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ABSTRACT
         The booklet provides a history of the Right-to-Read,
Austin (Texas) Learning Center project and, based on the experiences
at Austin, provides a guide to establishing a Right-to-Read project
in a learning center. The general problems, needs, and experiences of
the project are described and discussed as they evolved, under the
following headings: goals, locating the facility, personnel needs,
use of volunteer tutors, staffing and scheduling, testing, student
records, the instructional program, equipment, recruitment and
publicity, developing materials, and a cost estimate for establishing
a Right-to Read/adult basic education (ABE) learning center. A
summary indicates that two years of experience with a coordinated
Right-to-Read/ABE learning center have shown that such centers can
have a great impact on the communities they serve. It is believed
that the experiences and conclusions set forth in the booklet can be
adapted to fit the needs of any community-based
Right-to-Read/learning center site. Forms used at the Austin center
are appended, with comments on their use. (Author/NH)

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ESTABLISHING RIGHT-TO-READ PROGRAMS IN COMMUNITY-BASED ADULT LEARNING CENTERS

May 1974

prepared by

Industrial and Business Training Bureau
Division of Extension
The University of Texas at Austin

in cooperation with

The National Right-to-Read Effort
and
The Texas Education Agency

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FOREWORD

This booklet was written to serve two purposes: (1) to describe the goals and needs of the R_2R/Austin Learning Center project and (2) to provide a basis for discussion before establishing a R_2R tutor-training service center in the R_2R/Austin project.

The booklet reports the general problems, needs, and experiences of the R_2R project as they evolved. Where necessary for the reader's understanding, statistics are included in the narrative, but this document is not intended to be any sort of final report.

Prior to the drafting of this booklet, subsidiary programs of the Austir. Learning Center were scrutinized to determine if methods or materials unique to its operation were pertinent to the overall needs of the R_2R/Austin Learning Center. It is believed that the experiences and conclusions set forth in the following pages can be adapted to fit the needs of any community-based R_2R/Learning Center site.

The Division of Adult and Continuing Education, Texas Education Agency, and the Industrial and Business Training Bureau, Division of Extension, The University of Texas at Austin, combined their efforts to produce and publish this booklet.

INTRODUCTION

Since their beginning, Adult Education Learning Centers have been vitally interested in the education and, therefore, the reading abilities of adults. Even so, the active participation of learning centers in the National Right-to-Read Program is not widespread. The decision of the National Right-to-Read Program to phase out community-based sites after fiscal year 1975 precludes learning center participation as strong as might otherwise have been expected. This fact is regrettable. The few of us around the nation fortunate enough to have participated in the R_2R community-based site effort are convinced that the marriage of learning centers to the R_2R project can produce exciting and dynamic educational possibilities. A well-equipped learning center that has as one of its major offerings a reading clinic with diagnostic, prescriptive, and remediative capabilities certainly will be a tremendous asset to any community. Learning centers offer several unique advantages that Right-to-Read projects can tap and profit from.

1. Generally speaking, the individualized concept of instruction found at learning centers is particularly effective with nonreaders or poor readers. The flexibility of method that individualization offers gives the student an opportunity to protect himself from the disclosure of his weaknesses—disclosure that a class environment seems to inevitably bring about.

2. Because a learning center is, by definition, an information and materials resource center, opportunities for varying the curriculum for a reading student are immeasurably greater. It is obvious that, as the variety of instruction and materials increase, the likelihood that the student will drop out decreases.

3. In a learning center, with its multiplicity of educational opportunities and greater cross section of society, a student who enters with the single goal of reading

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improvement almost invariably will become aware of other opportunities and will set additional educational goals for himself.

4. It is generally true that the less advantaged segments of the population tend to have the greater proportion of learning disabilities—mostly because they cannot afford to get adequate help. Most learning centers are located in target population areas, which puts them geographically where the action is.

5. Most learning centers are not staffed with a professional reading specialist trained to detect reading problems and disabilities. As a rule, students who find reading too difficult will drop out and often become lost to society. If, however, a reading specialist were available—as would be the case if a R,R program were participating—a high percentage of these students could be retained. Equally important, the learning center's visibility in the neighborhood would attract far more students than would a single-concept educational office. Once enrolled, those students could be placed in programs that were appropriate to their tested achievement levels.

The following report is both a history of the Right-to-Read/Austin project and a guide to establishing a Right-to-Read project in a learning center. This information may be especially helpful to persons planning to develop a reading program or to establish a tutor-training service center at some future date. Because the Right-to-Read/Austin project was designed to be integrated into an existing learning center, details of methods for organizing a learning center *per se* will not be discussed. Further information on this subject may be found in *How to Establish an Adult Learning Center.*[1]

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[1] Division of Extension, The University of Texas at Austin, *How to Establish an Adult Learning Center* (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas at Austin, 1971).

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GOALS

When a Right-to-Read project is established in a learning center, a major consideration is the integration of total effort in order to develop a coordinated educational package. Obviously, the specific nature of R_2R goals complement the broader goals of a learning center; that is, improvement of a student's reading ability increases his opportunity for overall educational enrichment.

Specific program goals will vary, of course, among projects and learning centers, but quite clearly the *student's* broad goal involves the hope of a better life. That broad goal must be kept in mind when developing organizational and educational goals in programs such as these.

Other general goals should be: (1) to provide a program flexible enough to offer opportunities to all nonreaders, whether their inability be due to lack of education, inability to speak English, reading disabilities, or, as is often the case, a combination of these reasons; (2) to offer supportive services in improving reading ability (i.e., comprehension skills) for other learning center activities, such as GED preparation; (3) to coordinate overall activities so that all programs mesh properly, giving students maximum opportunity for self-realization; (4) to offer testing, diagnostic, and placement services to students in all aspects of the learning center operation, as well as prescriptive and remediative services in reading skills (remembering that reading cannot be defined simply as dealing with the printed word—ma.h involves a decoding process that is reading, as does deciphering a blueprint or a schematic); and (5) to offer training services to those in the community who wish to help others learn. Development of tutorial services, through in-service training and through curriculum and methodology instruction, is a clear necessity in all learning centers and in all community-based R_2R projects. Funding levels are such that almost no community-based R_2R project and very few learning centers can survive without qualified and experienced volunteer tutors.

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In almost all community-based R, R projects, the major goal as to location is to establish a site that is convenient to the population being served. This generally means that the site should be *within* a target area. If, however, there is more than one target population or area, then a more centralized location, accessible to all interested students, should be sought. If the total area is too large for easy student transportation, then satellite or feeder facilities should be established.

The Austin Learning Center serves a large enough area to warrant seven outreach or satellite programs. Three of these are located in state institutions, three in Austin Public Library branches, and one in a local Baptist church. (Two other facilities are given materials but are staffed exclusively by volunteer tutors.) Any problems too great for the limited resources of the outreach projects or volunteer projects are referred to the main Austin Learning Center for solution. If the problem involves any aspect of reading, then the reading specialist on staff is consulted.

In a metropolitan area, satellite facilities are important in terms of numbers of students reached, program visibility, and tailoring programs to suit specific ethnic or cultural sub-groups. Use of satellite facilities allows the learning center to enjoy the best of both worlds—i.e., to reach each needy area, as well as to be centrally located. In terms of recruitment, advertising, and convenience to the student, this central/satellite arrangement makes the Austin facilities accessible to essentially all persons who want to participate.

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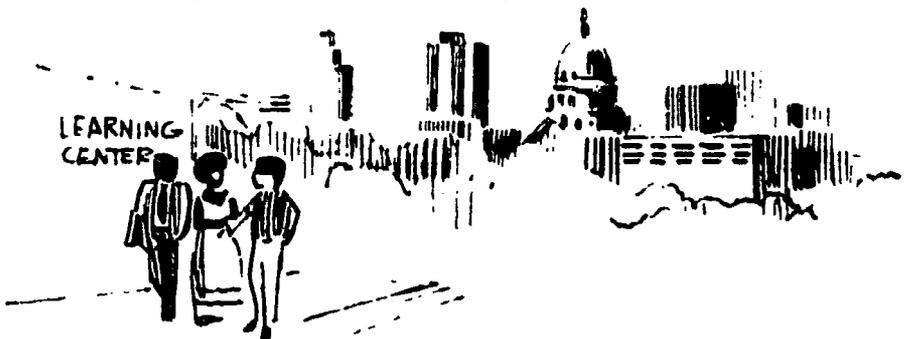
PERSONNEL NEEDS

A learning center/Right-to-Read project should function as if only one staff existed. After all, both staffs share a common goal—education and training—and a common facility. Clearly, a project that is divided against itself cannot succeed. In the R_2R/Austin project, every effort has been made to break down any barriers that might exist between staff members who are in different areas of the project, those who work part-time rather than full-time, or those who are volunteer rather than paid. The possibilities for friction and jealousy are as numerous as the number of personalities on staff, but weekly and monthly staff meetings and in-service training sessions constantly emphasize that, whatever each participant's particular job may be, all staff members and volunteers are joined in one common goal—to create an atmosphere in which learning can flourish.

Obviously, of course, different types of personnel are required for the successful operation of a joint project such as R_2R/Austin. Minimal staff requirements might include: (1) at least one administrator, (2) a cadre of professionally trained instructors (at least one of whom must have training in the particular problems of reading), (3) several part-time teachers, (4) several clerical-level persons (preferably ones who can substitute as teacher aides), and (5) several volunteers.

The administrator should primarily play the role of a coordinator. His function should be to maintain adequate staffing, materials, and records (records of student testing and progress, as well as program records) and to be responsible for reports, public relations, and program and staff development.

The reading specialist should be capable of providing instruction, testing, diagnosis, prescription, and remediation. This person should have experience in materials development and report writing and should be able and willing to double as an ABE instructor when needed.

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The cadre of ABE instructors should be professionally trained, capable of working in an individualized instruction setting, and able to develop materials to fit their needs. Above all, an instructor must have a professional attitude, which is particularly important when volunteer tutors are being trained on the job by working with a professional teacher or observing the reading specialist because this professional attitude rubs off on the volunteer. To successfully meet student needs, the R_2R/Austin center averages about one teacher per twelve students per hour.

Part-time teachers should be either professionally trained or in the process of receiving professional training. They are utilized strictly in the evening, the period of heaviest student attendance.

Clerical personnel should be able to serve as teacher aides when needed. R_2R/Austin has found it advantageous to hire its own graduates for clerical positions. In this way, persons who are aware of the materials and the philosophy of the center remain in the educational setting to help others who follow them. If a promising student passes the GED test at a time when a clerical position is available, that person is offered the position first.

USE OF VOLUNTEER TUTORS

Staff effectiveness in all facets of a R_2R/learning center project can be increased through judicious use of volunteer tutors. Volunteers can be a great asset, provided they are properly counseled as to their role in the total program, their responsibilities to the program and students, and the needs of the overall program. The following can be accomplished through the use of volunteers:

1. Students will receive more individual help than would otherwise be possible.
2. The volunteers themselves will receive free training and experience in proper use of materials, instructional

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methodology and technique, and testing and placement of students. (Availability of well-trained volunteers is of particular importance in the Austin area because student enrollment is increasing, rather than decreasing; presumably, the trend is the same nationwide.)

3. More special subject areas and additional facets of the expected subjects can be explored within the limited facilities of the center.

Volunteers can be used to advantage in the following types of activities:

1. Individual tutoring and drill, such as phonics or spelling.
2. Audiovisual presentations to small groups (thus freeing the instructor to work with students individually).
3. Special enrichment programs or short-term classes (such as income-tax preparation, etc.).
4. Shut-in student visitation and instruction.

Volunteers should receive the same in-service and staff-development training as do regular paid instructors and aides. Volunteers must be made aware of the overall picture, of which their own effort is a viable part. Above all, they must be made to understand that what they are doing is a vital and ongoing function. A student does indeed become dependent on his tutor, whether the tutor be a paid professional or a volunteer. Therefore, if a tutor ceases to attend to a student's needs, then that student in all likelihood will drop out again.

Volunteer tutors characteristically fall into two general categories. One major category of volunteers may be termed specialists. A specialist volunteer feels that he has a specific skill or talent to offer and is generally uninterested in doing anything else or at least in offering to do anything else. This person tends to go into volunteer work at the beginning with a rather uncommitted attitude toward the overall goals of the program in which he offers to help; he is interested only in the particular area in which his skill falls. Such volunteers are of great value to the program as long as their subject area is receiving attention. This type person tends to reject all but

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the most minimal supervision. The on-site supervisor must be prepared to work a great deal with the specialist volunteers in order to involve them in other facets of the program, and therefore, increase their usefulness.

A second major category of volunteers might be termed—for want of a better term—nonspecialized volunteers. These are persons who hear about the program and simply volunteer their services. With proper preparation, these persons can be fitted into most of the areas of need that a program might develop. As a general rule, however, unless some area in which these volunteers work turns out to be of particular interest to them, they tend to drift away after a few months.

Utilizing both of the above-mentioned types of volunteers as reading aides in reading instruction offers them a strong attachment point for their interests and can make them valuable assets to the program. Epner's text[2] on instructing reading aides is a valuable tool, even though there are differences between professional aides and volunteers. Of particular value is her curriculum outline.[3]

Another way to use volunteer tutors is to allow them to specifically deal with their specialities. This is being done in the R_2R/Austin program in which two outreach centers are staffed entirely by volunteers. These centers teach only specific GED areas and for specific amounts of time. A volunteer coordinator is in charge of activities, supervises classes, and takes care of materials requirements.

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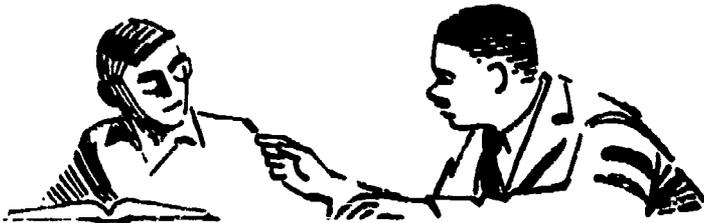
[2] Marcia Epner, *Reading Aid for Reading Aides* (New York: College Skills Center, 1974).

[3] Marcia Epner (curriculum outline for San Antonio College, San Antonio, Texas, 1973).

The number of staff members needed to adequately operate an educational program will vary according to the hours of operation and the primary type of instruction offered. At least one qualified instructor must be present in each location during all hours of operation. In any program of individualized instruction, students work independently until a problem arises that they cannot handle. In a typical Adult Basic Education classroom situation, a teacher and an aide can be expected to handle approximately twenty students per class hour. In a typical English-as-a-second-language (ESL) situation, however, the number of students that a teacher and aide can handle will drop to about twelve to fourteen or even lower, depending on how advanced the students are. In a typical R_2R situation, the number is reduced even more drastically; a teacher and aide can reasonably expect to deal with about eight students per class hour.

Generally, it is difficult to estimate accurately the number of students a learning center can expect to attract. A rough estimate, based on the R_2R/Austin Learning Center experience in its outreach programs, might be that only approximately one-half of 1 percent of those persons who need the program will ever make the initial investigation—i.e., will attend the first few meetings that a center will hold. In other words, if census figures show that an area has approximately one thousand functionally illiterate persons (i.e., with less than an eighth-grade education) within its boundaries, then the usual R_2R/ABE program could expect to attract around five to ten persons the first few nights. This figure may be increased somewhat by an intensive advertising campaign, including a door-to-door campaign, newspaper and radio advertisements, perhaps television advertisements or a billboard in the neighborhood, and particularly posters in all places where the public congregates (self-service laundries, supermarkets, filling stations, churches, etc.).

As news of the program spreads in the neighborhood by word of mouth, the figures will begin to move upward. Programs that are run outside the community or neighborhood are inherently unstable, however, and every care should be taken to understand the neighborhood before setting up a program. The greatest cause for student attrition in R_2R/ABE outreach projects has been shown to be transient teachers. As was pointed out earlier, students form dependencies on teachers; if the teacher leaves, so does the student.

In an area made up of or dominated by one ethnic group, it is best that both teacher and aide also belong to that group. In church facilities, a qualified member of the church or, at least, the same religion is a very powerful and practical addition to the staff.

The importance of carefully surveying an area before making any commitments cannot be overstressed. Potential students, facilities, public places, and advertising opportunities and prevailing neighborhood sentiment are all of crucial importance to a new program.

Equally important is the economic status of the neighborhood or area. If a sizable number of its adult citizens are out of work, a daytime program is feasible; but, if most of the potential students are working, evening programs are clearly the best approach. The Austin project operates its downtown location thirteen hours a day, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays and eight hours on Fridays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. All outreach programs, however, operate only in the evenings, with peak loads coming at about 7:00 p.m. at all sites. Staff and scheduling for all sites presently under $R_2R/$Austin Learning Center control are shown in the following chart.
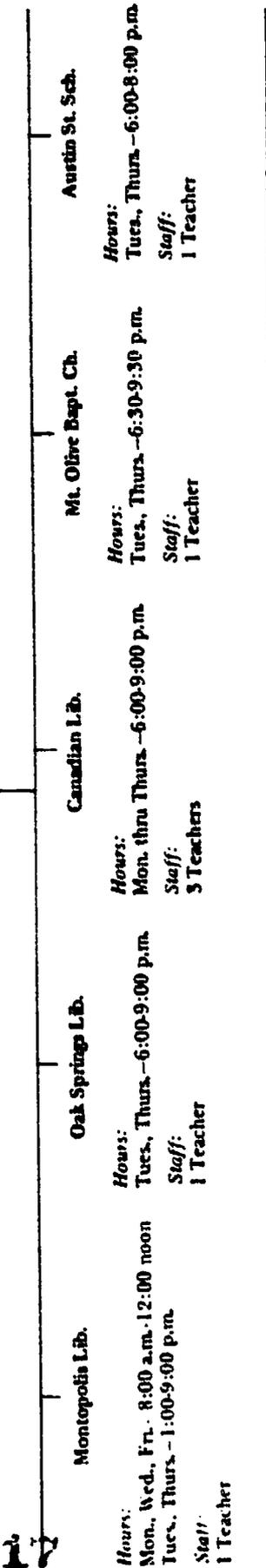
R₂R/AUSTIN LEARNING CENTER ORGANIZATION

ABE and ESL and R₂R/AUSTIN LEARNING CENTER

Hours: Mon. thru Thurs.—8:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.
Fri.—8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Staff:
1 Reading Specialist
3 Instructors
4 Clerk/Aides
3 Part-Time Aides

1 Director/Coordinator
1 Half-Time Lib/ABE Media Specialist
1 Part-Time Instruction

Montopolis Lib.

Hours:
Mon., Wed., Fri.—8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon
Tues., Thurs.—1:00-9:00 p.m.

Staff:
1 Teacher

Oak Springs Lib.

Hours:
Tues., Thurs.—6:00-9:00 p.m.

Staff:
1 Teacher

Canadian Lib.

Hours:
Mon. thru Thurs.—6:00-9:00 p.m.

Staff:
3 Teachers

Mt. Olive Bapt. Ch.

Hours:
Tues., Thurs.—6:30-9:30 p.m.

Staff:
1 Teacher

Austin St. Sch.

Hours:
Tues., Thurs.—6:00-8:00 p.m.

Staff:
1 Teacher

Austin St. Hosp.

Hours:
Tues., Thurs.—9:00-10:30 a.m.
Tues., Thurs., Fri.—1:00-4:00 p.m.
Wed.—9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

Staff:
2 Teachers, 1 Aide

Travis St. Sch.

Hours:
Mon., Wed., Fri.—12:00 noon-1:30 p.m.
Tues., Thurs.—4:00-5:30 p.m.

Staff:
1 Teacher

Allendale Pub. Lib.

Hours:
Tues., Wed.—6:00-9:00 p.m.

Staff:
3 Tutors

Twin Oaks Pub. Lib.

Hours:
Tues., Wed.—6:00-9:00 p.m.

Staff:
2 Tutors

Diagnosis of reading difficulties is essential to any good reading program. An individualized approach to reading or other adult education can be taken only after each student's needs are accurately identified.

In the R₂R/Austin Learning Center, both standardized and informal testing are used. Informal observation and testing are used initially with each adult entering the programs. Adults tend to be wary of anything labeled a test because most remember experiencing failure on tests in school. So as not to scare such students away, several informal methods to assess their abilities are used.

Upon registration, each student is asked to fill out an information sheet. (See appendix.) Besides getting the vital statistics needed for records (i.e., name, address, birthday, etc.), the center is able to assess the student's spelling, reading, grammar, and conceptualization skills. Although the information sheet in no way provides a completely accurate picture of a student's capabilities, it does suggest a starting point for a teacher.

When an adult indicates that he or she plans to attend, the student is given the reading comprehension section of the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, Form W, either Level I or Level II.[4] (This test is given only to students with at least a second-grade word-recognition skill.) From this test, a reading comprehension level, as well as a score on literal comprehension in inferential comprehension, is obtained. This standarized test gives a much more accurate comprehension score than our information sheet, enabling the reading teacher or one of the instructors to assign appropriate materials. Of course, informal assessment is continuous and equally important in providing for individual needs throughout a student's course of study.

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[4] Bjorn Karlsen, Richard Madden, and Eric Gardner, *Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1966).

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An informal reading inventory (IRI) is given to all nonreaders or primary-level readers. The IRI yields a word-recognition level for each student, as well as identifying weaknesses in word-recognition skill. It is perhaps the most valuable tool for individualizing instruction for each student. Occasionally tests corresponding to commercial materials used in teaching are also given to students along with the IRI.

The criterion-referenced test contained in *The Fountain Valley Support System in Reading*[5] offers another means of assessment. This system is very specific in pinpointing weaknesses in reading. Also, it is cross-referenced to materials the instructor may use in helping overcome the problems identified. Unfortunately, this system has been cross-referenced with only a limited number of adult education materials. When the details are completed for cross-referencing teaching alternatives useful for adults and available in ABE learning centers, it will be an extremely valuable tool in individualizing instruction.

The only other standardized test administered at this time in the $R_2 R$/Austin Learning Center is the Reading Everyday Activities in Life (REAL) test.[6] This is a test of a student's ability to read materials often found in daily life. Nine reading activities are included in the REAL test. Originally, this test was not scheduled to be included in the testing program at the Austin project. However, at the insistence of the Pacific T & TA Corporation, the organization responsible for evaluating community-based sites for $R_2 R$ across the nation, the REAL test was administered. It is given as a pretest, and six months later, as a posttest. Pacific T & TA Corporation scores the test booklets and returns the results to each individual program.

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[5] Richard L. Zweig Associates, Inc., *The Fountain Valley Support System in Reading* (Huntington Beach, California: Richard L. Zweig Associates, Inc., 1971).

[6] Marilyn Lichtman, *Reading Everyday Activities in Life* (New York: Cal Press, Inc., 1972).

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The importance of accurate diagnosis and evaluation in a reading or other education-oriented program cannot be overemphasized. No remediation can be successful unless there is an accurate assessment of the individual's needs. As noted above, in the R_2R/Austin program, this diagnosis takes two forms: standardized tests and informal reading inventories and observations. Both types of assessment are believed to be necessary.

It should be pointed out that, for the most part, scoring of the tests used in R_2R/Austin is not complicated. With proper initial supervision, any teacher (or volunteer) can be taught to assess a student's abilities. Standardized and informal assessment tools are essential in education programs and constitute one major area of in-service training and staff development.

STUDENT RECORDS

Keeping complete records of a student seems almost inevitably to become a cumbersome process. Several types of information are needed in the following fields in order to adequately understand and assess a student.

1. Past academic and personal history. (When did the student drop out? What grade was he in? Why did he drop out?)
2. Placement. (What method/test instrument was used initially? What means were used to validate or correct his placement?)
3. Materials used. (What books, supplementary materials, progress tests, etc. were studied?)
4. Progress. (Comparison of pretests and post-tests, GED examinations, etc.)
5. Attendance. (When did he register? How often does he attend? How consistent is he? What is his attitude?)

A record folder for each student in which most of the above-mentioned information can be written has been in use for quite some time at the R_2R center. (See appendix.) In addition to the information written on the folder, pertinent

papers can be placed in the folder, which is designed like a plain manila file folder.

Other records, relating to the operation of the center as a unit, are maintained in different ways. Records indicating the linear progress of $R_2 R$ students are kept in chart form by the reading specialist. These deal with scores on pretests and post test, informal reading assessments, and so forth. Records dealing with student enrollment (registrations, dropouts, graduates, promotions, and ratios of age, sex, ethnicity, etc.), including notations about recruitment methods, successes, and public relations, are kept by the statistician. In the case of the $R_2 R$/Austin, the ESL instructor acted as statistician. Other records that deal with official correspondence, funding, reporting, and similar administrative matters are maintained by the director.

THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The success of the $R_2 R$/Austin Learning Center, or any other learning center, is greatly dependent on the type and quality of the instructional program and materials. Individualized instruction is widely considered to be the best approach to use with adults. Students may work at their own levels and their own speeds without fear of competition. Furthermore, the instruction may be varied to meet the needs of particular students without affecting the others. A semiprogrammed instruction series enables students to work on their own and usually to check their own work. Teachers and aides are always available when a student needs help. The one exception to the individualized concept is in teaching English as a second language. Experience has shown that the mini-group approach works best for this type of learning.

The $R_2 R$/Austin Learning Center divides students into four major groups: (1) level A, (2) level B, (3) level C, and (4) ESL. Each group is further subdivided into stages, of course. Reading instruction is individualized within all four groups. Materials are selected in terms of what will best meet

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the needs of students at each level and at each stage within the four levels. The individualized approach allows a student to begin at the appropriate point for him within a level rather than at the outset of the level.

A student coming to the R₂ R/Austin Learning Center for the first time (or to any of the outreach centers) is greeted by one of the staff members and engaged in conversation. To as great an extent as possible, information is gathered regarding the student's background, probable level, goals that he has set for himself, etc. The student's level is roughly determined by analysis of the information sheet that he is asked to fill out as part of his initial enrollment procedure.

Level A students (equivalent to grades one to three) work primarily with the Mott Basic Language Skills Program,[7] which at its most fundamental level teaches the student to read a page from left to right and from top to bottom. Reading materials developed at the center to supplement the Mott materials are individualized by the reading specialist or take the form of a Reading Skills Development Kit (Copyright The University of Texas at Austin, 1970). The kit breaks into three parts: (1) phonics, (2) structural skills, and (3) dictionary usage. Filmstrips and basic work-texts round out the materials used at level A.

At level B (equivalent to grades four to six), students continue to develop their vocabulary and mathematical skills. Punctuation, parts of speech, and other structural skills are studied. A second level of the Reading Skills Development Kit—for comprehension—was developed (Copyright The University of Texas at Austin, 1972) and is in use. Steck Vaughn work-text materials are widely used in all areas of academic training at this B level and at the following C level. Workbooks at this B level are also from the Noonan-Spradley series[8] and the Mott series. The Noonan-Spradley series is a

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[8] Allied Educational Council, *Noonan-Spradley Diagnostic Program of Computational Skills* (Galien, Michigan: Allied Educational Council).

[7] Allied Educational Council, *Mott Basic Language Skills Program* (Galien, Michigan: Allied Educational Council).

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mathematics series for use from basic concepts through percentages.

The goal of the level C student (equivalent to grades seven to nine) is usually the successful completion of the GED tests. At this stage, the student is reading extensively at advanced levels in different subject areas. A great deal of work at the C level involves reading comprehension in science, literature, and social studies; advanced work in math and grammar continue. The Cambridge Pre-GED[9] series and the Cambridge GED series[10] are both very widely used in this program.

ESL students who already are literate in Spanish are placed in one of the five levels of the Lado English series[11], depending on their capabilities in English. The material provides both oral and written practice and includes explanations of progressively more difficult grammatical constructions. Other materials, particularly the Macmillan English 900 series[12], are also being used with ESL students. For students who are not literate in their own language, instruction is begun with the basic level of the Mott materials, the Language Master, and taped instructional materials.

[9] Angelica W. Cass, *Cambridge Pre-GED Program* (New York: Cambridge Book Co., 1972).

[10] *Cambridge GED Program Correctness and Effectiveness of Expression, General Mathematical Ability, Interpretation of Reading Materials in the Social Studies, Interpretation of Reading Materials in the Natural Sciences,* and *Interpretation of Literary Materials* (New York: Cambridge Book Co., 1973).

[11] Robert Lado, *Lado English Series,* Books 1-5 (New York: Regents Publishing Company, 1970).

[12] *English 900 Series* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964).

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EQUIPMENT

Although the individualized instructional approach is based primarily on the use of textbooks, workbooks, and a great deal of personal attention, some equipment has been shown to be of considerable help to many students. Any piece of equipment is useful only to the extent that it lends itself to a particular student's problems. Hardware does not teach; it merely opens another avenue of approach to resolving a specific area of confusion. The following lists particular kinds of equipment that have been used successfully by the R_2 R/Austin Learning Center.

1. The Language Master (Bell & Howell) Audio-Visual Instructional System. which allows student participation in prerecorded lesson materials.
2. The Bell & Howell Sound-Page Machine.
3. Individual filmstrip viewers and cassette players (particularly good for students in levels B and C who require solitary work).
4. Slide projectors and movie projectors, particularly 8 mm and super 8 mm sound movies (especially strong in natural sciences and social studies areas).
5. Multioutlet tape decks (especially for ESL students, for whom prerecorded repetition drill constitutes a considerable percentage of their work).
6. The Self-Development Computer by Self-Development, Inc. (both standard and sound-assisted models).

RECRUITMENT AND PUBLICITY

An organized and continuous plan for recruitment and publicity is greatly important to the R_2 R/Austin Learning Center, and all such educational facilities. Most of the people whom the program attempts to reach are not readers or researchers and will not be apt to search out an address or phone number in a telephone directory. It is the static, nonachieving, in-a-rut adult who is aware of his inertia but

unaware of what to do about it that this program and all such programs attempt to reach. It is important that publicity activities be continuous because of the transient nature of much of the target population: there is a constant influx of new potential students. Furthermore, experience has shown that most people will pay no attention to what they hear about the program until they are in a position to seriously consider it.

The primary purpose of the recruitment and publicity campaign should be to achieve a sort of cumulative weight in the mind of the potential student, so that if that student begins to seriously consider attending a school, he will have the information automatically at hand. The staff should include a paraprofessional person whose primary responsibility is door-to-door explanation of the programs available. Aside from personal, face-to-face publicity, other types of recruitment should be:

1. Fliers distributed in all target neighborhoods
2. Posters placed at strategic places of public congregation
3. Radio, T.V., and newspaper coverage in the form of advertisements (see sample notices in appendix: insert B)
4. Churches and social organizations, such as day-care centers, community schools, neighborhood centers, and welfare agencies, should be informed—and often reminded—of the existence of the program.

The most successful method of developing student awareness of the program is word-of-mouth information from student-in-fact to student-to-be. Without this grass-roots pressure, no program, no matter how much money it spends on publicity and recruitment, will be successful.

DEVELOPING MATERIALS

The Adult Learning Center sponsored by the Division of Extension of The University of Texas at Austin began operation in October, 1968. Over the first two years, the major conclusion drawn by the staff as to instructional

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materials was that very few educational materials had been developed for use with and by undereducated adults. There were even fewer programs that dealt with reading skills *per se*. As a consequence, in 1970 this learning center, under a grant by the Texas Education Agency, began work on a Reading Skills Development Program, bearing in mind the problems of the students in the program. This first program—using taped materials, Language Masters, Self-Development Computers, and work sheets—dealt with phonics, structural skills, and dictionary usage. A second level, dealing with comprehension, was developed in 1972.

In 1972, R₂R began to be known around the country, and the UT learning center, already committed to the necessity for reading skills improvement, was eager to become a part of a national effort. Immediately after being funded as a community-based site, R₂R/Austin formed a cooperative attempt between the ESL lead teacher and the R₂R reading specialist to produce a content-referenced placement/testing instrument for use with ESL students. At present, the placement/testing instrument is available in seven languages (including English) and is being used with low-level ESL beginning students. Statistics will be forthcoming soon.

A more ambitious project is nearing completion at the present time. Another cooperative venture between the R₂R reading specialist and the ESL lead teacher is to produce a four-level reading program (ESL, primary, first, and second levels). These projects are examples of the types of creative development of materials that can result whenever cooperation between programs is achieved.
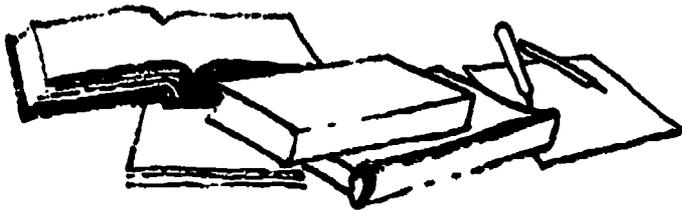
COST ESTIMATE FOR ESTABLISHING A
RIGHT-TO-READ ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
LEARNING CENTER

The following cost estimate is based upon the experiences of the Right-to-Read Adult Basic Education Learning Center in Austin, Texas. The estimate will, of course, vary considerably, depending on the resources available and standard of salaries in a given community. No cost for space rental, utilities, or custodial or maintenance services is included.

Staff

Director-Coordinator (full-time)	$10,000/12-month year
Reading Specialist (full-time)	$ 8,000/12-month year
2 Paraprofessionals (full-time)	$ 9,600/12-month year
TOTAL	$27,600

(The staff is also used to complement existing ABE staff; director-coordinator directs all programs.)

Materials $ 7,500

(Materials are used in conjunction with existing ABE materials purchased from other funding sources.)

Equipment $ 1,500

(Language Masters, tape playback machines, film cartridges, filmstrip projectors, individual filmstrip viewers, filmstrips, etc.)

Other expenses combine for a grand total for the Right-to-Read/Austin budget (direct costs) of $37,000.

SUMMARY

Two years of experience with a coordinated $R_2 R$/ABE Learning Center have shown that such centers can have a great impact upon the communities that they serve. Because such coordinated efforts serve, in effect, as resource depots as

well as instruction and enrichment centers, a far larger percentage of the needs of students can be dealt with. For organizations contemplating development of similar programs, the following points should be remembered.

1. All staff members—full-time, part-time, everybody—must operate as if they were one team Distinctions between or among programs must be minimized.
2. Initial research into community needs and program development along lines that treat the identified needs are essential.
3. Scheduling to serve the needs and convenience of the neighborhood is very important.
4. Centralized record keeping, materials and hardware inventory, and staffing are of considerable aid to the success of the program.
5. Student recruitment and follow-up are absolutely essential. As many of the various public media as possible should be utilized. Continuous recruitment is necessary.
6. Volunteer tutors are the salvation of most R_2 R/ABE projects—at least with regard to community-based sites—and they must be carefully trained in the same manner as are paid instructors. A volunteer tutor-training outline[13] from this program is available.

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[13] Marcia Epner (curriculum outline for San Antonio College, San Antonio, Texas, 1973).

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APPENDIX

During the early months of 1969, it was felt that the placement tests that were being used at the ABE Learning Center in Austin were inadequate for initial placement. The existing tests, W.R.A.T. and the Standard Oral Reading Paragraphs test, were exceedingly slow and cumbersome and for our purposes inaccurate. A new test, it was unanimously felt by the staff, was needed: one that would give an immediate and at least generally accurate placement; one that would be quickly evaluated; and equally important one that would not cause anxiety or hostility on the part of the student.

The staff undertook to write such a placement instrument. It was felt that several things might as well be accomplished at once, and the test was devised so that the student would feel that he was filling out an application questionnaire, rather than taking an examination. A considerable amount of information is necessary in order to complete each student's file folder, so questions relating to the file-folder information were used as the basis for the placement instrument. At a later time, the student's instructor or the teacher-aide can transfer the information from the placement instrument to the file.

Briefly, the rationale for the placement instrument is as follows: if the student can read or write at all, then the questions coming under the A section can most likely be answered. If the student goes no further than the A section, then obviously he is an A-level student and should be placed in the appropriate work-texts. If a student forges ahead into the B section but fades before he finishes, he should be placed in the terminal A group or into the low B-section material. If the student goes through the B group, answering the questions as they stand with accurate and clear answers, then clearly he should be placed into the top end of the B group with C-level material ready for him. If the

student sweeps right on into the C-level questions and answers them correctly without misspellings, bad punctuation, or grammar and has understandable responses that are pertinent to the questions, then the student should be placed in GED preparatory material and readied for the GED tests or should proceed with the GED tests.

The placement instrument accomplishes at least three purposes simultaneously: it offers a gross placement for the incoming student; it accumulates necessary information for the student's information file; it puts the student at ease in the sense that the student feels that he is still in the preliminary stages of his enrollment and is not yet under stress. Also, the instrument gives the instructor a good beginning for judging the student's usable vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and reading ability. All of this information is valuable in setting up a program of individualized instruction for the student.

INFORMATION SHEET

A

1. Write or print your name

2. What is your address?

3. What is the date today?

4. Do you have a telephone?
   What is the number?

5. Are you married?   What is your husband's
   name (or wife's name)?

6. When is your birthday?

7. When were you born?

B

1. Are you a citizen of the United States?

2. Are you a citizen by birth or by naturalization?

3. Do you maintain private transportation?

4. If so, what type?

5 Do you possess a valid driver's license?

6. What is your ethnic origin?

7. Are you a registered voter in the state of Texas?

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8. If you are presently employed, please indicate whether you are employed on a full-time or a part-time basis.

9. How long have you worked for your present employer on the job that you now hold?

10. Do you subscribe to an Austin newspaper?

11. Do you subscribe to other newspapers or magazines?

12. If so, please list them.

13. Do you own (or have ready access to) a television set?

14. Do you own a radio, or is one available to you?

15. Please answer the following questions with either *fine, good, fair, poor,* or *bad.*
    a. How is your vision?
    b. How is your hearing?
    c. How is your general health?

16. Please write in words the number of times you estimate that you visit the doctor each year:

17. How did you learn about this program?

C

1. Please write a brief and pertinent paragraph explaining how you were made aware of this program:

2. Please write a paragraph telling the aspirations that you have that you feel can be enhanced or furthered by the program that you are now beginning.

3. Please write a paragraph about yourself as you see yourself. You may reiterate the information that you have already given in the above paragraph.

4. Give me the information that you feel will be most helpful in aiding an instructor who is trying to prepare a program of instruction suited to your particular needs.

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THE RECORD FOLDER

The record folder shown on the following two pages was developed by the Austin Adult Learning Center staff in an effort to combine in one location information useful to ABE teachers and information required by the Texas Education Agency regarding all of their projects. Ideally, a teacher can determine almost at a glance everything he needs to know about a student even if he has never worked with that student.

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SAMPLE FLYERS

COME ONE
COME ALL

YOU'RE INVITED
A B C
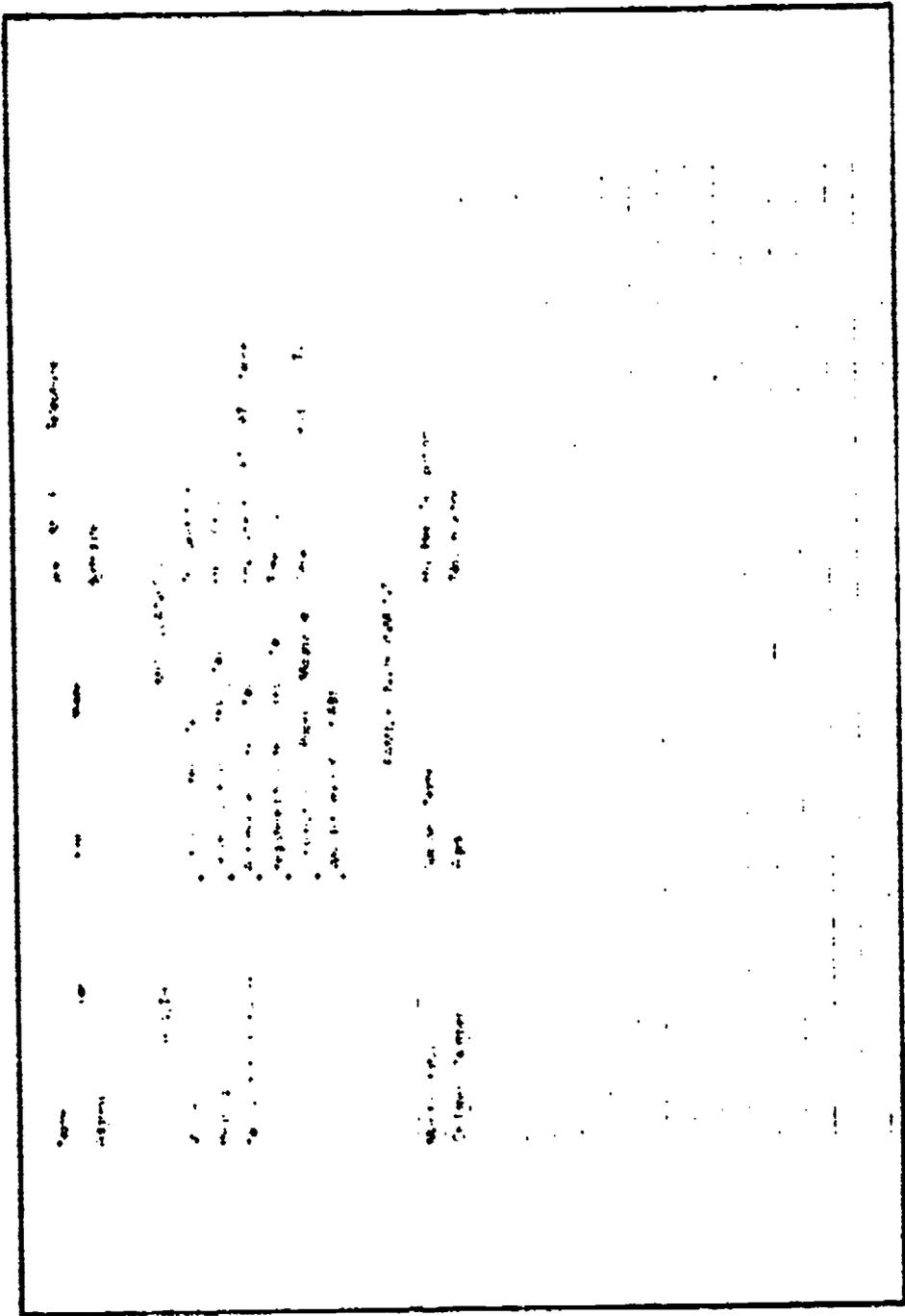
W E L C O M E

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