PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ON 19TH FEBRUARY, 1986:
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION

Introduction to the First Half of the Meeting

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This meeting takes place in the context of changing conditions in the world of education. Syllabuses are changing, expectations are changing, financial and economic conditions are changing. At the end of last year the Gallup organization undertook a survey of 700 firms. It concluded that three in five faced problems due to a shortage of appropriate skills. In the UK only 14 per cent of the population in the appropriate age group are in higher education compared with 22 per cent in the USA and 24 per cent in Japan. Several programmes over the last few years have resulted in the provision of new courses particularly in information technology (IT). First, there were the SERC sponsored conversion courses at postgraduate level. In 1985, the SERC listed 55 of these from which the graduates were reported to have found jobs without any difficulty. At first degree level, the actual words IT appear in only a few instances as

an organization of a complete degree programme. There are many other related courses under the headings of 'Information Systems', 'Information Processes' and 'Information Studies'. Such courses as Information Systems Design at Kingston Polytechnic are an early example of work in this area. The person who is most closely associated with the postgraduate conversion course in IT is Dr. Mike Denham who has had several years of experience in developing curricula in this area. He presents the first paper on this subject, while the second paper is concerned with the area of further education. Here the objectives are to prepare people for a range of new opportunities. This requires the imparting of specific skills (skills shortages exist not only at design and managerial level, but also for technical and support staff, maintenance, repairs etc.). Initiatives include those of the RSA; City and Guilds offer qualifications in this area.