

Final copy

Non-Traditional Studies

by

K. Patricia Cross

For some years now I have been studying and observing national trends in higher education, and I cannot think of any broad movement that has, on the surface at least, taken root and grown more rapidly than has that thing variously known as Non-traditional Studies, Extended University, Open University, Campus Free College, University Without Walls, and variations thereof. The time elapsing between the planting of the idea and the full flowering of a great variety of models seems little short of phenomenal in our basically very conservative educational system. To those of you who have toiled in these fields for years, perhaps the recent hullabaloo is not so new and different as the new innovators like to think it is. But if I may continue my ^{planting & growing} agricultural analogy for a moment, it is not the seed that is so new and exciting (although some of the newer hybrids are pretty interesting) rather it is as though a new fertilizer had been discovered that had stimulated a garden variety bean ^{plant} ~~stalk~~ to grow to Jack in the bean stalk proportions. Indeed, there are some who are greatly concerned about the speed of growth of non-traditional studies.

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But I think there are good reasons why the soil is suddenly more stimulating and the climate more hospitable to these particular educational alternatives. Let me enumerate some of the conditions that I think are responsible.

First, there are the pressures for egalitarianism that have moved from the convenient platitudes of a democratic society to full-blown plans for the implementation of equality of educational opportunity. Webster defines egalitarianism as "A social philosophy advocating the removal of inequalities among men." In our society, the recipe for creating equality of social and economic opportunity is thought to reside in education. And so there is widespread acceptance of the notion that everyone should have the opportunity for as much education as he can possibly use. This philosophy has opened the doors of higher education to virtually all groups that have been previously excluded. Basically there are four classes of people who, if not excluded from colleges and universities in the past, have certainly not been welcomed. They are those who have been discriminated against because of ethnic membership, sex, age, or academic aptitude.

I have been immersed for the past two years in research on what I have called New Students to higher education--those with poor academic records of achievement who are now gaining access to higher education through open door admissions policies. Most of the additional students to colleges in the 1970's will come from the lower academic half of the high school graduates simply because most of the upper half of all races and SES are already in college. And so higher education has devised

open admissions policies to meet the demands of this segment of the population for equality of educational opportunity.

But colleges and universities are also busy devising new procedures and, in some cases, new curricula to meet the needs of other groups of students who are increasingly entertaining realistic thoughts about going to college.

Everyone is well aware of the demands of ethnic minorities and more recently of women for creation of a more hospitable climate to their full participation in higher education, and through it to full social and economic equality.

The fourth large group--probably the largest numerically of all--are the adults of the society. I don't need to tell you that the so-called educational core, K through 12 and high school through graduate school, has been geared to youth. Any education that the over-thirties wanted has been largely regarded as a noble peripheral interest--nice, but not really a central obligation of educational institutions. It has been assumed that the education of adults can be left to industrial training programs, churches, YMCA's, government educational programs, and other agencies that have formed the educational periphery.

Things are changing now, however. Increasingly women are returning to established educational institutions for the experiences and the credentials that will lead to desirable employment opportunities. Men are seeking promotion and/or redirection in their careers. Increased leisure and the rising educational level of the populace are creating new demands for serious study. Federal and state agencies, as well as

private foundations, are expressing interest in encouraging the educational core institutions to implement the ideals of life-long learning as they are espoused by national study groups such as the Kerr Commission and the Neuman Task Force. The move is on for education for all the people. And it looks very much as though post secondary educational institutions are going to be asked to serve the needs of students that represent the total spectrum of talents, backgrounds, and experiences of the population.

The point is that mounting pressures for egalitarianism have explicitly placed new responsibility for the education of all the people in the laps of the educational core--which is not to deny the advantages of cooperation between the core and the periphery. This relocation of responsibility for the education of adults is one ingredient of the fertilizer for non-traditional studies.

A second ingredient is what, for lack of a better term, I shall call the counter-culture. The acceptability of criticizing the social institutions of the country started with youth, but it has spread rapidly to all age groups and into the establishments of church, school, and government. But perhaps because the counter-culture is historically youthful, the greatest pressures for reform have been directed toward educational institutions where youth reside.

The counter-culture flavor of the non-traditional studies movement is evident in its very name. We are not told what it is, but what it is not. It is not traditional education in the narrow sense, although I sense that some institutions are promoting what I would call very traditional programs under the non-traditional banner.

Despite the lack of precision of the term "non-traditional studies", there is a fairly general understanding of what it is. It is basically understood to be a protest against the time and place requirements of traditional education. Traditional education has used a very indirect measure for certification. The presence of a student in the classroom for three hours per week for one semester (i.e., time and place specified) adds up to three credit hours or roughly one-fortieth of a bachelor's degree. Any tinkering with this magical formula is viewed by many faculty members as heresy and a threat to academic standards--despite the rather obvious fact that the demands of most non-traditional programs for greater motivation and independence may attract students who are academically superior to traditional students in the same institution. And so the reform element of non-traditional programs appeals to common-sense logic as well as to the more dramatic proposals for reform espoused by the counter-culture. In reality, some of the programs that offer the most substantive alternatives to traditional subject matter, are programs that were established many years before anyone labeled them non-traditional.

The third element in the fertilization of the seed of non-traditional studies is more questionable than the other two. It is related to the present financial squeeze in higher education. The financial advantages of non-traditional studies is a matter that is still out for study, but the fact that most people--especially legislators--think that it is economical has certainly helped to spread the growth. Politically, the notion of bringing more education to deserving and

bright voters without capital expenditures is extremely appealing. It can hardly be resisted. And so state legislatures are passing legislation of all kinds that remove barriers to educational opportunity overnight.

A fourth element in the growth of the movement in this country is harder for me to get hold of. Perhaps some of you with more background in adult education understand it better than I. I don't know how much British Open University has had to do with the spread of the movement in this country. You can scarcely go to a professional meeting of educators today without being exposed to that delightful British accent describing the apparent success of Open University. I understand that the existence of a working model creates a wonderful excuse for a study committee to spend a couple of weeks in England. But the University of London has had a very successful external degree since the mid 1880's. Maybe there is not much to look at in the University of London's external degree. Perhaps the most realistic way to evaluate the influence of Open University is to say that combined with the influences of egalitarianism, the counter-culture reform movement, and the presumed financial advantages, the existence of an attractive working model in an attractive country does not hurt anything.

Although some educators are prone to view non-traditional studies as just another passing fad in education, I see the movement as strong, conceptually important, and one that will have a significant impact on higher education. Many of the innovative features of non-traditional studies will be absorbed into traditional offerings. In fact, the trend

is underway and the distinction between non-traditional and traditional is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain as we shall see as we look at some model programs.

As you may or may not know, the non-traditional studies movement has its own commission. Like the Kerr Commission on the Future of Higher Education, the Commission on Non-traditional Studies has a prestigious board and a well-known leader in Samuel B. Gould, the ex Chancellor of the State University of New York. The Commission was established under the sponsorship of the College Entrance Examination Board and Educational Testing Service and operates under a grant from the Carnegie Corporation.

Just recently, we received additional funds from Carnegie for a research project that will provide a data base for the recommendations expected from the Commission this fall. As researchers, we will be conducting a broad survey of institutional practices regarding such things as the awarding of credit, systems of delivery of instruction, areas of study offered, cost factors, etc. We will also attempt to determine the educational interests and needs of a national sample of adults from all walks of life.

The summarization of various models of external degree programs that I will report on today derives from earlier staff work of the Commission--primarily from the work of John R. Valley of ETS who has done, I suspect, more looking at actual models than anyone else in the country. He might be the appropriate person to speak to you today except that I am 3000 miles closer. I'll use the basic classification scheme that has been devised by Valley as he described it in a book released this month by Jossey-Bass. Sam Gould and I are the editors

of the volume entitled Explorations in Non-traditional Studies.

One of the services that Valley provided as background for the work of the Commission was to study the patterns that institutions were following in establishing external degree programs.

After studying some fifty proposals and new programs, Valley discerned six major models for external degree programs. The thing that all six models have in common is that the goal is to increase flexibility and access by reducing the traditional limitations of time and place. Some models modify curriculum as well.

Administrative-Facilitation Model

The most common model of an external degree is the Administrative-Facilitation Model. Perhaps because it shares many characteristics of traditional degree programs, many do not recognize it as an external degree. Yet, because it is a degree that is earned outside the central structure of the university it can be legitimately regarded as an external degree.

The Administrative-Facilitation Model is represented by the degree granting institution that establishes the facilities to cater to a new clientele, yet it holds to its customary degree pattern. Examples of this model are legion. Most common, of course, are the evening colleges that have been established by Universities as a separate administrative entity. The target audience of the instructional program is typically the adults of the community. The student group is a commuting population. Special counseling and advisory services are provided at times that meet the needs of the clientele. The scheduling of classes is done so as to consider the circumstances of the students: courses are offered after

normal hours of employment in the evening or on Saturday. Registration can be handled by mail. Class periods are extended--one three hour class session per week instead of three one hour sessions.

Thus, the changes that need to be made to create the external degree in this model consist of assembling the services, organizational structures and procedures that enable a new or different clientele to meet regular degree requirements. Basically the University of California proposal for the Extended University follows the administrative-facilitation model. But there are variations on the theme. One of the more dramatic elements that has been introduced in recent years is the use of modern technology such as television, video recordings, and audio tape cassettes. One of the pioneer technologically based external degree programs in the United States is the TV College of the Chicago Junior College System. Since 1956, it has been possible for students in the Chicago area to receive via TV in their own homes the basic instruction needed to qualify for an AA degree.

Another example of the Administrative-Facilitation Model built on imaginative use of modern technology is Stanford's master's degree program in engineering. In this case instruction is brought to students in classrooms located on business and industrial sites in the Bay Area. Students at these remote locations can talk with and question their instructors via telephonic links with the on-campus class. Another illustration is the University of South Carolina televised Master in Business Administration degree program. This program makes use of the closed circuit television network of the South Carolina Educational Television Center. Facilities of the University's regional campuses and classrooms at Technical Education Centers and high schools are used as outlets in approximately a

dozen locations throughout the state. Leased telephone lines provide talkback links to the live classroom. There are also five on-campus class meetings that begin on a Friday afternoon and that continue through Saturday noon. Colorado State College on the other hand offers an opportunity to earn a Master of Science degree in electrical or mechanical engineering in which the student receives instruction via video tapes made of on-campus classes. These tapes are delivered several times each week via courier to play-back units located in industrial offices in the area. Students not only can watch a re-cording of the class presentation, but they can also arrange for repeat showings and make-up showings if they missed a class.

Although recent technological advances make these programs seem novel and exciting, they are not fundamentally different in purpose or in clientele from correspondence study which has been designed to lead to a degree. While the medium may be different, the message is the same. And the message is pretty much that of traditional education.

The Modes of Learning Model

~~In the second general model~~ labeled the Modes of Learning Model the message is modified to meet the needs of a new clientele. In one sense the Administrative-Facilitation Model can be said to be spawned by the egalitarian movement, whereas the Modes of Learning Model can be said to be influenced at least as much by the counter-culture or reform movement in higher education. In the Modes of Learning Model, the institution proceeds to modify its curriculum and degree requirements to meet the different needs of a different clientele. This is basically what has taken place at the University of Oklahoma, Syracuse, or the University of South Florida, and in degree

programs that bear titles such as Bachelors of Liberal Studies, Bachelors of Independent Study, Bachelors of General Studies, etc. In these programs the degree requirements are actually different from those offered in the Administrative-Facilitation Model.

Open University is, of course, the best known example of this model. In January 1971, four undergraduate foundation courses were introduced in Arts, Social Sciences, Math, and Science; a fifth course in Technology was added in January 1972. I think it is fair to say that Open University was politically rather than educationally inspired. But it looks now as though its educational impact may well be more significant than its political impact. Some (see Maclure, S., England's Open University, Change, March-April, 1971, pp 62-68) are predicting that its most important contribution will lie in its impact on the education offered by other universities and colleges in England--and we might add, the world.

Of some interest to us, given the University of California's rather ~~timid~~ ^{cautious} approach to non-traditional studies, is the fact that in England's very elitist system of higher education, Open University has no admissions standards--except that the students must be 21 or older. The very nature of the program appeals to mature and highly motivated students and, as a matter of fact, this is one of its political liabilities. Broadly supported by Britain's labor party, it was heralded as "Second Chance University" and was to provide equality of educational opportunity to England's laboring classes. In practice, the first 25,000 applications brought in only 600 from workers in industry and 700 from shopkeepers and workers in sales and services compared with 10,000 from teachers.

Despite its open admissions and its presumed appeal to the common man, the standards for performance are well defined and pretty rigorous. While it may require little educational background to gain entrance to

Open University, it is going to require quite a bit to exit with the degree, and no one knows just how this will turn out. At the end of the first year over 15,000 candidates took the final three-hour examination and more than 14,000 of them received credits.

The fact is, Open University is big business, and it uses all the media known to man to beam forth its message. BBC television provides 14 hours per week of instruction and 10 hours is available via radio. Books, kitchen science kits, programmed correspondence courses, referral to local library resources, 250 local tutoring and counseling centers, are other aspects of the multimedia approach to learning. The mails alone carry an almost unbelievable burden. With 36,000 students now enrolled and 4,000 part-time faculty members, Open University mailed over 68,000 instructional packages to students all over the United Kingdom in a typical week in January, 1972. Incoming mail consisting of student completed assignments is now running 3,500 pieces daily. As Maclure has remarked "The whole thing has been highly mechanized and automated, which means that if it fails, it will fail catastrophically; but the headquarters staff is determined that instead it will become a model of technical efficiency as well as of educational innovation" (p66). At the moment, Open University certainly does not look like a failure. It seems to be defining new curricula, using new technology in its delivery system, reaching a new segment of the population, and according to Sir Peter Venables (a gentleman not given to over statement) creating an "air of excitement at the burgeoning release of knowledge and stimulation

of ideas without comparison perhaps since the early days of the Caxton Press after 1475" (Venables, 1972, AAHE presentation).

Perhaps the Modes of Learning model that has attracted the most attention in this country is the University Without Walls of the Union of Experimenting Colleges and Universities. This is a loose federation of 20 institutions, and each implements the basic philosophy of the University Without Walls in its own way. The following ideas, however, are considered basic.

1. Students, faculty, and administrators design and develop the program.
2. A broad mix of resources--including regular courses, internships, independent study, individual and group projects, telelectures, programmed learning, and travel--is to be used.
3. There is no fixed curriculum and no fixed time for the award of a degree.
4. A broad age range is included.
5. Adjunct faculty--government officials, business executives, scientists, artists, writers--are used.
6. Continuing dialogue between students and faculty is maintained.
7. Seminars are devoted to the development of skills for independent learning.
8. Programs and resources of other University Without Walls participants are open to all.
9. Each student must produce a major contribution: a research study, work of art, book, etc.

10. Achievement of graduates is to be evaluated.

As you may know, there is a branch of the University Without Walls in San Francisco.

One final example of the Modes-of-Learning model should suffice to illustrate the range of possibilities. The Bachelor of Independent Studies adult degree program of the University of South Florida offers a curriculum divided into four parts: the Humanities, the Natural Sciences, the Social Sciences, and Inter-area Studies. The sequence and pace of study are determined by the student's ability, previous experience, and the amount of time he can devote to study. It is expected that students will complete degree requirements in between two and eight years.

Guided independent study and area seminars form the foundation of the instructional program. When the student and his advisor feel he is ready, he takes an area comprehensive examination and enters into participation in the area seminars which are periods of intensive residential learning on campus. These seminars are ordinarily three or four weeks in length and are conducted under the direction of a team of university faculty members.

The Examination Model

The third model of an external degree has attracted considerable attention of late because the first instance of this model, the Examination Model, is ^{now} ~~about to become~~ operational in the United States. In this model an institution or agency, which need not itself offer instruction, awards credit and degrees on the basis of student performance as evidenced by examination.

The program ~~which is being readied for introduction~~ in this country

is the plan of the New York State Education Department to offer a
Regents Baccalaureate Degree. *the 1st of which will be awarded this year*
~~The announced timetable for the~~
~~New York plan calls for the first candidates to be examined and~~
~~degrees awarded in 1972.~~

Neighboring state New Jersey has established a similar institution--Thomas Edison College--a non-teaching, degree granting institution that will use some of the same examinations as those of the New York Regents Degree. The candidate will be able to earn his degree exclusively on the basis of examination performance. Both oral and written examinations will be used.

Under the New York plan faculty members of regular colleges and universities will play a key role in determining the kinds of examinations to be used and the standards which are to be set for degree qualifications. In addition, the examinations will first be tried out on regular college students just prior to their receiving their degrees as a means for assisting in the establishment of reasonable standards for external students.

The Examination Model, of course, has a world renowned illustration in the University of London. Since 1858 it has been possible for external students (that is, individuals not enrolled in one of the constituent colleges of the University) to take the regular examinations required of internal students. Successful performance on these examinations leads to the University of London degree.

Candidates for the University of London degree are not left to their own devices to prepare for the degree. Students are prepared for the examinations through some 75 colleges offering courses leading to a University of London degree.

There are many variations on the theme in the Examinations model. For example, admissions policies may range from open admissions to highly selective; degrees may be offered by regular institutions or by new institutions created solely for this purpose; degrees may be awarded by teaching institutions or by non-teaching institutions; institutions may be state-based, or national, or even international in scope; degrees may be awarded by public or by privately controlled institutions; degrees may be based on local teacher-made examinations or on examinations produced nationally.

The Validation Model

The fourth external degree model identified by Valley is called the Validation model. There are bits and pieces of this model around on most campuses, but in its entirety, it would consist of an organization or institution that was willing to put together a variety of learning experiences to add up to a degree--transcripts, credits gained through taking the CLEP examinations, courses taken in the military and supported by the CASE, industry-sponsored programs, home study, etc. The Validation model calls for a fairly clear definition of what experiences constitute a degree. The Westbrook plan initiated by a junior college in Portland, Maine approximates this model. The plan permits two-year graduates to qualify for a Westbrook bachelor's degree by completing the additional requirements elsewhere. When the student submits evidence that an agreed upon degree program has been completed, Westbrook awards the degree.

The Academy for Educational Development has proposed the establishment of an International University for Independent Study that would define the degree requirements. It would then be prepared to validate a variety of experiences in fulfillment of the requirements for students all over the world.

Most colleges now validate satisfactory performance on the Advanced Placement Exam as creditable toward course placement or toward a degree. It has also been increasingly common for colleges to grant credit for experience in the Peace Corps or Vista and for them to follow the recommendation of the Commission on the Accreditation of Service Experiences (CASE) for crediting military courses. The fastest growing examination program is probably the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) which is now accepted by some 850 colleges as a basis for granting up to two years of college credit. The CLEP exams are the ones used at San Francisco State College this fall in their program to recognize academic achievement ^{obtained} not ~~realized~~ in their own classrooms.

The Credits Model

The fifth model, the Credits model, is closely related to the Validation model but Valley differentiates the two because the Validation model is confined to an institution offering instruction, whereas the Credits model is associated with an external agency that recommends credit or conceivably grants credit for work completed under the auspices of another institution's instruction. The closest thing to this that presently exists in this country is the CASE which reviews the courses offered in the military services and recommends the amount of collegiate credit appropriate in the judgement of civilian consultants and educators who are experts in the academic areas concerned.

Once again, England seems to have an example of the Credits model in their Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). This Council awards degrees for instruction pursued under the tutelage of a group of colleges that do not themselves offer degrees. But these colleges do provide courses and examinations. This is a fairly sizeable operation in England involving some 20,000 students pursuing courses in some 70 subjects at 49 colleges.

The Complex Systems Model

Finally, something should be said about the well publicized Empire State College founded last year by SUNY. This college without a campus is classified as a Complex Systems model by Valley because it offers just about everything that we have talked about. It has an administrative staff and a faculty, and it offers instruction, counseling, and tutoring in learning centers established throughout the state. The student may use any number of means to qualify for his degree--independent study, studies prepared by the college faculty and offered via various technologies and media, studies completed at one of the 70 units of the State University, examinations, credit for employment, research, or community service. Full-time students would pay the standard tuition of \$550 and they could expect to complete the requirements for the Associate degree in two years and the bachelor's degree in four years. One of the advantages of Empire State College is its potential for working in tandem with the New York Regents Degree program. Thus, Empire State might provide some or all of the instruction needed by candidates pursuing the New York Regents Degree.

In summary, the number and variety of external degree programs and proposals is increasing rapidly--so rapidly that some educators involved in the movement are beginning to sound cautious. Steve Bailey of Syracuse has warned of four serpents in the basket of shiny apples.

1. The serpent of academic shoddiness. ...Unless very special precautions are taken, credit and degrees for off-campus students by examination alone can lead to a parade of academic horrors: cram courses organized by fast-buck proprietary schools, a deadly standardization of subject matter, tutoring to the test.

This is, of course, the most common concern that has been raised. Personally, I think it makes some assumptions about our present standards that are far from justified. I'd just as soon accept a student's score on a standardized examination where I can look at the content and his performance relative to others as I would to accept a student who passed professor X's course at Podunk College. I think we do need to beware of rigidifying the evaluation procedures, however. But that problem applies to traditional as well as non-traditional approaches.

The second serpent Bailey finds lurking in the basket of shiny apples is,

2. "The serpent of the garden path." Off-campus degrees "will seem to many an easy way--a royal road--to status" until students "discover that learning by non-traditional methods is hard and often baffling work. Enormous expectations will be initially established, followed by the thud of mass attrition." External degree programs must avoid becoming like the correspondence schools that "have come close to fraud by making exorbitant profits from the dropouts of their sullen systems of lonely learning."

3. "The serpent of fiscal naivete." There is no evidence to indicate that external degrees will be any cheaper than traditional programs, as many believe. In fact, Syracuse University's experience indicates that they are more expensive.

4. "The serpent of projected technological miracles...If millions of dollars worth of instructional devices are already dust-covered in campus closets, what makes us believe that similar or even more sophisticated

devices will save the world off-campus? ...For years ahead the most valuable learning aid will still be a little pedagogic device called a book."

To these cautions Sam Gould, the chairman of the Commission on Non-traditional Studies, adds four more.

1. The proliferation of degrees is already troubling many people in academic life (applies especially to BIS, BGS, etc. in Modes of Learning Model.)

2. The possibility of academic isolation that underlies totally independent study. The cross-stimulation of faculty and students, the classroom or seminar interchanges of thought among the members, the possibilities that campuses afford--these can easily be lost if the external approach is carried to an extreme.

3. To date, the glamour of the non-traditional movement seems to reside in altering the form rather than the content of traditional learning. The counter-culture of course wants reform in content, and I must agree that our present content is not as sacred as faculty would have us believe. There is really nothing much in the research that indicates that traditional content results in better workers or better human beings than any of a number of alternatives that might be explored. Given the present and likely future stance of academic faculties, however, new degrees are likely to be labeled second rate unless exceptional ~~study~~ *care* and wisdom is used in defining them.

4. Gould and many many others are worried about the financial implications of external degrees. If--and it's a big IF at the moment--external degrees turn out to be less expensive, for the student, ~~will~~

established colleges and universities find themselves in even worse straits than they are today.

The interesting thing about the sources of these criticisms is that they are coming from leaders of the non-traditional movement. I think that says that so much that is going on in external degree programs makes so much sense to so many people that Gould and Bailey are concerned lest the national enthusiasm run away with a thoroughly good concept. My personal opinion is that the ~~ultra~~ conservative proposal for the Extended University is not likely to justify any of these criticisms even though I am aware that some of them are being voiced by faculty members.