In or Out reading passage

In or Out

Historically, British colleges of further education were unconcerned about student attrition because the sector's origins were in professional apprenticeship training for businesses, where trainees could drop out without compromising their careers. In the 1970s, this sector began to provide more general education courses, which were viewed as an alternative to traditional schooling for 16–18-year-olds and a second opportunity for adults. Students were considered adults who should not be continually monitored but rather allowed to make their own decisions; it was not uncommon for academic staff to state that class attendance was fully optional.

In the 1980s, due to a heightened awareness of equal opportunity, colleges and universities changed their priority to recruiting students from historically underrepresented groups, particularly ethnic minorities. This resulted in a curriculum that was more reflective of the changing student population. There were efforts for the inclusion of black authors' works in A-level literature courses; history curricula were updated to move beyond a Eurocentric vision of the world, and geography curricula began to address the politics of maps.

The publication of a study on graduation rates by the government's education inspection agency in 1991 marked a turning point. Inspectorate of Her Majesty for England and Wales (HMI 1991). This report was nonetheless based on the academic staff's arguments for why pupils had departed. It was stated that the vast majority departed for personal reasons or because they found employment, and that just 10 percent left for reasons attributable to the college.

In the meantime, Britain was experiencing the Thatcherite revolution, and following Reagan's policies in the United States, a central premise was the need to dramatically lower taxation. At this time (and to a considerable degree currently), colleges of further and higher education were virtually totally supported by the government. Throughout the 1980s, there had been several cuts to this financing, but no one had examined its cost-effectiveness. However, in the early 1990s, the Audit Commission and Office of Standards in Education (GFSTED) (the new version of HMI) turned the spotlight onto further education and published a seminal report, Unfinished Business (Audit Commission and OFSTED 1999-2000), which revealed that drop-out was occurring on a large scale and, crucially given the politics of the time, attributed a cost to the state of £500 million, arguing that this was a waste of public funds. According to Yorke (1999), incompleteness has become a political issue. The Audit Commission report coincided with government efforts to privatize as many state functions as possible; and with the decision to remove further education from the control of local government and give it quasi-independent status, where colleges were governed by independent boards of governors competing for state funding to run educational provision. As part of this initiative, a new set of guidelines for funding and bidding were devised (JFEFC, 1994), which included harsh monetary penalties for student dropouts. Essentially, the majority of state financing is tied to each student. There is funding for early counseling and help, course delivery, and student success, but if a student drops out, the institution loses that money immediately; hence, the loss of students in the first term leads to an instantaneous loss of funds for the succeeding two terms. Not unexpectedly, this immediately and aggressively focused institutions' attention on the need to increase student retention rates. As a result, there have been recent efforts to enhance retention, although, as Martinez (1995)

noted, there is no body of evidence upon which to build retention tactics. Because colleges have been slow to computerize their students' data, the majority of institutions were unaware of their retention rates or any associated patterns. Where data did exist, it was held independently by administrative or academic personnel, with inadequate contact between the two groups. Colleges, on the other hand, adopted a variety of tactics based mostly on experience, instinct, and common sense, and the publishing of these strategies commenced. (Martinez 1996; Martinet 1997; Kenwright 1996, Kenwright 1997).

According to Martinez's summary of the literature, the principal tactics explored are described in (1995). These include sporting activities around entry to ensure "Best Fit," supporting activities including child [Eire, financial support, and enrichment/learner support, connecting activities to strengthen the relationship between the college and the student, including mentoring and tutorials, and activities to transform the student, including raising expectations, study/career development support, and tutoring.

Questions 1–5

Write the appropriate letters in Boxes 1-3 on your answer sheet, Note that there are more items listed under the "Key event" than years, so you will not use all of them,

1) 1991
2) 1993
3) 1994

Key events in the development of further education:

I. Severe penalties for drop-out are developed as part of college funding mechanisms
II. Serious attempts are made to improve student support
III. An Influential report showing that non-completion rates are significantly high is published
IV. The lack of a strategical basis is officially recognized
V. The HMI is created
VI. Data oil student completion rates for further education are published
VII. A minor report showing that non-completion is significantly high is published

Questions 4-8

Complete the sentences below, Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS from the passage to fill each blank space.

4) Further education colleges in Britain were originally not worried about student drop-out, because students did not leave college out of fear of___.
5) According to the writer, the philosophy at further education colleges was___.
6) As people became more aware of equal opportunities, colleges encouraged students from under-represented groups, as a move to___.
7)The HMI's report focused on completion rates, based on reasons for students' departure from

college___.

8) In the early 1990s, the political situation, both in Britain and the US, demanded a drastic___.

Questions 9-14

Choose the appropriate letters A-D and write them on your answer sheet,

9) The report Unfinished Business …
A. pointed out the politics of the time
B. gave 1500 mil 11 on to the state
C. linked drop-out to wasting money
D. turned the spotlight

10) The new series of principles developed in 1994 by the PEPC
A. gave money to each student
B. was quasi-independent
C. meant colleges had to turn their immediate attention to improving student retention rates
D. was aimed fit improving teacher retention rates

11) Attempts to reduce the student drop-out rate were hindered, because …
A. there was a lack of research data on which to base strategies
B. col logos did not know what to do
C. computers in colleges were slow
D. colleges had no patterns

12) Further hindrances in reducing the student drop-out rate were
A. collages slowness in computerizing data and tint knowing their retention rates, nor what patterns of retention exited
B. collage inertia and administrative incompetence
C. com put or glitches and strikes, Which occurred at most colleges
D. colleges not knowing their retention rates or where the patterns were

13) Colleges' strategies to deal with the problem of low retention …
A. brought administrative and academic staff together
B. varied enormously
C. jumped
D. were based on something other than data

14) The main strategies to improve retention included,
A. "best fit" supporting activities
B. activities to support and transform the Student
C. the raising of College expectations
D. a summary by Martinez