Assistant Education Officers for Community Education and

Further Education, the Chief Inspector for Further, Higher and

Community Education and the Inspectors for Further Education and
Community Education). (See figure 1.3, page 29.)

Two people within institutions identifed as key people in the process
of policy formulation were the Academic Assistant to the Director of
the Polytechnic and the Principal of a College of FE in the vicinity
of the polytechnic. Key people were identified, in part, from the
organisational structure, but in the case of those outside of County
Hall, following the suggestion of senior officers. The account of the
origins of the Open College of South London is reconstructed from
interviews with these people.

Interviewing people is regarded by historians as a valuable aid "in
helping researchers gain an overall grasp of available documentation"
(Seldon, 1988:5). Besides identifying what policy documents are
available and how they came to be written it is, also, a valuable
source of information which is not available in documents and which
enables the researcher to 'map' the organisational roles and
relationships. Obtaining the interviewees' perspective on events
helps to clarify the processses involved. Some of the relationships,
such as those between Members and officers, were known to be
sensitive. Meeting those closely involved helps the researcher to
gain insights and understanding of important events and of the key
participants. Whilst it is not unknown for the past to be
reconstructed and adapted to fit the present and for people to
interpret events in self-enhancing ways, nevertheless, the interviews

with a number of people involved enables the story to be told from

different viewpoints and this aids the validity of the exercise.

(Where there are differing 'definitions of the situation' these

provide interesting points for discussion.) Documentary evidence was

also employed to check the accuracy of the information given.

Interviews were, on average, an hour in length and conducted with the

use of an interview guide (see appendix A.2 p.138) and tape-recorder.

(The response rate was 100 per cent of those approached for an

interview.)

Hypothesis I: Policy-making in the Post-School Sector

An initial review of the policy-making literature suggests the

hypothesis would be that the policy initiative promoting a development

of educational opportunities for adult returners would be begun by the

Chief Education Officer (CEO) (although in the case of a large unitary

authority such as the ILEA this would most likely be the Deputy

Education Officer Post-Schools). It might well appear, nonetheless,

to have originated with the Members (politicians). However, in

reviewing the more recent literature concerning the politicisation of

LEAs in the late seventies and early eighties it is more than likely

that a policy, particularly one concerned with equal opportunities,

would originate with elected Members. This would be, because of their

ideological commitment to the expansion of educational opportunities

for the educationally disadvantaged groups and, perhaps, because they

would be responding to pressures from within the inner city

communities. It could also be influenced by Members' greater

involvement as Chairs of Committees following the reforms in local

government which granted payment for attendance at meetings. Some

tension between senior officers and key Members in the policy-making

arena might, therefore, be evident. There could also be conflicts of

interest between branches which had different priorities and were

separately resourced. Successful formulation of policy would depend

on agreement between key Members and the senior officers of the

branches concerned. Hence, once the approval of the relevant

committee had been sought and an allocation of resources agreed, the

main axis would lie between the officers and the institutions. In

general terms, "the implementation issue most straightforwardly

concerns how to bring together communications, commitment, and

capacity so as to carry a decision into action" (Williams, 1980:3).

Let us, therefore, examine whether this was the case and employ some

of the sensitizing concepts from the social action perspective - such

as: 'role'; 'definition of the situation'; 'reference group';

'culture'; and the 'negotiated order' - to explore the accounts of the

key people concerned - the political adviser to the polytechnic

director, a local college principal, the Members and the educational

officers.

The preceeding chapter of the historical background to the policy

suggests that there were a number of social, economic and political

factors which influenced the formulation of a policy designed to open

up educational opportunities for socially disadvantaged adults of
inner London in the early 1980s. The specific initiative, however,
lay neither with the administrative structure, in the hands of
officers, nor with Members but in one of the polytechnics within the
ILEA. The catalyst was the Political Adviser and Academic Assistant
to the Director of the polytechnic, whose brief was to develop the
Polytechnic's function in relation to the local community.

The Origin of the Open College of South London

The Polytechnic's Viewpoint: The Personal
Adviser to the Director (PA/Director)

The director of the polytechnic, at that time, had inherited what was
described as a "pretty run down" institution. He was also told by the
Authority that the block grant made to the Polytechnic would be
reduced by £600,000 if it did not better serve the needs of the local
population (AEO, FHE). The Director appointed, as his personal
adviser (PA/Director), a member of his staff whose brief was to break
down the barriers between the polytechnic and the local community. He
was described by an education officer as, "a great entrepreneur . . .
a person of imagination, flair and ideas". One of the projects
undertaken was to develop a Technopark with a £6 million grant from
Prudential Insurance. Another, was the notion of an Open College.
These initiatives were conceived with a view to "breaking down
barriers" between the polytechnic and the community in order to make

education more accessible to the local population. The PA/Director recalled that he formulated the idea, "invented it, May 18th 1981" and the polytechnic director supported it. The idea was based on the Open College of the North-West. The PA/Director's own education experience as a "late entrant" to HE had made him aware of the needs of mature students who lacked confidence and study skills. His attitude was also influenced by his activity in the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) and, perhaps, by being married to someone who became a full-time official in union education. In all, he recalled that he was part of a network of people at that time committed to expanding adult education.

The ethos of the early eighties, it was recalled by former academic assistant to the Director, was that the polytechnic "needed to be playing a much greater role in the community", but that it was also increasingly concerned about its falling roll:

> it should be attracting more people from inner London more working class people, people of ethnic minority. Perhaps it is too strong to say that the polytechnic was feeling that, but it certainly felt it could do more in that respect. It was undertaking surveys looking at ethnicity among students and clearly there was room for improvement in the number of students it was attracting and clearly it wasn't possible to bring this category of students in through the normal routes.

Aware that moral arguments for opening up educational opportunities for the local population would not win wholehearted support from the staff of the polytechnic, the PA/Director appealed to their self-interests:

> the demographic trends began to be useful to people like myself to use as an argument. We could convince the right wing, to put it crudely, that their self-interest lay in getting hold of

'non-standard' students. Yes, this was particularly useful
because the polytechnic suffered (from poor recruitment) in things
like Chemistry, Physics and so on. I don't want to over-emphasise
that because as it happens (the polytechnic) is a very high class
institution and could get students, but we could use the argument
and it worked and people did come forward and say that Access
courses with a capital 'A' were successful and so on. So the
polytechnic was open to pressures.

There was, therefore, a 'constituency'[4] for the Open College

within the polytechnic even if it was based, in part, on

self-interest. Adopting an entrepreneurial style, the PA/Director set

about winning support for the idea within what were perceived to be

prospective 'feeder' institutions. He was helped in this respect by

his NATFHE contacts and, in particular, by the Principal of a

neighbouring FE College:

> he had a lot of contacts in the FE world and suggested who we
> should bring in. It (the meeting) was only half an hour - an
> hours discussion we developed the idea a bit . . . and went out
> and did it. I got groups of people together from the institutions
> and gradually the idea got around what we wanted to do . . . we
> set up some sort of steering group and it took a whole year to
> formalise arrangements.

Establishing support for the idea among local AEIs, however, was

problematical in a way which the PA/Director had not anticipated:

> partly it is the smugness of AE, partly it is because they are
> petrified they are very small. I ended up at a polytechnic as
> Dean of Faculty and I was employing more full-time staff and had a
> bigger budget than an AEI with a handful of full-time staff, a
> small budget and petrified of the polytechnic with a £20 million
> budget . . . (their anxieties) came as a complete surprise to me.
> Again, it was a personal approach, I was innocent. All I had was
> access to a large amount of funds and influence within the
> polytechnic and I wanted to put that into the hands of the people
> around us. Yes, it was very egocentric. When I went to an AEI
> and told them that, went open-handed, they were petrified.

Approaching County Hall with a view to obtaining financial support for

the proposal, the PA/Director said that he found the Members much more

receptive than the officers.

Members are interested in votes and doing things in terms of
politics and there's a lovely message in an Open College, it's a
nice idea. The reason why the officers were opposed to it,...
was, partly, because they are barons and they have their own areas
- they are AE, FE and they don't want to part with any of their
empire - there was an upstart, me, actually saying "the Emperor
has no clothes" - so there was opposition, there was opposition to
me personally as well because I had been a trade union
representative hammering them the other side of the fence and they
certainly didn't like it, that the Labour Group, as they perceived
it, was supporting me trying to get money out of them to do the
things that they had claimed they were doing all along.

(Interviewer: This was prior to the Authority's launch of the
Equal Opportunities Policy?)

Equal Opportunities Policy of ILEA came in September 1982 because
the GLC had set one up in 1981. Yes, it was that period of time.
It was the period of time when the Labour Party in London was
going left-wing and getting very involved in anti-racism, Equal
Opportunities and God knows what. There were one or two riots in
Brixton which focussed people's attention as well and the
polytechnic is Brixton's polytechnic.

In the event, in 1981/2 the Vice-Chair of FHE Sub-Committee, who was

very supportive of the Open College idea, authorised £60-70,000 for

the OCSL. The move was thought, by the PA/Director, to have been

obstructed by a senior officer. The polytechnic, however, put up an

inital tranche of money and that enabled the OCSL to obtain a

substantial sum from the Authority, which was, in part, conditional on

member institutions matching the money that each received.

The View-point of the Principal

of a College of Further Education

It has already been suggested that AE institutions may have viewed the

proposal with caution, fearing perhaps a take-over bid by the

polytechnic. This is not to suggest that AE was fearful of

co-operation in principle. Indeed, there existed many examples of

close co-operation between the AEIs and FE Colleges. (FE Colleges,

too, may initially have been suspicious of the polytechnic's

intentions.)

This was how a former principal recalls the initial contact with the

polytechnic:

> I suspect that, initially, there was a simple-minded thought that
> there were a lot of potential students out there and some sort of
> method for getting a better feed-through from local colleges might
> be appropriate. I remember a particular head of department
> visiting the college where I was the principal and when I got a
> copy of his report back to his directorate his eyes were clearly
> sparkling. He was saying, "Gosh, that college has got 500 to 600
> 16-19 year old students; that would double our intake if we were
> to get a fair chunk of those". But I think that was fairly
> quickly overtaken by the polytechnic's concern about its place
> within the community and neighbourhood and its place within the
> ILEA education service - it saw itself very firmly placed there,
> rather like a bit of HE transplanted out to inner London. So the
> initiative was to do with seeing whether there were ways of
> helping adults with minimum qualifications of an externally
> validated kind to make their way into higher education; and the
> interesting thing is that as soon as they started to put it to
> themselves like that they said "why not the colleges? why not the
> AEIs?". The formal situation, as far as I recall, was an
> invitation to lunch one day to all the local college and AEI
> principals (local at that time being interpreted narrowly to mean
> Southwark and Lambeth; subsequently it spread to Wandsworth and
> Lewisham but initially it confined itself to boroughs in which the
> polytechnic had major buildings). What was put to us was a
> (proposal) . . . for something called an Open College. I think it
> was called the Open College at that very early stage.
>
> The reaction of the principals in the FE college and the AEIs was
> a bit suspicious . . . because there were two worries - (first)
> was that we did not want to become feeder colleges to the
> polytechnic, because our concern for our students was that they
> should have the maximum educational opportunity and if we were to
> tie ourselves down to the polytechnic as the outlet for our
> courses then that would not make for the maximum of educational
> opportunity, it was limiting it - that was the educational one.
> The other worry was that, originally, there was a thought that we
> might be talking about something which was in a very real sense, a
> college . . . and somehow parasitic upon us. That very quickly

posed the question as to whether it would have its own principal. While some of the colleges were upset and particularly bothered about that, the principal of our local AEI and I were only worried about it, and very concerned that if there should be such a thing it should be a co-operative network of interested institutions without its own site and certainly without a principal (though we were quite happy to see a 'Director of Site'). I may be telescoping things, 2-3 meetings, but my recollection is that it came up more or less in that form at the very first meeting over lunch – quite informal, no minutes, where the PA/Director (he was a fairly straightforward sort of bloke) put it to us straight and we put it equally straight – we were absolutely for it when affecting our students but a bit bothered about some of the implications as far as creating a new competitor in our patch with all the potential for crossed wires and trodden toes that you might get. Of course, at a slightly later stage, when it came into the official purview of the education officer at the time, that emerged as a problem at their end as well. That is a familar problem, the existence of CEC branch as something separate from FHE Branch was brought into question by any major co-operative exercise in which they worked together (especially if you had the question of institutions <u>aided</u> by FHE Branch with (their) greater freedom of action) . . . . However, to the credit of the institutions we overcame our worries, and to the credit of the polytechnic they were prepared to moderate their initial flier into something which was a great deal softer than they might have liked. I think, on reflection, that there's a touch of the MSC about them. You have always got the question with the existing system . . . do you coax it or do you bully it, if it is coaxing what is required may take a bit of time – or do you say "do the job". There was all that.

I don't think there was anything particularly problematic about the Open College in the sense that almost from (the outset) everyone was behind the intention as far as delivery to students was concerned – presumably then the only thing in everyone's minds was about precise means, structures and all the rest of it. After that lunch we went into the business of formal meetings and propositions to elected Members; and the polytechnic took the lead in writing these things and also took the lead, and this was crucial, in delivering the core site. What we worked up in our own minds was a staffing structure which involved the polytechnic in putting in four staff, initially at their own expense; and they were able to do that quicker than the rest of us could (a) because they had more staff and (b) because as an aided college they had more power to determine the use they made of their staff.

The interest and commitment of the principal of this particular

college to the idea of an Open College document was, in part, because

he was looking for new directions for his college and had already

developed a 'constituency' for change amongst the staff:

> we continued to grow during the late '70s and early '80s whereas
> other colleges were contracting; and that was because we
> consciously went for curriculum overhaul, curriculum maintenance
> and curriculum development.

When the FE and the AE principals proposed jointly in 1983 that the

college merge with the local AEI there was support for this idea but,

in the event, the proposal was turned down by the governors of the

AEI. Interestingly, the AE inspectorate and senior officers were also

reported to be "fairly against" the idea:

> (we) were rocking too many boats. We didn't see any problems at
> all and indeed we ran joint courses - very few others did.

The links between FE and AE, however, were strengthened and:

> (it) quickly became apparant to the polytechnic people, who said,
> reflectively, after the first 3-4 months, 'Look, we might have
> thought this was going to deliver us lots of students; doesn't
> look as though it's going to. Looks as though it's going to
> deliver us 60 at the most; but we don't mind: if we are going to
> reach 2,000 people that we would not otherwise reach through the
> education service, that's splendid. That was absolutely right in
> my opinion. So (it was) 'outreach' I think. It then picked up
> the baton of 'Race, Sex and Class' and we began to look
> particularly at opportunities for ethnic minorities. Probably the
> most celebrated thing then was the advertising of an 'Access to
> Law' course and finding literally hundreds of black people wanting
> to become lawyers. You can see why.

The principal of the college was, no doubt, extremely helpful to the

PA/Director at the polytechnic because he was conversant with the

authority's formal structures.

> PA/Director is a very old friend of mine personally. I am an ATTI
> and NATFHE activist (or was, until I left the ILEA). I was on the
> national council of the (union) until 1985 and for the latter part
> of that time PA/Director, who was younger than I am, was a fellow
> member of the national council for 3-4 years, he was a member of
> the national executive, so that we knew one another very well.
> Indeed I didn't know (the Director) so well, although it wasn't
> the first time we had met. I had had lunch with him when he took

up office in the polytechnic. He made it explicit to me . . . we
weren't trying to get anything out of one another meeting purely
on a social basis, just establishing a contact. And the other
thing of course was that during the development period I was one
of the teacher members of the ILEA education committee (1978-85) .
. . . one of those puzzling things for quite a lot of people at
that period was to know which hat I was wearing - principal,
teacher member of education committee, NATFHE officer, or 'local
worthy'; any of those would do, and I think it was slightly
difficult for the officers if they wanted to oppose something that
I was in favour of. I don't wish to arrogate too much influence
to myself but there was certainly something of that. If officers
did not wish to report to Members on something and I was involved
there was always the chance that I might tell a Member without
malice or forethought, unwitting to the fact that officers had any
worries about it.

The negotiation of co-operative links with potential 'feeder'

institutions in the locality, therefore, was another critical factor

in the setting up of the Open College of South London.

The Leader of the Authority

The Leader of the ILEA at the time of the study was influenced in her

thinking about the direction of policy within the Authority by her

knowledge of educational research:

    I had read very carefully the cohort studies which had
    demonstrated very clearly of course the failure to achieve of very
    large groups of children and so I said plainly - I moved - I wrote
    a paper saying, what is needed is a policy which concentrates very
    clearly on achievement in schools. What the Tories are saying
    about standards is not all wrong. It is just that they are not
    saying it the right way . . . achievement in schools, in part, is
    to do with the quality of education. That must be our major
    objective. And I moved a paper in the Labour Group three months
    after we were elected. I had the seminar in the Festival Hall for
    all the heads and teachers in which (the Director of Research and
    Statistics Branch) gave a seminar, at my request, on how the
    majority of children fail in school and they fail largely because
    they are members of a particular group. It was sui generis,
    we just developed from within.

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The "gathering" of information was seen as the first part of a

three-stage programme. The second part was "to make policy", the

third, "to carry it through". The assembling of research evidence was

seen as important in establishing reasons for educational inequality,

"the fact of the matter is that people fail in groups, we fail as

members of gender groups, ethnic groups, or class groups and that

paper led (eventually) to that approach being taken throughout the

Authority". Initially, however:

> the administration simply resisted the programme, I'm afraid.
> They didn't like the the anti-racist policy for example, they were
> horrified. They were very unco-operative in the early period.
>
> (Interviewer: So, how, other than assembling research, could you
> seek to change the way people were thinking?
>
> Well, the process of discussion and debate gradually changes
> people's minds. The minds of senior officers of the
> administration were changed on anti-racism when they met with
> representatives of the black community . . . you see none of them
> had any experience of dealing with black communities, very
> regularly, they saw the level of anger and pressure and they saw
> that something had to be done. Now that took two years of
> continued pressure.

The process of making policy, therefore, was also about communicating

with key groups, most notably senior officers, and obtaining their

commitment. The Leader was asked how important was the allocation of

resources:

> I have never really thought that the use of resources was an
> absolutely essential question, at least initially, until you work
> out exactly what it is you want to do. I think it is much more
> that I insisted that the 'machine' did it because it was their
> job. . . . At the same time I campaigned internally, I went around
> to talk to people and to discuss the issues and wrote articles,
> and by that gradual process of forcing the machine to do it, you
> cause it to happen - it was gruelling.

The particular interest and concern of the Leader was in the level of

achievement in schools but she was kept in touch with all areas of the

Authority's policy-making through the Policy Sub-Committee. The

development of the Open College lay within the province of

post-schools field. The equal opportunities policy, however, had

implications for all sectors. The Leader commented, "When you offer a

principle to critique then of course you don't see its ramifications.

Everyone takes it up and works on it".

(An extract from the Equal Opportunities Policy is contained in

appendix 3.1. p.137)

The viewpoint of the Education Officer (EO)

It is the role of the elected Members of an LEA to make policy. At

the time of the Open College development the ILEA was, technically a

committee of the GLC. Labour Members had a majority following the

1981 election and had campaigned on a detailed manifesto. This

document was viewed by the EO as "influential".

It is the role of the EO to recommend policy to the Education

Committee and, once it is agreed, to see that it is implemented. On

taking up his post in 1982 the new EO saw the time as appropriate to

"look afresh" at the needs of the education service. He said:

> the EO is conscious of the outside world, the world of employment,
> the government's views on matters, the financial situation, the
> expectations of the education service, major demographic movements
> and so forth . . . one has to distil them to find the essence of
> the changes and then to use the ingredients to form the basis of a
> policy that can be recommended. That's what I was about in 1982.

In "taking stock", he took note of the concerns and achievements of

his predecessors. He decided to focus on the improvement of secondary

schools[5] and a review of 'Advanced Further Education' (AFE).

> The AFE Review was (concerned with) demographic changes in terms
> of the number of 16-19 year declining in the inner city . . . and
> changes in the industrial infrastructure of the capital. It was
> clear, for example, that manufacturing industries had largely
> departed from inner London, other industries were developing fast
> - service industries some of them traditional like banking, were
> very strong, (their significance was growing) . . . at the same
> time it was clear that the participation rate in HE and AFE, as it
> was then called, was below what people thought it ought to be.

The process of reconsideration was assisted by the appointment of a

new Deputy Education Officer who favoured a Review which would create

"policy headroom". The responsibility for this AFE Review was

delegated to him. The internal appointment of a new Chief Inspector

for FHCE was also helpful in this respect.

The development of a policy in relation to AFE and the development of

an Open College system was seen by the EO to be consistent with an

'Equal Opportunities' policy but it wasn't activated by it. In terms

of the factors which influenced effective implementation of the

policy, the EO did not see the allocation of resources to the

development as the most critical factor. He believed that the

articulation of a policy was important in giving people a framework in

which to work to effect the changes which were needed in the service.

(An extract, the "Key Issues" of the AFE Review is contained in

appendix 3.2. p.138.)

The Deputy Education Officer

DEO (Resources)

The DEO (Resources) also had an overview of the policy-making process

in the early 1980s. She was interviewed because she was known to have

had a former role in relation to Access to Higher Education and was

asked, in that capacity, to speak at the formal launch of the Open

College of South London in 1983. She was clearly in favour of its

development and had been attracted to work for Authority because it

was "trying to pursue an Equal Opportunities Policy". For a time it

was one of her areas of responsibility within the administration.

(She had, however, no administrative role in relation to the Open

College development.)

In some respects the relationships between officers and Members were

known to be strained and to have become more difficult following the

1981 GLC election. In relation to the post-school sector, however,

the DEO (Resources) observed that relations were extremely good:

> it was partly that this was a less politicised area than some
> other parts of the Authority's work – partly it was also that it
> was more self-contained and people could get on with work in that
> sector . . . partly the personalities concerned. I think it just
> worked well, there was a Committee Chairman who was civilised,
> nice to deal with and officer/political strains didn't come into
> it.

The Chair of the FHE Sub-Committee

The Member interviewed was the Chair of the FHE Sub-Committee at the

time of the Open College development. As someone who had worked in FE

and had set up Return to Study courses outside of the ILEA, he said,

he was committed to opening up access to institutions. He had also

obtained his own degree by private study for an external degree from

London University. He recalled that it was about 1981/2, two years

into a new administration, with a completely new set of people on the

Committee, all "bright-eyed and bushy-tailed", that the policy was

initiated.

> I was very clear in my own mind what I wanted to happen and I was
> very clear about the Open Colleges which I had heard of elsewhere,
> it was during the first year that I was Chair. At that stage we
> had just a general view that what was needed was to set up an ILEA
> wide Open College strategy for making institutions across the
> polytechnic/FE colleges/AEI boundaries co-operate, collaborate and
> co-ordinate their provision and lead to a situation where there
> would be passports to study part-time awards and where there could
> be a planned provision where young and old people who could
> develop confidence and find their way through credit accumulation
> and a transfer system. All that seemed very easy and could be
> done almost overnight. That was when we were able to set a budget
> and see that resources were available and get it started.

The process of policy formulation was started by discussing the idea

with colleagues and speaking at public meetings:

> as a politician that is one of the way in which you get the
> organisation of the authority to move . . . . to our credit the
> polytechnic recognised that this was one of the areas in which
> they could indeed make their contribution . . . technically it is
> not an ILEA college but is funded by us. They created some posts
> within the polytechnic in that area . . . It got itself together
> and we encouraged institutions to put in resources, that is
> (funding half the post of a Co-ordinator for the Open College) and
> to collaborate with the polytechnic in that area. That was the
> first (Open College).

At much the same time the Chair of FHE initiated a 'Review of Advanced

Further Education' (AFE), as a "process for developing clear politics

on post-school provision". He involved the new officer (Director for

Post-Schools) who was very "receptive and responsive" who in turn

involved the Chief inspector for Further and Higher Education (FHCE).

But the Member claimed:

> it was my idea that we should conduct a major review of all our
> advanced work in London looking at the relationships of the
> polytechnic to the colleges, the colleges to the other
> institutions like adult education institutes, simply because I
> didn't and still don't believe that you can divide up education
> into compartments which relate to institutions. Institutions are
> actually inimical and quite hostile to educational change and
> initiatives. I know that from my direct experience of them so you
> have got to be outside them to actually know and get them to
> change. Once they start changing they can change very quickly,
> very rapidly, quite exciting things can take place.

The actual proposal contained in the AFE Review, however, that

geographical clusters of institutions could promote co-operation was

acknowledged as the Chief Inspector's (FHCE) idea which came about in

response to pressure exerted by Members for the development of an Open

College centrally.

> Our initial conception was that it would need to be an initiative
> from County Hall which would tell the institutions what they had
> to do. The Chief Inspector (FHCE)'s corrective to that was to say
> 'no', the initiative, the idea having emerged at the centre, can
> only work at a decentralised level. We had already got the OCSL
> which was 'up and running' and we said we wanted the institutions
> to find savings from their own budgets to put staff in to
> collaborate and co-operate and to do the planning at that level.
> The idea of clusters simple spread from this . . . . that was the
> kind of model that emerged. (Chair of FHE Sub-Committee)

At much the same time that the AFE Review was undertaken, an 'Equal

Opportunities' policy was being developed.

> Politically, these sorts of things don't emerge from the same
> plants - same bulbs - it was a separate, specific, but related

policy. Clearly I mean 'access' with a small 'a' into education. Participation in education is the most simple demonstrable side of a successful education policy . . . if you've got more people participating in inner London, you've got more disadvantaged people participating, because the proportion of disadvantaged in the community in inner London is higher than in the country as a whole. For every 100 you are recruiting you have more blacks and women . . . (A recent report) shows that we are recruiting a high proportion from among disadvantaged groups. (Chair of FHE Sub-Committee)

A 'financial carrot' was effected in the polytechnic's block grant as an acknowledgement that a higher intake of the more educationally disadvantaged groups required more tutor-time per student -

If you're 25 or 35 you need someone to hold your hand for the first couple of terms when you're back in college just in terms of counselling, study techniques and all the rest of it. If you're having more mature students you need more money for staff for those courses. It is actually good planning sense . . . .

What we are not doing is giving financial inducements to the colleges and AEIs to positively recruit students from those groups. We gear the resources they get to the provision that we expect them to be making - community-based provision that is responsive to the needs of the local community

We do monitor the student body at institute level in AE and in the colleges, . . . we give them more money if they can demonstrate that they're running ESL, literacy courses, valuable educational courses for ethnic minority groups, for those working in hospitals, those working with the elderly - all those categories need extra resources - we expect them to balance the provision with (that for) traditional groups in AE. (Chair of FHE Sub-Committee)

Clearly the key Member concerned was committed to a policy of expanding educational provision for socially disadvantaged adults. He was involving the relevant senior education officers in developing it and facilitating an allocation of resources to the institutions to meet the special needs of these students.

The Deputy Education Officer for Further,

Higher and Community Education (DEO/FHCE)

When the DEO/FHCE met with the Chair of the FHE Sub-Committee soon

after his appointment to the Authority in 1982, it was suggested that

a Review of area of 'Advanced Further Education' was required. He

said that he was "very quickly convinced" that it was "the right thing

to do". It was clear to him that there were pressing problems

concerning the size of the colleges as well as the structure and

resourcing of that sector which needed to be addressed. What quickly

became apparent, however, was that the Review was also concerned with

the processes of developing 'access' to education.

> a lot of talk of the ladder of opportunity . . . consumed an
> enormous amount of energy (it) tended to dominate the process
> because of the way in which it happened - the political concerns
> (organisational problems some of the colleges were amalgamated and
> the essential requirements of Access courses were discussed) the
> need for a structure . . . counselling for students . . . (the
> relative costs of part-time and full-time courses)

Whilst the Review was being undertaken one member of the Review body,

"a forceful character" from one of the polytechnics (known for its

"expansive and creative ethos") set up the first Open College, the

Open College of South London. The DEO/FHCE recalled that:

> the AFE Review (body) recognised it as being something which it
> (wanted to encourage) . . . I think it was that as much as
> anything which led the AFE people to talk about a polytechnic with
> a group of associated colleges meeting regularly to discuss as a
> group, to talk about all sorts of things. But (the central
> concern) was 'access', to create ladders leading down the path and
> forwards and so on - up to higher education.

In discussions with the Chair of the FHE Sub-Committee it was agreed

that the Authority find some money for the development. It was

regarded as a bit of "pump-priming":

> it was a bit of a risk, but one worth taking. Certainly it fitted
> in very well with the overall concept of the AFE Review which was
> about 'access' (and with the ethos of the ILEA) . . . . There was
> no doubt in our minds it was needed and that was as good a way of
> going about it as we had seen anywhere else.

What also emerged in the interview with the former DEO/FHE was that

both he and the Chair of the FHE Sub-Committee would have liked to

have seen a merger of the branches of adult and further education but

that because there was "very strong resistance to it from the AE

lobby, very strong - (we) didn't feel like taking it on". The

initiative for the first Open College was seen to come from the FE and

the HFE sector.

The DEO (FHE) subsequently left the Authority to become the Chief

Education Officer in another LEA. His successor was known by the

title of Director of Education (Post-Schools). The person selected

was someone who had had responsibility for both FE and AE in another

LEA. He saw his job as seeking some kind of "coherence" in the area

of post-school provision:

> preaching the gospel of providing a comprehensive post-school
> education service and providing the mechanisms of that to those
> who provide the service directly, in a coherent way. Those of us
> who work in this building (County Hall) must support them, support
> them in a coherent way rather than as (separate entities) like
> community education with a (one) set of values and other people
> like FE Colleges . . . (with another). I have already told my
> senior colleagues that our branch structure in the department is
> not helpful.

Chief Inspector (FHCE)

The Chief Inspector (FHCE) appointed in 1981 became involved in the

Open College development as a member of the AFE Review body. The

Chief Inspector for FHCE reflected that a review of provision in

'Advanced Further Education' was necessary because -

> of the implications of public expenditure cuts which could hit the
> service. We saw it coming, we didn't know their shape you
> understand and we couldn't have predicted what would happen quite
> the way it did - ups and downs budget-wise for years, whichever
> party was in power, quite frankly - no we launched this because we
> wanted to know what the service ought to be about and how we
> should organise it in order to best meet the aims and purposes as
> they emerged - the ones to be nailed to the mast.

His advice to the Chair of the FHE Sub-Committee was that the

initiative should reside with the institutions and not be taken by

County Hall central administration. He had had experience in a

previous post in setting up an Adult Education Advice Service,

designed to bring people back into education. (The setting up of

adult education advice centres in ILEA with 'shop front' premises was

one of the outcomes of the AFE Review.)

When asked what pressures there were to expand provision for

non-standard entry to HE at that time, the Chief Inspector (FHCE) made

two points. First, the polytechnics, he said, were well aware that

their roll was likely to continue to fall but that it would be wrong

to think this was their only motive, for there was a "growing

awareness of equal opportunities issues". Although the Review

pre-dated the series of documents on race, sex and class, he said, "we

were aware of tensions in the local population in terms of Londoners' needs".

The Chief Inspector (FHCE) was not involved in the setting up of the OCSL where the initiative was being taken at about the time of his appointment.

He commented:

> I think it is fair to say that (the Director of the polytechnic)
> wouldn't have been encouraged to take this initiative when he put
> money behind it, if he didn't know that (local colleges and
> institutes) were interested, he wouldn't have done it. He would
> have had a cool response. You could say that around the
> polytechnic there were half a dozen or so colleges and AEIs who
> were interested. Elsewhere the development was different, (the
> colleges) tended not to be so polytechnic-dominated - (such that)
> 'the Piper called the tune'. The OCSL has been (more) centrally
> structured because of the polytechnic's original investment in
> people and money, than was the case elsewhere.

Assistant Education Officers

The two assistant education officers (AEOs) for FE and CEC branches had both been in post throughout the early period of the Open College development. In fact, both had been AEOs in the Authority for a period of 11 to 12 years previously and their respective positions reflected their different career paths, the one teaching in HE, the other teaching in adult education (although with a responsibility at some point for FE in combination with AE). Neither was in a sense a 'second chance' person (both were also male and white). The AEO (CEC) was a national figure in AE, a member of the council of the National

Institute of Adult Continuing Education. The organisational structure

of the Authority (Figure 1.3 p.29) indicates their respective

responsibilities and their line-management relation to the Deputy

Education Officer (FHCE) who was later to be termed the Director

(Post-Schools).

The Assistant Education Officer (FHE). The AEO (FHE) saw the policy

on the Open College as having originated within the institutions prior

to the AFE Review. He recalled that the polytechnic was told by the

Authority that its block grant would be reduced by £600,000 if it did

not serve local needs better. It was:

> after the '79 election and at the stage of realising that not
> everything which had been promised could actually be done without
> a diversion of resources from the high cost bits of the system
> into the rest.

He clearly saw the Open College of South London as the initiative of

the polytechnic:

> I wasn't setting any objectives at all . . . . I was saying it is
> worth while on a short term basis, experimentally, to see if the
> polytechnic can actually generate ways of improving the 'ladder'.
> (There was) a certain amount of sceptism on my part, which is
> still there. (Aug. 1987)

The polytechnic objective, therefore, was seen as recruiting more ILEA

students. In the meantime, he commented, the Authority had begun to

develop objectives which were:

> essentially to make sure that more people were able to climb the
> ladder by part-time study and so on, not necessarily directed
> towards getting a place in the polytechnic but towards getting a
> place in HE as a whole . . . . much more general initiative to
> make sure that more people could climb the educational ladder. As
> far as the Authority was concerned - (it) doesn't matter where
> they drop off as long as they have had the opportunity I
> would judge it (successful if) more people are attracted into the
> system.

The role of the AEO (FE) was seen very clearly as one of providing

resources to assist the planning function of the OCSL. (In this sense

he saw his branch as the 'lead' branch.) Thereafter the lines of

communication were not seen to lie from the colleges to the AEO but

through feed-back from the Inspectorate.

> To a very great extent I and my colleagues in CEC have provided
> the money and have no direction over the educational set-up; in
> fact if there is one thing that annoys me it is the claim of the
> OCSL to have set up 'access' with a small 'a' and to claim all
> Access in South London, whether at Westminster, South London, or
> South Thames, as being OCSL initiatives. The great majority of
> those (courses) were in being and Access at least with a large 'A'
> for full-time students was in fact going great guns long before
> the OCSL set up. The function for the AEO (CEC) and myself has
> been to provide initial tranches of money to persuade the
> principals of colleges that it's a good idea and that they should
> continue to vote resources, both to actually to putting their own
> house in order - that is to systematically list what they're
> doing, what the outcomes of the courses might properly be - and to
> make sure that students know how they can progress. I think that
> is a major function for the OCSL, (other) than what was actually
> happening in a random fashion before . . . we needed a degree of
> systematisation, a degree of career counselling for those in
> general education courses both in AEI and FE Colleges . . . to
> actually plan better their movement forward . . . . Once we've
> said that there should be a planning function of OCSL then the
> educational function is a matter for the Inspectorate and
> especially the staff inspectors for literacy, numeracy on the one
> side and for AE in general . . . I only wish to have an overview.

> Ask the inspectorate what my role is. All of them will tell you
> the same thing - that I don't, on the whole, take initiatives
> myself, what I do is to make sure that there are initiatives going
> on in the Authority, especially things like the Open College,
> which are, I don't say are unique, but do need to be monitored,
> that I do keep an eye on what is happening and I do talk,
> especially to the inspectors who are responsible for them. I do
> talk to the senior managers in the polytechnic and I try not to
> impose my own beliefs, but at least to know what the beliefs of
> the people running these initiatives may be and (therefore) to
> anticipate trouble. If the Open College seems to me to be
> potentially running of the rails, I will take action behind the
> scenes.

The Assistant Education Officer (CEC). The AEO (CEC) also saw the

initiative for the Open College of South London as being taken by the

member of the AFE Review from the polytechnic who had responsibility

for developmental/outreach work within the polytechnic at that time.

> He was active in NATFHE and met many people in FE and AE through
> his attendance at regional and national meetings. He was
> influenced by earlier reports of the Open College of the
> North-West based on Nelson and Colne College.

The policy was seen as having been conceived in the context of the AFE

Review.

The role of the officers was seen one of facilitating resources: to

the polytechnic in terms of setting up of a central unit; and to the

colleges/institutes the equivalent of a half-post of lecturer (on

condition that the institutions funded the other half of an

appointment).

> (The polytechnic) came initially to the Authority and said we can
> find some money can the Authority match it . . . . The amount
> given to the OCSL was quite considerable, it enabled them to have
> the (four) full-time staff. All the central money came from the
> AFE allocation and it was 'top-up' to the polytechnic allocations
> in the name of 'Community and Continuing Education'
> responsibility, which was related to the Authority's "Equal
> Opportunities Policy" (it was) part of that thrust.

The AEO commented that in putting in money and staff time the member

institutions: "had a number of different interests but a few which

they shared in common. Those would have included the benefits of a

co-ordinated programme from the Consortia". An important objective

was, "for students to see routes between establishments and through

the joint programming of courses; liaising in staffing and curriculum

design was also seen to be very important". Having had prior

experience of collaboration with colleges of FE, he said that he was

optimistic and supportive of the proposal for liaison between

institutions which emphasised their separate identities, the benefits

of different "atmospheres" and the value of different "styles" in

post-school education.

> It is ten years now that students have moved freely between (the
> various institutions) in certain subject areas. So we have got
> the evidence . . . and we know it works. We know that it is
> possible in the atmosphere of an AEI to do some preparatory work,
> we know (collaboration works) with the college and polytechnic
> staff coming into the Institute making inputs to the programme.
> Gradually the students can be helped to move from their
> preparatory work to a syllabus which leads to an academic
> qualification. That's been tried and tested and we have got it
> replicated in a number of other places and different subject
> areas. What the Open College was trying to do was to accept this
> principle across the whole range of the post-school sector and
> saying, why shouldn't we try it everywhere? I think that is quite
> a reasonable as well as a laudable objective.

Another example was given:

> Teaching is undertaken by the college staff but they work within
> the atmosphere of an institute - a simple thing. Just down the
> road from the Institute you will see a group of students doing 'O'
> level English from the FE college alongside the institute students
> and staff. That's been going for many years. Now that is, in
> itself, enough to prove that barriers are unhelpful and that what
> we need to do is to respect the different styles of post-school
> education that are provided from within the institutions and
> cement the relations, in order that the students can freely move
> across.

The 'client' group were seen by the AEO (CEC), to be: "People for whom

educational experience in one institution is not sufficient to satisfy

a learning need when they don't have the traditional background and

paper qualifications and confidence and personal skills".

Communication between the Open College and the central administration

in County Hall was also seen, by the AEO (CEC), to be through the

inspectorate.

Several important points stand out when one attempts to summarise the role of the assistant education officers for FE and CEC in the development of an Open College system: it was apparent that there was not one view shared by all involved; there were varying levels of support and commitment; and, it was sensed by the researcher, there was greater enthusiasm for Open Colleges in the Further and Higher Education sectors than in Adult Education (where some of the staff were concerned to defend their professional territory). There was also greater support, it seemed, for the developments of Open Colleges in other parts of London, than for the initial one, 'The Open College of South London'. The latter always suffered from its origins. In the view of the Assistant Education Officer (CEC), "it was an often expressed view that the OCSL was imposed from above and the partners were 'bribed' or 'bullied' into membership".

Once a AFE Review had been completed, the final report went to Committee and became the official policy of the LEA. At that stage a formal monitoring or evaluation of the subsequent developments could have been requested either through the auspices of the research and statistics branch and/or through the Authority's inspectorate. It appears that because the development of the Open College of South London pre-empted the Review of AFE, this did not happen. The resources for the development were initially made available by the polytechnic and, following facilitation by the Vice-Chair of FHE Sub-Committee, the Authority assumed responsibility for the development. The expectation was that the initiative would be

reviewed internally by the governing body, by senior managers and by the inspectorate (although it was acknowledged that the inspectorate was grossly under-staffed and its capacity to undertake institutional reviews extremely limited).

Discussion

Let us consider now the general hypothesis that policy formulation requires "communication, commitment and capacity". First, it is clear that the policy on the Open College was not formulated either by Members or officers but conceived within the polytechnic and 'negotiated' with local colleges and adult education institutes. Informal contacts between of principals of these institutions gave rise to a steering group which sought the support of Members and senior officers. Members were more receptive to the idea because it fitted in with their policy on equal opportunities. The Deputy Education Officer for FHCE welcomed it because it made for a more rational use of resources within the service. The Education Officers, for the respective branches, however, were noticeably less enthusiastic at the outset, perhaps, because such a development impinged on their branch's autonomy. Most concerned was the adult education sector which jealously guarded the unique characteristics of its service.

Second, it is clear that there was a strong political commitment to the notion of expanding educational opportunities within the

Authority. This was most evident, as might be expected, among Labour

Members and influenced by the social and economic situation in the

inner city. The Chair of the FHE Sub-committee was also a former

mature student, at one time a lecturer in FE, who had pioneered

courses for adult returners. He had both a politicial commitment and

a professional interest in the policy development. Within the

institutions there was also a 'constituency' for change, in part,

because of falling rolls, but also because there was a network of

people motivated to develop 'second chance' education. It was also a

policy supported by officers. In fact, it had been instrumental in

attracting key individuals to work for the Authority. Three new

senior officers had been appointed: one a Deputy Education Officer who

had experience of the development of Access to Higher Education and a

political commitment to equal opportunities; a Chief Inspector (FHCE)

who had prior experience of expanding opportunities for adult

returners through setting up educational advice shops in Yorkshire and

who became involved in the Review of 'Advanced Further Education'; and

a Director of Post-Schools who was someone who had experience in both

FE and AE. The 'new' officers were more receptive to the notion of

developments which spanned branches than the two senior officers of FE

and CE who had been in charge of their respective branches for some

twelve years or more and who had some reservations about the Open

College development. They were influenced by their 'reference groups'

in their respective professional fields.

The third factor, that of resources, is also pertinent. Demographic

changes had begun to affect FE and AFE institutions and they were

consequently more 'open' to new developments to ensure their survival.

It was also a period in which, although resources were increasingly

more scarce, there was still some room for manoeuvre in the budget

which enabled the Authority to offer some financial inducement to

institutions to participate. Last, but by no means least, was the

site and resourcing which the polytechnic was prepared to offer,

albeit under pressure from the Authority to commit some of its

resourcing from the Authority to meet the needs of the local

community.

There was, therefore, the necesssary support for the policy within the

Authority. This is not to say there was unanimity of view. Quite

clearly, the participating branches and institutions, which had quite

different 'cultures', had different priorities. The polytechnic,

initially, held a different 'definition of the situation' than the

local colleges and institutes. Members and officers also had

different perspectives. The proposal by the steering group, however,

was timely[6] and the Open College of South London was launched in

November 1983.

It is useful at this stage to review the insights which the various

theoretical approaches have provided. First, the 'systems' approach

focussed attention on the formal roles of the key individuals

concerned in the process of policy formulation. The EO considered the

Authority's duty to provide an education service in the light of the

changing economic and social conditions in inner London. Hence he set

up the Review of AFE. His strategic role within the Authority's

structure enabled him to influence developments by the appointment of

senior officers who favoured greater co-operation between the sectors

of FE and AE. Further, the role of the Members was to make policy.

This they clearly effected by the Leader holding a seminar at the

Royal Festival Hall which paved the way for a policy on equal

opportunities and anti-racism. Whereas in the 1970s the LEAs were

described as 'reactive' rather than 'innovative' (Kogan, 1982:101),

the 1980s was a period in which the ILEA took initiatives in improving

secondary education and expanding the opportunities for adults to

return to education. In particular, it addressed the question of

equal opportunities. The Review of AFE was of special interest to

Members because of their ideological commitment to redressing social

inequalities. But it was, also, of interest to senior officers

because it promoted a more rational use of resources. The Open

College became the delivery mechanism for the policy on equal

opportunities in the post-school sector.

Whilst the 'systems' approach is valuable in highlighting the way in

which the educational policy relates to the social, economic and

political situation pertaining in inner London, it cannot explain the

conflicts of interest between groups and individuals within the

Authority. It was observed that there was a difference of interest

between the branches of FE and AE. At this juncture it is useful to employ the concepts and insights derived from 'social action' theory. Differences in viewpoint between branches can be explained, in part, because each one had its own 'culture' and concerns. The tensions that existed in relation to the Open College development are, perhaps, explained by the way in which the OCSL was 'negotiated' by key people in the field. Whilst senior officers and Members agreed on the desirability of broadening 'access' to education, the problem of accountability occurred because of the route by which the Open College was originally funded. Initially the polytechnic made the resources available and subsequently the Authority took responsibility for the development. Hence, the policy on the Open College was not, at the outset, formally approved by the FHE Sub-Committee and therefore the question of evaluation was not addressed at the outset. (Williams, in 1980, noted that control is greatest at the point of initial funding of developments.) The development of the Open College conforms to the 'bargaining' model described by Hill (1972). Hence, ethnomethodology is also helpful in furnishing insights. The development of a network in which there were different 'definitions of a situation' meant that "jarring occurred continuously as the network developed" (Rock 1988:126).

Other theories are also relevant. Pluralists might see the initiative taken by local government in education in Inner London in the early 1980s as an indication of the way in which the 'tri-umvirate' functioned (Kogan, 1971:234). The LEA could be seen to be addressing

the areas of need highlighted in White Papers from the DES in the discussion document 'Higher Education in the 1990s'. It envisaged the higher education system as embracing different types of students and meeting fresh needs, "such as that of recurrent and continuing education" (DES, 1978:3). (However, it was undoubtably the thrust in the direction of equal opportunities which later brought the LEA into confrontation with a central government of a rather different political persuasion than the one which had published the White Paper of 1979.)

Marxists, on the other hand, would point to the economic recession in the 1970s as a crisis in capitalism which subsequently led to a cut in public resources thus restricting the ability of an LEA to innovate. The sector most threatened was the non-statutory area of provision of adult education. Reactions to the Open College proposal have to be seen in the knowledge that those engaged in adult education feared a rationalisation of the service.

Theories relating to corporatism are also relevant. The personal assistant to the director of the polytechnic and the principal of a local FE college had key roles in developing the OCSL. Their knowledge and familiarity with the LEA decision-making processes as well as contacts and influence which they had with Members and senior officers resulted from their experience as trade union representatives in the consultative procedures in County Hall.

Finally, there is the general usefulness of concepts drawn from the

field of decision-making. The 'non-decision' not to amalgamate the

branches of FE and AE nevertheless influenced the behaviour of people

in the field. The AFE Review, it was noted, was only a "guide for

action"; the policy to develop an Open College did not emerge in some

classically linear desision-making fashion but conformed more to the

"disjointed incrementalism" described by Lindblom (1963). Whilst the

development of the Open College was a direct manifestation of the

ILEA's policy on equal opportunities it was, also, pragmatically,

concerned to ensure a more rational use of resources in the light of

demographic trends and the changing needs of the London labour market.

Notes

1. E.J.T.Brennan (1975) *Education for National Efficiency: The Contribution of Sidney and Beatrice Webb* London: Athlone Press, p. 109.

2. Hill identifies three models of policy-making: the 'ideological model in which Members dominate; the 'administrative' model in which officers dominate; and the 'bargaining' model in which power is decentralised. M.J. Hill (1972) *The Sociology of Public Administration* London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

3. Within the ILEA the Chief Education Officer is known as the Education Officer.

4. The term 'constituency' is employed by Sarason (1982) to describe a situation in an institution where there are power struggles and those seeking to effect change need to develop support to enlarge the group sharing the same concerns and obligations in order to effect change. *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

5. In relation to secondary schools the Authority commissioned a committee of inquiry chaired by Dr. Hargreaves on the Curriculum and Organisation of Secondary Schools. *Improving Secondary Schools* London:ILEA.

6. 'Timing and feasibility' can be crucial elements in the making of policy. David, M.E.(1977) *Reform, Reaction and Resources, the three R's of educational planning* Windsor:NFER.

Appendix 3.1: Extract from 'Race, Sex and Class' 1. Achievement in Schools (ILEA 1983).

Introduction

Members of the Inner London Education Authority, elected in 1981, set themselves four principal objectives. They resolved to maintain and improve the level of educational provision in Inner London; to reconsider existing arrangements for the education of 16-19 year olds; to expand provision for the increasing number of unemployed school leavers; and to examine the question of achievement in education from the vantage point of working class children, black children and girls. 'Achievement in Schools' is the first in a series of ILEA publications on the subject of 'Race, Sex and Class in Education' arising out of consideration of that fourth objective....

The purpose of this paper, delivered to representatives of all ILEA schools in the Festival Hall in September 1981, is to present existing evidence in the nature of achievement, specifically in schools. Many ILEA schools have themselves observed in practice the effects set out in this evidence and developed their own strategies in response. We present the evidence in order to consider policy change on an informed basis.

In publishing it, and the ensuing policy statements and documents deriving from it, we recognise that educational institutions cannot operate as islands cut off from the values of the society of which they are part. Parents, for example, need to be convinced of the value to their children of what a school offers, and to be enlisted as partners. At the same time we record that the evidence set out by the scholars is known to many parents from their experience, Black parents, women working class parents have in different ways demonstrated their concerns, and in varying degrees have sought change, in the interests of their children. Furthermore we know, from the success that some of our own schools have already shown in overcoming obstacles to achievement, that we can develop strategies to meet these concerns.....

Frances Morrell
Leader, ILEA August 1983.

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Appendix 3.2: Extract from 'Review of Advanced Further Education in
Inner London', Education Officer's Recommendations. ILEA, August 1984.

1. Key Issues

1.1 The key issues which were identified in Part Two of the proposals
paper, and which attracted many responses, were:

    (i) access to courses;
   (ii) links with other sectors of FHE;
  (iii) availability and allocation of resources;
   (iv) structural arrangements.

1.2 In considering these issues it has become clear that, provided
effective mechanisms for concerted action are developed, the strength
of the post-school education system in inner London – with resources
unmatched in Britain and reflecting London's status as a major capital
city – is well able to meet these challenges. Many of the
recommendations in this report are aimed at providing such a mechanism
for AFE within the context of a London-wide education service.

1.3 This report shows how the concept of a London-wide perspective can
be applied in a number of contexts, allowing new challenges to be met
with confidence. In ILEA, it will be necessary for institutions to
take a wider view of their responsibilities, and to consider their
work in relation to that of other institutions as a matter of routine.
Looking outside the ILEA service, there is a clear need to develop
links with the universities and with other organisations whose work is
relevant.

1.4 *Access* – Improved access to higher education, particularly for
groups at present under-represented, is of major concern to the
Authority and to its institutions; it is also clear from the public
discussions that this policy has widespread support. The impending
fall in the 18-year old population creates an opportunity to widen
access. Here is a key area where a London-wide perspective is needed
if students are to be assisted to move readily up the 'ladder of
opportunity'. Specific proposals for improving access are set out in
a later section of this report – they are largely based on developing
geographic groupings of institutions which will be required to link
access arrangements between them in a systematic way.

1.5 *Links with other sectors* – Links between AFE institutions and
those dealing mostly with non-advanced further education (NAFE) or
adult education, and links across the binary line, are not ends in
themselves but are means of consolidating and developing the overall
strengths of the London education system. There have already been
discussions with London University and The City University over both
collaborative arrangements and institutional mergers, and specific
recommendations are made. I regard these discussions with the
universities as important because the Authority, working with the

universities, can be instrumental in achieving a marked widening of opportunity for Londoners.

1.6 *Resources* - The Authority's policy has been to prevent considerations of quality being unreasonably restricted by those of finance. Nevertheless, the review has recognised the pressure on existing AFE resources. There is a need to increase the efficiency with which resources are used to demonstrate the equity with which they are distributed.

1.7 *Structural change* - This report makes major proposals for structural change, which follow from examining individual subject areas with a view to producing a strengthened system. Extensive work has been done by the institutions concerned and by officers and inspectors in examining these proposals in depth; in some cases, further work remains to be done. Staff in these institutions will want to know how any proposed structural changes will affect them, and arrangements will be made for local discussions with both teaching and non-teaching staffs concerned.

1.8 At this stage, the capital and revenue cost implications of the various proposals made here have not been precisely determined. Capital and revenue expenditure are regulated by annual processes, most of which are in the hands of bodies other than the Authority. If the structural changes recommended are accepted, it will be necessary to bring forward appropriate funding plans.

CHAPTER IV

POLICY-IMPLEMENTATION I

The interview study of the policy-makers revealed that the notion of

an Open College development was conceived neither by education

officers nor by elected Members but within the polytechnic and a small

cluster of educational institutions of adult and further education.

The structure and resourcing of the 'College' were discussed and

'negotiated' with key people in the LEA's organisational hierarchy.

The proposal, however, was conceived in response to pressure from an

Authority with a political commitment to the educational needs of a

multi-ethnic inner city population affected by economic recession and

in the expectation of cuts in resources. There was also concern

within institutions facing falling student rolls and a realisation

that they needed to consider provision for a wider clientele. There

was a sense, therefore, in which the policy was, in part, 'top-down'

and, in another sense, 'bottom-up'.

What is apparent from the foregoing chapter is that the stages of

'making' and 'implementing' a policy on expanding 'post-school' for

adults were not separable, one from the other; some relevant courses

for adult returners had developed prior to the launching of the Open

College. The allocation of resources by the authority to the Open

College development, however, marked the formal commitment of the

decision-makers (senior officers and Members) to the expansion of

post-school provision which would develop opportunities for the

socially and educationally disadvantaged adults in the population.

Successful implementation of an Open College policy could ultimately

be measured on a number of fronts: the expansion of relevant courses;

the recruitment of adults most in need; and the facilitation of links

to provide for progression between institutions.

As was made clear at the outset, the focus of this study is on the

implementation of policy within institutions, for so often in the past

attention has focussed on evaluating policy outcomes thus neglecting

the process by which the policy was, or was not, implemented

(Hargrove, 1975; Gunn, 1978). Opinions differ as to whether an

implementation study should begin with the policy-making (the

'top-down' stance) leading to policy implementation, as the 'systems'

approach would suggest (Easton, 1965a) or, whether it is best

undertaken from a 'social action' perspective (the 'bottoms-up' view),

advocated by Elmore (1981). He coined a term 'backward mapping',

defined as:

> 'backward reasoning' from the individual and organisational
> choices that are the hub of the problem to which policy is
> addressed, to the rules, procedures and structures, that have the
> closest proximity to these choices, to the policy instruments
> available to affect those things, and hence to feasible policy
> objectives (p.1) (see also Elmore, 1980)

This study, as outlined in Chapter I, attempts a conceptual

integration of the 'systems' and 'social action' (or 'game theory')

approach. A review of the literature including that which

specifically pertains to implementation studies and to organisations

more generally (especially of the role of professionals in

bureaucracies) is useful, in order to focus on factors which could

promote, or inhibit changes, in educational institutions.

A Review of the Literature

The relative strengths and weaknesses of the 'systems' and 'social

action' approach to understanding organisations were discussed in an

earlier chapter. These perspectives termed 'top-down' and 'bottom-up'

models applied to a study of policy implementation are differentiated

and discussed in some detail in Ham and Hill's book, The Policy

Process in the Modern Capitalist State (Chapter 6, 1984). They refer

to the 'seminal' work on implementation by Pressman and Wildavsky in

1973 and to other works which followed (Mountjoy and O'Toole, 1974;

Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975; Gunn, 1978; Nixon, 1980). These studies

were concerned to identify the elements which made for a successful

implementation programme and those which reduced the chances of

failure. Ham and Hill draw parallels between the 'systems' approach

and that adopted by organisation theorists (Hood, 1976; Dunsmire,

1978a and b). They advance a number of criticisms of the 'top-down'

approach: the assumptions which are made about the nature of policy;

the differentiation of policy-making from policy-implementation; and

of the normative stance adopted by students of implementation,

particularly when this is implicit rather than explicit (Ham and

Hills, 1984:101). First, with regard to the nature of policy, they

point to the danger of assuming an entity called a 'policy'. This,

they observe, may only emerge as a stage following implementation.

Initially, it may refer to a 'stance' adopted by policy-makers.

However, if the term 'policy' is reserved only for something more

concrete, such as legislative action (Ham and Hills 1984:102), this

also has problems for studies of implementation because it is

difficult to identify simple goals within the policy. It is also

problematical to disentangle the effects of one policy initiative from

another. Policies too may be phrased in general terms and left to

administrators to implement; often they require adjustments to

existing policies - not new initiatives - necessitating structured

change in resource allocation. Implementation is then concerned with

'means' not 'ends'. The danger of the 'top-down' approach is that

there is a tendency to make assumptions about the concreteness of a

'policy', when what exists is more of an "interactive and negotiative"

process (Barrett and Fudge, 1981:25). It has been demonstrated in the

study of policy-makers in relation to the Open College that

policy-making and implementation were interwoven and more of a

"seamless web" (Ham and Hill, 1984:105). The 'bottoms-up' mode of

analysis, therefore, is recommended, as a better means of identifying

"who seems to be influencing what, how and why" (Barrett and Hill,

1981:19). It tends to be descriptive, whereas the 'top-down'

approach, in making certain assumptions about the setting of goals and

the policy-implementation relationship, tends to be prescriptive.

Since the early 1970s there have been a number of empirical studies,

some specifically concerned with the implementation of a particular

policy (Murphy, 1976; Grindle, 1980; Warwick, 1982) and others

concerned more generally with the dynamics of change in organisations
(Gross et al., 1971; Geertz, 1975; McLaughlin, 1976; Pincus, 1976;
Herriott and Gross, 1979; Sarason, 1982). These furnish insights into
some of the elements which might influence the effective
implementation of a policy. It is worth reviewing some of the
influences identified and the typologies proposed which, whilst not in
any way prescriptive, are worthy of consideration in the study
undertaken of the Open College development. The elements influencing
the effectiveness of implementation and the dynamics of change in
organisations are identified from the literature as: historical
antecedents; cultural factors; the measure of internal and external
support for change; the role of change-agent; the availablility of
resources and the importance of communication. These factors need to
be considered in the light of the observed influence of
negotiation/bargaining within an organisational context.

Historical antecedents. Little attention has been paid to date to
historical factors which foster, or hinder, the implementation of
policies (Gross et al., 1971:22). Several studies (Greiner, 1967)
and earlier ones (Burns and Stalker, 1961; Mann and Neff, 1961;
Gellerman, 1963), however, of planned change in organisations point to
greater likelihood of successful innovation in the organistion where
there is a history of innovation and climate for change.

Cultural factors. Whilst historical factors per se have not attracted
much attention from researchers in policy implementation and those

interested in organisational change, cultural factors have been of

interest. A study of population policies and their implementation in

eight developing countries (Warwick, 1982:130), for example, indicated

that adoption of a policy was more likely to be successful if it

respected local cultures and had the support of influential informal

leaders in local government.

Murphy (1976), in a study of the impact of discretionary funds on

state education bureaucracies in the USA, pointed out that the

differential related to its unique organisational culture, which had

its "own history, norms and standard operating procedures". Also,

within an educational setting, the study by Sarason (1982) pointed to

insufficient attention in the past having been paid to the culture of

the school, and its community, in trying to change and improve

schools.

Another study in education, one of innovation in classroom

organisation (McLaughlin, 1976), indicated that the attitudes,

motives, and receptivity of teachers were critical. This research

indicated the importance of the 'action' perspective in examining

people's perceptions, their 'definition of the situation' (Jenkins,

1978; Young, 1979; Young and Mills, 1980) and the institutionalization

of ideologies (Berger and Luckman, 1976). They point to the need to

examine subjective meanings, also recommended by Barrett and Fudge

(1981), and how important it is to note the impact of professionalism

and 'socialisation' within the organisation (Geertz, 1975:89). In a

study, 'Bureaucracy and Policy Implementation', Ripley and Franklin

(1982) developed a typology of bureaucrats: careerists; politicians,

professionals and missionaries (Downs, 1967:88; Wilensky, 1967:85-86).

They noted that the diversity of types of bureaucrats involved in the

implementation process could lead to their having competing goals and

differing expectations of a policy.

The measure of internal/external support for change. The foregoing

historical and cultural factors are seen to influence the climate for

change, innovation and adaptation within organisational settings and,

thereby, the propensity for implementation by those involved. There

are, however, particular factors which support innovation and change.

In a comparative study of the implementation of birth control policies

in eight countries the commitment of the implementers to the policy

was seen as very important (Warwick, 1982:135). This was measured as

"an evanescent compound of belief, feeling, capacity and the will to

act". The true test was whether officials carried out the policy when

they had the option not to do so. Their commitment to execute the

policy depended on the interactions between implementers, key actors

and the environment. Most critical for successful implementation was

the relationship of the 'field' implementers and their clients. Where

tensions and conflicts of interest were most in evidence within the

organisation, and possibly with the implementer's own value system,

implementation was more likely to be problematic.

Grindle (1980), also, in a study of policy implementation in the Third World, identified the commitment of lower level officials as an important factor in the implementation process. Failure to take account of the need for the co-operation and co-ordination of local actors, is one of the factors which Pressman and Wildavsky (1979) identified as affecting the degree of efficacy of implementation.

Williams (1980:60), too, identifies the "front-line professionals" as critical to successful implementation. These people, whom Lipsky terms "street-level bureaucrats", are at the critical interface of implementation. He maintains that they rarely feel powerful; on the contrary, they frequently profess to feeling like "pawns in the institutional game" (Williams, 1980:60).

The role-set of an individual (the key people with whom they interact, their professional peers and colleagues (Glaser, 1971)), has been identified as a potential supportive factor for innovation and change in the implementation process. Within an educational setting the role of the headteacher as 'gate-keeper' may be critical, but for an innovation to be effectively implemented there is required a 'constituency' for change within the institution. For change to be effected, McLaughlin says, teachers have to take on "the role of constituents acting as implementers". This points to the strategic role which in-service training (INSET) and particularly, institutionally-based INSET, could have in the management of change.

The role of change-agent. The role of change-agent is to give support

and advice (Gross et al., 1971; Kirst and Jung, 1982). The term

'fixer' is employed by Williams (1980) to suggest that to be an

effective agent of implementation the individual needs to have some

power to intervene in the process. There is little empirical

evidence, however, of the role and effectiveness of change-agents,

although it is generally believed (Bennis, Lippitt in Gross et

al., 1971:25) that innovation in an organisation will be effected

where subordinates participate with superordinates, along with an

outside change agent. Bardach (1973) believed that the presence of a

'fixer', someone who has the will, staff and resources to oversee

implementation and, who would intervene almost continuously, would be

crucial to the successful implementation of public policy. Within the

Open College the appointment of a team of four co-ordinators,

centrally, with a brief to encourage the development of the curriculum

for adult returners in a particular field (Return to Learning, Access,

New Technology, Flexible Learning Opportunities) and, the appointment

of co-ordinators, within the institutions, with a brief to develop

courses in the areas designated, can be examined in the light of their

role as 'change-agents'.

The availablity of resources. Studies of the implementation of policy

points to a consideration of the availability of adequate resources

for the purpose (Gross, 1971; Williams, 1980; Grindle, 1980; Mazmanian

and Sabatier, 1981; Kirst and Jung, 1982). Sarason (1982) discusses

resources in terms of their quality and quantity, the time available

and human resources. The more limited these are, the more likely it

is that the goals of the institution have to be reformulated.

Competition between agencies over the disbursement of financial

resources, it has been observed, can undermine the goals of an

organisation (Warwick, 1982:130).

An allocation of resources as a form of incentive to individuals, in

terms of salary enhancement, or to the institutions to undertake new

developments, is frequently observed as affecting implementation.

Murphy (1976), in his study of the impact of discretionary funds in

state education bureaucracies, commented on the need for policy-makers

to consider the propensity of the existing organisational structure

for self-renewal and pointed to the potential use of the 'carrot'

method as an incentive to induce change. It is observed that the

massive expansion of training under the auspices of the Manpower

Services Commission within the FE sector is one very notable example

of, "he who pays the piper, calls the tune".

It is, therefore, pertinent to investigate what financial resources,

in terms of capital and personnel, were made available to educational

institutions to promote developments of the Open College within member

institutions. It was noted by Williams (1980), that, in any 'federal'

system (one where there is a notion of shared governance), resource

allocation was frequently "a pivotal spot of linkage" and critical to

active involvement. Central control in this situation was, therefore,

at its maximum prior to decisions on the allocation and distribution
of resources.

Communication. For a policy to be effectively implemented requires
that the aims and intentions be understood, addressed, and made
operational and guidelines adhered to at each stage of its
implementation (Williams, 1980: Ch.5). A multiplicity of decisions,
it is noted, can hinder success (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1979).
Mountjoy and O'Toole (1974) observe that policies need to be clear and
unambiguous if implementation entails inter-organisational linkages.
Nixon (1980), too, examining the linkages between central and local
government in Britain, drew attention to the importance of "clarity
and consistency in the communication of policy" (Ham and Hill,
1974:100). Federal systems, whether governmental or 'quasi-federal'
in an organisational sense, are perhaps more prone to experience
problems in relation to communication and control, in part, because
goals may be left vague in order to obtain consensus but, also,
because they are more likely to devolve decision-making, over the
specific allocation of resources, in order to gain greater compliance
(Cyert in Kirst and Jung, 1982). Williams describes the system of
implementation as "bottom-heavy and loosely-coupled":

> it is bottom-heavy because the closer we get to the bottom of the
> pyramid, the closer we get to the factors that have the greatest
> effect on the program's success of failure. It is loosely-coupled
> because the ability of one level to control the behaviour of
> another is weak and largely negative.

This indicates the all important role of two-way communication, of

'feed-back' from the 'street-level' to those whose function it is to

interpret the policy decisions and implement them. Grindle (1980)

noted the method of reporting mechanisms within a bureaucracy as one

of the factors affecting policy implementation in his study of the

Third World. Williams and Elmore (1976) reported that where

decentralisation conceded control to local officials it could impede

the programme for the most disadvantaged group. Evaluation studies,

it has been observed, might be useful adjuncts to decision-makers in

systems where the responsibility for implementation is decentralised

and where there is a need for political accountability (Williams and

Elmore, 1976: Chapter 2).

The role of communication is strongly associated with the need for

control in the process of policy implementation. In a situation where

the 'street-level' bureaucrats are professionals one of the

acknowledged, most effective forms of promoting compliance is through

're-socialisation'[1]. McLaughlin (1976:174) and Bird and Norton

(1988) observe how effective institutionally-based INSET was, with

consultants working alongside teachers in the classroom, with regular

staff meetings in which ideas were shared, where problems were

discussed and peer group support was available. Mutual adaptation,

not standardisation, would appear to be a key to successful

implementation where professional personnel are concerned. Three

critical components of INSET in terms of 'learning by doing',

identified by McLaughlin (1976) which might be of relevance to the

Open College structure were: the development of local materials,

'on-going' training (adaptive planning) and frequent staff-meetings.

Whilst the above six factors have been elicited from the literature as important factors in the process of implementation, other prescriptions exist covering much the same ground, elements which promote or inhibit implementation (Gross, 1971; Murphy in Williams, 1976; Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1981). Consideration of these factors, whilst not directing the lines of inquiry, nevertheless prompted certain questions of the implementers of the Open College system.

The Role of Negotiation/Bargaining

in the Implementation Process

Eugene Bardach (1977) in the 'The Implementation Game' describes the whole process as numerous special interests, groups and individuals, pursuing their own goals which may of may not be compatible with the goals of the policy-makers. It is, therefore, important he says, to consider, how any new policy 'fits' the existing agenda. Murphy (1976), too, in his study of the impact of discretionary funds in state education bureaucracies commented on the way in which bargaining between agencies influenced the distribution of funds more than the goals originally agreed upon. This suggests that any radical departure, for example, in the allocation of resources, could be undermined by action based on the self-interest of individuals or departments.

The whole character and shape of bureaucracy and the critical role which bureaucrats have in the implementation process led Ripley and

Franklin (1982) to suggest that, in recognition of the omnipresence of

'bargaining' in the organisational context, effective implementation

was more likely where market mechanisms operated, where

decision-making was decentralised; in other words, where flexibility

and adaptablity were the hallmarks of a 'good' bureaucrat. Similar

conclusions were reached by Williams (1980) in the 'discretion' which

'street-level' bureaucrats exercise in the course of their daily

encounters with the general public. Insufficient attention, say Ham

and Hill (1984:112), has been paid in the past to the "importance of

negotiation and bargaining which occur throughout the policy process".

They argue:

> there is a tension between the normative assumptions of government
> - what should be done and how it should happen - and the struggle
> and conflict between interests - the need to bargain and
> compromise - that represent the reality of the process by which
> power/influence is gained and held in order to pursue ideological
> goals (Barrett and Hill, 1981:145).

Whilst the influence of negotiation/bargaining was obviously neglected

in the earlier studies of implementation it should, perhaps, not now

be emphasised to the exclusion of other important factors and

influences such as: the impact of individuals with differing status

within the organisational structure; or, the powerful and pervasive

impact of professional training on a bureaucrat's behaviour.

The review of the literature suggests that it is important to examine

the implementation of policy both from the vantage point of the

policy-makers (top-down) and from that of the point of view of the

implementers (bottom-up). Having examined the views of the

policy-makers, let us now look at the views of the people in the

central administrative structure (the Director of Studies and the four

central co-ordinators).

Hypothesis II: The Implementation of Policy

in relation to the Central Team

On the basis of the review of the literature on implementation it is

hypothesised that for the 'policy' of the Open College to be

successfully implemented certain conditions would need to be present.

In relation to the central team it was expected that the successful

establishment of courses and the recruitment of educationally

disadvantaged adults would depend on the commitment of all concerned.

In particular, the recruitment of the central staff to act as

'change-agents' would be a critical factor. Second, access to

financial resources, especially in the early stages of development,

could be important. Third, it was anticipated that the ability of the

central co-ordinators to be effective 'change-agents' would depend on

there being good communications between all concerned: between the

central co-ordinators and key people in the institutions; within the

management structure of the Open College of South London; and between

the OCSL and the Authority's administration. Good avenues for

communication would be important in order that a shared view of the

Open College develop. A regular means of formally reviewing and

evaluating the Open College would also need to be established. In

general terms, as with 'policy-making', the key factors were how "to

bring together communications, commitment and capacity so as to carry

a decision into action" (Williams, 1980:3).

In the case of the Open College the implemention was at two levels in

the organisation: first, the central staff, the Director of Studies

(the former Director's Personal Adviser) and the four central

co-ordinators; and second, the staff involved in the colleges and

institutes (namely, principals, co-ordinators and tutors of courses

identified as Open College courses). Let us consider whether at the

first stage of implementation, the setting up and operation of the

Open Colleges central structure, the criteria above were met. And, as

in the examination of the first hypothesis, some of the sensitizing

concepts of the social action perspective, such as 'role,

'socialisation', 'culture' and 'negotiated order' will be employed.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the Director of Studies and

the four central co-ordinators. (The interview guide is given in

Appendix A.2 p.381.) Information was also obtained from the

interviews undertaken with key people in the administration in County

Hall, from staff in the member institutions and from observations and

the documentation of the management forum of the Open College, all of

which facilitated triangulation.

The First Stage of Implementation:

The Central Administrative Structure

The Open College was established in 1983 with four posts of central

co-ordinator (termed the 'Co-ordinator for the Open College of South

London'). Initially, the polytechnic funded the appointment of the

central co-ordinators on temporary one-year contracts with the

polytechnic. In the second year, the central co-ordinators were

offered permanent contracts with the polytechnic and it was

re-imbursed through the block grant from the Authority. Within the

member institutions the ILEA funded seven half-posts of Lecturer to

facilitate remission for the lecturers to promote the development of

the curriculum for adult returners within their institution and to

liaise within the Open College.

The posts of central co-ordinators were advertised in the national

press and, of over 200 applicants, 16 were shortlisted and

interviewed. All four appointed were external candidates to the

polytechnic. Each assumed a responsibility commensurate with

background and experience in relation to curriculum development in one

of four areas: Access courses; Return to Learning; Flexible Learning

Opportunities and New Technology. The first three course areas were

selected because they clearly provided a means of developing a pathway

through the post-school system; the other, New Technology was chosen

because it was identified as a subject which many adults would not

have had any previous experience and where there were not only

expanding opportunities for adults to re-enter the labour market but also linkages between institutions, with differing resources, could, perhaps, be most fruitful. The calibre of the four people appointed, it was observed, was extrememly high - "some of the people involved were excellent, different systems, different approaches" (Director of Studies).

The Open College of South London had a Joint Planning Board "responsible for the general direction, academic policy, staffing and resources". It comprised one member of senior management from each member institution, four representatives of the institutions' co-ordinators, two from Adult Education and two from Further Education, two representatives of the central team, the Director of Studies and co-opted members.

The Views of the Central Team

The Director of Studies (the former Personal Adviser to the Director of the Polytechnic)

As the original catalyst in the development the Personal Advisor to the Director of the Polytechnic was appointed Director of Studies and promoted from senior lecturer to principal lecturer.

> I was a manager, but I didn't think of the title, someone else
> thought of that . . . In fact (the principal of the local college)
> did me a favour because I wasn't in this for self-interest. He
> insisted that I get given a title and that the polytechnic promote
> me from senior lecturer to principal lecturer, which had not
> crossed my mind until he suggested it. I thought - great idea. I

stopped working for the Director and I started as head of a small
unit called the 'Extra-Faculty Unit', of which the Open College
was to be a part. Over three years it developed from a staff of
6-7 to over 60 people. As the central team took over,
(increasingly) I became a manager rather than the central
intellect behind it. . . . I actually don't know very much about
adult education. I can tell you my dream for half an hour -
that's it (then it's up to someone else to take over - to work on
it).

There was an official launch at the polytechnic attended by a large

invited audience. The Director of Studies continued in his

entrepreneurial role, promoting the development and playing a leading

part in publicising the Open College. He was very concerned to market

the Open College effectively.

We spent £3,000 at the beginning and got the (multi-coloured
leaflets) very nicely designed. Flooded the market - I had a very
nice secretary and she said what shall I do with all these
leaflets? I said, "Send them to places where people havn't got
anything to do". She said, "You mean dentist's and doctor's
waiting rooms". She got lists of all the dentists, doctors in . .
. and all the banks (and the circulation of leaflets led to)
thousands of enquiries.

(Interviewer: The leaflets were attractive?)

Style was very important. . . . The technobus - nice advert (its)
important. . . . The central co-ordinator for New Technology
claimed that he thought of the title. I know that everything in
those days was techno, technopark . . . I have forgotten where we
got the money from now. (He filled in the application forms and
hunted around for some money - charity money - and we used that to
get the big money, which was about £100,000 - a good bus. Of
course, from then on (the CC/New Technology) took off. I totally
lost control of him, all over the place - buses, people, hiring,
firing. . . . couldn't hold him down.

Being involved in the appointment of the co-ordinators within the

member institutions was another way in which the Director of Studies

was able to influence the development. He was looking for people with

flair and drive, with new ideas. Some of the member institutions,

however, were keen to make an internal appointment for reasons of

their own.

> In theory I was involved in all the appointments but, in practice,
> they kept me out of some of them. It was agreed that I would be
> involved although the institution would appoint, but that I would
> be on the panel and so would the AE inspector. I was involved in
> ___ College and they appointed someone who was good, others did
> not, some (I was) excluded from. Take for example, an AEI with 10
> full-time staff, who wanted to 'lose someone sideways', and did
> not want to appoint someone new. ___ (institution) have never
> really had a co-ordinator and have been taking the money from the
> Authority right from the beginning . . . A whole lot of people in
> the Open College were good, (CC/New Technology) was one of them.
> I am interested in the way in which individuals affect the world
> around them. You can set up all sorts of systems - but without
> the right people - nothing happens.

The Director of Studies saw his role as a change-agent:

> my job was to break down the walls of the institution so you
> couldn't see where the polytechnic began and the community ended.
> We did a variety of things, one of them was the 'Techno-park', the
> science park next to the polytechnic - we went out, did it and
> got the money. The idea of that was that you couldn't tell where
> industry ended and (education) began. . . . The Open College was
> another way of doing that,. . . .as an agent of change. It didn't
> matter whether it was a 'Techno-park' or an Open College, or
> wedded to a whole variety of things. It changed the polytechnic
> just to show that (from) scratch you could do something without a
> great deal of money, just some ideas and energy . . . it changed
> people's lives. . . . The idea was to break down the barriers
> between institutions so that a student did not know they they were
> in an institution - whether AE, FE or AFE. I've got a very simple
> idea that people are put off by institutions, there are so many
> hurdles to leap over - calling the places different names (is
> confusing to people).

Progress, as far as the Director of Studies was concerned, was

measured in terms of particular objectives: whether students got good

quality courses; 'opening up the political debate' and creating a

pathway to HE.

> They were astonished at the things that we did and we did some
> remarkable things. I don't know how many Access courses there are
> now but when I started there were four and when I finished (after
> two years) there were 17 or 18, something like that. We moved
> away from straightforward sociology to the (more technical

subjects) . . . we released all sorts of energies from within the
institutions. Institutions will say that this would have happened
anyway, so how can the Open College claim (the credit). I just
don't believe that these things would have happened in such a
short period of time.

The Director of Studies was influenced by his own experience in

education:

> I am a straight up and down yobbo, I didn't become a student until
> I was a bit older (20 years). I was at the polytechnic in 1961
> and incredibly badly taught by people who didn't understand
> language - which was a lesson. I used that experience to
> understand what students go through, students are very ignorant of
> the procedures, they don't (make connections) with other courses.
> I didn't find out until the third year of my degree that degrees
> were classified. There are lots of things students are unaware of
> - study skills are important. (I had worked for two years and
> drifted.) I went to Garnet, (I was) educated at Garnet. It
> taught me that I wasn't thick and that I could handle art and
> literature. I went on to the --- (polytechnic) in 1969, and
> became a straight 'up and down' lecturer in mathematics and
> statistics at Brunel. The main influence was being very active in
> the trade union - it was a very important influence - I learned
> about education.

He was also influenced by 'significant others', his wife (involved in

trade union work) and a network of friends and associates in the field

of adult and continuing education. One person, in particular, within

the 'reference group' was the person who had started the Open College

of the North-West who was seen as a model for 'selling education':

> an interesting guy, working class, before he went into education
> he used to sell ladies underwear. He sells education in exactly
> the same way. (He) stands up with learned people and talks in an
> accent. They don't like it at all. But he was helpful and had
> lots of ideas. One or two people like that (influenced us.)

National trends and government White Papers, Her Majesty's Inspectors

(HMI) reports, and the National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher

Education (NAB) also influenced the Director's thinking, drive and

initiatives.

He experienced some support from within his own institution (the

polytechnic), partly attributable to a strong NATFHE presence, but

also to the impact which Access students[2] began to have:

> the progress of Access students into the polytechnic began to
> change the (composition) of the student population and the
> polytechnic began to regard itself as as a community polytechnic,
> as well as a national one. I had a note from one of the Deans,
> now a Vice Chancellor (in which he said) "I've come to the
> conclusion that there is nothing wrong with Access courses, it's
> the Polytechnic's courses which are at fault". That from a Dean
> of engineering who was very staid, straight-laced - that was a key
> change of attitude.

The Director found more support from the Open College development

within the colleges of FE than from within the AEIs which he

attributed to a fear the AEIs had for the possible loss of their own

autonomy. The meetings of the Joint Planning Board (JPB) were viewed

as a battle-ground between the central staff and the AEI principals.

> The JPB doesn't work. Most of them see - the AEI in particular -
> see their role as stopping the Open College doing anything. I
> think it is as simple as that . . . They don't go along to
> contribute, all they go along for is to stop anything that is
> going to impinge upon their patch.

Difficulties experienced in communication with the AEIs were

attributed to different philosophies and cultures.

> FE are more used to doing things. AE sit around and talk about it
> and have great philosophical debates. If I am involved I am not
> interested in talk - I get on with it. (If you) want a
> techno-park 100,000 square feet of space, bang, I will do it. I
> am interested in doing things. AE discuss at great depth and by
> the time you've done that the money has dried up . . . the market
> is a strange concept to them.

The Director also experienced similar difficulties in his

communication with officers in County Hall. This, too, he attributed

to a cultural divide:

> it is a cultural thing, even within the same institution, even
> some departments. Perhaps it depends whether (people are) sharing

or protecting. We adopted a style of being open, which was an
incredible challenge to people in the ILEA culture who were
brought up as barons. The way in which ILEA deals with its AEIs,
deals with FE, tells them to build up the empire and not to cross
over the boundaries. It creates rivalries between institutions .
. . they are not open to co-operation.

Members were seen as supportive of the Open College, whilst education

officers responsible for the individual branches, were seen by the

polytechnic, as resistant, even in one instance, obstuctive, in the

early stages of its development. The resistance which the Open

College had encountered, both from the AEI principals and the lack of

support from the Authority, led the Director to comment:

> I don't think it has had the impact that it could have had for
> reason of the forces of reaction - the principals who want to
> retain control over their lives and the institutions have held it
> back. The central thrust was not there, we did not get support
> from senior officers and inspectors, we were viewed with total
> suspicion and their imagination was restricted. They held us
> back.

Asked whether the AEIs, perhaps, feared they would lose control over

their provision - the Director reiterated his belief that:

> it is the culture, not the courses (which was the cause of the
> difficulty). All the institutions have got control over their
> courses. As an institution (the Open College) doesn't exist, it
> is a network of people and the control lies with the institutions
> - no, it's the culture (that is the problem).

It would appear that there were irreconcilable differences between the

AEI view and that of the Director of Studies:

> There won't be any AEIs unless they get close to some of the major
> institutions in some way - it doesn't have to be an Open College .
> . . If there is a move to full cost fees, which is likely, the
> AEIs will disappear in a year or two. The polytechnic can deal
> with the marginal costs in various ways, but, in an AEI, all the
> costs are born (centrally) . . . we could swallow the AEI.
>
> (Interviewer: That's probably their fear.)

I think it is - but unless you get close it's bound to happen. If
you stay as rivals then there will be a battle and the AEI will go
down the shute. Meanwhile no-one is thinking about the ratepayers
and the taxpayers . . . if you are black and unemployed you don't
care whether it is an AEI or the (polytechnic), you can't tell the
difference, as long as it's got education on the door, a good
course, get a job, off you go . . . that's what the Open College
is about. But they wouldn't let them put (Open College) on the
title - they stopped it . . . The size of the polytechnic
resources could swamp the AEI provision, (we) could have set up an
extra-mural department (absorbing the over-heads). The local
population do not care who provides.

The AEIs, too, probably could also recall the history of the Open

College proposal when the Director:

gave the impression that they were going to become the Adult
Education Faculty of the polytechnic. He would say openly, "we
will take you all over" and they actually had cable TV and
produced a video on cake icing (why that I don't know) but
(perhaps) thinking that the AEI was not much more than
cake-decorating classes. It was that sort of perception. These
were the dynamics. He was saying, "We are going to become the
faculty of AE - the Open College is just the starter of all this
and we will be taking you all over". That was the sort of thing,
it was unthinkable . . . the (institutions) felt threatened.
(Inspector for Community Education)

It would appear, therefore, that whilst the Director of Studies (the

former Personal Adviser to the Director) had, in the light of the

initial reaction of the local AEIs, tempered his vision of an Open

College, as a 'take-over' bid of the institutions concerned, the AEIs,

nevertheless, remained suspicious. They wanted, on the one hand, to

participate, to collaborate in the venture; on the other hand, they

did not want to lose control of their own futures as institutions.

Underlying, however, what appears as a territorial battle between

branches, it was later revealed, were also differing 'definitions of

the situation' (of what 'access' meant) - the battle was, in fact,

also an ideological one. In this sense, the Director of Studies'

observations, that the difficulties experienced in communication with

the AEIs were related to differences in culture, were relevant. He, inevitably, felt frustrated:

> the launch was not difficult. Having the idea and the launch was easy. It's like the gun start, already 40 yards down the track before - on your way - then held back. It was the second and third year which were difficult.
>
> (Interviewer: If, you were doing it again, would you do it differently?)
>
> I wouldn't dream of co-operating with the AEIs. (I would just involve the polytechnic) and FE - I wouldn't try to run a democratic thing (I would) say to the FE Colleges - money is here, join in, (there's) potential for students and later I would get in the AEIs.

Let us, now, examine the experience of the other members of the central team - the four central co-ordinators. The views of two of the co-ordinators (the one for Return to Learning and the other for New Technology) will be discussed at some length as they had, in some important respects, different experiences as a result of their differing fields of curriculum development.[3] The experience of the other two central co-ordinators (the one for Access and the other for Flexible Learning Opportunities) will be referred to in less detail but will be used to provide a valuable basis for triangulation, particularly in relation to the structural position of the Open College within the Authority. The central co-ordinators were appointed by an interviewing panel, chaired by the Assistant Director of the Polytechnic, which included the Director of Studies, an ILEA inspector and a principal from one of the member institutions.

The Central Co-ordinator for New Technology Courses

(CC/New Technology)

The CC/New Technology was appointed because of his experience on a

community education project concerned with the application of new

technology for community use. He recalled:

> (New Technlogy) was recognised as a vehicle for attracting adults,
> (for them to) get something out of it and go on to other things.
> When the Open College started they were looking for someone in New
> Technology and, at that time, there were not many people around
> with experience in setting (it) up, certainly not with community
> experience - so I fitted the bill.

He was an adult returner himself (male, white and in his thirties).

> I was 23 years old and had been working in a print factory for
> eight years and was desperately looking for things that I could do
> with my life, rather than (continue) on an express way to 65, as
> it seemed to me. I decided I would do a couple of 'A' levels at
> an FE college and then applied for mature entrance to Sussex and
> Essex University. I took exams at both and was offered a place at
> Essex, subject to getting a couple of passes at 'A' level, which I
> did, and off I went.

With a background at 'A' level in sociology and economics he chose to

read sociology. His appointment as Co-ordinator was his second post

after finishing his degree (following the experience on the community

education project). He was, therefore, sympathetic to people wanting

to change direction.

> I thought (the Open College) was wonderful, because I had to go
> the traditional route myself and get two 'A' levels and learn a
> lot of things which were not really relevant to my situation. I
> needed help with reading, writing, study skills, communication,
> things which the Open College actively stresses which weren't
> there for me and many people like me. I was always highly
> motivated but I did not always work effectively.

He clearly saw his role as expanding the range of courses available in

New Technology in the member institutions.

> We (the central co-ordinators) didn't see ourselves as polytechnic
> people and concerned with the polytechnic's provision, we were
> concerned with obtaining an overall view of what provision there
> was for adults, what gaps there were, what were the most
> successful courses and then trying to build on those as a model,
> trying to implement that in all the Open College institutions.
> All the (institutional) co-ordinators shared that view and went
> back to their colleges and tried to implement it. We did have a
> common ground. It was outside of the institution.

Through meetings with the New Technology representatives from the

institutions (the New Technology panel) the central co-ordinator

endeavoured to reach agreement on the levels of introductory,

intermediate, and advanced courses, in order to 'signpost' the courses

in the Open College leaflet, for which he took responsibility. He was

also instrumental in getting three new Access courses off the ground:

electronics; computing; and, another, in New Technology.

He was very enthusiastic about the possibilities of using New

Technology to enable students to develop study skills:

> There's interactive video which has been given quite a large
> impetus by the 'Information Technology Schools' Project/Domesday.
> I've managed to get the polytechnic to allocate £10,000 to develop
> interactive video resources unit and we shall be trying to find
> ways in which those resources can support adult returners. There
> are packages being developed on study skills and communication
> skills up and down the country . . . there is a dirth of provision
> in study skills available at the moment in this polytechnic . . .
> That's one way in which we can start to use the New Technology
> resources.

As a former educational researcher, he was also concerned to evaluate

the Open College in the New Technology area and hence sought the

advice of the Authority's research branch. (The results of the

student survey which he commissioned of the introductory courses in

New Technology, are discussed in the next chapter.)

Also aware that some of the member institutions lacked the necessary

technical resources to develop courses in New Technology, the CC/New

Technology sought external funding for a technobus, which could,

perhaps, have acted as a mobile classroom and training centre for the

staff in the member institutions. He was encouraged in this venture

by the Director of Studies (whom he described as "the great

entrepreneur"). For a time the novelty of this development attracted

the interest of tutors in the New Technology field to attend the

meetings of the New Technology panel. The bus was launched with great

publicity in May 1986. The Inspector for Community Education

recalled:

> they got the bus and the CC/New Technology got the responsibility
> for looking after (it) and he was taken off his other
> co-ordinator's duties for the bus project. He then, very
> unfortunately, sent out a letter about training, to each of the
> institutions. Some of the principals did not like the letter that
> was sent out, they did not feel they had been consulted enough -
> so unfortunately there have been some institutions that have not
> collaborated well and there have been others, who, sadly to say,
> deliberately did not want to be part of it. So I have seen the
> bus parked with only one or two students in it, and on another
> occasion, where there has been a real interest in the institution,
> I have seen it used all day by a number of people. (It was) seen
> by principals as setting up separately when they already had
> computer hardware - there was insufficient consultation about what
> should be done.

It was originally envisaged that the bus would be used as a training

centre of tutors; some principals feared that it was to be used for

setting up courses which would then be in competition with their own

institutions's provision.

In part, the difficulty which the CC/New Technology met in

communication with the principals of the member institutions, was a

reflection of the history of earlier relations which the principals

had experienced with the polytechnic. It was attributed by the

inspector concerned to:

> insufficient discussion undertaken with the people involved . . .
> one person in isolation . . . the polytechnic again, a 'top-down'
> thing which a lot of them were fearful of, because of the way in
> which the whole thing was set up.

There were difficulties of communication for the CC/New Technology

because, with one exception, all the Open College co-ordinators

appointed in the member institutions were in the humanities field.

Tutors unfamiliar with 'techno-speak' quickly lost interest in

attending the meetings. (Tutors in New Technology, unless they were

Open College co-ordinators, were also unable to obtain release to

attend panel meetings.) In the view of the CC/New Technology:

> I think the New Technology aspect did not have a good system of
> co-ordination and contact, a forum in which to discuss with all
> the lecturers teaching on such a wide diversity of courses. I
> think there's always been a bit of an issue whether New Technology
> should feature as part of the offer - the counter argument has
> always been that, because so many adults are attracted to it, that
> we should pursue New Technology and the leaflet ended up as a
> guide to courses (more generally) rather than simply listing Open
> College provision. There are a lot of fruitful outcomes from
> adopting that approach - staying with New Technology. But it's
> always been a can of worms to try and unravel, as far as policy
> goes, but it is paying off.

Whilst the technobus project provided a catalyst for bringing together

the lecturers in New Technology from the member institututions, poor

communication on the subject alienated the principals. Unfortunately,

too, the funding from the DES ultimately required that the technobus

have a wider brief than operating entirely within the ILEA. It had to

undertake an outreach programme visiting estates and festivals and

establishing links outside of the Open College network, after the

first year of its operation. This broad commitment meant that it was

never available to AEIs on a regular basis for use as a classroom,

even if the principals had acceded to it. (The FE colleges never had

the same need in this respect because they were adequately equipped.)

It was observed that the momentum for the New Technology panel,

created by the bus project, was lost, once the bus was operational.

Further, the CC/New Technology was taken up with its operation and was

viewed by a local principal as having "taken off in a technical orbit

all of his own".

The Central Co-ordinator for 'Return to Learning Courses'

(CC/Return to Learning)

The CC/Return to Learning was obviously selected for the post on the

basis of her previous experience in adult education: at one time

working in AE in South London; and, later, developing learning

materials for local groups at the Open University. (She was female

and white Dutch.) Having worked in the area, she had a number of

contacts and "a reasonably good sense of what was on offer" for adult

returners to education.

From her previous work in adult basic education she was able to

identify the potential clientele:

> I was always aware of the groupings - women returning (to
> education), black people of various (ethnic minorities) and
> sections of the unemployed. But you are aware when you develop a
> course, of how information is distributed and how a course is
> developed and marketed. You may have certain (specific) things
> neatly on your agenda and by the time it is part of an offer in an

institution it's much more general. This is particularly so for a
course (which originates) for women only, or one that is for black
people who have been unemployed for some time.

The CC/Return to Learning saw the broad role of the Open College as

influencing the expansion of courses for people over the age of 19 and

who did not have formal qualifications. Hence, the first task was to

identify what was on offer:

> it was really interesting in the first one and a half to two
> years. It took us a long time, because it was difficult to
> identify what institutions had on offer - one thing - we
> identified twelve more Access courses than anyone knew about. . .
> . we did cause a growth in courses for mature students, there is
> no doubt about that ___ College, for example, had nothing other
> than very high level courses and they now have Access and Return
> to Learning for second language students. There is a big
> difference in ___ AEI and in others (too) - it's very difficult to
> say it's because of the Open College, but, again, the successes
> are (attributed) to the institutions and the failures are ours.

The second and more difficult task, she said, was to influence the

development of further courses:

> developing and promoting courses and talking to people about
> redirecting resources, this is quite a tough job . . . when you
> have institutions where some of that is already happening, either
> because they have appointed somebody themselves to work in those
> areas and across departments, or you have institutions, who
> literally say, "I don't need it". And we only have the powers of
> persuasion, we don't have (any leverage).

The need to influence, yet not having control over the direction of

decisions in the institutions, led the CC/Return to Learning to

conclude that she needed to have some resources at her disposal:

> I was proposing that something should happen jointly - told in "no
> way" - proposing that a pool of hours should be sitting somewhere
> and used flexibly - told "no way". . . . so what I found was that
> if I wanted to do something specific, like having identified, for
> instance, that a certain group of black people in Lambeth and
> Southwark were unemployed for a long time and they had no access
> to vocational courses and I wanted to develop something to remedy
> that need (I had) to look for external funding. That's getting
> worse, in a sense, because the resources are getting scarce and
> over-committed.

Encouraged by the Director of Studies she undertook, therefore, an

entrepreneurial role in raising capital for course development, from

national bodies such as the National Institute for Adult and

Continuing Education (NIACE) and Adult Unemployed Programme (REPLAN),

but also from organising a course, for profit, for an American group

of adult education lecturers. The money raised was used to help

finance new courses and publicity.

At the same time she also found it useful, when engaging in

conversation with institutions, to play down the resource aspect as

the first consideration for any new development:

> I talk to people about setting up something new - they say - you
> want resources and I have learned, over the years, that the tactic
> should be - OK, let's first discuss it, see how it shapes up, what
> it's for and then we'll see what we need and what we have already
> got. Up until about two years ago that worked tremendously well
> for most institutions, they found something within . . . That did
> happen, now it's much harder.

The one resource which institutions had in respect of the Open College

was additional funding from the Authority of half the cost of a

lecturer's salary. It was envisaged that the 50 per cent remission

from teaching which this allowed would be used by the lecturer

concerned for Open College work, in part, in liaising with tutors on

Open College designated courses and in attending meetings convened by

the central co-ordinators. The first appointments of institutional

co-ordinator were made with the Director of Studies as a member of the

interviewing panel. Subsequent appointments, however, were made in

which the central staff had little or no influence on the selection

procedure. According to the CC/Return to Learning:

within their institution no-one is really interested in what they have been doing and where they have left they havn't been replaced, although they have established courses, they have got the tutors to work together in teams, they have done all those things that the Authority and the institutions were keen for them to do and they leave because they have been given a short term contract for whatever reason and the institution does not replace them. That's difficult (for liaison). Some institutions have conveniently forgotten the time that should be committed to Open College work . . . . We can't give back-up because people in institutions are fixed in what they are doing. In some cases this is good but, in others, the whole idea of flexibility has been lost. The whole idea was to bring in some new things, or help to develop further what was there in small measure and help it to get off the ground.

It, therefore, appeared that the institutions were pursuing their own goals, ignoring their commitment to an Open College network. The institution's co-ordinators were not, therefore, co-operating with one another or facilitating co-ordination by the central team.

(Like trade unions) the Open College can only be as strong as its membership and quite a few of the co-ordinators have that same attitude (of what it is it doing for me?). It is not necessarily the ones with only two or four hours remission a week because they feel they use that time and they get something back from it, but the ones who have got 50 per cent remission - say - "what is it doing for me?" I say, look you've got to contribute something to get something out of it, and this is not understood in that sense. That has grown historically, partly because management in the institutions was unclear about what the co-ordinators should be doing. Some of them have strayed and some havn't, because they didn't want their courses damaged. In some institutions the turnover of co-ordinators is very high. (CC/Return to Learning)

Another aspect of the central co-ordinator's role was to develop links between institutions. Following her appointment the Authority published the AFE Review which made reference to the development of "geographical networks". This acted to reassure the CC/Return to Learning about the Authority's commitment to the idea of an Open College. Yet the reality was that the relevant administrative

branches did not prove helpful to her in forging links between

institutions.

> The Authority was saying this is what should be happening and at
> the same time, (as far as implementation was concerned), I was
> trying to get joint provision between AE and FE off the ground, it
> was impossible because at the officer level I was being told, "No
> you can't shift hours from one institution to another in the
> post-school sector", the red tape was still there. . . . Another
> question which arose was one concerning the merging of two
> institutions when one was much stronger and better financed than
> another, (opportunities) for co-operation (were) being stymied in
> the administration, which meant that quite a lot of the projects
> had to be based here (centrally,) although people hit us around
> the ears all the time, about our 'centre-periphery' model. But we
> were forced into that, because they didn't allow that kind of
> joint working between institutions where we could be servicing an
> organisation with an input of expertise. (It was difficult to
> develop any flexibility within the administration). Now, I know a
> couple of examples, where students are enrolling in both types of
> institution, and that seems perfectly possible now it's five years
> on.

The central staff, did not experience positive support from the

Authority's officers for the proposals, which they put forward for

greater flexibility in administration to overcome the barriers of

better co-operation between institutions, nor did they receive any

support for their proposals from the Joint Planning Board (JPB).

> Some of the principals were very critical, in public forums, about
> what the network was doing, what the central staff were doing, but
> when they were invited to come and discuss that and to present a
> paper to the JPB, year after year in the first three years, they
> were just not doing it at all, which was very damaging all round.
> . . . no single member of the member institutions, at least until
> the executive committee was elected, was prepared to put their
> shoulders under it (the 'College'). So that means that, for over
> five years, there has not been a single review or appraisal, for
> any of the staff here, it's incredible, I could have been off to
> Australia - quite amazing. In a sense it does rely on your own
> measure, against your own expectations of your self, just trying
> to improve on previous performance . . . The job satisfaction is
> to do with seeing that the provision has grown, knowing what is
> required because of the inquiries we get here and from the
> educational advice shops that I link with, and managing to raise
> big and small amounts of money to get specific things off the
> ground. (CC/Return to Learning)

The one group from whom the CC/Return to Learning did experience

valuable support was the course panel which comprised the tutors in

the member institutions.

I think the reason why the Access and the Return to Learning
panels work well is because the calibre of the people working on
those courses tends to be very high . . . very committed tutors
who put in more hours than there are in the day, if they have to -
often coming to meetings in their own time - it shows the level of
commitment. Another reason why people find the group supportive
is because the issues discussed are of day-to-day importance . . .
(we have) talks about the 'negotiated curriculum'... equal
opportunities implications, study skills on craft-based courses,
(negotiating access for students to the polytechnic courses),
problems of resourcing, consultation with community groups and
(staff development) . . . panels have not (however) fulfilled the
promise of informing the discussion of the JPB, although we always
send minutes to JPB members - the paperwork round here is
fantastic.

Conversations with some of the co-ordinators in the institutions, who

were tutors of Return to Learning, courses confirmed the value of the

panel meetings and the support which they experienced from the group

and from the CC/Return to Learning. She made it clear that her job

satisfaction came from the "contact work and certainly not from the

organisational aspects".

The Central Co-ordinator for Access Courses

(CC/Access)

The CC/Access had a not dissimilar experience in a number of respects

from that of the CC/Return to Learning. In the first place both

brought with them to the post prior experience of working in the field

of adult returners. Whilst the CC/Return to Learning had experience

in adult education, the CC/Access had prior experience of working in

the field of further education where she had developed Access

provision with external funding.

Second, in common with the CC/Return to Learning, she had sought

external funding to finance research and development within the OCSL.

Both co-ordinators had been somewhat surprised to find that the

management group of the Open College, the JPB, had not responded

favourably to the initiative they had taken.

Third, perhaps the most successful aspect of the work undertaken,

again, was the setting-up of a panel for Access studies for staff,

largely in FE and HE, who were involved in developing the curriculum

in this field for adult returners. The panel provided a forum for

discussion, for the development of resources and, generally, for

support. The CC/Access recalled, "it was very useful – great meetings

(very well attended). I learned a lot from what was going on – people

got ideas there – and (support)".

In terms of support from the Authority's inspectorate the CC/Access

had two contrasting experiences with two different inspectors. The

first was when she had approached an inspector to speak to the Access

panel:

> (he) eventually came and afterwards he sent me a bill costed out
> the number of staff and the time spent and said do you think that
> the time spent here was actually justified. (He) felt I was
> treading on his toes. He said, "you must be aware that the
> inspectorate is very jealous of its advisory role". I didn't find
> that very encouraging.

The second inspector, much more constructive, was said "to have been a lot of help - couldn't have done more, I think. But she wasn't identified as an Open College person, she was (designated) as an Access to 'Higher Education' (HE) person". The Authority was seen to have been very supportive and influential in the development of Access provision:

> first of all special awards the discretionary awards and secondly, the support that the ILEA inspectorate has given, very constructive, reviewing, monitoring role, quality control, encouraging course tutors and all of that planning joint publicity. I think it has been very good they combined expansion with quality control.

The tactic employed by the CC/Access in relation to member institutions was not dissimilar to that employed by her colleague in the Return to Learning field. It was one of facilitating, liaising, publicising courses and "giving the people (the notion) that it was their idea, their development, their course, disengaging credit for development". Unlike the CC/Return to Learning, however, the role involved acting as a 'broker' between FE and HE to promote their collaboration on developing course programmes. Ultimately, the CC/Access judged her success in terms of the number of courses developed and the recruitment of adults who were educationally disadvantaged. One course 'Access to Law', for example, had been developed which over a period of 4-5 years had admitted 20 black students a year who wouldn't have qualified otherwise. She said, "I derive some comfort from that".

The Central Co-ordinator for Flexible Learning Opportunities

(CC/Flexible Learning Opportunities)

The CC/Flexible Learning Opportunities was also, perhaps, appointed

because he had had some prior experience in this field. His was, no

doubt, the most difficult assignment because it was concerned with a

teaching medium and did not have a discrete subject focus.   Hence

there was no single identifiable 'constituency'[4] within the member

institutions of the Open College.   One of his tasks was to identify

which courses offering 'flexible learning' were on offer within the

institutions and to publicise them through the Open College network.

Following this it was his role to seek to stimulate the development of

this medium of learning in the institutions.   He, therefore, sent a

letter to all the institutions:

> suggesting that all the AEIs, particularly, might like to get
> together on this act because it seemed to me they had the
> flexibility in their 'roll-on roll-off' enrolment proceedures and
> so on to get round some of the bureaucratic problems that FE were
> having and I also thought there might be a bit of a carrot there
> because it might enable the AEIs to offer some GCSE work which
> they wern't doing up until then.   There was an initial burst of
> enthusiasm. . . . then I mounted a large publicity campaign . . .
> students started responding and I was to farm them out to an
> appropriate institution.   On the eve of the whole thing I was let
> down by a large number of tutors who suddenly said, "Look I don't
> think we can offer it after all". . . . they pulled out for one
> reason or another for the reason largely that there wern't any
> resources, they hadn't got any hours, they simply hadn't the time
> to be bothered and they wern't really convinced there was
> sufficient demand.   (I) ended up with 20 students (whom I did not
> want to disappoint).   I actually ran the courses myself here, I
> was their tutor, I enrolled them in the polytechnic . . . and
> tried to provide them with tutorial support in whatever subject
> required and in such things as Maths referred them to the FE
> College.   It was a bit of a failure and the reasons . . . people
> don't understand the full implications, the bureaucracy gets in
> the way all the time.

The acknowledged failure of this designated area was attributable to a number of factors. First, there was the question of the appropriateness of this medium of learning for adult returners who have had a minimum of formal education. Second, was the obvious need for the traditional role of tutor to be redefined. Third, there was an identifiable need for investment in time and resources to support the innovation. At that time there was no support available from the Authority's inspectorate in the field of Flexible Learning Opportunities. For a number of reasons, therefore, the development of courses designated Flexible Learning Opportunities did not take place.

Discussion

Let us reflect on the observations of the central team to consider whether, in relation to the implementation of the 'policy', certain important conditions were, or were not, present. First, in relation to the prior requirement of commitment, it is clear that the Director of Studies (the former Personal Adviser to the Director of the Polytechnic) was very enthusiastic about the venture. He was very much involved in the initial launch, the publicity and the first appointments of personnel. As head of the Extra-Mural Unit, the Open College, however, was only one part of his brief and when he left the polytechnic after two years, his administrative role initially was covered by the CC/Access on a temporary basis, and no new appointment was made. She was later assigned to other duties within the polytechnic and her post, in relation to Access courses, was also

filled on a temporary basis. The administrative role for the OCSL was

unofficially covered by the CC/Return to Learning. The role of

Director of Studies was important, initially, especially in

influencing the appointment of the four central people and in

influencing the appointments of the co-ordinators within the

institution.

As far as the four central co-ordintors were concerned there was no

doubt about their commitment to their job in terms of their energy,

initiative and enthusiasm. They brought with them relevant experience

from their previous posts and the CC/Return to Learning had a working

knowledge of what was 'on offer' in the area for adults returning to

education. It was evident that the impact of 'socialisation', through

their own educational and work experience, their personal contacts

(their 'role-set' and 'significant others'), and the 'model' which the

Director of Studies provided, influenced the central team's view of

the development.

Since the central co-ordinators had experienced an inability to

influence curriculum change without some control over resources, they

sought to find, in the absence of centrally-allocated funds, external

funding. Three of the four co-ordinators had been successful in this

respect, but the raising of extra resources proved to be a contentious

issue within the management structure of the Open College.

Communication within this structure was a problem for all the central

co-ordinators, as the Joint Planning Board was not supportive and the

regular meetings of the institutional co-ordinators were not well

attended.

There were, also, historical antecedents which effected a 'cultural'

schism between the FE and AE branches in the Authority, and this was

mirrored in the differing 'definitions of the situation' of an Open

College held by the institutions of the FE colleges and the adult

education institutes. In terms of the support from the JPB, members

of the central team felt that, far from being supportive, at least in

the first five years, it was continually critical of their work. The

principals of the AEIs were the most vociferous, the FE principals

much less so (according to the Director of Studies). Suggestions by

the CC/Return to Learning for promoting liaison between institutions,

necessitating within the Authority closer liaison between the

branches, were obstructed by the administration. Senior officers, for

whom responsibility for the Open College development was only one part

of a very wide brief, had not attended the JPB (with the exception of

one individual on one occasion). A newly appointed inspector who,

initially had the responsibility for the Open College, had attended

meetings of the JPB and had been personally supportive of the CC/New

Technology in his search for evaluation, but she was later assigned to

other work (deputising for the Senior Staff Inspector) and her duties

in relation to the 'College' were assigned to an already over-worked

inspector for further education. She, nevertheless, attended the

meetings of the JPB and reported on the Open College developments to

senior officers and was supportive of curriculum developments in
relation to Access.

In terms of support from within the institutions the posts of
institutional co-ordinator proved a weak and ineffective link for the
CC/New Technology and for the CC/Flexible Learning Opportunities; in
the case of the former there was one who shared an interest in the
designated area, in the case of the latter, there was not one
co-ordinator who had an expertise in that field. Institutional
Co-ordinators were, generally, more attuned to the interests and
concerns of the CC/Return to Learning and CC/Access because they were
more likely to have teaching responsibilities in that area. The links
between the central co-ordinators and the institutional co-ordinators,
however, were undermined by the lack of control which the central
staff had over the staff in the institutions. Attendance at centrally
convened meetings was generally poor.

The most effective co-operation which the central co-ordinators
experienced was through their subject panels. For the CC/New
Technology this was shortlived once the technobus was set up. The
importance of the Return to Learning and Access panel to the member
institutions was noted as something to be investigated in the
interviews undertaken within the institutions.

The ability of the central team to fulfill their role was, therefore,
almost entirely, based on their entrepreneurship, their powers of

persuasion and the extent to which they could provide knowledge,

training and support to the members of their respective panels. Staff

development, facilitated by the Return to Learning and Access panels,

was an important means of developing a 'shared' view between staff in

the member institutions. It might be expected that there would be

greater development in these areas than in New Technology and Flexible

Learning Opportunities where there was not the same avenue for

communication and the basis for working together.

In terms of the hypothesis as to what makes for effective

implementation, namely "communications, commitment and capacity"

(Williams, 1980:3), it would appear that, as far as the central unit

of the Open College was concerned, there was commitment and capacity,

but that communication was generally inadequate. The exception to

this was the rapport established by the central co-ordinators for

Return to Learning and Access with the tutors in their respective

fields. The main weakness, however, of the policy-implementation

within the central team was that it had no means of control over the

role of the co-ordinators within the institutions. Before, however,

reaching any conclusions about its effectiveness, let us consider the

views of those concerned (principals, co-ordinators/tutors) with the

Open College in the member institutions. It is sufficient to observe,

at his point, that the co-ordinators in the central team encountered

more than a few organisational problems in the early stages of

implemementing the 'policy'.

It is useful at this juncture to reflect on the value of the various

theoretical perspectives in relation to the development of the Open

College. Most insightful at the stage of implementation would seem to

be the 'social action' perspective. The differing degrees of success

which the four central co-ordinators were likely to have in their role

were influenced by their previous 'socialisation'. The co-ordinators

for Access and Return to Learning shared a common 'culture' with the

institutions in their respective fields of development and this helped

them to establish a rapport with the tutors concerned. Within the

management forum of the JPB, the different 'definitions of the

situation' concerning the desirablity of 'access' as perceived by AE

and by FE could also be explained by the differences of 'culture'

between the different branches of the education service. The reaction

of the AEI principals to the Open College development was also

probably influenced by their awareness that CEC Branch had earlier

escaped a merger with HFE Branch. (Hence, non-decisions can be seen to

influence behaviour.) Another generally useful concept was that of

'negotiation'. The central co-ordinators had to 'negotiate' their

role within the management forum of the Open College where the

principals of the member institutions held differing 'definitions of

the situation' than that of the Director of Studies.

Also important although less obviously so, was the 'systems'

perspective. It is generally supposed (Kogan and Van der Eyken, 1973)

that the main avenues for communicating policy are from the Education

Officer through the educational administrative machinery to the heads

of institutions, although in an Authority the size of the ILEA it would be from the Deputy Education Officer for Further, Higher and Community Education to the principals of the institutions. It can be seen from the figure (Figure 1.3 p.29) that the Open College structure was 'out on a limb' as far as the branches of HFE/FE and CEC were concerned. This caused difficulties for the Open College staff in relation to the Authority's administration.

Within bureaucracies, generally speaking, it is found that bureaucrats can be identified as 'careerists', 'politicians', 'professionals' or 'missionaries' (Ripley and Franklin, 1982). The Director of Studies in the Open College of South London would not seem to fit any of these categories; he was an entrepreneur. What developed was a situation in which there was a large bureaucracy, the ILEA, with clearly defined professional territories and established bureaucratic procedures in which the birth of a new organisation did not fit too comfortably. Other important insights are, therefore, to be derived from ethnomethodology. Change it has been noted occurs in structures when an individual identifies the malfunctions and anomalies and brings it to the attention of others. In developing a 'shared view' of what action should be taken "jarring occurs continuously" (Rock, 1988:126) since the actions of people may appear contentious. Certainly this was the case in the early days of the meetings of the Joint Planning Board when the heads of the institutions met with the staff of the 'new' organisation. The 'expansionist' ethos of the Polytechnic was

viewed with suspicion and a battle for control ensued over the

direction of the 'new' organisation.

Notes

1. The term 're-socialisation' was used by Gross et al. (1971) to describe a situation where staff needed to be made aware of their role obligations. Poor comunication and the lack of a reward mechanism for staff led to a failure in the implementation of innovations. Hence it was recognised that there was a need for in-service training.

2. Something in the order of ten per cent of the polytechnic's students were thought to be recruited from within the Open College network. Source: Interview with former Director of Studies. August 1988.

3. Initially interviews were conducted with the central co-ordinators for New Technology and Return to Learning: the former, because of the evaluation which took place at the Authority's Research and Statistics Branch in which the researcher was the officer concerned; the latter because observation within the Open College suggested there were different experiences and the second interview would provide a basis for comparison. It was then thought useful to test the 'Williams' hypothesis further by interviewing the two other central co-ordinators. Obtaining the views of all four co-ordinators facilitated triangulation.

4. The term 'constituency' was used by Sarason (1982) to describe a situation in which a group wishing to effect change within an institution had to 'win' others to their point of view.

CHAPTER V

The interviews with the policy-makers and with the central staff of

the Open College ascertained that the formulation and implementation

of policy in broad terms required "commitment, capacity and

communication" (Williams, 1980:3). The difficulties that were

encountered in implementation within the central unit were

attributable to poor communications within the management structure,

accentuated by the clash of cultures between AE and FE. There was

also a problem of control in so far as the central staff had no

line-management responsibility for the co-ordinators within the member

institutions in relation to their Open College role. These factors

were noted and explored in the interviews with principals and

co-ordinators in the institutions.

Hypothesis III: The Implementation of Policy
in relation to the Institutions

The literature reviewed in relation to the implementation of policy

generally is also pertinent to the experience of the institutions. In

relation to the implementation of the policy within the institutions,

it is hypothesised that the success of the enterprise (establishing

courses and recruiting educationally disadvantaged adults) will depend

on: the capacity of the institution in terms of resources; the

commitment of key people (notably in this instance the principal and

the institutions's co-ordinator); the past history and culture of the

institution which will influence the measure of internal support for

the development and the receptivity to external support; and the

establishment of effective means of communication, both within

institutions (between co-ordinators and course tutors) and without,

within the Open College network more generally. In broad terms again,

therefore, the hypothesis of what makes for successful implementation

concerns "how to bring together communication, commitment and

capacity" (Williams, 1980:3). In-depth interviews explored the

individuals' perception of their role in relation to the Open College.

(See Appendix A.2 p.382 for the Interview Guide employed.) As with

the study of the central team the underlying concepts are those drawn

from 'social action' theory, such as: 'role'; 'reference group'; and

'socialisation'. Other perspectives, however, notably the

structuralist frame of reference, are also relevant.

The Second Stage of Implementation:

the Institutions

At the outset, in 1983, there were seven member institutions of the

OCSL: the polytechnic, three colleges of further education and three

institutes of adult education. By 1984, three more institutions, one

from each sector, had sought and obtained membership. (The

association of one of these institutions was fairly short-lived.) By

1988, however, the consortium comprised 14 members: the polytechnic;

eight colleges and five institutes. The interview study with

principals and Open College co-ordinators was undertaken in nine

institutions (the original seven and two of those which joined in

1984) because these were the institutions in which the survey of

students taking courses in new technology had been conducted. Five of

the institutions were in FE and four in AE. The response rate for

co-ordinators was 100 per cent, but that for principals 66 per cent

because at the time of the study one principal had retired, one was

new in post and the other headed the institution whose membership of

the Open College was short-lived. In these three cases the view of

the institution was ascertained from the co-ordinator. The detailed

records of the meetings of the Joint Planning Board (JPB) provide a

useful source of information as do the interviews undertaken with the

central co-ordinators and officers of the Authority; the use of more

than one source of information facilitates triangulation.

Of the nine institutional co-ordinators interviewed in 1987/8, only

two had been in post since 1983 and, of the nine principals, only four

had been in post since the founding of the OCSL. It is important to

note this for it indicates an important facet of organisational life:

the constantly changing relationships within and between institutions

brought about by changes in personnel. This is particularly pertinent

to the development of a network, endeavouring to facilitate links and

foster co-operation between institutions. A further feature of both

FE and AE provision is that of organisations on split-sites, with a

large proportion of staff and students who are part-time which
inhibits easy communication within the institution.

Westwark College of Further Education

Westwark College was a founder member of the OCSL and associated from
the outset through the involvement of its former principal in the
exploratory talks with the polytechnic. It was also one of the
institutions which had pioneered courses for adults returning to
education, prior to the Open College development in 1983. Further,
the governing body of the college recognised that the "local community
wanted a better service" and that one means of achieving this would be
to establish links with other colleges and AEIs. It had even reached
the point of proposing a merger between the college and the
neighbouring AEI.

As far as the facilities of the college were concerned, these were
generally considered adequate. One notable lack was adequate creche
accommodation; only 15 places were available. Technical facilities
were sufficient, such that the college had no particular need for the
technobus. The 40 per cent remission from teaching to enable the
co-ordinator to liaise and promote Open College work was an important
factor in the development. (Only the founder member institutions

enjoyed this facility.) The post-holder at Westwark College taught on

Access courses and was responsible to the vice-principal. This direct

link was seen by the principal as important because the vice-principal

had a "lot of knowledge about the OCSL" and that (this was) first of

all (important) to support the co-ordinator, to know that the college

was concerned and that (the Open College) was not a "soft" option; but

second, it was also important, "to give some direct clout for teaching

purposes and, therefore, (he was) assigned to a department". At the

time of the study the principal was the former vice-principal and was,

therefore, familiar with the senior management's role in relation to

the OCSL. He was also fully conversant with the 'college's' aims and

objectives:

> I recall some of the obvious ones which are still there - not all
> have been delivered as much as we would have liked. First, the
> co-ordination of the offer which the Authority makes to its
> adults. In the first place we recognised there was a good
> argument in FE alone to have an infra-structure formally which
> would actually allow us to link students needs from one place to
> another. AEI (was) saying the same thing and how much more there
> would be if AFE colleges together could have good links with our
> local institute . . . The first thing was to co-ordinate
> information so that students could know what was going on where,
> what the entry requirements were, what the opportunities were for
> progression and so on. Second, from that, to identify the gaps in
> provision and fairly fast on that trail (to) fill the gaps. We
> thought as a linked service that we could facilitate things, so
> that students could pass from point A to point B. Third, another
> aim would be to make available study facilities for students so
> that, for instance, someone might be working across the road from
> this college but would have time during the day to actually come
> in to the library to work and that we would have an institution
> which would cope with that. We actually have a number of students
> who use our library during the day. The spin-offs from that (is
> that they) get a taste of the other institutions and talk to other
> people.

The principal was not someone who had a particular interest in adult
returners:

I don't have a special interest I am interested in a whole range
of students - I could recognise at the time in the college that we
were catering very well for example, for our 16-19 year old
students, for students with special needs. I could see that there
were gaps in several places, one of which was for adults . . . I
realised that if we were going to do this that the principal would
not have the time and it had to be done at a high level. I wanted
to do it for that reason. I havn't got more of a burning interest
in adults than I have in other groups.

Whilst he may not have had a special interest in this particular field

he did have a wide range of useful contacts with people who had been

involved in similar developments elsewhere in the country, through Her

Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) and connections established through the

national college for FE staff. These associations were a useful

source for reference when it came to developing the Open College.

The co-ordinator for the OCSL at Westwark was an internal appointment,

following the promotion of the former co-ordinator to the post of

senior lecturer within the college. The person concerned had been

interested in 'adult returners' as a result of being course tutor on

one of the adult education courses. Along with the vice-principal he

saw these courses as being best directed to those adults most in need

- women, ethnic minority groups and the handicapped. He was not, in

any sense, a second-chance person himself (male, white, with a degree

in psychology and post-graduate diplomas, one of which was related to

Access students). He clearly saw his role, as did the principal, in

terms of liaising, advising, undertaking 'outreach' work for

colleagues and tutoring courses for 'adult returners'. He commented

that he was stereotyped the 'meetings' person.

Within the college the co-ordinator liaised with staff involved in
Open College work, by means of personal contact (although there was a
noticeboard for general use). He was one of the co-ordinators'
representatives on the JPB and a member of a sub-committee for
monitoring students; whilst he saw the central organisation of the
OCSL as necessary for the purposes of publicity, the dissemination of
information and the facilitation of a student card he, nevertheless,
found the most effective way of liaising with other institutions was
through developing joint courses, on his own initiative, within a
small cluster of institutions which were in close proximity to one
another. A notable example of one such development was a liaison with
the neighbouring AEI for the purpose of a joint course for adults with
special needs entitled 'Widening Horizons for the Wheelchair-Bound'.

Communications with the central group of co-ordinators were seen to be
problematical in some respects because where documentation was
produced outside of the college/institute it was more likely that the
issues would be marginalised within the institution. The
dissemination of policy documentation from the Authority's central
administration such as the 1986 Review of the Open College policy and
the AFE Review were similarly problematical. The co-ordinator's
network was restricted to two institutions in the locality. He had
met, however, people engaged in similar work in other parts of the
country, through attending national conferences on Access; that
experience furnished a wider frame of reference.

What criteria and evidence was there at Westwark College of the impact of the OCSL? There were a number of developments which may (or may not, according to the principal) be attributable to its influence. First, was the noticeable expansion of courses for adult returners (adult basic education, Return to Learning, Foundation and Access courses); second; there was the recruitment of educationally disadvantaged adults and, within the college this was seen to have "raised the profile of adult's needs and (for) some people it actually was a catalyst or stimulas to them".

In general terms, the principal evaluated the Open College within the context of other developments and reviews of the curriculum and in terms of other policy initiatives, notably the 'Equal Opportunities' policy. He was therefore concerned with criteria such as recruitment, retention rates and accreditation. Within FE, emphasis was on the the upward mobility of students and therefore the establishment of links with higher education (HE) but the development of links with AEIs was also seen to be important as a potential source of recruitment.

The co-ordinator, similarly, measured the success of the development in terms of the expansion of courses and the recruitment of adults most in need. He felt, however, that the really important decisions affecting development were made at a macro level. He cited the lack of remission for co-ordinators in some institutions, signifying, as he saw it a less than whole-hearted support for the development from the Authority and the lack of mandatory financial support for Access

students, signifying the central goverment's lack of real concern for

adult returners. Meanwhile within the institutions he observed staff

turnover and 'burn-out'. He saw the OCSL in terms of the general

climate in which FE was operating:

> the culture of fashionable jobs (associated with the MSC, CPVE,
> Pre-Voc, the dubious criteria, the constant state of flux . . .
> the shift from trade subjects, the concern over tertiary
> (developments) the stumbling process, (the) changes before we feel
> secure.

Flinton College of Further Education

Flinton College was also a founder member of the OCSL, having reponded

to the invitation to join in 1983. There was no obvious pressure from

within the college (nor from within the local community), although

some interest was thought to exist within the 'general education'

department which catered for the needs of adult students. The

arguments in favour of joining were that it would open up

opportunities for educationally disadvantaged adults in the community,

namely black women. Whilst the principal of the college at that time

expressed some fear that it might result in "some loss of sovereignty

and independence" for the college, this was not a view shared by the

vice-principal who became the principal in 1986. He recalled that the

college had been involved in developing courses for adult returners,

such as one somewhat patronisingly entitled 'Typewriting for Mums'

some 10 years previously. He also viewed some of the purely

recreational courses as embryonic Open College work but this was not a

view generally held. The re-organisation of the college as a matrix

with a department of continuing education created a climate in which

the Open College development fitted without any difficulty.

As far as the facilities of the college were concerned, the technical

equipment, refreshment facilities were considered by the principal to

be adequate for Open College use. There was no great need for a

technobus although it had been used on one occasion for staff

development. The counselling and careers advice and, in particular,

the creche with only 15 places available for students' use, however,

was recognised as painfully inadequate. (There were 90 children on

the waiting list.) Also needed, in the co-ordinator's view, was a

room for mature students' use which would be possible to create an

atmosphere in which they could establish a rapport, an identity and

support system. This was sadly lacking.

The principal of the college, at the time of the interview, had first

been associated with the Open College development when, as

vice-principal, he had been delegated responsibility for it. He

expressed an interest in and sympathy with the aims and objectives of

the Open College which he saw as inextricably linked to equal

opportunities.

> I think it's a very close relationship, in fact. The basic
> principle of 'access' for a start is one of penetration into
> occupations and professions which have previously been closed for
> a variety of reasons. I think a lot of receiving institutions
> have been surprised by the immense wealth of talent that's
> available and unused, particularly in relation to women and black
> people.

He was, nevertheless, quite pragmatic about the Open College as an

'information network', noting that the development coincided with the

needs of the polytechnic. For two years (1985-87) he had been chair

of the JPB. He was not a second-chance person himself (white, male

with a fairly traditional career path through FE), although prior to

this he had experience of a variety of jobs. Perhaps, too, as a

person from an ethnic minority group (albeit a white one) he had some

sympathy for others outside of the dominant culture.

As one of the founder members of the Open College his institution had

been allocated a half-post of lecturer by the Authority. The first

co-ordinator was an external appointee, who had subsequently taken up

a post in a polytechnic. The new co-ordinator was an internal

appointment, the former student services officer. The role was

defined by the principal as:

> publicity among students, publicity among the staff, guidance
> among students, to some extent guidance among staff, acting as a
> link between the Open College and the college. Also a useful
> source of information as to what other institutions were doing . .
> . from prospectuses.

From the accounts obtained from other people and from what the

co-ordinator herself indicated, a much greater emphasis was placed on

liaison within Flinton College and within the local community through

educational advice shops and, therefore, much less time was now spent

in liaison with the central team of Open College co-ordinators.

> I go to recreational centres basically to find out what people
> want - I find young black males who have more or less given up
> completely . . . . Basically what I find is that women see their
> position is at the bottom anyway and therefore when they (come
> back into education) they are prepared to start at the bottom with
> basic courses and to work their way up - black women accept this

role - they will start from scratch; whereas black men feel that at 25, if they are not already working, and have a house and a family then they are not interested to try . . . The problem for men is the macho image . . . keeping up a facade.

As a second-chance person herself (black and female) she had every sympathy with the adult student. At 23 and a single parent she had returned to take 'O' and 'A' levels at an FE college, over a period of some three years.

> I didn't know I was so clever . . . when I left school I thought I was so dumb, then found something I fancied - thinking as a woman I thought of social work. I took social history, sociology and I got three grade 'A', two grade 'B' rest 'C's and went on to do two 'A' levels and because I thought it would help my chances of getting on I got some experience of voluntary social work. I spent three years preparing for a degree and three years on a degree and I got a good degree but I would have liked something like Access. . . . If I hadn't been so motivated but I didn't want to bring up my child on supplementary benefit for the rest of its life, my life, that's what motivated me. I could have done with a bit more advice, more counselling. It was that (interest) which brought me into adult education. If I can be there, help, be a support - the years I spent studying were financially hard, finding time in every way. I could have done with help with study skills I didn't know anything, it was very, very hard. I think I can help and support adult returners. (The co-ordinator's degree was in Social Psychology.)

The co-ordinator had only been in post for less than a year at the time of the interview and, therefore, was still in the process of negotiating her role.

> When I first came into the job I thought my job was to co-ordinate these courses but nothing like that happens because the course tutors (are responsible). I know this happens in most colleges. In one or two the co-ordinators might be more important but in the main it is liaising and passing on information from the Open College. Basically (I see my role) as liaising with the community about adults' needs in education and I go back to the Open College, talk out a plan and put courses on - that's my perception. Actually that was in the job description . . . because of the structure the courses develop within the college and the Open College just embraces them.

The co-ordinator was concerned to open up opportunities for adults in non-traditional fields. She operated on a personal, largely informal level with other staff and as a former student counsellor she drew on her former contacts with career and community groups. Within the college she liaised with heads of departments and heads of sites. Formally, her line management was through the "head of student resources" to the "student resource co-ordinator" to the principal but in the non-hierarchical matrix organisation of the college it was possible for the co-ordinator to consult informally with the principal as the need arose.

It should be noted that the year in which the co-ordinator took up post was the one in which the OCSL structure was under review. The co-ordinator at Flinton College viewed the CC/Return to Learning as a "key person . . . just co-ordinating the whole lot". As a co-ordinator she operated, however, almost entirely within the college and was not a representative at the JPB meetings; neither did she have any point of reference in relation to her work outside of the Authority. Other than the policy review document (1986), she had not received any background policy papers such as the AFE Review. Her identity was very much focussed on her own college and whilst she acknowledged the importance of the central structure she felt that, as an institution, the OCSL had "done itself out of a job".

According to the principal the success of the Open College was measured in terms of whether:

> institutions are more open. . . . it has acted as a catalyst
> between some of the tightly-knit ivory towers in South London. . .
> . we emphasise the various avenues. . . . I wish we had been more
> successful in terms of the inter-college use of facilities.

The co-ordinator shared the principal's objectives of 'access' and

'open-ness' but was also concerned to measure the success of adults

developing confidence in their abilities. The principal saw the Open

College development threatened by the proposed changes in the position

of polytechnics in relation to local education authorities (LEAs).

The co-ordinator attributed some of the organisational problems of the

Open College to people's job insecurity. This, she felt, led them to

seek a more clearly defined role within their own institution.

Hallwark College of Further Education

Hallwark College was a founder member of the Open College of South

London. One of the heads of department was part of the initial

network of interested people associated with the polytechnic and

politically active in the locality. According to the principal, he

had "a tremendous number of contacts in politics, youth work and adult

education". The college had two communities, the locality, and the

construction industry. Formerly called the 'Hallwork School of

Building' the principal said grandfathers were still sending their

16-19 year olds along on the grounds - "that's where you go and that's

all right,. . . contacts resulted from having satisfied customers".

There was a department called the Continuing Education Department and,

therefore, there was some history of an involvement with adults (the

department was reorganised as General Education, Business Education

and Continuing Education) but adults had not been specifically

targeted or catered for previously. Aware, however, of the changing

demography - "the 16-19 year-olds were drying up" - the principal was

concerned to 'tap' the 19+ market; the college had participated in the

Open College development in the expectation that co-operation and

collaboration would be beneficial in ensuring the future of the

institution. It was recognised that collaborative working could be

timeconsuming and costly and that openly discussing and displaying

one's courses could lead to competition between the various providers.

Nevertheless the college went ahead finding the resources to fund half

the cost of a Lecturer's appointment as co-ordinator. A small budget

(£12,000) was allocated to the post to finance elements within the

courses. This, said the principal, "gave a signal to the rest of the

college". The general facilities of the college were considered

adequate for adult students' use although the co-ordinator said it was

not always possible to allocate each student group a room of their

own. The technobus was not used by the college. Acccording to the

principal, it was a "good idea, but superseded . . . technology moves

so fast".

The role of the principal in the Open College development was

pragmatic; he saw it as a means of reviewing and re-allocating

resources in order to increase recruitment at a time of falling roles.

He described himself as a traditional FE man (his subject was

electrical engineering and he was white British). Whilst, he was not,

in the accepted sense, a second-chance person he had some empathy with

adult students having taken a second degree in Physics and Psychology

by part-time study whilst meeting the demands of a full-time job and a

family of four children. As general secretary of the Association of

Principals and Vice-Principals of Colleges and AEIs he had a wide

frame of reference within the Authority and as a co-opted Member of

the Further, Higher Education Sub-committee he was aware of a broad

range of concerns. He saw the equal opportunities issue very much in

terms of expanding course provision to meet the needs of the

educationally disadvantaged adults, targeting courses, if necessary to

discriminate positively in favour of the groups identified.

He viewed the appointment of a co-ordinator from within the college as

an advantage in terms of communication with the staff. Establishing

personal contact and disseminating information were seen as the most

valuable aspects of the role. The co-ordinator was responsible to the

head of department and to the vice-principal who represented the

college on the JPB. He was not a member of the academic board but was

a member of the governing body (in his capacity as staff

representative). As a sociologist he had taught on Access courses

prior to his appointment as co-ordinator and had a particular interest

in curriculum development. He had followed a fairly traditional path

through education, was white, male and of working-class origin.

Communication and co-ordination did not appear to be a problem for the

co-ordinator within the college but links with other institutions were

problematical; he did not attend meetings of the Open College panel

because the meetings clashed with his teaching time-table and meetings

of co-ordinators were infrequent. He was not nominated as a member of

the JPB and rarely visited other colleges and institutes. His only

regular contact was with the neighbouring FE college and the local

AEI, both of which were members of the OCSL. He appeared to have no

active frame of reference either within the Authority or outside.

Most critical to the development of courses within the college were

the links between the co-ordinator and members of staff:

> generally our experience of collaboration and co-operation is that
> it really (depends on) members of staff wanting things to happen
> because you can set up all sorts of grand schemes . . . if there
> is a need and if the collaborating institutions have staff who are
> committed to it, it works and if you have staff who are not
> committed to it, it doesn't work and the head or the principal can
> run around and jump up and down and go to meetings and all sorts
> of things but unless you have got staff on the ground who are
> going to make it work, it doesn't work. (the principal)

Whilst there was some 'constituency' for change and course development

within the college, the co-ordinator did not appear to be a member of

a support network within the Open College more generally. This

situation may have been influenced by the attitude of the principal to

the central administrative structure of the OCSL which he saw as

dominated by the interests of the polytechnic. Any achievements in

terms of course development he viewed as attributable to the member

institutions and independent of the influence of the central

structure. In his view the OCSL had failed to deliver on a number of

fronts, namely on mobility between institutions and the development of

a system of accreditation.

Whilst the co-ordinator shared the principal's frustrations over

accreditation, he felt that links that had been established locally

between the college and the AEI had broken down the stereotypes which

each had held of the other. He confessed that he felt cynical about

the opportunities which the OCSL had provided for Open College

co-ordinators. His own measure of the success was the extent to which

the institution had been able to offer a wider range of courses to

adult returners; the most rewarding aspects were the personal

successes of students. He expressed concern over 'drop-out' rates

which remained high; the low levels of recruitment for technology and

science and high staff 'turnover'. In particular, he was critical of

the reduction in the number of student grants for Access courses.

The College of Tehnical Craft

The College of Technical Craft's membership of the OCSL was

short-lived; it joined in 1984 after the launch and left in 1986 prior

to the interview study undertaken within the member institutions. No

interview, therefore, was given by the principal of the college who

had never become involved with the OCSL and had not attended the

meetings of the JPB during the period of the college's membership.

This account, therefore, is based almost entirely on the interview

with the co-ordinator with reference to the minutes of the JPB.

According to the co-ordinator, who was in post for little more than a

year, his college had joined the Open College for a brief period

because it was in the process of reorientating itself to changes in

the educational marketplace. The decision, perhaps, had something to

do with the changes in training needs (the ending of apprenticeships

and the advent of MSC training schemes in which the college was not

involved to any great extent owing to union opposition). The college

was also seen to be under pressure from the Authority over its

staff/student ratios. Further, it was also the period in which the

Authority was requiring institutions to draw up policies on Equal

Opportunities and the participation in an Open College development may

have been viewed by the principal as an indication to the Authority of

the institution's involvement on that front. It may, therefore, have

been viewed as no more than a public relations exercise. Whilst it

was observed by the co-ordinator that the principal probably wanted to

keep the college within the Authority, community education was not the

way in which he saw it going. He was seen to be much more interested

in developing the more advanced courses. It was largely that "the

college did not know in which direction it was to go and was therefore

cautious about committing itself to anything". It was also wary of

the polytechnic which it was felt, "was ready to grab this college and

spit out the bits it didn't want".

The college had no experience of collaboration with other educational

institutions or of providing for the local community. It was an

institution almost entirely orientated to an occupational community,

to an industry which was notoriously, "anti-women and certainly

anti-black". The co-ordinator saw that developing community education

could perhaps help to change attitudes. The college had spare

capacity and considerable technical resources. (It certainly did not

require the services of a technobus.) It did not have, however,

either a creche (although it had 6,000 students and 200 members of

staff) or, an evening careers advice service, both of which would have

been of value to adults returning to education. The co-ordinator was

given three hours remission from teaching for 'outreach' and the

involvement in the Open College. He volunteered to take on the job

from a colleague in the department on 'Science and General Studies' in

which they both taught because he was interested and "personally

committed to the idea". Through his involvement in 'History Workshop'

he had contacts in the community and the local councils. He was put

in touch with a youth centre for the unemployed, women's groups and

trade unions and established a new clientele running courses at the

centre for the unemployed, for shop-stewards and providing photography

for mentally handicapped people in day centres.

Meanwhile within the college the co-ordinator wrote a paper for his

head of department identifying the various needs, outlining proposals

and indicating at the same time how inadequate was the remission for

the job undertaken. He held a meeting for interested staff. As Open

College co-ordinator, he had no direct access or avenues open to him

through formal representation on the academic board or the Board of

Governors but as a union representative in the college he was well

known and had informal contacts with a large number of people. There

were members of staff who were interested in teaching adult returners

and subsequently successful courses in community radio, community

printing and photography were established. Some heads of department

who had not imbibed the full portent of what was required, simply

provided courses 'off the shelf'. The courses in new technology which

were surveyed were of this order. They were simply existing courses

which were designated Open College and the institution had the benefit

of advertisement through the OCSL's network. Some departments sought

community designation in order to gain access to resources and

computer time. One such request from the department of business

studies to put on a course in Investment Management was thought

unlikely to attract those from the socially-deprived inner city

groups.

The introductory courses to photography, video, community radio, and

printing were very successful but they were not recognised by other

members of staff and and, therefore, not a means of progression on to

the established courses leading to qualifications. Adult returners,

the co-ordinator commented, were seen as:

> second-class citizens who could use technical equipment in
> off-peak times when 'our' students were not using it, the notion
> of 'our' did not encompass 'them' - the funding was very low
> indeed, it was difficult to get them time-tabled.

Pressure on resources was evident as resources became more scarce;

students were known to have fights over use of the darkroom.

As far as the central organisation of the Open College was concerned

the co-ordinator had found the central staff and the co-ordinators

from neighbouring institutions supportive. He had also received all

the policy documentation available and could see the development of

the Open College in the context of the AFE Review and the Authority's

equal opportunities policy. He found that there was some interest and

support from within his own college. The librarian, for example,

displayed and circulated material from the Open College but there was

no 'constituency' as such for the development within the college. His

head of department had, for example, voiced misgivings about the

development of courses for trade unionists under the umbrella of the

Open College, because it was seen to be "too political".

There was no doubt of the co-ordinator's personal commitment. He was

a 'second-chance' person, having himself left school at 15 and gone

into industry in a northern city. He attributed his attitudes on the

question of equal opportunities to the early influence in his work

environment of two shop stewards, one a communist and the other "a

staunch Labour man". Following a period working abroad, he took a

degree as a mature student in history and politics and became a

teacher. He could sympathise with the needs of adult returners

knowing that he would have greatly appreciated an Access course

himself at one point. He recognised the opportunity which the Open

College presented.

> My view was the job was to be open to people who had been away
> from education for a while. I saw it at this college as offering
> people access, offering people skills and equipment which we have
> and in a way in which they wanted to use in the community as they
> wished - that was one thing. Another, was to give them some kind
> of skill which they could use as a base to go on either through
> employment or through education . . . and a third (was the general
> notion of access, not necessarily Access in terms of mobility
> upwards to higher education) I was quite happy if my mentally
> handicapped people could learn to use a camera and put on a little
> exhibition. I felt that was something worthwhile in itself and
> whether they went on from there was (not important).

The courses which were developed in community radio were viewed as succcessful in this respect.

> I (only) monitored it for a year - I have discovered organisations doing things that they never did before - producing leaflets, posters, occasionally hearing one of them speaking on the local radio and they're confident. A lot more groups buying little printing presses and so on, as a result of (the course) doing their own thing.

He had personally found teaching adult returners a very rewarding experience.

> I was literally, literally in tears at the end of one of the trade union courses where I had taught, . . . helped them to read and write, and at the end of it (they were) speaking on television and stuff like that - most rewarding - they couldn't believe they had done it themselves.

What impact, it must be asked, did the Open College have in an institution which subsequently withdrew from the consortium of institutions? It was, after all, not an institution which had a history of involvement and responsiveness to its locality; it had, perhaps, set its sights and future more firmly in the direction of becoming a polytechnic of the arts. However, there was some progress in the direction of equal opportunities: first, there were personal contacts established with neighbouring institutions, facilitating progression for some students and accessing facilities, such as a creche, for others; second, the arguments that had been voiced for developing Access opportunities at the time were disregarded subsequently even though Access links were established with neighbouring colleges; and third, part-time foundation courses for the unemployed in media studies were developed from which students could progress, if they wished, to higher education. It would seem, therefore, that the role undertaken by the co-ordinator as a

change-agent was effective to some extent even in this seemingly
infertile territory.

Dunstan College of Further Education

Dunstan College of FE, whilst a founder member had not been a college
which was actively involved in setting up the Open College. Its
membership had been sought and it was not a college which had ever
made much provision for adults. Virtually the only course which it
offered was an 'O' level in English Language prior to the Open College
development. Its focus had been on advanced specialist science
courses and in the view of the principal it had not been "outward
looking towards the community".

At the time the principal was interviewed he had been in post two and
a half years. He had been appointed, he felt, on the basis of his
previous experience of Open University Foundation courses and his
known commitment to tertiary education (which to his way of thinking
was "16 to the grave"). He came from a college which belonged to the
OCSL and saw himself as a curriculum innovator. With the observed
fall in the teenage population, Dunstan College was faced with spare
capacity. The Open College, therefore, provided a catalyst for
innovation in the curriculum within the college. Prior to his
appointment an Access course was established and he had noted the
staff interest and philosophical commitment to it.

> My coming was to say to the rank and file staff across the college
> - would you please consider as a matter of priority generating

courses which could feed into the Open College. The Open College
was quite clearly looking for more courses and I think that was
(part of) the 'Equal Opportunities' movement . . . . There was an
almighty (move) as soon as I arrived with the grass roots, we
actually gave it a bit of time and so there has been a great
proliferation in the number of Open College (courses in the last
two years).

Departments in the college began to make contact with women's and

other community groups only to find that "they were pushing at an open

door". The co-ordinator also noted that staff had exhibited a "latent

interest - some (keen) to move in this area without knowing very much

about it and, no doubt, career motives were mixed up in it as well as

more ideological ones". The principal took an active part in the

OCSL, attending meetings of the JPB and when the formation of an

executive committee was proposed in 1987, his name was put forward and

he was prepared to undertake the responsibility. In spite of

organisational problems of the OCSL he remained extremely positive

about it. He was not a 'second-chance' person himself; he was white,

male and a music graduate. However as an upwardly mobile

working-class person, the grandson of a Welsh miner, he was concerned

to make education more accessible to adults who had missed out

previously.

Unlike the other principals interviewed in FE colleges the principal

at Dunstan did not regard the existing facilities on his institution

as adequate for Open College use, although they were not noticeably

different from those elsewhere. He criticised the inadequate size of

the creche, the dearth of social facilities such as a room for

flexi-study and the absence of a pastoral support system. Technical

facilities, however, he thought were adequate and there was no

observable role for the technobus.

In recognition of the importance which the college attached to the

work of the OCSL, the college co-ordinator had been given 50 per cent

remission from teaching. The first occupant of this post, whom the

principal described as "superb", had spent quite a lot of time

off-site liaising with the central co-ordinator and had got three or

four courses established in the first two years. The second

co-ordinator was an internal appointment, who spent the major

proportion of his time within the college. According to the

principal:

> (to) all intents and purposes he is a project manager for the
> development of a whole range of new Access courses within the
> college. He is extremely successful at creating informal networks
> - extremely successful in getting 'exit' groups and in visualising
> new possibilities . . . we have got chemistry lecturers who are in
> danger of being under-employed because of a slide in numbers and
> he is actually working on a pharmaceutical Access with exit routes
> to the hospital. That is an example of his ingenuity.

The principal kept in close touch with Open College developments in

the college through written reports from course tutors. Formal and

informal links were established so as to facilitate links between

subjects.

The co-ordinator was directly responsible to the principal whom he

regarded as "very supportive". This 'backing' enabled him to 'jump

hurdles' in his liaison with the various college departments. He

identified avenues through which to pass information, which was,

perhaps, one the advantages of having worked in the institution

previously. He occupied a position on the academic board and on the

board of governors (although this was not in his capacity as

co-ordinator). He sought links with other institutions in order to

identify progression for adult students from the college. As far as

his contacts with central organisation of the OCSL were concerned, he

attended the management forum and the meetings of the institutional

co-ordinators (although these had become increasingly infrequent owing

to the number of unfilled posts). Through a national conference on

Access he had met people from other parts of the country engaged in

similar work. He was familiar with the review policy documents on the

Open College but not with the initial documents concerning the AFE

Review.

There was no doubt of the co-ordinators commitment to his role; there

were seven Access courses established and three Foundation courses

(pharmacy, media, studies and playworkers). Interestingly, he was a

'second-chance' person himself having left school at 15 and returned

to education through a college of FE after seven years in employment

to take his 'A' levels before going on to university.

The principal took a broad view when measuring the success of the Open

College. He saw it as:

> the ability of disadvantaged people to benefit from further
> education and their success in getting on to further courses and
> success. I suppose it sounds very woolly - the fact that they
> actually feel more fulfilled as people - being able to manage
> their lives. That's a very AEI type aim isn't it? That they
> actually feel that as a result that it has given them some
> insights, some perceptions which help them to cope with living in
> a university, to cope with stresses in their lives - that's one of

the functions of adult and further education. . . . it's very easy
for me. It's all about equal opportunities. It's a
manifestation, it's a way in which the college can give genuine
access, not token access, to all groups but particularly providing
for disadvantaged groups - women, black people in particular - I
see it very much in equal opportunities terms.

Some issues which the principal felt the Open College still had to

address concerned resources for in-service training and accreditation.

In spite of the difficulties which the OCSL organisation experienced

he said, "I am extremely positive about the whole thing".

The co-ordinator shared the view held by the principal that success

was measured in a number of ways and that even a 'drop-out' could

indicate success if the person concerned was leaving because they had

been offered a job. He found satisfaction in helping individuals but

he also enjoyed "marketing education" - creating openings:

    strategically the objectives of the Open College coincide with my
    own. . . . the pump-priming role of the 'Open Colleges' - there is
    a need for a network, some benefit for the institution in having
    spare capacity . . . the advantage of autonomy - the broad plan,
    the blue print it offers - opportunity - a structural
    footlooseness in a structured situation.

Westwark Adult Education Institute

Westwark Institute was another founder member of the OCSL. The

principal had retired at the time of the interview study and was not

interviewed because he was ill. In the absence of a new appointee the

account of the Open College developments at the Institute is based on

the interview with the institute's co-ordinator who had been in post

for three years. The institute had for some time developed a close

liaison with Westwark FE College to the extent that a merger between

the two institutions had been proposed. It was already involved in

Return to Learning courses in Food Studies and Child Care prior to the

launch of the OCSL. It was responsive to the needs of its immediate

environs and ethnic community, so that when asked about the

significance of the Authority's Equal Opportunites Policy within the

institute, it was simply seen, "to reinforce the institutes's own

policy . . . it happens without our thinking".

In terms of its facilities for adult returners the adult education

institutes generally know how to make adult returners feel at ease by

providing refreshment facilities which enable social exchange; and

Westwark Institute was no exception in this respect. What, however,

was generally lacking was adequate technical equipment. The institute

had managed to acquire a computer but it did not have a full-time

tutor for the subject. The technobus could have been of use to them:

> I wanted to book it for a class but it was not for standard use -
> it was a bone of contention - there were different views and
> different needs. I feel it should be used by community
> groups/institutes during the day, for those without equipment. I
> lost interest when it was not to be used by students and had such
> a wide brief. The questions asked in staff meetings have never
> been satisfactorily answered. (the co-ordinator)

Other needs, such as a creche, were met to some extent but there were

only five places available for students on Return to Learning courses.

Counselling and careers advice were variously met: as a group;

individually with course tutors; and through established links with

the educational advice shop.

The co-ordinator was an external appointment and had previously worked

in FE. She was not a second-chance person (white and with a fairly

standard career path), but she demonstrated a real interest in adult

returners by having taken a Master's Degree in Education on that

particular subject. She had also been involved in in-service courses

in the institute concerning equal opportunities and racial awareness.

She expressed concern that the monitoring of Open College courses was

not as systematic as perhaps it could be and this meant that the links

between course provision and the equal opportunities policy were not

made in the way that they could have been.

The co-ordinator felt that the overall objectives of the Open College

development had undergone some kind of transformation; initially,

these were seen as "global aims - filling a gap in educational

provision, linking institutions but it was difficult to realise these

large and amorphous aims and because it wasn't desirable or

prescriptive it was all rather vague, lacking direction and identity".

In her view it did not matter greatly whether the Open College was

recognised within the institute; what was concrete were the courses.

Neither did it matter to her that the AEIs and FE Colleges had

different emphases. Perhaps because she had worked in both types of

institution, she was more tolerant and respected the contribution

which each could make.

The co-ordinator was involved in organising courses (Return to

Learning, Foundation, and Computing), recruiting students

(interviewing each one individually) and teaching on designated Open

College courses. All the courses, the co-ordinator said, aimed to

impart information, develop skills and build confidence:

> people need confidence and are bound to suffer a lack of it
> because of the unfamiliarity (with further education), but their
> abilities are often far in excess of those adults on conventional
> courses — they help one another a lot as a group, in many ways
> they are very adept . . . it is dangerous to feel a maternalistic
> role (they have) far more skills than I have to handle situations.
> They cope very well.

The co-ordinator had established a network of people within the

institute with whom she liaised: head of departments; heads of

centres; and all the staff teaching on designated Open College

courses. She was responsible to the principal. She was not at that

time on the academic board but was a member of three committees:

curriculum development; policy and resources; and learning resources.

Within the OCSL network, having been a member of the working party for

the development of Foundation courses she liaised most regularly with

the central co-ordinator for Return to Learning courses. She attended

meetings of the panel and the meetings for co-ordinators but did not

visit other institutes and colleges as much as she had done at an

earlier stage of the development. She experienced no particular

conflict in her role within the institute and her role in the OCSL;

"people", she said, "express no resistance to the time I spend at

meetings and are quite happy with the way I handle it". She felt that

she acted as a 'clearing house' for information relating to the Open

College within the institute. As far as communication with the

Authority's central administration and familiarity with the overall

policy were concerned she had seen the original policy document

relating to development in AFE but had not received the 1986

'Objectives and Review' paper.

Her own measure of success was the extent of the programme: in three

years she had got nine courses 'off the ground'. She found job

satisfaction in students' appreciation of the courses and their

progression; the growth of liaison between herself and other staff in

the institute; and the links which she had been able to establish with

other institutions.

Bentham Adult Education Institute

Bentham Institute had been approached by the polytechnic to join the

OCSL and was another of the founder institutions. The principal was

very wary of the motives of the polytechnic in relation to the

institutes's independence and was concerned about the overall context

in which adult education was operating. Generally, he felt it was

desirable to be associated with FE and to take part in "whatever

initiatives were going". (He had had experience within FE and through

connections with an old colleague was familiar with the development of

an Open College in the North-West.) He was keen to find "new ways of

operating" and the Open College development "made a high pitch on the

'New Tec' side". The allocation of a half-post by the Authority in

the venture enabled the principal to make an appointment of someone

who was qualified in the computer studies field and, yet, who would

act as the institutes's co-ordinator for the Open College. The

CC/Flexible Learning Opportunities commented on the way in which some

of the principals of instiututions "used" the Open College to provide

new directions for their institution:

> they use the 'college' in their own way - Bentham saw it as a way
> of getting 'new Technology' off the ground . . . decided to use
> the co-ordinator as a New Technology person. . . . he was used to
> set up a new suite and to get the whole lot of computer courses of
> the ground, he did it very effectively, he didn't need to use the
> New Technology panel because they had got their own New Technology
> person at home.

There had been a number of informal links established for some time

between the institute and neighbouring institutions (both FE and adult

institutes), noticeably in technical subjects (brickwork, woodwork and

art) which enabled some adults to develop their skills further and to

obtain qualifications. Movement between institutions was facilitated

by the institute's staff.

Compared to other institutes, Bentham was, therefore, well resourced

in terms of its technical facilities; a computer unit with adequate

terminals for a whole class had been set up. There was a creche and

although the number of places was never adequate it had been enlarged

and there were excellent refreshment facilities with home-cooked food

in a room which was conducive to social exchange. Whilst there was no

formal careers service on site there were a number of part-time staff

who were well qualified to help adult students and there was a strong

link with the local educational advice shop. The technobus had not

been used for teaching purposes, other than on one occasion for staff

development. It was regarded as a 'white elephant' which had caused a

"lot of bother".

The first co-ordinator appointed was well qualified in computer

studies and it was envisaged that half of that person's time would be

spent in teaching computing and the other half would be spent

co-ordinating the work of the Open College within the institute or

liaison with other institutions and the central unit of the OCSL. In

the event, the person concerned became so taken up with the subject he

was later seconded as an advisory teacher in computing. On obtaining

a replacement the co-ordinator half-post was subdivided between two

people, one responsible for the teaching of computing, the other,

effectively a quarter post, the Open College co-ordinator. On

reflection, the co-ordinator felt this arrangement had created a

strain:

> I thought I worked pretty hard when I was there. They havn't
> appointed an Open College person since. They wanted to be seen to
> be doing work in that area but didn't want to lose control, wanted
> to keep it part-time. Terrific people working in that institute.
> . . . it ran on goodwill, the principal was a shrewd manager who
> ran a tight ship on a low budget.

The co-ordinator was not a second-chance person (white and female) but

had considerable interest, enthusiasm for and commitment to teaching

adults. She had taken a higher degree in communications and had

worked for five years in an higher education establishment on an

educational diploma in independent studies. She had taken 'time- out'

to have her children and was, therefore, particularly interested in

women returners because as she said, "I've had to return

unconfidently, I've got a lot out of it, I'm very committed to

'access' with a small 'a'".

She was familiar with the policy papers, both the AFE Review and the 1986 'Objectives and Review' paper and had a clear view of what the job entailed. She was directly responsible to the principal and was a member of the academic board. Within the institute she liaised with head of departments and co-ordinated course tutors teaching designated Open College courses (Return to Learning - Food Studies, Child-related Studies, Fashion and the Foundation Courses - Learning to Learn, Computing and Art). She also set up a Return to Learning Committee within the institute for part-time tutors and prepared a portfolio for curriculum assignments which met twice a term. As a teacher of two Return to Learning courses, she also saw each student individually twice a year.

Along with co-ordinators for Return to Learning from other institutions she attended a support group. At one time she recalled "we were very much a team, we wrote our own development plan and had a clear view, it was like some sort of palace revolution going on". She held the central co-ordinator for Return to Learning courses in high regard:

> Excellent - I always knew where, how to get her (she had)
> information - very supportive. Whereas, . . . never attended a
> management meetings meeting. He interviewed me but I never saw
> him again - no involvement, no focus unless you were part of that
> panel meeting.

The co-ordinator made reference to the organisational difficulties of the OCSL: the accentuation of the interests of higher education with the focus on Access and accreditation; the conflict of views between FE colleges and AEIs; the lack of cohesion among the four central

co-ordinators; and the general lack of direction. A change took

place, however, she observed when the central co-ordinator Return to

Learning effectively "took over, really became the Open College". An

important turning point was the establishment of the executive

committee (Summer 1987). At that point the "structure was either

going to fall apart completely or pull together". (It should be noted

that it was, perhaps, helped in this respect by the Policy Review

which gave the management meetings more control over its finances and

led to the setting up of a joint project between the AEI and the FE

college.)

Inspite of the OCSL's limitations and the fact that the reasons for

its development were not all "snow white", the co-ordinator saw it as

a "good idea" in so far as it did provide "space" and "openings" for

some people. But for her it was also:

> unprofessional, it doesn't give the students a good deal . . . it
> could have given a more coherent package, a lot of part-time staff
> left, we were a part-time foundation centre. At Westwark they had
> three full-time people - it was much better established - at
> Bentham it ran on goodwill.

What were the outstanding issues as far as the principal was concerned

and how did he measure the success of the development? Within the

Open College structure he was concerned about the lack of control

which the management meetings could exercise over the role of the

co-ordinators. In relation to the other member institutions he

expressed disquiet at the advertising of a course in FE for black

lawyers (which had 700 applicants for 15 places) or drama courses "for

kids who were never going to be actors" as not only did it raise false

expectations but undervalued what education had to offer. Education

should not, in his view, be presented as a palliative for

unemployment. Within his own institution one of his concerns was to

designate a small number of courses as Open College in order that each

one should receive sufficient attention with regard to its content,

purpose and suitability. Some heads of department could be all too

anxious to have courses designated Return to Learning because this had

the advantage of the reduced fee and whilst this aided recruitment

tutors did not always adapt the course accordingly.

As far as the overall success of Open College type courses were

concerned, the principal took a fairly pragmatic view. Besides the

accepted measures of student recruitment, retention and satisfaction

expressed with the course, he said that as far as he was concerned, it

would be satisfactory if:

> if only one or two people from any course actually progress to do
> something which was higher FE than were they stood and it would be
> equally successful if in terms of the other 12, four said the
> course was excellent, four did something else on the same level,
> and four people went away and did something else and came back the
> following year.

Seaham Institute of Adult Education

Seaham was one of the two institutions in the survey of New Technology

courses which was not a founder member of the OCSL. It had expressed

interest at the outset but at that early stage, it was not regarded as

sufficiently close to the other institutions. It joined when the OCSL

first expanded in 1984.

The principal was of the opinion that educational institutions could operate more effectively if they liaised with one another. The AEI had responded in writing to the AFE Review and had tabled their response the institute's academic board. The principal had a special interest in literacy work and had worked in adult basic education in the voluntary sector. He said staff in-service training within the institute had addressed the questions arising out of meeting the needs of local communities, "as thrown up by English as a Second Language and Literacy classes".

> We joined for cross-curriculum development particularly in areas
> of the curriculum after basic literacy . . . looking to
> preparatory courses which might be multi-directional in their
> (objectives) to share with people the contradictory wisdoms of
> work which could on the one hand lead to certification; and on the
> other, reflect that process developed in good adult literacy work,
> when you start from where students are. This process of
> discussion, creative writing and intellectual engagement is more
> like a university tutorial than a basic skills course. Thrown up
> from that is a genuine problem around how you evaluate
> experiential learning and how you credit the non-standard forms of
> progression. (The lessons learned needed to be shared within AE
> more generally.)

He was in touch with developments elsewhere in the country in his role as Chair of a national comittee concerned with 'access' for education for people with disabilities.

A link had been established with a neighbouring FE college (which had also joined the OCSL at the same time as Seaham) in which students from FE could take up vacant places on courses at the institute as part of their 'electives' programme at no extra cost. Registration in one institution counted in the other. The aim, apart from providing a

wider choice to students, was to enable one institution to learn from the other with a different tradition and different style of learning.

Whilst the founder members of the OCSL were given a half-post of Lecturer by the Authority on the understanding that the institution found the other half, this resource was not available to the later entrants. Hence the co-ordinator at Seaham had no formal remission in respect of her Open College liaison role and felt unable to claim any from within her post mainly due to her commitment to teaching on the New Horizons course.

Both the principal and the co-ordinator were of the opinion that the facilities of the institute for adult returners were deficient in some important respects: there was no library (in all, the institute had 200 books); there was no science laboratory; and of the 70 sites only three had computers (the technobus was not available for class use). There were, however, good learning environments with places for people to meet informally, refreshment facilities and twelve creches, with up to 25 places each. Although there was an educational advice shop this was not based within the institute and its services were not seen (by the co-ordinator) to be widely advertised. The co-ordinator received information direct from the Open College central staff and passed on what was relevant to the tutors within the institute, placing items in the newsletter and reporting periodically at staff meetings. Whilst she had not read the AFE Review she had read the 1986 'Objectives and Review' policy paper. Within the institute she liaised with head of

departments, and reported to the principal. She was a member of the
academic board and a member of various working parties within the
institute, one relating to language policy and the other to
anti-racism. She organised meetings for heads of departments who were
involved in Open College courses.

Although she had no formal remission from teaching in respect of her
Open College commitment (because she was seen by the principal to have
been allocated 12 hours remission already in respect of her role as an
organiser) she had, over a period of two years: attended meetings for
co-ordinators (initially these were weekly, later fortnightly);
chaired the Return to Learning panel; been a member of a working party
on staff roles/relationships of co-ordinators at the Open College
centre; organised a conference on Return to Learning; 'traded' staff
in relation to 'O' levels with the neighbouring FE college; and
visited Access courses in other member institutions. Most useful and
enjoyable for her had been the regular meetings of the Return to
Learning panel - "great little meetings, cups of tea, weekends away .
. . sharing resources. The panel is still doing good work". In
contrast, she had become frustrated with the management meetings and
with the cancellation of co-ordinators' meetings.

The co-ordinator judged whether or not she was doing a good job in
terms of whether her student group, "were solid with one another,
confident in what they were doing". But she had to balance their
needs with the demands of the Open College and without adequate

resources it was too much of a strain and she had had to relinquish

the role of co-ordinator in the interests of her students and in

recognition of her commitment to them.

Whilst the co-ordinator was not a second-chance person herself, she

had a great deal of empathy with adult returners. She described

herself as a feminist and a socialist. Previously she had been

involved in adult literacy work and had read a great deal of the

literature on mature students and was doing a part-time diploma in AE

in the Extra-Mural Department of the University of London.

Objectively, the principal observed a number of developments which

could be attributed to the Open College development: within the

Institute the Return to Learning (Fashion and Textiles) course was set

up and the central co-ordinator for that area was acknowledged to be

very helpful at that juncture; a co-ordinator from another institute

had also been very helpful in setting up an introductory course in New

Technology; and within the consortium, more generally, the Access

courses had been developed with links established between FE and HFE.

The frustration for the principal was the lack of control which the

member institutions had over the role of the central co-ordinators.

He made particular reference to the central co-ordinator for New

Technology who had "become a trainer for the technobus project,

scarcely in contact with the management system". There were important

issues which he felt should be placed on the agenda, in particular,

the neglect of 'access' with a small 'a' and the need for

student-centred learning in contrast to provider-led courses designed

to serve the interests of the polytechnic. At the time of the

interview (1987), however, the management system was under review and

the constitution was being revised. The principal saw 1988 as "a

critical year".

Laymore Institute of Adult Education

Laymore Institute was another founder member of the Open College. It

was in close proximity to the polytechnic, Westwark College and

Westwark Institute. The institute was one of the largest in London

and renowned for its provision in the arts. The principal had been

the first Chair of the management group but had left the college

shortly before the study was undertaken. As a result the account of

Laymore's involvement in the OCSL is based on the views of the

co-ordinator. The person appointed to this post was from within the

college and had been in the position since the outset. The institute

was already providing Fresh Start courses and therefore when it joined

the Open College it was initially designating courses which were

already established. These courses were regarded by the central

co-ordinator for Return to Learning as a model for other institutions.

The institute provided 40 per cent remission from teaching to enable

the co-ordinator to liaise with the Open College network and develop

further courses. At the time of the interview the post was a job

share.

The co-ordinator had two lines of responsibility within the institute:

in relation to Open College work she reported directly to the

principal (although there was a vice-principal, who, had a nominal

role and was delegated responsibility for the OCSL connection and

attended meetings of the management); in relation to her teaching

responsibilities on Fresh Start she reported to the head of social and

community studies. She co-ordinated Social Sciences, Women's Studies,

Humanities, Languages and Science Fresh Starts and was involved in the

recruitment of students, all of whom were interviewed either by

herself, her job share colleague or the relevant head of department.

Any other time was taken up with administration, meetings and external

advice work. She found it necessary to prioritise her time. The

first consideration was always the students; much attention was, for

example, attached to tutorial work.

> We have no resources to pay part-time tutors to do individual work
> other than what head of departments can carve out of the teaching
> budget. Now I've really tried to be creative about getting around
> this, so the students enrol for a 5-hour day. They're taught as a
> group for four hours of the day and for the fifth hour they have a
> seminar. The tutor sets a subject for discussion and the students
> elect a Chair and while they are doing that, the tutor sees two or
> three students individually. Even using that system we don't have
> the part-timers to cover the tutorial work and the tutorials are
> for feed-back on essay-writing, really thorough going-overs -
> spelling, paragraphing, structure, content - everything, advice on
> future careers, applications, interviews and so on, and personal
> problems which impinge on the student's work life. We don't offer
> a counselling service on personal problems here because we can't.
> We are not trained anyway. But when there are things which are
> directly interfering with the students ability to work, and if
> talking to us can help them find creative solutions to that, then
> we have to spend time on that.
>
> (Interviewer: Were there strict criteria for recuitment?)
>
> (Students) must either be women or working-class, or disabled or
> of an ethnic minority group and they must fall into the category
> of educational disadvantage, so that if they have already had the

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harvest of the state or private sector education they don't come
here, they don't qualify.

The objectives of the courses were not simply concerned with content

and skills but were broadly educative and designed to 'empower'

students.

> Our objectives are to meet the needs of students to return to
> learning, to make a change in their lives and to use education
> both for personal growth and advancement and for social change,
> and both those things have equal importance. It's not an
> individualistic course, it's not about establishing a
> patron/client relationship in order to get one person through an
> unfair system to a satisfactory situation. It's about
> collectivism and co-operation and understanding the world that you
> live in, not about selfish self-betterment and walking on the
> backs of others. Beyond that, within the subject criteria of the
> courses like Women's Studies and Social Science, Women's Studies
> aims to raise the consciousness of women, Social Science aims to
> raise the level of social, political, psychological and economic
> knowledge in society in order to increase people's participation
> in democracy, to empower them to enable them to understand the
> world they live in in order to change it, not in order to maintain
> the status quo. So at the end of the course people should feel
> less happy really - less satisfied, less happy with the world.
> Within Languages, I imagine, there's a similar thing to do with
> understanding other people and other cultures but also
> understanding other facets of yourself that you might come to by
> being able to rise above and see you own culture in a different
> way. And the same with Science - Fresh Start in Science is about
> enriching your own life through an understanding of Science, but
> it is also about putting humanity in charge of science. It's
> about understanding the relationship between science and society,
> and defence and politics and the philosphy of science and it's
> about unpacking science as well as harnassing it to take all the
> goodies out of it.

Staff who shared this perspective had been recruited as course tutors.

The science course was taught by a woman described by the co-ordinator

as a -

> radical scientist, and was head of science, a chemist, at a girl's
> school but she has children and she's taken time out of full-time
> science teaching in order to get a perspective on it, but also to
> spend some time with her babies.

Whilst the institute may have had good facilities, as far as its prestigious music and art courses were concerned, in a whole lot of respects the facilities were regarded by the co-ordinator as inadequate. The creche was "terribly over-subscribed". It catered for thirty (3-5 year olds) and fifteen babies/toddlers - "people just burst into tears having got through every gate, they just can't get their child into the creche". There was a bar and a canteen but the prices were prohibitive for someone on a low income. The co-ordinator observed:

> there's a woman with two children, on supplementary benefit, and you're not allowed to take you own food in there. Now she can't afford to go and buy three meals and she has to work out what her coming to college costs are. She's got to travel, and eat and each day must not come to more than a certain amount of money. Now I think she said the day must not cost her more than £4.45 because that is what she's got left over after committed monies in a week and so she has to bring sandwiches.

Other identifiable needs were for a bigger library, a science laboratory, a private room for counselling students and technical equipment. Requests to enable the institute to use the technobus for teaching students had been turned down; it was not therefore seen as a great asset to the Open College development in the institute.

In terms of developing the Open College type of provision within the institute there was an identifiable gap between adult basic education and Fresh Start courses. It would have required, however, either a re-allocation of resources within the institution or for the larger and prestigious departments in Music and Art to take on a commitment to the more educationally disadvantaged adult students.

The co-ordinator was a member of the academic board and attended

weekly meetings of the institute staff, reporting to them termly on

the Open College work. She described herself as an "active and vocal

member of the college staff, not known for her silence on anything".

Together with her job share, she was at various times on committees

concerned with: Equal Opportunities, Women, Gay and Lesbian Issues,

Anti-racism and Publicity.

In relation to the Open College she ensured that information got

circulated to the relevant people within the institute. There was a

noticeboard for courses in other institutions and one concerned with

rights, benefits, jobs and employment. The principal passed on to her

relevant policy papers and she was familiar with both the AFE Review

and the 1986 Review of the Open College policy.

It would appear that there was a 'constituency' for the Open College

development within the institute but it was probably small in

comparison with the one for specialisms in the arts. It was, however,

very cohesive; the nine members of staff in social science worked as a

team meeting twice termly in order to share problems, report, plan new

developments and share in-service training in counselling adults.

The co-ordinator played a full part within the Open College network.

She had been one of the AEI representatives on the management meetings

and had attended the meetings for co-ordinators which were held

initially once a week at the centre and then once a fortnight for a

year during which time they visited one another's institutions.

Thereafter the meetings had become less frequent because of the

"organisational problems". She was a member of the panels for Return

to Learning and the Foundation courses. She had found the central

co-ordinator concerned very helpful in supporting course developments

in this area within Laymore Institute and recalled the development of:

> (a) network of women from Fresh Start courses who formulated their
> own agenda thrashed out areas of the curriculum, did Freud, gave
> each other a lot, pooled (resources), had dinner together, caught
> up on Freud, cut and deepened the social science programme -
> deepened operations.

In contrast there had been no contact with the central co-ordinator

for New Technology in relation to the introductory courses in this

field which had been designated Open College in the institute's

programme.

As far as the wider network was concerned the institute had

established contacts with the educational advice bureau, London

University and the polytechnics prior to joining the Open College and

through national conferences and informal contacts the co-ordinator

had met people engaged in similar ventures in other parts of the

country. It was difficult properly to assess the impact of the OCSL.

As far as the co-ordinator was concerned, however, it had been

influential in promoting development within the institute.

> Certainly it was the Open College that revised my position, put me
> on the academic board, gave me a full-time job so that I could
> attend weekly staff meetings. I am quite certain that the response
> from the Head of Humanities was to do with just knowing all about
> what we were doing and my being able to say to her "I'm always
> getting people who enjoyed History and English at school and who
> want a Fresh Start, but who don't really want sociology, economics
> and psychology, and so she piloted a course as a result of those

conversations which was immediately successful and which doubled
(in numbers) the following year.

The other thing that has been going on inside the ILEA is the
equal opportunities work and very clear directives that the
priority for funding was to be with the working class, women,
ethnic minorities, the disabled, people with special needs, and so
on, so it's difficult to know quite where the pressure came from.

Certainly the pattern has been that heads of department have been
saying, "Well, I'd be quite happy to do a Fresh Start . . . Then
usually somebody from (the centre) has come and talked and we've
had a meeting, and so the courses that have started since have
been much less trial and error 'cos they've been negotiated with
the Open College to check that there is a gap in curricula
provision, to talk from the very beginning about progression,
about recruitment of which students from where, and where they
might go on to afterwards and who else we should be talking to. I
don't think that way of proceeding could have gone on without the
Open College.

A very important factor in relation to the development of the Open

College within Laymore was the personal commitment, drive and

enthusiasm of the institutes' co-ordinator (she had, for example,

organised residential weekends for her mature students which included

looking after transport, food, cost-free location as well as the

course content). Her subjects were politics and sociology and

although she was not a second-chance person herself, she had spent

five years out of her ordinary profession, working at home as a

childminder (of three). She had been involved in the early days of

the Open University and the Open College. She had a clear vision of

what the development was about.

I'll tell you, ideally first of all, being a person of ideals -
social justice. It was supposed to redistribute education for its
intrinsic value and for its instrumental value to people who had
been deprived of it. I think that was the ideal. As it came with
no additional resources to increase courses, which were already
oversubscribed, what is has done is distribute something which I
can only describe as the cultural capital of the middle classes,
that is knowledge of the educational system, a network of people
who are connected and who will recommend you, (give) extra tuition

and feedback that the middle classes have always been able to
avail themselves of. It's gone some way towards a very small
redistribution of privilege and I think they have to count that as
one of it's successes, because the curriculum isn't everything,
and I don't think middle class people ever acknowledge how much it
mattered to them, not just that they were clever and could do the
work, but also the support that they had from their mothers and
fathers, the difference that having a wealth of realistic
knowledge about the education system made to them, and this
business of social connections - who you are and who you know and
who will recommend you and who will ring up a colleague who works
in higher education and say to them "I've got a very good student
for you this year, will you interview them?". And it's
acknowledging that that's the way the system works in Thatcher's
world and spreading it a bit more thinly between the people. I
suppose a part of me resents that the system works like that and
so I'm wary of becoming incorporated as a kind of godmother in the
system and wary of perpetuating it, because what one has to say is
that there is still gross injustice.

(Interviewer: So you said ideally it was this, and in practice
you feel it has marginally increased the opportunities for the
educationally least advantaged people, so you're saying that it's
not as radical really as maybe -)

Yes. The reasons for it not being radical lie outside the Open
College. There are things within the Open College that I can talk
about, but there are things without, and the economic recession is
one of the main reasons it's not radical - it's cosmetic actually.
The cracks in the education service have been papered over with a
sort of ideology of equality, or equality of opportunity which is
not same as equality. At the same time as we have no money and
high unemployment, we've had a downturn in the birthrate which
should have liberated some places in higher education for working
class people, for women and for ethnic minorities, but because
they've occurred at the same time as the lack of finance and the
high unemployment, not only have you more people applying to
higher education, because whatever Sir Keith Joseph felt about it,
the working classes, in the absence of a middle class cohort have
been able to get the qualifications, and what one has to accept is
that since the birth of the Open College, the percentage of mature
students going into higher education has fallen. But it hasn't
fallen because of the Open College, it's fallen because working
class people are capable at eighteen, if they're given the chance
of going to University or a Polytechnic. And they're unemployed if
they leave school, so they may as well go to Polytechnic, because
in the rank of who's going to be unemployed, the graduates are the
last people. So it would be quite unfair to say it is the Open
College's fault. It is actually Margaret Thatcher's fault that
the Open College hasn't worked and yet liberals and the Right can
point to it say, "Everything is more fair, we have an Open
College, we are redistributing resources".

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There were therefore structual constraints, the co-ordinator felt, on

what the Open College could achieve:

> We think we can solve their problems in relation to unemployment.
> I am not sure that we can. I might get, because of connections,
> two or three of my students on an Access course but there are
> probably two or three other students whom they are displacing . .
> . There is also a big gap between our rhetoric and our resources.
> Trying to implement municipal socialism starved of funds it's
> difficult not to become incorporated or 'ground down'. As
> educationalists fund raising or political in-fighting, detracts
> from education. The time is spent on staff meetings getting a
> quart in a pint pot . . . no educational discussion. Outside of
> the department all the talk is money - can we do it? - can
> students afford the fares?

Within the Open College she felt, there had been "a small amount of

bad management". The energy and money spent on advertising and

appearances, for example, could have been better spent in providing

more individual advice on recruitment. With all the constraints,

however, she obviously found a great deal of satisfaction in her job.

She measured success in terms of a number of factors.

> It's the (quantifiable) - the quantity of students who come for
> advice and help, and the quantity of students who come on the
> course, the quantity of students who stay the whole course. It's
> not always a measure of failure when they leave, because our
> daytime students are unemployed and they are also looking for
> work, so sometimes it's a cause for celebration when somebody
> comes in and says, "I've got a job! - a REAL job!" and perhaps we
> wrote the reference for the job, so it's very good. It's all
> sorts of things about people's personal growth.

Discussion

Let us now review the various situations of the member institutions of

the OCSL in order to ascertain which factors appeared to be critical

in the development of courses for adults returning to education.

(Figure 6.3, page 280 summarises some of the key factors influencing

implementation.) The hypothesis was that successful establishment

would be most likely where resources were made available; where key

people (notably the principal and the institution's co-ordinator) were

committed to the enterprise; where historical antecedents and the

culture of the institution were favourable to the innovation and

supported it; where the institution sought or was receptive to support

from outside; and where effective means of communication were in

evidence within and between institutions.

The development of new courses was influenced by the history of the

institution and the attitudes and values which predominated. Hence,

at Westwark College of FE where curriculum innovation was the norm,

co-operation on course development with the neighbouring AEI

(Westwark) was relatively easy. Both institutions had been involved

with adult returners for some long time. The one institution where

the dominant culture was totally anti-pathetic to equal opportunities

was the College of Technical Craft and its membership of the Open

College was short-lived. Another institution where there was

excellent provision for adult returners but where expansion was

limited by priorities over resources was Laymore Institute, renowned

for its provision in art and music. One exception to this general

observation on the influence of history and culture was Dunstan

College where formerly the dominant interest lay in advanced science

courses. There perhaps because of the dramatic drop in the demand for

advanced level science courses the Open College provision developed

because new directions were urgently required.

The role of principals, whether in FE or AE, was a fairly pragmatic
one in relation to the Open College development. Facing cuts in
resources and concerned to implement the policies of the Authority and
to manage their institutions in a period of change in the educational
market place, they acted initially as 'gatekeepers' but also as
'brokers', hedging their bets, in the expectation that there would be
something to be gained from being part of a consortium. Where a
principal perceived membership of the Open College as enabling the
institution to undertake a radical change of direction, they were more
likely to be committed to and supportive of the development. This was
evident in the case of Dunstan College and Bentham Institute. Hence,
greater development was likely to take place where the objectives of
the Open College were compatible with those of the institution.

The only resources which were made available to the institutions in
respect of the Open College development was the allocation of a
half-post of lecturer to the founder members. It was not given to
those which joined subsequently (Seaham Institute and the College of
Technical Craft). The half-post enabled remission from teaching
(generally 40 per cent) in order that the co-ordinator could liaise
with staff within the institution and the central co-ordinators
concerned. In undertaking evaluation it was evident that there was
less curriculum development in those institutions (Seaham Institute
and the College of Technical Craft) which were not allocated a
half-post of lecturer (see Table 6.12 p.293). Both the co-ordinators
experienced a role-strain as a result of insufficient time available

for their job as co-ordinator and had to reluctantly give up the position.

A second factor in relation to the availablity of resources was the investment which the institution made in technical equipment. When it materialised that the technobus was not available for class-teaching purposes, the viability of course development in computing in AEIs depended on the investment which they were able to make in purchasing their own equipment. Only Bentham at the time of the study had undertaken to do this.

A third factor in relation to resources was the much better facilities that were available to adult returners in the AEIs compared with FE colleges; they were much more likely to have creche, with more than a nominal number of places available and, the ambiance, generally, was much congenial than that in FE colleges which were still catering very largely for the post-16 age group.

Establishing effective communication between the centre and the member institutions was also important. One of the observed problems in disseminating information on Open College courses at other institutions was that each institution acted as a 'gate-keeper'. In 1984/5 there were only two institutions that had noticeboards advertising courses in other institutions. Colleges/institutes were interested in having their own courses designated and advertised under

the auspices of the OCSL but were also seemingly concerned not to lose their own clientele to another institution.

One notable area of successful communication, co-operation and sharing of information and resources among co-ordinators was on the Access and Return to Learning panels. The latter led to the formation of another supportive group, one concerned with setting up Foundation courses. The success of these groups was attributable, in part, to the commitment of the central co-ordinators. It may also have had something to do with the fact that the first generation of institutional co-ordinators were more likely to have been external appointments and therefore, perhaps, more likely to have had a 'reference group' outside of the institution. The second generation were more likely to have been internal appointments who tended to spend a smaller proportion of their time visiting other institutions and attending meetings at the Open College centre.

The culture of the institution influenced its receptivity to change. The co-ordinator was greatly helped if there was a 'constituency', a group of peers within the college/institute, who were interested and supportive of curriculum development for adult returners. It was observed that co-ordinators who had a direct line of communication with the principal, who were given the relevant policy documents, who had avenues of communication through the academic board as well as the policy and curriculum committees within the institution, were better placed to act as agents of change than those whose who did not.

Institutionally-based in-service training for staff in relation to Open College development as at Seaham, was effective in generating interest, commitment and a shared view among the staff but this institution was an exception in this respect.

It was noted that there were varying levels of commitment among the institutional co-ordinators. Generally, however, their socialisation, their home background (in some instances working class and/or ethnic), their educational experience (in some cases as second-chance people), and their value orientations (as feminists and/or socialists) enabled them to empathise with adult returners and to make provision to meet their needs. All the co-ordinators interviewed had a social science or humanities background. It was noted that the one appointee from the first generation of co-ordinators who was not of a social science or humanities background had been more interested in his subject (computing) than in adult returners *per se*. He had left to take up an advisory post. Figures 6.3 and 6.4 (pp.280-281) summarise some of the key factors involved which indicate that some co-ordinators were better placed than others within their institution to be effective implementers of the Open College developments.

In general terms again, therefore, it can be seen that successful implementation was about "how to bring together communication, commitment and capacity" (Williams, 1980). The one obvious ommission or, perhaps, it was more a failure to resolve what was an obvious contentious issue at the outset, was the question of control. It was

revealed in the interviews with the central co-ordinators that one of

the difficulties for them was that they had no managerial Authority in

relation to the co-ordinators in the institutions. (For example they

could not require them to attend meetings at the centre.) Equally,

the main problem as far as the member institutions were concerned was

that they had no control over the role of the central co-ordinators.

Overall, therefore, the OCSL suffered from a lack of direction.

Again, it is useful at this point to reflect on the relative merits of

the various theoretical perspectives employed. The concepts drawn

from the 'social action' perspective are insightful because they

explain the differences between institutions to the extent of how far

the curriculum for adult returners was developed. In large part, it

was explained by the 'culture' of the institution. Most development

took place where there was a history of involvement with adult

returners, where the institutional co-ordinator was committed to it

and acted as a 'change-agent'. A favourable 'culture' could also

bring about a 'constituency' of support and interest from other

members of the staff. Further, it was more likely to lead to a fairer

allocation of the resources since the curriculum development 'fitted'

with the goals of the institution.

The 'systems' perspective, however, is useful because it offers an

explanation as to why change took place in those institutions which

did not have a history and 'culture' that were favourable to adult

returners. Some principals, faced with falling rolls and the changing

needs of their local communities, were forced to consider alternative

directions for their institutions. By allocating resources and being

'open' to advice from 'change-agents' from the central unit, changes

in the curriculum on offer were achieved. Hence, it is helpful to

adopt a 'systems' perspective as developed by Easton (1965), which

sees the institution within the wider economic, social and political

framework.

There is another way in which the 'systems' perspective is of value.

This relates to the way in which it focusses attention on the formal

roles, rules and structure within an organisation. The location of

the central unit of the Open College outside of the main avenue of

communication of the administration (see figure 1.3, p.29) lying as it

does from senior officers to institutions, meant that the

line-management relations were less clear. This created instances of

'role-strain' for the institutional co-ordinators who had half their

post funded by their institution and the other half directly from the

Authority. It also created a problem for the principals because of

the lack of control which they could exercise over the central staff.

CHAPTER VI

EVALUATION

. . . .

The Open College development in South London has to be evaluated in

terms of the policy objectives contained within the 'Review of

Advanced Further Education in Inner London' (1983-4). This

recommended that geographic groupings of educational institutions in

the post-school sector be established (1984:5.5) to promote

opportunities in AFE for adults returning to education.[1] It

asserted that: "Polytechnics, colleges and adult education institutes

have resources which can be more effectively deployed to widen the

basis for adult education and services to the whole community when

working together than when operating separately" (1983: 8.14). Open

Colleges were thus seen by the Authority as a means of widening

opportunities for those who, hitherto, had participated least in AFE

(members of ethnic minority groups, of the working class and women);

and extending the role of new technology "to enable all ILEA

institutions to have access to facilities and expertise appropriate to

their level of work" (1984:5.52). In effect, it was attempting to

create a comprehensive post-school service, whilst retaining the

various types of institutions (the polytechnic, FE Colleges and AEIs)

as separate entities.

Evaluation was initiated, therefore, to establish whether access to

education for the least educationally disadvantaged adults in the

- 244 -

inner city population was facilitated; whether changes took place in

the allocation of resources within institutions to develop provision

for adult returners and whether the adults recruited were drawn from

the disadvantaged groups. An Open College could be judged successful

if it was able to identify and meet student needs. Measures of

performance would be: the development of appropriate courses; and the

recruitment, retention, completion and 'going-on' rates of the

students.

There were four designated areas of course development: introductory

courses in New Technology; courses employing Flexible Learning

methods, introductory Return to Study courses and Access courses to

higher education. Two of these areas, introductory courses in New

Technology and Access provision, were the subjects of evaluation

within the Authority's Research and Statistics Branch (the former, by

this researcher in her capacity as a research officer in the branch).

This chapter will begin with a review of the literature which pertains

generally to the evaluation of provision for adult returners. The

results of the evaluation of the introductory courses in New

Technology will then be presented, followed by less detailed

evaluations of the other areas of course development. The variation

in outcomes, differences between institutions and between course

fields, will then be discussed in the light of what is known about the

institutions from the interviews with principals and institutional

co-ordinators.

A Review of the Literature

The social characteristics of adult students. Students in adult

education are far from being a homogeneous group. Indeed the term

'adult student' is one employed by educational researchers,

administrators and national and international bodies to focus on areas

of common interest rather than a term employed by the students

themselves. If adult students share a common identity it is as

members of a particular class course or institution. Whilst,

therefore, the term may not have meaning to the participants it is

useful in enabling common questions to be asked of all types of

provision. National surveys have established: the range and quantity

of provison; the social charateristics of the 'students'; and the

benefits perceived from study (Killeen and Bird, 1981; Percy et

al., 1983; Woodley et al., 1987). It has long been the

concern of adult educators that they recruit from among the more

educationally disadvantaged groups in the adult population but,

seemingly, there is an inverse relationship between demand and need

(Rubenson, 1983), such that the more education people have the more

they want (Trenaman, 1967) and the more that is available to them.

For example, even recreational classes for adults were found in the

survey conducted in London for the 'Russell' Report to benefit those

already educationally advantaged. (Twenty-nine per cent of these

students were found to have been in post-school education.)

Every move to expand educational provision tends to miss those who are the most educationally disadvantaged. The expansion of further education, for example, provided an 'alternative route' largely for the middle-class youth unable to follow the full-time route (Raffe, 1979). And the provision of 'paid educational leave' from employment was found to be more generous the higher the position of the individual in the occupational hierarchy (Killeen and Bird, 1981:56). When the Open University was founded in 1969 it was heralded as a way of opening up university education to those who had missed out earlier. Whilst it did expand opportunity, it was most feasible for those who had previously reached the point of entry to higher education, or who had five 'O' levels (the requisite to have entered an academic sixth form course).

Conscious of the cycle of social and educational deprivation that persists and responding to the findings of the study conducted in the ILEA for the Russell Report, the ILEA set up a review of its provision for adults. The 'Report of the working party on the social structure of the student body of adult education institutes' (ILEA, 1973) made recommendations to promote the participation of the most educationally disadvantaged adults in the community. Some resources were targeted towards course provision for the more disadvantaged groups (English as a Second Language, literacy and numeracy classes and Access courses for non-traditional entry to higher education). Creche were provided in AEIs and reduced course fees offered to the unemployed, the

over-sixties and those on social benefits (in 1986/7 these groups could take any number of courses for £1).

Other providers of adult education also undertook to direct their provision towards the more educationally disadvantaged sections of the population. For example, the DES by cutting its grant to the extra-mural department's traditional areas of course provision, made 2.5 million pounds available in 1984 to the 'REPLAN' scheme (Ward and Taylor, 1986:42). The 'new' money was directed to outreach work of a pioneering nature towards groups such as the unemployed, tenants and ethnic minorities. Hence, there was some experience in adult education of targeting courses to meet the needs of groups identified as being educationally disadvantaged, prior to the setting up of the Open Colleges in London.

The reasons for course enrolment. The reasons for joining a class may, at first, appear as varied as the forms of provision. A number of researchers (Styler, 1950; Floud and Halsey, 1958; Dumazedier, 1964; Giddens, 1967; Jary, 1983) have sought to establish conceptual distinctions in differentiating the various factors involved. The earlier studies, conducted in an era when adult education was viewed in social policy terms as an individual 'good' and a moral right, differentiated the intrinsic from the extrinsic reasons for study.

More recently, certainly since the mid-70s, the allocation of resources to adult education and training has been viewed more in

terms of society's needs than those of the individual (Finch,

1984:89). Thus the prime reasons given for study have, in part,

changed as the pattern of provision has changed: in the 1950s

self-development was seen to be the most dominant factor in adults'

reasons for study with only ten per cent having work-related

motivations (Styler, 1950); whilst in the 1970s work-related 'paid

educational leave' study (Killeen and Bird, 1981) the majority of

students gave one of two reasons why they had taken the course: either

they wanted qualifications to improve their career prospects (30%), or

else they were seeking information and skills which were directly

related to their paid employment or to their voluntary work as trade

union representatives (34%). Studies conducted of adult students'

reasons for study in the inner cities in the late seventies and

eighties (Daines, 1982; Johnson and Hall, 1985) also revealed a

substantial proportion giving work-related career reasons. This, in

part, indicates the much higher level of educational and economic

deprivation in the inner cities with high proportions of immigrant

ethnic minority groups, but it also reflects the targeting of

particular courses to meet identified needs. However, where studies

have been conducted of adult students taking a wide range of courses

(Woodley et al., 1987; Bird and Vaarlam, 1987) the intrinsic

interests in study were still in evidence as were extrinsic social

factors. It is, therefore, important to establish the wide range of

reasons which may influence an adult's choice of course.

Choice of institution. Convenience in terms of location has been
established as an over-riding concern to adults selecting a course of
study. Within the Open University over two-thirds of women, who were
not working, gave as their main reason for choosing the OU rather than
a full-time course, the fact that they had to look after children or
other dependents (McIntosh and Woodley, 1978). Studies of
'Information-giving Methods for Adult Learners' in Sheffield indicated
that most adults enrolled close to home in a building which was
familiar to them (Watson, 1980). Also within the ILEA the proximity
of the institution was found to be a critical factor both in the study
of provision made at the community school (Bird, 1985) and in the
study of students on the evening degree course (Johnson and Hall,
1985:9).

Tuition fees. Another important factor known to influence adults'
choice of institution is the cost of the course. A reduction in the
rates of participation in adult education was noted by Daines (1982)
when course fees rose by 240 per cent in the period 1978-81; the
participation rates of manual workers, housewives, and retired people
fell by as much as 10 per cent. Within the ILEA the policy of
establishing preferential rates for certain disadvantaged groups made
adult education more accessible. In an Authority-wide survey in 1987
it was found that over two-thirds of all students paid the reduced fee
(61%) or no fee (9%) (Bird and Varlaam, 1987:3).

Counselling. The need of adult returners for counselling has been
identified in earlier studies. On the Return to Study courses at the
City Lit. in 1966 (Hutchinson, 1978) group counselling was found to be
an essential and important element (69% of students said it was
essential). Fordham (1975:65), also, noted that "the counselling role
was so intricately tied up with the teaching role that no separate
guidance system would suffice, but rather the guidance function had to
be expressed in the basic professional skills of adult educators".
This role, however, is perhaps more easily assumed by adult educators
in the liberal adult tradition (more likely to be found in the AEIs
than in the more vocationally oriented FE sector). Adults moving from
one sector to another could well experience culture shock if tutors
were unaware of the special needs of the adult returner. Given below
are some of the comments of mature students on the evening degree
courses at the Polytechnic of North London (PNL):

> (we need) confidence boosting: (a) lot of us are doing it because
> we havn't had the opportunity in the past: we've been told for so
> long that we're inadequate - sometimes tutors are not aware of the
> traumas people have had in the past.

> (I) think there's a possibility for people to get into difficulty
> without support being available. . . because we have no time we
> don't form real support groups - some students have real
> difficulty in coping (and) feel isolated. (Johnson and Hall,
> 1985:22)

In contrast, note the experience of a group of adult students in
Sheffield who, having undertaken a Return to Study type of course at
an AEI, registered as a group with the OU whilst retaining the adult
centre tutor as their OU tutor counsellor. Over a half of the group
had few, if any, formal qualifications. The tutor provided guidance

on study techniques and the group supported one another in times of
doubt and difficulty:

> everybody was in this situation. . . the telephone was used, you
> rang up and said I can't do this. And then Mary would say, Yes
> you can, do so and so . . . then you would speak to P . . .
> and then you would speak to D. Always there was somebody, you
> could turn to. (Mercer, 1980:83)

All the students completed the course and all but one passed the

examination which compared favourably to the OU course completion rate

overall.

Counselling adult students would seem to be an important task if they

are to identify their needs and select an appropriate course. Mercer

(1980:94) noted the danger of creating a widening pool of demoralised

people who feel they have failed. The 'failure' could reflect more

the lack of support for adult learners than people's lack of ability.

There is a danger that withdrawal from a course could give adults a

"lower view of their potential than when they began".

Course completion rates. In general the 'drop-out' rate on OU courses

is noticeably higher for adults who have few if any qualifications.

Pentz (1981:11) has pointed out that students with previous tertiary

level education are about thirty times more likely to gain a science

degree than those whose education stopped at no more than five 'O'

levels. A major factor in obtaining a degree is the occupational

background of the students; teachers have the highest proportion

(69.5%), followed by housewives (60.5%), clerical and office workers

(41.0%) and manual workers (26%) (Rumble, 1982:214). One of the

reasons for the development of Access courses was that they were seen as a means of 'bridging' the return to formal education. The reason for designating the 'Return to Study' as an area for course development in the OCSL was that this area was designed to develop study skills and self-confidence which would provide a basis for progression into further or higher education.

The benefits of study. It is evident from the results of recent national surveys of adult students (Killeen and Bird, 1981; Woodley et al., 1987) that whilst the reasons for study may be infinite and various the most frequently quoted benefits of study are that it has enhanced self-confidence and promoted self-development. It was also clear from the survey of 'paid educational leave' that courses which were largely vocational often had educational outcomes for the students concerned and those that were primarily viewed as educational had vocational outcomes for some other students.

Interest in further courses. It is a well-known effect of education that the more a person has the more they seek. On the national survey of PEL a very high proportion (91%) of students surveyed wanted to take more courses and almost two thirds had started, or taken one at the time of the interview. The impact of the experience of Fresh Start and New Horizons courses introduced in the ILEA in the 1970s was to promote the notion of progression through the post-school system. There is, however, a strong feeling in some quarters that the emphasis on progression upwards through the education system is to the

detriment of the intrinsically rewarding aspects of education. The

values of liberal adult education are still evident in the AEIs and,

in some quarters, perceived to be in conflict with the more

utilitarian values of adult training.

What is clear from this brief survey of the literature is that adult

education covers a wide range of provision that has undergone

substantial change in the last 15 years. A much higher proportion of

the least educationally advantaged adults in society are now being

attracted back into education. Adults are returning to education

because they are unemployed or because they want to improve their

chances of promotion or mobility. Research studies indicate that the

old distinctions of education and training are no longer meaningful

and reflect more the ideologies of the providers than the experience

of the adults concerned.

Hypothesis IV: The Implementation of Policy
in relation to Student Outcomes

In the light of what has been established in preceding chapters as to

the factors which are likely to influence the effective implementation

of the Open College policy and in the knowledge of what is known from

earlier studies pertaining to the needs of adult students, it is

hypothesised that the most successful outcomes (in terms of the

recruitment of educationally disadvantaged adults, student retention,

and 'going-on' rates) will be in institutions where there is prior

experience of adult students; where the institution is adequately

resourced in terms of technical equipment and other facilities (most

notably creche and a social/refreshment facility); and where there is

a commitment to the Open College development as evidenced in the

remission for the institutional co-ordinator (which facilitates

communication both internally with course tutors and externally with

the central staff). Once again, therefore, it is appropriate to

employ the hypothesis that effective implementation is crucially

concerned with the question of how "to bring together communications,

commitment and capacity so as to carry a decision into action"

(Williams, 1980:3). (For purposes of easy reference the measures of

the various member institutions in terms of their history of

involvement, their capacity, commitment and facility to communicate,

which were established in Chapter V are summarised in matrix form in

Figure 6.3 p.280.)

The Third Stage of Implementation:

The 'Street-Level'

Introductory Courses in New Technology

Questionnaires were designed for use in situ with adult students

taking introductory courses in New Technology (one of the areas

designated for course development within the OCSL). There was a total

of 40 courses in New Technology in 11 member institutions in the

period 1984/5. A sample of 14 courses (catering for 170 students) was

selected to be representative of the length of the course and the type

of institution (see appendix 6.1 p.285). Questionnaires (see appendix

A.2 pp.388-397) were given by the researcher at the beginning and end

of the course, eliciting information on the adult's reasons for study,

the reasons for selecting that particular course and collecting

background information on the socio-economic characteristics of the

student. Another questionnaire (see appendix A.2 p.397) was given at

the end of the course to identify students satisfaction or

dissatisfaction with the course, the perceived benefits and their

degree of interest in taking further courses. Data was collected from

class registers on student 'drop-out' and a brief questionnaire sent

to those who did not complete the course. Class tutors were also

given a questionnaire. (See appendix A.2 p.401.)

Performance measures were identified in the light of the policy

objectives arising from the AFE Review performance criteria. The four

areas worthy of investigation were: first, to establish a profile of

students (whilst the courses were not aimed exclusively at

disadvantaged adults, it was expected that they would be represented

amongst those recruited); second, to examine the extent to which

courses met students' identified needs as evidenced by course

completion rates and the benefits perceived by students; third, to

ascertain whether the introductory courses were seen, by students, to

lead on to other courses; fourth, to look for evidence of co-operation

between institutions in co-ordinating the provision of courses in new

technology.

Recruitment from among the identified

disadvantaged groups

As the name implies the Open College had a policy of being 'open' to all who apply on a 'first come, first served' basis; there were no formal entry qualification requirements. This had the effect of creating a very mixed student population, in almost every respect.

The age of students ranged from 15 years to 69 years, the mean age being 34 years (the mode 32 years). A fifth (21%) of all entrants had either a few CSE 'passes' or no formal qualifications whatsoever. A substantial proportion (43%) had one or more 'O' level or equivalents and rather more than a third (36%) had 'A' or post-'A' level qualifications (some had gained qualifications by part-time study). Approximately half the students were in work and, of these, two-thirds were full-time and a third part-time. Table 1 (see appendix 6.1 p.286) gives the employment status of the students in the sample.

In terms of social class as measured by students' occupation (past or present) it was evident that about a third (34%) were professional workers, almost a half (46%) were in routine non-manual work and a minority (12%) were manual workers (8% were students, housepersons or non-employed - disabled). The vast majority (80%) of Open College students were, therefore, in non-manual work and a third were in professional or semi-professional employment. A not dissimilar pattern was found in the social status of Open University students

(McIntosh, 1976). If, however, the social status of Open College

students' fathers were taken as indicative of their social origin a

somewhat different pattern was evident and a substantial proportion

(43%) of adult students were found to be of working-class origin

(Table 2 in Appendix 6.2 p.286). This again was not dissimilar to

that found for Open University students.

It was evident, therefore, that a substantial proportion of students

taking introductory courses in New Technology were upwardly mobile, in

so far as 43 per cent were of working-class origin and yet 80 per cent

of those in employment were in non-manual work. Two-thirds of the

sample were women, which was not dissimilar to the adult student

population more generally. Given, however, that a half of the courses

were sited in colleges of further education where men predominate, the

social composition of the designated Open College courses was

atypical, especially of courses in a technical field. The high

proportion of women resulted, in part, from the addition of the two

'women only' courses to the sample. (Positive discrimination in these

instances was to enable women to develop confidence in a field where

they sometimes feel at a disadvantage through lack of prior technical

experience.) The proportion of women on the 'mixed' courses was 61

per cent.

In terms of ethnic origin, almost two-thirds of the group were of

English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish origin and rather more than a third

(36%) were from a black or other ethnic minority group. (The

proportion of adults of ethnic minority background was estimated to be

20 per cent of the adult population of inner London.) Most numerous

were those of West Indian origin (15%), followed by African (8%), and

Asian (6%).

Overall, therefore, the Open College could be said to have recruited a

substantial proportion of women, of black and other ethnic minorities

and of the working class (in terms of social origin). One in five of

the student population had no qualifications higher than a CSE. In

terms therefore of recruiting some of the educationally least

privileged, the Open College could be seen to have met one of its

objectives. Figure 6.1 (p.260) gives a profile of students enrolled

in courses, designated by institutions as Open College courses.

Meeting students' identified needs

Students' aims. Students were asked whether their decision to enrol

for a course in New Technology was related to their work, their

particular interest in the subject or any one of a number of reasons.

Listed, in Table Table 6.3 Appendix 6.2 (p.287), are the various

reasons given.

The most common reason for undertaking the course was an intrinsic

interest in New Technology (50% were keen to find out about New

Technology, 32% wanted to learn more about it). Almost a third of

students (30%) wanted to acquire practical experience and a third saw

Figure 6.1

A Profile of Students* Enrolled on Courses Designated by
Institutions as Open College Courses   *Average Age 34 Years

- 260 -
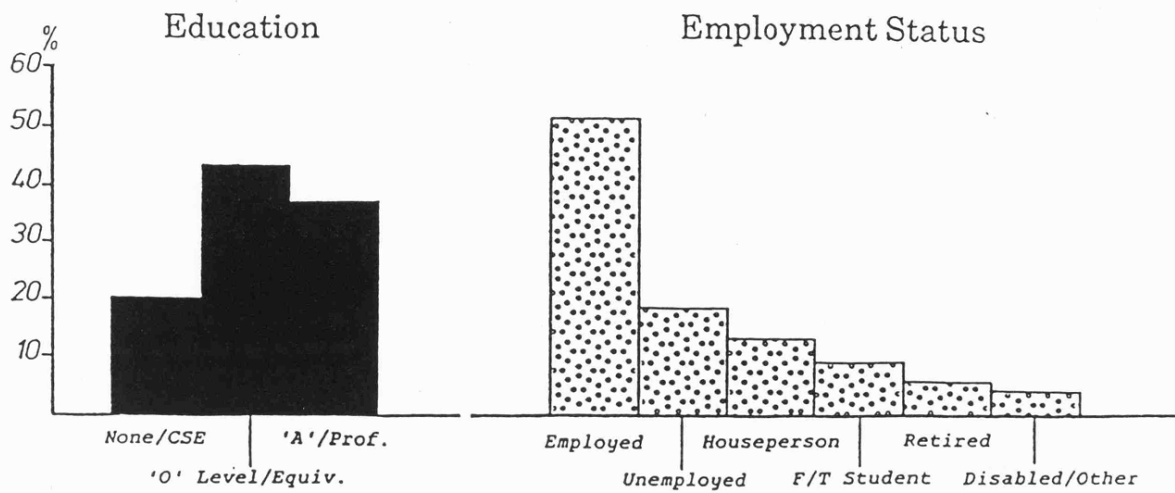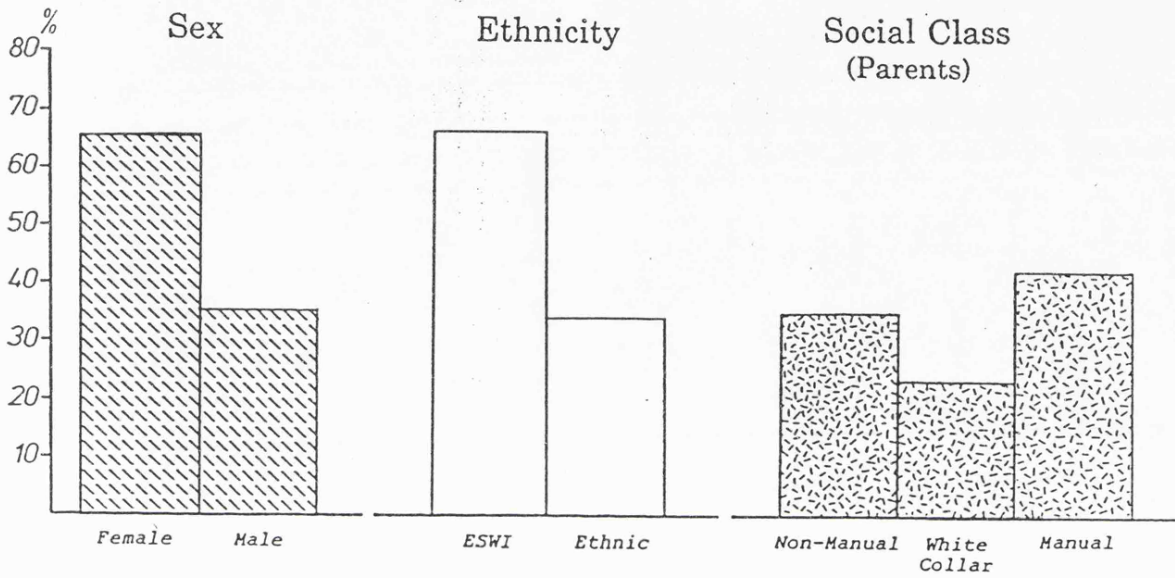
the course as a basis for other courses at a higher level.
Significant proportions of students saw it as helping them in relation
to employment (46% felt it would enhance their career prospects, 25%
said it would help them in their present job and 18% hoped it would
enable them to re-enter the job market). Other more general reasons
were also given for taking the course: there were retired people who
saw it as a means of keeping their minds active (22%); those who saw
it as as a means of making up for a lack of opportunities in the past
(20%); some who saw it as a challenge (17%); others who saw it as a
means of developing their self-confidence (10%); house-persons who saw
it as a means of getting out of the home (10%); and some who saw it as
a hobby (6%), or as a way to meet people with similar interests (4%).
(Four per cent had other reasons for taking the course.)

When asked to say which of their aims was the most important, almost a
half (47%) indicated that their prime concern was 'work-related': they
either saw the course as helping them in their current job, which
might improve their career prospects; or, they hoped that it would
enable them to find work. Rather more than a third of respondents
(37%) were primarily attracted by the subject, expressing a particular
interest in computers. (A third of students, it materialised, had a
computer at home and a quarter had one at work.) The student
population's motivations, therefore, reflected a mix of leisure and
vocational aspirations. This changing pattern in adult students'
motivations has been noted elsewhere (Daines, 1982:37).

Further indication that the students on New Technology courses were

not typical of adult students at large, who were mainly seeking

leisure interests, was given by their response to a question

concerning their long-term plans. Of the 51 per cent who were in

work, only 6 per cent expected to be doing the same work, on the same

grade, in five years time. A substantial number expected to be doing

similar work, but at a higher grade, and some expected to be doing a

different type of work. The unemployed hoped to be in work and a

further quarter were uncertain as to what they would be doing. This

suggests that among Open College students on New Technology courses

there were a substantial proportion who were ambitious and others who

were 'open' in their expectations.

Factors influencing course selection

Students were asked whether their selection of that particular course

was influenced by some features of the course itself, the mode of

study, practical concerns in terms of accessibility or other factors.

Table 6.4 in Appendix 6.2 (page 288) summarises the responses.

Apart from the most obvious factor, that of selecting a particular

subject, the other important factors in the selection of a course were

those relating to practical convenience. Adults who returned to study

part-time, whether in work or at home, paid much attention to the

proximity of the institution, the time of the course and whether it

fitted in with their existing work, and other commitments. Cost, too,

was an important concern. (At the time of the survey unemployed persons could enrol for an unlimited number of courses for £1.) Whether a course took into account students' differing levels of educational experience and was geared to mature students were important considerations for a substantial minority. For others, the critical factors were child care facilities or accessibility for the disabled. (Ten per cent of students said the provision of child care facilities were an important criterion in their selection of a course.) Without such facilities they could not have enrolled. The Open College, therefore, succeeded in recruiting mature students because it was geographically convenient for people in its locality, charged fees which were not beyond the people's means (or had preferential rates for special groups) and made special arrangements, at least in some locations, for certain groups (the disabled or parents with young children).

Meeting students' expectations

Course completion rates. Almost a half (45%) of students did not complete the course for which they enrolled but there were very great variations in rates of completion in courses in New Technology between different institutions. Table 6.5 in Appendix 6.2 (page 289) gives the mean and range for each type of institution.

The polytechnic had a high rate of completion (82%), in part because the course was of the 'roll-on, roll-off' type where students (largely

people employed full-time in administrative positions) paid a fee for

so many hours tuition and booked to attend. It was of an 'open

learning' mode where students worked individually at their own pace

using statistical packages, with individual help from the class tutor

as required.

There were considerable differences between colleges of further

education in the rates of course completion (which varied between 28%

and 78%). A number of factors were identified in relation to this.

One course of three terms at Flinton was subsequently deemed to have

been too long for young post-school students who were unsure of their

career path. Another of the 'open learning' type (Hallwark II) was

perhaps not suited to the young post-school age group. One college,

the College of Technical Craft (I and II), with a high rate of

completions was, contrary to the spirit of the Open College, operating

a hidden form of selection in enrolling only those who had an

acceptable competence in mathematics. (This college subsequently left

the OCSL.) The college course with the highest rate of completions

(Hallwark II) was a full-time 'women only' course. One important

feature with regard to this was that the students received a grant

from the European Economic Community (EEC) Social Fund. (This

amounted to £41 per week plus travelling expenses.)

Among AEIs, also, there was an even greater range in the rates of

completion (from 11% to 92%). Two classes (one at Seaham and another

at Laymore) which had the lowest rate were those which had noticeably

limited facilities - one computer with more than 15 students in the class, at the outset. One successful evening class (Westwark Institute), with excellent resources, was held in a secondary school where the specialist teacher in computing was the class tutor. Another AEI (Bentham) which had invested in micro computers had a low student/tutor ratio and a high rate of course completions. One of these classes was a 'women only' class with creche facilities. The institute was also well resourced in other respects with excellent catering facilities where students enjoyed social contact outside the classroom.

Students who did not complete the course were asked to respond to a postal questionnaire as to their reasons for 'dropping out'. (See appendix A.2vii page 401.) The response rate (15%) was low but returns received did indicate that limited access to equipment was one factor while another was that the content of the course was not what they had expected.

Problems students experienced. Listed in Table 6.6 in Appendix 6.2 (page 289) are the difficulties encountered by the students who completed their course. For only a small proportion (less than 10%) were any of these factors a great problem. They give some indication, however, of problems which may be encountered by mature students returning to study, particularly in a field in which they have no prior experience.

Most evident (39%) were the practical problems which beset part-time

students in organising their time in relation to their work

commitments. More than a third had difficulties in relation to the

subject-matter of the course, lacking confidence in their abilities

and having difficulties 'keeping up'. Some (15%) felt they lacked

support for their study and some (11%) had difficulty meeting the cost

of the course. Very few (only 2-3%) had any problems in relation to

the staff or the students.

Sources of student dissatisfaction. Listed in Table 6.7 in Appendix

6.2 (page 290) are the areas of concern which students described as

"fairly" or "very unsatisfactory". Again, there was quite a lot of

variation between the course groups.

Almost a quarter of students were dissatisfied with the lack of

provision for informal contact such as the opportunity to have a

coffee break with other students. In some institutions there appeared

to be no provision for this. Child care facilities on this course

were only available in one institution (Bentham). The lack of

adequate equipment was mentioned by almost a fifth of students and

these were largely in AEIs. In one case (Seaham) there was only one

computer for a large class. Overall, most students were fairly

satisfied with the standard and content of the course and the methods

employed by adult tutors. Twelve per cent of students, however,

expressed a greater need for course counselling and advice.

Benefits experienced from taking the course

Overall a high measure of satisfaction was expressed among students who had completed their course (Table 6.8 in Appendix 6.2 p.290). Most in evidence was the benefit and enjoyment which students said they experienced in relation to acquiring new skills and information about an interesting subject. Ninety per cent felt they had gained sufficient experience to pursue the subject at a higher level. More than three quarters (78%) felt more self-confident. Two thirds (62%) felt they had increased their career prospects. Over half the students had 'spin-offs' in terms of making new friends or being able to share their newly-found interest with others in their family. Only a third, however, had obtained advice on 'follow-on' courses. (This will be discussed below.) And it must be noted that 45 per cent did not complete the course.

Interest in 'follow-on' courses

Students were asked at the beginning and, again, at the end of the course whether they had any plans to continue their education in any way. The responses are categorised and presented in Table 6.9 in Appendix 6.2 (p.291). Students who completed the course, not surprisingly, had a clearer idea as to whether or not they would continue with their education than when they had first started. Only 13 per cent of those completing the course had no immediate plans to enrol for another course, compared to almost a third (31%) at the

start of the course. Almost all those who wanted to continue with their studies were choosing another New Technology course; almost two-thirds (63%) wanted to take the same subject at a higher level. It appeared that, having taken the introductory course, a small number had decided to take an Access course prior to taking a degree course. In terms, therefore, of the objective of the Open College to open up new areas for study and to provide for progression through the post-school system, the introductory courses in New Technology at the OCSL could be seen to be achieving this, at least, in relation to those students who completed the course.

Evidence of a co-ordinated programme

Source of information on course. Students were asked where they obtained information or advice about the course prior to enrolment. A wide range of possibilities existed because courses were advertised quite extensively through a number of agencies. Students' responses are given in Table 6.10 in Appendix 6.2 (page 291).

When asked which was the most influential source the majority (56%) referred to the college prospectus for the institution in which they were registered or to a member of staff in that institution. Small proportions (in each case 8%) said they had been told by a friend or had read about it in the newspaper. Only four per cent said that the most important source of information for them had been the leaflet produced by the OCSL. This indicated, as has been found elsewhere

(Mercer, 1980) that people are most likely to return to education
through the doors of an institution which is familiar to them.

Information obtained from course tutors. Of the fourteen tutors of
the courses surveyed seven taught part-time, four taught at more than
one institution of the OCSL and one was a representative on the new
technology panel of the OCSL. (The panel consisted of one lecturer in
New Technology from each of the institutions.)

It was observed when visiting classes for the purpose of the survey
that students generally expressed great interest in 'follow-on'
courses. Despite the fact that the administrative centre for OCSL
produced a detailed prospectus of the courses 'on offer', many classes
did not receive it and only did so (eventually) through the auspices
of the researcher. Seven of the 14 tutors did not have information
pertaining to other New Technology courses within their own
institution and only three said they had been provided with
information on New Technology courses at the other institutions of the
OCSL.

A noticeable number of students were known to have expressed a need
for course and career advice. Almost two-thirds (11) of tutors said
some students had asked for advice. The number in any one group
varied considerably, from 13 to 89 per cent (it averaged a third of
students). Tutors were not, however, generally trained in counselling
and there was a dearth of knowledge about the accessibility of careers

staff. Many students and even some course tutors were not even aware that they were participating in a designated Open College course.

Summary

To what extent was the OCSL meeting its objectives in terms of its provision of introductory courses in New Technology? As far as the recruitment of students by the member institutions was concerned, it would appear to have been successful, overall, in attracting a substantial proportion of students from among the more educationally disadvantaged groups: two thirds were women; almost a half were of working-class origin; and rather more than a third were from an ethnic minority group. A fifth were unemployed and seeking work.

In judging whether the Open College of South London met students' needs the evidence is more mixed. On the one hand, among students completing courses there was, overall, a high measure of satisfaction expressed in terms of their having acquired new skills and information, developed self-confidence and enhanced their career prospects. (The great majority wanted to take further courses and almost two thirds wanted to take the subject at a more advanced level.) On the other hand, there was a 'drop-out' rate, overall, of 45 per cent denoting dissatisfaction by a substantial minority. Whilst the relatively high 'drop-out' rate may, in part, be attributed to the nature of the subject (and students having no prior experience of it) there were, however, noticeable variations in the rates of

course completions between institutions. A closer investigation of the profile of students revealed considerable differences in this respect also. Figure 6.2 (p.272) indicates, for each institution in the three sectors, the extent to which each was (a) recruiting students who were educationally disadvantaged (b) satisfying students to the extent that they were completing the course (c) fostering an interest in further study, as indicated by the propensity to want to take further courses. Some institutions succeeded in some respects and not others, some did well in all respects.

Further, in terms of assessing co-operation and co-ordination between course providers within the OCSL, there was little evidence of this at the time of the survey (conducted two years after its launch). There was little indication that effective communication existed between institutions facilitating a movement of students between institutions. Students also expressed a need for careers and course counselling which was largely un-met in the area of New Technology.

Evaluation

Evaluation can be defined "broadly as the collection and use of information to make decisions about an educational programme" (Cronbach, 1987). It is also about the process of "communicating information" for the guidance of educational decision making" (MacDonald, 1980). It is, therefore, not sufficient to describe outcomes but important to make judgements about them in the light of

Figure 6.2

Differences in Recruitment Patterns and 'Success' Rates Between Courses
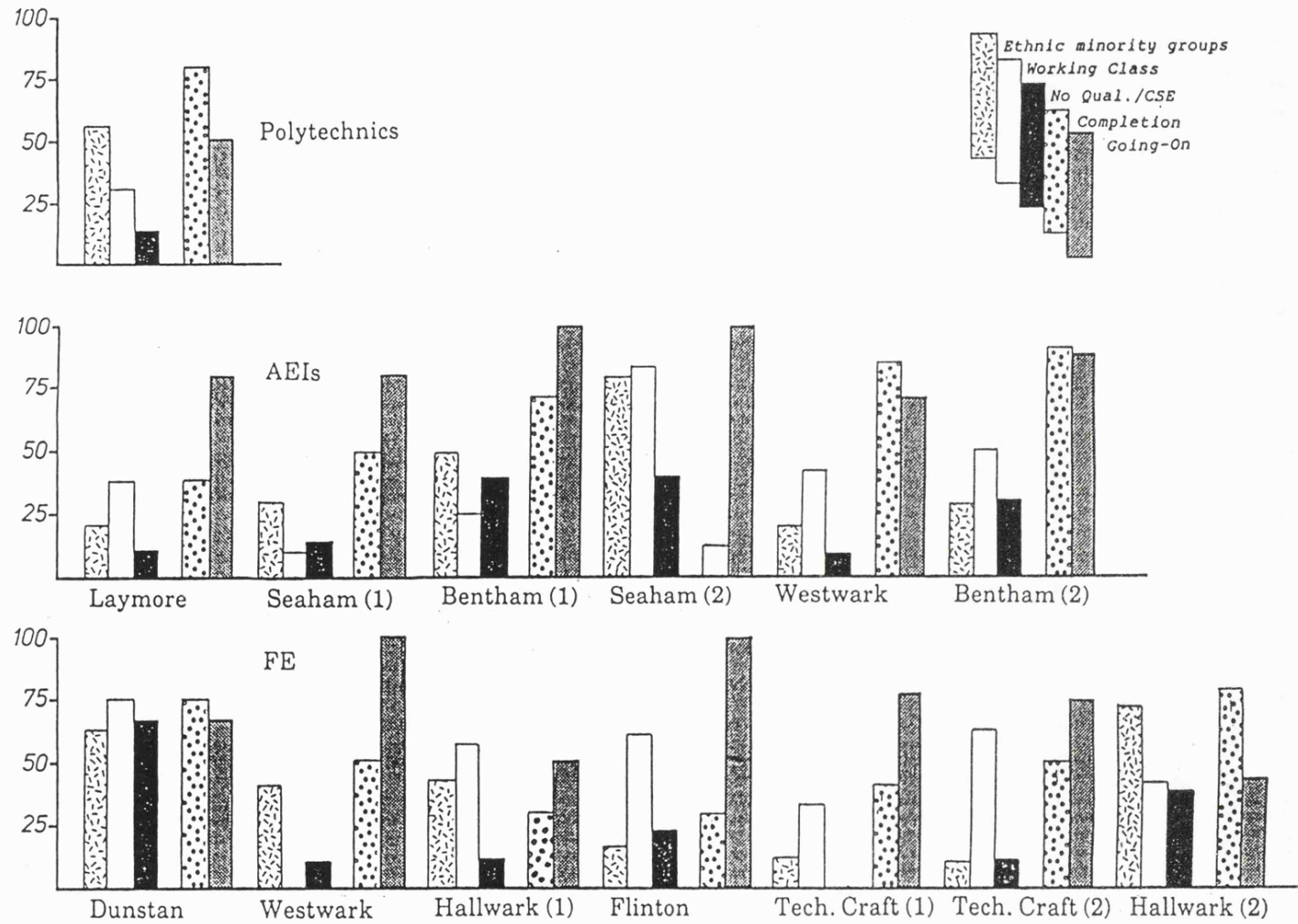
the objectives set by policy-makers. It is also necessary to

communicate the information and to influence decisions which would

increase the effectiveness of future programmes. A wide range of

evaluative techniques are available. The study of the introductory

courses in New Technology was the most thorough and wide-ranging

evaluation in the methods employed. It was initiated by the CC/New

Technology and the Inspector for Community Education and undertaken by

the researcher within the Authority's Research and Statistics Branch.

All four areas discussed below, however, draw on the documentation of

the OCSL, observations in the field and the interviews with key

personnel.

Introductory Courses in New Technology

What accounts for the differences in effectiveness of member

institutions in their recruitment of the more educationally

disadvantaged adults in the population and in their ability to meet

students' needs? It was anticipated that in relation to the

implementation of Open College policy the designated area of

introductory courses in New Technology certain factors were likely to

promote successful implementation in terms of the criteria above.

Figure 6.2 page 272 provides a useful summary of the measurement of

the member institutions on certain key variables. Some outcomes could

be predicted. It is clear that the AEIs were noticeably less well

equipped in this field than were the FE Colleges. Courses at Seaham

and Laymore which were using inadequate facilities in host

institutions experienced high 'drop-out' rates. But in the AEIs which

had adequate facilities there was a high retention rate. Westwark

used the facilities of the school in which the evening class was

located employing the teacher responsible as adult tutor, whilst

Bentham AEI had invested in its own computer facilities. Both courses

were successful in terms of recruitment, retention and 'going-on'

rates. Of the two, Bentham was the most successful for it was

targeted at women, employing a female course tutor. There was a very

supportive learning environment. Bentham was also the one member

institute which had a co-ordinator (albeit a quarter-post) with a

specialism in computing. Hence there was, perhaps, better internal

communication between the institutional co-ordinator and class tutor,

than was the case in other member institutions (as within Laymore).

Among the FE colleges there were generally adequate technical

resources for New Technology. Colleges were generally less

user-friendly to adult students (creche facilities were minimal and

the social/refreshment facilities were not so pleasant). There were

noticeable differences in the student profiles within FE colleges.

Flinton, for example, was recruiting a much higher proportion of

students from among the disadvantaged groups than was the College of

Technical Craft. One tutor in the latter was found to be operating a

'hidden' form of selection in counselling-out applicants who had not

got a qualification in mathematics. Whilst this resulted in a high

rate of completions and a high 'going-on' rate it was excluding the

more educationally disadvantaged adults. The college was 'using' the

OCSL, but was operating in its own institutional interest which was not in sympathy with the objectives of an 'open' college. Dunstan had a high rate of course completions and this was because it was a word-processing course and less of an unknown quantity than some other technology courses. The most successful course in FE, in terms of the performance measures overall, was Hallwark. This was a full-time course targeted for women returners with student grants from the EEC Social Fund.

Whilst, overall, the designated area of course development in New Technology was meeting with varying degrees of success in the member institutions it was clearly not meeting the fourth criteria of the OCSL in promoting co-operation between institutions. Other than at the time of the setting up of the technobus project, the panel was not an effective forum and there was little evidence of any movement of students from one institution to another. The main failing in the FE New Technology area can be attributed to the poor communications between the central OCSL co-ordinator and the tutors within the institution and poor communications between the co-ordinator in the institutions and those tutoring New Technology courses. The latter was, in part, made more difficult in all but one case, Bentham, because of the lack of a shared subject interest.

It might well be asked whether the OCSL had any influence on course development in the field of New Technology. In one respect it certainly did: it provided the impetus within the Bentham AEI to

invest in resources in New Technology and to target courses for women

returners. In another sense, and this is difficult to measure, it

promoted the climate in which the developments for adult returners

were encouraged and external sources of funding sought from the EEC

and DES.

Flexible Learning Opportunities (FLO)

No separate evaluation of the Flexible Learning Opportunities courses

was undertaken. It was, generally, considered the least successful

area of course development and there are a number of reasons for this.

In the first place, FLO was not a discrete subject area but was more a

learning strategy using course packages with tutorial support. There

was not, therefore, the same 'constituency' in terms of tutors sharing

subject interests as there was in New Technology (where for a short

time there was a burst of interest in the Technobus). Secondly, there

was no support from the Authority for Open Learning in the form of an

Inspector with a special designation in this field. Third, and

perhaps most significant was the fact that this approach to learning

may not be one most appropriate for adults with the minimum of formal

qualifications who, it has been noted (Fordham, 1975; Hutchinson,

1978; Mercer, 1980; Johnson and Hall, 1985), need a supportive

learning environment.

Within the New Technology field there were two courses evaluated which

were Open Learning, one of which was successful and one of which was

not. The successful one was at the polytechnic which was adequately

equipped with a terminal for each student and a small class with

well-developed learning materials. Whilst the adults were recruited

from among the groups identified (women, ethnic minorities and the

working class) they had generally acquired some formal qualifications

and were therefore able to cope with the Open Learning approach. In

contrast, the unsuccessful course (Hallwark (1)) was one with teenage

youth with a poor educational background and who were also, perhaps,

less motivated and less able to learn without the support of a group.

Early findings of the central government's initiative of an Open

College using 'open learning' methods would seem to suggest that it is

an approach most suited to those who have reached a certain level of

education.[2]

Return to Learning

No detailed evaluation of the Return to Learning courses was

undertaken but in-depth interviews with the OCSL co-ordinators, both

the central team and the institutional co-ordinators, revealed that

this area was deemed to be very successful in meeting the overall

objectives of the Open College policy, in terms of the recruitment of

adults from among the targeted groups, developing a suitable

curriculum, providing a supportive learning environment and promoting

progression to other courses, whether in FE or HFE and into

employment. Further, there was every evidence of co-operation between

institutions in the success acknowledged of the Return to Learning
panel.

Access

A monitoring of the Access courses was undertaken by the Authority's
Research and Statistics Branch. It recorded the substantial increase
which had taken place in the Access provision, overall, in the ILEA
(Williams, 1988). By 1986/7 there were in excess of 39 courses in the
ILEA catering for 575 students on a wide range of courses (including
accountancy, business studies, law, nursing, social work, teaching,
mathematics, science and technology). Within the OCSL there were 16
Access courses. A substantial proportion (42%) of students were in
receipt of maintenance grants financed by the Authority. There was
every indication that the Access courses were recruiting from among
the population targeted; women and ethnic minorities students
constituted more than half the intake. Courses were found to be
opening up education and employment opportunities (10% were progessing
to FE, 83% into HE and 7% into work). Within the OCSL, it was
acknowledged by the co-ordinators in the institutions, that the Access
panel had provided a source of support for the tutors concerned.

Discussion

Table 6.12 (p.293) indicates noticeable differences between the member

institutions of OCSL in the number of courses designated Open College

courses in the period 1985-88. Figure 6.3 (p.280) summarises the

institutions on certain important variables. Interviews with key

people in the institutions indicated the wide variations in the

capacity, commitment and communication facilities between institutions

which affected the delivery mechanism. Figure 6.4 (p.281) summarises

some of the background characteristics of the Open College

co-ordinators in the institutions. It indicates some of the factors

relating to their interest and commitment to the Open College

development.

It could predicted on the basis of this information that more

development would take place in the Return to Learning and Access

course area than in the field of New Technology, if for no other

reason than that the co-ordinators were most likely to be teaching in

this field and close liaison with other co-ordinators was likely to be

effected. This was found to be the case.

Within the FE sector, with the exception of Westwark, there was,

generally, less experience with adult returners but the energies of

the co-ordinators within the institutions and close liaison with the

Access panel facilitated by the central co-ordinator led to growth in

Figure 6.3: Chart of Key Factors influencing Implementation within OCSL

	History	Capacity			Communication		Commitment	
	Adult Returners	Technical	'Other'	Remission	External	Internal	Principal	Co-ordinator (Background)
FE: Westwark	✓	✓	Inadequate	0.5	✓	✓	✓	✓ Soc.Science
Flinton	Some	✓	Inadequate	0.5	Poor	✓	✓	✓ Soc.Science
Hallwark	Some	✓	Very Inadequate	0.5	Poor	Poor	Indifferent	✓ Soc.Science
Dunstan	None	✓	Inadequate	0.5	✓*	✓	✓	/ Soc.Science
Technical Craft	None	✓	Very Inadequate	<0.1	Some	✓	Not Interested	✓ Soc.Science
AEI: Westwark	✓	Host Institution	Reasonable	0.5	✓	✓	Post Vacant	Arts/ Education
Bentham	✓	Very Good	Reasonable	0.5	✓	✓	✓ But critical	✓ Soc.Science/ Technology*
Seaham	✓	x	Reasonable	None	✓	✓	✓ But critical	✓ Education
Laymore	✓	x	Reasonable	0.5	✓	✓	New appointment	✓ Soc.science

* new incumbant but previous post-holder committed to Open-College development.

Figure 6.4: Summary of Background Factors relating to Institutional Co-ordinators/Liaison Officers

	Sex	Ethnicity	Working Class Origin	'Second Chance'	Subject Background	Feminist	Socialist	Other
F.E: Westwark	M	White	–	x	Pyschology	–	–	Former Course Tutor adult courses
Flinton	F	Black	✓	✓	Social Psych.	✓	–	Single parent
Hallwark	M	White	✓	x	Sociology	–	–	–
Dunston	M	White	✓	✓	Social Science	–	–	Master's Degree European Working Class Movements
Technical Craft	M	White	✓	✓	History/ Politics	–	✓	Experience of trade union education
AEI: Westwark	F	White	–	x	Sociology	✓	–	Master's Degree Adult returners
Bentham	F	White	–	x	Communication/ Computing	✓	✓	Very committed Adult returners
Seaham	F	White	–	–	Adult Literacy	✓	✓	Very committed Adult returners
Laymore	F	White	–	–	Politics Sociology	✓	✓	Very committed adult returners

– indicates information not available

this field. Westwark College continued to expand Access provision and substantial development also took place at Flinton and Dunstan. All three colleges had principals who saw the Open College as 'fitting in' with future plans for the college. Notably the least successful was the development in the College of Technical Craft where, although the co-ordinator was very committed, the college did not see Open College developments as central to its function and future.

Within the AEIs there were also marked differences in the commitment of the institutions to the Open College development. Westwark AEI had a history of co-operation with Westwark FE and although the principal of the AEI was known to have strong reservations about the structure of the OCSL and the role assumed by the polytechnic it would, nevertheless, appear that developments in the Open College field were well supported. The attitude of the principal at Bentham was not dissimilar, namely, that this was a policy development which the AEI could not afford to ignore. But he saw the advent of the OCSL as a means of investing in new technology which would be advantageous to adult returners in AE. In contrast, the New Technology courses at Laymore were of the 'off the shelf' type and there was no particular attention given to the needs of adult returners. There was no liaison between the co-ordinator of the Open College and the part-time tutor of the New Technology course, which was located away from the main site of the institute. The developments at Laymore in Return to Learning, however, were well-established and thrived through the energies of the co-ordinator. Least development took place at Seaham

where the institute did not give formal remission and the co-ordinator
who was very committed was frustrated by the lack of recognition of
the need for remission. She eventually resigned from the role of
co-ordinator.

In relation to the general hypothesis concerning the successful
implementation of Open College objectives the findings support the
prediction that successful development was most likely to occur where
there was a history of involvement with adult students, where the
institution was adequately resourced, where key people were committed
to the development and where good communication was evident, both
between staff within the institution and with those outside the
institution who could provide support. However, where there was no
history of involvement and the culture of the institution was not
immediately favourable curriculum change and development could take
place providing there was commitment within the institution from the
principal, in terms of the allocation of resources and remission for
the role of a co-ordinator. This could promote the development of a
'constituency' within the institution and facilitate the use expertise
from without.

Notes

1. Whilst the OCSL was launched in 1983 prior to the publication of
    the Review of 1984, it was conceived in the knowledge that a
    policy statement was to be made recommending the collaboration of
    institutions in the post-school sector.

2. Initial observations on the experience of the Open College set up
    in 1987 by central government in attracting clientele suggests it
    has not attracted those with a minimum of education. Times
    Higher Education Supplement March 3rd 1989.

Appendix 6.1: Methodology

In 1984/5 forty introductory classes in the field of New
Technology were provided. Twelve classes (a 30% sample) were
randomly selected to be representative of the length of course
and the types of institutional providers. Two other classes (for
women only) were added to the study in 1985/6. A total of 14
courses, therefore, were surveyed in 11 institutions (one in a
polytechnic, six in colleges of further education and seven in
adult education institutes) catering for 170 students. With two
exceptions, all were short courses (8-12 weeks) for a 2-3 hour
period each week. One of the two long courses was in FE (part of
RSA I 'Computers in Data Processing' - a year-long course of
seven hours a week) and the other, in an AEI (2-3 hours a week,
also a year in length, although it made provision for new
entrants each term). The majority of the New Technology courses
were of an introductory nature and only two had formal
qualification aims (although two others gave college
certificates). In 1985/6 two further courses were added to the
survey. These were 'women only' courses, one in an AEI and the
other in a college of FE. The course in the AEI followed the
general pattern of introductory courses (a short 10-week course
for two hours a week with no qualification aim); the other, in
FE, was a full-time course (30 hours a week) over a year, leading
to the qualification 'B/TEC Record of Achievement in Information
Technology'.

A questionnaire was given in situ, by the researcher, to
adult students at the start of the course and, another, on
completion of the course. Students were asked how they came to
take the course, what difficulties they encountered on returning
to education, what benefits they perceived and whether they
expected to follow the subject through to a higher level. They
were also asked for details of their social and educational
background. Additional information was obtained by means of a
questionnaire to the lecturers of New Technology courses
pertaining to their involvement in teaching at other institutions
of the OCSL, their membership of the New Technology group, the
'flow' of information on courses in their own and other
institutions, their counselling of students with regard to
'follow-on' courses and their general comments on the teaching
facilities. The response rate from tutors was 100 per cent and
from students 98 per cent on the two questionnaires given in
situ. The response to a follow-up questionnaire to students
who did not complete the course was 15 per cent. The researcher
also attended meetings of co-ordinators of New Technology courses
at the Open College administrative centre and was present at the
launch of the 'Technobus' at the Polytechnic of the South Bank,
an occasion attended by representatives from all the member
institutions of the Open College.

Appendix 6.2: Survey of introductory courses in New Technology

TABLE 6.1

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF STUDENTS TAKING INTRODUCTORY
COURSES IN NEW TECHNOLOGY
(N=152)

	%
In paid employment (full-time/part-time)	51
Temporarily unemployed but seeking work	18
Houseperson	13
Full-time student	9
Retired	5
Non-employed (disabled)/Other	4
	100

TABLE 6.2

SOCIAL CLASS OF STUDENT'S FAMILY
(N=135)

	%
Non-manual (R.G. I&II)	33
Non-manual (R.G. III n.m)	24
Skilled Manual (R.G. III.m.)	23
Semi-/unskilled manual (R.G.IV&V)	20
	100

TABLE 6.3

REASONS FOR TAKING AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN NEW TECHNNOLOGY*
(N=170)

	%
Work-related aims:	
To improve my career prospects generally	46
To help me in my present job	25
To enable me to re-enter the job market	18
Subject-related aims:	
To find out about the new technology	50
To learn more about a subject that really interests me	32
To gain sufficient background to continue the subject at a more advanced level	32
To learn a practical skill	30
To develop a shared interest with my friend, spouse, children	17
General Reasons:	
Wanted an interest to keep my mind active	22
To make up for lack of educational opportunities in the past	20
To see if I could succeed at a course of this sort	17
To develop greater self-confidence	12
To get away from my usual surroundings and responsibilities at home	10
To use the equipment there for a hobby of mine	6
To make new friends with similar interests	4
Other	4

* More than one reason could be offered. Percentages are
  percentages of students offering that reason.

TABLE 6.4

REASONS FOR THE SELECTION OF THE COURSE *
(N=170)

%

Features of the course itself:
The subjects offered appeared to be the ones I wanted............ 57
The course was at the right academic level........................ 24
It was specifically designed for mature students................. 10

The mode of study:
It was at a convenient time for me................................ 36
I could study without giving up my present job/career............ 27
It fitted in with my domestic responsibilities................... 19
It allowed me to study at my own pace............................ 14
It provided an opportunity to mix with younger students.......... 1

Practical factors:
It was near to where I live/work................................. 50
The cost of the course was reasonable/manageable................. 41
Pre-school child care facilities were provided................... 10
It catered for students with disability problems................. 1

Other factors:
I could get on the course despite my lack
 of qualifications.. 8
I could not get a place on the course that
 I really wanted to take....................................... 8
It was recommended by others e.g. students, tutors............... 5
Spouse or friend etc. was already taking the course............. 2
Other factors... 3

* More than one reason could be offered. Percentages are
  percentages of students offering that reason.

TABLE 6.5

RATES OF COURSE COMPLETION

Institution (N)	Mean %	Range %
Polytechnic (1)	82	-
Colleges of F.E. (5)	51	28-78
Adult Education Institutes (4)	49	11-92
ALL (10)	55	11-92

TABLE 6.6

FACTORS WHICH PREVENTED STUDENTS GETTING THE MAXIMUM
BENEFIT FROM THE COURSE *
(N=170)

	%
Job demands restricting my study time	39
Relating my practical experience to the skills/subject taught	37
Organising my time for the course	34
Lacking confidence in my abilities	34
Keeping up with the level of the course	31
Feeling my level of education was inadequate	24
Lacking encouragement from family/friends etc	15
Meeting the cost of my studies	11
Getting on with the teaching staff	3
Getting on with the other students	2

* More than one factor could be mentioned. Percentages are
percentages of students mentioning that factor.

TABLE 6.7

STUDENT DISSATISFACTION WITH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF
COURSE PROVISION*
(N=93)

	%
Places for informal contact with staff/students...	24
Pre-school child care provision...................	23
Provision of up-to-date equipment.................	18
Physical environment..............................	15
Transport system..................................	15
Availability of staff for counselling and advice..	12
The teaching methods for mature students..........	11
The academic standard of the course...............	10
The subject/content of the course.................	8
Interest and enthusiasm of the staff..............	6
Amount of contact with the teaching staff.........	3

* More than one aspect could mentioned. Percentages are percentages
  of students mentioning that aspect.

TABLE 6.8

BENEFITS EXPERIENCED FROM THE COURSE*
(N=93)

	%
Learned more about an interesting subj./activity..	93
Acquired new skills/information that I needed.....	92
Gained sufficient background to continue subject at a higher level........................	90
Enjoyed skill/subject for its own sake............	89
Became more confident in myself and my abilities..	78
Increased my career prospects.....................	62
Encouraged others in my family to study...........	58
Developed new friendships.........................	53
Obtained advice on follow-on courses..............	35

* More than one benefit could be mentioned. Percentages are
  percentages of students mentioning that benefit.

TABLE 6.9

STUDENTS' PLANS FOR 'FOLLOW-ON' COURSES
(N=60)

	On beginning the course %	On finishing the course %
No plans	31	13
Same subject advanced level	42	56
Course in similar area	18	21
Same subject - Access	2	7
Same subject - Degree	3	-
Course in unrelated area	3	3
	100	100

TABLE 6.10

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON NEW TECHNOLOGY COURSES
(N=170)

	%
College/Institute prospectus	43
Staff giving the course	14
A friend	12
Other staff from the institution	11
Newspaper, magazine or trade journal	11
Open college leaflet	7
Someone at work	4
Spouse/Partner	4
Posters about course	3
Staff from another institution/school	3
Specialised careers service for adults	2
Someone who had taken the course previously	2
Clubs/Organisations	1
Television/Radio	1
	100

TABLE 6.11

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS COMPLETING COURSES WHEN COMPARED TO THE CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS ON ENROLMENT

EDUCATION

	None/CSE	'O'level/Equ.	'A'/Prof.	ALL	
On enrolment:	20	43	37	100	(n = 170)
On completion:	38	37	25	100	(n = 93)

SOCIAL CLASS (parents)

	Manual	White collar	Non-manual	ALL
On enrolment:	42	23	35	100
On completion:	57	22	21	100

ETHNICITY

	Ethnic minority	ESWI	ALL
On enrolment:	34	66	100
On completion:	31	69	100

SEX

	Women+	Men	ALL
On enrolment:	65	35	100
On completion:	61	39	100

TABLE 6.12

COURSES DESIGNATED 'OPEN COLLEGE' COURSES IN OCSL 1985/87

	R to L/ Foundation		Access		New Technology		Flexible Learning	
	'85-'86	'86-'87	'85-'86	'86-'87	'85-'86	'86-'87	'85-'86	'86-'87*
FE COLLEGES								
Westwark..........	4	5	5	5	3	2	11	
Flinton..........	5	11	5	6	3	3	–	
Hallwark..........	4	6	3	2	2	9	4	
Dunstan..........	2	5	2	5	5	9	1	
Technical Craft...								
AEIs								
Westwark..........	4	12	–	–	5	10	1	
Bentham..........	3	5	–	–	3	6**		
Seaham............	1	4	–	–	1	3		
Laymore..........	3	3	–	–	3	3	3	

* Information on Courses not assembled by OCSL.
** Substantial day-time courses.

CHAPTER VII

A REVIEW OF THE POLICY

What processes were there for reviewing new developments within the

local education authority? The Easton model employed by Brown in an

earlier study of the ILEA (see figures 1.1 and 1.2 pp.18-19) suggest

that policy-making, implementation and the review of policy are part

of a continuous process. The purpose of this chapter is: first, to

examine the feed-back mechanisms and the procedures for evaluation and

policy review; and second, to examine whether the shortcomings

identified in the Open College structure led to modifications which

could better promote the desired outcomes. There were three levels at

which the review could be undertaken: first, within the management

forum of the OCSL; second, within the Authority's administration,

through the routine monitoring by the inspectorate and/or through

reports requested by the relevant sub-committee (either of which could

involve the use of the Authority's Research and Statistics Branch);

and third, externally by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI). Over a

period of the study the OCSL was subject to a review at all three

levels.

Hypothesis IV: Reviewing the Policy

If the process of review were to be successful, it is hypothesised it

would require: first, that there was two-way communication between the

policy-makers and the policy-implementers in order that any
unsatisfactory aspects of the development could be made known and
addressed; second, that the key people concerned, namely the
principals of the institutions continued to be committed to it; and
third, that adequate resources were allocated to ensure it could
operate effectively. In the light of the deficiences that were
identified in relation to the problem of managerial control, it could
be expected that the problem of control would be identified and
addressed in the review process and that the structure of the Open
College would be revised.

In undertaking an analysis of data and events the 'social action'
approach again will be employed. Most significant will be whether the
key persons involved shared the same 'definition of the situation', in
order that they propose and 'negotiate' changes that would facilitate
the desired outcomes of the policy. Other theoretical perspectives
will be employed as appropriate. Most particularly at this point, the
models of the political scientist may be appropriate in order that the
outcomes of the policy review be viewed in the light of the broader
political scene, that of relations between central and local
government. Again, the use of more than one source of information
will be deployed: interviews with key people; the minutes of JPB
meetings; participant observation at meetings of AFE Strategy Section
of FHE Sub-Committee and the JPB; and documentation from various
sources provide insights and understanding of the train of events and

the outcomes. (The use of more than one source of information also

facilitates triangulation.)

To begin, it is perhaps useful to map the structure of the

organisation of the Open College and the avenues of communication.

(See figure 1.3 p.29). Within the formal structure of the Open

College of South London the formal forum was the meeting of the JPB

(Appendix 1.1 page 44 details those who were members of the JPB),

whilst within the ILEA the policy forum for discussing developments in

the post-school sector was the AFE Strategy Section.

The Review by the Authority

Communication: the 'feed-back' process

What were the regular processes by which the education authority

reviewed a particular policy? The interview with the former Education

Officer (EO) revealed that it could take place in one of a number of

ways. "Sometimes", he said, "we would build it in - we are agreed we

want to take another look at it in two years". This could, on

occasion, involve the Research and Statistics Branch in a monitoring

exercise or evaluation study which would report to the committee

concerned. Routinely, it would be the responsibility of the

inspectorate to report on policy implementation and to feed back to

the senior staff inspectors (SSIs) and the assistant education

officers (AEOs) of the branch(es) concerned. It has been established

in the case of the OCSL that the origin of the policy lay with the institutions. There was no discrete policy as such and therefore no requirement by a sub-committee for an evaluation and reporting-back requirement. Only the routine process of formal reporting mechanism operated through the inspectorate, augmented it was observed, by informal feed-back through regular social contact between officers and inspectors. This process was documented from the interviews with the key people concerned.

Initially, the inspector responsible for supporting and reporting on Open Colleges and other Community Education initiatives/developments was in the general field of community education. She was involved in the initial appointments of the central and the institutional co-ordinators and attended the termly meetings of the JPB. She saw her brief in terms of providing "advice and support", in fostering co-operation and co-ordination between institutions and generally in monitoring developments.[1] When approached, however, by the central co-ordinator for New Technology who was concerned about the non-completion rates of the introductory courses, she suggested that he seek the advice of the Research and Statistics Branch in undertaking a survey of the students.[2] When the inspector for CEC had to deputise for the SSI, the responsibility for the Open College developments was temporarily assumed by an inspector from FE who viewed the inspectorial role similarly. She attended meetings of the JPB and provided advice and support, particularly in relation to curriculum development. The reports from the inspectors were

initially written for the SSIs and the Chief Inspector (FHCE) the

latter of whom held a cross-phase brief. The inspector would also

report to the senior officers concerned "to make sure everyone knows

what is happening". Informally, it was noted, inspectors and officers

would share observations on Open College developments.

The Chief Inspector (FHCE) when describing his role in feeding back

comments from the inspectors, saw the inspectorial role as one of

having an "overview" of what was happening within the Open Colleges,

taking responsibility for examining the way in which they publicised

their activities and disseminated information and evaluated their

programme in terms of their responsiveness to adult advice groups. He

acknowledged that he took a "lot of interest in (the Open College)

because it's my baby". (He had been associated with the Open College

development from the time of the AFE Review.)

> We receive reports of what is going on, we attend meetings and we
> can tell whether they are kidding themselves . . . but they don't.
> You must remember that the people who actually take part are
> totally committed to the conception and are often wrestling hard
> with their own institutions far more than they are with us for
> money to do development work. What they want us to do is to fight
> hard for their corner . . . they are promoting activities in the
> institutions . . . trying to develop the work, extend the range of
> courses on offer - so evaluation is an integral part of what
> they're doing.

The insights which inspectors gained in the field were fed back to

senior officers. The AEO (CEC), for example, was conscious that the

inspector responsible for the OCSL had examined the role and the

work-load of the co-ordinators in the institutions and was, therefore,

aware that some institutions were meeting their commitment to Open

College development more conscientiously than others. He admitted

that formal evaluation had not been envisaged at the outset but that

it had been sought at a later date. His own measure of success was

seen to lie:

> within the organisational arrangements of individual colleges and
> institutes and how they present themselves to the population
> locally. I would be looking for a measurable change in the
> student profile of any group of students who moved through the
> system. I think I would want to see some changes in curriculum
> planning and programming across the geographical area – to what
> extent has an institute been able to acknowledge the better
> facilities of a college in certain subject areas and vice
> versa and act upon that acknowledgement. I think that would
> be fairly useful. I also think that I would want to know whether
> the teaching staff in different institutions had ever shared any
> in-service training in the last three years.

The AEO (FHE), similarly, saw his line of communication with what was

happening in the colleges as operating via the inspectorate. As he

put it, "I only wish to have an overview of what is happening, rather

than a specific view".

There was, therefore, a mechanism for 'feed-back' in existence which

was also an on-going 'negotiation' between the Authority's inspectors

and the staff involved in Open College developments in the field.

There were, however, no formal reporting mechanisms or review

processes. As far as the Authority's officers were concerned it was

evident there was a continuing commitment to the Open College

development; resources, albeit somewhat restricted in the case of the

later developments, continued to be allocated to the initiative.

Communication initially, however, was almost entirely a one-way affair

as there was no routine basis on which the OCSL staff could enter into

an exchange of views with the Authority's senior officers.

Some two years after the initial launch, the Open College was

encountering some difficulty in its administrative machinery and the

JPB was seen to be more obstructive than supportive of developments.

It appeared to the central co-ordinator (Return to Learning) that:

> It's difficult because within the network there is no real
> agreement as to what the main purpose is - I tend to think within
> the Authority there is no real agreement (either) as to what the
> main purpose is. (December 1987)

There was no indication, it seemed to the people working in the field,

that their efforts were valued. Frustrated with the lack of control

that they had in relation to the co-ordinators' roles within the

institutions and, experiencing a lack of support, even hostility on

occasion from the JPB, the central co-ordinators sought contact with

the staff of other Open College networks which had developed in other

parts of the Authority. Anxious to learn and support each other, the

Open Colleges formed themselves into an 'Inner London Co-ordinating

Committee' (InLOCC) in September 1985.

In terms of the known requirements of successful policy implementation

(commitment, communication and capacity) it would appear from

interviews with the central co-ordinators of two of the three other

Open Colleges that, as in the OCSL, they were not lacking in

commitment, but that having been set up at a later date they were much

less well-resourced (each had only one full-time co-ordinator after

prolonged negotiations with the Authority compared to the OCSL's four

posts and the allocation of remission time for the

co-ordinators/liaison officers in the institutions was less than a day

a week). Figure 7.1 (page 302) summarises the key factors relating to

implementation in two of the other Open Colleges. In some important

respects the other Open Colleges had rather different experiences from

OCSL. In the first place they had different emphases: one focussed,

at least initially, on compiling directories of all the available

courses and by 'mapping', identifying gaps in the provision for adult

returners; the other, identified needs through small scale research

projects conducted by staff in the member institutions. A major

difference was that they seemingly experienced more support and better

relations with their respective management groups. It may be that as

they were established after OCSL that they had learned from some of

its problems. Certainly one Open College, The Access to Learning for

Adults (ALFA), strongly proclaimed that it had a very different

philosophy from OCSL. Whilst OCSL was perceived having "started with

a great flurry of activity - the big bang theory"[3], and as being

dominated by the polytechnic and "driven through by a Director of

Studies and a team of four, the Open College in North London had

developed slowly. The co-ordinator, for example, was seconded,

initially on a part-time basis, from one of the founder institutions.

The philosophy of ALFA was one which emphasised democracy and

accountability but, most important of all, ensured that the

institutions retained ownership of the courses and control over the

direction of the Open College. This approach, fostering trust, was

seen to be quite unlike the flamboyant entrepreneurial style

associated with the OCSL. However, in common with the OCSL, the other

Open Colleges experienced frustration in their communications with

senior officers in County Hall.

	Commitment	Capacity			Communication		
	(Background)	Central Co-ordinators	Remission Co-ordinators	Office in Poly	Management Forum Representatives Institutions	Internally/ Network	Externally/ County Hall
OCSL	✓ Arts Science Soc. Science	4 full-time	most 0.5	✓	+ Limited representation of central co-ordinators & instit. co-ordinators Not supportive	Workshops/panels Relations good in 2 cases poor in 2 cases	poor
ALFA	✓ Arts	1 initially 0.2	0.1	✓	+ Central co-ordinator All liaison officers Very supportive	Projects Workshops Access forum Staff development	poor
CAWLOC	✓ Soc. Science	1 initially 0.5	<0.1	✓	+ Central co-ordinator All liaison officers Very supportive	Projects Sub-committees Staff development	poor

InLOCC was not formally constituted but, in the absence of any formal

machinery, it acted as a pressure group. In November 1985 InLOCC

approached the Chair of the FHE Sub-Committee for sustained financial

support for further Open College developments. The Chair saw it as

the responsibility of the inspectorate to see that policies were

implemented. He supported the developments and had been kept informed

of what was happening through his attendance at receptions,

conferences and seminars. He said:

> I do feel that I am fairly well informed of what goes on - I feel
> it is good we are going in the right direction, so there is no
> major Review (planned). But I feel the time is ripe for an
> assessment of how far the exercise has gone and I feel we need to
> ask the inspectors and people responsible for the Open College to
> evaluate it. There is a tension, I think, between the
> enthusiasts, God bless them, people putting in more effort on
> their own, keeping the thing going because of their personal
> commitment and the constraints of the system, because there is
> never as much money as people would like. (March 1987)

He, no doubt, gave InLOCC a sympathetic hearing and raised the matter

with senior officers and invited Open College representatives to a

meeting of 'Strategy Sub-Section of FHE Sub-Committee'. As far as the

Members were concerned they were totally supportive of the development

of the Open Colleges and were prepared to support it with what

resources could be made available and communicated this to the senior

officers concerned. It was about this time (Autumn 1985) that a new

appointment was made to the post of Deputy Education Officer

(FHCE)[4]. The person appointed couldn't help but be struck by, as

he put it:

> the rather incomplete way in which the (Open College development)
> had been thought through in the AFE Review. There was clearly
> seen to be a need for some geographical grouping of institutions,
> whether or not they were involved in AFE, which would improve the
> opportunities to progress from one form of study to another. In

practical terms a number of Open Colleges were operating in different ways with very different perceptions of what the Authority's expectations were, with very different financial basis, with the OCSL having a much bigger base . . . . So take the theory and practice - the theory was incomplete and the practice was very varied. This seemed to me to be quite unsatisfactory and then I asked a number of people what the Open Colleges were supposed to be about and the diffuseness of the answers that I got suggested that people hadn't thought it through very thoroughly. So I convened a meeting with the AEO (CEC) and the AEO (FHCE) and a number of meetings took place with the Chairs of the Open Colleges. They had been coming together in an informal grouping called InLOCC and they were not handling it at all sensitively, or clever politically. InLOCC started doing some direct lobbying for some money to AFE Section . . . I don't think I was actually at the meeting but it all sounded as though it was getting out of hand. There were some fairly frustrated people out in the Open Colleges trying to by-pass the proper administrative mechanism for getting an initiative through and lobbying Members direct.

The association of the Open College development with the equal

opportunities policy of the Authority enabled InLOCC to act as a

pressure group to influence Members who, in turn, brought pressure to

bear upon the senior officers responsible, such that they seriously

had to address the problems which the staff of the Open Colleges were

experiencing in relation to their structure and/or resources. In

April 1986, InLOCC met with senior officers in County Hall for a

discussion of the Open College policy and a paper was drafted entitled

'Open Colleges: Objectives and Review' (Appendix 7.2 p.332) which went

through a number of revisions and which "sought to be much more

explicit about what the Open Colleges were about and how we would

judge them" (Director of Education Post-Schools).

What the Review also established was a formal mechanism for reporting

back on an annual basis to the Education Officer (PS 6130:2.4). Each

of the Open Colleges was asked to submit an annual report summarising

the achievements of that session in terms of the objectives stated in

the Review. The member institutions and agencies were also asked to

evaluate the use made of Open College work. This established a forum

for the Open Colleges to communicate their work to senior officers and

Members of the AFE Strategy Section of AFE Sub-Committee on an annual

basis. In the first three years of the Open College development,

different 'definitions of the situation' had seemingly come to be held

by those involved. The Review functioned (as the AEO (FHE) saw it) to

negotiate a common set of objectives for the key people concerned. In

the absence of a formal mechanism for reporting and reviewing the

policy which would have been more likely to be the case had the

development been established by committee, the Open Colleges jointly

had forced a formal review following the pressures which they were

able to exert through Members.

Let us now examine whether the obvious deficiences in the Open College

development were addressed in the Review. In relation to the OCSL the

most obvious deficiency was in relation to communication whereas

vis-a-vis the other networks, the most obvious need was for adequate

resources.

Communication. The Review document set out clear objectives for the

Open Colleges (PS 6130:2). (See Appendix 7.2 page 332.)

The DEO (Post-Schools) said:

    That was my attempt, working with colleagues to be more precise
    about what they were expecting of Open Colleges, to be much more

precise about the fact that they are not institutions, that they
do not have a managerial role in terms of deciding what courses
are run, that that is an issue for the Authority not for
individual institutions. Their role is about, on the one hand,
ensuring that potential students have got the best information and
advice about the courses available. That's why I don't see the
Open Colleges as an amalgamation of institutions and advice-giving
bodies. That's where the careers service and the educational
guidance service are so important . . . . So on the one hand, the
Open Colleges are about networks of information from the
institutions to advice-giving services, about what is available,
because many of the needs of the disadvantaged can be met if only
the disadvantaged know what exists; but they are also about the
advice-giving bodies in their contact with clients and potential
clients feeding back to the institutions the ways in which they
can be more helpful to clients . . . specific ways in course
design . . . . I call them information networks rather than Open
Colleges, the word 'open' gives the aura of institutions and the
resistance of some of the institutional partners of the Open
College resulted from the (the misconception). I think that may
have been particularly true of the OCSL given the polytechnic's
domination and the fear among some of the partner institutions who
didn't want to be managed by the polytechnic.

(Interviewer: Your role was to get people to think through the
objectives more clearly - to find some coherence to the policy
overall?)

(It was) an attempt to prevent people from doing those things that
the Authority was not prepared to let them do. Now I am quite
honest about that - where they were attempting to manage and seek
to get involved in which courses to run, I was saying "No", that
is not part of your role. There were some interesting tensions
there because they wanted to be in at the cutting edge of new
developments, so we compromised a bit on piloting (courses). But
it was the (a) trying to achieve coherence and (b) trying to
harness what the Authority wanted with what people were
enthusiastic about doing and I hope being sensitive to the fact
that the Authority can't impose too much on other people so that .
. . they say we can't go on.

(Interviewer: So the objectives for those at the OCSL centre
changed or the emphasis changed?)

I suspect that that was the case.

Commitment. The effect of the policy Review document, stating quite

clearly the objectives of the Open College policy, was to establish

unequivocaly the Authority's commitment to the development. It

allocated financial resources on an annual basis and gave the Open

College control over the financial resources which were managed

through a 'top-up' grant to the polytechnics in respect of their Open

College links. It further established the Open College as a key

feature of the Authority's Equal Opportunities policy.

> The Open College initiative is a key component in the Authority's
> strategy for ensuring equal opportunities in access to post-school
> education. By identifying barriers to entry, by assisting
> non-standard entrants, and by researching unmet needs of local
> communities, the Authority places great importance on the work of
> the Open Colleges in partnership with its institutions and other
> agencies (PS 6130:4.1).

Also, without exception, all the co-ordinators and certainly all the

principals had seen a copy of the policy document. The Review

document, therefore, established a 'shared view' of the policy

development. The Deputy Education Officer believed:

> we were making a very conscious effort to think through with
> people and take on board their comments, modifying the way in
> which we presented it in statements, in such a way as they felt
> they were committed to it. So I hope that the document that we
> finally came out with was one of which there was a shared
> ownership within the Open Colleges, as well as here. I am not
> saying that everyone associated with the Open Colleges would
> accept every word of it, that would be too much to hope for, but
> (more) the general feeling of having seen this Review through
> together and of having resolved what was a policy.

Control/Capacity. A second revision which the new DEO (Post-Schools)

initiated in relation to the Open Colleges was to give them greater

control over the way in which the financial resources were to be

employed.

> (There was) very little clarity about the money the Authority was
> putting in the polytechnic's block grant and how that was being
> spent on Open College activities . . . (What) I have done which I

believe to be significant is this — in the polytechnic block grant
report which went to Committee between Easter and Summer for
1987/8 we put in additional money for the Open Colleges. By
putting it in to the block grant we were saying (in a covering
letter to the directors of the polytechnics) that all the money
(because the Open Colleges had previously had no control over the
finance) in the block grant specifically identified for the Open
College (£7 million of the FHCE grant) . . . can only be spent in
agreement with the Open College committee and if you are not able
to reach agreement with the committee it is unavailable. I think
the letter goes on to say . . . in the final resort the Authority
would not be in a position to pay this money into the block grant,
if agreement could not been reached. Now I guess that's the first
way, certainly in relation to Open College funding, that the
Authority has said to the polytechnics, by inference, also to the
Open Colleges, that you have got to get your act together
yourselves, we have set you some overall objectives, we have
provided you with some additional money and we have indicated in
the Report on the Review process the way we intend to operate in
the future, but if you don't get your act together then the money
won't be available. Now that is very (unlike ILEA).

(Interviewer: Was this move influenced by the fact that the
polytechnics are to be removed from the control of LEAs and the
new relationship will be a contractual one?)

Yes, but I would have done this anyway (in relation to) the
additional money in their overall allocation. But I was conscious
. . . that in the not too distant future we are going to have to
be drawing up contracts, a partnership of the polytechnics with
the Open Colleges and the polytechnics can't just be agents on
their own. It was quite deliberately saying to the other parties
in the Open College the polytechnic isn't there just to tell you
how the money will be spent. During September and October we will
be getting reports back from the Open Colleges to see how far that
agreement is being reached.

The revised mechanism for allocating resources to the polytechnics

clearly gave the Open Colleges more control over their respective

budgets. It is apparent from the document that the OCSL remained the

beneficiary of more substantial resources than the other Open Colleges

(PS 6130:3.3). There was no attempt in the Review to address the

internal structural problems of the OCSL. The Joint Planning Board

(JPB) subsequently undertook to address the problems arising from its

organisational structure. These are discussed in a later section.

<u>The first Annual Review of the Open</u>

<u>Colleges by the Authority</u>

The first test of the Authority's mechanisms for reviewing the Open

Colleges was when the first annual report of the Open Colleges was

presented to AFE Strategy Section in November 1987. This was also the

occasion when the report from Research and Statistics Branch,

evaluating the introductory courses to New Technology, was presented.

(A copy of the report RS 1137/87 is enclosed with the thesis.) The

AFE Strategy Committee was a public forum of communication between all

the key parties concerned (officers, Members, Open College staff and

researcher) in which views were shared about the development. The

issues of 'capacity' and 'commitment' were raised at different points

in the discussion. Financial incentives were seen as one means of

bringing pressure to bear on institutions (Chief Inspector (FHCE)).

They did influence the Open Colleges' capacity to deliver, said one

member of the Open College staff. The important underlying factor of

control was recognised. The Chair said there was a bewildering sense

of "power and powerlessness" allied to an uncertainty regarding the

individual commitment of the institutions which led him to suggest

that institutions should be asked for a "summary of their commitment

to the Open College". The concerns raised by the evaluation report

from Research and Statistics Branch in relation to the need for staff

development, student counselling and the drop-out rate, were noted by

the Chair. "There was", he said, "a problem in trying to achieve a

range of objectives and there were variable results". The commitment

of the Authority to the work of the Open Colleges was confirmed by the
Review. It also established a formal mechanism for communication and
accountability on an annual basis.

The OCSL's Review of its

Management Structure

The problems of the OCSL could be seen to stem from its constitution
as a separately constituted entity, as indicated by its title The Open
College of South London. Employing yet once again the criteria for
successful implementation - namely communication, commitment, capacity
and control - let us examine first of all whether the deficiences were
diagnosed and next to ascertain whether remedies were found and
implemented.

Following the formal Review of 1986, the OCSL set up a 'Working' Group
to address the problems it was experiencing. Interviews with the
principals and central co-ordinators, together with the minutes of the
JPB, indicated that the following problems existed.

The accountability of the four central co-ordinators. Since the
Director of Studies had left in 1986 there was seen to be something of
a "management vacuum". There was a sense in which the principals did
not feel that the central team were sufficiently accountable to the
JPB. (The central co-ordinator for Flexible Learning Opportunities
had not produced an annual report and the central co-ordinator for New

Technology was seen to be solely taken up with the organisation of the technobus and thus seemingly unaccountable for his time to the JPB.)

Accountability of the member institutions to the OCSL. Some colleges and institutes were seen to be failing to use either the half post of Lecturer to undertake work in connection with the Open College, or were doing so in such a way that the time was spent entirely within the institutions. In addition, the co-ordinator was not attending meetings which were arranged centrally.

Communication. There was no forum in which all four co-ordinators met with the principals and institutional co-ordinators since the JPB was composed only of representatives of the various groups.

The JPB established a 'Working Group' to examine the constitution and to put forward proposals, which were subsequently accepted as an interim measure. The revised constitution reasserted the aims of the OCSL constitution of 1985, but added two further methods by which it would pursue its aims. These were by "liaising with relevant regional and national bodies" and by "regular meetings of co-ordinators no less than once a term with agendas determined by co-ordinators". Membership of the JPB was enlarged to include all central co-ordinators and all the co-ordinators in the member institutions (previously it had only included two members of the central team and four representatives of the institutional co-ordinators, two from AE and two from FE, and representatives of educational advice shops and

local community groups). The most significant change in the

constitution was to establish an executive committee which would be

elected annually by the JPB. It was to consist of: one member of the

senior management and one co-ordinator of the Open College; a unit

member from each of the sectors (AE/FE/HE) elected at the summer

meeting of the Joint Planning Board; one representative of the

Education and Careers Advice Services for Adults in the local Boroughs

and the chairperson of the executive committee who was to be elected

at the first meeting in each academic year. It was hoped that the

changes would facilitate "increased staff involvement". It was agreed

that elections for the Executive Committee would take place at the

Summer Conference of the Open College.

The changes in the constitution addressed the problem of communication

and by establishing a small executive committee also sought to

exercise greater managerial control over the work of the central team.

The Chair also sought to sort out the finances in relation to the

funding of the co-ordinators' posts. (Initially, these had been

funded by the polytechnic but after the first year of operation the

Authority had taken on the funding of these posts, although the staff

concerned remained employees of the polytechnic.) The working party,

however, did nothing to tackle the problem of the principal's

accountability for the time of the institutional co-ordinator to the

OCSL. This question was raised at the JPB and one of the first tasks

of the newly constituted executive was to undertake a survey of the

institutions to ascertain the number of co-ordinators in post and the

way in which their role was defined. It was difficult to see what

pressures the executive committee could bring to bear on the member

institutions if they did not fulfil their obligations in respect of

the half-post of lecturer, designated the Open College co-ordinator,

other than proposing that the institution withdraw from the Open

College network and thereby lose its funding for the half-post

appointment.

Some of the inherent problems in the OCSL could not be fully resolved.

These were to do with the fact that it was an organisation outside of

the institutions, complicated by the fact that the institutions were

of three different orders (adult education institutes, colleges of FE

and a polytechnic), each answerable to different branch within the

overall structure of the Authority, each with its own agenda. The

review and revision undertaken by the OCSL in its constitution,

however, went some way towards tackling its organisational deficiences

and certainly the atmosphere at JPB meetings became noticeably more

constructive and the principals more supportive of the central staff.

A Review of the Open Colleges
by the HMI

The HMI reported on their general conclusions of the inspection to a

meeting of InLOCC to which the Authority's officers asked to be

included.[5] It is useful, therefore, to see what observations the

HMI made and what recommendations followed from their inspection.

The areas of Open College activity which were commended by the HMI
were: the use of Access and Return to Learning panels as developed by
OCSL; the compiling of 'Directories' undertaken by ALFA; the inclusion
of non-ILEA institutions in the Open College forums and, generally,
the practice of working across the sectors. The problematical areas
were identified largely as organisational difficulties to do with
management structures, poor communications with the Authority's
administration and "philosophical" differences between AE and FE. It
was noted that the relations of the Open Colleges with their 'host'
polytechnic could also be problematical. In particular, the dominant
role played by the polytechnic in relation to OCSL, it was observed,
had not been helpful. Further, within the Open Colleges, generally,
the dual role of institutional co-ordinators/liaison officers was seen
to engender role conflict.

The HMI identified certain concerns which should be addressed: the
need to establish permanent posts (to avoid staff turnover); the
importance of obtaining and maintaining the support of the
institutions; the need to establish facilities for student guidance;
and the provision of staff development in adult-orientated techniques.
The main thrust of their recommendations concerned the need for the
Open College networks to become an integral part of the Authority's
structure. In particular, they thought InLOCC should be formally
constituted, that a system of accreditation should be established and
that there should be greater accountability of the Open Colleges to
the Authority. The institution of an Annual Report mechanism was

welcomed. Had this been in place at the time of the HMI visit, it was

noted, it would have provided a framework for the HMI's evaluation.

In the discussion that followed the HMI's verbal report to the staff

of the Open Colleges and the Authority's officers, the DEO

(Post-Schools) was reported as saying:

> that the Authority did not want to control and dictate what the
> Open Colleges did but wanted to take advantage of the creativity
> at grass roots. Was the HMI suggesting that strict guidelines for
> structures be set down? Open Colleges were supposed to develop
> without bureaucratic control from the centre. [6]

Subsequently, InLOCC drew up a proposal to re-structure the Open

Colleges. The plan met with objections from within the OCSL, in

effect, because it was felt that the very organisational problems

which they had experienced and were seeking to tackle, such as the

problems of a 'top down' structure, would only be replicated with the

proposal for one single Open College structure.

It appeared to this observer that the re-structuring proposal served

to unite the hitherto disparate group of people in opposition to the

proposed scheme. In the event, the internal review by the OCSL which

sought to identify priorities for Open College developments within the

institutions was temporarily shelved in order to discuss the greater

concern, the re-structuring which threatened their autonomy.

The Influence of Central Government

At about the same time an even greater threat to the future of the
Open Colleges became apparent. It was never an item on the agenda but
it influenced people's thinking and their stance towards the proposed
re-structuring. This was the announcement by central government in
February 1988 that the ILEA would cease to exist as a unitary
education authority on April 1st 1990 and that individual Boroughs
were to assume responsibility for education. It should, perhaps, be
said that throughout the whole period of the establishment and
expansion of the OCSL that the influence of central government had
been felt: first, the effect of 'rate-capping' reduced the financial
resources available, particularly in the non-statutory area of adult
education; second, the proposal to remove polytechnics from the
control of LEAs created insecurity about the continued commitment of
the polytechnic to devote resoures to the OCSL. The proposed
abolition of the whole Authority, however, was the ultimate threat to
the fragile consortium of institutions which spanned several boroughs.
The future of adult institutes was seriously threatened. There was,
therefore, a strong feeling of insecurity in the post-school sector.
There were different 'definititions of the situation' depending on the
actors' situations, roles and relationships. For example, when the
polytechnic director attended the AFE Strategy Sub-Committee in May
1988 and presented the polytechnic's proposals for 'Community
Projects' she was asked by a senior officer whether the polytechnic
intended to continue support for community initiatives "after vesting

day" (April 1st 1990). In response, the director said that although

the polytechnic was "experiencing considerable difficulty in balancing

the budget" and was subject to much "national buffeting" and

consequent re-structuring and needed to look to ways to enhance

funding, they were nonetheless internally confident and committed to

the community projects (29 per cent of the students were drawn from

inner London as were 60 per cent of all Access students). When the

Chair probed further, suggesting there could be a conflict of interest

between the polytechnic's community relations and relations with

business interests and questioned whether the community commitment

would survive in the "harsher economic environment", the director

responded by indicating that they operated the 'Robin Hood' principle,

whereby 20 per cent of the surplus income from courses went to a

central pool to 'top up' other areas. Courses for adult returners,

she said, were seen as central to the polytechnic's role, admitting at

the same time that there was an element of "self-interest" for the

polytechic in this in relation to Access students.

Within the polytechnic, however, a different 'definition of the

situation' was all too apparent to some members of staff as a result

of central government's White Paper (designed to take polytechnic's

out of the control of LEAs). A re-structuring of departments had been

undertaken whereby all Deans were no longer elected academic leaders

but line managers with a marketing function. According to one member

of staff, people, "were all running around with price tags on their

heads - it was very depressing". It was evident that there were

different schools of thought and different value systems in conflict

with one another; there were those members of staff who were anxious

for the polytechnic to become a quasi-university and who were

therefore prepared to jettison Access students on the grounds that

non-standard entry lowered standards. On the other hand, there were

others who, whilst they might admit "we are going to lose the battle

(over the future of the OCSL) that doesn't mean we are not going to

fight it". Already the re-structuring and the new 'realism' had had

an impact; there were "an awful lot of line managers around the place

and, as a result, a lot of flowers (were said to have) died".

The Education Reform Bill was published on November 20th 1987. One of

its proposals was a provision for the inner London boroughs to opt out

of the ILEA in any year after 1990. Following pressure from some

Back-bench Members of Parliament, however, an amendment to the Bill

was made on February 4th 1988 which proposed the abolition of the ILEA

in April 1990.

Representations were made to the House of Commons and a ballot of

parents was held in which 94.3 per cent voted for the ILEA to be

retained (only 5.5 per cent voted for control of education to be given

to the boroughs). "Abolition was opposed by an absolute majority: by

51.6 per cent of those entitled to vote" (Guardian May 4th, 1988).

Further action by central government seriously damaged the provision

in the post-school sector. In 1988 the ILEA's budget was cut by £93

million (almost a tenth of the total). This affected the

non-statutory areas of provision, such as adult education

disproportionately. An HMI Report (2nd February 1988) had described

the provision of adult education in the ILEA as "first-rate in every

respect . . . and is regarded as an exemplar by many observers of and

commentators on Adult and Continuing Education". 'Rate-capping',

however, led to cuts in resources for maintenance awards to adult

returners for Access courses by 60 per cent. The advent of the

Education Reform Bill also meant that the education authority would in

the future be prevented from giving the polytechnics 'top-up' money in

respect of the provision they made for Access students (New Society,

18th March, 1988). (Fourteen per cent of the ILEA's polytechnic budget

was in respect of Access provision.)

Other measures taken by central government, most notably by the

Department and Health and Social Security, whereby an unemployed

person could no longer attend a course of up to 21 hours a week

without losing welfare benefits, seriously impaired the opportunities

which such persons had of obtaining education/training. Colleges and

institutes altered their provision to meet with the new regulations

only to find that they then faced further changes designed to exclude

those claiming benefit from education.

By the Autumn of 1988 it was clear that the radical re-structuring of

the Open Colleges was not going to go ahead. The budget of the OCSL

was reduced from £90,000 to £72,500. The polytechnic was asked to

absorb two of the full-time central co-ordinators within the

polytechnic (this had, in effect, taken place as the persons

responsible for Access and New Technology were no longer noticeably

engaged with work for the OCSL). Of the remaining two central

co-ordinators, one was seconded to work on a system of accreditation

and the other, the Development Officer, took maternity leave). The

central site was retained with costs born by the polytechnic. In the

Summer of 1989 the OCSL moved its site to Westwark College of FE.

Discussion

The hypothesis was that for a policy-review to be successfully

undertaken and effective in contributing to the greater efficacy of

the policy it must meet the requirements of "communication, commitment

and capacity" (Williams, 1980). The question of managerial control

was also identified as an important factor, especially in relation to

a consortium of institutions. First, let us consider the question of

communication as any decision concerning the continued allocation of

resources must be taken, in part, on the basis of knowledge and

communication of the achievements of the policy to date.

It was established that the Open Colleges were almost ad hoc

developments either anticipating, or following in the wake of, the AFE

Review. Each resulted from initiatives taken by institutions with

resources being sought and negotiated with senior officers.

Negotiators found strong allies in the Chair or Vice-Chair of the FHE

Sub-Committee who exerted pressure on senior officers to facilitate resources. As there was no formal review mechanism instituted, senior officers received feed-back from inspectors in the field through the formal and informal reporting mechanisms. There was no formal avenue, therefore, for the Open Colleges to make representation or to make their activities and needs known to the Authority's decision-makers. Concerned to expand their activities, the InLOCC approached the Chair of the FHE Sub-Committee. This move ultimately brought about a formal review of the policy of the Open Colleges and the formation of a policy document clearly stating the policy objectives. It provided the basis on which the Authority's policy could be reviewed annually and a mechanism (reporting to AFE Strategy Section each Autumn) which provided a forum for the Open Colleges to present and participate in discussion with Members and senior officers.

The OCSL also sought to improve communication within its own network by setting up a 'Working Group' to recommend changes in the organisation. As a result of this the composition of the JPB was enlarged to include all the co-ordinators as well as the central staff and those within institutions. At the same time it established a small executive committee which could function more effectively to reach agreement about proposed developments than a larger but unrepresentative group. The effect of both reviews, the internal one undertaken by the OCSL and the one undertaken by the policy-makers, was to improve communication among all those concerned with the Open College development.

In terms of commitment it was apparent that there were some very

committed individuals in the field both as central co-ordinators and

as lecturers within the institutions. There were some doubts

expressed about the commitment of some institutions which appeared to

want the benefits of an Open College system in terms of advertising

their own courses and enhancing student recruitment but were not

prepared to concede any control over the role of the institutional

co-ordinator. This shortcoming was made explicit in the annual review

of 1987 and was later addressed by the newlyformed executive committee

of the OCSL. By the time of the annual review of 1988 the climate

within the OCSL was noticeably better than previously but the

questions concerning the co-ordinators' roles had not been properly

addressed because of the concerns about re-structuring and the

threatened abolition of the Authority. The formal review by the AFE

Strategy Section was helpful to those working in the field in so far

as it was a statement of the Authority's belief in, and continued

support for, the work of the Open Colleges.

A third factor, that of capacity, was also addressed in the review

procedure. The financial resources allocated to Open Colleges were

largely in the form of 'top-up' grant to the polytechnics. This money

was only forthcoming from the Authority, if the various Open College

committees agreed with their particular polytechnic how the money

would be spent. This gave the Open Colleges greater control over

their relatively small budgets. It did not enable them, however, to

exercise any control over the role of the co-ordinators in the

institutions, as the money for the half-post appointment was paid direct to each member institution. The allocation of the co-ordinator's time to the work of the Open College remained the subject of 'negotiation' between the JPB and the institutions.

The inherent problem for the Open College was that it was a structure which lay outside the established institutional mechanisms for central control and accountability of the Authority. Both review mechanisms - that undertaken by the senior officers and the internal one set up by the JPB of the OCSL - went some way to addressing some of the obvious shortcomings of the Open College development but they could not address the underlying structural problem without proposing wholesale changes in adult and further education. The Open College was therefore vulnerable in a period of political upheaval.

The external evaluation conducted by the HMI identified the same strengths and shortcomings in the Open Colleges as were identified by the Authority's review procedures. There would seem to be, however, one basic point of disagreement between the Authority's view and that of the HMI; the Authority's officers believed in the minimum of control from the centre in order to encourage creativity at the grass roots (one institutional co-ordinator had earlier termed it a "structural footlooseness"), whilst the HMI advocated greater control and the incorporation of the Open Colleges into the Authority's structure.

Ultimately, the most influential factor determining the outcome of this development lay outside the control of local government. Central government had successively restricted the ability of the ILEA to support developments in the post-school sector by 'rate-capping' the Authority thus reducing the financial resources available. It had further influenced the situation by amending the DHSS regulations which had the effect of inhibiting unemployed persons from attending part-time courses. It had also undertaken to remove the control of polytechnics from LEAs, thus restricting the 'topping-up' of grant in respect of their Open College connection. Finally, in an amendment to the Education Reform Bill, it proposed the abolition of the Authority and thus undermined the whole future of the provision of adult education in inner London.[7] Had central government not intervened in this manner, the conclusion to this study of the implementation of the Open College policy would have been that commitment, communication and capacity were all important factors in influencing the efficacy and outcome of the policy. The formal review procedure instituted had successfully sought to address the most obvious shortcomings in terms of communication and control and set up a two-way process of communication between the institutions and the Authority. However, in the light of the policy pursued by central government, the conclusion has to be that the most dominant factor influencing the outcome was 'capacity'. By abolishing the unitary education Authority of inner London, the Open Colleges faced an uncertain future.

The value of an eclectic approach is evident from the analysis

undertaken; each perspective had something to contribute to an

understanding of events and the policy outcome. Initially, the

'systems' approach suggested the potential importance of a feed-back

mechanism, whereby a review of the policy could enhance its

effectiveness. It focussed on the roles of key people in the

decision-making arena. Where there were no formal mechanisms

established for a regular review, the 'social action' perspective

indicated the significance of informal negotiations of the kind which

were undertaken by practitioners in the field in order to establish

communication with the decision-makers. In a new organisation, which

lay outside of the established structure, the roles of the individuals

- notably the central co-ordinators and the co-ordinators/liaison

officers in institutions - had to be defined in interaction with key

people within the institutions and in relation to the Authority's

administration. The process of review also had to be negotiated and

established. (The Authority was perhaps rather slow in doing this,

but it was, in part, because there were two changes of senior officers

during the time period when the Open Colleges were developing.)

Ethnomethodology has also some insights to offer because of the

somewhat unique and unorthodox way in which the OCSL was established

through a network of institutions clustered around a polytechnic. The

fact that it was established as a result of pressure by Members upon

officers perhaps explains why there was a seeming unwillingness by the

senior officers to sort out the organisational difficulties that

resulted. It was said by one of the staff in another Open College,

that "the Authority's role was quite comical, they got taken for a

ride - the money-spinning activity by the OCSL - and the Authority

never forgave the OCSL for having done that to them and the inspector

used to be apoplectic and the Assistant Education Officer apoplectic

about OCSL. They had gone to Members to get money instead of going to

officers". It was, therefore, perhaps, the unorthodox way in which

the development was initially funded which influenced officer's

perceptions and subsequent action or inaction. It was only when the

Open Colleges formed InlOCC and were able to put pressure on the

Authority through lobbying Members that the senior officers undertook

a review of the policy. Rock (1988:136) notes that one feature of the

"birth" of an organisation is the way in which a successful network is

one in which participants exchange information and develop a broader

perspective. In the case of the Open Colleges, it was the formation

of InLOCC which enabled them to bring pressure to bear on the

Authority to formalise their policy on the Open Colleges.

In the short term, however, the approach which best explains the

eventual outcome is the 'structural' perspective. It was, ultimately,

the power which central government could exercise which was the

decisive factor in abolishing the education authority and, with it,

the policy of creating opportunities for educationally disadvantaged

adults. This seriously threatened the Open College networks which had

been established. At the time of writing it was not known whether the

new LEAs would jointly fund the Open Colleges and the associated 'Accreditation Unit'.

Notes

1. The roles and responsibilities of an inspector are defined in three DES reports each promoting a different aspect of the role (those of evaluation, curriculum developer and generalist/pastoralist). Andrew Stillman, 'LEA advisers: change and management' in Educational Research Vol.30 No.3.p.191.

2. The results of this survey are reported in Chapter VI. The survey was later incorporated into a formal review procedure which was established in 1986 and presented to AFE Strategy Section of FHE Sub-Comittee when the Open Colleges made their first formal reports in November 1987. (An interim report had earlier been sent by the researcher to the CC/New Technology in September 1985. See Appendix 7.1 page 329.)

3. Source: Interview with Co-ordinator for 'The North and East London Open College Network' (ALFA).

4. This post was re-named Director of Education (Post-Schools).

5. The account of the HMI inspection is based on a verbal report to a meeting of InLOCC on December 11th 1987 at County Hall also attended by senior officers. Source: CAWLOC Paper. December 1987.

6. Ibid. p.4.

7. It is interesting to note that 1988 was the third occasion on which a Conservative central government had proposed the abolition of the education authority in inner London. As early as 1971 the observation was made that "the issue (of abolition) will undoubtably come up again. Conservatives do not want a single-purpose education authority which is likely to be dominated by Labour in perpetuity" (Kogan, 1971:98).

Research and Statistics Branch is currently conducting a survey of students taking courses in the new technology field. The report will not be available until late Autumn, after the start of the academic year. However, as there are a number of observations which have been made by the tutors of these courses and some preliminary analysis has been undertaken of the student intake it is possible to make some recommendations to the colleges and institutes concerned which might help the recruitment procedures for the new intake of students.

Student enrolments/course completions in 1984/5

Courses in new technology were generally over-subscribed. There was no problem in attracting a large number of students (the average class size was 18). There was a problem, however, in some cases, in maintaining class numbers. The average course completion rate was 45 per cent and ranged from 10 to 80 per cent.

A number of reasons have been postulated for the higher than average 'drop-out' rate on these courses. Each of these will be discussed in the light of what is known about the students surveyed. As there are considerable variations between the institutions providing courses the observations are not obviously relevant in every case.

1. Subject matter

One reason for the higher than average 'drop-out' it is thought, is that, unlike enrolling for 'Keep-fit' or 'O' Level English, courses in computing are much more of an unknown quantity. The survey indicated that approximately one third of students were enrolling wanting to know "more about the subject" whilst over a half were enrolling "to find out about it". Courses where the content could be anticipated by students (such as word-processing) had a higher rate of course completion.

It is suggested, therefore that:

(a) Course titles are as descriptive as possible of the course content.

(b) Tutors be available at the time of enrolment to advise students. (This may require that part-time tutors be paid to attend on these occasions.)

(c) It might be beneficial to hold an 'open' session at the start of each course, prior to enrolment. It is observed that some students do not attend after the first one or two classes. This would give students an opportunity to find out more about the subject. As it is, with enrolments on a 'first come, first served' basis, many courses are running half full, whilst institutions have turned away potential students.

(d) The length of the course should be given careful consideration. The 'drop-out' on the longer courses is higher than that on the shorter ones. A year on a subject which is an 'unknown' quantity is too long a period for some people to commit themselves. Introductory courses of 10 weeks, which can either be seen as complete in themselves or which connect with other related courses, are perhaps preferable.

2. Equipment

A high proportion of the 'drop-outs' on some courses gave inadequate facilities as their main reason for not continuing with the course. Some institutions are much better equipped than others to run New Technology courses.

It is suggested, therefore that:

(a) The availability of the new Technobus might be very useful to some institutions.

(b) In evening institutes which use a school's premises, there are advantages in employing, as tutor, a member of the school staff who is familiar with the technical equipment.

3. Student expectations

'Open' courses, by definition, have no formal requirements and the student population, consequently has a wide range of educational experience, needs and expectations. Students were found to be very strongly motivated by career interests. Almost a half took the course with a view to promotion prospects. The course was also seen to be an avenue to more advanced study in the subject.

It is suggested, therefore that:

(a) A tutor's brief should include time for counselling students on related courses and possible career paths.

(b) Information on related courses at other institutions in the Open College should be prominently displayed.

(c) Tutors of New Technology courses could plan a sequence of courses at different levels to allow for a student's progression to higher level courses.

(d) A day of 'in-service' could be beneficial to tutors for them to exchange views about the content and teaching methods employed on courses. This would necessitate release 'cover' for the full-time staff and an additional payment to part-time tutors for attending the course. (Part-time tutors were generally less well informed of developments within the Open College.)

Appendix 7.2: The Policy Review

Education Committee   Item 15   PS6130
Further and Higher Education
Sub-Committee   OPEN COLLEGES:
                                                       OBJECTIVES AND REVIEW

Report (26.11.86) by
Education Officer

Recommendation

That the objectives and review system set out in this report be
approved for the future management of the Open Colleges.

1. Introduction

Open Colleges

1.1 The prime purpose of Open Colleges are:-

(i) to improve and increase co-operation and collaboration between higher, further and adult education establishments;

(ii) to ease movement between establishments so that students can maximise the benefit to be gained from all parts of the post schools sector; and

(iii) to equalise learning opportunities by removing unreasonable and unnecessary entry requirements and recognising the validity of non-traditional learning patterns.

1.2 Throughout the 1970s the development of Access Courses (formal and informal), the growth of education guidance services and the increasing recognition of the need to review patterns of higher education to enable more mature adults to gain entry contributed to a general pressure to break down barriers between different elements (Further, Higher and Adult Education) in the post-school sector.

1.3 Access to Higher Education (HE) for students with non-traditional educational backgrounds, for adults who have been out of the system for some years, and for those who lack the usually-demanded qualifications, has been difficult in a system which is geared primarily to the established school/HE progression. One result has been that there are large numbers of potential students, capable of benefitting from HE, but denied the opportunity. Not only is this state of affairs wasteful, it is also discrimanatory because women, people from black and other ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities are likely to be disproportionately affected.

1.4 This has been recognised for several years and to help alleviate it, diverse ad hoc arrangements grew up which prepared non-traditional student groups for entry into mainstream HE. These initiatives received a great boost from the Authority's AFE Review, which stressed that opportunities could be improved by closer collaboration between colleges, polytechnics, and adult education institutes. The Review sought to formalise previous ad hoc arrangements and to expand into areas not previously served, in a system then described as 'geographic groupings', and now more widely known as 'Open Colleges'.

1.5 The designation, 'Open College', is used widely throughout the country. However, the arrangements to which it is applied vary. What they have in common is an explicit agreement between different post-school institutions in a specified geographical area to work together with the clear intention of breaking down demarcation lines and barriers and enabling potential existing students to be assisted into and through the system.

1.6 Four groupings now exist in inner London:-

   (i) Open College of South London (OCSL) - post-school provision
       in Wandsworth, Lambeth and Southwark with some links in
       Lewisham and Greenwich.

  (ii) Access to Learning for Adults (ALFA) - post-school provision
       in Islington and Hackney with some links in Tower Hamlets
       and Camden.

 (iii) Central and West London Open College (CAWLOC) - Hammersmith
       and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Camden
       post-school provision.

  (iv) Second Chance Opportunities for Education (SCOPE), formerly
       the Open College of the City and East London (OCCEL) -
       post-school provision in Tower Hamlets and Hackney and the
       City of London.

1.7 An embryonic Open College grouping is being developed in Greenwich
and Lewisham to be known as the Greenwich and Lewisham Education for
Adults Network (GLEAN).

1.8 Although the ways in which the Open Colleges have developed have
differed, they all include within their membership all of the
Authority's maintained and aided colleges and institutes, the
education guidance services and the careers service. In addition,
they have a range of other member bodies including universities,
settlements, community organisations and the Workers Educational
Association.

1.9 After some initial guidance and small scale funding from the
Authority centrally, the progress and development of the patterns in
the local areas has depended upon the enthusiasm, interest and
imagination of the local people involved.

2. Objectives and review of the Open Colleges

2.1 This year marks the end of the initial phase of operation of Open
Colleges in inner London during which valuable experience has been
gained and which forms a basis for the clarification of their role.
The Authority is now in a position to establish, in consultation with
the Open Colleges, a clear set of objectives for their operations.
The general relationship between the Open Colleges and their
constituent membership of teaching institutions and other agencies is
that the Open Colleges will initiate a range of developments including
research, publicity, staff development, and strategies for their
implementation. Control of resources for undertaking courses will
remain with the institutions. There needs to be a productive
partnership between Open Colleges and their membership, not a
duplication of responsibilities. Alongside this partnership, the

Education Officer will seek both to define the general policies and priorities as guides to local action and also to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to the Open Colleges.

2.2 The Open College aims, as set out in the AFE Review, were stated broadly and were not intended as an evaluative framework. A more precise set of objectives is therefore being proposed, drawn in many cases from the objectives which the individual Open Colleges have defined themselves on the basis of local experience. Within the broad aim of promoting closer collaboration between institutions in the post-school sector and associated agencies, to provide improved access to educational opportunities for adults, the proposed objectives are:-

Information on educational opportunities

(i) to collect and analyse information on course provision and student participation, in collaboration with Post-Schools Department;

(ii) to codify and disseminate information for their membership on access to, and availability of, educational opportunities;

(iii) to promote the production and dissemination of course and access information for the public;

(iv) to advise the Education Officer and their membership on gaps or potential gaps in the provision of both access information and counselling services for adults;

Course provision

(v) to advise the Education Officer on issues affecting access opportunities, progression and accreditation, and to promote developments in these areas;

(vi) to advise the Education Officer and their membership on the appropriateness of the general pattern of course provision and on the need to develop further course provision, and to promote new curricula and delivery systems;

(vii) to develop new approaches to identifying the unmet educational needs of the local community, through active consultation;

(viii) to undertake studies on unmet educational needs, to promote developments in this area and to seek sponsorship;

Staff Development

(ix) to identify the need for, and to promote, staff development programmes related to improving access to opportunities.

2.3 On the basis of the above objectives each Open College will
formulate an annual programme reflecting the needs and priorities of
the geographical area. It is recognised that current levels of
funding might not permit all the Open Colleges to work towards all the
objectives in the short-term. In such a case the Open College will
frame a reduced programme, inform the Educational Officer of what
might be achieved within existing budgets, and estimate what extra
funding would be required to carry forward the whole range of
objectives.

2.4 Beginning with the current session, the Open Colleges, will submit
to the Education Officer an annual report summarising the achievements
of that session in terms of the objectives set out above. The
membership institutions and agencies will also be asked to evaluate
the use which they have made of Open College work. As a result of
this overall assessment, the Education Officer will advise the
Sub-Committee on the appropriate course of development and the
necessary level of funding for the future.

3. Funding

3.1 The Open Colleges have received funding in a variety of ways reflecting their diverse natures and histories. Some funds come directly from ILEA either as cash or in terms of staff allocated to Open College work. These direct funds are broken down into three parts, viz base budget provision, INSET – an allocation for in-service training, and additional funding which so far has been identifies and allocated for the current year only.

3.2 In addition to the direct funding, the constituent members allocate resources to the Open Colleges in terms of staff, premises, or consumables. This indirect funding varies from member to member and is difficult to assess on a consistent basis. In the case of the polytechnics' contributions, however, the indirect funding has been estimated and a specific allowance made in each polytechnic's block grant, (which itself is directly funding from the Authority), for 1986/87 as shown below. The polytechnics are of course free to add to the allocated amounts at their discretion from non-specific top-up funding which is also part of the block grant system. For historical reasons the indirect funding through PSB of OCSL is much higher than the other and therefore no direct funding has been allocated for 1986/87.

3.3 In summary the revenue resourcing for 1986/87 is:-

Direct	OCSL	ALFA	CAWLOC	SCOPE
	£	£	£	£
(a) Base budget	0	12,600	12,600	12,600
(b) INSET	0	4,000	4,000	4,000
(c) Additional	0	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total Direct	0	26,600	26,600	26,600

Indirect				
(d) Poly block grant	75,000	30,000	32,000	30,000
(e) Other membership	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

3.4 Of members of the Sub-Committee wish to confirm the objectives and review system set out in this report, it will be necessary to provide the Open Colleges with appropriate funding in 1987/88 and subsequent years. It is proposed that this is done by a specific allocation to each Open College from the resources used to supplement the Polytechnics' Block Grants and a report to effect this will be presented to Sub-Committee in due course.

4. Equal Opportunities

4.1 The Open College initiative is a key component in the Authority's strategy for ensuring equal opportunities in access to post-school education. By identifying barriers to entry, by assisting non-standard entrants, and by researching the unmet needs of local communities, the Authority places great importance on the work of the Open Colleges in partnership with its institutions and other agencies.

Director of Finance (27.11.86)

1.   The main report concerns proposed objectives for the Open Colleges and the arrangements for reviewing their activity.

2.   Details of the identified 1986-87 funding arrangements (totalling £246,800) for the Open Colleges are set out in section 3 of the main report. It is recognised (para. 2.3. refers) that these current levels of funding might not permit all the Open Colleges to work towards all the proposed objectives in the short term.

3.   If the proposed objectives and review arrangements are confirmed, the Education Officer proposes to consider the appropriate 1987-88 funding levels in the context of the resourcing of Polytechnic Block Grants for that year.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS
. . . .

To carry out an in-depth study of the implementation of an educational

policy within an LEA is a rare opportunity, as there is a tendency to

concentrate on the short-term measurable aspects of policy (Rein,

1976). The study of policy implementation is a relatively new field

(Williams, 1982) and such studies as have been conducted (Berman and

McLaughlin, 1976; Pressman and Wildavsky in Bardach, 1977:56) indicate

the value of adopting a theoretical approach and the application of a

variety of research strategies over a period of time (Gross, 1971:25;

Yin, Hall and Macmanus, Kirst and Jung in Williams, 1982; Mazmanian

and Sabatier, 1981). A growing body of literature, therefore,

suggested some fruitful lines of inquiry which provided the basis for

a hypothetico-deductive research strategy. But because the researcher

was employed in the organisation for a period of some two years prior

to the research being undertaken and was a participant observer over

the whole period of the research (four years), there was a wealth of

data (documentary materials, observations of daily informal

interactions as well as the formal meetings of management forums and

LEA committees and in-depth interviews with some 40 people) which

provided the basis for an inductive approach. The starting point was

a working hypothesis based on experience in the field and a reading of

the literature. In general terms it was anticipated that at each

stage of the policy development (formulation, implementation and

review) there would need to be key people who were committed to the development, who could communicate effectively with those concerned and who had the resources to act and promote the initiative. At each stage of the policy process reference was made to other literatures and these raised specific questions to be addressed and areas to be explored in the in-depth interviews undertaken with key people. It was more of an interactive research strategy employing both deductive and inductive strategies at various stages throughout the five-period of the study than a linear research model. The role of the researcher in-house afforded many opportunities for participant observation of the processes of implementing and reviewing policy; it was, in many respects, a "social process" (Burgess, 1984).

The personal interests which prompted the undertaking of this thesis were made explicit at the outset and there were a number of questions posed for which there should now be some answers. The first question was whether an Open College system could be said to be an effective mechanism for redressing educational inequalities in the adult population. In relation to its economic, social and political environment, the Open College development could be seen as a 'critical' case study. The second, and central focus, was to investigate the factors which made for successful implementation of a policy as well as those factors which proved to be problematical and thus detracted from success and, in their extreme form, led to failure. Was one stage of implementing the policy found to be more critical to the overall outcome than another? A third interest was in

establishing whether anything could be learned from a case study of

the 'birth' of an organisation which could be of value in

understanding the process of policy implementation more generally.

Fourth, there was the concern to employ more than one theoretical

perspective and to ask whether one approach proved more useful than

another in the insights which it was able to provide. Finally, there

was a desire to consider, critically, the role of research in relation

to the making and implementing of educational policy: the extent to

which the key people involved were aware of the findings of earlier

studies relating to equal opportunities in education; and whether

research in-house exercised any influence on policy outcomes.

Ultimately, it was hoped that the study might provide new insights on

the process of implementation and would be able to make

recommendations to improve the efficacy of the policy-delivery

mechanism.

How effective was the Open College as a mechanism

for redressing educational inequalities

in the population?

Within the consortium of institutions there were four designated areas

of course development: Return to Learning; Access; New Technology;

and Flexible Learning Opportunities. Some areas were notably more

successful than others in achieving the desired objectives of

recruiting adults from among the educationally disadvantaged groups in

the population, of providing courses which met their needs and of facilitating progression to other courses.

The least successful areas of course development were those in the Flexible Learning Opportunities field and this may, in part, be attributed to the difficulties of this medium of learning for adult returners who have had a minimum of formal education and who need a supportive learning environment. Whilst there was substantial course development in the field of New Technology, it was more a reflection of the interest and demand for that particular subject than of the efforts of the central co-ordinator concerned, whose work, after 1986, was largely taken up with the organisation and administration of the Technobus. It could be seen from a detailed longitudinal study undertaken that institutions were recruiting from among the educationally disadvantaged sector of the population and that a high rate of course completions led to a high proportion who were keen to continue with the subject at a higher level. Some of the introductory courses in New Technology, however, failed to meet the criteria laid down for an Open College and this was because they were 'off-the-shelf' courses and not designed specifically for adult returners. Aside from the Technobus project, neither the central co-ordinator for New Technology nor the one for Flexible Learning Opportunities succeeded in establishing a 'panel' of interested people from the member institutions who could provide mutual support for one another in initiating curriculum development.

Noticeably the most successful areas of curriculum development were in

the field of Return to Learning and Access provision, together with

Foundation courses which were developed to link the two. In 1986/87,

in a survey of Access provision in 12 of the 14 colleges, there was a   .

total of 575 students on 39 courses studying a range of subjects.[1]

Sixty per cent of the intake were female and 57 per cent were black,

of whom the majority were Afro-Caribbean. At the end of the course 83

per cent went into higher education, 10 per cent went into further

education and seven per cent took up employment. In these two areas

of course development the central co-ordinators were successful as

'change-agents' in establishing a network, as evidenced in the

attendance at panel meetings. These meetings provided a source of

information and professional support which stimulated course

development in the areas designated. Developing networks may have

been easier for the central co-ordinators concerned because the

co-ordinators in the institutions were more likely to share their

subject background and to teach on Return to Learning and Access

courses.

There are some critics of the Open College who would argue that Access

was being developed prior to 1983, and this was certainly the case in

London and some other authorities, but nowhere else did Access develop

on such a broad scale in the years 1983-88 as it did in London.

Comparisons, too, of the adult student population in London with the

national profile indicates that a noticeably higher proportion of the

London students were drawn from educationally disadvantaged groups.

(Bird and Varlaam, 1987:11). This reflects the greater need in the inner city than in the country as a whole, but also the initiative of institutions in developing an Open College network, opening up new areas of the curriculum, attracting a new clientele and, generally, raising the profile of provision in the post-school sector for adult returners.

Two major factors identified as influencing enrolment in the longitudinal study of students were that a course was offered close to where people lived or worked and that the fee was affordable. The financial factor was found to be a particularly important determinant in opening up education to a broader clientele. At the time of the study unemployed adults and those claiming social benefits could take any number of courses for £1. In the year 1987/88, also, 42 per cent of those taking Access courses were in receipt of a discretionary award from the Authority. At the time of writing it was anticipated that, with the cuts in spending forced upon the ILEA by central government, the cost of courses would increase and the number of discretionary awards to mature students would be reduced. Changes in the rules governing the receipt of unemployment benefit of students taking part-time courses were also expected to have an adverse effect on recruitment.

Set against the obvious achievements of the Open College of South London were the considerable limitations which were apparent in the range of courses available, in the number of places (most Access

courses were heavily over-subscribed) and in the number and size of

the grants available. Tutors worked hard at networking in order to

gain access for their students into higher education, conscious of the

competition for the limited number of places. To some extent the Open

College could be seen to be more of a reformist strategy than a

radical one; it was change at the margins. However, it did show, as

one principal said, "what could be done and should be done" in opening

up education to a wider clientele[3]. As one tutor put it, "we have

acted to redistribute the cultural capital of the middle classes to a

wider group".[2]

Perhaps the most important contribution to the overall development in

the expansion of educational opportunites was that it demonstrated

that it was possible for those with few, if any, qualifications to

return to education and to find a pathway through the existing

post-school system: progressing to higher education or into vocational

courses in further education or, simply, to improve their job

prospects. Whilst it was true that the Open University (OU) had

earlier opened up higher education to a wider clientele, the OU had

been noticeably more successful with adults who had at one stage

reached the point of entry to higher education, or who had

demonstrated by the level of education reached (for example, having

obtained a number of GCE Ordinary level examinations) that they were

academically capable of proceeding to education at a higher level. It

had proved less appropriate for those with only a low level of formal

education and thus less likely to proceed without 'face to face'

tuition (McIntosh et al., 1980:55).[4] The achievement of the

Open College was to provide a 'second chance' to the more socially and

educationally disadvantaged sections of the population. In so doing,

it countered the general criticism of earlier attempts to expand adult

and further education which alleged that the already well-educated

were the main beneficiaries (Rubenson, 1983) and the middle class

(Raffe, 1979). The Open College, as with adult education more

generally in London, was attracting a much higher proportion of people

who were unemployed or wanting to improve their employment prospects

(Bird and Vaarlam, 1987:9). What the Open College development

indicated was that people were returning to education in the years

1983-88 for the very utilitarian reasons of wanting to improve their

job prospects. They were helped to do so by the low level of fees

operating at the time for disadvantaged groups. Where the policy was

successfully implemented the adults concerned not only acquired the

requisite skills but also gained in self-confidence and in a greater

awareness of the possibilities of continuing with their studies in

further or higher education. Research, elsewhere, of working people

returning to education, when training as workplace representatives,

for example, has found that the experience sometimes has had a

dramatic impact on the individuals concerned, in raising their level

of consciousness, in widening their frame of reference and in

influencing them to continue with their education to one of the adult

colleges and, thereby, into higher education (Killeen and Bird,

1981:81).

The Open College stimulated the development of a new type of
curriculum to meet the specific needs of adult returners; in its
provision of Return to Learning, Foundation and Access courses it
concentrated on identifying students' needs, developing study skills
and building students' self-confidence. Many adults suffer a low
self-esteem in relation to their educational capabilities resulting
from the British 'sponsored' model of education [5] which has acted
to exclude pupils by selection at each successive stage (11,16 and 18
years), thereby defining those excluded as 'failures', such that a
substantial proportion has come to accept a definition of themselves,
often quite erroneously, as non-academic, unintelligent, even dim and
incapable. If these adults are ever to venture through the door
marked 'education' again, it would seem doubly beholden on educators
to create a supportive learning environment, one which meets
identified needs and credits learning in other spheres. The Open
College developments in Return to Learning, Foundation and Access
courses were successful in this respect.

One further feature of the Open College development which is worth
commenting upon, is the way in which, over a period of time, and in
common with other innovations in education such as the Open
University, it became incorporated into the existing structure. The
OU set out in the early 1970s to reach the educationally
underprivileged population, as did the Open College in the 1980s.
Both were successful with those groups which had gained the necessary
qualifications for entry to higher education, or, had just marginally

failed to do so. Both educational innovations started by being more

adventurous in the curriculum and gradually became less so as time

went on. Initially the OU pioneered multi-disciplinary and

inter-disciplinary courses aimed at a new clientele. But of late the

growth area for the OU has been in courses for professional

development. In the case of the Open College, it developed Return to

Study and Access courses to higher education but, in the light of

experience there are grounds for fears that, with the advent of

accreditation they will perhaps become more standardised and less

'open' in their recruitment of educationally disadvantaged adults.

Similarly, in Canada at Athabasca University, which was set up with

the same commitment to remove barriers to higher education, some

observers perceive that its energies and resources are currently being

focussed more in the direction of the private sector and 'marketing'

than on increasing the educational opportunities for the socially and

educationally deprived people in the local population.[6]

Which factors make for the successful
implementation of a policy?

The hypothesis that successful implementation requires capacity,

commitment and communication was tested at each level of

implementation of the policy on the Open College. Stage one, the

initiation and launch, was accomplished without too much difficulty.

This is not to deny that there was some lingering resentment against

the polytechnic and the leadership concerned for having master-minded

an innovation which was seen by some to be mainly a means whereby the
recruitment of mature students from the locality could be improved.
Stage two was in some ways the most problematical stage, for it
required that the central staff co-ordinate curriculum development in
their designated field and yet they were given no authority to act in
relation to the member institutions. The major problem at this stage
was that the central co-ordinators had no control over the staff in
the institutions. They had no means of redress, if the co-ordinators
in the institutions, for example, did not attend the meetings which
they convened. Indeed, there was no means of knowing whether the
allocation of the half-time remission of a lecturer's post was being
spent on work associated with the Open College initiative or not.
Equally problematical was the lack of control which the management
forum of the Open College (the JPB) had over the staff of the central
team. Nevertheless, in spite of the frustrations and the lack of
support from the JPB, considerable development took place in the
Return to Learning, Foundation and Access courses which could be
attributed to the efforts of the co-ordinators concerned. The two
other co-ordinators, for different reasons, did not effectively
influence curriculum development in their respective fields. The
focus of interest of the co-ordinator for New Technology was taken up
with obtaining, and then maintaining, the technobus. The co-ordinator
for Flexible Learning Opportunities experienced difficulty, perhaps
because this was not an appropriate learning medium for adults with a
minimum of formal education. Neither were the institutions were
prepared to spend the time and resources required to develop it.

In all, the energies of the four central co-ordinators were fragmented by having four separate foci, each with its own network. The resignation of the Director of Studies, moreover, within the first two years of the Open College left a vacuum which the member organisations chose not to fill. An added and not inconsiderable difficulty for the Open College was the clash of cultures between adult education and further education, evident at meetings of the JPB but, also, reflected in the central staff's problems in communication with the different branch structures within County Hall. The various professional groups from related but separate fields held different 'definitions of the situation' of the prime objectives of an Open College development and each branch of the bureaucratic structure had a vested interest which it sought to defend or advance. This finding supports that of Jennings (1977:190) who observed that LEA officers were "expansionists with vested interests".

Stage three of the implementation process was the most critical to the policy outcomes since, if the policy was to succeed, it had ultimately to be successful at the interface between tutor and student. The courses which were particularly successful were those which were taught by the institutional co-ordinator, or where there was good communication and a 'shared view' between the co-ordinator and the course tutor about the nature and purpose of Open College work. The survey conducted of adults taking introductory courses in New Technology indicated that whilst some courses failed because they were inadequately resourced in terms of the equipment available, others

failed because the tutors were insufficiently briefed as to their role
in relation to the requirements of adult returners who needed to
acquire study skills and information about 'follow-on' courses.

At each stage of the implementation, the most successful outcomes were
evident where there was good communication between the parties, where
staff were committed to the initiative and where the institution had
adequate resources. If, at one stage or another, there were
shortcomings in one or more of these factors, or if there were obvious
problems, such as that of managerial control, the development was
hindered. Sometimes the policy succeeded, to a greater or lesser
extent, in spite of the shortcomings and frustrations experienced.
Consider, for example, the case of the College of Technical Craft:
here was an institution where the history and culture of the college
was antipathetic to equal opportunities, where the principal made the
minimum gesture in terms of remission for the college's co-ordinator
and where, in terms of access to technical resources, the Open College
designated courses were marginalised. Yet, even in these unfavourable
circumstances the co-ordinator and tutors were able to provide courses
facilitating the development of skills in printing, photography and
local radio which increased the technical competence and enhanced the
confidence of adults who were among the educationally disadvantaged in
the local community. The development in this situation was inevitably
limited, as the principal was not committed to the institution but was
more interested in developing courses of an advanced nature.
Consequently the college's membership of the OCSL was shortlived.

The policy review was identified as a fourth and crucial stage in the implementation process. This was where the Open College development in London almost floundered since there was no regular mechanism established for reviewing the development. Communication needed to be two-way in order that the difficulties encountered in the early stages of the Open College development could be evaluated and reviewed thus allowing action to be taken by the senior officers and committee responsible for tackling the problems. The organisational problems in relation to the OCSL could have been addressed much earlier than 1986 if a process of formal review had been established at the outset. It can be seen from the place of the Open College in relation to the organisational structure of the Authority that its structure lay outside of the lines of accountability of the administrative branches which served the different sectors. (See figure 3, p.29).

Whilst all the member institutions were within the post-schools sector each type of institution - AEI, FE College or Polytechnic - was accountable to a different inspectorate and a separate administrative branch.[7] Because the Open College lay outside the established structure, there were problems of communication between the central co-ordinators and the administrative structure within County Hall.

It is tempting to ask whether any one of the factors investigated could be said to have been more important than another. If there is one key factor it would appear to be 'commitment' at 'street-level', for if this is present, pressure can be exerted in order to make

resources available and hence committed individuals can find

appropriate avenues for communication. If commitment is lacking,

communication is not effected and institutions can misuse or leave

unused the resources available. Commitment, however, needs to be

present at each and every level (tutor, co-ordinator within the

institution, principal, external change-agent, director of studies,

inspector, officers and Members) and where it was obviously lacking,

as in the case of the principal of the College of Technical Craft, the

development of the curriculum for adult returners was restricted.

Resources too would appear to be a critical factor, for the

institutions which had a half-time co-ordinator to support the work of

the Open College developed more courses than those which did not.

Resources, however, were also a contentious factor in so far as some

member institutions had the half-time appointment of a co-ordinator

while others did not. As one observer[8] commented, "money can be

counterproductive" and "divisive". It was evident in the case of the

two other Open Colleges that the institution's co-ordinator/liaison

officer had much less remission time than did those generally within

the OCSL but that they were effective and, having less time outside of

the institution, they remained much more an integral part of it and

incurred less envy from other members of staff.

The Education Officer, in reflecting on the Open College development

saw the significance of the financial resources in terms of a

'message' of support to the people involved:

No, it wasn't the money - what people who are bringing about
change find difficult is if their efforts are not recognised by
the system. It is very hard to effect change . . . . when it's
one individual pushing at the door. But if you actually have the
Authority saying "we actually believe in what you are doing and it
fits in with the major thrust which we want to make" (a) they feel
reasssured about what you're doing and (b) they feel they have got
greater influence with the machinery round about them or with the
administration . . . in that context the money can be helpful,
but I don't think it was the most crucial thing. I think the most
crucial thing was to give them a framework within which they knew
that they had a place and could work.

Williams (1980) noted that resources could play a 'pivotal' role in

influencing involvement in a federal structure and that central

control was at its maximum prior to decisions being taken with regard

to allocation and distribution. The fact that the OCSL was funded

initially on a temporary basis by the polytechnic and only

subsequently authorised by the FHE Sub-Committee, effectively

prevented the senior officers from establishing control at the point

at which resources were allocated. When the policy was reviewed in

1986 it was able to establish a mechanism for reviewing the Open

Colleges on an annual basis and to make recommendations as to the

allocation of resources in the Authority's budget (PS 6130). (See

appendix 7.2 p.332.)

Easy communication and support from the administration were also key

factors identified by Glaser and Ross (1971:51) as favourable

organisational attitudes which supported change. The quasi-federal

structure, the 'framework' so-called of the Open College of South

London, however, was problematical. Communications, which appear to

be the key factor, were inadequate at all levels: within the

administrative structure at County Hall; within the JPB of the OCSL; between the four co-ordinators (focussed as they were in developing four separate panels) and within the member institutions. It was only when the central co-ordinators for the Open Colleges joined forces and established a channel of communication with the officers and Members at County Hall through InLOCC, that a review of the policy was undertaken which resulted in a formalising of its objectives and the establishment of a mechanism for an annual review (PS 6130). But this only happened because the full-time central co-ordinators, who were committed to the development, eventually put pressure on the Authority to confront their organisational problem. The measure of commitment of people in the field was acknowledged by a Member at the time of the 1987 Review when he commented favourably upon their enthusiasm. Commitment was important in establishing communication with the Authority's decision-making structure. It was a case of "good" people overcoming the defects in a poor system of management control (Anthony and Dearden in Williams, 1980:99).

Why, it might be asked was the problem of communication not addressed earlier than 1986? The answer lies, in part, in the lack of leadership. The Director of Studies had resigned to take up another post in 1985 and had not been replaced. The OCSL was to remain in an organisational limbo until the review of 1986 and its own internal review in 1987. Meanwhile two of the four designated areas of course development continued to expand and the other two did not. There was no one to act in a co-ordinating role in relation to the central

staff. Had the organisation been integrated within the bureaucratic structure of the LEA, it is unlikely that an 'established' post would have been left vacant for two or more years.

The research replicates the findings of other studies of the implementation of policy in so far as it establishes that whether or not a policy is effectively implemented depends on a "bringing together" of the key elements of commitment, capacity, and communication. What it highlights, however, is the importance of 'control', especially in establishing at the outset of an undertaking what the objectives of the policy are and in operationalising these in such a way as to provide performance criteria by which the implementers can evaluate their effectiveness.

A case study

How useful are the results of this research in understanding the process of implementing policy more generally? There are some grounds for believing that the insights afforded by an in-depth study over a five-year period could produce findings which could have some more general application. To a large extent, the degree to which the findings are valid more universally depends on establishing how typical the features of the Open College policy were of other implementations of policy. There are reasons for believing that the OCSL can be regarded as typical in some important respects.

In the first place the Open College can be regarded as a 'critical'

case study (Goldthorpe and Lockwood, 1968). Given the long history of

the development of adult education and of the particular economic,

social and political pressures in Britain in the early 1980s, it could

be expected that the demand and support for a policy to expand the

opportunities for adult returners would be most likely to take place

in a Labour-controlled LEA in an inner city. The Open College of

South London was one such initiative but there were other similar

networks which developed between post-school institutions in other

parts of the country, such as the one in the North West region. As

bureaucratic organisations Open Colleges have certain features in

common. Different types of institutions (adult education institutes,

colleges of further and higher education) would likely exhibit

different cultures making for different 'definitions of the

situation'. It would also be the case that the changes in the

curriculum on offer to adults would have to be implemented by the

bureaucrats and professionals at each level in the LEA, therefore

requiring good avenues for communication between people. The capacity

to innovate and effect change would be likely to raise the same issues

of the resources, as were raised in the case of the OCSL. Ultimately,

it would be highly likely that the success of the development would

depend on obtaining the commitment and compliance of the professionals

involved. Etzioni's schema (1971a) suggests that obtaining the

compliance of professionals is not based solely on remuneration but

also derives from the influence of professional commitment. Hence, it

is likely that there would be found a need for staff development

through in-service training. Following from that, the basis of generalising from the Open College is based on the fact that it shares common features with other institutions in so far as it has a bureaucracy that employs professionals. Evaluation of the process of implementation is therefore likely to be facilitated, as in the study of the Open College of South London, by the use of organisation theory. For example, systems theorists assume that the goals of an organisation are delimitable (Udy, 1965:678), but the study of the OCSL has indicated that any new policy has to compete for the organisation's resources and for the energies of its personnel. In some institutions the Open College had a higher order of priority than in others. The process of implementation required that the policy be 'negotiated' (Strauss, 1963) by the professionals within the power structure of the institution. This is also likely to be a factor in the implementation of other policies.

One feature of the OCSL, however, which is not typical of educational institutions more generally, was the quasi-federal nature of the organisation. This served to highlight the problem of control by the management body in relation to the central co-ordinators and the problem of control by the central unit of the co-ordinators in relation to the member institutions. There are, however, other instances of educational institutions forming a consortia and it may be that as this study indicates, the question of control and accountability could feature as a particular problem in these circumstances.

Another basis for believing that the case study of the Open College of

South London is capable of offering insights more generally about the

process of implementing change in education derives from the fact that

it concerns the 'birth' of an organisation (Rock, 1988). It

originated as the result of an entrepreneurial initiative. The OCSL

did not 'fit' within the general pattern of an LEA organisation, as it

lay outside of the existing branch structure (see figure 1.3 p.29).

Moreover, it had not developed directly as a result of a

"rational-legal" decision as is generally the case with the formation

of policy; but was, instead, the 'brain-child' of an individual on the

staff of the polytechnic, outside of the mainstream of the LEA

administrative structure. It's formation could, however, be seen to

anticipate the outcome of the AFE Review, which was a rational

appraisal of the requirements of the education service in the advanced

further education sector. The OCSL is, perhaps, most useful as a case

study of the birth of an organisation within the "institutional womb"

(Rock, 1988:125) of an already existing organisational structure.

Although not generally the subject of research, and usually thought of

as a feature of industrial and financial institutions in the private

sector, entrepreneurship is also a feature of educational innovations.

There has been considerable interest in the question of how change

takes place in education and thus the "birth" of an organisation is

especially relevant.

The five-year period in which the study was undertaken, from 1984-89,

was sufficient to map the birth, life and decline of the OCSL. The

detailed interviews with the policy-makers and implementers within the institutions portrayed the successive stages of the life cycle of the organisation and the role of the entrepreneur. First, the vision − there was the "dream" stage − the hopes of what kind of institution there might be. It was this which motivated the PA/Director in his original conception of the OCSL and led him to develop the network of key individuals and institutions. The Open College of South London was established as a public identity at a conference at the polytechnic attended by well-known figures in post-school education. There followed a period of "structural entrophy" and "institutional autonomy". When the entrepreneur left the organisation there was a problem of "succession", made even more difficult by the problems of an organisation outside of the bureaucratic power structure. After some considerable time the management structure was revised, a period resembling what Rock refers to in his article on the birth of organisations (1988:150), as one in which "relations with neighbours engaged in reciprocal sense-making" but, one in which, also, "the capacity to innovate is restricted and the growth is slowed".

By the time the study of the OCSL was completed, shortly before the abolititon of the ILEA, the full-time central staff was reduced to one (and that person was seconded by the JPB of the OCSL to the Authority-wide accreditation unit). Accreditation was recommended by the HMI as a means of standardising the new types of courses. The Open College also moved from its location in an annexe of the polytechnic to one of the FE colleges. Hence, it became incorporated

into the existing organisational structure. The half-time

co-ordinators within the member institutions were also fully absorbed

into their institution's establishment. (This was to safeguard the

individuals concerned; to ensure that they would be

'block-transferred' to the relevant London Borough, on abolition of

the ILEA, in April 1990.)

This case study is of interest and value because it is about the

process of educational innovation and change. Within a bureaucratic

stucture the educational entrepreneurship of the polytechnic was

evident and in favourable conditions the OCSL effected innovation in

curriculum development and some change in the clientele recruited.

The extent to which the changes were far-reaching and permanent

depended on the socio-economic environment and the political climate.

There was every indication at the time the research was concluded that

the innovation was being incorporated into the existing organisational

structure of the ILEA. With the demise of the ILEA, the OCSL was

being re-located within a college of further education.[9] At the

same time the accreditation of courses for adult returners was being

developed both locally and nationally. Some feared[10] that this

would effectively standardise the Access and Return to Study courses

in such a way that it was possible that institutions would be less

'open' in their recruitment policy, because they would be looking to

ensure high completion and 'going-on' rates. The accreditation

process was also taking place in the other Open Colleges in other

parts of the country. It was a procedure strongly recommended by the

HMI in their verbal report to the Authority, following their

inspection of the Open Colleges in 1987. The experience of the Open

College of South London in focussing on accreditation, in this

respect, was typical of the experiences of Open Colleges elsewhere.

Hence, the study can be seen both as a case study of the 'birth' of an

organisation and as a 'critical' case study of a development in

post-school education.

Was the eclectic research model helpful?

In considering the origins of an educational policy on the Open

College developments it was thought appropriate to look, initially, at

the historical factors and the broad social, political and economic

context in which the policy was conceived. Two models were

particularly useful in this exercise: the first was the systems

approach and, in particular, the Easton model of decision-making; the

second, was the pluralistic model proffered by political scientists.

The Easton model was particularly helpful in the way in which it

identified key areas of inquiry and the interrelatedness of the parts

of the system. Systems theory was relevant in identifying the

structure of authority, the chain of command in the organisation, the

formal roles and status of officers, inspectors, Members and the

branch structures. The system perspective also highlighted the

importance of the feed-back procedure which was an important means of

reviewing the policy. The failure to establish a mechanism for

reviewing the Open College development initially was an unfortunate oversight.

. . . .

The pluralistic model was useful at both central and local government levels and in the relations between them. In the former, it depicted the triumvirate of the DES, the LEA and the professional bodies, as described by Kogan (1971) in the 1970s, a model that suggested that it was the natural order of things for central government, in consultation with the professional bodies, to produce the broad plan for policy-making, such as the White Paper directed 'Towards a Strategy for Higher Education in the 1990s' and for local government to develop strategies for implementation. At the LEA level, the pluralistic model operated within the structure of County Halls where there was a close liaison between the CEO and the chair of the education committee (Jennings, 1977:121-124). In the 1980s, however, the traditional tri-partite relationships were strained as central government sought to control the perceived excesses of spending by local government on education. Within local government there arose a much more politicised elected body of Members who sought to exercise greater influence over the direction of making, implementing and reviewing policy (Jennings, 1977:202). The formulation of an Open College policy resulted from an informal negotiation between professionals, administrators and politicians.

Another perspective which provided useful insights, particularly at the macro-level, was that of the structuralist frame of reference. It

was primarily the needs of an expanding economy which gave rise to the expansion of the educational system and, when recession became evident by the late seventies, it temporarily halted the economic pressure for second-chance education. There were also other insights furnished by concepts drawn from the field of political science and decision-making theory (Rose, 1969; Dror, 1978; Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963).

An important perspective in the policy-implementation process was that of social action theory. Its value was in understanding the process involved, the way in which the roles of co-ordinators were negotiated in interaction in the Open College network. Whilst the goals of the Open College may have been clearly stated at the outset, not all members of the Open College network and the representatives on the JPB were equally committed to, and agreed upon, the priorities. A battle for control was evident at meetings of the JPB, the interface between the central staff of the Open College (perceived as employees of the polytechnic) and the principals of the member institutions. The organisational structure of the OCSL was unhelpful to its development and it was only the commitment of the co-ordinators for Return to Learning and Access provision and their ability to negotiate their role, which led to the successful development in these fields. The social action perspective was critically important in developing an understanding of the motivation and perception of individuals in the organisation and in explaining the difference in outcomes within and between the designated areas of course development.

Was one perspective more useful than another at different stages of the formulation and implementation of the policy? In one sense it is rather like needing different pairs of spectacles to focus at different levels of the formulation and implementation of the policy: at the macro-level, systems theory, structuralism and pluralism were the most insightful; whilst at the micro-level, the social action perspective and phenomenology were the most relevant. Within the broad perspective of social action theory, the field of phenomenology conveys something of the fluidity of organisations and, therefore, an understanding of the way in which change occurs. Each perspective, however, was complementary to the others; in taking a close look at the micro-social interactions within the JPB, in terms of how individuals' defined situations, how their behaviour reflected norms and values internalised by their professional training and experience, one could not understand the nature of the 'social exchange' unless one also took into account the macro-political scene at that time. Central government policies to abolish the ILEA and to remove the polytechnics from the control of LEAs influenced people's perceptions and the more constructive and supportive attitude of principals towards the central team which developed in the management forum of the Open College (the JPB) was, in part, attributable to the perceived external threat to the Authority.

Ultimately, was one perspective more insightful than another in predicting the outcome of the policy? A conclusion as to the outcome of the policy on the Open College depends on the time scale envisaged.

Initially, at the point of evaluating the objectives (in comparing the outcomes of the designated areas of course development and student recruitment), it was evident that the social action perspective was the most helpful in explaining the differences in outcomes between institutions and between curriculum areas. If, however, one takes a time scale of some five years after the launch, the point at which central government had passed legislation to abolish the ILEA, then the structuralist and pluralist models would seem to be the most insightful. Should an even longer time scale be employed, however, then it is highly likely that the systems model would be appropriate for if, as predicted, the desired expansion of the economy necessitates an expansion of post-school education to a wider clientele then the country will be obliged to make better use of its human resources in order to further economic growth and competitiveness. Opening a debate on higher education in the House of Lords on April 12th 1989, Baroness Blackstone, Labour education spokeswoman, said the Government was limiting the opportunities for talent to be nurtured at the very time when the expansion of higher education was an economic necessity. Pointing to the fact that student numbers were growing at a rate below those of our industrial competitors, she asked, "Can we really afford to expand so slowly?" (speech reported in the Guardian 13th April, 1989). Ultimately, in order to increase the number of pupils staying on at 16 and to bring adults back into education, the government will have to seek the co-operation of LEAs and the teaching profession. Hence, in the long term, the systems and pluralistic models will again be relevant.

By the same token, the social interaction perspective is also

applicable in central government circles where it is increasingly

apparent that there is not one holistic view of the policies needed in

the post-school sector. Raab's model (1988) of 'negotiated networks'

in a pluralistic framework might be appropriate in this situation.

There would appear to be 'negotiation' at different levels in the

system, within the Open College, within the LEA and within central

government. The speech by Kenneth Baker, the Education Secretary, at

Lancaster University on January 6th 1989 on the future of university

education, for example, reflected a number of different points of view

within his own party. There would, therefore, seem to be no one model

or theoretical perspective which is to be preferred above all others;

each has a potential contribution to make in understanding the process

of policy formulation and implementation.

Did previous research have any influence
on the process of policy formulation?

In the first place it was very clear that the Leader of the Authority

was very much influenced by the findings of the cohort studies, such

as those by Douglas (1968) and Davie (1972), and of the evidence of

under-achievement. The results of academic research were used in the

writing of policy papers by senior officers, at the behest of the

Leader, to influence the Authority's administration.[11]

Subsequently, however, in interviews with key people it proved very

difficult to ascertain whether they were influenced by research. The

answer to this was made more difficult by the fact that education is a well-researched area and many practitioners are familiar with the results of at least some research. It was found not particularly useful or valid to ask a direct question of policy-makers because there was a danger of "retrospective bias", as those interviewed could have had a tendency to recollect in "self-enhancing ways" (Bauer and Gergen, 1968:219).

Where the term 'research' arose in the course of an interview it was found to have different meanings for people: some saw it as an activity in which they engaged in 'reviewing' provision; others saw it purely in quantitative terms; some were obviously influenced by academic research in relation to educational inequalities but were not familiar with exact details. What was apparent in the interviews undertaken in the institutions was the universal awareness of the Authority's policy on equal opportunities. The Open College development was closely associated with that policy, although in fact the equal opportunities policy post-dated the setting up of the Open College of South London. The Chief Inspector for FHCE recalled in the AFE Review that "we were preparing equal opportunities policy. . . aware of the tensions of the local population . . . already influenced by the thinking in equal opportunities". And in the words of the Education Officer, the Open College was "consistent with the equal opportunities policy, but it wasn't activated by it".

The Authority was unique in some respects in having a research
department which had academic standing in the research community. The
Director of the Research Branch believed in drawing on the insights of
earlier studies. Prior to the launch of the equal opportunities and
anti-racist policy, the Authority had commissioned a review of the
literature pertaining to educational inequality from the research
department and the subsequent publications[1][2] had been circulated
to all schools and colleges. It was apparent in the interviews
conducted that whilst people may not have been familiar with the
detailed research contained in this document, a knowledge of the
incidence and nature of inequality in the educational sphere had
permeated the policy-making sphere (Donnison, 1972:526).

Did research 'in-house' influence the process of policy-implementation?

The response to this question is somewhat easier to document. In
general, it could be said that the advantages of in-house research
outweighed the disadvantages: access was easily facilitated and the
contact maintained with the Open College of South London over the
whole period of the development; the familiarity with the various
networks and the organisational processes in County Hall were
advantageous in the observational insights which were afforded. One
disadvantage of such close contact might be said to be the problem of
observer bias because of an allegiance of an employee to the
organisation and, perhaps, therefore to a reluctance to identify the

negative aspects of the Open College organisation. Certainly this

research was a "social process" (Burgess, 1984) and it was

acknowledged at the outset that the researcher, as a 'second-chance'

person had a personal interest in the Open College development. The

way in which the research was conducted, analysed and reported,

however, was not thought to have biased the research outcome.

One of the anticipated advantages of having an in-house research unit

might be that the proximity of the research to the policy making and

implementing machinery would allow for the results of the evaluation

to be more easily fed into the process of policy review. This did not

happen. The establishment of a formal process of feeding-back on a

policy development would normally ensure that any research

commissioned would routinely be reported to the appropriate

sub-committee. However, as described in the earlier chapter, there

was no such procedure established and it was only following the

pressure exerted by the Open Colleges, through the informally

constituted InLOCC, that the Authority formalised the objectives of

the Open Colleges and instituted an annual review procedure. The

in-house study (RS 1137/87)[13] was presented to the AFE Strategy

Section at the time of the first formally constituted review and

certain recommendations were made by the Chair of that Committee

following that presentation. Shortly thereafter, however the

abolition of the ILEA was announced and the whole future of the Open

College development was in question. There was never to be a second

annual review.

Recommendations

What recommendations can be made concerning the implementation of
educational policy in an LEA following the undertaking of this thesis?
The hypothesis was tested at each stage of the policy formulation and
implementation. In fact, these did not appear as distinct stages and
whether this was attributable to some uniqueness of the Open College
development, or whether it was the blurring of stages which is also a
feature, of policy-making more generally, is hard to determine. It is
likely, however, that there are other instances of a 'policy' taking
shape and becoming formalised following an initiative taken by an
institution. The hypothesis concerning the importance of "bringing
together" commitment, capacity and communication was supported at each
and every stage of the development from the conception to the review
of the policy. What also emerged, however, and this is supported in
the findings of all three evaluations undertaken (two internally and
one externally), was the lack of accountability. Initially the
line-management relations were unsatisfactory for the people involved
and there was no regular mechanism established for reviewing the Open
College development at the outset. It follows that whilst
'grass-roots' initiatives are thoroughly desirable, if they fit with
the LEA's policy, they do need at some stage to become formalised so
that the roles and responsibilities of key individuals are clearly
defined for all concerned. In formalising the process, it is also to
be recommended that objectives are agreed upon and that the allocation

of resources is, in part, conditional on the development meeting its
performance criteria.

A second recommendation follows from observations of what makes for
successful innovation and change in educational institutions. An
important means of obtaining compliance of key people within the
educational service, whether as officers, managers of institutions or
as 'street-level' bureaucrats, is the provision of professional
development. This may take various forms: seminar papers, workshops,
appraisal and institutionally-based or course-based in-service
training. What is clear is that 'learning' needs to take place at all
levels and with all groups from senior officers to telephone
receptionists in institutions. People are also more likely to change
their attitudes and practice if they share the 'training/educational
learning' experience with colleagues and if they are supported in the
process of innovation and change within the institution by drawing on
expertise from outside as required.

A third recommendation, which follows from the experience of a
researcher in-house, is the value of 'research' at all levels.
External evaluation is helpful because of its greater objectivity and
it is also likely to be more insightful if it draws on the concepts
and theories which have general application within the policy-making
field. The role of the researcher in-house needs to be clearly
defined in relation to policy-makers and policy-implementers. The
various audiences to whom the results of the evaluation are to be

disseminated need to be identified at the outset of the research. The

evaluation of policy initiatives needs to be both formative and

summative. Further, the use of interim reports and verbal as well as

written reports should be considered. What could be developed further

is the use of self-evaluation and institutionally-based evaluation

which could aid communication between the parties and help the

individuals and groups to make sense of their situation and thus

better manage the process of change. This form of research develops

communication between the parties, and helps to develop a 'shared

view'. It is empowering in developing professional autonomy. Last

but not least, it is likely to have greater impact than the findings

of external evaluation in inducing change in the educational service.

Notes

1. Subjects covered by Access Courses included Business Studies, Art, Architecture, Engineering, Mathematics, Food Studies, Humanities, Languages, Nursing, Photography, Recreation and Leisure Management, Science and Technology, Social Science, Social Work, Speech Therapy and Teaching. (ILEA RS:1197/88)

2. It is argued by Bernstein and Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) that the educational system perpetuates class relations through established cultural traditions which militate against the entry of children of working class origin into higher education.

3. Source: Interview with the principal of Flinton College.

4. An examination of sub-groups of the 1971 student population revealed that those who had the normal educational qualifications for entry to a conventional university (2 'A' levels) were more likely to graduate more quickly than those who had not. By the end of 1978, 62.5 per cent of this group had graduated compared to 39.5 per cent of those without 'A' level qualifications.

5. R.H. Turner, 'Modes of Social Ascent through Education, Sponsored and Contest Mobility', in A. Halsey, J. Floud and C.A. Anderson, eds., Education, Economy and Society (Glencoe, Ill.,1961), pp. 121-139).

6. Paper entitled, The Academy under Siege: Perspectives from a Distance Teaching University' Rick Powell and Tony Simmons, Athabasca University paper presented at Queen's University, Belfast on 20th May, 1989.

7. Similar problems were encountered by the community school for much the same reason. (ILEA RS.932/83)

8. Interview with the co-ordinator for ALFA.

9. It was interesting to note that the accommodation at the polytechnic used by OCSL was to be used for the new entrepreneurial activity, the provision of management courses.

10. Source: Interview with the co-ordinator from Laymore AEI.

11. There were six publications by the ILEA entitled Race, Sex and Class':1. Achievement in Schools 2. Multi-Ethnic Education in Schools 3. A Policy for Equality: Race 4. Anti-Racist 5. Multi-Ethnic Education in Further, Higher and Community Education 6. A Policy for Equality: Sex.

12. Ibid.

13. The report <u>The Open College of South London</u> (RS 1137/87) is enclosed with the thesis. A paper, based on the study, entitled <u>An "Open College": A Development in Post-School Education</u> was given to the Canada/UK Colloquia in Toronto in November 1988. A copy of the paper is also enclosed with the thesis.

Appendix A.1: People with whom interviews were conducted 1984 - 1989

<u>Members</u>

The former Leader of the Authority   July 1989

The Chair of the FHE Sub-Committee   March 1987

The Chair of the FHE Sub-Committee   July 1989

<u>Officers</u>

The former Education Officer   July 1988

The former Deputy Education Officer
(Further, Higher and Community Education)   November 1988

The Director of Education (Post-schools)   August 1987

The former Deputy Education Officer
(Resources)   April 1989

Assistant Education Officer
(Further and Higher Education)   August 1987

The Assistant Education Officer
(Community Education and Careers)   March 1987

The Chief Inspector
(Further, Higher and Community Education)   March 1987

The Inspector for Community Education   March 1987

The Inspector for Further Education   December 1987

An administrative Officer in FE Branch   February 1987

<u>The Polytechnic</u>

The Administrative Assistant to the Director November 1987

<u>The Staff of the Open College of South London</u>

The former Director of Studies   August 1987

The former Central Co-ordinator for Access   February 1989

The Central Co-ordinator for New Technology   March 1987

The Central Co-ordinator for Return to Learning December 1987

The Central Co-ordinator for Flexible
Learning Opportunities   December 1988

Staff in the Member Institutions

The former Principal of a founding institution   April 1987

Six Principals of Colleges/Institutes   1987/88

Nine Institutional Co-ordinators   1987/88

Other Open Colleges in London

The Central Co-ordinator for ALFA   May 1989

The Central Co-ordinator for CAWLOC   May 1989

Appendix A.2.:   Interview Guides and Questionnaires

A.2. (i) Interview Guide - Key People

. . . .

1. Historical Factors

Where did the policy originate?
(Officers or Members' initiative?)

Who were the key people involved?   *(roles)*
(Ascertain whether informal discussion prior to committee proposal)

Was there pressure exerted, from whom, where, which groups the most
pressure?
(communities, unions)

At what stage did you get involved?

2. Objectives

What were the stated objectives of the OC?   *(definition of
                                                  (the situation)*

Were there any other objectives?
(Institutional goals, electoral concerns, career interests)
                                                  (goals)
What do you think the policy is trying to achieve?
(rationalisation of resources?)

What is most important?

How practical do you think these goals are?

What is meant by 'equality of opportunity'?
(Ascertain whether familiar with relevant research)

Who were identified as the client group?

How are their interests represented?

3. Organisational Factors

Use an organisational map. Ascertain whether it is a diagramatic
representation of the Oc's structure

Is responsibility delegated to AEOs for FE and CEC Branch?

Were institutions invited/approached to participate?

What considerations were there - capacity, suitability in terms of
clients, prior experience in the field, catchment area, resources
technical and teaching.

Did other institutions ask to join the OC?
(Response, reasons)
<div align="right">*(role-set)*</div>
Are you a member of the OC's decision-making bodies?

Which are the real lines of accountability?
<div align="right">*(communication)*</div>
How do you see your role in relation to this policy initiative?

4. Implementation

What factors did you see as being important in implementing this
policy?

Were financial resources required?   *(capacity)*

Who provided resources?
(branches, the institutions and/or the authority)

Were these additional to existing budget or re-allocated?

Were additional staff required?

Were these to be recruited from within ILEA or were staff to be
re-assigned?

What commitment was required of member institutions?

Was discretion allowed/encouraged by member   *(definition of
institutions?   (the situation)*

Were there any difficulties in launching the OC?
(From whom, for what reason?)

What publicity did the OC receive?

Was evaluation envisaged at the outset?   *(control)*
(Whose responsibility was it?)

(What purpose do you think it serves?)   *(accountability)*

How would you measure the success of this policy? *(goals)*
(How do you feel about it yourself?)

What can realistically be achieved in the next 3 years?

5. Cultural Factors

What is your current role in relation to the OC? *(role)*

How long have you been in post?
(Ascertain how central/marginal/integral it is in relation to their role generally.)

Have you had any prior experience of 'second chance' provision
(Access, New Horizons etc.). *(socialisation)*

Have you ever worked in AEIs/FEs/OU/ other OCs? *(reference group)*

6. Personal Factors

Ascertain the age, sex, ethnicity, class and educational background of the respondent. *(socialisation)*

THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME YOUR TIME AND HELP IN THIS WAY.

A.2.(ii) Interview Guide: Central Co-ordinators

1. History

Area of responsibility . . . .

Personal history - subject background, AEI/FE/HFE, experience of
second-chance students   *(socialisation)*

2. Structure of OCSL

Role in relation to other co-ordinators   *(role-set)*

3. Capacity

Entrepreneurial role envisaged.

4. Objectives   *(definition of*
                                                     (the situation)
How to measure success. Which areas were the most successful? Why?

5. Communication

Familiarity with AFE Review and other documentation
                                                     (role)
Contact with - the Central unit.

the JPB

the Panels

the Authority - the inspectorate

the network - development of InLOCC
                                                     (reference
Nationally - the development of Access forum.   *(group)*

6. Changes within the OCSL

1986 Review

Changes within the JPB.

7. Current Situation -

Within the ILEA   *(definition of*
                                                     (the situation)
Nationally

8. Other comments -

A.2.(iii) Interview Guide: Principals for the Colleges/Institutes
(C/I)

1. Appointment

How long have you been in post?

2. Role of College/Institute in relation to the OCSL

How long has C/I been a member of the OCSL?

Did the C/I seek membership or was the institution approached to join?
(Ascertain who approached the institution.)

What were seen as the advantages of joining?   *(goals)*

Were there any disadvantages perceived?

Was there any interest/pressure to join from within the I/C?
(Ascertain which departments and extent of interest.)

Was there any interest/pressure to join from within the local
community?

Did the Institute/College have any involvement in 'Return to Learning'
type courses prior to the development of OCSL? *(culture)*

Did joining the OCSL necessitate any changes to the Institutes/College
programme?

What courses does the I/C currently run which are designated 'Open
College' courses?

How are decisions arrived as to which courses shall be designated
Open College courses?

What are the course objectives?   *(definition of
                                               (the situation)*

What are the criteria for recruiting students?
(evidence of positive discrimination)

Have you ever been asked not to run a particular course by the OCSL?
(Ascertain the reasons given and the institution's response.)

Who is the co-ordinator?

How do you see that role?   *(role)*
(Ascertain autonomy envisaged.)

3. Role of Principal within OCSL

Are you a member of any committees or working groups?
(Joint Planning Board, INLOCC etc.)   *(role-set)*

I understand that a new management structure is being proposed for the OCSL -

How do you view this proposal?
(Ascertain views and reasons.)   *(definition of*
        (the situation)

Do you visit other institutes/colleges?

Are the teaching staff involved in teaching at any of the other institutions of the OCSL?   *(role-set)*

Have you visited other OCs elsewhere?

4. Facilities

Does the Institute/College have: *(capacity)*

Adequate technical equipment?

Refreshment facilities?

Creche?
(number of places)

Counselling/careers advice?

Do you consider these facilities adequate for OC use ?
(Ascertain how these might need to be augmented.)

The Technobus

Have you seen it?

Has your Institute/College used it?
(Ascertain views on its use.)

5. Information

Did you receive or have over-sight of any of the following:

The AFE Review   *(definition of*
        (the situation)
Policy Paper November 1986 'Open Colleges: Objectives and Review'

R & S Interim Reports on the Open College?

IF YES -   *(communication)*

Did you pass the information on to the tutors of OC courses?

IF YES -

Did you alter your practice in any way as a result of this report?

Information from the OCSL and information from other institutes, colleges
(Ascertain what is done with it - given to students, tutors etc.)

Is there a noticeboard for notices in relation to OCSL?

6. Objectives

(goals)

(a) What do you think the Open College is trying to achieve?

IF MENTIONS MORE THAN ONE -

Which of these is the most important?

(b) What is meant by 'equal opportunity?

(c) What does it mean in relation to your own institution?

How would you measure the success of the Open College?
(Mobility between institutions, horizontal, vertical or both?
Emphasis? Accreditation?)

8. Background Information
(Ascertain age, sex, ethnicity and whether 'second chance' person)

(socialisation)

Subject Background: qualifications

Have you read anything about adults returning to education?

(commitment)

Is there anything you feel you would like to add to your observations?

WELL, MANY THANKS FOR GIVING ME YOUR TIME AND HELP IN THIS WAY

A.2.(iv) Interview Guide: Institutional Co-ordinators for the Open College

1. Appointment

How long have you been in post?

2. What does the job entail?   *(definition of (the situation)*

(Ascertain how much remission co-ordinator has)

PROMPT

(i) Within the Institute/College?

To whom are you responsible?   *(role-set)*

With whom do you liaise?
(Principal, Vice-Principal, Heads of Dept.)

Are you a member of the academic board?

Are you a member of any committees?

Teaching commitment

Do you teach on designated OC Courses?

Did the Institute/College have any involvement in 'Return to Learning'
type courses prior to the development of OCSL?

          (culture)

Did this development necessitate any changes to the Institutes/College
programme?

Are you involved in enrolling students?

What criteria are there?   *(goals)*
(evidence of positive discrimination)

What are the course objectives?
(cognitive, non-cognitive)

(ii) Within OCSL

With whom do you liaise?   *(role-set)*
(Other co-ordinators, Manor House co-ordinators)

Are you a member of any committees or working groups?

Do you visit other institutes/colleges?

*(reference
(group)*

Have you visited other Ocs elsewhere? · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·

3. Facilities

Does the Institute/College have: *(capacity)*

Adequate technical equipment?

Refreshment facilities?

Creche?
(number of places)

Counselling/careers advice?

Do you consider these facilities adequate for OC use?
(Ascertain if not, how they might be improved.)

The Technobus

Have you seen it?

Has your Institute/College used it?
(Ascertain views on its use.)

4. Information

(communication)

Did you receive or have over-sight of any of the following:

Information from the OCSL
(What do you do with it? noticeboard etc)

Information from other institutes, colleges
(What do you do with it? students, tutors etc.)

The AFE Review

Policy Paper November 1986 'Open Colleges: Objectives and Review'

R & S Interim Reports on the Open College?

IF YES -

Did you pass the information on to the tutors of OC courses?

IF YES -

Did you alter your practice in any way as a result of this report?

5. Objectives
(goals)

(a) What do you think the Open College is trying to achieve?
(Progression - horizontal, vertical or both, emphasis, accreditation.)

IF MENTIONS MORE THAN ONE -

Which of these is the most important?

(b) What is meant by 'equal opportunity?

(c) What does it mean in relation to your own job?
(Ascertain whether counselling is part of the role of co-ordinator.)

6. Role-conflict:

Do you ever experience a conflict in your role in relation to the dual
commitment to the OCSL and the Institute/College?
(intra-role
(conflict)

7. Background Information

(Ascertain age, sex, ethnicity and whether 'second chance' person)
(socialisation)
Subject Background: qualifications

Have you had any time for in-service activities in last 3 years?

Why were you interested in this post?   *(commitment)*

Have you read anything about adults returning to education?

How do you measure success in your post?

Career path/interests?

Is there anything you would like to add to your observations?

WELL, MANY THANKS FOR GIVING ME YOUR TIME AND HELP IN THIS WAY

Appendix A.2 (v)

A QUESTIONNAIRE TO STUDENTS ON NEW TECHNOLOGY COURSES

Please put a ring round the number corresponding to your answer like this (3), or write, as appropriate the answer in the space provided.

SECTION I YOUR PRESENT COURSE

1   (a) Before deciding to enrol for this course, did you obtain any information
         or advice about the course from any of the following services?
         (RING ALL THAT APPLY)   INFORMATION
                                                                          FROM

     01 Someone who had taken the course previously 1   ___

     02 Staff giving the course 1   ___

     03 Other staff from the present institution 1   ___

     04 Staff from another institution/school 1   ___

     05 Specialised careers advice for adults eg.Lambeth Educational Opportunities 1   ___

     06 Club/organisation to which you belong 1   ___

     07 Your spouse/partner 1   ___

     08 A friend 1   ___

     09 Someone at work 1   ___

     10 Open College leaflet 1   ___

     11 Newspaper, magazine or trade journal (PLEASE SPECIFY)..................... 1   ___

     12 Posters about the course (PLEASE SPECIFY LOCATION)....................... 1   ___

     13 College/Institute prospectus or leaflet.................................. 1   ___

     14 Television/radio 1   ___

     15 Other source (PLEASE SPECIFY) 1   ___

     16 None.. 1   ___

                                                                                        (20)

IF YOU HAVE RINGED MORE THAN ONE:

1   (b)   Which would you say was the MOST useful source of information

(ANSWER BY ENTERING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER FROM 01 TO 15 IN THE BOX PROVIDED)

2   (a)   When you decided to enrol for this course, what did you hope to get out of it? What were your aims?

(PLEASE READ THROUGH THE AIMS LISTED BELOW AND RING ALL THAT APPLY)

(i)   WORK-RELATED AIMS
01 To help me in my present job 1
02 To improve my career prospects generally 1
03 To enable me to re-enter the job market 1

(ii)   SUBJECT-RELATED AIMS
04 To find out about the new technology 1
05 To learn a practical skill...................................1
06 To learn more about a subject that really interests me.......1
07 To develop a shared interest with my spouse/partner, friend, children etc.(SPECIFY WHOM) 1
08 To gain sufficient background to continue the subject at a more advanced level 1

(iii)   GENERAL REASONS
09 Wanted an interest to keep my mind active....................1
10 To use the equipment there for a hobby of mine 1
11 To see if I could succeed at a course of this sort...........1
12 To make up for lack of educational opportunities in the past.1
13 To make new friends with similar interests 1
14 To get away for a time from my usual surroundings and responsibilities at home 1
15 To develop greater self-confidence 1
16 Other aim (Please specify below) 1

(b)   Which of these aims would you say was the MOST important in your case?

(ANSWER BY ENTERING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER FROM 01 TO 16 IN THE BOX PROVIDED)

3   There are now many courses available to mature students. Were any of the following factors important in leading you to select THIS PARTICULAR COURSE, AT THIS PARTICULAR INSTITUTION?
(PLEASE RING ALL THAT APPLY).

(i)   FEATURES OF THE COURSE ITSELF
01 The subjects offered appeared to be the ones I wanted 1
02 The course was at the right academic level 1
03 It was specifically designed for mature students 1

(ii) THE MODE OF STUDY
05 It gave me the opportunity to become a full-time student ...1
06 I could study without giving up my present job/career 1
07 It fitted in with my domestic responsibilities 1
08 It allowed me to study at my own pace 1
09 It provided an opportunity to mix with younger students 1
10 It was at a convenient time for me.........................1

(iii) PRACTICAL FACTORS
11 It was near to where I live/work 1
12 The cost of the course was reasonable/manageable 1
13 Pre-school child-care facilities were provided 1
14 It catered for students with disability problems 1

(iv) OTHER FACTORS
15 I could get on the course despite my lack of qualifications.1
16 I could not get a place on the course that I really
    wanted to take..1
17 It was recommended by others, e.g., students, tutors 1
18 Spouse, friends, etc., were already taking the course 1
19 Other factor (Please specify below) 1

(58)

4   IF YOU ARE TAKING A COMPUTER STUDIES COURSE -
(OTHERS GO TO Q5)

(a) Do you have a computer at home?   Yes 1
                                     No 2

(59)

(b) Do you use a computer at work?   Yes 1
                                     No 2

(60)

SECTION II In this section we would like you to tell us about your earlier education and about your educational plans for the future.

5   How old were you when you left school   _____ years

6   What did you do next after leaving school (RING ONE NUMBER ONLY)

      Full-time work with some part-time study (SPECIFY STUDY)............1
      Full-time work with no study 2
      Part-time work and part-time study (SPECIFY STUDY)..................3
      Full-time higher education (e.g., in a university, polytechnic,
         college of education, etc.) 4
      Full time study for A-levels or other school-type exams 5
      Other full-time study (e.g., technical, FE college,
         secretarial course etc) 6
      Became a full-time housewife/houseperson...........................7
      Other (Please write in) 8

7   Have you any formal educational qualifications?   YES/NO

If YES: Which of the following categories best describes the highest educational
           qualification which you hold at the moment? (PLEASE RING ONE NUMBER ONLY)

```
CSE passes ..........................................................01
GCE O-Level (1-4 subjects) ..........................................02
GCE O-Level (5 or more subjects) or General School Certificate ...03
BEC/TEC general .....................................................04
ONC/OND or BEC/TEC national .........................................05
HNC/HND or BEC/TEC higher national ..................................06
Teaching certificate ...............................................07
University diploma ..................................................08
First degree ........................................................09
Post-graduate degree ...............................................10
Professional qualification, below A-level equivalent..............11
Professional qualification, A-level but not degree equivalent.....12
Professional qualification, degree equivalent or above ..........13
Other (Please specify) .............................................14
```

(64-65)

8   (a)   When you have finished your present studies, do   Yes 1
           you have plans to continue your   No 2
           education in any way?

     (b)   If 'YES' which course do you plan   _____
           to do next? (Please write in)

                                            _____

(66-67)

     (c)   What course(s) do you eventually   _____
           hope to take? (Please write in)

                                            _____

(68-69)

SECTION III This section concerns jobs - past, present and future. (WHENEVER POSSIBLE,
PLEASE GIVE FULL JOB TITLES INCLUDING RANK OR GRADE eg APPRENTICE GAS FITTER, TOOLROOM FOREMAN,
BANK CLERK, PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER, CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT)

9   Which of the following best describes your present employment status?
        (RING ONE NUMBER ONLY)

                In paid employment (full or part-time) 1
                Temporarily unemployed, but seeking work 2
                Full-time student 3
                Full-time housewife/houseperson 4
                Retired 5
                Disabled or otherwise permanently unemployed 6
                Other (Please write in) 7

IF YOU ARE NOT IN PAID EMPLOYMENT PLEASE GO TO Q11

10   (a) What is the exact title of your (main) job?

_____

        (b) In what type of organisation is this?
             (e.g., car factory, school, DHSS)

_____

        (c) Including overtime, and any other paid part-time work, roughly how many hours
             do you work in a normal week?

        NOW GO TO Q12

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11   (a)   What was the last full-time job you held before stopping work (IF NEVER FULL
TIME JOB GO TO Q12)

       (b)   In what type of organisation was this?
(e.g., car factory, school, DHSS)

ALL STUDENTS -

12   (a)   What was the main job that your FATHER (or the male person responsible for you)
had during the latter days of your schooling?*

       (b)   What was the main job that your MOTHER (or the female person responsible for
you) had during the latter days of your schooling?*

       (c)   What is the present occupation of your spouse/partner?*

(*IF NOT WORKING, PLEASE GIVE HIS/HER LAST JOB)

13   Now a question about your long-term career plans. What type of work do you expect to be
doing in five years time from now? (PLEASE RING ONE NUMBER ONLY)

I expect to do the same type of work and at the same grade/rank as at present 1
I expect to be doing the same type of work, but at a higher grade/rank than at present 2
I expect to be doing a different type of work (Please give expected job) 3
I expect to have started work (Please give expected job) 4
I expect to be a full-time housewife/houseperson 5
I expect to have retired/I have already retired 6
I expect I won't be working for some other reason (Please give details) 7

Don't really know yet 8

14   Are you male or female?   Male 1
                                                     Female 2

15   How old are you?

                                                     years

16   IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN -

        How many children have you?

17   Ethnic Origins

Many ethnic groups are concerned about the educational opportunities available,
and have asked us to collect relevant information. It would be appreciated
if you could tick below the ethnic or cultural group that you feel that you or your
family belong to.

NOTE: If you think that none of the categories provided describe adequately yourself
(and your family) please ring no. 10 (the penultimate line) and write down the
details necessary.

          English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish 01
          Asian/Indian, Pakistan, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Malay 02
          Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese 03
          West Indian 04
          African 05
          Arab/Middle Eastern or North African country 06
          Greek, Greek Cypriot 07
          European Country other than Britain, Ireland, Greece 08
          Turkish/Turkish Cypriot 09
          Other (write in) 10

          I prefer not to answer this question 11

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND TROUBLE IN HELPING US WITH THIS STUDY

(87)

Appendix A.2 (vi)

A QUESTIONNAIRE TO STUDENTS ON NEW TECHNOLOGY COURSES ON COMPLETION OF THE COURSE

Please put a ring round the number corresponding to your answer like this (3), or write the answer in the space provided.

1   Below is a list of factors which can prevent students from enjoying or   getting the maximum benefit from their course. (PLEASE GO THROUGH THE LIST AND INDICATE TO WHAT EXTENT EACH OF THEM HAS CREATED A PROBLEM FOR YOU)

PLEASE RING A NUMBER FOR EACH FACTOR SHOWN	A great problem	A slight problem	Not a problem	Not Appli-cable
Feeling my general level of education was inadequate .	1	2	3	4
Keeping up with the level of the course	1	2	3	4
Organising my time for the course	1	2	3	4
Getting on with teaching staff	1	2	3	4
Getting on with other students	1	2	3	4
Meeting the cost of my studies	1	2	3	4
Lacking confidence in my ability	1	2	3	4
Lacking encouragement from family, friends, etc.......	1	2	3	4
Relating my practical experience to skills/subject taught	1	2	3	4
Job demands restricting my study time	1	2	3	4
Other (Please specify below)	1	2	3	4

2   The following areas of concern have been mentioned by other mature students when assessing their satisfaction with the courses provided for them. (PLEASE READ THROUGH THE LIST AND INDICATE FOR EACH ITEM HOW SATISFACTORY YOU HAVE FOUND YOUR PRESENT COURSE)

PLEASE RING A NUMBER FOR EACH AREA BELOW	Very satis-factory	Fairly satis-factory	Fairly unsatis-factory	Very unsatis factory	Not Appicable/ Don't know/
The subject/content of the course	1	2	3	4	5
The academic level/standard of the course......	1	2	3	4	5
The teaching methods for mature students.......	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of contact with teaching staff..........	1	2	3	4	5
Interest and enthusiasm of staff...............	1	2	3	4	5
Provision of up-to-date materials/ equipment	1	2	3	4	5
Pre-school child-care provision	1	2	3	4	5
Places for informal contact with staff/ students (e.g., common room, bars)	1	2	3	4	5
Physical environment (e.g., building design) ..	1	2	3	4	5
Transport system (e.g., buses, car parking) ...	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of staff for counselling/advice ..	1	2	3	4	5
Other (Please specify below)	1	2	3	4	5

(99)

(110)

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3 (a) What benefits have you experienced from taking the course? What have you
      gained from it? (PLEASE READ THROUGH THE LIST OF POSSIBLE BENEFITS BELOW AND INDICATE
      TO WHAT EXTENT EACH ONE APPLIES IN YOUR CASE)

PLEASE RING A NUMBER FOR EACH BENEFIT	To a great extent	To some extent	Little/ not at all	Somewhat the opposite	Not Appli- cable
01 Become more confident in my self and my abilities...	1	2	3	4	5
02 Developed new friendships, a more satisfying social life	1	2	3	4	5
03 Encouraging others in my family to begin study/ study harder	1	2	3	4	5
04 Learned more about an interesting subject/skill/ activity	1	2	3	4	5
05 Acquired new skills or information that I needed....	1	2	3	4	5
06 Gained sufficient background to continue........... the subject at a more advanced level	1	2	3	4	5
07 Enjoyed study/skill/activity for its own sake	1	2	3	4	5
08 Obtained advice on 'follow-on' courses	1	2	3	4	5
09 Increased my career prospects - getting a job/ have had or expect to get promotion	1	2	3	4	5
10 Other (Please specify below)	1	2	3	4	5

3 (b) Which of these would you say was the MOST
      important in your case?

      (ANSWER BY ENTERING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER
      FROM 01 TO 10 IN THE BOX PROVIDED)

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4   (a)   When you have finished your present studies, do you have plans to continue your education in any way?

Yes 1
No 2

    (b)   If 'YES' which course do you plan to do next? (Please write in)

_____

_____

    (c)   What course(s) do you eventually hope to take? (Please write in)

_____

_____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND TROUBLE IN HELPING US WITH THIS STUDY

A Questionnaire to students who discontinued a course in New Technology

Course:_____   Location:_____   FOR OFFICE
                                                              USE ONLY
1 (a)   Please give your reason(s) for not continuing with   ___(151)
        the course:

                        RING ALL NUMBERS WHICH APPLY

The subject/content of the course was not what I expected ___1   ___(152)

The equipment/reserves of the class were inadequate _____2   ___(153)

I found the subject matter too difficult _____3   ___(154)

I found the subject matter too easy _____4   ___(155)

Transfer to the college was a problem _____5   ___(156)

Personal reasons - health, conflicting demands at home   ___(157)
or work _____6

Other (Specify)_____7   ___(158)

(b) Which of the reasons listed here was the most important?

                                ENTER NUMBER   [   ]

2 Do you intend to take another course in new technology
        in the future?   RING NUMBER   ___(160)

                                YES   1

                                NO   2

                           Undecided   3

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP WITH THE STUDY.

Appendix A.2 (vii)

A QUESTIONNAIRE TO LECTURERS ON NEW TECHNOLOGY COURSES

Please tick your response , or write, as appropriate the answer in the space provided.

1. Do you teach full-time/part-time ?

2. Do you teach at any other school/college/centre ?
   Which ones ?   (list)

3. Are you a representative for your institution on the 'New Technology' group
   of the Open College ?

4. Have you been provided with information on the other courses in the new technology area

   a) within your own institution ?   Yes/No

   b) within other institutions ?   Yes/No

5. Have any of the students in your class asked for advice or information on related courses ?

   Yes/No

   If Yes -   give number _____

6. Have you any comments which you would like to make on the your teaching situation ?

   a) in terms of the equipment available -

   b) the numbers of students in the class -

   c) the duration of the class -

   (d) the physical environment -

   e) any other comment -

Have you any recommendations which you would like to make to the 'New Technology' group
of the Open College ?

If you would like a copy of the report on students taking courses in the 'New Technology' field
under the auspices of the Open College please give your name and address:-

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND CO-OPERATION WITH THIS STUDY

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