



Prime Minister.

The attached reports
are submitted in their
current. I do not suggest

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE that you should
ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH send them.

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE's Office

MW
26in

26 February 1982

C Whitmore Esq
Principal Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Clive,

TRADE UNION STUDIES

... In my letter of 25 February I undertook to send
some further examples of HMI's reports on trade
union courses in individual colleges. I now
enclose notes of visits by HMI to three classes
at Leicester University and to a class at Carlisle
Technical College.

Yours sincerely
Imogen Wilde

MRS I WILDE
Private Secretary

26 FEB 1982





File AH

Trade
Union

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

1 March 1982

Dear Imogen,

TRADE UNION STUDIES

Thank you for your letter of 26 February 1982 with which you sent some further examples of reports by HMIs on trade union courses.

I have shown these to the Prime Minister who has read and noted them.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Whimmore.

Mrs Imogen Wilde,
Department of Education and Science.

AH

LEICESTER UNIVERSITY RB INSPECTION

INDUSTRIAL STUDIES: TUC EDUCATION PROGRAMME
GENERAL SHOP STEWARDS COURSE, WEEK 8, DR BOB CARTER, VAUGHAN COLLEGE,
24 NOVEMBER 1981

Twelve stewards were present from a variety of employment including engineering, hosiery and printing; ~~Twelve present~~, including 2 women (knitwear and nursing).

They had reached 'disciplinary procedures' in the TUC stage 1 handbook and had brought with them copies of the procedures in their firms. The class was divided into 3 groups who were set to answer questions set in the course book with reference to their own agreements. In the main, these were to test whether the agreements were up to the standard of the model given in the text.

The tutor spent some time with the 2 groups other than the one which I joined, but did not intervene much. My group tended to be dominated by one student who described the procedures in his firm. Two others tried to divert his monologue into a discussion of the questions set, while the only woman member remained silent. Gradually, the talkative student was caused by the others to give way to discussion of many matters of principle underlying the simply procedural questions. For example, the point where general supervision of work became 'disciplinary', and how disciplinary supervision moved from incidental criticism or checking of performance to become a verbal warning which would be the first stage of a disciplinary procedure. This led also to records and the expurgation of disciplinary warnings after an agreed time. As procedures were examined, the question arose of the disadvantages of formality as well as the need for ultimate safeguards. The group was probably assisted in examining these issues through having me there as an outside member, and I doubt if they could have been identified and separated from the mechanistic examination of procedures had the group been left entirely to its own devices. As it was, we found it difficult to make time for a precise analysis of the various agreements brought by the members.

After about 30 minutes the tutor, sitting in front of the room, invited the groups to report their findings, which they did with some difficulty as there had not been time to record their results with any precision. The general discussion summarised some of the procedural points and some of the principles, and included personal anecdotes and examples. By the end of the first 90 minutes, when the class adjourned for coffee, the issue had not been summed up by the tutor but, perhaps, this would be done in the next session.

This was generally a useful process as the students had not examined the principle of disciplinary action and the necessary procedures, nor did such issues often arise in their working circumstances. The treatment by the tutor while I was there and the kind of discussion undertaken by the group I joined emphasised the conflicting requirements of the TUC course. Explicitly, the course demands the accurate answering of questions in relation to agreements and rule books. This needs to be recorded accurately and then checked under the supervision of the tutor. At the same time, the questions set conceal important issues of principle which need to be identified and examined in an orderly way in order to make effective use of the experience and sound common sense of the students. Under the limits of time and the human limitations of the tutors, the tendency is not to check the results of exercises meticulously, or to go over them carefully with the whole group. At the same time, the principles are not made apparent by the text, and when they are raised by members are not necessarily recognised for what they are or followed up in sufficient depth.

The students had brought copies of their disciplinary procedures with them, but

did not show evidence of any other reading since last week. No use was made of a blackboard or other aids.

The group were extremely co-operative and impressed me with their experience and understanding. How far this is being developed by the existing course is an important question which is hard to settle satisfactorily.

The group met in a small room at Vaughan College with individual small flat-topped desks which were moved about to form tables for the 3 groups. When the tutor spoke to the whole class they remained round their tables, some with their backs to him.

C.W.R.

LEICESTER UNIVERSITY RB INSPECTION
INDUSTRIAL STUDIES: TUC EDUCATION PROGRAMME
GENERAL SHOP STEWARDS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
WEEK 8, VAUGHAN COLLEGE, TUTOR: MR DAVID MARSHALL

24 NOVEMBER 1981

This group (7 women, 5 men) from NUPE were dealing with grievance handling. They met in the Vaughan College library and were using the video tape of a BBC shop stewards course programme. A shop steward was seen holding a meeting of his small section after coming back from a meeting with union officers and management on a pay and grading grievance which needed to be taken to national level in the engineering industry.

Previous tapes in the series had been used and the meeting began with the class divided into 3 groups considering how the shop steward was going to handle the meeting and what were the pitfalls. We then viewed the tape, and the groups then analysed the steward's performance, before entering into a discussion with the whole class and the tutor. The tutor moved round the groups and posed useful questions.

The group I joined and the class as a whole applied themselves seriously and with good insight into the example shown and analysed the meeting shrewdly. The tutor knew the tape and the points he wished to make and encouraged useful thought in the closing discussion period.

This part-time tutor had worked on the recent revision of the general TUC course and was sufficiently familiar with it to be prepared to depart from the programmed texts and spend time on basic issues such as the conduct of the steward shown on the video tape. He told me he spent much time on such basic procedures and relationships between stewards and members, departing as necessary from the format of the printed material. He took the view that the students would read this in any case, and that the class meeting should not follow it when other matters were more important. Following the video tape and group work, the tutor brought the class together and used the closing 20 minutes to ensure that the main issues were covered and the session summarised in a constructive way.

Cwr.

LEICESTER UNIVERSITY RB

TUC EDUCATION SCHEME: HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES' COURSE,

WEEK 8, TUTOR : Mr Lee Solomon (Part-time)

VAUGHAN COLLEGE, VISITED 23 NOVEMBER 1981

When visited, there were 10 (9 M 1 W) safety representatives present. They had spent the day, according to the TUC programme, on Chemical Hazards, and were undertaking the exercises in the work book. They worked in groups of 3 or 4, and with the help of tables appeared to be calculating the safety of exposure to certain levels of chemical hazards and answering the questions set.

The tutor must have explained the procedures quite effectively and the group were applying themselves seriously to their tasks in a businesslike way. The tutor had brought in a good number of useful reference books from the Vaughan College library, where they are kept locked behind a grille because they tend to disappear.

He talked sensibly about his approach to the work, and clearly uses the TUC material conscientiously but not without thought. Owing to the nature of the exercise when I visited it was not possible to see him actively engaged in teaching the whole group.

His own working history is of a 16-year school leaver who later went to Ruskin, then worked in children's adventure playgrounds before going to Leicester University to read sociology and take a PGCE. After a brief spell as a community tutor in a Leicestershire community college he has been working as a part-time trade union studies tutor. This, I heard from Dr Carter, allows him to cope with his difficult domestic circumstances, but is clearly a precarious livelihood.

In conversation, this part-time tutor showed a realistic, dedicated and energetic approach, and I would expect him to have good potential for teaching on this programme.

What is not clear, is how he can bring to it qualities particularly characteristic of university scholarship and teaching.

CWS

CARLISLE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS STUDIES

HOD: E Dellow

'FOLLOW-ON' Shop Steward Class (10 weeks x 1 day)

The class seen was held in a small, not particularly comfortable room on the top floor of an old house in an adjoining street to the main college. There was a blackboard and O/H Projector (not used) in the classroom.

1. The class was on the second week of a ten week programme - they are released by their companies for one day a week to attend this course. All the shop stewards except one had previously attended a Basic Course (10 x 1 day).
2. There were 11 shop stewards on the register, but only six present. The stewards came from a variety of organisations - some private (eg. Metal Box), but the majority came from local authorities and the regional health authority. According to the tutor, the missing members were mainly from NUPE, and their non-attendance was due to the failure of the union regional officer to give the stewards adequate notice of course dates.
3. The college had not been selected as one of the 'pilot' centres for the revised structure of TUC courses (Basic courses now become Stage I, and 'Follow-on' become Stage II). The college was operating the 'old' follow-on syllabus. The tutor did not have a scheme of work - he argued that it was not feasible to produce one until about the fifth week of the course when the needs of that particular group of stewards would become clearer.
4. The tutor - Don White - was a SL in the Department of Business Studies with responsibility to the HOD for shop steward courses. His timetable is divided between shop steward supervisory and short management courses. He has had considerable experience as a works convenor.
5. The class seen was devoted to 'Work Measurement' as an introduction to bonus schemes. (In the first week the tutor had concentrated on 'Method Study'). The session consisted of short 'inputs' from the tutor followed by questions to the group and discussion. No attempt was made to give any handouts - some stewards took an occasional note. The quality of the 'input' was not particularly satisfactory, nor was the tutor skilled in drawing upon the wealth of experience available in the group. No attempt was made either to explain to students at the start of the morning what the tutor proposed to achieve during the course of the day, nor at the end of the first session what learning had been achieved. Discussion with the tutor indicated that the remainder of the day would follow the same pattern - short inputs followed by questions/discussion. No attempt would be made to use, for example, films (rating, etc) as a base to consider some of the concepts underpinning Work Measurement.

The content was unexceptionable - however the inputs were pitched at too low a level.

General Comment

One of the least satisfactory shop steward classes seen with an uninspired tutor. There was some uncertainty on his part about overall course objectives.

J D THOMAS

5 February 1982



File 57

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

26 February 1982

Mrs Imogen,

TRADE UNION STUDIES

Thank you for your letter of
25 February 1982.

I have shown the Prime Minister
the reports you sent with your letter
and she has taken note of these.

Yours sincerely,

Alfred Whittam

Mrs Imogen Wilde,
Department of Education and Science.

58



2.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

mk

C Whitmore Esq
Principal Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London
SW1

25 February 1982

Dear Clive,

TRADE UNION STUDIES

Thank you for your letter of 17 February.

I enclose a report of a factual survey by HMI of the provision of trade union courses in 1979-80 (the latest general survey).

I think the Prime Minister will find it more useful, however, to see HMI's reports on trade union courses in individual colleges. I enclose one such example, a recent report on Ruskin College, Oxford, which includes a section on the College's advanced course in trade union studies (pages 17-19). I am awaiting some further examples and will let you have these as soon as they arrive.

Yours sincerely,

Mayer Wilde

MRS I WILDE

Prime Minister

You asked to see some HMI reports on trade union courses.

The two attached reports do not appear to offer any serious criticism of the content of the courses.

MW

25/2

25 FEB 1982



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

REPORT BY HM INSPECTORS

on

RUSKIN COLLEGE

OXFORD

*N.B. Not yet
issued to Ruskin.*

Inspected 18-22 May 1981

NOTES

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CONTENTS PAGE

1. The College
2. College Buildings
3. The Student Body
4. Academic Staff
5. Support Staff
6. College Diplomas
7. The Labour Studies Diploma
8. The Literature Diploma Course
9. Development Studies Diploma
10. The History Diploma
11. Diploma in Social Studies
12. Advanced Course in Trade Union Studies (ACTUS)
13. Research at Ruskin College
14. Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

1. THE COLLEGE

This is a residential College for adult students. Founded in 1899, the College has as its continuing aim the provision of higher education for working men and women. Its traditional links with organised Trade Unionism and the 'Labour Movement' in general remain of paramount importance; this is reflected in the composition of the governing body of the College which is drawn from nominees of workers' organisations. The College is grant aided by the Department of Education and Science.

2. COLLEGE BUILDINGS

Ruskin College is located on two different sites, one in Walton Street and the other at Ruskin Hall, Headington, several miles from the centre of Oxford. The Walton Street site contains the original college buildings, together with a number of cottages at the rear. Currently, a new block containing a library, teaching facilities and some student accommodation is under construction. Accommodation at Walton Street has the appearance of being cramped and unplanned, and many of the rooms appear to be inconveniently located. The study/bedrooms are small but adequately furnished. The dining room, whilst of barely adequate size, provides for basic meals, but does not encourage students to sit and talk. Recreational facilities are minimal — one sizeable room contains both a table tennis table and a billiard table — and what might be called the lounge has to double as a lecture/seminar room. Tutor accommodation tends to consist of small rooms, which double as studies and rooms in which tutorials are held. Such accommodation, whilst cramped in appearance, is suitable for the conduct of the tutorial system so much favoured by the College.

2.1. The site at Headington is an extremely pleasant one, a particular feature of the extensive grounds being the many trees and shrubs. In addition to The Rookery, which contains study/bedrooms, a dining room lecture theatre (Tawney Hall), library and various common rooms, three residential blocks have been built. Smith House, the former stables at The Rookery, has been converted to provide a games room, the Students Union Office, reception and office accommodation. The most recent acquisition at Headington is Stoke House, a pleasant building in which are located various seminar/tutorial rooms, a small library and visual aids/learning resources room.

3. THE STUDENT BODY

An important feature of the College's work stems from the fact that it has not selected its students from the educationally qualified; many students will not have become active participants in education until, as mature people, they might have attended adult classes and courses provided by the adult education departments of the universities, the Workers Education Association or local education authorities. Preference is indeed given to applicants who have little or no full-time education beyond the statutory school leaving age and it is therefore unlikely that students will have acquired formal education or qualifications.

3.1. The vice principal, assisted by tutors who have responsibility for one or other of the diploma courses, looks for some kind of evidence that would indicate that an applicant would benefit from a course of "sustained full-time disciplined study". Equal importance, however, is given to the applicant's "record of activity in voluntary work and service of some kind to the community, with an emphasis on work undertaken in the trade union movement and its associated bodies". Aware of the difficulties that will face many students once they have started at Ruskin — not least being a lack of confidence — the College has welcomed the help that many trade unions have given by actively encouraging their members to think of the College as offering a relevant and accessible experience. At least one large trade union actually interviews would-be applicants before endorsing their application, and many unions offer scholarships/bursaries to supplement the DES State bursaries.

3.2. To assist the College in making up its mind about offering a place, the applicant is required to produce a written piece of work (of about 1,000 to 2,000 words) on one of a list of subjects ranging from 'The United Kingdom's Membership of the Common Market' to 'Literature as Art and Propaganda'. In addition, a brief autobiographical note is requested, examples of which were made available during the inspection. More than one note referred to disappointing school experiences and to subsequent frustrations in jobs that gave no satisfaction. From material provided on request, the varied occupations and backgrounds of Ruskin students are to be seen by a breakdown of the 1979/80 student intake. In that year, among the occupations represented were:

administrative assistant, car assembly worker, civil servant, colliery mechanic, dairyman, dustman, gardener, house father, machine operator, occupational therapist, telephone engineer, rigger, store-keeper, trade union official, warehouseman, youth worker.

3.3. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of unemployed adults applying to the College. Traditionally, Ruskin College has been successful in its attempts to attract students from overseas, mainly from the Commonwealth countries; until recently, such students amounted to about 10% of the total student population. The increase in prescribed charges for overseas students has, however, brought a reduction and the College has reluctantly come to accept that probably no more than nine or ten students will come from overseas in the near future.

3.4. In discussions with present and past Ruskin students, HMI were left with the impression that few students arrived at the College in the belief that they were about to embark upon five or six years of full-time study, that is, by going on to university or polytechnic after Ruskin. Nevertheless, this is the path that three-quarters or more of those students who pursue one or other of the two-year diploma courses eventually follow. For some the transition is not easy, and one tutor has written of students experiencing "a crisis of identity", that is, they want to retain their connection with their roots or their commitment to trade unions or political parties or — in a rather general sense — with their working class origins yet finding that they may lose that connection by obtaining higher education. HMI came across very little discord within the student body during the period of the inspection. The tensions that can easily arise in a residential college atmosphere were certainly not in evidence, and relationships between members of staff and students were friendly and relaxed. On more than one occasion, HMI were impressed at the maturity shown by students in discussing quite contentious topics. Respect for the ideas and beliefs of others was readily shown.

4. ACADEMIC STAFF

There is a full-time staff of nineteen including the principal and vice principal; in addition, the Colleges uses visiting lecturers. The principal has been in post for just under two years, but he has held other posts at Ruskin since 1957. For over twenty years, he has built up a proven record of involvement

in adult education and trade union studies. More recently he has acted as deputy chairman of the Price Commission. The vice principal also took up his duties in 1979; a former Ruskin student, he had become a Staff Tutor in economics and industrial relations at the University of Oxford Department of External Studies in 1968. Both the principal and vice principal have a teaching commitment; the former has retained a close interest in the Trade Union Research Unit, which is housed on the College site, whilst the latter has assumed responsibility for student admissions.

4.1. The academic staff body is made up of five senior tutors and twelve tutors (one on a temporary appointment), many of whom have been at Ruskin College for ten years or more. Most tutors have carried out research in their various academic fields and several have good records of publications. All staff have the opportunity to take periods of sabbatical leave — arranged on a rotation basis — and extended periods of study leave (without pay) are also possible. At the time of the full inspection, three tutors were on study leave, one of whom had been away from the College for three years. Such opportunities are to be welcomed.

4.2. Under the general direction of the principal, the tutorial staff arrange for a programme of individual tutorials, lectures, the supervision of student projects, the production and marking of examination papers, and act as student advisers. As far as possible, students are given freedom of choice with regard to tutorials and may or may not go to the lectures provided by staff; not all tutors will be lecturing to the same extent throughout the year and, obviously, the lecture programme is lighter when students are concentrating upon revision. Indeed, during the week of the inspection, much of the work done by second year students was related to revision; seminars and tutorials were arranged at the request of students. Eleven tutors have groups of first and second year students for whom they act as advisers; as well as advising on non-academic matters (as and when necessary), advisers keep an eye on the progress of students and will give assistance to individuals who may find difficulty with essay writing or find full-time study too demanding in the first instance. All tutors who contribute to the teaching of a Diploma course are members of the Board of Study for that course; an experienced tutor acts as Chairman and as such has considerable responsibilities for the organisation and administration of a particular Diploma course. Meetings of the Boards take place each

term and a review is made of class programmes, including subject areas and syllabuses. Tutors can contribute to more than one course and may, therefore, find themselves having to attend a number of different meetings each term.

5. SUPPORT STAFF

The General Secretary is responsible for the supervision of a dozen or so non-academic staff at the College, plus the domestic staff. Without a buildings officer or finance officer, this is a considerable burden of responsibility. Preparation of a budget for a college as large and complex as Ruskin has become increasingly difficult. The main costs are to do with staffing — both academic and non-academic — and if economies are necessary they have to be found in the areas of teaching, support services (in particular the library), food, heating and lighting and maintenance. All academic plans may have to be scrutinised in terms of cost, and the General Secretary will need the ready co-operation of the Executive Council to keep the College finances on an even keel. Note is taken of the important work that the present General Secretary of Ruskin College carries out in his capacity as Secretary to the Committee of Principals of long-term residential colleges.

5.1. The extensive library provision at the College is under the control of a full-time librarian, with two part-time assistants.

6. COLLEGE DIPLOMAS

Prior to the early 70s, most students at Ruskin followed a two-year programme which led to the Special Diploma in Social Studies awarded by Oxford University. Such a course is still offered, but only a small number of students now opt to take it. Apart from the special one-year programme of study which can be offered if requested by students, all students now study on one of the following Diploma courses:

- Labour Studies
- Literature
- Development Studies
- History
- Social Studies
- Applied Social Studies (not included in the inspection)

6.1. In changing over from the Special Oxford Diploma to the provision of college Diplomas, Ruskin hoped that staff and students would be given greater freedom to pursue an education that matched the needs and aspirations of hitherto educationally under-privileged adults with a strong commitment to the Labour Movement. Students would be able to participate in the organisation and planning of their courses and make use of their industrial and related experience. Staff would be free to experiment in methods of teaching and assessment. One advantage of the Special Diploma had been its 'marketability', that is, it had been recognised by universities and polytechnics as 'qualifying' Ruskin students for entry to undergraduate courses. Significantly, the new Diploma courses have gained at least the same recognition from institutions.

7. THE LABOUR STUDIES DIPLOMA

This is a two-year course consisting of subjects taken from the social sciences and humanities, which assist in the study of labour. Students are expected to make a selection from a number of options ranging from the Development of Socialism to the Methods and Sources of Labour Statistics. In addition, students are required to attain a prescribed level in Industrial Relations, English Expression and Statistics. Bearing in mind the origins of the College and the continuation of its traditional aims, the Labour Studies Diploma is seen as the most significant contribution to the education of adults made by the College; it attracts the largest number of students and accounts for a sizeable part of the College's total resources. It is, indeed, a well-conceived course, particularly as a qualification for whose who wish to return to their previous employment and play an active role in the arena of industrial relations. Moreover, for those who discover that the course is not appropriate to their particular needs, there is a commendable flexibility and time allowed for course change.

7.1. Much thought has gone into the overall design of the course and it is clear that the aim is not to concentrate narrowly and exclusively on a single specialist subject but to appreciate the relevance of a number of disciplines. Some doubt must be expressed as to the mechanism by which this aim is to be achieved, however. The tutorial does not set out to do so and the project may offer such an opportunity for an inter-disciplinary approach, but not necessarily. Staff consultation about the overall structure

of the course takes place, both informally and formally through meetings of the Course Board of Studies, but the content of individual tutorial subjects appears to be the concern of individual tutors. Unless formal discussion takes place on the contribution that such subjects can make to the course, it is difficult to see how the inter-disciplinarity aimed for can be achieved. Indeed, some of the current students on the course expressed uncertainty about how the individual parts fitted together.

7.2. In general, the students with whom HMI came into contact were well-motivated and worked as hard as was expected of them. Their own expectations were high and the drop-out rate low. Students obviously appreciated the ease of access to staff and the counselling that was readily available. The abler students are certainly stretched and to exemplify this it was most encouraging to note that the computer facilities of the University were made available to at least one student studying Economics who had some experience of working with computers and a special interest in Econometrics. Another student, who had made a study of "Pricing Policies of Public Utilities", greatly benefited from searching questions by his tutor. On the other hand, care must be taken to support students of lesser ability, particularly as part of their introduction to this very special type of "second chance" education. In one or two sessions observed, for example, the choice of reading material and the level of subject treatment given by the tutor were far too advanced for first year students. Monetarism is a difficult concept to grasp and yet students were expected to have mastered Samuelson's fairly substantial work on the subject whilst at the same time being familiar with the contents of a recently published Select Committee Report on Monetarism.

7.3. Students on the Labour Studies course benefit from contact with a number of outside lecturers and from material fed into the course by individuals engaged in trade union studies research. Such visitors can often make a valuable contribution to particular aspects of a course and, if adequately briefed by members of the full-time staff, can provide a stimulus for students not easily matched by college tutors. It has to be remembered, however, that not all 'experts' or research workers find teaching easy and full-time tutors, acting in the capacity of chairmen, should be prepared to intervene on occasions when the visitor is clearly not making an effective presentation.

7.4 All Labour Studies students have to pursue a five-term Statistics course, which aims to equip them with the ability to link analytical and conceptual study with empirical enquiry and practical application. Statistics and mathematical tuition – a three-term course of statistics is also provided for the Social Studies Diploma students and students on other courses have the opportunity to follow optional courses on quantitative subjects – is normally the responsibility of two members of the Economics teaching group, but one of these tutors was on sabbatical leave at the time of the inspection. Teaching is by lectures, tutorials, topic workshops and calculations classes, but despite efforts made by the staff to ensure that students were able to cope with the material being presented to them there were signs that some students were finding the pace of presentation too rapid. Tutors have prepared an extensive series of handouts and worksheets which are used to supplement textbooks and sources of statistical information. Supplementary material of this type is invaluable to the students and the tutors are to be commended for their efforts in its design and preparation. The production of high quality material is very time consuming and it makes heavy demands upon the services of typing and support staff. Classes observed took place in a lecture hall which was furnished to an acceptable standard but lacked an overhead projector or any other modern form of audio visual aid. This necessitated extensive use of a relatively small blackboard surface which effectively precluded the rapid integration of lecture material and handouts. Students were using a wide variety of pocket calculators of varying degrees of mathematical sophistication. In a number of cases, the sophistication of the calculator appeared to exceed that of the user and tutors should consider giving guidance about the type of equipment that students should purchase. Students on both the Labour Studies and Social Studies diplomas could well benefit from brief inputs on computer applications and electronic data processing.

8. THE LITERATURE DIPLOMA COURSE

The Literature Diploma is a two-year full-time course, the first three terms of which are seen as providing a "foundation" or introduction to a very wide range of writing through the three principal genres – drama, the novel, poetry. At the same time, students are beginning the study of a modern foreign language as valuable in itself as well as providing a reference

to the study of language generally. The first term of the second year focuses upon the relationship between language and society as the students begin to make choices for deeper study.

8.1 Although the course is successful, there would be advantages in beginning the study of literature where the students are likely to feel more confident, that is, in contemporary forms of expression. Despite their expectations to study "English Literature", the pressure on the students to acquire knowledge and skills must be great. Although it is very rare for any of them to fail to withstand this pressure, if an introduction to their study was to be contrived through contemporary forms such as Science Fiction or Writers on Women's Liberation, it could be that their adjustment would be easier and the contemporary relevance of their study made greater.

8.2 The Literature Diploma Course is based upon the tutorial method of teaching and learning; the high quality of this must play a large part in the success of the students. Throughout the two years, students have regular sessions with members of staff during which the writing being studied is discussed along with the essays that the students have written and the comments made upon them. When, in the second year, students make their own choices of writing to be studied, although often the choice is made in consultation with the tutor its unfamiliarity may still make very considerable demands upon the latter. Since, from the very beginning, the tutor has been to the student the centre of his or her learning, there is some danger of a relationship of dependence developing. It would be advantageous if students were required regularly to conduct seminars. These would be occasions when students led a discussion – under the supervision of the tutor – with perhaps four others on the reading and writing which they had done. The purpose would be to increase their sense of responsibility and, at the same time, increase the range of student to student interchange.

8.3 Emphasis in the course is placed upon developing in the student the skill of using language in writing. Unless steps are taken to prevent its happening, the student may come to believe that the primary form of language expression is written. Not only do the students bring with them to the College a quite highly developed spoken language, but they would benefit from reassurance in the competencies which they have achieved already.

8.4 All students on the Literature Diploma are required to study a foreign language – French, German, Russian or Spanish; no previous knowledge is required. Emphasis is placed upon oral comprehension and reading skills and an internal elementary examination is set in the fifth term. Students from other Diploma Courses are also given the opportunity to study a language from scratch – History students may take a two-hour translation paper as an endorsement on their diploma – and may, if they wish, take an examination of the Institute of Linguists. Although few students take advantage of this opportunity, those who do so are usually successful. HMI note with interest the fact that this year the College has been recognised as a Centre for taking Institute of Linguists Examinations.

8.5 The small group of tutors responsible for the English Literature Diploma also contributes to what the College refers to in its prospectus as "Special Help ... with problems of English expression and techniques of study". During the Induction Week, all first year students are required to complete a two-hour 'diagnosis' language examination and on their performance in this paper are classified as 'Satisfactory', 'Marginal' or 'Recommended Remedial'. In the present year, ten students were considered, and considered themselves, to be in need of extra help, which is provided by the Literature tutor responsible for Communications and Remedial teaching. Other students, especially those classified as 'Marginal', are provided with continuing guidance by their own subject tutors, who are required to make comments on language performance on the student's termly report form. A second Literature tutor, with qualifications in teaching English as a Foreign Language, also provides a series of classes for those foreign students whose needs are different from those 'Recommended Remedial' during the first term. HMI notes the rapid improvement in the control of language achieved by most of the foreign students. Attendance at Communications Endorsement classes is open to all students of the College (students on the Labour Studies Diploma are required to follow the course). Similarly, all students may attend "general education" classes offered by the Literature tutors. These include weekly classes in Creative Writing, The Use of English and (in the first term) Problems of Study. Both of the latter are particular attempts by the Literature tutors to employ their special skills in helping the students to adjust to full-time study and the demands made upon them for writing. The number of students attending these classes, however, is small; the only

provision to assist students to acquire study skills (outside the tutorials) seems to be a personal initiative by one of the Literature tutors.

9. DEVELOPMENT STUDIES DIPLOMA

This is a two-year study of the problems and issues generally to be found in low-income countries undergoing the processes of development and modernisation. Core studies are, indeed, concerned with themes of 'development' and 'under-development', and embrace aspects of Sociology, Economics and Politics. Students also have to acquire a knowledge of, and some proficiency in, a selection of study techniques, English, elementary statistics and methods of social investigation. As an inter-disciplinary study, the Development Studies Diploma has much to offer students, particularly those from overseas, who may assume future roles in the formulation, planning and appraisal of economic and social development policies. However, HMI were made aware of problems in the course concerning the meaning and even viability of the concept of 'Development Studies', and the fact that numbers had fallen to very low levels. It is noted that a Review Committee has recently reported that whilst in general the basic tripartite structure of the course is sound it suggests that changes should be made to the nature of the contribution of Economics. Suggestions that overseas students' interest in the study of 'development' could be met from within the structures of other courses (Social Studies/Labour Studies) are also noted, but it is hoped that the College will persevere with the concept of a distinct Development Studies course for a little longer and continue to seek a solution to the problems of recruitment and curricular content. The course would seem to offer considerable potential for development both academically and as an attraction to students from the Third World and elsewhere. There is considerable goodwill outside the College; for example, Ruskin College has connections with African States, particularly with Sierra Leone. In Oxford itself there is also goodwill towards the College and the University has very considerable resources for specialist study of Third World problems. It is possible that Ruskin is unique in offering this channel to university education for Third World students and its influence in this respect may therefore outweigh the actual numbers of Third World students who attend the College.

9.1 During the week of the inspection, HMI took the opportunity to talk with tutors and students involved with the course and with the external assessor who happened to be visiting the College. A range of class meetings and tutorials was also observed. As presently conceived and taught, the Diploma course offers a very conservative, linear approach to subject matter. It became clear that students find considerable difficulty in dealing with Principles of Economics, and in discussion with some of the overseas students a concern was noticed that they found the subject matter difficult to grasp and that, in any case, they thought it largely irrelevant to their interests. First and second year students come together for some seminar sessions. HMI was present when students read papers on such studies as "aspects of rural development in Sierra Leone", "the problems of political integration in Nigeria" and "an economic survey of Malawi, 1964 to 1972." The students themselves, whilst not exceptional in any way and often characterised by a range of weaknesses, were nevertheless indicative of earnest student endeavour and commitment. Equally important, in view of its place in the developing processes of learning, was the task of speaking to the papers, the chairing of meetings by students themselves, the wide-ranging and sometimes passionate discussions activated and the sympathetic and tactful summing up of papers and discussion by the Course Tutor. It is well to consider, however, whether some of these studies tend to be too complex and demanding for the students concerned. Staff might consider devoting some seminar work to well-prepared case studies and problem-solving exercises. Such an approach might also improve the teaching of Economics for a problem-oriented approach would help to redress the balance between concepts and processes and factual content.

9.2 Within course structure and content, it is surprising to find that there is so little reference either to artistic and cultural themes or to the creative tradition of various peoples and countries. Development activity within Britain itself could also play a more prominent role; much could be gained not only from the study of locally based community projects of various kinds, but also the work of such bodies as the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU), of some Urban Aid and Youth Opportunity programmes and of some aspects of the statutory and voluntary youth and community services.

9.3 It is common practice at Ruskin College for students pursuing a particular diploma course to attend classes with students from other courses;

this is valuable not only for economic and organisational reasons but it also means that particular groups do not become isolated. However, in concept, the Development Studies Diploma tends to be different from, and less traditional than, the other courses, and students may be suffering from having to spend as much as 50% of their time (approximately 170 hours) in general classes. During the two years, and across the whole span of studies, the students will have been taught by at least fifteen different members of staff; and, whilst there are benefits in the fact that students are exposed to such a variety of expertise, it does mean that staff from the core subject areas – Economics, Sociology and Politics – and particularly the Course Tutor, have the difficult task of pulling the whole package together.

10. THE HISTORY DIPLOMA

The College prospectus states that the object of this two-year course is to provide preliminary training in the study of British history and that the course is designed "to appeal to those who may be interested in teaching or historical research". At the same time, reference is made to the inter-dependence of the discipline of historical study and the social sciences. In fact, students tend to study a traditional package of courses, with the emphasis on recent British history. Whilst minimal attention is given to historiography or to the unique contribution that history can make, students are required to study a related theoretical subject from a range which includes Economics, Social and Political Theory, Sociology and Social Anthropology. Again, on an optional basis, it is possible for a student to inter-relate historical studies with nineteenth century literature. Although students are encouraged to pursue a foreign language – at least to acquire the ability to READ a foreign language – little emphasis is given to European or world history in the course as a whole. The reasoning behind the rationale of optional subjects is a little difficult to follow: if students are not to remain recipients of prescribed views, whether from the tutor or from the books selected, they need help when asked to study certain subjects or periods in history. For example, the English Revolution of the seventeenth century is, itself, a difficult subject; it is made even more difficult if the students are asked to come to it without any introductory outline course in English history prior to 1640.

10.1. History is also studied by students on other Diploma courses and both the tutors in history have considerable experience in the teaching of the subject to adults. It is no surprise, therefore, to find how thoroughly the students are supported in the preparation of tutorial essays and the care given to the preparation of reading lists in support of lecture and seminar programmes. Similarly, both tutors are skilful in the way in which they conduct their tutorials; extra support and encouragement is provided for the "less able" student, whilst the brighter student is challenged to the full. From observation, however, it is not clear that all students understand what is expected of them in tutorials; they do not appear, for example, to note down what is said there and, frequently, the student leaves the tutorial room with only what he can retain in his memory as a record of what is said. Also, in spite of the belief of tutors to the contrary, the student remains in a dependant or client relationship with the tutor. Tutors tended to regard seminars with suspicion, but the one opportunity that HMI had of observing a history seminar provided a lively and stimulating experience. The seminar was 'managed' by the students — tutors were present and contributed to the discussion — and a very sound paper was presented by a student on "the social role and status of women before 1914". The responses from the students present were both interesting and well-structured. Obviously the success of the seminar depends on the paper presented; it also provides an opportunity for students to compare themselves with members of their peer group and provides opportunity for the weaker student to learn from the more able.

10.2. In general, the History Diploma provides students with a valid experience in the subject. The Board of Study responsible for the course should, however, give thought to the present range of optional subjects; in particular, to the introduction of a number of optional seminar subjects (similar in design to those on offer for the Sociology Diploma students) which arise out of the introductory courses in history. "British Elites, 1870 to the Present Day", "Popular Politics" or "Poverty and Social Policy 1870 to 1950" are examples of subjects with a thematic flavour. They could also provide the opportunity for students to use a whole range of source materials.

11. DIPLOMA IN SOCIAL STUDIES

This is a two-year course which aims to provide an integrated study in at least two social science disciplines. Students can opt to take either the Oxford University Special Diploma in Social Studies or an equivalent College Diploma. Over the last few years there has been a tendency for students to move away from Economics which they find difficult whilst, on the other hand, there has been an increase in the numbers choosing History.

11.1. HMI was able to talk to staff and students involved in the course and to observe a range of tutorials and classes. Staff obviously have a satisfactory command of the subject and relations between staff and students were good. Occasionally, however, HMI was left a little uncertain as to whether individual students were able to follow the intricacies of certain topics in political theory. Not all staff appear to have mastered the technique of challenging students' beliefs and making them realise that strongly held views must be supported with knowledge and facts. Whilst most staff and students at Ruskin regard themselves as sharing in the same tradition of philosophical, political and economic thinking the characterises what is known as "the Labour Movement", nevertheless, more staff should be ready to challenge students and be ready to widen their awareness and parameters of thought. In a tutorial on "Dissent in the USSR" the tutor strongly challenged the arguments of a student, and referred him back to further reading; on another occasion various trade union myths were challenged with great vigour whilst the measured approach adopted by a tutor contrasted the "romance" of socialism with the actual degree of socialist achievement in historical reality. Because not all staff are either capable of adopting this challenging approach, or feel the need to do so, HMI was left with the impression that some students do not know what is expected of them. Some, however, presumably set their own standards and may not be greatly affected by tutorial attitudes and college expectations.

11.2. Selection of subject matter on this course appears to be a fairly conservative one though within this restricted framework there were occasional examples of a stimulating and unstereotyped approach. The only teaching strategies observed — the lecture/discussion, the tutorial, the seminar — all relied solely on words, written or spoken. No visual aids were used. Occasionally, student input was used — which HMI found to be both interesting and useful — but tutors did not always allow sufficient time for

discussion. Although evidence of student reading is difficult to discover, students remarked upon the ease with which access to the resources of the University are open to them; one student, for example, who had chosen "Dissent in the USSR" as a tutorial topic, had been able to obtain access to St Anthony's College post-graduate library where there is specialist material on the USSR and Kremlinology. Thesis briefing sessions usually include advice from a tutor on all library sources which might be helpful. Although one senior tutor expressed the view that most students found the Ruskin College library and the Social Studies library adequate for their needs, students are taken around other Oxford libraries by the Ruskin librarian. Essays are set once a week for students on the Diploma course and the degree of help which students get in the techniques of essay writing depends very much on the tutor. In the initial stages, when students find it difficult to read, take notes and present an essay, it is not unusual for tutors to ask students to present a short synopsis of a piece of reading. Similarly, the marking of written work depends entirely on the tutor; in one tutorial attended by HMI it was noted that the essay had been marked in advance and was then discussed in detail. Other tutors, however, point out that they prefer that students should read the paper; they then interrupt and challenge the student on particular points. Such an approach provides an easy way out for the tutor; it is difficult to understand how tutors can deal with specific points of writing techniques or misunderstandings by this method. It is important to get all the aspects of essay writing and marking correct because attendance at tutorials (when the essay is presented) is the one compulsory element of the students' workload.

12. ADVANCED COURSE IN TRADE UNION STUDIES (ACTUS)

Since 1977, Ruskin College has included in its programme a series of short, full-time courses mainly for experienced trade union work-place representatives, together with some full-time union officers. These courses have an experimental aspect in that they explore ways of utilising more fully the resources of college staff, teaching materials and (above all) accommodation; in the latter case, for example, by taking up residential accommodation when Social Work students are away from college on assignments. The courses also attract additional resources to the College, since various union

funds contribute to students' board, travel and tuition costs, and to the administration of the courses. In addition, the TUC, individual unions, international bodies and Government agencies supply multiple copies of pamphlets and papers for students' use. The professional staff of such institutions and agencies conduct seminars often at little or no cost to the course. Now that the courses are established, the College is considering ways of following them up, and developing other courses by the use of distance learning techniques combined with short periods in residence.

12.1. The course is directed by a member of the College full-time staff who undertakes the educational planning and direction, the considerable volume of administration required to recruit students and a large number of visiting staff, and the role of course tutor throughout each four-week period. The tutor also teaches on some other College courses, supervises research and enquiries recently contracted to Ruskin by the European Commission and the SSRC, and maintains close contact with the nearby Trade Union Research Unit. Despite the volume of work involved, all these aspects are effectively pursued, to the benefit of the course.

12.2. Six courses are held each year and there are about eight students on each. They work mainly as a group, using a seminar room on the Ruskin Hall site where the students are accommodated. The location of the room adjacent to the course office and the tutors' office enables the course tutor to keep in touch even while engaged in administration. The collection of working papers on shelves in the seminar room is used to give immediate access to reference material as points arise. The atmosphere in the course visited was business-like and good natured, giving an appropriate blend of study and working experience.

12.3. The course starts from trade union experience and moves towards a study of the economic and political contexts of contemporary trade union work. A number of visiting experts as well as members of Ruskin staff conduct seminars. These include the present and former principals, and the course tutor. The method of exposition combined with round-table discussion is well proven with mature students, and each session is introduced by a prepared statement from a member of the course. The course tutor, who specialises in Economics and Statistics, and is actively engaged in relevant research, ensures that themes are related throughout the course. The willingness of students to make contributions is an important factor in the success

of the course, and demonstrates that trade union activity is located in a complex economic and political environment.

12.4. The students on the course visited had a desire to continue their education, though they are unlikely to know what would best suit their needs or what possibilities exist. The ranges of previous educational experience and general vocational educational requirements are likely to be extremely wide and more than any one adviser could deal with unaided. Educational counselling should be built into the period in residence but it would require staff time, and liaison with an appropriate educational guidance service for adults. If further time is needed for an increased emphasis on both written words (and figures) and on educational guidance, the course could make heavier structured demands on students during the weekends. Those who stay in Oxford, perhaps for economy rather than choice, have the compensation of a substantial increase in time available for study. Optional assignments, incorporating study guidance, are likely to be of greater value at this stage than time for general reading.

12.5. There would be no prospect of innovation without the spirit of co-operation and mutual respect between students and tutors sensed in this course. ACTUS demonstrates a considerable achievement and provides a good basis for yet further development.

13. RESEARCH AT RUSKIN COLLEGE

HMI agree with the view put forward by the principal that an element of research related to the college work is desirable. The main areas of research, either recently completed or currently undertaken, include a study of trade unions and company information, the impact of new technology on union organisation and a "Shop Stewards' Guide to the European Commission". The last two are funded by the European Commission, but SSRC funding for the first area could not be extended to cover a second stage. A final report was, in fact, published in March 1981 in the form of a pamphlet, "Constraints upon the Acquisition and Use of Company Information by Trade Unions". The principal expressed his hope that the output of the College's research group would be used by tutors on all relevant Diploma courses in the College. So far, with perhaps the exception of the ACTUS course, there is little evidence of this taking place.

13.1. Based at Ruskin College, but independently financed and governed, the Trade Union Research Unit (TURU) publishes a series of papers on a range of topics relevant to active trade unionists. At the same time, the Unit works on client-based work such as the preparation of wage claims, assembling evidence for enquiries, carrying out surveys of trade union membership and contributing to trade union training courses. Clients other than trade unions have included the SSRC, the European Community and the Anglo-German Foundation. The advantages to Ruskin College of the Unit are that it produces research findings which are readily available for teaching purposes and that researchers are able to teach occasional seminars. Again, however, there is not a great deal of evidence to suggest that tutors in the College are making much use of the Unit's research work.

13.2. Founded in April 1976, the Trade Union International Research and Education Group (TUIREG) aims at interesting United Kingdom trade union members in the rest of the world — particularly the Third World. Its approach is to start with problems of topical concern in the United Kingdom and then teach about their implications for the Third World. No funds are provided by the College for TUIREG which in fact reimburses the College for its administration and accommodation; funding is, in fact, a major problem for TUIREG, especially for the security of the three full-time staff. To date, the main work of the unit has been the production of tape-slides, written materials and videotape cassettes, which have then been sold to users at cost. Examples of tape-slide programmes seen by HMI include "Talking of Brandt" (the Brandt Commission), a technically very well produced kit, with clear sound and good graphics. Complex issues are clearly and fairly presented. From a series on Unemployment — "Why isn't the world working?" — the kit entitled "They think they're English" deals with the difficult area of white unemployment and the fear that immigrants are taking the jobs. Both programmes are backed by full and often good notes with references to sources; they present a fair case with the underlying assumption that the North has to take more cognisance of the needs of the South if both are to survive. They indicate that TUIREG is capable of producing good teaching material with the needs of adult learners in mind, with some working-class language and idiom.

14. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1. Ruskin College continues to make a valuable contribution to the provision of general education for adults. It creates a supportive, rigorous and demanding academic environment. A high proportion of students proceeds to higher education, where they do well academically. Thus, Ruskin College plays its part in providing mature students with a "second chance" — sometimes the first — to participate in higher education.

14.2. The decision in the early 1970s to offer a range of its own diploma courses in place of the Oxford University Special Diploma in Social Studies courses was clearly a sound one. There can be no doubt as to the academic quality of the Ruskin diplomas which are, indeed, readily acceptable to universities and polytechnics in place of the more normal GCE qualification requirements. Equally important is the fact that tutors and students have been given the opportunity to engage in curricular development and innovation, and in the overall evaluation of courses. However, by relying almost exclusively on the two-year diploma course, and insisting that all students require the same amount of time to gain and acquire the skills that are necessary for serious academic study, Ruskin College limits the numbers of students who can benefit from the excellent facilities available in Oxford.

14.3. There is a clear division in the views/perceptions of the role as tutor between those tutors who have been at the College for some time and the newer recruits. There is a need for a policy of staff development, both to avoid stagnation and to explore different ways of teaching/learning. Sabbaticals or study-leave periods could be used in a more positive way to enable tutors to explore different areas of the education service other than the university sector. The Further Education Unit has a great deal to offer on study techniques and learning situations relevant to mature students, whilst curriculum planners of the Technician Education Council and the Business Education Council areas of further education have much to offer, especially with regard to numeracy and the application and use of computers. The College acknowledges its responsibility to help in the language development of its students but so far it has failed to establish agreed criteria of performance (written or oral). A programme of staff development which has students' language as its focus is necessary. As

mentioned previously, there is clear evidence that staff have the skills to develop sound curriculum material but less skill in developing strategies to get the material across — in particular, little use is made of anything other than words (spoken or written).

14.4. Very few students fail to complete their studies at Ruskin College, a fact that in many ways reflects the care taken over recruitment and the support that is available to the less able at an early stage. Undoubtedly, students and staff mostly share the same political views. It is important that tutors challenge uncritically accepted views in order to widen the perspectives of students, without undermining their beliefs and confidence at a period of much change and uncertainty in their lives.

14.5. The College has established a sound structure for exercising control over the various Diploma courses. A separate Board of Studies is responsible to the Academic Board for the organisation and administration of each of the Diploma courses and it is primarily for the attention of the Academic Board that the following points relating to individual courses are made. Every effort should be made by the College to find solutions to problems relating to the Development Studies course because the course undoubtedly adds an important dimension to the contribution to adult education made by the College. If the course is to continue it is essential to consider what steps need to be taken to attract more students. The role of individual subjects on thematic and inter-disciplinary courses requires careful attention; on at least two diploma courses — Development Studies and Social Studies — students express their uneasiness with regard to the value and relevance of Economics to their studies. The statistics syllabus within the Labour Studies Diploma course requires further attention; in particular, the assessment procedures appear to be unnecessarily complicated and expensive in terms of staff resources. At present students can pass the statistics examination by developing a competence in a relatively small part of the syllabus. It may be that a series of staged tests of application and understanding may be more appropriate for the students and could also serve to reduce staff loadings. The Literature Diploma course is, to a small extent, isolated from the other courses in the College. The Academic Board could with advantage consider ways in which it could systematically encourage integration; it is here assumed that the similarities between students at Ruskin as adults are more important than the differences of their courses. Although students showed signs of

lacking study skills, and although the College asserts that part of its responsibility towards its students is to help them to adjust to the demands of full-time study, at present there is little formal provision to this end. It would be of considerable advantage for the College gradually to include such provision in its curriculum.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

REPORT BY HM INSPECTORS

on

A SURVEY OF SHOP STEWARD COURSES

IN ENGLAND AND WALES

CARRIED OUT DURING 1979-1980

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- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Background
- 3.0 Grant
- 4.0 Centres for Trade Union Studies
- 5.0 Courses
- 6.0 Syllabuses and Content
- 7.0 Course Planning and Recruitment
- 8.0 Organisation
- 9.0 Staffing
- 10.0 Students
- 11.0 Classes
- 12.0 Joint Union-Management Courses
- 13.0 Links with Regional Management Centres
and Regional Advisory Councils
- 14.0 Fees and Grading of courses
- 15.0 Future Developments

Appendices

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 A sample survey of shop steward courses was carried out during the Spring and Summer terms of 1979. In England and Wales such courses were offered in 122 further education (FE) colleges; 46 of these were selected on a random basis for visit during the survey. The information obtained has been updated for many of these institutions by further visits during 1979-80. In addition to visits to colleges, one day was spent with each TUC Regional Education Officer (REO) (Appendix 1).

1.2 The aim of the survey was to examine:

- a. the range and numbers on shop steward courses;
- b. the organisation of shop steward courses, and the institutional policy towards shop steward courses;
- c. the experience and qualifications of staff;
- d. the availability of resources;
- e. the nature and quality of the learning experience which course members received;
- f. the opportunities for further development.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Exact numbers of shop stewards (workplace representatives) and health and safety representatives are not available. The most reliable sources suggest that there are approximately 270,000 shop stewards and between

90,000 - 135,000 health and safety representatives in England and Wales. The annual turnover of shop stewards varies both by union and by geographical location. Most unions consider that an annual turnover of between 15-20% is a conservative estimate.

2.2 In 1972, when the Gold* report was published, there were 77 colleges in the further education sector providing about 250 courses annually for about 3,000 shop stewards. University Extra-mural departments and WEA districts added courses for approximately a further 3,300 shop stewards.

2.3 The period between 1972 and 1978 was characterised by two significant trends:-

- a. a steady but sustained growth in both the provision of courses for shop stewards and health and safety representatives, and the number of institutions offering these programmes;
- b. an increasing share of the total programme carried out in further education colleges.

2.4 Two significant landmarks in the 1970s contributed to this growth in Trade Union courses. The Employment Protection Act (1975) gave trade union officials the right to paid release from work for Trade Union training, and since 1976 government has provided grants towards expenditure on Trade Union education and training.

* "Report of a Working Party on Shop Steward Education and Training (1972)".

2.5 The 1978-9 academic year, when the survey commenced, coincided with the largest ever expansion in this work. Figures produced by the TUC Education Department show that in England and Wales the total number of students on day-release courses was 38,615 in 2,726 courses. This represented an increase of 54% in the number of courses, and approximately 59% in the number of students compared with the previous year. These figures relate not only to the further education sector, but also to the WEA districts and the Universities' Extra-mural departments. However, the further education contribution was substantial, with 78% of the total course provision.

2.6 The large increase in 1978-9 mirrored the TUC General Council's declared aim of expanding their regional education provision by about 30% each year for the succeeding five years. It also coincided with an increase in government funding for Trade Union courses (see 3.1). However, the overall total of 38,615 day release students in 1978-9 masks considerable regional variations.

The South-East TUC region contains about three times as many employees as the next largest - the North West. Yet only 534 courses were run in the South East compared with 520 in the North West.

2.7 The increase in the number of courses and students in 1978-9 in England and Wales was not evenly distributed between the three main categories of Trade Union courses - Basic or Introductory, Health and Safety, and Follow-On. It was the policy of the TUC Education Department to give priority to courses for union safety representatives, and this is reflected in course statistics. (Appendix 2 - Course and student statistics 1978-9 and 1979-80).

While many of the courses were 'general', that is, course members were drawn from a variety of industries and unions, the trend towards courses planned for and with membership confined to a specific industry became more marked. Of the 955 basic courses 319 were run on such a basis for 20 different industries, and 651 of the 1542 Health and Safety courses were organised for 26 separate industries.

2.8 The increased demand for Trade Union courses in 1978-9 considerably reduced earlier criticism made of the TUC REOs as there were fewer cases of late cancellation of courses with corresponding under-utilisation of teaching staff. For example, in the South East out of 600 planned courses fewer than 50 were cancelled, and in many cases these were only postponed until later in the year.

2.9 A further growth in the provision of courses was envisaged by the TUC Education Department in their forward planning for the 1979-80 academic year. Some adjustment was made in the proposed balance of programmes between the three major categories with rather fewer Health and Safety courses planned than in 1978-9. However, figures produced by the TUC Education Department show that there was a small fall (2.1%) in the total number of courses run - whether in the FE sector, WEA districts or University Extra-mural departments - but a larger fall in the number of students on these courses (10.9%).

2.10 The number of Basic courses in England and Wales increased in 1979-80 when compared with 1978-9, namely 1031 courses (955) with 13,382 students (11,601). Almost one third of these were organised to meet the requirements of a specific industry - the same proportion

as in the previous year. The number of Follow-On courses also increased - 327 (229) with 3,951 students (2,804). (Figures in brackets represent numbers for 1978-9.)

2.11 Perhaps the most significant feature in 1979-80 was the fall in the number of Health and Safety courses, to 1268 (1542 in 1978-9), and, in particular, in the number of students on these courses, to 16,510 (24,210 in 1978-9). Some of this reduction may be attributable to strikes in the engineering and steel industries, and some possibly to contraction in sections of the economy. It would appear that the lessening in demand which had been foreseen by the TUC Education Department occurred rather more swiftly than expected, and by the time that the trend became clearly discernible it was not possible to make corresponding increases in the Basic and Follow-On programmes.

2.12 The contribution of the FE sector as a proportion of the total programme increased slightly in 1979-80, when it represented 80% of the total course provision.

2.13 The number of colleges in the FE sector running day release courses within any region varies according to regional size and economic concentration, the desire of colleges to participate in this work, the degree of involvement of other providers, such as the WEA districts and University Extra-Mural departments, and the initiatives of REOs. Two characteristics are immediately apparent:-

- a. Although many colleges are now offering a considerable volume of Trade Union courses, only a very small number offer a significant proportion of the total day release provision within a region (defined as more

than 15%). These include Filton Technical College (South West - 16%), Solihull Technical College (West Midlands - 21%), and Newcastle College of Arts and Technology (North East - 31%). All were visited as part of the survey.

- b. Regional provision is often patchy: some large urban conurbations for example Leeds and Nottingham, are comparatively under-provided with courses. It is estimated that there are 12,000 shop stewards/safety representatives in the Leeds conurbation, with an annual turnover of 20%. Yet in 1978-9 three institutions ran only 37 Trade Union courses in this area.

3.0 GRANT

3.1 Grant has been provided jointly by the Department of Education and Science and by the Department of Employment since 1976 in support of expenditure on trade union education and training by the TUC and independent affiliated trade unions. The non-affiliated trade unions have been included in the arrangements since 1978.

The annual grant provision has been as follows:

	MILLION
1976-7	£0.40
1977-8	£0.65
1978-9	£1.05
1979-80	£1.528
1980-81	£1.758

Grant is paid towards the cost incurred by the TUC and unions on course fees charged by local education authorities and responsible bodies; on course development and research; on courses provided by the TUC, including courses for teachers in trade union studies; on residential courses provided by the unions; and on certain special courses provided by the unions in agreed key priority areas.

4.0 CENTRES FOR TRADE UNION STUDIES

4.1 A number of colleges which offer Trade Union courses have been "designated" by the TUC as "Centres for TU Studies". The designation follows a recommendation by the REO, and an endorsement by the national TUC Education Committee. The first seven centres - six FE colleges and one University department - were nominated in 1978 in the North West on the initiative of the REO. Since that date the TUC had defined its criteria more precisely. Six further centres have been designated. However, their distribution is uneven with two centres in the North East, one in Yorkshire and Humberside, one in the West Midlands, two in Wales and none in other parts of the country. (Appendix 3 - List of designated centres, and the guidelines used by TUC in "designating" centres).

4.2 The role of these centres has never been explicitly formulated, although it is anticipated that they will assist in tutor training and contribute in the piloting of new courses. There was some confusion and uncertainty in other colleges not only about the role of 'Centre for TU studies' but even about the number of centres which had been designated.

TUC policy is that a 'Centre for TU Studies' should allow a concentration of interest which facilitates the development of appropriate expertise and knowledge, but which nevertheless encourages input from and contribution to other courses, where it is appropriate.

4.3 Five out of the six most recently designated centres were visited. The evidence from the survey indicates that TUC have selected these colleges with care and that concentrations of expertise have been satisfactorily achieved without isolation from associated areas of further education.

5.0 COURSES

5.1 As stated earlier Trade Union courses fall into three categories: Basic or Introductory, Health and Safety and Follow-On. Their aim, as defined by the TUC General Council in 1979 is "to improve the competence of Trade Union representatives in carrying out their Trade Union duties and responsibilities". For many students these programmes represent their most significant educational experience since leaving school - many at the age of 15. The survey confirmed that these courses do contribute to their personal development through a general understanding of society and its problems.

The TUC Education Service has produced more specific educational objectives for these courses under the general headings of attitudes, skills and knowledge. The intention is:

- a. to encourage self-confidence and understanding of trade union approaches and methods, and a more critical approach to problems;

- b. to develop analytical, organisational and informational skills;
- c. to equip workplace representatives with the skills and confidence to handle a wide range of written source materials.

5.2 The Basic course concentrates on the handling of grievances and the role and functions of a shop steward, disputes, participation in meetings and report writing, collective bargaining and agreements, law at the workplace, health and safety at work, industrial democracy and work study and similar techniques.

5.3 The Health and Safety courses aim at assisting safety representatives to identify the main hazards and problems at their place of work, to ascertain the appropriate standards of health and safety, and to develop union organisation for safety, and, where necessary, procedures for discussing problems with management.

5.4 Follow-On courses are intended for union representatives who have attended a basic course. During the period of the survey there were three main courses available. Not all colleges offered these courses, which were normally held in the more established centres:-

- a. Rights at work - This course aims to examine the relationship between collective bargaining and employment law. Emphasis is placed on the following topic areas:

discipline and dismissal, job security, equal opportunities, disclosure of information, and wages and conditions of work.

- b. Bargaining and Company Information - This course is intended to assist shop stewards in workplace negotiations to identify information which they require when presenting a case to management, and to use this information effectively.

- c. Work Study, Productivity and Pay - This course provides the opportunity for shop stewards to consider the relationship between productivity and pay, to develop skills in analysing management, information on costs and output, and to learn about techniques, such as work study.

The most widely run of the Follow-On courses were those on Rights at Work, and Bargaining and Company Information. Some colleges also offered courses for Pension Trustees.

5.5 The great majority of courses involved part-time day attendance spread over ten weeks. The occasional course, however, was run on a more concentrated basis - either a two week block or a one week block attendance followed by an interval of one week and then a further block attendance of one week. In nearly every case these were health and safety courses mounted at the request of a company, or a basic or follow-on course specially designed for a specific industry such as steel.

5.6 The colleges visited had a clear perception of course aims. Many of the departments involved emphasised the value of their educational role. Tutors emphasised the importance of creating an awareness of and sensitivity to social and moral issues. Representative of the majority was the tutor who believed that he had a two-fold role: a specific function, defined as helping shop

stewards to develop role centred skills and knowledge and to generate confidence in their application, and a general educational aim to help stewards approach problems in a more rational way. The survey confirmed that not only did most tutors perceive, but also achieved, this two-fold role.

6.0 SYLLABUSES AND CONTENT

6.1 Basic Course

During the period of the survey all the colleges were using a package developed by the TUC for use on Basic Courses not specific to a particular industry. Before the package was printed it was tested by tutors on pilot courses and modified where necessary. The package consists of ten sections, one for each day of the course; each section consists of a combination of notes, questionnaires, small group tasks and discussion exercises. The latter are intended to develop skills in ascertaining and assessing information about, for example, collective bargaining information. The discovery exercises were completed during the intervening week between classes, and were normally reviewed at the commencement of the next session. Course tutors were supplied with notes, which provide a suggested time-table and brief guidelines on how to approach each section of the course.

6.2 The package was supplied to colleges free of charge, and the normal practice was for tutors to distribute the appropriate section to course members at the commencement of each session. The evidence from the survey indicates that the standard package was used

with considerable flexibility, although the occasional less experienced tutor tended to rely overmuch on the printed material. In general the material was being used with judgement - that is, the material was adapted to meet the requirements of course members. Tutors were prepared to reduce the time on those sections considered less immediately relevant, and introduce other topics, supported by college developed notes, where appropriate. This is a welcome development. Although there was some occasional criticism of the TUC material - too elementary in parts, an excessive amount of information - there was almost general appreciation of its quality and value, if used with discernment and judgement. Equally course members believed that it would provide a valuable framework for later reference.

The TUC package for the general Health and Safety course was generally used flexibly. Although some colleges considered that too much information had been included a majority welcomed the scope of the material and the need to select from it with judgement. However, some tutors, and particularly those who were catering for a specific industry with which they were not familiar were inclined to follow the notes and exercises too rigidly. Colleges not only made use of films, but a number arranged visits to local firms where students were required to identify safety hazards.

6.3 Follow-On courses

Far fewer Follow-On courses were seen during the survey. Whereas the Basic and Health and Safety programmes were often well established, the Follow-On courses were frequently experimental. A number of colleges ran pilot courses using draft TUC material. There was much more

dependence on college material than with the Basic and Health and Safety courses and syllabuses were sometimes college devised.

7.0 COURSE PLANNING AND RECRUITMENT

7.1 The majority of colleges in the survey - particularly those whose scale of provision is modest - relied heavily on the TUC Regional Education Service for recruitment of workplace and safety representatives for their courses. There was, however, a sizeable minority of colleges, particularly in the West Midlands who had established close links with individual unions, and who also recruited through the full-time regional offices of these unions. When this occurred the TUC REO was notified. However, in most regions relatively few students were directly recruited by colleges.

7.2 The mechanics of course provision do not vary significantly from region to region. The REO writes three times a year to a college proposing a programme for the following academic term - the programme indicates the number and type of courses included (Basic, Health and Safety, or Follow-On, and whether the course is specific to a particular industry). The college then replies accepting or suggesting amendments to the REO's list. The programme is then placed before the TUC Regional Education Advisory Committee, which provisionally approve it, and submit it to the TUC Education Department for final approval. The final approval is given after the balance of the programme, and the cost has been scrutinised. Although such procedures may appear cumbersome, in practice problems rarely occur.

7.3 The REO distributes a printed leaflet three times a year to unions, companies and colleges on his mailing list. The leaflet provides details - location, time and type of course for union representatives - of all courses which will be offered in that academic term, and a detachable application form which is returned to the REO after certain formalities have been completed (agreement of employer to release the steward with pay, and approval of the full-time Union officer at the branch). If colleges receive application forms, they advise the REO. Applications have to be returned to the REO at least three weeks before the commencement of the course. He then forwards to the colleges a list of names of those who will be sponsored by the TUC. Finally, joining instructions are sent out to course members by the REO. The demand for courses is such that REOs have frequently to maintain waiting lists.

7.4 The great majority of colleges expressed themselves well satisfied with the arrangements for recruiting course members. Colleges have been relieved of the responsibility for expensive advertising, although an indication that Trade Union courses are provided is frequently included in college prospectuses. Although ultimate responsibility lay with the college it is generally recognised that the REO undertakes routine administrative tasks associated with course planning and preparation which would otherwise have to be performed by college staff. There were few complaints from colleges either about the cancellation of courses, or the late notification of course membership.

7.5 Colleges, which also negotiated directly with full-time union regional officers, generally welcomed the close links which had been established. A few colleges which had cultivated a close association with

local firms discussed with them the release of shop stewards for attendance on courses. In some very large companies the practice had developed of arranging annual meetings between the college, company management and convenors, and REO to plan and facilitate the attendance of shop stewards on courses for the coming session.

7.6 Further expansion of Trade Union courses may well require the colleges with well established courses to play an increasing role in recruitment.

8.0 ORGANISATION

8.1 In two thirds of the colleges visited, shop steward courses were located in the Department of Business Studies or Business and Management Studies (in the latter case the business studies component formed the major part of the Department's activities). In the larger institutions where there were often separate departments or schools of both business and management studies it was not uncommon to find the courses within the Management Department or a Management Studies unit. There were several instances in which the tutors were based in the General Studies Department, and, exceptionally in a specialist department, such as Carpet Technology or Engineering. The location depended to a considerable extent on a combination of factors, and, in particular, historical accident, perceptions of Heads of Department, and the complexity and size of institutions.

8.2 In those colleges running a considerable number of Trade Union courses, a separate Trade Union studies unit was sometimes created. However, this was exceptional; in most colleges there was a team of lecturers involved in this work, and they generally formed part of a

division or section of the department. The largest unit or team seen in the survey consisted of nine full-time staff, most of whose teaching was on Trade Union courses; the smallest consisted of one full-time lecturer giving a substantial part of his programme to Trade Union studies and assisted by external speakers.

8.3 In those colleges - the great majority - where more than one member of staff was engaged in teaching Trade Union Studies for a substantial part of their programme it was the practice to designate one individual as the leader. Formal job descriptions were rarely provided. The leader was generally responsible for organising the work, undertaking staff programming and timetabling, and providing the main link with the REO and external bodies. There was some variation in the organisation of courses between colleges, but a tutor was normally given responsibility for a course. On Basic courses he normally taught either the complete programme or a substantial part of it. On Health and Safety and Follow-On courses he was usually supported in the teaching by other members of staff. In some colleges the organising tutor might teach the morning sessions and another lecturer take the afternoon periods.

9.0 STAFFING

9.1 In the 46 colleges visited as part of the survey there were 181 full-time lecturers who taught wholly or partly on trade union courses; of these 48 were engaged exclusively (defined as 95% or more of their teaching programme) on these courses. Some staff spent as little as three hours per week or less on this work, but the average time was nearer twelve hours per week.

9.2 The proportion of staff time devoted to Trade Union studies was dependent on a number of factors:

- a. VOLUME OF TRADE UNION WORK IN A COLLEGE.
Those institutions which ran only a small number of courses were reluctant to ask staff to specialise exclusively in this work. Frequently, the college had one member of staff devoting a substantial proportion of his time to these courses, supported by contributions from other full-time staff and some external speakers.
- b. CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT. If staff were appointed to teach Trade Union studies they normally undertook this either exclusively or for a high proportion of their teaching timetable. The almost five-fold expansion in the number of courses between 1973/4 and 1978/9 encouraged colleges to appoint full-time lecturers who would be exclusively engaged in developing this work. However, lecturers appointed to teach Industrial Relations often taught on both trade union and management courses.
- c. ATTITUDE OF HEAD OF DEPARTMENT AND STAFF.
A few heads of department were opposed "as a matter of principle" to staff teaching exclusively on Trade Union Studies. This view was shared by some staff. Indeed, a majority appeared to be not averse to teaching on other programmes, such as those leading to National Examinations Board in Supervisory Studies (NEBSS) qualifications, and a substantial number of these welcomed the opportunity. The reasons for this were

many - some were related to promotional prospects; others to perceived educational benefits. Some tutors argued that this provided a wider and sharper dimension to their teaching and that both both groups of students - shop stewards and supervisors - obtained significant educational advantages.

9.3 The Gold report commented on the employment of part-time staff. Comparisons with these confirm that considerably fewer part-time tutors and 'guest' speakers were now being used, particularly in the larger colleges. However, in a few colleges up to 20% of the Health and Safety courses were still taught by part-time lecturers; there were occasions when the part-time specialist was essential. The reasons for the sharp reduction in the number of part-time tutors, including guest speakers, were:

- a. the preference for using full-time staff.
The acquisition of full-time staff has inevitably reduced the need for part-timers;
- b. the reduction in many college part-time staff budgets (particularly in 1979-80);
- c. the development of the TUC packages which have reduced dependence on Trade union officers;
- d. the increasing difficulty in obtaining the services of specialist speakers - for example, members of the Health and Safety Executive.

9.4 There is no evidence from the survey to suggest that a previous background as a full-time union officer or workplace representative is essential for an effective tutor. Indeed, in approximately half of the centres visited there was at least one tutor whose previous experience had been in management; they were able to make full and valuable contributions to the courses seen. Nevertheless, all tutors require sound understanding and appreciation of TU organisation, methods, policy and attitudes in order to create the optimum platform for credibility in this work.

9.5 The survey indicated that many tutors on Trade Union courses had a richness of experience which could be beneficially used on other programmes. Where the volume of work justified it, and this was true of many of the centres visited, there was considerable value in a team specialising in this work with most members teaching for a significant proportion of their time, but not exclusively on these programmes.

9.6 The great majority of the teachers seen during the survey had empathy with their students, and their aspirations. They were objective in their approach and had the capacity to present a balanced viewpoint. They possessed pedagogical skills and, in particular, the ability to create an effective learning environment, together with the flexibility to adapt their teaching techniques to the level and experience of their students.

9.7 The degree of clerical and administrative support which teaching staff received varied from adequate to poor. Many examples were noted of teaching staff typing their own course material, although occasionally this appeared to be a consequence of inadequate forward

planning. The use of TUC packages, and the documentation undertaken by the REO has relieved the colleges of much burdensome work. Nevertheless augmentation of support staff would help in many cases to optimise the use of scarce teaching time.

9.8 The TUC has been running a programme of tutor training since 1976. The programme includes one week courses and briefing sessions held at the TUC Training College at Congress House, a one week tutors summer school held at the University of Sheffield, as well as one day and one week regional conferences.

The scale of the TUC provision, and the expansion which took place particularly in 1978-9 can be seen in the following table. The figures refer to courses of between two and five days duration in the United Kingdom and refer not only to tutors employed in FE institutions, but also WEA districts and University Extra-mural departments.

	Courses			Tutor Participants		
	1977/ 78	1978/ 79	1979/ 80	1977/ 78	1978/ 79	1979/ 80
Provided Regionally	15	18	23	216	350	451
Provided Nationally	10	17	14	144	238	245
Total	25	35	37	360	588	696

9.9 There are three main types of course for tutors, each of one week's duration:

- a. AN INDUCTION COURSE. This is intended for new tutors. Emphasis is placed on pedagogical methods with particular reference to the basic course;
- b. HEALTH AND SAFETY COURSE. Again the emphasis is on pedagogical skills and methods, but within the context of the Health and Safety course. Technical information is introduced as part of the course;
- c. ADVANCED COURSES. These are intended for tutors on Follow-On modules. For these programmes, the TUC can draw upon the resources of the TUC Curriculum Development Unit. This consists of eight full-time staff; most of their time being devoted to the production of course material.

9.10 The importance of the regional conferences cannot be over-emphasised. These are organised by the REO, although the programme requires the approval of the Education Department of the TUC.

In addition to these formal courses, the TUC Education Department organises shorter conferences. It is the policy to invite college tutors to undertake tasks at these conferences and at the one week courses as part of their personal development.

9.11 It is TUC policy, as far as it is practicable that tutors should not teach on courses for shop

stewards until they have attended one of their staff development programmes, and those who attend a Health and Safety tutor course should previously have completed a Basic programme. Although exact statistics are not available, it is estimated that about 90% of full-time tutors and 50% of part-time tutors who are new to the work now attend a tutor-training course or conference(s) in the year in which they commence this teaching.

9.12 The scale of TUC provision is impressive and clearly reflects the direct government funding in this work. College staff indicated how much they valued these regional and national courses and conferences. The survey confirmed that staff received the optimum benefit when the institutional climate is supportive of staff development, and there is close integration between departmental objectives and staff development.

10. STUDENTS

10.1 It is not easy to make valid generalisations about course members. In a "typical" class ages might extend from 20 to the mid-50s, there would generally be a mixture of new and experienced stewards, and literacy skills might range from poor to a high level. This obviously poses both problems and challenges to tutors. Furthermore, because of the nature of the recruitment process, it is not always possible to arrange a balance of experienced and less experienced course members. However, small group activity allows lecturers the opportunity to mix individuals of differing experience and ability.

10.2 Two trends became apparent during the period of the survey - that the proportion both of new stewards

and of female representatives on courses were increasing although the latter were still in a considerable minority except on courses for those industries where women predominate.

10.3 Students were highly motivated, and displayed a willingness to learn from and profit by the courses. Indeed, there was evidence that these programmes were successful in influencing course members to pursue other further education courses.

11. CLASSES

11.1 The general aim of colleges was to achieve a group size of 12-16, so as to enable the group to be sufficiently large to incorporate a range of experiences, but also to permit individual attention to students many of whom were returning to education for the first time for many years.

11.2 The accommodation varied from very acceptable to barely tolerable. Some of the larger centres had been able to provide a suite of rooms, including library provision - perhaps in a refurbished older property - with appropriate visual aids and blackout facilities. In some other colleges, including some with considerable pressure on accommodation, course members could be found in rooms where the furniture was more suited to young students. The quality of the accommodation in general reflected the priority given to these courses, the volume of work (in some colleges this justified separate accommodation), and the pressure on existing resources. Nevertheless, the learning process was influenced by the nature, including layout, of the room used - those provided should be appropriate to the needs of mature students.

11.3 The quality of the teaching varied from the pedestrian to the exhilarating. Because there had been rapid expansion in Trade Union Studies, many tutors were comparatively inexperienced, and were rightly experimenting to find the most appropriate learning methods to meet the needs of their students. A few tutors placed an excessive reliance on ill-selected anecdotes as a substitute for reasoned argument. Nevertheless, the general standard of teaching was high and the commitment and enthusiasm of tutors were particularly evident.

Many commendable features were noted: sessions on the whole were thoughtfully planned with clearly defined objectives, and the TUC learning packages were generally handled flexibly. Formal inputs were well-balanced with discussions and small group activity. Many lecturers were skilled in using the considerable fund of experience available in the group, so as to optimise learning.

There was sometimes a conflict on the tutor's part between covering the full range of material in the TUC package, and taking advantage of learning opportunities which might arise during the process of often well-informed discussions. Few attempts were made at the end of a day's work to identify and reinforce the learning which should have occurred.

11.4 Few examples of team teaching were observed. Whilst judicious use was made of case studies, it was exceptional for lecturers to employ closed-circuit television (CCTV) - apart from the occasional negotiating exercise - and visual aids. Tape-slide presentations were sometimes used imaginatively to illustrate topics, such as industrial accidents.

11.5 Most college libraries contained books and pamphlets on Trade Union studies and industrial relations, although often the range of books was limited. However, students often did not know what was available. It was common practice for tutors to hold selected reference books which were consulted when students worked in syndicates; frequently, one copy of a standard work had to be shared among several groups.

11.6 While many tutors had a clear understanding of course aims and objectives, and were able to discuss these lucidly, few had given as much attention to course evaluation.

12. JOINT UNION MANAGEMENT COURSES

12.1 No joint union-management programmes were seen during the survey. The occasional supervisor or manager who was a member of a Union (for example, Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS) was to be found on basic or health and safety courses, but not as part of joint programmes.

12.2 A few colleges in the survey have run, and some are continuing to run and develop, joint union-management courses. These would appear to have three characteristics - the scale of provision is still extremely modest, the courses are run 'in-plant', and normally are concerned with health and safety. They are frequently based on a "problem-centred" approach.

12.3 The attitude of college staff to joint union-management courses varied. However, these staff emphasised that to be successful such joint programmes must have clear aims and objectives, and that these

must be both understood by an acceptable to management and unions. The competence and experience of tutors was equally important.

12.4 Evidence from the survey suggests that there are two areas in particular in which such joint union-management programmes could usefully be considered.

- a. Some aspects of Health and Safety;
- b. New Technology. After the initial Follow-On module has been run, there might be advantages in developing joint programmes.

12.5 There is a strong case for Follow-On joint union-management courses which are based on the practical problems faced by all the participants. The adoption of a "problem centred" approach might be most successful when all the course members come from the same enterprise, and can easily identify their shared needs and experiences as the basis for the problem-solving approach.

13. LINKS WITH REGIONAL MANAGEMENT CENTRES AND REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

13.1 As Regional Management Centres (RMCs) have become more firmly established, a network of relationships between institutions has evolved. However, with exceptions, RMCs have had a less direct involvement in Trade Union Studies.

13.2 There was evidence that some RMCs, wish to play a more constructive and positive role in Trade Union Education in the future. If done in a sensitive way, this could strengthen the close partnership which already exists between REOs and most colleges.

13.3 Following Further Education Circular letters 9/72 and 8/73 most, but not all, Regional Advisory Councils set up sub-committees or working parties on Industrial Relations. They provided the opportunity to bring together representatives from Universities, WEA, TUC, Industry and Colleges. These sub-committees or working parties were concerned not only with Trade Union education, but also Industrial Relations for management. Their reports included a register of staff teaching Industrial Relations in a region, guides to Industrial Relations at colleges in regions, and an investigation into the amount of Industrial Relations embodied in certain professional courses.

13.4 Few college staff during the survey mentioned the existence of these sub-committees or working parties, most of which are now inactive. Nevertheless, RACs provide a continuing resource for collaboration in the regions.

14. FEES AND GRADING OF COURSES

14.1 The normal pattern is for colleges to discuss fees with the REO on the basis of fees recommended for differing categories of part-time courses by Regional Advisory Councils, or Local Education Authorities.

14.2 Fees charged sometimes varied between colleges in the same region and occasionally between colleges in the same LEA. There was some evidence of increasing standardisation of fees regionally.

14.3 The 'average' fee for shop steward courses for 1978-9 was £12.30 per student per course, although this could range from £8.25 to £15.20. By 1979-80 the 'average' fee per student per course had increased to £14.53.

14.4 Some colleges preferred to charge a block fee for courses to which the TUC sponsored students - fees averaged about £200, irrespective of the numbers attending although occasionally colleges stipulated a maximum number. This method of charging was frequently adopted for administrative convenience. In one or two instances a small surcharge was made for folders and the cost of stationery. The great majority of colleges did not consider it appropriate to make this surcharge as they were receiving printed material from TUC free of charge.

14.5 During the latter part of the survey a number of colleges mentioned problems associated with the recoupment of fees from neighbouring authorities. Some colleges were unable to accept on any TUC course a student who was ordinarily resident in another county unless prior permission for the attendance had been obtained in each individual case from that student's local authority. The problem was particularly acute in some urban conurbations; this was creating difficulty in maintaining sensible concentration and economic provision of courses.

14.6 The lack of uniformity in the grading of shop steward courses continues to cause concern. The majority of courses are still graded "three", but a minority are graded "four". Occasionally, the basic course is graded "four" and all other programmes "three". Although there tends to be a regional pattern, there are often differences of grading within a region. This can create friction and irritation. During the survey several Education Authorities independently examined the gradings of these courses. They recognised their special nature, that students are more mature than 'the usual 16-19 age group', that there is need to employ specialist staff with appropriate

industrial experience and that the students are all adults, who although often returning to formal education for the first time for many years, are generally shrewd and mature, and who because of the special circumstances require sophisticated techniques and approaches.

15.0 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

15.1 TUC strategy as outlined in the General Council report of 1979 envisaged continuing expansion of Trade Union studies courses over the next five years. The survey provided HMI Inspectors with the opportunity of discussing with colleges their future development plans in this field of work. College responses can be divided under three heads:

- a. COLLEGES WHO WANTED TO EXPAND. (20%) These colleges were generally only running a small number of courses - in some cases because they had only recently commenced to run programmes, and wished to achieve what they considered to be a viable volume of work. However, some major centres also wished to expand - mainly, because they had identified Trade Union students as a growth area, and one in which they had already acquired some expertise, and could develop from an established base. Some of the colleges in this category were prepared to divert existing staff resources to facilitate expansion.
- b. COLLEGES WHO DID NOT WISH TO EXPAND FURTHER. (10%) These consisted of a small minority, who wanted to maintain a "balance" between

various departmental programmes - in particular, between supervisory, functional management and Trade Union courses, and who, in furtherance of this aim, favoured expansion in other areas of work.

- c. COLLEGES WITH NO STRONG VIEWS (70%). The majority came under this classification. These colleges might be prepared to expand, providing additional resources were made available, but would examine carefully the conflicting claims on scarce resources of other courses.

15.2 The majority of colleges - especially those who were only offering Basic and Health and Safety courses - wished to run Follow-On courses, which were perceived as having a higher status.

15.3 The period of the survey coincided with increasing financial stringencies. Whereas some colleges had been able to appoint additional full-time lecturers in Trade Union studies in 1978-9, far fewer were appointed in 1979-80. For the great majority of colleges in the survey the prospects in the immediate future of obtaining more staff - either full-time or part-time remain bleak. This will almost certainly be a major constraint in mounting further courses, although some modest expansion is possible in the number of students on each course.

15.4 A number of colleges are planning longer courses in Trade Union studies, which would lead to the award of a certificate. These are intended primarily for Trade Unionists who have completed the Basic, Health and Safety and Follow-On courses. The certificate courses will probably be offered on an evening basis,

APPENDIX 1

TUC EDUCATION REGIONS - ENGLAND AND WALES

1. Northern (including Cumbria)
2. North Western
3. Yorkshire and Humberside
4. East Midland and East Anglia
5. West Midland
6. South Western
7. South Eastern
8. Wales

APPENDIX 2

ENGLAND AND WALES - STATISTICS

	COURSES		STUDENTS	
	78/79	79/80	78/79	79/80
BASIC	955	1,031	11,601	13,382
HEALTH AND SAFETY	1,542	1,268	24,210	16,510
FOLLOW-ON	229	327	2,804	3,951

APPENDIX 3

A. CENTRES FOR TRADE UNION STUDIES

1. Blackburn College of Technology and Design
2. Bradford College
3. Carlett Park College of Technology
4. Gwent College of Higher Education
5. Newcastle College of Arts and Technology (in association with Newcastle Polytechnic)
6. North Cheshire College
7. Solihull College of Technology
8. Stockport College of Technology
9. Stockton - Billingham Technical College
10. Tameside College of Technology
11. University of Manchester
12. W Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education
13. Wigan College of Technology

B. GUIDELINES USED BY TUC WHEN "DESIGNATING" CENTRES

- a. Centres should have three or more staff engaged on Trade Union studies for more than 75% of their teaching time.
- b. The centre should offer a whole range of Trade Union Studies.
- c. Separate accommodation should be provided for Trade Union Studies.
- d. Library facilities should be adequate.
- e. The tutors in the centre should have a proven record in developing Trade Union education work.
- f. The college should have a catchment area which would sustain an ongoing programme.
- g. The development of Trade Union work should have the full support of the LEA and Principal.