

# **ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

## **Theory and Practice**

**PETER JARVIS**

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I would like to express my gratitude to those who have given me permission to quote or reproduce from other writings: the Cambridge Book Company, New York, to quote Roby Kidd's 'Ten Commandments', Dr Colin Griffin has allowed me to summarise most of the points he raised in his paper on continuing and recurrent education in table 8.5; Holt, Rinehart and Winston have allowed me to reproduce Professor Dennis Child's diagram of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Professor Robert Gagné's diagram of the relation between phases of learning and events of instruction; Jossey Bass have granted me permission to reproduce two diagrams from Professor C Houle's *The Design of Education*.

Once again, I must gratefully acknowledge the help and encouragement of my wife, Maureen, and children, Frazer and Kierra, who have encouraged me to write, even though it has resulted in them undertaking additional family responsibilities.

Many people have, obviously helped me to

produce this text but, like every writer, the final responsibility for what has been produced must rest with me.

P. JARVIS  
University of Surrey

The book can be written without the encouragement, suggestion and, even, provocation of friends and colleagues. This book has all of them. I would not have been able to write it without them. I would like to mention and thank, however, some who have helped in special ways and to whom I am greatly indebted. Miss Sheila Gibson, Dr Alan Chadwick and Dr Colin Griffin have read all or part of the book in draft form and their comments have enriched the text considerably. The post-graduate students of the University of Surrey have continued to help me to clarify some of my ideas in our teaching and learning sessions. Mrs Hilary Hall has undertaken the responsibility of transcribing my handwritten draft into a camera-ready typewritten form with expertise and efficiency.

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## INTRODUCTION

The study of adult education is growing in significance as the training of educators of adults is being undertaken more frequently in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. But there are few textbooks that seek to introduce students to a broad sweep of the field, so that this text has been prepared with this aim in view. It is hoped that students of the education of adults on ACSET I, II and III, Certificate, Diploma and Degree courses might find it a useful volume. In addition, it is hoped that other practitioners in the field of adult and continuing education will find much in this book that is relevant to their work.

With this aim in mind, the book has been very fully referenced so that readers can follow up any of the points that interest them and can also refer to the original sources. Further reading is suggested at the end of each chapter, so that ideas from each chapter might be developed by interested readers. The contents of the book are wide enough to introduce students and practitioners to a variety of contemporary issues in the study of the education of adults. The aspects discussed in this book reflect the purpose from which it has been written, so that a great deal of it is devoted to the teaching and learning transaction. These have been divided into different chapters in the book for reasons of clarity but in reality such a division is frequently artificial.

The text attempts to combine the theoretical with the practical and it is hoped that those who read it will find it informative, relevant and, above all, useful.

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## Chapter One

### TOWARDS A RATIONALE FOR THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

Education, it is generally agreed, is a good thing so that during the past century it has assumed an important place in policy making at both the levels of local and national governments and, consequently, a proportionate amount of the total public expenditure has been directed towards it. Kumar (1978: 248) suggested that in the 1980s it is anticipated that 8% of the Gross National Product would be claimed by education. Yet examine that expenditure and clearly the greatest amount is directed towards the education of the young. Indeed, it has been estimated that 85% of all expenditure on education by public authorities goes on initial education and that only about 1% of the Gross National Product is devoted to the education of adults. (ACACE Report 1982a:58). If the amount of money expended on vocational education and that spent by industry and commerce on education is included in these statistics, then the figures are underestimates of the real figure (see Woodhall, 1980). Nevertheless, it is clear from these estimates that adult education is the 'poor cousin' (Newman 1979) of the education world. They reflect the idea that education is something that happens predominately to the young - 'a front-end' conception of education rather than regarding it as a lifelong process. While 'lifelong education' may be a relatively new term the idea of lifelong learning is far from innovatory: Plato expected that the philosopher-kings should divide their time equally between the affairs of state and study after the age of fifty years. But this education of the elite has gradually been extended to the masses; initially under the influence of Christianity when 'education for salvation' (Kelly 1970:1-3) became a feature of British life in the first Elizabethan period and, by the nineteenth

century, adult schools, mechanics institutes and university extension classes were established in Britain and lyceums, library societies and cultural societies in America (see Kelly 1970, Peers 1958). By the second Elizabethan period the education of adults has become widely accepted. Additionally, many recreational associations have introduced educative components to their activities and occupations and professions generally devote a considerable proportion of their resources to the education and training of their personnel. Legge (1982) documents a vast array of providers of education for adults in the United Kingdom, while Boone et al (1980) indicate something of the range of provision in the United States. Throughout the world the education of adults is occurring and, gradually, a study of comparative adult education is emerging (see Charters 1981, Harris 1980, Kulich 1982a, Titmus 1981) which indicates that the breadth of provision is wide enough for scholars to develop the study of this sphere of education. It would, therefore, be quite false to assume that the education of adults is a marginal or insignificant branch of education; rather it is one that is quite crucial to any comprehension of the concept of education and basic to its practice. This opening chapter, however, offers a justification of the education of adults based upon the nature of contemporary society and upon the nature of the individual: it is divided into two main sections, starting with contemporary society, and demonstrates that education should be provided for people throughout the whole of their life span. It must be borne in mind throughout that this division is quite arbitrary since the individual and society are dialectically inter-related and interdependent, so that any changes in society will affect individuals but people can and do cause transformation in society and its culture.

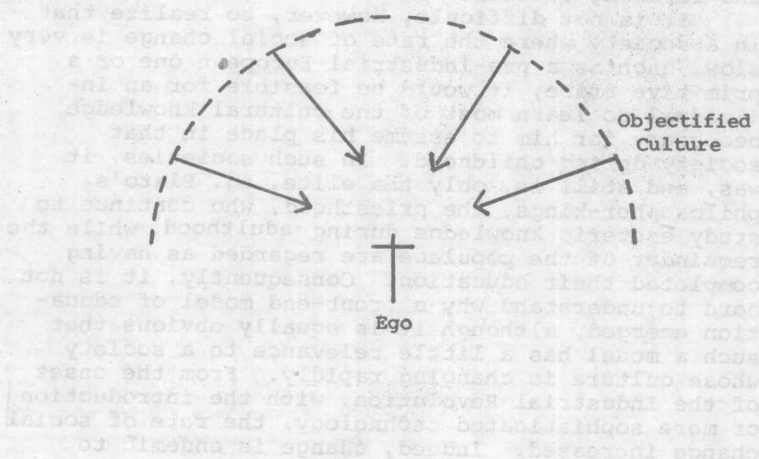
## THE NATURE OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Any discussion about the nature of society inevitably assumes certain theoretical perspectives but this brief one does not seek to enter any sociological debate about the structure of the social system. Rather it assumes that society is a complex social system in a state of continuous change and that change is the norm rather than the exception. It also recognises that the educational institution

is both the recipient of the pressures for change exerted by other institutions in society, especially the technological and the economic, and a source of pressure on other institutions. Finally, it is recognised that the individual is moulded by the forces that are exerted upon him as he seeks to discover his place in society but that the human being is more than a passive recipient and processor of social pressures, he is able to act back upon his world and become an agency of change.

Every society produces its own culture which is carried by human beings and transmitted through interaction but, more recently, this culture is also being stored in audio and video cassettes, in computers, etc. Culture, in this context, refers to the sum totality of knowledge, values, beliefs, etc. of a society. Because of its apparent commonality among members of a society, culture seems to be a phenomenon external to the individual and objective. Actually, this objectivity is more apparent than real since each individual has internalised aspects of his culture. Consequently, it may be regarded as 'objectified' rather than 'objective' and the manner in which an individual acquires that culture, after having been born into a society, may be simply illustrated by the following diagram.

Figure 1.1: The Process of Internalisation of 'Objectified' Culture



Every individual has the culture of his society 'transmitted' to him through interaction with other people. The arrows in the above diagram indicate the direction of the transmission in every interaction between 'ego' and 'alter'. Hence it may be seen that there is a sense in which every interaction is a process of learning and teaching. Every time an individual learns something as a result of being exposed to any of the media, the same process of learning is occurring. It is the process of socialization. There is a sense in which some facets of education may be regarded as a part of the process of socialization, although the former is usually viewed as a more formal process than the latter. However, it is possible to understand precisely how Lawton (1973:21) can regard the curriculum as a selection from culture within the context of this discussion. Obviously, the process of acquiring culture is very significant during childhood, both through socialization and through education. However, sociologists regard socialization as a lifetime process having at least two aspects: primary socialization is 'the first socialization an individual undergoes .... through which he becomes a member of society. Secondary socialization is any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective world of his society' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:150). Similarly, education may be regarded as a lifelong process and further reference will be made to the concepts of lifelong learning and lifelong education below.

It is not difficult, however, to realize that in a society where the rate of social change is very slow, such as a pre-industrial European one or a primitive tribe, it would be feasible for an individual to learn most of the cultural knowledge necessary for him to assume his place in that society during childhood. In such societies, it was, and still is, only the elite, eg. Plato's philosopher-kings, the priesthood, who continue to study esoteric knowledge during adulthood, while the remainder of the populace are regarded as having completed their education. Consequently, it is not hard to understand why a front-end model of education emerged, although it is equally obvious that such a model has a little relevance to a society whose culture is changing rapidly. From the onset of the Industrial Revolution, with the introduction of more sophisticated technology, the rate of social change increased. Indeed, change is endemic to