

TVEI EXTENSION

Your initiative in launching TVEI has proved remarkably successful: schools have acquired equipment (word processors, computers, lathes, etc); teachers have been motivated to retrain; technical and vocational education has been developed in the curricula (although patchily in some cases); many TVEI projects have been oversubscribed by pupils; and relationships between schools and industry/commerce/public services have been established or strengthened. By the autumn of 1986 there should be 103 projects in 98 authorities.

Extending this pilot programme to a nationwide initiative in the timescale envisaged by the Report, and at a cost of £300m, £600m or £900m, raises a number of questions which Lord Young needs to answer before you agree to his request.

These are cumulative figures, over a period of years

Developing the 16-18 Phase of TVEI

The experience with TVEI so far is primarily the 14-16 age group; certainly the success of the programme relates to this first phase. The Report's assessment on curriculum development for the 16-18 phase is that:

"First round projects have now had a first attempt at devising detailed curricula for the 16-18 phase of their projects, and the 48 second round projects are in the

midst of their first attempt. The exercise is proving very testing, and only a minority have so far succeeded in producing a full and satisfactory post-16 programme."

(5.5)

The problem is difficult because of: (i) the attraction of the YTS for 16-18 year olds; (ii) entry into projects by students at 16 who may not have been engaged in TVEI-type activities pre-16; (iii) the well-developed "A" Level curricula; and (iv) the difficulties of establishing links between schools and FE colleges in TVEI projects. Even where such links have been developed, however, the Report concludes that:

"There is little evidence on the basis of inspection that authorities in England and Wales have been able to plan and assemble coherent four-year packages, even where the schemes have been FE led or where a tertiary college operates." (5.22)

Q. How can we guarantee that extending the Scheme to the 16-18 age group will generate the right curriculum?

Availability of Teachers

Successful TVEI projects depend critically on an adequate supply of motivated teachers with the right skills. Already there are shortages in the fields of business, technology and information technology - even though only pilot projects have

been started. TRIST (TVEI-Related In-Service Training Scheme) is of some help, but INSET has proved inadequate. This is certain to be a major problem in the face of a major nationwide expansion.

Q. Where are the teachers for TVEI projects to be recruited, especially in view of such a large and rapid expansion of the Scheme?

Local Authority Expenditure

TVEI is a one-off exercise. It lasts four years and then it ceases to be funded by central government. Its object, however, is to have a permanent effect on school education. It is worth asking Lord Young what is his intention for the funding of TVEI. If it is to be funded by local authorities, how will it be financed? In the short term, the Employment/DES view is that local authorities are not likely to provide extra finance. Because of this, the Treasury claim that the choice is not £300m, £600m or £900m, but that extra funding of the order of £80m-300m should be added to each figure.

In the longer term the outlook is even more serious. Given that successful TVEI projects are being established in LEAs, the political pressure for them not to be dropped and made permanent by central government funding is likely to be very great. This raises the prospect of permanent funding from

central government to finance permanently higher local authority expenditure.

- Q. Given the extra cost to local authorities of in-service training and the training of new teachers, what is the likely indirect as well as direct costs over the period?

Evaluating the Output of TVEI

Most of the evaluation of TVEI is on the basis of inputs: the curriculum, the management of the service, pupil motivation, quality of teaching, costs of the programme. But hardly any evaluation has been done of the outputs of TVEI. What do companies think of children who have attended TVEI programmes? Are students learning skills or being provided with expensive toys?

Lord Young might make this clear. You need to press him as to whether TVEI is a "hard" programme producing pupils with well-defined technical and vocational skills; or whether it is an extension of the kind of progressive education which has dominated the primary school - emphasising activity rather than skill, and learning by doing rather than teaching - into the secondary area.

- Q. Is TVEI giving youngsters marketable skills?

