

This research project was initiated with the purpose of developing and establishing KCTU's educational curriculum and framework. The project involved labor education research case studies in five countries including South Africa and Sweden. We wanted to find examples or lessons we should bring into focus, from the experience of labor education in other countries. The report on the project describes the five case studies and summarizes the current status and challenges of Korean labor education.

PROJECT PROCEDURES

1. Formation of Research Teams for the Case Studies

2. The Content of the Case Studies

The results of labor education case studies in South Africa, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and Italy have been summarized based on reference studies and the country visits

The basic contents covered in each of the country cases study are as follows:

- ✧ The history and the current status of the trade union movement.
- ✧ The history of labor education.
- ✧ The current status and structure of labor education at national trade union and industry-wide union levels.
- ✧ Institutional conditions of labor education
- ✧ Activities and programs of [trade unions'] educational research and training institutes.

We had specific focus areas of study in each of the five countries. They are as follows:

- ✧ *South Africa*: We focused on educational activities of COSATU, the national trade union federation in South Africa. We also focused on the establishment and activities of Ditsela.
- ✧ *Sweden*: The activities of the workers' education associations were initiated by LO, TCO, the national trade union federations, the construction industry workers' union, the chemical industry workers' union, and ABF.
- ✧ *Denmark*: The process involved in establishing FIU's educational system, and the FIU activities as well as the changes.
- ✧ *Germany*: 1) The historical changes in the German labor education trend and the legal and institutional conditions [today]. 2) Trade unions' education activities at regional and federal levels and the activities of the workers' academy.
- ✧ *Italy*: 1) Educational contents and methods of the national federation and industry-wide unions, 2) Educational courses of CISL Study Center
- ✧ For the current status of labor education in Korea, it would have been appropriate to examine labor education activities of FKTU¹, various labor education organizations, and colleges. However, this study focuses mainly on the current status and tasks faced by KCTU's labor educational activities.

3. "Labor Education Case Studies in Five Countries and the Tasks of Korean Labor Education."

¹Federation of Korean Trade Unions.

- ◇ Labor Education Case Studies in South Africa, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, & Italy: Labor education in foreign countries and its significance to the Korean situation.
- ◇ The Current Status and Tasks of Korean Labor Education: The Labor Movement's Education Trend since the 1970s.
- ◇ The Current Status and Tasks of Korean Labor Education*

THE CURRENT STATUS AND TASKS OF KOREAN LABOR EDUCATION*

I. Historical Trend of Korean Labor Education

1. Labor Education in the 1970s

The Korean labor movement as we know it today was ignited in 1970 by the heroic self-immolation of Jeon Tae-il, a 22-year old garment worker and a labor organizer who died in protest against the inhuman labor conditions and the then government's failure to enforce its own labor laws. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the movement manifested itself in the form of a widespread struggle to form democratic labor unions in industrial work places. In 1987, the movement that was spurred some 17 years ago culminated in the Great Labor Struggle, and the seed of the KCTU was sown. The Korean labor movement during this period was a movement of endless struggles against labor exploitation and oppression by the capital owners and the government. The division of the Korean peninsula into two countries and the prevailing and prevalent ideology of anti-communism had been a major obstacle in developing labor education in Korea for close to 50 years. Accordingly, the history of the labor education movement has also been a history of struggle itself against the government and the capital owners and a process of great struggles against harsh conditions.

In the 1970s, in the wake of Jeon Tae-il's death, religious organizations and "night schools," specifically formed for workers and the urban poor, began labor education programs. In the 1980s, the movement took a significant step forward with the birth of programs for activists with commitment toward labor movement and social transformation. After the 1987 Great Labor Struggle, the education programs spread widely.

Now, for the labor movement to further grow and spread in Korea, we need a comprehensive review of the labor education achievements so far and re-establish the core-activist education programs that have disappeared. The re-establishment of educational curriculum to nurture core-activists must be in tune with the historic changes that have taken place. Also, the scope of labor education must change from focusing only on trade union movement to continuing education and adult education programs for workers, which would improve the quality of individual worker's lives.

2. Labor Education in the 1980s

The 1980s began with the Kwangju Uprising and the massacre of innocent civilians by the new military dictatorship. In the wake of the massacre, the student movement in Korea grew rapidly. The students formed study groups to study politics, economics, and philosophy and formulated a number of different theoretical frameworks for fundamental social transformation. One of the

* Here, the case studies of the five countries, from "Labor Education Case Studies in Five Countries and the Tasks of Korean Labor Education," will not be included. The report will be summarized and translated into English with the focus on the part that deals with the current status and tasks of Korean labor education, with the purpose of introducing the Korean labor education situation abroad.

most influential lines of thought of the time was one that emphasized the importance of the role of the industrial workers in social transformation. A massive number of students went to factories to become industrial workers. The study circles that began in universities, among student activists, now became a part of labor movement through clandestine small group meetings and other efforts. As a result, major industrial complexes in the country became hotbeds for core activists in the labor movement, who were formerly university students, armed with sophisticated theoretical knowledge on labor movement and social transformation.

After the 1987 Great Labor Struggle, the labor education improved dramatically. The number of new trade unions increased rapidly from 2,675 with the total membership of 103,000 in 1986 to 7,880 with the total membership of 1.8 million members. The demand for education also increased for such basic trade union activities as collective bargaining for wage increase, division of trade union activities, and staff training. The demand was met by active participation of the movement activists. The education programs were held in various labor organizations that were established immediately following the Great Struggle. As the demand for union staff training grew, informal study groups aimed at cultivating a small number of "core activists" gave way to the new trend. Informal small-group meetings became public, which then became larger 'labor classes' and 'labor seminars.' In this way the labor education grew widely until the beginning of the 1990s.

3. Labor Education in the early 1990s: The Period of the National Workers' Unions Association

The National Labor Unions Association was formed in 1990 and was dissolved in 1995. During this period, labor education activities were carried out mainly by The National Labor Unions Association and its 14 regional unions. In the case of office workers, education was carried out mainly by the enterprise-level unions themselves. The National Labor Unions Association developed a wide variety of educational programs during this period. For division of trade union activities, it carried out staff training for different trade union departments such as education, publicity, culture, survey and statistics, industrial safety, women's affairs, etc. For officers training, it provided leaders training, new officers training, and separate training programs for union officers in shipbuilding, textile, car, and general metal industries. The National Labor Unions Association also published educational materials on collective bargaining for wage increase, revision of labor laws, and general knowledge; it produced educational video tapes and developed new educational materials; it carried out major labor education research summarized in the two projects, Suggestions for Labor Education and Trade Union Education Method; it also supported enterprise-level trade unions by providing speakers for their education programs. During the period, there was a great demand from the newly organized trade unions for training on trade union's internal division of activities. The National Labor Unions Association concentrated its education activities on their demand, and the programs improved significantly every year. The National Labor Unions Association also actively carried out an on-going educational program "The State of Affairs and Direction for Struggle," in an attempt to respond to changes in the relationship between the government, the management, and the labor.

Also, the educational programs for "activist cultivation" that have their roots in the 1980s continued, in the form of small meetings with participation of workers, and in the form of regional 'labor classes' and sectoral 'labor seminars.'

However, compared to the earlier period, and at least from the perspective of cultivating activists, the major trend of the labor education during The National Labor Unions Association period was that it was retreating. This was also a period after the collapse of the Eastern European socialist bloc. In Korea, ideological confusion and uncertainties followed. The strength of activist organizations weakened in the labor movement; political organizing activities languished; and the student movement fell into stagnation. With these internal and external factors overlapping on top of each other, the enthusiasm for study programs of the earlier period slowly diminished.

4. Labor Education in the Late 1990s: The KCTU Period

The direction of the educational programs in the KCTU period has not changed from that of The National Labor Unions Association period. Thus the KCTU educational activities can be summarized by the staff training and the "The State of Affairs and Direction for Struggle" programs. In May 1997, KCTU collected most of the educational programs, developed from the time of The National Labor Unions Association period and published them as "A Collection of Teaching Programs." It is a comprehensive collection of teaching programs that cover subjects from day-to-day activities of the trade union to collective bargaining and collective actions; it contains educational materials on KCTU and sectoral unions, labor laws and social transformation, new management strategies and employment, the state of affairs and direction for struggle, labor movement history, introduction to philosophy, politics, and economics, and staff training by trade union activity departments.

What is new and noticeable about the KCTU educational program is that it has developed and distributed new curriculum, and that educational activities at sectoral level have become active. KCTU has developed and distributed new curriculum materials entitled *Education for New Officers*, *Education for New President*, *1&2*, and *Training Education Activists*, introducing a "sustainable" education curriculum.

Also, as the sectoral-level education became active, sectoral unions with enough membership and capacity pursued educational programs for lay members as well as officers. Of the education programs carried out by sectoral unions, the following were particularly successful examples: The 'combined membership training' and 'shop-floor activists training' programs by KFHU; the 'labor class' programs by Korea Federation of Metal Workers; and the "shop-floor activists training in steps" program by KFCW.

II. The Current Situation of KCTU Education

1. Educational Capacity

In terms of professional educational capacity, KCTU and its affiliate organizations have at most 1-2 persons with professional qualifications. In general, one person is responsible for the union's organization, publicity, and other functions, making it difficult for the person and the union to concentrate on developing and carrying out professional educational programs.

2. Educational Conditions in terms of time, budget, and facilities.

✧ Formally secured time to carry out educational programs is limited to the membership and officer training time guaranteed by collective bargaining agreements at enterprise-level unions.

Trade unions in Korea are still largely organized at enterprise level, and under such a system the guaranteed time for training and education programs ranges from 1-24 hours per year, varying widely from individual company to company.

✧ KCTU does not have a central educational training institute.

✧ The KCTU total education budget for 2000 is 1.5 million won², or 0.5% of the total budget. Curriculum development projects so far have been possible because of support from overseas organizations. In the case of sectoral unions, the chemical industry union, construction industry union, and metal workers union have received funds from overseas. In the case of regional headquarters of KCTU, many of them carry out education programs with support from their local governments.

3. Educational Contents and Methods

✧ **Educational Contents:** The contents of educational programs conducted by KCTU and its affiliates are largely composed of the following: general studies on trade unions (trade union, membership organizing activities, the role of officers); studies of politics, economics, and philosophy for worker consciousness raising programs; and educational programs for organizing labor struggles.

Around the 1987 Great Labor Struggle period, the emphasis of the labor education was on raising workers' labor consciousness, and the focus of the education was the study of philosophy, history, politics, and economics. Since The National Labor Unions Association period, the emphasis has shifted to nurturing basic qualifications of union workers and officers through educational programs that strengthen their day-to-day activities and union work capacity.

Since the establishment of KCTU and after the 1996 and 1997 general strikes calling for the revision of labor laws, many educational programs are being carried out on organizing [successful] general strikes. These programs, educating the membership of the policy directions for labor struggles, have played an important role in the activation of KCTU struggles, which is part of the KCTU organizational policies.

However, membership consciousness-raising and capacity-strengthening educational programs must be carried out systematically to continuously produce sound union leadership from floor-up who will work with long-term perspectives on the labor movement. Currently at KCTU, the ordinary operation of trade union is difficult in the face of the IMF structural adjustment programs and the continuing struggle of workers. Under such circumstances, the need for "cultivating union leadership, which understands the reality objectively and works toward finding a new outlook," cannot be overemphasized.

✧ **Educational Method:** Since the establishment of KCTU, the characteristic of the various educational programs at sectoral, regional, and national levels have gradually changed, in that they have become more participation-oriented. Over the past few years, more participatory programs, such as discussion programs, have been continuously developed and carried out.

✧ Most of the KCTU and its affiliate educational programs are 2-night-and-3-day courses. Some are overnight programs. Also depending on the nature of the program, education programs can

². Approximately US\$11,500. -- Tr.

take place in the form of a 'labor class,' consisting of a lecture and discussion, after the work hour.

4. The education program initiated by KCTU affiliated federations and regional offices

Table 1 Federation: The program aims to raise activists and enhance capabilities of activists. The education for organizing struggles was not included.

	First half	Later half	Contents
K M W F		Educators convention in 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ The case study on education and communication ◇ Neo-liberalism and the future of workers ◇ The lives as working class and philosophy
		History of Korean workers movements	Visiting historically meaningful places for workers
K P S U	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education for new union officials ● Education for negotiators 	Education for new union officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ History of workers' movements ◇ The role of union officials and everyday activities ◇ Running union meeting
		Labor laws	Individual and collective industrial relation laws
		New union officials (2day program)	Union activities, Propaganda Training The tasks before our union Building activity plans
K U W U	3day program: Training programs for the members of Standing Committee		
K F C W		3day education program for rank and file workers (beginning course)	Union activities, Propaganda Training The tasks before our union Building activity plans
		3day education program for rank and file workers (Intermediate course)	Propaganda training Leadership training
K F H U	2 day Education course for newly elected local union leaders: How to lead meeting and build presentation skills	2 day education program for rank and file workers (beginning course)	Capitalism and working class History Building presentation skills
		2 day education program for rank and file workers (Intermediate course)	Modern capitalism Making activity plan
K F T W U	3 day Education course for newly elected local union leaders: How to lead meeting and build presentation skills	Training union officials	The task before taxi workers History of workers' movement Building an industrial union Building activity plans Labor laws Building presentation skills
K T U		2day program of training trainers	Building education activity plans
K F C W U		2day program of Education for union officials	Everyday activities and the role of union officials The activity plan of the KCTU in the later half of this year Women's issues

Table 2. The education activities of KCTU regional offices

	The education activities of the later half of the year 2000	Contents
Seoul	School for workers' empowerment (9 classes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Tasks before unions for workers' empowerment ◇ The cases of unions in other countries ◇ The perspective of future society
Inchon	2 day program for newly elected local union president	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ The lives as working class and philosophy ◇ The history of Korean working class ◇ The activities of unions
	2 day program for union officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ The lives as working class and philosophy ◇ The history of Korean working class
Kyong-ki	3 day program for new union officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ The union activities ◇ The lives as working class and philosophy
Puchon	4 classes new union officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ The history of workers' movement ◇ The lives as working class and philosophy
Kyong ju	5 classes new union officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Korean society and working class ◇ The history of workers' movement ◇ The basic labor laws ◇ The role of union officials
Chung-book	2 day program Tracing history of workers' movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Visiting meaningful places of workers in Chunra province ◇ Neo-liberalism and the struggle of the later half of the year 2000
	The education program for union officials of newly established union	The same as the KCTU education program
Kwang-ju	The education program for union officials of newly established union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ The introduction of the KCTU ◇ The history of workers' movements ◇ The role of union officials ◇ Presentation skills

III. The Task of KCTU Educational Program

It has been five years since KCTU has been established, but KCTU educational programs still have many challenges to overcome. It will take much preparation work and practice, trial and evaluation, and continuous exploration for the KCTU educational system to take roots at all levels of the Federation under the budgetary and human resource restraints that it is in.

There are numerous educational projects to be developed by KCTU. Some of the projects and issues KCTU is faced with are as follows: Development of a variety of educational programs to fit various target groups and to address various topics; building systematic curriculum; guaranteeing more educational opportunities to union members; development of educational materials and methodology; collection/documentation and distribution of educational activities, examples, and materials from and to all levels of the union (local, industry-wide, and national); securing teaching equipment; discovering and training educational personnel; securing teaching staff and educational training facilities; and legal and legislative actions needed to secure educational rights of workers. Not all these projects and issues can be pursued and addressed at once, and in the following, four core issues are further explored.

1. Development of KCTU Educational Curriculum and Research Programs

Resources must be focused on complementing the educational programs developed so far since the establishment of KCTU and on research and implementation of new curriculum.

Table 3. The developed education program and the education program in 2001

The target group		Contents of education program	
President of local unions	Course 1	<p><Lecture> The history of workers' movements, The role of president of local union, The union activities</p> <p><Training> The role of union leader, The analysis of organization, the meeting procedures, Presentation skills, Building activity plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ 3 programs run by KCTU ◇ Programs run by federations and KCTU regional offices
	Course 2	<p><Lecture> Economy of capitalism</p> <p><Training> Leadership and activities as president of the union, Human relations and organizational relations, The task before democratic independent union movements</p>	One program run by the KCTU in 1999
Union officials Strengthening the capability of union officials	Course 1 Beginning course	<p><Lecture> The history of workers' movements, The union activities and the role of union officials</p> <p><Training> The analysis of organization, Presentation skills, Building activity plans</p>	Regional based program in 1999
	Course 2 Intermediate course	<p><Training> Looking back my activities as a union official, Human relations and organizational relations, propaganda training</p>	March 2001
Union officials Strengthening workers' consciousness	Workers' school	Understanding Philosophy, Economy, History in relations with current problems faced by Korean working class	◇ Prerequisite course before workers' school (beginners' course)

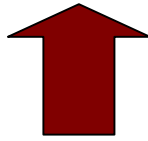
All courses are developed program except * marked program.

Target	Subject	Contents	
Elective course			
The second Education program for union officials – Strengthening capabilities as a union officials	Training educators Course 1	<Lecture> Union education activities <Training> Various education methods, Building education plan, Presentation skills	February 2000
	Training educators Course 2	Sharing education activities, Planning union education plan, Various medium used in lecture, Training lecturing skills	February 2000
	KCTU Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Educators from federations and KCTU regional offices ✧ The education contents are focused on strengthening capabilities of educators 	Once every year since 1999
	Women activists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ The 3rd education program for women activists: Sexual harassment at workplace, Prevention to response, Affirmative action and quota system ✧ Regional education course for women workers (Labor laws in relation to women workers, Prevention program on sexual harassment, the role of women activists in a union) 	KCTU, KCTU regional offices, and federations
	Communication school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Communication skills ✧ Writing and reporting ✧ Practices on communication activities 	Once every year
	Research & Statistics	✧ Using internet, SPSS program	2 day program once every year
	Culture	Working class culture, songs, media, movies, policies, planning	
		Camping: finding workers' culture	500 activists in national wide
	OHS	Training course for OHS specialists	KMWF, 2000
	Internet media	Using internet, building homepage	
Organizers *Developing	Importance on the activities at shop floor, case studies, meeting skills with union members, analysis on the activities at workplace, building activity plans	Rank and file workers, organizers	

Target and subject			
Education by subject	Politics schools	Workers' empowerment	Regional base program
	Labor laws *Developing	Individual and collective industrial relations	KCTU January 2001
Training activists	Labor college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ History, Economy, Philosophy ✧ Labor politics, current challenges, and tasks before labor movements 	November 2000 1 st Workers School

KCTU Labor College (Regional based college)

Those who completed the program
KCTU Workers



described below are eligible to enroll the
School

Required course	Program for union officials including presidents of local unions Course II	Elective course	Education program by subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Labor laws ✧ Social reform ✧ Politics 	
	↑			Practical training program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Education ✧ Communication ✧ Research and statistics ✧ Culture ✧ OHS ✧ Women ✧ Organizing ✧ Internet
	Workers school		→		
	↑		Program for union officials including presidents of local unions Course I		

2. The basic framework of KCTU educational program must be unified.

Looking at the case studies of other countries in the current research project, one can see that in most countries labor education takes place in levels. In the case of FIU in Denmark, for example, basic and advanced programs are organized for rank and file workers. The basic program is generally carried out by industry-wide unions in four levels. The advanced program also consists of four levels, and rank and file workers in the program have the choice. What is impressive about the FIU educational system is that all LO rank and file workers in Denmark receive the same education under the systematic "unified framework" of FIU educational program.

In the case of Korea, currently KFHU, KFCW, KFTWU and KPSU unions each carry out their own officer training programs. The educational contents are in general similar, and some unions reflect the special aspects of their unions.

Depending on the situation, training sessions are carried out in 1-day, 2-day, or after-work hour programs. In other words, the content and method of the education can change depending on the program circumstances as well as on the special nature of the work schedule, industry, and regional labor conditions. The KCTU task here is to make sure that there is 'unified content and framework' regardless of where and when the education is carried out. The efforts to unify the basic educational content and framework will result in a systematic labor educational system in

Korea which can be used at local, industry-wide, and KCTU levels.

3. Systematization of Labor Education

a. Development of the debate on unifying the educational system

Since 1997, there has been a debate on the role of the local and industry-wide unions and KCTU in labor education. In particular, between regional headquarters of KCTU and sectoral unions, there has been much discussion on the content and who should be the provider of the labor education. For example, there was the issue of redundancy in the schedule and content; there was also the issue of who, between the sectoral union and KCTU, should support the local union educational activities.

It should be kept in mind that these debates took place under specific historical circumstances. That is to say that during this period, KCTU was still in its early stage of organizational establishment. The sectoral 'federations' were also in the transitional period of formally becoming sectoral unions. This was a time when the role and the status of the KCTU regional headquarters had not yet been clearly defined. In other words, some of the debate on the role and the program of the labor education in the past have been a natural part of developing organized labor in the country.

b. The process of systematizing educational curriculum

A number of preparations must be made to systematize KCTU educational curriculum.

First of all, there has to be a review and evaluation of the educational programs currently carried out at various levels of organizations, by KCTU, sectoral federations/unions, and local unions. Based on such an overview, KCTU affiliates should cooperate on the programs they must carry out, and consensus must be built for a unified educational framework.

Second, currently sectoral federations are being reorganized as sectoral unions. At the same time, organizational improvements are being carried out to minimize the imbalance between some sectoral unions in terms of the size and operation. The KCTU educational system will also go through improvements along with these changes. In anticipation of these changes, KCTU must concentrate its resources on developing systematic educational curriculum.

c. The construction plan for an educational center: Next five years.

The construction of a KCTU educational center can be realized within 2-3, or 4-5 years.

All activities to develop teaching materials and systematic curriculum and training educational activists are a part of the process to improve the KCTU education system. They also constitute important groundwork for the future KCTU educational center; they will yield the contents to give meaning to the center.

A number of activities should be carried out simultaneously for the preparation of building an educational center: 1) Development of the contents mentioned above; 2) expansion of the awareness of the importance of labor education within the organization and the securing of financial resources through such an expansion; and 3) securing of labor educational rights through legal and legislative frameworks.

It is important for the leadership of the KCTU affiliates to have awareness of the importance of carrying out labor education. This will be achieved through the KCTU "labor university" projects

and officer-training programs currently carried out by the federations. These educational programs will increase the awareness among not only the leadership of the unions but also among the rank and file.

Furthermore, national educational activists conferences should be held to lay the bricks for building the educational center and to solidify the struggle for securing legal and legislative framework for labor educational rights. At the central level, the National Assembly of Delegates should adopt a resolution to build the center after proper organizational debates have taken place. As for securing financial resources for building the center, KCTU should begin with the building-block resolution and expand the sources to include support from domestic and overseas organizations and the government. Building of the educational center is a future project, but KCTU must start the preparation work now.

4. Plans for vitalizing labor education

a. Personnel and Financial System

To vitalize labor union educational activities at local, sectoral, regional, and national levels, it is a matter of utmost importance to train and nurture proper human resources, the educating subjects.

b. Securing the Budget

In the year 2000, KCTU has allocated 0.5% (15 million won) of its budget for labor educational programs. It is unrealistic to carry out the many educational tasks with this budget (projects budget from outside support is not included in this figure). At the same time, it is also unrealistic for KCTU to allocate 25% of its budget to education, as is the case in Sweden's LO. What is needed of KCTU is to gradually increase its education budget.

Also, as the sectoral federations reorganize as sectoral unions, the transfer of union funds to an educational fund or a fund for building the center should be given a serious consideration.

c. Struggles for Securing Labor Education Rights

Various countries in the world guarantee the rights of the workers to study through a system of paid educational leave. Furthermore, the ILO articles on the issue include labor education as well as general, social, and civic education for paid educational leave.

In the past, KCTU affiliates have continuously raised the issue of securing paid time for union-member and officer training at the collective bargaining tables with the management. Some local unions have been successful in securing paid time for officer training. Officers from these unions can participate in certain overnight educational programs provided at federation, regional, or national levels without using their regular vacation time. The achievements of these unions should be further developed, and they should be further expanded to include paid educational leave and continuing education rights.