

Engagements between Universities and Trade Unions in the UK

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Buna ziua!

Research

- Research ON...

- TUs as passive victims

- Research FOR...

- Commissioned
- Control

- Research BY...

- Limited horizons – pay and jobs

- Research WITH...

- Most innovative

Research with TUs - Examples

- Leeds bus drivers (TGWU/UNITE)
- Hospital closures (COHSE/UNISON)
- Water/Marine H&S (NUS/RMT TGWU/UNITE)
- North Sea Ferries (NUS/RMT + TGWU/UNITE)
- Social Networking (UNITE)

TUs and Lifelong Learning

Pre 1975

- Universities had substantial share of small pot
- Weekend schools and long day release
- Personal development and horizon-raising

Mid 1970s

- Public funding and statutory paid release
- Smaller share of greatly enlarged pot
- Extended TUC role
- University misgivings
- Role-related training
- Preference for client-based relationship

1980s and 1990s

- Boom was dramatic but short-lived
- Recession, marketisation and legal constraints
- Employer narrowing of agendas to discipline and grievance representation
- Limited state interference
- TUC role consolidated – preference for FE
- Decline of access courses
- Rival areas with more promise

New Labour (1997 - ?)

- No strengthening of release or direct public funding
- Confined union ambitions (TINA)
- Membership education brokerage (impact?)
- Workplace Reps, Safety Reps, augmented by ULRs, Disability Reps and Equality Reps – young, women, LGBT, migrants

Broader Educational Engagements

- For free public education and adult learning
- For training of workplace reps
- For skilling workers / employability
- For promotion of learning for members / workers
- For officers and staff

Does any of this matter?

- TU Education hits all the priority learning buttons
- TUs as major resource for democracy and the good life
- Shared crises of trade unionism and lifelong learning represent a major tragedy

Ken Coates and Tony Topham

- The British trade union movement is the greatest single community resource of the British people. It stimulates a large and continuing voluntary effort, innumerable acts of self-sacrifice, and a major and vital part of the rational commitment to the ideals of justice and democracy. Who doubts this must leave reading books, and move among the people who have created...[trade unions]. (Trade Unions in Britain, 1988)

Multumesc!