



**CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY  
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CURRICULUM INNOVATION IN F.E: A CASE STUDY

by

James Avis

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CURRICULUM INNOVATION IN F.E. A CASE STUDY

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## Glossary

REB	Regional Examination Body
CFE	Certificate of Further Education
UEI	Union of Educational Institutions
WMAC	West Midlands Advisory Council
BEC	Business Education Council
TEC	Technician Education Council
C & G	City and Guilds
NAFE	Non-advanced Further Education
FE	Further Education
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
FEU	Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit
YOP	Youth Opportunities Programme
SEN	State Enrolled Nurse
SRN	State Registered Nurse
SLS	Social and life skills

Introduction\*

This paper is concerned with a case study of the introduction and development of the Certificate of Further Education (CFE) in a particular college in the West Midlands and the role of the Regional Examination Board, i.e., the Union of Educational Institutions (UEI) in this process. In part, it is a study in curriculum innovation. The CFE, at its inception in 1973, was to be a general pre-vocational course for non-traditional sixth formers. In part it is an engagement with Marxist themes of reproduction, complexity, relative autonomy, and the articulations of generation, race, patriarchy and class. The paper indicates various determinations that through their interplay culminated in the CFE. As such it is an empirical elaboration of what Gleeson and Mardle have termed the central problematic of the sociology of Further Education: that of the relative autonomy of Further Education. The paper argues that the degree of autonomy that a course, college or examining board attains, is subject to movement over time; at some moments a greater degree of autonomy will be attainable than at others. The case study material similarly supports the contentions of Gleeson and Mardle, and Raffe, that historically there has been a shift in the nature of vocational Further Education, away from being a means of upward social mobility, towards an emphasis on the placement of students in particular occupational positions.

Many similarities can be seen between the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) and the CFE. Hoos' work suggests that YOP, through its social and life skills, aims to influence the emotions and attitudes of students, socialising them, into a work identity that can sustain casual and intermittent work, a position, that is, in the secondary labour market.<sup>1</sup> The CFE in many ways attempts the same task. The case study material, through the use of practitioners' accounts, illustrates the influence and interplay of the structures of race, patriarch, generation and class. These, through their influence on, and more importantly, their reconstitution in the day-to-day practice of FE, serve in often contradictory ways to locate agents in a potential labour market.

\* This paper is part of a larger project which is concerned with the nature of further education. The research has involved discussions with teachers and students at a number of colleges in the West Midlands. I am very grateful for their help, and to Richard Johnson for helping to edit this paper. An earlier version of part of this paper is due to appear in D. Gleeson (ed.), Youth, Training and Search for Work (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983). I am grateful to the publisher for permission to use the material in another form.



Curriculum innovations such as the CFE cannot be understood without recognising the increasing presence of youth unemployment, and behind this the crisis in capital accumulation and changes in the labour process. These factors create a framework within which curriculum decisions are made setting limits and creating possibilities for curriculum interventions. Youth unemployment provides the student take-up for these courses. The ideologies of industry, reflecting changes in the labour process, influence the development of the formal curricula. Industrialist ideology also stands as an implicit critique of much that goes on in school and further education. An acceptance of this critique of education, which lays the blame for youth unemployment upon the educational system, has had profound political effects. As Frith and Finn have put it:

We have been arguing that the educational 'crisis' in Britain in the 1970's was, in fact, a labour process 'crisis'. If youth employment statistics reflected a gap between the qualities of school leavers and the labour needs of industry, this was less to do with a breakdown in the school process than with shifts in the labour process. The problem became an educational one out of political necessity - the state in a capitalist economy can manipulate education and policy directly, it can only change production policies indirectly. The attack on existing school practices has to be understood ideologically as an aspect of the political process of educational policy making.<sup>2</sup>

In addition these curriculum interventions are attempts to manage the crisis by firstly, 'cooling-out' the over-aspirant student, and secondly by inculcating work disciplines.

This framework, however, is heavily overlaid by institutional factors within FE, which have their own level of determinacy and are not directly deducible from the problems of capital accumulation or changes in the labour process. These include the pressures of student numbers, departmental interests, and definitions of student needs. These processes will be examined in this paper. As Johnson has argued:

Different sites (e.g. schools or families) do not simply express or reflect social relations in other sites (e.g. in factories or places of waged labour). They have a hardness, a particular history, and a power to effect outcomes all of their own. So schools do not simply express or reflect the relations of production 'Education' is not just a relay or transmission belt from the 'family' into 'work'. Rather schools and colleges are places that contain the play of extremely diverse and contradictory processes.<sup>3</sup>

The case study of the certificate of Further Education illustrates the play of institutional factors which are located in a wider structural context.

This paper is divided into two main sections: the first concerning the regional examining board (UEI/WMAC) and the CFE, and the second, a local college and the CFE. This division is for reasons of clarity of presentation; by no means is it intended to play down the subtle and continual inter-relations that exist.

#### The Structure of UEI/WMAC

I will consider in the next section the involvement of the UEI with the CFE, but first it is necessary to consider the constitution of the UEI. This provided the framework within which decisions about the CFE were made.

Up to 1978, when the UEI merged with the WMAC, its constitution had remained largely unaltered for a number of years. The changes that had taken place were on the whole minor, reflecting such things as changes in the nomenclature of Local authorities, for example the creation of metropolitan district councils. The structure of the UEI, the spheres of responsibility of its committees, had remained unchanged for a long period, though the constitution was subject to regular reviews. I will use the constitution of 1973 to illustrate the structure of the UEI prior to its merger. This constitution was in force for much of the period that was crucial to the CFE.

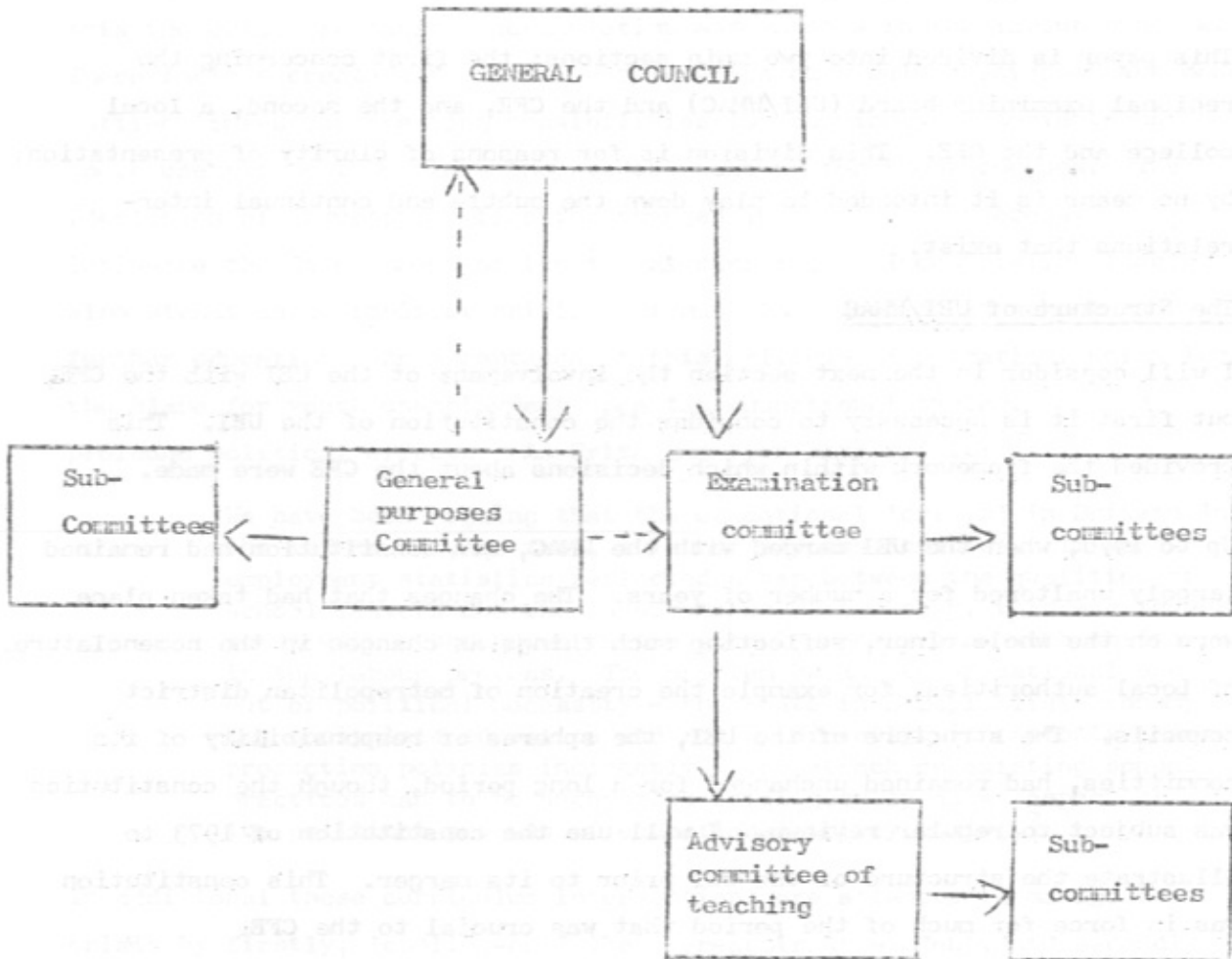
The constitution of the union lays down its objects:

- i) to establish, maintain, and conduct a system of examinations for such colleges, schools, and/or other institutions... as may seek the assistance of union for that purpose.
- ii) To certify the educational attainment of students, full-time and/or part-time...
- iii) To help promote the co-ordination of educational activities and to discuss with other interested authorities and/or bodies, matters of common interest.
- iv) To assist Local Authorities in their arrangements for the transfer of students.. and in the award of scholarships.
- v) To offer prizes, scholarships and exhibitions...
- vi) To assist in the general development of education...
- vii) To act with, combine with, or provide financial or other assistance to any authority, institution and/or body, established or to be established for any of the foregoing purposes.<sup>4</sup>

The structure of the union comprised a council, a general purposes committee, and examinations committee and teacher advisory committees. The council was responsible for the management of the union.<sup>5</sup>

TABLE 1

THE UEI STRUCTURE 1973



In order to obtain its objectives the union had the power to raise funds through subscriptions, examination fees, sale of literature, gifts and 'such other means as the council may designate'. The union had two types of members, plenary and associate. Plenary membership was available to non-metropolitan counties and to metropolitan districts approved by the general purposes committee. Associate membership was offered to those who were ineligible for plenary membership. The two types of membership differed in the democratic rights accorded and the subscriptions paid. Plenary members appointed representatives to the council and additional representatives to the unions' general meetings, these representatives had voting and speaking rights. Associate members had the right to send one member to general meetings, who had neither voting nor speaking rights. In addition the plenary members were able to nominate teachers to serve on the teacher advisory committees. Both plenary and associate members had the right to use the examinations of the union at a reduced rate and to receive the literature of the union free or at a reduced price.

Annually the council elected from its membership the General purposes committee<sup>6</sup>. This committee was responsible to the council for the conduct and administration of the business affairs of the council. In addition it could make recommendations to the council and the examinations committee. It set the date and place for the AGM and had the power to call additional general meetings and special meetings of the council. Whereas the general purposes committee was primarily concerned with the administration, the examinations committee was concerned with the educational objectives of the union. Its functions were:

- a. the general supervision of the organisation of such examinations as may be assigned to it by the council of the union.
- b. the formulation of courses and syllabuses of instruction
- c. the appointment of examiners and assessors at rates of remuneration approved by the general purposes committee
- d. the carrying out of any other duties or particular business the general purposes committee may assign to it<sup>7</sup>

The membership of the examinations committee consisted of:

- a. the chairman of the council, the honorary treasurer and chairman of the general purposes committee.
- b. the chief education officer, or an assistant officer for further education, of each plenary member, together with principals of establishments of further education nominate annually by the plenary member.
- c. the chairman of each advisory committee
- d. one representative each nominated by:
  - the association of colleges for further and higher education
  - the association of principals of technical institutions
  - the association of teachers in technical institutions  
(now Natfhe)
  - the city and guilds London institute
- e. not more than 16 members co-opted by the council
- f. two assessors appointed by the department of education and science<sup>8</sup>

The committee appointed its own chairman and could establish subcommittees.

An important facet of the constitution was that whilst in the case of disagreement the decision would be made on the basis of a simple majority, the whole UEI structure was in essence undemocratic. This derived from the structure of the union's committee-membership. The committee structure resulted in committees being dominated by senior educational officers, whether they were principals or officers of the local authorities. This structure encouraged conservatism not in the sense of a resistance to change or innovation, but rather as a loyalty to the frameworks through which change would be managed. The practice of plenary members appointing representatives onto the various committees had similar results.

The constitution of the Union also differed from the other vocational examining bodies, in that unlike the C & G, BEC or TEC there was an absence of user representation within the committee structure. There was no constitutional necessity for user representation either in the form of student or industrial representation. This absence was reflected in the dominance of educational institutions particularly of Local Education Authorities. Whilst university representatives were on the council their presence indicated the historical orientation of the union towards educational acceptability, rather than acting as a profound influence on union policy.

The final part of the committee structure was the advisory committees of teachers. These committees were established by the examinations committee, having their members appointed by that committee. The members of the committee were to be:

- a. the chairman of the council, the chairman of the examinations committee, and the chairman of the general purposes committee
- b. members appointed by the examinations committee of who 2/3 shall be teacher representatives nominated by plenary members
- c. one assessor appointed by the department of education and science.<sup>9</sup>

Each advisory committee appointed its own chairman and could establish its own sub-committees. The functions of these were:

to advise and to make recommendations to the examinations committee in all matters relating to the section of examinations entrusted to the advisory committee such as:

- a. the framing and revision of curricula and syllabuses
- b. the appointment of examiners and assessors
- c. the moderation of papers
- d. the assessment of examination results
- e. any other matters that may be referred to it by the examinations committee<sup>10</sup>

These advisory committees dealt with the whole range of union work ranging from craft engineering to the CFE. The nomenclature of teacher advisory committees was in some senses misleading as these committees were frequently dominated by the more senior members who themselves were often principals of colleges. The term 'teacher' is itself of interest here. It ignores the real hierarchies of control that exist within the colleges. This arises from the ideology of professionalism which constitutes <sup>teachers</sup> as an ideologically homogeneous occupational category, who share common educational orientations and goals. Consequently it becomes 'unimportant' whether a teacher representative is a senior member of college staff or merely a rank-and-file teacher. Thus the real hierarchical differences between teachers are disguised. Actually these 'teachers' hold different positions: from head of department through deputy head, principal lecturer, senior lecturer, to lecturer 1 and 2.



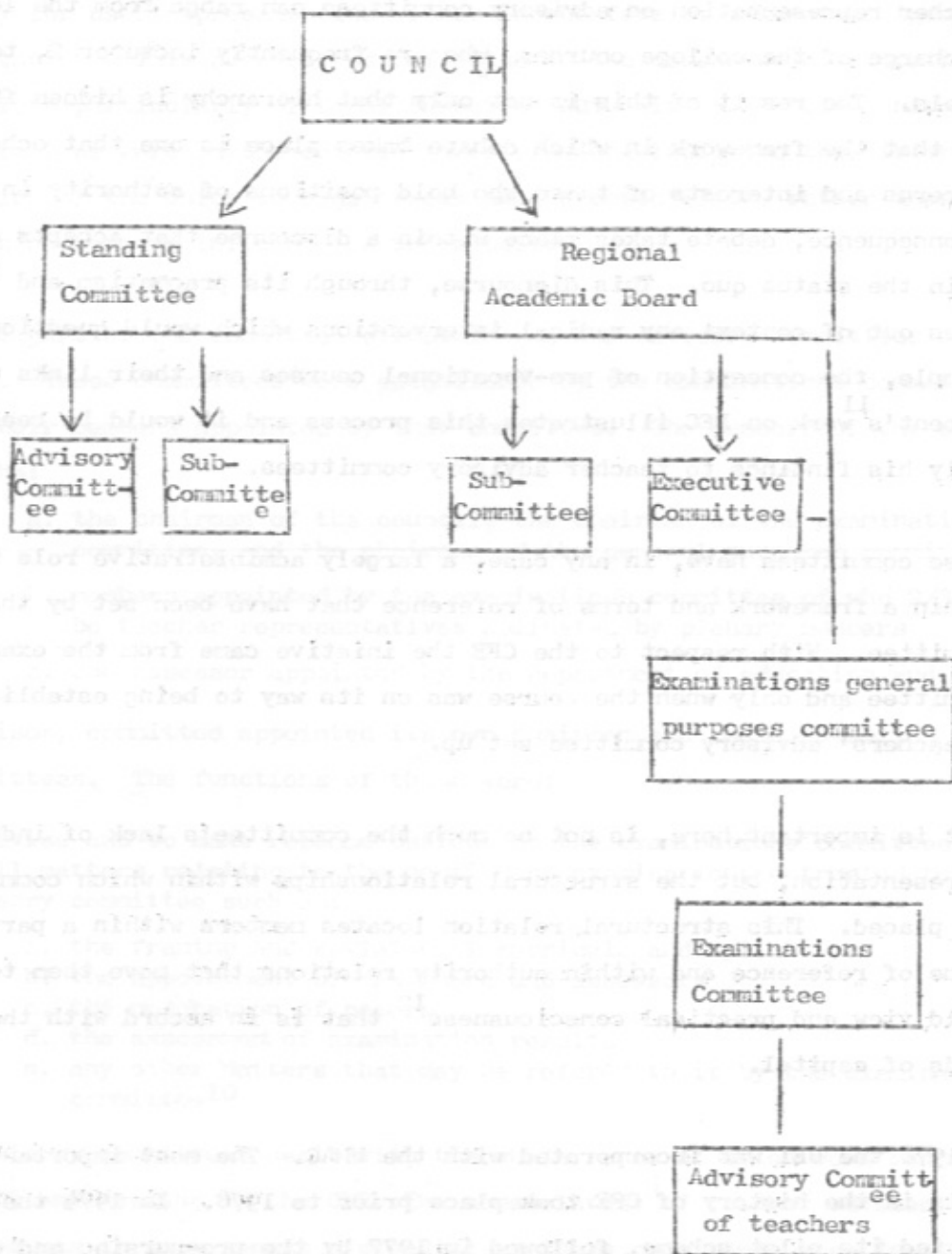
The interests of these various levels differ. Ordinary lecturers wish to control the courses they teach. This desire may well conflict with the interests of those higher up the hierarchy in maintaining their authority. Teacher representation on advisory committees can range from the lecturers in charge of the college courses, who are frequently lecturer 2, to higher levels. The result of this is not only that hierarchy is hidden from view but that the framework in which debate takes place is one that echoes the concerns and interests of those who hold positions of authority in FE. As a consequence, debate takes place within a discourse that accepts and works within the status quo. This discourse, through its pragmatism and 'realism', rules out of context any radical interventions which would question, for example, the conception of pre-vocational courses and their links with industry. Vincent's<sup>11</sup> work on BEC illustrates this process and it would be reasonable to apply his findings to teacher advisory committees.

These committees have, in any case, a largely administrative role working within a framework and terms of reference that have been set by the examinations committee. With respect to the CFE the initiative came from the examinations committee and only when the course was on its way to being established was a teachers' advisory committee set up.

What is important, here, is not so much the committee's lack of industrial representation, but the structural relationships within which committee members are placed. This structural relation locates members within a particular frame of reference and within authority relations that move them toward a world view and practical consciousness<sup>12</sup> that is in accord with the generic needs of capital.

In 1978 the UEI was incorporated with the WMAC. The most important developments in the history of CFE took place prior to 1978. In 1974 the UEI started its pilot scheme, followed in 1977 by the pre-nursing and engineering/construction inter-regional schemes. It is for this reason that I shall provide a briefer description of the new structure than I did of the old. At the time of the field work (April 1981) this constitution itself was under review. As one respondent intimatee, the merger resulted in the bifurcation of the WMAC's structure. The WMAC committee structure was paralleled by the UEI's and both sectors continued to operate in their traditional ways, the WMAC in its traditional advisory role and the UEI sector with its responsibility for examinations. The new structure is represented diagrammatically in Table 2.

TABLE 2. STRUCTURE OF UIC/WMAC AFTER REORGANISATION



In some respects the new structure represented a wider constituency than before as industrial, commercial, trade union and student interests were represented. However, the representatives of these groups were few in numbers and tended to be located toward the top of the UEI/WMAC hierarchy, in committees which met infrequently. On the examinations, and general purpose committees there was no representation of these groups apart from that of NATFHE (FE & HE teachers union). One respondent during interview suggested that this lack of industrial presence enabled the UEI/WMAC to respond more readily to the general needs of industry rather than to those of specific firms. This response to the generic needs of capital arose

through committee members' understanding of industrial requirements. These notions, however, sprang more immediately from their institutional positions and the relationship of their institutions to industry, and so were coloured by their institutional interests. Thus, the needs of industry, while being a major topic of concern, were filtered through institutional processes, so that some needs, rather than others, were addressed.

#### UEI/WMAC and the Origins of the CFE

In 1973 the UEI set up a sub-committee of its examination committee to investigate one year courses at 16+. It was out of this development that the CFE was to emerge. The REB's major source of finance is from examination fees.<sup>13</sup> Their need for finance and competition with other examination bodies (e.g., C & G, RSA, other REB's) means that they attempt to be sensitive to the development of markets for new courses.<sup>14</sup> Their competitive relations with other bodies operate on a number of levels. On one level the bodies attempt to be responsive to the requests and needs of colleges that they service; at another, they attempt to gain competitive advantage over the other examining bodies through the effectiveness of their marketing strategies, for example by organising conferences, commissioning articles for such journals as Educa, issuing press releases of the latest developments to the TES and so on. On another level, REB's are aware of the curriculum innovations that are being discussed and developed by various curriculum agencies, for example the Schools Council and FEU, and in some cases will be responsive to these. Whilst the above portrayal of the REB's emphasises competition, the relations between these various agencies are characterised by compromise. Although the various concordats that have been reached between the REBs and the C&G are rightly interpreted as a curtailment by the centre of local initiative and autonomy, in an attempt to rationalise the system,<sup>15</sup> a space has nonetheless been left which the REBs can occupy and use to reassert a degree of autonomy. The most recent concordat, the Ferryside Agreement, does not cover all the REBs activities through it could be renegotiated and extended. Another factor that contributes to compromise is that the personnel who occupy positions on the committees of the REBs may also sit on the committees of other examination bodies, thus enabling a fairly swift flow of information from one body to another.<sup>16</sup>

The influence of local employers upon the REB is mediated by the colleges in two ways. Firstly, through examination fees. Employers, through training policies and apprenticeship schemes, send part-time students to attend college. Their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a course will be reflected in the



number of students sent to a particular course. Employer take-up of places on part-time courses will also be affected by competitive pressures and changes in the labour process. Thus falling student numbers and the subsequent decline in fee income may lead REBs to reconsider provisions. Secondly, the influence of local employers upon the REB is mediated by teachers themselves or their representatives on the board, commenting on syllabus, curriculum etc. Teachers will draw upon their knowledge of local industry, labour processes and what they assume to be employer needs. The financial imperative is an important factor for the REBS and where one source of finance is contracting, as is currently the case in craft training, new sources will be sought. The significance of 16-19 full-time education should be remarked here, being an area of potential expansion and thus a source of examination fees. Whilst representatives of users do now sit on the committees of the UEI/WMAC, as do Trade union representatives, their direct influence is generally negligible. To the extent that the REB is responsive to industrial needs, this is achieved through college mediation rather than through direct representation, for example, through local take-up of courses, through the comments of firms' training officers to college lecturers, through lecturers' perceptions of the local situation, and their assumptions about the needs of local industry, and finally through college and department course strategies.<sup>17</sup> This mediation allows for a more subtle relationship - a relationship that does have the capacity, in a highly mediated and possibly unintended way, to meet the needs of local employers.

During the 1970s a large number of reports issued from the Schools Council and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) concerning the education of the 16-19 age range. It was out of these deliberations that the Certificate of Extended Education (CEE)<sup>18</sup> was developed. This curriculum innovation, mainly based within the schools, was in competition with colleges of FE for student numbers and also with the interests of the REBs. This competitive pressure was one of the catalysts which led the UEI to set up a subcommittee in 1973 to investigate one year full-time courses<sup>19</sup>. In 1974 agreement was reached to run a pilot CFE scheme during 1974/5. At this stage the CFE reflected a local REB's response. The course, whilst having no clearly stated entry requirements, was to cater for the non-traditional sixth former in the ability range CSE grade 2-4. The course was to be a pre-vocational course located in colleges of FE, and would cater for those students who were not necessarily committed to a particular occupation. The course would therefore play a 'diagnostic' role, and enable the student to experience a range of vocationally orientated options, thereby facilitating an informed occupational choice. There was to be core elements of numeracy and literacy and the student would select at least two options from a vocationally

orientate range. At this stage in its development there were no inter-regional links. However, there was concern about the national currency of the new certificate, and there was a wish that those students who had passed appropriately in the CFE would be able to obtain exemption from the first year of craft courses.

At this time the occupational links of the CFE were strongly stressed. It was felt this linkage would motivate students to attend, perform well and would overcome the forms of student resistance that beset the more traditional subjects both in school and FE. Whilst this concern with vocational relevance can in part be understood as a means of student control, and in part an affirmation of the suitability of FE as a site of 16-19 education, it was also drawing upon the rhetoric of vocationalism that is a central feature of the ideologies surrounding FE. These stress that FE as an educational site is primarily orientated towards the needs of industry and a definition of student interests in these terms.

The next major development was the establishment of an inter-regional working party in 1976 to look at the CFE. The motivation behind this was twofold. One of the major problems that REBs face is the national currency of the qualifications they offer. As regional bodies their certificates are known locally, but lack recognition outside the region. Usually these problems are not too severe and, in the case of the CFE, those colleges which offered it on the basis of their own internal arrangements could offer exemptions to higher level courses. The second factor motivating these developments was the continued presence of competition from other sectors whose courses held national currency, notably the City and Guilds foundation course and the CCE. The outcome of these discussions was that three CFE schemes became available to the local college in my study; the UEI general scheme, the inter-regional CFE Engineering/Construction scheme and the inter-regional CFE Pre-nursing and Caring Services scheme.

Each of these schemes, however, had a particular history. Both the Engineering and Pre-nursing scheme had been developed in REBs other than the UEI and represented a shift in the philosophy surrounding the CFE. The general UEI scheme had been conceived as containing both 'diagnostic' (i.e., diagnosing occupational preference) and 'tasting' elements, (i.e., providing experience of a range of vocational options), whereas the Engineering and Pre-nursing schemes were more tightly vocationally orientated. This shift in philosophy, from the general to the specific, can be explained in a number of ways. Firstly, the CFE general scheme was surrounded by a certain amount of conflict and therefore it is dangerous to assume complete consensus.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, the

REBs who had been responsible for the development of the two new CFEs were obviously committed to these. The benefit of the inter-regional schemes would be national currency for the CFE; a certificate would be produced bearing the names of all six REB's, together with increased credibility for the regional CFEs. However, these institutional pressures were not the only ones present. Student demand and spare capacity, especially in Engineering/Construction departments, were also important factors. In addition there was the opportunism of the local REB, willing to exploit a means of increasing fee income. Currently supporters of the CFE are engaged in a rearguard action against the C&G Foundation course and it seems likely that the C&G will become the validating and co-ordinating body for the 17+ vocational examination and therefore will colonise the CFE space. However, because of the nature of institutional processes it also seems likely that some sort of concordat between the C&G and the REBs may be negotiated.

In the preceding discussion of the CFE and the involvement of the UEI I have indicated a number of factors that have played a part in its constitution and development. What has been missing from the discussion is a sense of the conflicts and contradictions surrounding the CFE. Both within and outside the UEI/WMAC there is disagreement concerning the validity of the CFE. The position taken, by some members of the UEI/WMAC and other concerned parties is that since employers recruit for apprenticeships at 16, the CFE has nothing to contribute. Students who take the course will be disadvantaged in comparison with younger school leavers and thus, rather than enhancing employability, the course renders them less employable. Whilst this criticism is recognised, those who favour the course would see their role as being the re-education of employers. As one senior college administrator stated in interview:

All I can say is that as long as employers stick to the old ideas that they want them at 16, hopefully with 'O' levels or CSE's, there's not a lot of future for it. If employers are prepared the pressure will have to be bought to bear on them and the unions to consider people at all ages at 17 and 18.

A further source of conflict arose with the development of the specialist CFE's<sup>21</sup>. Their development was a response to pressure from other REBs and their acceptance was attained on the basis of the acquisition of national currency for the CFE. The conflict focused upon the shift in philosophy from a general to a specialist course. In some quarters it was felt that these specialist courses would serve neither student nor employer needs but would merely solve departmental problems, and would result in the transmission of outdated and too specific skills. This illustrates the major contradiction of the general and engineering CFEs in that, in their different ways, they produce agents who can be directed toward craft jobs at a time when these

jobs are undergoing contraction

Another area of conflict has been the institutional location of the CFE. The UEI/WMAC as an examination body with an interest in examination fees would be happy to see the course conducted in both schools and FE.<sup>22</sup> However, college principals would argue against this on anything other than a link basis<sup>23</sup> arguing their case in terms of an educational rhetoric, a rhetoric that has lying behind it institutional competition. With respect to the UEI/WMAC this illustrates its wish to expand the market for its courses. In some ways parallels could be drawn between the REB and capitalist firms: both seek constantly to expand their markets in order to increase revenue. The result of this process for FE has been the proliferation of courses catering for a specific market. This overproduction then leads towards rationalisation and monopolistic tendencies normally orchestrated from the centre.

I would like to close this section by making some general observations, some of which will inform and be further substantiated in the following section. On an institutional level the relations between the CFE and other similar courses and the needs of capital is tangential. It is a highly mediated relation. In all three CFE syllabuses however, a direct link is made between the courses and future employment. Thus the general scheme states:<sup>24</sup>

It offers a broadly based course of education on a vocational basis and in its content is linked to ongoing more advanced courses of study. A broad bridge between school and employment is thus provided with a wide range of subsequent opportunities.

This relation to the needs of industry may arise in part through the ideology of vocationalism by which colleges of FE and examination bodies justify their existence. This ideology permeates the consciousness of those who participate in curriculum development as part of a taken-for-granted reality which sees FE as unequivocally serving the needs of industry. Such needs are sometimes more assumed than real as, for instance, when literacy and numeracy are taken as invariable technical requirements for employment. Thus the spare capacity of a department, caused by the decrease in part-time students, may be taken up by new full-time students in the hope that by doing so both the long term needs of capital (for appropriately socialised and skilled workers) as well as the departmental need to maintain student numbers, will be met. For example, in my case study a senior member of staff argued that whilst CFE Engineering students currently experience difficulty in obtaining employment, with the end of the recession the CFE might in the long term meet both their needs and those of local industry.



The assumed linkages may not necessarily work through in the ways envisaged and may be contradictory. If FE reproduces particular social relations, cultural forms and subjective orientations, it may do so in a number of alternative ways. It may be helpful to spell out the way in which the term reproduction is being used in order to avoid a functionalist formulation. Firstly, capitalist reproduction takes place in conditions that have arisen through past struggle. The agents of capital can only struggle over those conditions. Thus the terrain on which capitalist reproduction takes place is the outcome of struggle. Secondly, reproduction itself is never completely secured. The reproduction of capitalist social relations reproduces antagonisms and contradictions that are embedded in these social relations thus rendering the process of reproduction itself a site of struggle. Thirdly, in so far as FE plays a role in the reproduction of capitalist social and technical relations this reproduction involves not merely class relations but relations of gender, race and generation too. These themselves structure and are structured by capitalist social relations. At the site of production capitalist social relations articulate with these structures. This can be illustrated by the historic class struggle of workers for a family wage which is constituted within patriarchal relations. Capital is largely indifferent as to which site reproduces the affectual dispositions and social skills of its future workers whether it be in schools, in FE or on YOP schemes. It is into this arena that competition and conflict between these various institutions can enter, for example, in the case of the CFE, between schools and colleges and also between examining bodies.

Capital neither nationally nor locally directly determines the nature of FE provision. The influence of capital is therefore a negotiated determination<sup>25</sup> passing through college institutions via their relation to local capital, through the examination bodies, through the state itself, and importantly through the practical ideologies of those involved. The ideology of vocationalism that is present in colleges is an important aspect of this process as are the linkages that colleges build between themselves and industry. Certainly in the directly vocational departments<sup>26</sup> lecturers pride themselves on knowing what industry wants and as Gleeson and Wardle argue, it is this industrial linkage that in part legitimates their practice as teachers. The absence of a direct determination of capital upon colleges provides a degree of freedom for them to determine the nature of the courses they offer. This freedom is historically circumscribed. In the case of the CFE and 17+ vocational education this is reflected in the move towards national provision.<sup>27</sup> It is also limited

by the relation the specific course has to specific capitals or other employers as well as by government policy.<sup>28</sup> For example, a full-time course such as the CFE does not have to attract students from industry and therefore does not experience the pressures emanating from employers that impinge upon part-time courses. It was into the space<sup>29</sup> of educational provision for the poorly qualified school leaver that the CFE entered. The lack of national provision for this group in full-time education provided the space for local initiative and it was out of this that the CFE and similar courses emerged. Over the last few years the CFE type course has been in this position, but increasingly the centre is intervening to co-ordinate and rationalise these courses in the form of bodies like the FEU and C & G. The central state in the form of the DES has been a shadowy but real presence in the manoeuvring. Its representatives in the form of HMI's are members of the major committees of the various curriculum agencies and report back to the DES. Certainly the move towards a single validating body for the 17+ vocational examination has emanated from the DES, engaging support at the time of writing from the C & G and the FEU.<sup>30</sup>

#### A Local College and the CFE

The following discussion is based on field work undertaken at a college of FE in The West Midlands which has a large enrolment of Black and Asian students. The origins of college involvement in the CFE was a direct though mediated result of 'student demand' (as interpreted by college staff), and at the same time student resistance to the more traditional subjects. The notion of 'student demand' is problematic and should be rid of its idealistic connotations. It is located within a social, economic and political context. Student demand is connected to the negative compulsion of both unemployment and parental pressure. In addition it relates to student aspirations and the way in which college staff respond to these.

In February 1975 the heads of the Science and General Studies departments presented a paper to the academic board suggesting the establishment of a one year pre- 'O' level course. They were concerned about the unsatisfactory performance of 'O' level students and felt a two year 'O' level course would overcome this problem. An internal working party was then set up and recommended that in the academic year 1975/6 a general education course should be run. The academic board accepted this recommendation. It was also during this period that the academic board encountered the CFE. A delegation from the academic board visited a college where the scheme was

being run. The visit was unsuccessful and the CFE as a possibility was dropped for the time. The reason given, paradoxically, was that the course was too narrowly vocational.

In 1975/6 the general education course was being run almost entirely as a diluted 'O' level course, though alongside main stream subjects it included three hours a week for PE and Careers counselling. Part of its stated aims were:

1. To provide a broad educational base on which a more informed choice of career can be made and to alert students to alternative career choices;
2. To make the individual aware of his social environment, and to contribute to his social and personal development;
3. To provide an opportunity for the student to continue his general education; to improve his literacy and numeracy and to broaden his leisure activities;
4. To provide a level of achievement which will allow progress to a course of further education.

During that year the course was reviewed and it was felt that a more practical curriculum would be of benefit to the students concerned. A report by course tutors stated that the course was taken up predominantly by West Indian and Asian students, that a more practical curriculum was required and that whilst there was a demand for the course the students tended to be rather 'boisterous'. It was at this time that at least one course tutor felt there was a degree of hostility towards the course, being a course that was clearly identified with low achieving black youth.

Int. One of the things I remember in particular about that was the fact that this new course....became notorious as causing problems in the commonroom and throughout the college.

JA Why was that?

Int. For the first time there was a course which could easily be identified. They were all black, that was the thing about them, they were a group that was low level, considered to be low level and they were all black as well. I think there was a certain amount of prejudice that was picked up there and they were blamed for everything.....

JA Blamed by the staff were they?

Int. Oh, staff yes...

It was this interest in a more practical curriculum that led the college to reconsider the CFE. It was felt this course would have the benefit to students of being more practical and vocationally orientated. It also

offered the student an examination certificate, something the general education course failed to provide. It was also felt the CFE would be more attuned to student need and thereby reduce the problems surrounding the course. At this stage in its development the course was a general pre-vocational course hoping to offer diagnosis of vocational orientation and enabling students to "taste" vocationally orientated options thereby facilitating a more informed occupational choice. An early UEI statement on the CFE commented:

The scheme for the CFE has been devised primarily for those non-traditional sixth former students, both boys and girls, who are unaware of their aptitudes and interests in the vocational field, and who have completed their period of statutory secondary education. It offers a broadly based course of education on a vocational basis and its content is linked to ongoing more advanced courses of study. A broad bridge between school and employment is thus provided. <sup>31</sup>

At this point in the college's involvement the CFE stood as an internal response to institutional problems, that is the large-scale failure of 'O' level students and a 'demand' for 'O' level courses from students the college felt were unsuitable for such courses, and who could be directed towards the CFE. Student demand for 'O' level courses was related to two interconnected factors: the drying up of the local youth labour market especially for those with low-level qualifications, and parental pressure on children to attend college to acquire qualifications rather than being unemployed or on welfare. As one senior member of college staff stated:

There are parents who will say I don't want my youngster on state benefit I'd rather they'd be in college  
.....with the CFE you've got the parents behind them...

As a result of the racial structuration of the local labour market and the working through of the racial structuring of education, the CFE has historically been a predominantly black course. At college level this factor, together with modes of student resistance, have played a part in the CFE's internal development. However, in addition, other institutional and department factors have shaped its development, keying in with CFE developments that were taking place on an inter-regional level.

Currently the college offers three CFE schemes, the general UEI scheme which is a direct descendent of the initial general course, the inter-regional CFE Pre-nursing and Caring Services scheme, and the inter-regional CFE Engineering and Construction scheme. Each of the two new CFE schemes have their own internal college histories. Traditionally the college had run a two year Pre-nursing course. This course was in essence a two-year 'O' level course designed to enable students to enter nursing training, and it was as a



result of LEA opposition to two year 'O' level courses being held outside school, that the inter-regional CFE scheme came to replace it. This course had its own separate development and whilst there was a possibility of rationalisation with the CFE general scheme, which had a nursing option, this was resisted. The General Nursing Council at that time was unwilling to accept that UEI's CFE course as an entrance qualification. It was argued both in the college and outside that there was a pre-existing student constituency of girls who were already vocationally committed and orientated towards the nursing/caring services and that there was therefore a need and demand for a vocationally specific pre-nursing CFE. It was as a result of these factors that the inter-regional scheme developed and was adopted by the college. The scheme through its certification also provided a means of motivating students during the first year.

In the same way the CFE Engineering/Construction course developed in the college with its own history. Initially there had been an Engineering option as part of the UEI general scheme and in the same way as there had been a perceived student demand for the nursing course so too for the engineering course. The Engineering department argued that there were students who were clearly committed to the CFE Engineering and who were orientated towards engineering in a general sense. Again college pressure coincided and linked in with inter-regional developments. An important backdrop to the Engineering department's involvement in the low level work of the CFE was its own falling numbers of part-time students which was a result of the decline in craft training. As one respondent put it:

It was the first sign of the Engineering departments decline here which has continued ever since - you know, it has been a steady decline and it will continue, as I see it, indefinitely.

The above has provided a description and history of college involvement with a particular group of courses. The description whilst inevitably partial should not be read off as mere 'appearance' under which lies some essential relation linking the needs of capital to educational interventions. This criticism, whilst a useful corrective to free-floating analysis which lacks a sense of determinacy, carries with it the danger of an essentialism which is inadequately complex. The local college contains within it the play of diverse forces many of which can only, in a highly mediated way, be related back to capital and its needs. The colleges involvement in the CFE was in some ways a response to perceived student 'need' - student 'need' as defined by the college, and in many instances verging on a form of control. The rhetoric of vocationalism, relevance and practical work is a frequent strategy of control. The perceived student 'need' was a result of pressure emanating

from the margins of college provision. College involvement was also related to its inability to offer 2 year 'O' level courses, declining numbers in its Engineering department, and the involvement of a senior member of staff in the development of the CFE. However, the extent of this involvement was limited by a number of factors: staffing, resource allocation, cost (in that compared with YOP the CFE stands as an expense whereas YOP is a source of income), departmental strategies, and finally, teacher resistance or willingness to teach on CFE courses. For some teachers the CFE is viewed as being of low status and carries yet more control problems born of student resistance. There is therefore a need to adopt different teaching strategies both in terms of control and survival.

### Social Reproduction: Youth, Class, Race and Gender

This paper has been arguing that FE, or more specifically the CFE, has exercised a degree of relative autonomy from a direct or specified determination by capital or its agents.

Another approach to the same question is to look at the educational arrangements that emerged from the point of view of their tendencies and outcomes for the agents involved. In other words we need to look at the role of the CFE in social reproduction. How far do CFE courses secure conditions that are favourable to the requirements of local industry, or, more generally, conform to a capitalist logic? This involves considering the role of the CFE in reproducing subjectivities or agents appropriate to adult destinies in a capitalist world.

It is important to add why more than 'class' is involved here. We are concerned, more precisely, with the social division of labour or of occupations, including occupations which are not paid (e.g. housework, caring for children at home, reproducing adult labour power) but which are indispensable to our social order as presently organised. But these social divisions are not class divisions only, but correspond also to differences of age, gender and race. The social division of occupations is determined not only by the divorce of management and control from waged labour, but also by relations of age, gender and race. As many studies have now shown, the young, women and members of racial minorities are overwhelmingly assigned to the worst rewarded, least secure and less valued jobs. They are also the first to lose the possibility of paid employment in time of recession. How, then, does the educational programme of CFE courses relate to this pervasive structuring, in patriarchal, racial and aged terms?

In what follows, various aspects of these processes are examined: the overt and implicit attitudes of teachers, the criteria by which students are assigned to courses, the formal and hidden curricula, the relationship to the local labour market and student and teacher resistances.

The links between the various CFE courses and employers is variable though all the courses are in a sense 'sold' to students through their vocational ideologies.

Both the Pre-nursing and Engineering CFE's are more selective than the general one, directing those students who are not chosen to the latter. Thus there is a stratification between courses. All the schemes involve work placements. The Pre-nursing and Engineering curricula are constrained by vocational factors; the Engineering CFE in terms of its equivalence to the first year of a Craft course, and the Pre-nursing by the examination assessment and also by its pre 'O' level orientation, i.e., nurse training in addition to the CFE will require 'O' levels. So whilst the Pre-nursing course in curriculum terms is largely a pre 'O' level course, in terms of the subjects offered, its hidden curriculum and its work placement, it includes a strong element of anticipatory socialisation towards nursing/caring services.

In this course the tutor legitimated her teaching practice through her occupational identity as a nurse. Gleeson and Mardle's work on lecturers in FE has indicated the manner in which technical teachers legitimate their practice through their occupational identities. Much the same process can be seen at play in this course tutor's orientation. Her nursing provided a legitimation of her teaching stance.

JA How does the teaching of the CFE nursing compare with the teaching of 'O' level students, is it fairly similar or do teachers take a different approach?

IIT. Well, that's rather a difficult one for me because nearly all my 'O' level students are the ones who are going in to nursing and they're my students, so there's no difference. Perhaps in the first year I'm a greater disciplinarian, I don't know whether that's right or wrong ..., in hospital there's got to be a great deal of discipline, and self discipline, and things like being on time for classes, behaving in classes, general attitudes, I'm strict about that in the first year. In the second year, the 'O' level year, it's easier and the students have generally moulded into a group...

The emphasis upon discipline and primness was legitimated because of the presence of these requirements in nursing.

Of the three CFE courses it would appear the links between employers and this course are strongest, with the work placement acting not only towards experience but in some cases as an aid to recruitment. In the case of the Engineering CFE the linkages with employment are far weaker and only a small number of students obtain work in engineering.<sup>32</sup> The majority of large employers in the area recruit at 16 and have their actions circumscribed by mutual agreement with trade unions. Consequently CFE Engineering students, when they find employment, tend to find it in smaller firms. As one respondent put it:

Int. I think they're more likely to get placed in the small companies, the very tiny ones rather than the big ones, the big ones can still pick and choose.

JA Yes, what, is it just that the smaller companies don't have proper training schemes?

Int. No, they don't have proper training schemes, no, and we're doing that for them on the CFE scheme with workshop experience you see, and if they're shrewd they'll use the youngster and won't have to pay anything will they..

In one sense the Engineering course services the secondary labour market, a labour market that has historically been constituted through managerial strategies of control and worker resistance<sup>33</sup>. The relationship of the two courses to the respective labour markets they service will either exacerbate or ameliorate the contradictions of the course through their eventual linkage with work.

All the courses in their different ways prefigure the sexual division of labour. In the CFE general scheme sexual divisions are related to subject choice with males doing 'male' subjects and females 'female' subjects. On the Engineering and Pre-nursing CFE, gender divisions are reflected in student selection of these courses and the ideologies surrounding them. On such pre-vocational course the 'naturalness' of the sexual division of labour is accepted quite unproblematically. Whilst being interviewed the course tutors on these respective courses initially referred to their students as all female or male correcting themselves<sup>later</sup> to include members of the 'inappropriate gender'. The correction indicated the 'unnaturalness' of members of these sexes on the course. In the case of the pre-nursing CFE the range of subject options is based on the assumption that girls not boys will take the course. As one respondent stated about the dressmaking option in the course:



They do dress [making]..Now this can be argued against for entry to nursing but this gives them a facility with their hands, the actual manipulative abilities which are very necessary in nursing. It gives them a consciousness of clothing that helps them to keep their uniform correct which is another thing, and dress themselves neatly, another important thing in nursing...

The sexual division of labour is taken for granted, being recognised and accepted by teachers and students alike. As one teacher on the general

CFE stated:

Again the girls want to be typists - they go for the typing course and because the girls don't want to do engineering they often choose Institutional Management as a girl's subject. In other words a lot of them choose subjects in terms of boys' and girls' subjects.

Whilst individual teachers may struggle against patriarchy the vocational ideologies themselves carry within them deeply patriarchal assumptions, which are reflected in these girls occupational orientations. An another teacher stated:

Well I started off the year by showing a film called 'Jobs for the Girls' ....Its a film showing one young school leaver trying to get work as a car mechanic - woman, and the problems that she had in that. And I did start off the year with that film and a discussion about sex discrimination, about sexual socialisation, to give that sort of perspective in it [laugh] but it doesn't seem to have achieved anything very much. And I gear alot of work into talking about that. Education, I've looked at again; socialisation in the educational system, choice of subject and so on, but they are quite adamant that these are the subjects they want to do and this is a little bit irrelevant to them....But I think I've found that all along doing women's studies in the college to some extent.

In the case of the CFE Pre-nursing the gendered organisation of the course can be seen as an effective mechanism of social control through its construction of femininity and its articulation with nursing and caring. Of the three CFE's it would appear student motivation is highest in this course.

A recurrent theme that surrounds discussion of the various CFE schemes is that of socialisation, a socialisation in some instances of black youth into white culture. For one teacher this socialisation wa an attempt to overcome the students' obsession with race relations:

JA In terms of the needs of black students how does the syllabus meet their needs?

Int. ...If you're talking about multi-cultural education and talking about Black history and that sort of thing, there isn't any. It's very much a traditional course. At the same time I think that, and I can see that multi-cultural

education, in doing Black and Asian history would be useful in a general sense in the schools. I feel perhaps it's a bit late at this stage to start that. They've fallen so far behind in the culture of the indigenous population - they need to learn that ...

And as the same teacher also stated:

...And there is a sense in which the CFE and other courses have got to find some way of reintegrating them into the system...'

Whilst this orientation towards socialisation may be the dominant one that is reflected in the course, and which articulates most clearly with the college's position, it is by no means the only orientation teachers take into the classroom with them. For example, a teacher on the CFE Engineering, rather than seeing a concern with race as being an obsession of students used it, as well as their concern over unemployment, as the starting point.

...A major problem was their inability to communicate in a written language so I turned it into a remedial English course, as a major part of the course content...We attempted to do that through what I tried to perceive as their concerns, and I suppose the two major ones were unemployment and racism.'

This teacher saw this strategy not only as being relevant but as being the only workable one.

...They need a much more direct and honest approach if they're going to do anything, otherwise they switch off, that's the message I get from my CFE's. They just switch off to most of their teachers. They regard them as old people who have a set of values which simply just do not fit; they regard themselves as exposed to white if not racist something, some creature that does not seem to recognise in a fundamental way the problems they are experiencing.

However, on the CFE courses the degree of latitude that teachers possess is limited by the options and the CFE they teach. The above examples refer to a Community Service and Communications module. In other modules there is much tighter curriculum constraint. For example, in the Engineering options of the Engineering CFE the exemption from the first part of a craft course means that the syllabus has to be closely tied to the material that would be covered in the first year of a craft course.

In the college itself the discourse surrounding the CFE, as in much educational discourse, constitutes the student as lacking in both educational and social skills.

Some of the best work I've seen done in that area has been with the girls on the pre-nursing and community caring services options and to see Asian and West Indian girls producing cookery which we're used to...to be able to lay a table in a thoroughly conventional manner and for many of them the act of eating off a table where there's a table cloth and serviettes, cutlery and appropriate glassware and crockery and so on. These are things which they've enjoyed doing and they've learnt - what goes on in their homes I dread to think and it is good to see girls White, Asian and West Indian working harmoniously together in joint projects...

they've fallen so far behind in the culture of the indigenous population - they need to learn that.

These quotes were made by two sympathetic 'liberal' members of staff, their significance lies in their implied racism, a racism that portrays white culture as paramount and that implicitly designates black culture as inferior or even as the antitheses. And as another course tutor stated:

Well according to the ethnic minorities in my course it meets it [their needs] well because they don't like being treated as ethnic minorities. They like it because the white students, Asian and West Indian are all treated the same...I've had talks with them about various things, about things like doing ethnic cookery for instance.

'Who wants to do ethnic cookery, we do enough of that at home' ...'And in any case; 'said one of them, 'we would never get an 'O' level because how could someone, unless they were trained in ethnic cookery test us. I wouldn't want to do it anyway. I like doing English Cookery.

What is important is that these statements exist within a discourse that is internally contradictory, containing elements that would reject these statements and my interpretation of them. However the quotations do indicate the way in which these themes can surround particular courses and have consequences for the orientations of those involved. In a less overt form this orientation links up with that of teachers who have been drawn from the social and life skills (SLS) tradition and for these teachers too the students are deficient. It is the teachers role to uncover these deficiencies and orient teaching to meet these.

Coming from the GS [General Studies] side of things I can see the opportunity for a health education part in that. How to use the NHS, what is available; especially as a lot of them don't understand that. One of the first things that I did with them, in fact it came up in passing, was talking about free prescriptions because there was some confusion as to whether they were entitled to them. They didn't know they could go along for free dental treatment and so on. So very simple things like that.

JA So really from what you're saying it seems as if the students have some influence on the direction which the course has taken.

INT. Yes, but that's my approach, and again coming from GS teaching social and life skills, its student needs always, that seems to be the way that I teach the course.

This whole orientation fosters in the student the development of coping skills, the ability to make out, and contains a tendency toward a soft form of social control. In addition, through its construction of the student, it cements and works within the mental/manual divide, as do CFE courses generally as a result of their orientation toward the practical. However, it must be stressed that the SLS approach is not necessarily adopted in an ideal form and that side by side with this a more radical stance may exist. But the tendencies of the SLS approach is to lead the teacher to impart/ have the student discover 'useful forms of knowledge', and to individualise problems, seeing them as reflections of student inadequacies.

An additional feature of a racial structuring is the constitution of the student body itself. In all the courses the students are predominantly black. This reflects both underachievement at school<sup>35</sup>, and the racial nature of the local labour market. The courses similarly operate in a manner that can be understood as an unintentional, attempt to produce agents to 'fit' places in a racially stratified labour market. The relationship of the Engineering CFE to the secondary labour market has already been noted. In the case of the Pre-nursing CFE the majority of students who pass will enter SEN training, a minority SRN training and those who fail the course may become nursing auxiliaries. As one teacher stated:

It varies from group to group and on the calibre of the students. Some of them, the bulk of them will be SEN at all times but you will always have some who will do SRN as well...The senior officers have requested their nursing sisters to let them know of any particularly good practical students so that if these students should not pass their exams but still wish to nurse as auxiliaries they've got their names in front of them.

This course serves a labour market that is itself racially and sexually structured<sup>36</sup>. In the case of the general CFE the presumed destiny is towards routine work in offices, shops or factories. However, the major contradiction of this course is that the majority of its students have been redirected from other courses, mainly the 'O' level, and at the end of the course still retain a desire to go on to 'O' levels. As one teacher stated:

There is a sense in which many of the students have to be socialised away from 'O' level because it just isn't for them anyway.



This aim is only incompletely achieved since some students do enter on 'O' level courses. Even so, CFE is often intended to act as a way of inculcating 'realism'.

Generational structures are reflected in the courses primarily through the authority relations of the classroom and themselves constitute a site of resistance. As one respondent stated:

Well, I think some of the students have come to college and perhaps they don't really want to be here. One of the reasons they didn't want to come here was because they didn't like school but not having got a job they've come back to education and for them they see it as school, and one of the things they didn't like about school was having to be on time and being told about lateness and perhaps their attitude isn't very good.

This keys in with both patriarchy and authority relations within the family where parental pressure is one of the factors that leads an individual to take the course. As one teacher explained:

There's a lot of parental pressure especially from West Indian parents but also from Indian parents for their kids to come on this course as they see it as a solution from going on the streets and at least a chance to get that 'O' level or a chance to get a job - enormous pressure.

This also explains the apparent contradiction between students who receive good reports from their work placements but who are considered fractious by the teaching staff. It indicates too how, for many students, continuing an educational career is a poor substitute for what is currently withheld - a job and the status of adulthood.

Parental pressure however should not be thought of one sidedly. It is not only exercised against the wishes of children, but constitutes a demand on the college. It is, in fact, an element of struggle. Black and working-class parents through parental pressure may demand educational opportunities and the right to qualifications for their children. In some cases this demand is orientated toward 'O' level but is deflected to the CFE.

Another important aspect of age relations is in the labour market itself. As one member of staff expressed it in relation to engineering:

They're now 17 and if they haven't got a job in engineering by 17 then it's pretty hopeless. Next year they're 18 and then 19 and they're competing against 16 year olds leaving school.

Employers running apprenticeship schemes prefer to recruit at 16. This recruitment policy links in with both race and generation. It links with

race because of the racial structuring of apprenticeship whereby black youths experience more difficulty in obtaining apprenticeships than their white contemporaries.<sup>37</sup> It links with generation because age is a means by which adult, white workers secure their privileges as skilled workers.

I have argued for the recognition of the complexity of FE and also for a recognition of the specificity of the CFE courses I have considered. All of them in different ways are concerned with occupational socialisation; for example the inter-regional Pre-nursing scheme works through its hidden curriculum, modes of student selection and work placement. The inter-regional Engineering CFE acts in a similar way, but for those who fail to obtain work it operates on a more general level towards the inculcation of work disciplines, as does the CFE general scheme. The courses tend at one and the same time to operate on a political level of containment, of acceptance of the status quo and of the development of coping skills in much the same way as the Social and Life skills of the MSC<sup>38</sup>. These elements and their emphasis will be variable between the courses, and quite centrally will be mediated by students' subjectivities and resistance.

The methodological approach adopted in this paper - interviewing staff and analysing the documentation of the CFE - has enabled us to grasp some features of the courses, but has only been able to hint at the nature of student struggle and resistance. However, a full account requires an understanding of student response and, indeed, initiation. We might recall that the setting up of the CFE initially was, in part, a response to student behaviour and a problem of control. Though student responses have been researched in full,<sup>39</sup> no detailed report is possible in a paper of this length. The following features, however, are significant. The reference point against which students compared the college was school; the main resistance was towards being treated as school children. They tended, by contrast, to accept those disciplines related to future 'vocation', even where opportunities were pitched at a modest level. Their characteristic orientation to courses was largely instrumental. The main strategy in class to cope with the resulting boredom was limited to minor interruptions. The most radical form of resistance was simply to drop out. All this suggests that in terms of student subjectivities, the courses work least well in internalising a youth dependence - to put it crudely they reproduce an intense irritation with this refusal of adulthood. This is experienced most poignantly by pre-nursing students. Yet a resistance to infantilisation in many ways delivers these students to an affirmation of occupational orientations, in the hope of a safe passage to adulthood.

Curriculum innovation: a theoretical note

I would like to conclude this discussion by making a number of theoretical observations and conclusions. These by their nature can only be tentative as a result of the small-scale nature of the research.

Russell, drawing upon Althusser, has described the central curriculum agencies of the Business Education Council (BEC), Technician Education Council (TEC) and the City and Guilds (C & G) as being ideological state apparatuses - being engaged in the reproduction of labour power. Implicit within his argument is the suggestion that other curriculum agencies such as REB's can also be viewed in this way. Whilst, analytically, these agencies play a role in reproduction it is necessary to avoid the dangers of the functional reductionism that is present in Althusser's work. The role these institutions play is highly mediated and complex, involving institutional processes and relationships that are not deducible from the imperatives of reproduction and indeed articulate with structures that are analytically outside of production. It is similarly necessary to avoid the misleading contention that non-advanced further education in any simple way reproduces labour power. The reproduction of labour power involves the reproduction of social and technical relations. In a restricted and abstract sense social relations refer to the relations between capital and labour at the site of production. Elsewhere<sup>40</sup> I have argued that the concept social relations needs to be expanded to include the structures of patriarchy, race and generation. These structures are both structuring of and structured by one another, setting the limits in which each exercise their determinacy. FE's role in reproduction must necessarily be rendered problematic as it is only by doing this that FE can be constituted as a site of struggle and therefore politics. In addition the antagonisms that are embedded in capitalist social relations will be reflected in FE and their contestation will mitigate against a direct, unmediated reproduction of capitalist social relations. Some additional points can be made. The inter-relations between patriarchy, race, generation and class in a site such as education may be out of alignment with the articulations of these in production, e.g., feminist struggle in FE may shift the terrain of discourse and facilitate the engagement of girl students in previously defined masculine spheres. This may then sit uneasily with the articulations of these structures at the level of production resulting in student difficulty in obtaining work. Secondly, the separation between FE and production may result in a disarticulation, e.g., the establishment of courses that meet college needs but not those of capital. Thirdly, it is vital to recognise that whilst abstractly capital has global requirements, concretely these form very particular interests which may not be met.

Finally, the constituency that FE addresses is not solely capital but will include parents, students, teachers and this may again lead to a disarticulation.

In the same way curriculum interventions in FE can in no simple way be reducible to the needs of capital. Though often overdetermined by the structural relations in which they arise, and thereby embodying a particular world view and ideology, this is something that has been secured rather than simply being a given. Curriculum innovations in FE, whether located at college level or centred upon curriculum agencies, will be influenced by the structural relationships within which FE is placed. The overarching one is a relation to capital (the needs of industry). The relation is constituted at two separate and distinct moments. It is constituted through the direct necessity of having to sell courses to employers, and secondly through an ideological level that emphasises the vocational and industrial links of FE. As a result of the separation of education and industry, the relative autonomy of FE, together with the presence of other constituencies within FE, curriculum innovations cannot in a simple and reflexive way be functionally linked with capital. Therefore the hegemony of capital mediated as it is, is never-the-less a site of contestation and is something that is constantly being secured.

To the extent that FE is engaged in social reproduction, this will be in forms that relate not only to class but to race, age and gender. In one sense students who enter the courses have already been located within the social division of labour. Their perceived occupational orientations serve to place them within a division of labour that is structured in terms of class, race, age and gender. However the very nature of the courses themselves, and particularly students' experience of them, may serve to reaffirm, to challenge or indeed to modify this location. This elaboration of the earlier statement is vital if we are to fully understand the role of the CFE in social reproduction, a reproduction that is both complex and incompletely achieved. It is too easy to describe social reproduction within the CFE as if this were somehow automatically achieved. The internal processes that surround these courses, student and teacher reaction and resistances, and centrally their subjectivities will have a bearing on the 'success' or otherwise of social reproduction. In the end, as a result of the antagonisms and contradictions that are present in the CFE, its role in reproduction becomes inherently contradicting and equivocal. The earlier discussion of youth, race, class and gender has provided illustration of these processes indicating those that have contributed toward and those that hinder social reproduction. One needs only to consider the relationship between the courses and the local labour market, the occupational orientations of students, and the students

concern with credentials to recognise the complexity of the processes that are involved. Recognition of complexity and therefore the need to interrogate the specificity of courses may lead to an analysis that lacks a strong sense of determination and therefore can only point toward tendencies. The loss of a strong sense of determination results in an analysis that is more equivocal but which can more readily grasp the complexities and therefore gain a fuller understanding of the courses.

I would like to end this paper on a personal note, lest I be misunderstood. The intention of the paper has been an attempt to make sense of the curriculum innovation that was the CFE. It has not been my aim to discredit the work of particular teachers or to discuss the nature of an appropriate radical teaching practice. As a socialist teacher in FE I am aware that my own practice leaves much to be desired. It is as contradictory as all such practices are bound to be, given the structures we work in. I am sure, however, that one condition for an adequate teacher practice is some understanding of these structures themselves.



#### FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See W. Moos: Government Youth Training Policy And Its Impact on Further Education, CCCS Stencilled Paper No. 57 1979
2. See S. Frith & D. Finn, 'Education and the Labour Market', Open University Course Unit, Course E353: Society, Education and the State, Block 1, Unit 4.
3. Richard Johnson, 'Education and Popular Politics', ibid., Block 1, Unit 1.
4. UEI, Constitution, 1973 pl
5. Its membership comprised:
  - a. the officers of the union (ie the president, chairman of the council, chairman of the general purposes committee, and the honary treasurer)
  - b. representatives appointed by the plenary members. Each plenary member could appoint the chairman of its educational committee or appropriate subcommittee as a vice president, 2 or 3 additional representatives could be appointed depending on the subscriptions paid, as well as the chief educational officer and another officer of whom only one could vote.
  - c. university representatives.
  - d. up to 10 co-opted members (who will have been selected by the general purposes committee)
  - e. chairmen of the advisory committees.

The president, chairman of the council and Hon treasurer were appointed by the council members.
6. This committees membership consisted of:
  - a. The chairman of the council
  - b. the immediate past chairman...
  - c. the honary treasurer.
  - d. the chairman and vice chairman of the examinations committee.
  - e. three members not being educational officers or principals of establishments of further education.
  - f. three members being educational officers.
  - g. three members being principals of establishments of further education. (UEI Op.cit. p.6)
7. ibid p.7
8. ibid pl
9. ibid p8
10. ibid p8
11. M. Vincent: The Business Education Council and Curriculum Development, paper no. 1/78, Standing Conference on the Sociology of Further Education (1978)

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12. "...the concept of practical ideologies invokes a socially defined way of thinking and acting, a set of conventions and assumptions which make meaning possible and which phenomenologists call the 'taken for granted' world of everyday life. It is thus somewhat akin to what sociologists refer to as culture. However, unlike the phenomenologists concept of the 'taken for granted', normative institutions which determine 'what everyone does' and 'what everyone knows', practical ideologies in the marxist sense, are seen as not merely cultural but having a material reality and a material force."

R. Sharp, Knowledge, Ideology and the Politics of Schooling, (RKP 1980) p96.

13. Income and expenditure accounts

Income	1977-78	1978-9	1979-80
Examination fees	97,283	110,094	87,232
Sales of syllabus & question papers	736	565	491
Sale of other publications and misc income	1,489	1,988	4,172
Investment and other income	10,383	16,580	23,741
Contributions by constituent LEA's	52,580	65,060	74,400
Subscriptions	1,620	-	-
Deficit	-	-	5,407

Source WMAC Annual Reports 1978/79 p96-7 and 1979/80 p74-5

From the accounts it can be seen that fees are a major source of income. In 1977 the UEI merged with the WMAC. The UEI largely financed itself through fee income which was supplemented by other sources. Regional advisory councils are funded by the contributions of constituent LEA's. With the merger the two modes of funding coincided, yet the UEI's funding was to finance its work and the regional council's was to finance its.

The importance of fee income can also be seen in this quote made by an ex-chairman of the examinations committee in discussion the development of the CFE inter-regional schemes.

...I must confess the examining boards saw in this revenue...they felt that if they stuck to a basic...scheme the broad CFE. It would not have the impact...[of the inter-regional schemes].

14. As one respondent who had served on UEI committees put it;

Now that is what examining boards are in business for. In my view they are there to cull entries from the market.

15. see T.R. Russell, The State Action: One Tentative Example, paper no 2/79 proceedings of the Standing Conference on the Sociology of FE, (1979)

16. For example, officers and members of UEI committees may sit on the committees of other examining bodies as a result of the concordats between REB's and C & G.

17. As the head of the engineering department commented on his departments links to industry:

Head These are extensive, extensive. I haven't got time to tell you all the links, and not only with industry, but with all the other people, training boards...

JA Do most of these links go through people like training officers?

- Head Yes, its mainly through in industry training officers but don't forget we have to have links with all the examining boards as well as all the training boards and people like that. The liason of course is done in roughly three ways. There's liason over an individual problem of a student which will be done by a course tutor. There's liason with regard to a particular course which will be done by the section leader and then there's liason, which is very important about new developments...to find out what industry needs and what we can offer...
18. The certificate was designed for the non-traditional sixth former, was to be run predominantly in schools, and was to be validated by the CSE boards.
  19. See UEI, Annual Reports, no. 78 Report of the Examinations Committee p28, and see Resume of UEI Working Group for the CFE Meeting of 12.1.76.
  20. See Minutes of the Examinaiton Committee 26.9.74 appendix J, where mention was made of criticisms of the CFE in terms of the lack of industrial involvement and the problems of entry into apprenticeship for those who have passed through the course.
  21. See Resume of UEI Working Group for the CFE's Meeting in January 1977, where concern was expressed over the development of specialist CFE's. In the local college similar concern was expressed in a paper produced by the head, deputy head and course tutor in the general studies department in 1977.
  22. In 1982 the CFE became a qualification that could be offered in schools.
  23. This refers to linked provision between colleges and schools with colleges normally providing the more vocational inputs.
  24. UEI., Certificate of Further Education, Course 999 (1977) p6
  25. The term 'negotiated determination' is used as I wish to convey a sense of the way in which FE can exercise a degree of autonomy. Capital may make certain demands of FE. FE can in some senses determine its modes of response to certain demands more readily than others. For example historically, advanced courses have been looked upon more favourably than low level courses.
  26. D. Gleeson and G. Mardle, Further Education or Training (RKP, 1980)
  27. See Russell op.cit.
  28. See B. Tipton, Conflict and Change in a Technical College, (Hutchinson, 1973).
  29. The spatial metaphor is used to indicate a sphere in which there is an absence of total determination which provides an arena in which interventions can be made.
  30. In May 1982 the DES outlined plans for the 17+ the certificate of pre-vocational education. The first course will start in September 1984.
  31. U.E.I., 1977; op.cit. p.6
  32. In an informal discussion the course tutor stated that only one or two students to his knowledge obtained jobs at the end of the year. However he did stress that very little contact was maintained with past students.
  33. Friedman has explored these processes in, Industry and Labour, (Macmillan 1977).
  34. Patriarchy is a structure in which power relations are such that men dominate women, control their fertility and sexuality. For many feminists the fundamental site of patriarchal relations is the family. Patriarchal



relations in the family will extend to children, thus parental authority will be constituted through and within patriarchy. For a discussion of the term see V. Beechey, 'On Patriarchy', in Feminist Review, no. 3, 1979.

- 35. The literature has consistently shown black underachievement in the educational system. See A. Little, 'Schools and Race', in Five Views of Multi Racial Britain, (CRE 1978). Redbridge Community Council and black peoples progressive Association, Cause For Concern: West Indian Pupils in Redbridge (1978). The Rampton Report, West Indian Pupils in our Schools (1981). Even Driver's work could be i.e. interpreted to illustrate black underachievement. See G. Driver, 'How West Indians do better at School' (especially girls), New Society 17.1.80. A and O Foster-Carter, Letter to New Society 24.1.81.
- 36. See Doyal et al., 'Your Life In Their Hands', in Critical Social Policy Vol. 1 No. 2 (1981).
- 37. See Lee and Wrench, 'Where are the Black Apprentices', in New Society, 24.1.81. For an example of inequalities in the labour market. See also The Runnymede Trust and the Radical Statistics Race Group, Britain's Black Population, (Heinemann, 1980) For a discussion of Black employment.
- 38. See Frith and Finn and Moose op.cit.
- 39. See J. Avis, Strategies of Survival: Pre-Vocational Students in FE, unpub paper available from author.
- 40. See J. Avis, 'Social and Technical Relations: The Case of FE,' British Journal of the Sociology of Education, Vol. 12, No.2, 1981.

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