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ABSTRACT

The book contains 15 papers focusing on adult illiteracy in Great Britain in the context of the community, but excluding the prison population, trainees at Adult Training Centres, patients in mental hospitals, or literacy education in the armed forces. The papers are presented in three sections. Part 1 on students contains six papers: "The Scale of the Problem?" a British Association of Settlements Conference Paper; "They Look Normal--But..." by Dr. Susan Shrapnel; "The Adult Illiterate" by Bob Kedrey; "Communications and Recruitment" by Bob Kedney and Connie Timpson; "Assessment and Diagnosis of Adult Illiterates" by Geoff Allen; and "Approaches to Literacy" by Geoffrey Thornton. Part 2 on staffing cortains four papers: "Recruitment of Tutors" by Elaine McMinnis; "Staff Development and Training" by Bob Kedney; "What and How?" by Donald Moyle; and "Sources and Resources" by Tom MacFarlane. Part 3 on aspects of organization contains five papers: "Structures of Adult Literacy Provision" by Margaret Ben-Tovim; "The Functions of Management of Literacy Provision" by Hazel Veall; "Inter-Agency Co-operation" by Dr. Michael Stephens and Roger Bruton; "Adult Literacy: An Approach to a Theory of Behavioural Competence" by Wilf Connor; and "The Future" by Lady Plowden. One page of notes on contributors is included. (JR)

ASPECTS OF ADULT ILLITERACY

A Collection of Papers

Editors.
Margaret Ben-Tovim and R.J.Kadney

Merseyside and District Institute of Adult Education —
Cheshire County Council

1976
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This collection of papers on aspects of adult illiteracy represents one of the first major attempts at comment on provision from those working directly in the field. The editors wish to thank the authors for their contributions, freely given, and for their forbearance under strain, Cheshire County Council without whose financial support production would not have been possible, and the Merseyside and District Institute of Adult Education.

The physical production of the report has been undertaken by Mr S Baldwin, Area Organiser for Adult Education at Macclesfield College of Further Education through Mrs K Singleton and Mrs P Richmond to whom our many thanks are also given.

FOREWORD

LADY PLOWDEN

To the general public adult illiteracy, when it is encountered, is too often considered both as slightly humorous and at the same time as a reflection on the character of the illiterate. It should be more widely understood as the tragedy it is for the individual concerned. The growing publicity being given at present to the lack of literacy of some school leavers may help to dispel the lack of understanding of the problem and of its size. It is likely however, that the belief that illiterates are necessarily delinquent will die hard.

There are now well over two hundred literacy schemes in England - these have grown from about ten in 1950. They work in differing ways and are run by both voluntary and statutory agencies. Because of the nature of the problem there is no one solution; there will continue to be the need for a wide variety of approaches to suit the individual differences of the illiterates.

What is lacking is a central agency for the dissemination of information among all who are working in this field.

This collection of papers underlines the need for a study of the whole problem and for an exchange of ideas about what is being done and how effective it is.

The thanks of the estimated two million adult illiterates in this country should go to the Merseyside and District Institute of Adult Education for their initiative in producing these papers, for the energy with which they have tackled the project and for their willingness to finance it.

INTRODUCTION

Margaret Ben-Tovim and R J Kedney

We present these papers in an atmosphere where the whole field of adult illiteracy has gained a new found popularity. This is directly linked to the Russell Report, the pioneering work of the Cambridge House Literacy Scheme and conferences on the subject such as those organised by N.A.R.E. and B.A.S. The result has been rapid expansion from isolated pockets of experience developed in the mid 1960's to the first buddings of a more general pattern of provision.

Our problem is one of a dearth of well founded information and advice. Previous experience has tended to be loosely structured, undefined and grounded in particular local situations. There is a lack of evidence for generalisations in a sensitive field where initiatives need to be successful and be seen to be successful. However, early successes with numbers of highly motivated students indicate the need for injections of human, physical and economic resources.

Fundamental problems on the meaning of literacy in our society, the dimensions of illiteracy, its relationship to personal autonomy and to a downward spiral of human misery need to be explored. Problems such as the relative merits of individual and group tuition, or the shortcomings of child-centred books used in an adult context, need to be seen in their true perspective: important but very much taking their place in the mainstream struggle for more recognition and resources. Problems of evaluation of needs, of teaching methodologies, and of assessment need to be used as means to exploring wider issues.

This book is a collection of papers making initial forays into a number of selected fields. The boundaries of the provision covered by these papers needs definition as they focus on adult illiteracy in the context of the community and exclude the prison population, trainees at Adult Training Centres, patients in mental hospitals or literacy provision made by the Armed Forces. Borders, however, are clearly flexible and overlapping is inevitable in areas of methods, materials, research etc.

The range of authors, subjects, depth and style is deliberately diverse and so attempts to reflect the situation in the field. Thanks are due to Cheshire County Council and the Merseyside and District Institute of Adult Education for initiatives and production. Though parochial and no doubt limited, with a limited life in what needs to be a rapidly moving field, the book attempts to offer glimpses of aspects of the work and is intended to feed and encourage the production of specialist papers and books.

PART ONE

STUDENTS

Dear Mrs
Bentovim got your letter
throw the posts I think you
really no I was going
for me I did one a learning
But everthink I got I forgot
the next day. sorry for wasting
Shared time I supose he thinks I am a
right Barsted. for not telling him I was
not comeing. just tell him am sorry
for not letting him. See the thing
is

that you got a Brains or you havent.
well Me I haunt got Brains I got no Brains
for anythink. just thick A DIVE. just one
big tall lad of a DIVE. anyway the rest
all like me the peple who come to
you Help

keep up the good work
please [crossed out]
[crossed out] Sincerely

Dear Mrs Bentovim,

I would like it made known at the meeting on Thursday. How much I appreciate all you and Mrs Robb have done for me.

Mrs Robb has taught me more in the short time I have known her, than all the teachers put to-gether did, while I was at school. All my adult life I have longed to be able to read and write. Now I can. Not only has Mrs Robb helped me with reading and writing and an outline of English Grammar, she has built up my self-confidence to such a degree, that I am actually looking forward to joining an Evening Class in the near future, at a Technical College.

I know I speak for all the group when I say Mrs Robb will never know just how greatful we all are for all the help, and spare time she has given up for us. It grieves all of us to know that she gets no financial reward for all her hard work.

Please forgive me for not signing my name, but it is important to me and my future progress that no one outside the group knows about my problem.

Thank you once again
From a Group Member.

1.

ADULT ILLITERACY: THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM?

The accompanying paper produced by the British Association of Settlements attempts to illustrate something of the dimensions of the problems but is it too rosy a picture?

1 It needs to be pointed out that all of these figures relate to adults with a reading age of less than 9 years. It has now been suggested that the crude target of a Reading Age of 9 years is meaningless, 12 or 13 years is more likely for competence - see the Newson Report (1962). The figures could therefore possibly be meaningfully doubled or trebled.

2 How far are Reading Ages based on tests for children a useful indicator of competence?

3 Cross - cultural comparisons with other Western Cultures are scarce but indicate that 1% to 3% of the adult population estimated as in need is far too low a figure.

British Association of Settlements
Adult Literacy Campaign.

EXTENT OF ADULT ILLITERACY IN ENGLAND AND WALES

The 1971 Census returns indicate that there are approximately 36,800,000 people over the age of 18 (i.e. in the adult population) in England and Wales.

The National Foundation for Educational Research has made six surveys of reading ability since 1948. The results are summarized in 'The Trend of Reading Standards' (1972 - Slough: NFER).

If one takes a figure more modest than the average of these results one can estimate that at the very least 0.5% of the adult population may be classified as illiterate, and at the very least 2.5% as semi-literate, making a total of 3% (i.e. over 1 million adults) whose reading and writing ability is poorer than that of a nine-year-old.

The particularly alarming result of the 1971 survey is that the consistent improvement in reading standards indicated by surveys since 1948 has not continued, and that the proportion of school-leavers who still lack basic literacy skills has not decreased and, if anything, may even be greater.

This is an extremely modest estimate for the following reasons:-

1) We have based the actual number on those 18 years and over, thereby not taking account of those aged between 16 and 18 years who are in fact in the adult population.

2) The picture presented by the 1948, 1952 and 1956 studies is undoubtedly rosier than in pre-war England and Wales. We are therefore applying modest post-war assessments to those age groups over 25 years, who almost certainly contain a higher proportion of illiterates. This is particularly true of those born prior to 1896 and up to those likely to benefit from the 1944 Education Act - numbering some 18 million.

3) The same figures have been applied to Wales although the 'Trend of Reading Standards' (p.19) says that 'comparison between the results of the 1956 W.V. Survey of Wales and that of England shows that Welsh pupils at age 11 and 15 were scoring significantly less than average in the W.V. tests than their English contemporaries...'

4) Special Schools were omitted from the NFER surveys thereby concealing the statistics of those who 'would undoubtedly be among the worst readers of their ages in the school population'.

COUNTY COUNCILS	NO. OF ILLITERATES
Anglesey	1352
Bedfordshire	6367
Berkshire	11556
Breconshire	1239
Buckinghamshire	13335
Caernarvonshire	2734
Cambridgeshire	6615
Cardiganshire	1197
Carmarthenshire	3742
Cheshire	24044
Cornwall	8492
Cumberland	4961
Denbighshire	3962
Derbyshire	15021
Devonshire	9887
Dorset	8044
Durham	18533
Essex	25872
Flint	3978
Glamorgan	16555
Gloucestershire	12681
Hampshire	22333
Herefordshire	3186
Hertfordshire	20324
Huntingdon and Peterborough	4345
Isle of Man	1282
Isle of Wight	2358
Isle of Scilly	45
Kent	30625
Lancashire	55287
Leicestershire	13273
Lincolnshire (Holland)	2362
Lincolnshire (Kesteven)	3542
Lincolnshire (Lindsay)	8340
Merionethshire	841
Monmouthshire	7893
Montgomeryshire	983
Norfolk	10057
Northamptonshire	7677
Northumberland	11533
Nottinghamshire	15063
Oxford	6086
Pembrokeshire	2250
Radnorshire	416
Rutlandshire	675
Shropshire	7582
Somerset	13513
Staffordshire	15729
Suffolk-East	5906
Suffolk-West	3796
Surrey	22504

COUNTY COUNCILS	NO. OF ILLITERATES
Sussex-East	9945
Sussex-West	11085
Teeside	9252
Warwickshire	14071
Westmorland	1636
Wiltshire	11009
Worcestershire	10253
Yorkshire-East Riding	5746
Yorkshire-North Riding	7573
Yorkshire-West Riding	40365

COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL	NO. OF ILLITERATES
Barnsley	1708
Barrow-in-Furness	1433
Bath	1930
Birkenhead	3229
Birmingham	24444
Blackburn	2250
Blackpool	3375
Bolton	3431
Bootle	1795
Bournemouth	3469
Bradford	6682
Brighton	3681
Bristol	9623
Burnley	1755
Burton-upon-Trent	1143
Bury	1525
Canterbury	745
Cardiff	6467
Carlisle	1595
Chester	1381
Coventry	7492
Darlington	1897
Derby	4882
Dewsbury	1199
Doncaster	1879
Dudley	4079
Eastbourne	1577
Exeter	2077
Gateshead	2155
Gloucester	2027
Great Yarmouth	1188
Grimsby	2182
Halifax	2155
Hartlepool	2225
Hastings	1665
Huddersfield	2947
Ipswich	2745
Kingston-upon-Hull	6529
Leeds	11457
Leicester	6223
Lincoln	1710
Liverpool	13698
Luton	3631
Manchester	13358
Merthyr Tydfil	1334
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	5325
Newport	2513
Northampton	2785
Norwich	2727
Nottingham	6743
Oldham	2533

COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL	NO. OF ILLITERATES
Oxford	2486
Plymouth	5557
Portsmouth	4594
Preston	2189
Reading	2841
Rochdale	2054
Rotherham	1955
St. Helens	2317
Salford	2949
Sheffield	11813

LONDON COUNTY COUNCILS	NO. OF ILLITERATES
ILEA	65835
Barking	3848
Barnet	7200
Bexley	4840
Brent	6334
Bromley	6898
Croydon	7366
Ealing	6831
Enfield	6021
Haringey	5717
Harrow	4685
Havering	5688
Hillingdon	5303
Hounslow	4669
Kingston-upon-Thames	3161
Merton	4128
Newham	5963
Redbridge	5548
Richmond	4095
Sutton	3744
Waltham Forest	5400

2. 'THEY LOOK NORMAL, BUT...'

Susan Shrapnel

In teaching non-literate adults, are we engaged in social work or in politics?

I would like to offer a brief sketch of these two main alternatives. If anyone thinks we are or should be engaged in pure education, that is to say in transferring skills without any presupposition in our organization, teaching structures, or teaching materials, as to the relationships between the learner and the world, I should like to hear it argued.

The most convenient place to start on the social work approach is Peter Clyne's book The Disadvantaged Adult. (1). When you look for what he has to say about literacy teaching you will find it in the chapter headed 'The Backward Adult'. Are all your students backward? Mine can play the electric guitar, raise tomatoes, supervise the cooking of school dinners, bring up children under persecution by a wife-beater, run a haulage business, nurse the sick, and even keep their sense of humour. I don't think I know what 'backward' means. The Elfrida Rathbone Society's Annual Report 'puts the problem succinctly', says Mr Clyne:

> 'In very general terms, a backward child is educationally inadequate and a problem in the school. A backward adult is socially inadequate and a problem in the community.' (2)

The transition is illogical: school is, unfortunately, a one-purpose institution, society is manifold. My students seem to me to have problems, not to be problems.

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(1) Longmans, 1972
(2) op. cit.

But the director of a literacy project attached to an LEA evening centre in Lancashire thinks I'm wrong. He thinks that his students have IQs between 75 and 90; that they are classic 'social problem' people; that their illiteracy is caused by being in a band just above the ESN and special-treatment level at school - they looked normal, but couldn't quite cope, and so slid through school just failing all along the line. He thinks some of them will never learn to read, and that he's fulfilling the purpose of his job if he helps them adjust to society and makes them a bit happier. I haven't named him because I wasn't making notes, and I may have misquoted. But I was too busy worrying about the behaviour of my volunteer tutors if they believed him, and met their students with their heads full of 'They look normal, but....'

I don't IQ-test my students, so I can't simply disprove what he says; but it isn't a typical profile in my experience. Nor, it seems, in that of the Lancashire principal quoted in their adult education news-sheet (1) (Can it be the same scheme?), who seems to have some genuinely normal people coming to learn. Only he calls them 'clients'. Why? Does he call the people in his Keep-fit and O level French classes 'clients'?

The social work approach, then, implies the inadequacy of the student (by criteria only defined as 'social'); it sees the teacher's job as adjustment; it risks expecting little learning and settling for the performance of limited tasks; it risks also fostering dependence and reinforcing the student's vision of himself as inferior. It also - these

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(1) Lancashire FORUM, no. 1 Autumn 1973

points I haven't illustrated, though they are consistent - implies indifference to the nature of the teaching material as long as it does the job (what job?), and so tolerance of childish stuff; acceptance of the marginality in terms even of adult education resources, and the 'remedial' - that is to say, hole-patching - nature of present provision; and a wholesale belief in the professional's competence to solve the problem. It needs no search for structures other than the carefully-protected class or the one-to-one pair, because the student's deference and isolation are not, in this view, part of his problem, though his confidence may be. It will cause nobody in authority any trouble. There may be few people who hold all these views, though I have suggested that they do make up a consistent position; but it is a position that underlies a lot of what is going on at the moment.

The political approach, on the other hand, sees the student as a person wronged and deprived, not as a backward person. It sees the teacher's job as setting objectives that have no prescribed limit, and which include all the disturbance and creation of consciousness of which any education is capable. It wishes to foster the independence and wholeness of the student. In order to do this, it demands learning material that is related to the basic concerns and growing points in the student's mind; it will press constantly for expansion of provision, for national recognition of the problem, and of the general cultural and educational dividedness of which it is the most acute symptom; and it will eagerly, not just as an expedient, involve the non-professional (though not necessarily unpaid?) teacher, both because he can know and teach someone like himself and won't need to blame either himself or the student for past failures, and because a body of teachers of this kind is the beginning of a campaign. It suggests that links

should be sought with workers' organizations and all who are concerned to define and improve a class position. It may find research objectives, not purely of a 'reading-technical' nature: I'll indicate one below. It needs to find a way of creating among students solidarity, mutual help, and the shedding of self-reproach and shame by recognition of a common problem and the growth of indignation. It will cause trouble by demanding more resources for its own work, for the schools where the problem arises, for jobs for its students to go to; and by using 'controversial' teaching material. It doesn't yet altogether exist, or if it exists as ideas, it governs no scheme at present working. No doubt plenty of people will tell me of the risks and dangers if it should.

> 'In accepting the illiterate as a person who exists on the fringe of society, we are led to view him as a sort of 'sick man', for whom literacy would be the 'medicine' to cure him, enabling him to return to the 'healthy' structure from which he has become separated. Educators would be benevolent counsellors, scouring the outskirts of the city for the stubborn illiterates, runaways from the good life, to restore them to the forsaken bosom of happiness by giving them the gift of the word.
>
> In the light of such a concept - unfortunately, all too widespread - literacy programmes can never be efforts toward freedom; they will never question the very reality which deprives men of the right to speak up - not only illiterates, but all those who are treated as objects in a dependent relationship. These men, illiterate or not, are, in fact, not marginal. What we said before bears repeating: they are not 'beings outside of'; they are 'beings for another'. Therefore the solution to their problem is not to become 'beings inside of', but men freeing themselves; for, in reality, they are not marginal to the structure, but oppressed men within it. Alienated men, they cannot overcome their dependency by 'incorporation' into the very structure responsible for their dependency. There is no other road to humanization theirs as well as everyone else's - but authentic transformation of the dehumanizing structure.
>
> From this last point of view, the illiterate is no longer a person living on the fringe of society, a marginal man, but rather a representative of the dominated strata of society, in conscious or unconscious opposition to those who, in the same structure, treat him as a thing. Thus, also, teaching men to read and write is no longer an inconsequential matter of ba, be, bi, bo, bu, of memorizing an alienated word, but a difficult apprenticeship in naming the world.' (1)

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(1) Paulo Freire, Cultural Action for Freedom (Penguin,1972), p.28.

Isn't this more use to us than 'The backward adult is a problem in society'?

The first stage, perhaps, is to be absolutely clear that they are inconsistent with each other.

Shouldn't we investigate the existence of a 'culture of silence' and a 'dictator society' within this country (to use two more of Freire's terms), and see if they alienate written language even from the eloquent speaker? How much has this contributed to our students' past failures and present fears and difficulties?

Shouldn't we work as a first priority, and with all the time and skill we have, not at counting illiterate adults, but at creating and making available writing for them to read and learn with, that will give them the freedom of their native language, and help them define what has been done to them in this and other areas of life?

3. "THE ADULT ILLITERATE"

R J Kedney

At this stage in our experience it is dangerous if not impossible, to adopt a classical model of "the adult illiterate". Far too little is known at this stage to attempt to start to generalise when fundamental issues such as what you mean by literacy or illiteracy, or its function in our society, have yet to be considered. The adult illiterate student is, by his or her very nature, untypical. How can a sample of 1%, at best, of those who are semi-or totally illiterate be taken as indicative of the other 99% of adults with literacy problems? Equally, how can schemes which by their very nature, their location, catchment areas, publicity methods, teaching approaches, resources and so on, generalise from their own particular backgrounds? Cross-scheme studies comparing, say, the provision in the college at Altrincham with the Liverpool University Settlement Project and with an evening institute in Wigan or Warrington may tell us something more about the reality of the 1% who, at best, are currently involved.

Rather than attempt to look in depth at a single adult illiterate, the following is intended to illustrate aspects of the meaning of illiteracy in our society. Our limited contact has given limited insights, rather like trying to wear a blindfold for an hour to simulate blindness. The anecdotal approach that has been adopted is intended to reflect the fragmented nature of our insights into the meaning of adult illiteracy in England and Wales. What is needed is authoritative research and in-depth studies into a subject that is essentially taboo in our society.

What this study may prove is that illiteracy crosses social class, financial, geographical and even educational boundaries so that it becomes clearer that there but for the grace of ..... go I.

New Students

The following anecdotes are taken from reminiscences of interviews, both formal and informal with students, comments over a cup of tea or chance meetings in the street. As such they are not verbatim records from formalised situations but nonetheless they may give some insights into aspects of the complexity of our knowledge of our existing student body.

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1 After some discussion and liberal distribution of cigarette ash from chain smoking and trembling hands at an initial meeting, we eventually "defined" a writing problem for a man, in his mid-thirties and clearly reasonably intelligent ....."Write down your name and address produced a response. Fine, your handwriting is better than mine, now write down a simple letter."

The product quickly became illegible for when the would-be student couldn't spell a word he scribbled and tried to memorise the message. He had found, until now, that this would get him by. The man worked in communications in the Royal Naval Reserve and though competent with electronic gadgetry, he was shortly to go to sea and would have to send written messages from the bridge to gunnery and rocket batteries - What price our Navy?

2 Mrs S. after three cups of tea and much sympathetic chat came to the crux of her problem. As a middle class woman, married to a bank manager with two children receiving private education and doing very well, she felt totally inadequate and completely unimportant to her family. The reason-Mrs S. could not write a coherent, well spelt letter, could not read anything complicated and could not thus help her family in any work in which they were involved. She felt depressed, full of shame, totally inadequate and convinced of her own stupidity. That was eighteen months ago. She has now taken a secretarial job and is about to start an 'O' level course next September.

3 Mr H. took a long time to admit that he could not read or write and even longer to say why he wanted to learn. His probation officer had brought him along to the scheme and his attitude was a mixture of shame at his failure, resentment at being brought to yet another 'social agency' as he saw it. Desire to be able to read a book and the wish that this skill could be gained overnight with no work on his part. We are still working with Mr H. He is progressing slowly but surely although we have a sneaking suspicion that his progress is due to the fact that his tutor is a very attractive young woman with whom he has formed a close friendship.

4 Our Mary was (or should it be still is?) an incredibly shy but pretty young girl in her twenties who was brought by her parents who stood and waited all evening. After leaving special school she helped at

home, never took up a job and lived a sheltered, almost cloistered, life. She had to be matched at first with tutors who were women as she jumped nervously and was distracted by the presence of men. The parents asked for guidance, extra tuition, home coaching, book lists etc. etc. and clearly felt the social stigma which they had focussed on illiteracy. Mary did not need to read and did not particularly wish to learn.

Placement directly into a group situation may have seemed cruel but Mary is progressing well, still tends to blush and now also attends a cookery class in a local evening centre. Her literacy skills are improving too.

5 Mr Y. is a partner in a business, he is very confident on the surface and has built up his business without his partner knowing that he is illiterate. They initially established a division of labour which has operated ever since. Mr Y. has been living under a lot of strain due to the deception involved and came for tuition on the advice of his doctor. He is singleminded about the task and knows exactly what he wants from the learning situation. He has progressed so quickly that he should be ready for a general English class in a few months.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND RECRUITMENT

R J Kedney

Literacy teaching is an aspect of communications, as indeed is any teaching activity. This short paper attempts to suggest that in making provision for literacy teaching other aspects of communications can also usefully be explored in order to support face-to-face teaching activities. Information-giving and receiving about adult literacy problems and teaching between organisers, tutors, students and the communities in which they work can be concerned with more than recruitment for initial survival. Communications within the system of provision at staff and student levels are elements of other papers and it is intended here to touch upon aspects of publicity, recruitment and community education. After some initial general observations Mrs Timpson discusses approaches to recruitment in the light of her experience in North Cheshire.

Communications can be seen as being developed to serve several functions, the most obvious being recruitment of students and staff, but channels can also be built to inform and educate society about the nature and causes of adult illiteracy problems as well as to encourage support for meaningful provision. It can also be concerned with developing greater understanding amongst those in the community who meet the problem at first hand, both in family and authority settings. Publicity concerned with recruitment often does little to highlight to the authors the stress or the complexities of reading one's income tax return forms, the car handbook or the instructions on local buses.

The development of information giving will not however be complete unless it is counterbalanced by a return flow of information about adult literacy from staff, students and the community. Staff meetings and a communal teabreak may provide valuable elements but so too can telephone conversations and an open-door policy. What price an appropriate counterpart to parents'evenings through contact with literate husbands/wives and employers,with meetings for families to discuss the nature of literacy and the supportive role they can play or for employers, staff at post offices, employment exchanges etc. to inform them on how to recognise literacy problems and of the educational provision that is available?

The development of channels of communication would seem to need to take cognisance of a number of factors,for though there would seem to have been little research into the effects of publicity, even on aspects of recruitment, work in allied fields offer some guidelines. To some degree the nature of publicity will determine student and staff recruitment: because of adult education's bias towards middle class involvement, information in the public library is liable to contact different people from publicity and support from staff in the Labour Exchange. Equally close contacts with the Probation or Social Service Departments is likely to lead to different students than referrals from churches or schools. A study of the relationships between recruitment, communication processes and the local community could prove valuable.

Any publicity effort must be related to both the objectives it is intended to serve and to the processes it will utilise and hence will need to consider existing communication networks at both formal and informal levels. In general terms major urban, suburban and rural settings will tend to have significant differences and hence demand different approaches.

The local post office in a village, pubs and clubs in a dormitory town and the local radio station in a major city offer potential examples of different agencies.

Communities have existing communication networks and messages need to be placed within these if they are to be utilised. At a formal level the mass media of T.V., radio and the press, either nationally, regionally or locally are supplemented by church newsletters, football programmes etc. and the work of local organisations and officials. At an informal level family and neighbourhood networks, the factory shop floor, the working men's clubs and the launderettes are all contact points. Entry is also made through formal agencies such as trade union official notices, a leaflet dissemination and advertisement.

Communications in a community context would therefore seem to need to be considered in a number of dimensions and be based on local study if it is to be meaningfully utilised rather than left to chance. Recruitment needs to be related to resources and objectives and a two-way flow of information will enable a more meaningful definition of community needs than may at first seem possible.

RECRUITMENT

C M Timpson

It is not until one tries to recruit students for Adult Illiteracy classes that one realises how isolated these people are. Not only are they unable to read and write well enough to respond to advertisements but their embarrassment is such that often members of their own family are unaware of their predicament.

If publicity remains at the level of the poster in a Borough Library reading - " Adult Illiteracy Classes are now held at ... etc." it would be laughable were it not so sad. It is rather like seeking T-Totallers in a four-ale bar. It could well be amended to - "You enjoy reading, many can't. If you know anyone who would like to read better, tell them etc." Better still is Cheshire's effort. A similar message, with the address and phone number of the nearest college of F.E. was printed on bookmarks. These, being taken home, could be referred to and passed on.

Before going any further it is essential that careful plans are made to receive any response there may be. The simplest message to put over is "Ring a given number and ask for the Reading Teacher". When the student has done this his path should be made as smooth as possible, for if he is put off he may not try again. This means making sure that office staff are primed. In my own college any caller, in person or by telephone, who asks for me is put in touch at once. No questions are asked, no forms produced. A colleague takes over in my absence. The name and address should be taken, and an appointment made for a private interview, as soon as possible. Speed is important as courage soon evaporates.

Since our clients are functionally illiterate, some other method of direct publicity must be found, although an advertisement should certainly go in the local paper. Writing ought to be mentioned as many adequate readers are unable to spell at all. It is better to put in a separate, displayed advertisement, rather than have it included in the College list of Evening Classes. A coupon, with a space for name, address and telephone number to be returned for further information, often gets results.

Local Radio and T.V. are obviously going to reach non-readers, but the areas they cover are wide and some kind of central clearing house is needed and can only be utilised when adequate resources are available locally to cope with the response. The North West Regional Council for F.E. kindly undertook this duty for the area and their telephone number was broadcast and callers were passed on to their nearest class teacher. Functionally illiterate adults often have no trouble with numbers. They can't use the Directory but seem to use the telephone competently if not confidently. Instructions as to time and place should be very clear and repeated several times. Remember - they can't write it down!

After a while, students will talk about the class and may bring a friend who is in the same boat. They recognise, in others, the ploys they used themselves and will pass on the good news. Any opportunity the teacher has to talk about his work should be exploited. In a suburban or rural setting many local societies, Townswomen's Guilds, Women's Institutes, Church Groups, are glad of a speaker - especially a free one. This is a good opportunity to educate the community in the plight of the illiterate. Counter-clerks and shop assistants,

receptionists and hall-porters, should be made aware that a proportion of the people they meet are unable to read notices or fill in forms and would rather go away than admit it! We need another Winston Churchill or Ernest Gowers to lead a campaign for the simplication of notices and application forms. Certainly one passenger in every load on a Pay-As-You-Enter bus, is unable to read the instructions.

A short circular letter should go to all social services in the area, including General Practitioners, Opticians, Ministers of Religion, Probation Officers, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Employment Exchanges, Marriage Guidance Counsellors and the Personnel Managers of local firms. Local Education offices need to be reminded that the classes exist and that enquiries there should be handled gently. Heads of Primary Schools are often aware of a parent's illiteracy and are in a position to 'have a quiet word' with an illiterate Mum suggesting that she might like to keep up with her children. The message really is - 'Get yourself talked about'. The local paper may be willing to send a photographer and print an illustrated article, but great care must be taken to protect the anonymity of the class. A pleasant room with modern apparatus being used by volunteers (Members of Staff!) with their backs to the camera presided over by a cheerful teacher will certainly provide useful publicity.

Since fifty per cent of students in our classes here in Altrincham have left school in the last five years, it seems a pity to let one in seventeen leave in this condition without knowing where to seek help. They may well have a 'couldn't care less' attitude now, but in a year or two this will change. As a result of a meeting with local secondary school teachers, any child in the last year at school who is going to

leave semi-literate, may be released for an hour or so a week, to have lessons at the College Reading Centre. This is quite voluntary and will, we hope, bridge the gap. The Peripatetic Reading Teacher working with the Educational Psychologist are encouraged to bring their older pupils, if only for a visit. For the best, they may learn more successfully in a new environment; at the worst, they will know where to get help when they are ready for it.

Each district is different and so new students should be asked "How did you hear about us?" The best method in a particular area can then be discovered. If no students are forthcoming, it isn't because there aren't any in your area. You aren't looking hard enough.

5. ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS OF ADULT ILLITERATES

Geoffrey Allen

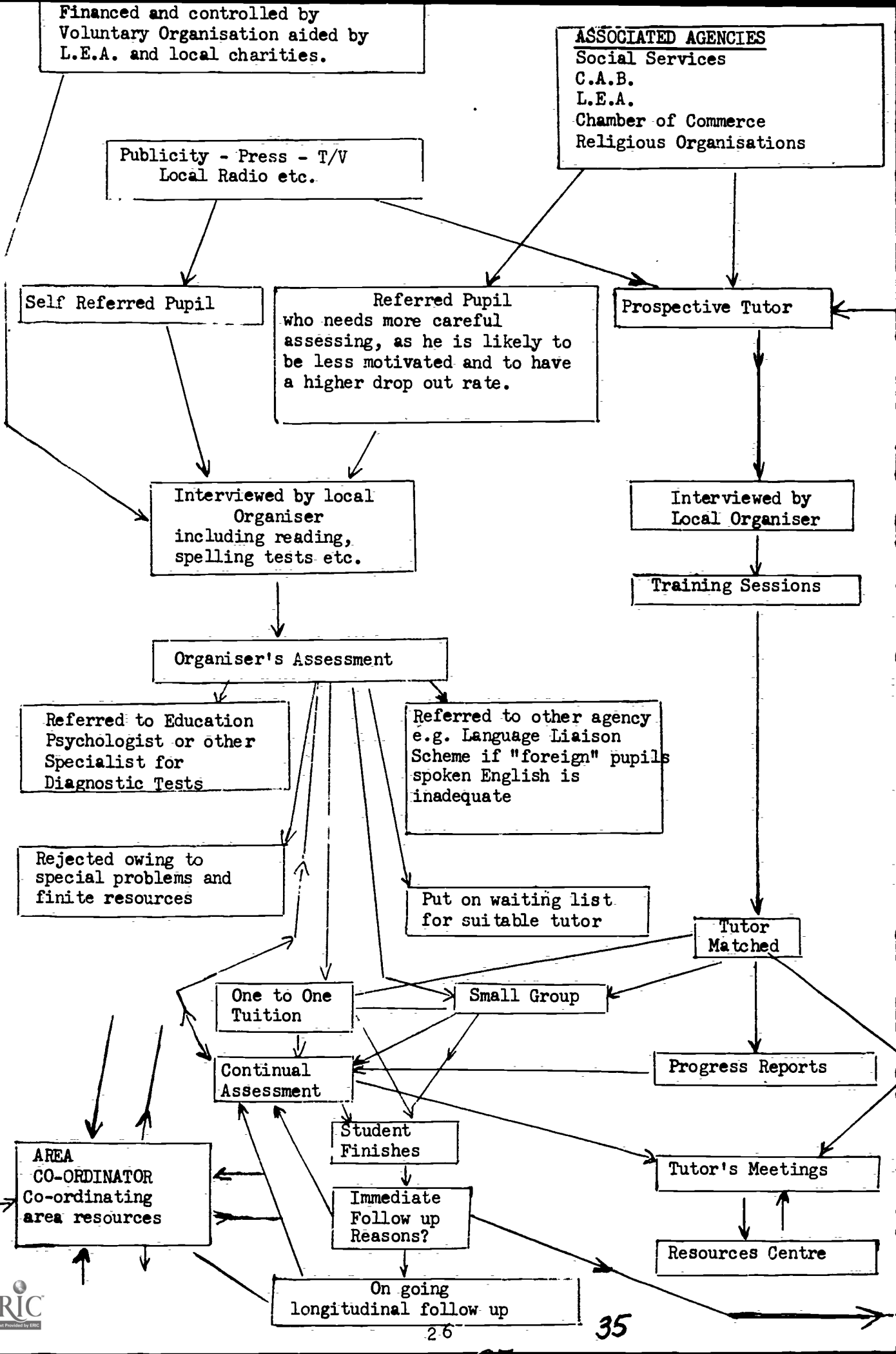
Assessment of the Individual

The late Sir Cyril Burt[1] said that "since the causes differ so widely it is clear that an indispensable preliminary to successful treatment is to start with a systematic case-history; a review of all the information available that is likely to throw light on the pupils special difficulties or his special needs. The instructor will find his choice of aims and methods greatly assisted if he collects particulars for every student - including the application of standardised intellectual and educational tests, and a study not only of inferior performances and disabilities, but also of special abilities, interests and occupational knowledge and skill".

Influenced by Burt's observations, other workers in the field and by practical limitations, I have shown the various stages of implementation in diagram 1 - Model of a Hypothetical City Literacy Scheme. The initial interview is shown as the first step in a continuous assessment process.

The possible goals of the initial interview are:-

1. Seeking to obtain information about the applicant to determine whether we have the resources to meet his needs, taking account of his motivation, ability and stability.
2. To obtain information that will help to carefully place the student.
3. To deal with a highly anxious applicant in such a manner to increase his confidence right from the start, that the scheme can help him with his problem.
4. To suggest a suitable teaching programme.
5. To be able to advise the tutor on any specific abilities related to the teaching learning situation.
6. To contribute data to a continuing research programme.


Financed and controlled by Voluntary Organisation aided by L.E.A. and local charities.
ASSOCIATED AGENCIES
Social Services
C.A.B.
L.E.A.
Chamber of Commerce
Religious Organisations
Publicity - Press - T/V Local Radio etc.
Self Referred Pupil
Referred Pupil who needs more careful assessing, as he is likely to be less motivated and to have a higher drop out rate.
Prospective Tutor
Interviewed by local Organiser including reading, spelling tests etc.
Interviewed by Local Organiser
Training Sessions
Organiser's Assessment
Referred to Education Psychologist or other Specialist for Diagnostic Tests
Referred to other agency e.g. Language Liaison Scheme if "foreign" pupils spoken English is inadequate
Rejected owing to special problems and finite resources
Put on waiting list for suitable tutor
Tutor Matched
One to One Tuition
Small Group
Continual Assessment
Progress Reports
Student Finishes
AREA CO-ORDINATOR Co-ordinating area resources
Tutor's Meetings
Immediate Follow up Reasons?
Resources Centre
On going longitudinal follow up

The interviewer should:-

1. Have a thorough understanding of the literacy provision.

2. Have had some training in interviewing.

3. Have empathy, be a good listener and trained to observe and interpret non-verbal feedback.

4. Be perceptive and sensitive to the way his behaviour affects the applicant.

The National Institute of Industrial Psychology's seven point plan provides headingsby which information can be collectedabout the person.

The following points indicate how we might be able to adapt their plan to meet our requirements.

1. Physical Make-up

(a) Has the applicant any physical defects or disabilities that may affect his tuition, e.g. eyesight, hearing, psycho-motor control?

(b) How impressive is his appearance, bearing and speech?

We must remember that most of the applicants are likely to be highly anxious, and speech disturbances may be a function of that anxiety. Most of them feel a great sense of failure and inadequacy and are usually so ashamed that they will be reluctant to admit it to anyone. Many feel that it must somehow be their fault, and this shame adds agony to their difficulties.

2. Attainments and Previous Experience

(a) How many schools has he attended?

(b) Has he been to special schools?

(c) Has he had remedial lessons?

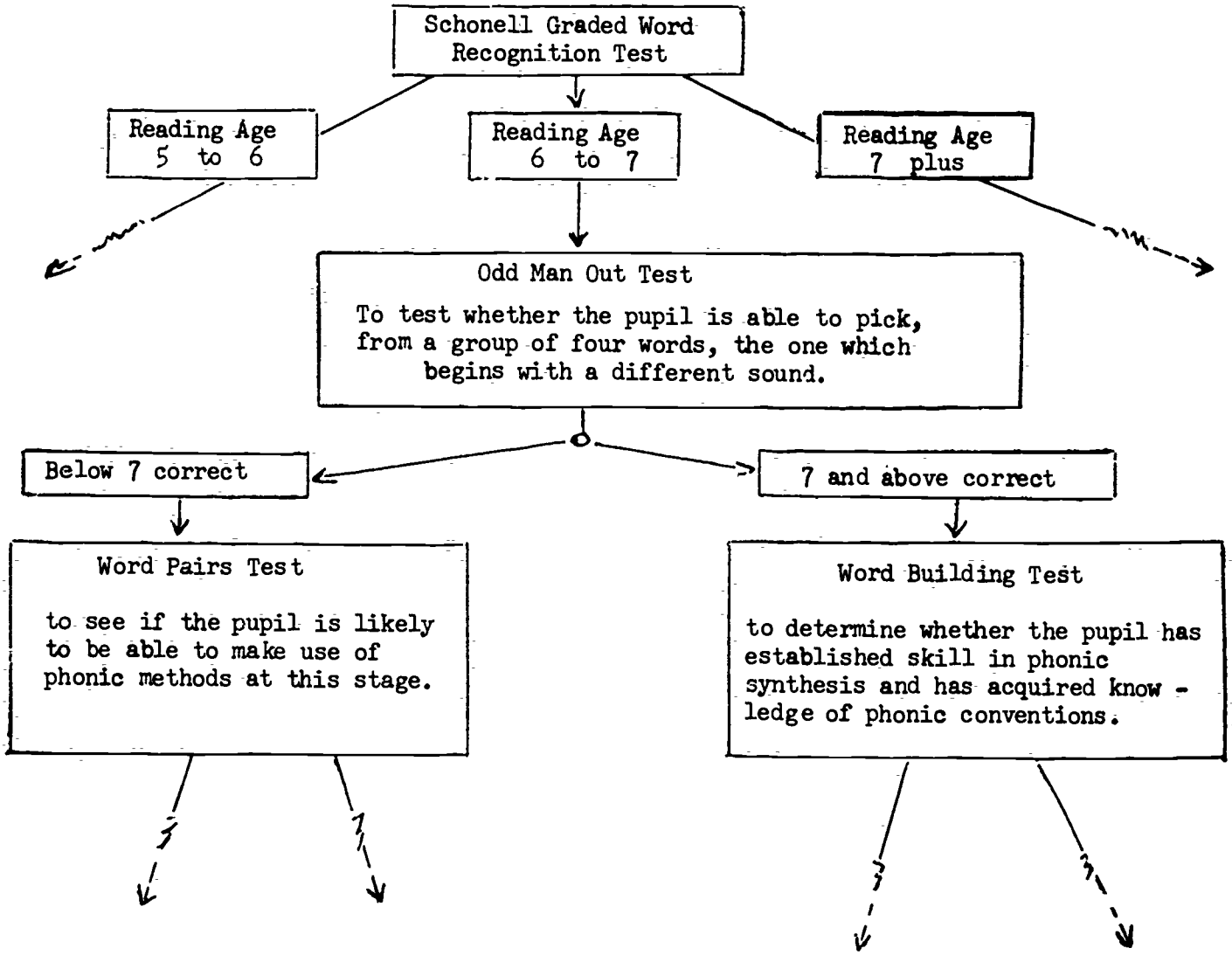
(d) What is his present reading age?

Some adult pupils cannot read or write at all, some can read effectively but cannot write anything other than their names and addresses. With most pupils their writing is usually worse than their reading ability.

However, reading ability is not a single skill which can be measured by one test, but a test that gives a quick and reasonably accurate picture of the student's general reading level can be useful as a starting point in tuition and also in following up the pupil's progress.

There are many tests for the assessment of reading skills,[2] including Word Reading, Sentence Completion, Comprehension, Diagnostic, Multi-purpose and Reading Readiness Tests.

An extract of a branching programme for the assessment and teaching of reading described in detail in the West Sussex booklet[3] is shown below. Although this programme and the Daniels and Diack[4] scheme were designed for schoolchildren it may be worth adopting for adults.



3. Intellectual Capacity

Although there appears to be a positive correlation between tests of mental ability and reading ability it has been shown that reading ability is not purely a function of measured intelligence. There are "intelligent" children who fail to make normal progress in reading and "dull" children who can read fluently.[5]

Notwithstanding the controversial and emotional overtones that enter into any discussion on intelligence tests, I think that the use of a "non-verbal" test such as the Ravens Progressive Matrices is useful if time allows. If we regard the test as an indicator of the "speed of learning" it can be very useful in the matching process.

Some pupils have been told, or see themselves as "thick", and think they will never be able to learn and so perpetuate the "self-fulfilling" prophecy. It can help many pupils to "know" that they are say "above average" and once confidence has been gained, progress can be made. Some students will be "slow-learners", but with this knowledge to help them in the matching process a suitable tutor will help the pupil to make progress in confidence, social skills etc.

4. Special Aptitudes

Does he draw well? Is he good at doing jobs with his hands? Any special aptitudes that may be developed to increase his confidence and serve as a basis and interest on which to build, are worth noting.

5. Interests

What does he do in his spare time?

Are his interests social, artistic, physically-active, practical-constructional?

Hobbies again can serve to build on and might be used in the matching process and form a base for development of student-orientated reading material.

6. Disposition

(a) How acceptable does he make himself to other people?

(b) Is he steady and dependable?

(c) How introspective and anxious is he?

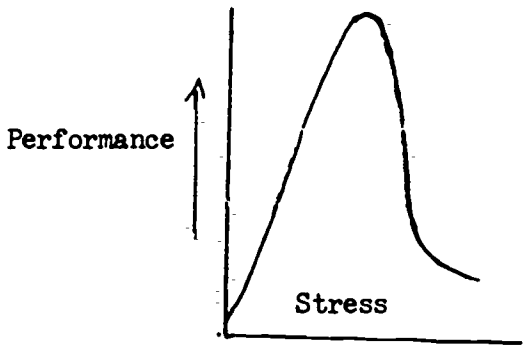
It is difficult to establish whether personality problems are the cause or effect of reading difficulties.

Personality tests are even more controversial than intelligence tests, and although I have not the space to go into much detail the following comments may stimulate discussion at some future date.

I think that a knowledge of personality traits could be very useful in the matching process and as a guide to the type of teaching programme to be used.

Eysenck[6] suggests that there are two major personality dimensions, extroversion (E factor) and emotionality (N factor) which are largely independent of each other.

Eysenck suggests that N can act as a drive and two other workers interpret N as motivating intellectual achievement. The relation of stress to performance can be illustrated by Yerkes-Dodson's "Law".



Increasing stress or arousal at first improves performance, but later leads to deterioration, as "anxiety" disrupts the pattern of behaviour. The optimum level of arousal for most effective performance is lower the more complex the task. Even adding up a row of figures can be made less accurate for some people by a person standing watching them.

There is some evidence that introverted children responded better to praise, whilst extroverted responded better to blame. Criticism or blame was usually ineffective with introverts. The extrovert will not be able to concentrate for long periods, and will need more changes and rest pauses.

Eysenck suggests that an "anxious" introverted child is more likely to have personality problems e.g. depression, inferiority feelings, absent mindedness, whilst the "anxious" extroverted child is more likely to have conduct problems, e.g. disobedient, rude, stealing and lying. It also seems likely that introverts may be "late developers" as compared to extroverts. Is it unreasonable to project these statements from the child to the adult?

Goals which appear to be beyond the reach of an individual will act as negative reinforcement, even before any scheme of work has been attempted, and may affect introverts more than extroverts, as they tend to be more pessimistic. I suspect that some adult illiterates are, in Eysenck's terms, "anxious introverts" and will need very different learning situations.

There is some evidence to suggest a correlation between illiteracy and neurosis, but it is difficult to say whether it is cause or effect. One report[7] in the British Medical Journal discusses psychiatric disturbances in adults of normal intelligence who have hitherto unrecognised difficulties in reading, writing and spelling which appears causally related to their psychiatric disturbances and subsequent referral to a psychiatrist. A recognisable neurotic pattern is evident in these patients. Their existence in the community before referral has been a precarious one and specific stresses, for example of job promotion demanding paper work, had been effective in causing the patients disproportionate upset. A pattern of inferiority and over-reactions to others emerged similar to that described in children by other workers.

7. Circumstances

(a) What are his family circumstances? Are they literate?

(b) Can he have lessons at home if necessary?

(c) Can his wife and/or family help him?

(d) Why does he want to learn now? Motivation is a key factor in the learning process. Many reasons are given by applicants, including to get a better job, for promotion, the wish to read to their young children, to start living, etc.

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

Most pupils will probably be already convinced that they will never learn to read or write.

My adult pupil thought he was a "dunce" and my main problem was to convince him that he could learn by "new teaching methods" if he was prepared to work hard. My approach was based on the work of Skinner[8] and I used simple operant conditioning methods, ensuring he could experience "success" from the first lesson. I explained the methods to his wife and taught her to reward and reinforce correct learning. I linked the instruction with his practical activities and reinforced his own needs to learn. I made sure he had brief daily lessons and as many hours of Lexicon, Scrabble, children's crosswords etc. as he wanted.

I explained learning curves to him and warned him about the inevitable plateaux. I planned his lessons to try and avoid some of the factors which contribute to regression and plateaux, such as fatigue, consolidation, loss of interest, and lack of success. "Over-learning" reduced the chance of forgetting. His lessons were based on simple, meaningful (to him) material which he wanted to learn.

Teaching adults to read and write effectively can be a satisfying and rewarding experience for the tutors, but it is also a grave responsibility.

If the pupil "fails" again, it will be even more difficult for him to learn in the future, and we may well have done more harm then good. The follow up of the "drop-outs" may be more important than the "stayers-on".

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2. For further details of reading tests and interpretation of results read Jackson S. A Teacher's Guide to Tests. Longmans 1968 pp87-111 Also The Assessment of Reading Skills. Edited by Donald Moyle. U.K.R.A. 1972.

3. Assessment of Reading Ability. West Sussex County Council 1973. p 14. Copies can be obtained from the Education Department, County Hall, Chichester, Sussex. PO19 1RF - price 15p (including postage).

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6. Eysenck H.J. "Manual of the Eysenck Personality Inventory". 1964.

7. Saunders W.A. and Barker M.G. "Dyslexia as Cause of Psychiatric Disorder in Adults". British Medical Journal 1972; 4 pp759-761.

8. Skinner B.F. The Technology of Teaching. New York. Appleton Century Crofts. 1968.

6. APPROACHES TO LITERACY

G Thornton

There is speech and there is writing. Being literate means having the ability to move from spoken language to written language, and back again, freely and at will.

Speech is something that all normal human-beings, those, that is, born without brain damage, learn as part of the process of growing up. The basic process of learning to speak is acoomplished very early in life, certainly well before the average child enters school at the age of five. Each individual's experience of language during the first formative years is different, the experience leaving its mark not only on the child's accent and dialect but on his ability to handle language in reciprocal exchanges with other people. Nevertheless, whatever the individual's experience of using language has been, his knowledge of language even by the age of five will be considerable, in terms of his ability to put sounds and words together in meaningful utterances. The process of becoming literate involves investing this knowledge in mastering the writing system.

The relationship of written language to the spoken language is a complex one, more complex than is sometimes thought. Spoken language consists of sounds made with the mouth, written language is marks made with the hand, but the writing system does not "write down the sounds of the language, in anything near to a literal sense of the phrase 'write down the sounds'" (K J Albrow - The English Writing System). It does far more than that. Spoken language usually occurs in face-to-face situations between people who can see each other and who can use facial expression and bodily gesture in combination with language to make their meaning clear. Spoken language, too, typically consists of

bits of language ("structured chunks of syntax and meaning" as they have been called) put together with pauses, um's and er's, false starts and repetitions. Written language, on the other hand, exists in space, not time, with directionality - in English, from left to right. It is usually written in sentences and in a more formal style than spoken language. It cannot make use of characteristics of speech such as intonation and stress.

At the same time, it has features, like punctuation marks and capital letters, which have no parallel in speech.

There would, however, seem to be no real reason why, in the majority of cases, mastery of the writing system should not be achieved, although the process entails cracking a complex code of sound-symbol relationships. I.Q. need not be a factor - pupils with low I.Q.'s are successfully taught to read and write. Children from all kinds of socio-linguistic backgrounds learn to read and write competently. The sound-symbol relationship is slightly, if sometimes subtly, different for each one of us.

What, then, can get in the way?

Psycho-motor difficulties may be a reason. So, too, may prolonged absence from school, either through illness or truancy. There is some evidence that emotional stress, such as that arising from a broken home, may be a factor. Other reasons may lie in teaching attitudes and approaches which fail to establish, for the child, the necessary relevance between the spoken language which he has and the written language he is being asked to master. It may be that his own language is under-valued in school, or that the material he is confronted with is so far removed

from his own language and experience that he cannot make sense of it.

There is no doubt that if the "breakthrough to literacy" is not achieved in the early years of schooling, it becomes more and more difficult as time goes on. To whatever underlying causes there may be, there is added an evergrowing history of failure, which in time will convince the individual that he is incapable of learning to read and write. He will then devote himself, often with considerable skill and ingenuity, to devising strategies to conceal and circumvent his disability. In these circumstances, it may be very difficult, as the chapter on "Recruitment and Publicity" makes clear, to persuade adult illiterates to avail themselves of the help that exists. But, once they have taken the step of seeking help, and have put themselves once again into a learning situation, they bring with them, apart from motivation, an extensive resource: a wide knowledge and experience of language, spoken language.

The task of achieving literacy, however late in the day, will be made much easier if use is made of key areas of their linguistic experience. A plumber was taught to read and write after a conversation about his job had been taped and a core of words extracted and built up into an individual reading scheme.

In this way, he was given the chance to invest his knowledge of language acquired in an important area of his life, language that had virtually become part of him through daily use, into learning how to handle the writing system. Such starting points can be found, or made, for everybody, even if it is at the level of something so apparently simple as the ability of an old-age pensioner to distinguish CHEADLE from STOCKPORT on the front of a bus.

By making use of the spoken language that they have, a confidence in their knowledge of language can be inculcated and used as a bridge between their language and the ability to read and write that they seek. Methods which start from this proposition offer the best chance of success in overcoming years of failure.

Further Reading:

Ashworth, E.	Language in the Junior School	(Edward Arnold)
Doughty, P.S., Pearce, J.J.		
Thornton, G.M.	Exploring Language	(Edward Arnold), chapter 9
Mackay, D., Schaub, P.,		
Thompson, B.	Breakthrough to Literacy, Teachers Manual	(Longman)
Torrey, J.	"Illiteracy in the Ghetto" in	Tinker, Tailor - The Myth of Cultural Deprivation -(Ed. Nell Keddie, Penguin)

PART TWO

STAFFING

1. RECRUITMENT OF TUTORS

Elaine F McMinnis

As a newcomer to the field of organizing a literacy scheme, the author has perhaps been fortunate to begin her work with provision which had, to some extent, already been established prior to her appointment. As such, many of the details compiled in the article which follows have been acquired at secondhand; they are set into an order which is an attempt to establish in solid form details of staff recruitment which are often passed merely as snippets of advice from scheme to scheme and organiser to organiser. The article is also intended to explore to a limited degree some aspects of literacy provision as they are related to staff recruitment.

To begin with, there are several basically different approaches to the question of staff recruitment for a literacy scheme.

Staff may well be chosen to suit the needs of students already known to the organiser; or they may, on the other hand be chosen in a deliberate endeavour to offer particular course facilities for students as yet unknown. The number of potential staff available to choose from will vary very much in proportion to the recognition that the scheme or suggested scheme has received within staff recruitment areas.

Recruitment areas themselves are open to debate, as are problems such as whether it is preferable to interview prospective tutors formally or informally; to enrol paid or voluntary tutors; to train all or some tutors: in addition to these problems come the questions of the extent and the duration of commitment which may be possible for any one tutor. All of these

would seem to crowd in before we have even considered what kind of person we need as a tutor.

A basic job description could resolve some of these questions. If we know what type of job we expect tutors to do, we may decide with more clarity what kind of people are required; the suitability of applicants may then determine the training needs.

Those who have already been involved in the setting up of literacy schemes have found certain characteristics of personality and skills which they feel can be required of the potential tutor. These can be divided into two basic categories: firstly, features intrinsic to personality; and secondly, acquired skills, with some inevitable overlap to allow for the essential differences in the types of tutor available. The following are not listed in any rank order.

Features of personality

Personal qualities

(1) Sense of humour
(2) Sensitivity
(3) Strength of character
(4) Ability to accept and rise to challenge
(5) Adaptability

Personal abilities

(1) To set value on others
(2) To read non-verbal communication symbols
(3) To accept the adult student as an adult
(4) To tolerate/accept/integrate into/identify with other value systems and life styles.

Personal approach

(1) Clarity of personal expression
(2) Astute perception of student needs
(3) Ability to devise acceptable methods of approach

Socio-economic background or political /religious views can prove to be important factors, especially when considering the matching of tutors with students.

Skills

Acquired personal skills

(1) informality of approach
(2) skilled and easy interpersonal relations
(3) ability to set value on the student's work
(4) ability to allow the student to teach himself where appropriate, and progress at his own speed
(5) ability not to become overprotective to the student

Acquired methodological skills

(1) accuracy in definition of student needs
(2) accuracy in testing student's physical capabilities i.e. sight, hearing and motor ability
(3) suitable choosing of subject matter
(4) ability to find appropriate learning and teaching methods and to capitalize on opportunity
(5) ability to appraise accurately the student's
  (i) potential
  (ii) progress
  (iii) regression
(6) adequate ability in reading and writing skills
(7) ability to present some written assessment of the student

After such a formidable list of requirements for tutors, it can be said that the tutor quite simply needs to be basically an informal, sensitive and adaptable individual with an astute awareness of the needs of others and an ability to find acceptable and thorough means of providing for those needs.

Some of these basic requirements could well be overridden by a more specialized job description, so that the tutor's job is made more straightforward altogether. For example, perhaps some basic testing might be arranged by the organiser as part of a screening process for students before they reach the tutor, leaving the tutor free to proceed with the more clearly identifiable task of helping the student to learn. The fact will, nevertheless, always remain that often much of the vital feed-back to organisers or testers comes through tutors, and they must therefore always be individuals skilled enough to cope with assessment.

Previous training for the tutor patently needs to be taken into consideration when speaking of acceptable and thorough means of providing for the needs of the non-literate adult.

Thoroughness demands specialised training in the specific field of adult literacy. Clearly a tutor must basically be trained in methods of instruction but these alone are inadequate for effective teaching with illiterate adults. The provision of training must therefore extend and supplement the existing skills of both those with previous training and experience in teaching reading to children and those who lack these skills and knowledge.

When the scheme is in a position to offer initial training to its tutors, then untrained personnel can be considered for selection, with the proviso that only individual teaching may be possible for such tutors, for whom a number of students may become unmanageable. However, if the scheme can provide no induction training, then staff already qualified in instruction may well be required. The problem is thorny but perhaps it can be resolved by the boundaries of the actual scheme itself. If this is organised through educational channels it may not be possible to find pay for anyone but staff with educational training and qualifications. Organised through other channels perhaps the scope may be wider. On this subject the solution will be different within each local area; however, the guideline to any selection must be the diagnosis of the students and their matching with staffing resources.

As has been said, the job specification determines the staffing needs. Six aspects of this possible specification appear and require equal consideratio

(1) Job description

possibilities
(i) individual teaching
(ii) small group teaching (max. 6 students)
(iii) team-teaching (max. 6 students per tutor)
(iv) small group teaching with separate session for individual tutoring

(2) Time schedule:

possibilities
(i) part-time work day and/or evening
(ii) full-time employment with a specific teaching schedule

(3) Payment:

possibilities
(i) voluntary tutorship - Unpaid
(ii) paid post (NB rates of pay)

(4) Commitment:

(i) degree of personal commitment to the student/scheme
(ii) duration of commitment to the post

(5) Staffing situation:

(i) staff student ratio
(ii) responsibilities of role

(6) Staff contact:

possibilities
(i) entirely individual work
(ii) team-teaching with one or several other tutors
(iii) required staff meetings for discussion, feedback, policy decisions etc.
(iv) advisory support
(v) evaluation

These six aspects of the job specification should be considered in order to assess the staffing needs before any staffing commitments are made. Many essential factors are written into these categories. which need discussion at too great a length to be contained within the scope of this investigation.

Where the organiser finds his choice of available staff inadequate, recruitment can be achieved in various ways. Sympathetic media, the press, television, shops for poster adverts - may find tutors. They may, however, find far more students then tutors, and leave the organiser with an even bigger staffing problem than before. The word-of-mouth method may pay better dividends.

When touting for tutors where does one look? Schools, Colleges, and Adult Education Centres are obvious targets. Some less obvious sources are Social Services, hospitals, prisons and industrial centres or industrial training centres, all of them possessing personnel well used to dealing with the non-literate or semi-literate adult over day-to-day matters.

Many staff within these fields of employment possess the personality traits and the skills desirable for the literacy tutor and have acquired them sometimes through a long process of education and training for the skills required in their own profession.

Once the literacy scheme has got underway, it is quite possible that the once non-literate adult may prove to be a good potential tutor. He understands the position of the non-literate adult; he has just himself been in the learning situation; he remembers how he learned; all of these difficult aspects for the literate adult to appreciate. The "each-one-teach-one" situation will certainly have some long-term value at a carefully defined level and with very structured objectives.

However limited or full the choice of available staff appears to be, some formal method of procedure for staff selection would prove helpful.

An application form can be adopted as a standard method of gaining basic facts before deciding whether to establish further contact. A 'phone call or a letter, and a formal interview which follows an interview schedule may be required to gain further details and to assess personality and capability; an informal interview may subsequently be appropriate and perhaps a "trial-run" of several sessions as a voluntary tutor, to give both employer and employee chance to assess suitability. When the organiser has made his assessment, ideally he should be free to suggest further training should it prove suitable.

Where the organiser has a wide choice of tutors, this method may be appropriate. However, in many cases, a lack of availability of tutors leads to an apparent "no-choice" situation. The organiser should not hesitate to refuse to appoint staff where he finds that none have so far proved suitable.

Recruitment of tutors therefore requires consideration of the following basic matters

(1) the needs within the area
(2) the type of tutor required
(3) the availability of tutors
(4) method of dealing with applications
(5) method of conducting interviews
(6) basis on which choices should be made
(7) basic skills a tutor should possess
(8) kind of training to be offered to tutors in order to improve their ability.

It is hoped that within this paper, the discussion of these questions may have proved helpful. Answers to these and other questions will need to be discovered within the scope of each individual literacy scheme as it progresses.

2. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

R J Kedney

As we gradually come to realise that we in Britain have an adult literacy problem and we begin to make some educational provision, so too we must begin to recognise the challenges and problems of such provision. Early experiences in other countries, both developed (eg USA and Canada) and developing, are quickly being paralleled here for we too lack fundamental information about teaching materials, methodologies and above all about developing the human expertise that is necessary to come to terms meaningfully with the needs of illiterate adults. An emphasis on quality as well as quantity is likely to be central to any valuable growth and demands a dynamic staff-development policy. The design of such a programme will need to reflect and re-inforce the standards and practices to be set; what price for example preparing detailed plans for developing evaluation through a training course if provision for diagnosis and recording in the field is weak or non-existent?

We in this country would seem to be at the point reached in the United States before the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, seen by Hersey as being staffed with interested, dedicated and sincere teachers who had only "a friendly tip or two from an experienced colleague. On the job training for the teacher was the rule rather than the exception". [1] Lessons are offered by later observations such as that of Mangano (1968) - "In the few short years that have passed since the recognition of America's adult basic education problem it has become evident that the educational community cannot solve this problem using traditional materials and lockstep methodology. Programs designed to educate the illiterate and functionally

illiterate adults must be developed. It is imperative that a cadre of instructors be trained to implement programs based on the findings of research in the field of adult basic education."[2]

A key resource in establishing and raising standards must be the expertise of the professional and paraprofessional staffing and yet as Neff[3] points out adult basic education, like adult education, is a movement rather than a profession for it lacks universally acceptable standards. Furthermore, he goes on to state that "In addition to the problem of lack of agreement regarding standards in the field is the reluctance of old line volunteers to accept the notion that something more than emotion, dedication and experience is required before the appellation professional may be used legitimately. The continuing overly romantic approach of volunteers is consistent with the position that adult educators should be trained only by direct work experience with those already on the job. Nevertheless, training programs for adult educators manage to turn out (in the USA) a small number of graduates annually".[4]

To accept the views expressed above is not to deny a role to the unpaid worker nor indeed to support the claims for the near parallel training of the school teacher, but rather to accept as the baseline the demands particular to the field of adult literacy teaching. The one-hour-a-week tutor and the full time organiser are both faced by the considerable challenges of the need for a thoroughly professional approach to the clients; for few would doubt these needs.

Approaches to a policy of staff development should be tailored closely to local situations, as generalisations can only provide broad indicators as to action. If meaningful standards are to be set, then flexibility and forethought are keywords to be linked to a recognition of the need for an on-going, growing commitment in order to improve the quality of provision. The immediate problems of knowledge of content, materials and methods for staff development have to be placed in a systematic approach and hence be drawn from the definition of aims and objectives.

The observations of supervisors and requests from tutors, together with information on drop-out rates, recruitment, staff turnover, student progress and research findings from elsewhere will serve to indicate these needs. The functions of roles such as class or voluntary tutor, counsellor, adviser or organiser must be clearly defined and compared with ideal models such as that of Catherine Davison's for the teacher. [5] Training requirements can then be highlighted and priorities selected for action. In the short term it may be the induction of staff for survival but in the longer term the findings may parallel those found by Knox from studies in the USA -

" To identify the long range effects of deprivation

To identify with and encourage learning by undereducated adults

To provide adult-centred counselling and guidance with some assistance by specialists

To be competent in adult basic education program development

To teach reading to adults of a wide range of abilities

To have criteria and procedures for the evaluation of instructional materials

To understand, and give assistance to help persons in related instructional roles to become more competent

To be flexible in coping with lack of resources to achieve objectives

To know ways to enlist community support" [6]

At this point in time findings such as these offer us a possible chink of light on our medium and longer term objectives, for the essence of any staff development programme is to continue to develop meaningfully. Action and resources, such as research or the production of case studies or role-play exercises,[7] can then be built up in this country and fitted to our context.

Quick answers about methods or materials that can be used mechanically in any situation are rarely successful, as they have to be fitted to the needs of the individual student. This in turn takes knowledge, skills and competence on the part of the tutor so that the objectives of any training programme have to be drawn from the carefully considered requirements of teaching provision. The science,(or should it be art?)of defining objectives is discussed at length by authors such as Mager[8] and Davies[9] and various forms of categorisation are used. Knox, for example, uses knowledge, skills, attitudes and competence which fit with Davison's model and offer a useful base for the Skilled Worker Standard which is to be aimed at by trainees.

Objectives determined by priority needs have to be matched against factors such as resources and potential support, to indicate directions for action, be they staff meetings, a handbook, a one day school or a course. They will also point towards content and methodology. Research has yet to produce a flawless match between objectives and methods for example, but the strengths as well as the limitations of some indicators are being actively explored. Too often a traditional lecture and exhortation on clerical matters to maintain the system or flights of high-flown fancy form the base of off the job training.

If knowledge is a major objective then materials such as a handbook, film or cassette tape offer alternative approaches to the lecture whereas non-directive methods such as small-group syndicates may be needed for attitude development. Competence needs practice, and role-playing and simulation, particularly if supported by closed circuit television, can be particularly useful. Studies on methodology seem to proliferate almost daily and information on traditional approaches such as the lecture and group discussion are explored alongside ideas-inventories and case studies in a number of works eg. Bligh's "What's the Use of Lectures" [10] and McLeish, Matheson and Park's "The Psychology of the Learning Group". [11]

Neff recognised the opposing pressures on the selection of content when he stated that "confusion, debate and disagreement have characterised the discussions of the most appropriate curriculum for training adult education teachers. The temptation is to offer training in method skills. This approach is welcomed by trainees for through the development of such skills they develop a beginner's confidence. It may be, however, that for those who already have some experience, the purpose of training should be to stimulate the teacher to engage in a continuing re-examination of his work, searching for useful information and striving to improve his performance." [12]

Ames [13] advocates that content should be placed firmly in the context of adults, of literacy and of adult literacy, drawing from the related fields of sociology and psychology. In "Training Needs of Instructors in Adult Basic Education Programs in British Columbia" [14], Catherine Davison discusses in some depth the nature of such content and gives as an example of implementation a one-day school on adult learning.

Formal training situations represent merely the overt aspect of staff development through meetings and courses; cues however are also taken from the working context, beginning at the initial contact at the interview onwards. Priorities are quickly sifted and standards established from such routine actions as recording involvement and progress, or indeed from seeing their lack of importance. Exhortations to use management of learning by objectives need to be reflected in the organisation of provision.

Evaluation is an integral part of any provision; indeed it is inevitable, for we all judge, with a greater or lesser degree of efficiency, activities in which we are involved: as, of course, do our students. Such judgements can be used to organise and to direct and re-direct action. Basic information is needed, through quantitative approaches such as questionnaires, about teacher characteristics, test results, drop-out rates etc. and through qualitative analysis of reports and written descriptions. The outcome of efforts to meet objectives in training can then be assessed and objectives redefined.

The challenges posed by staff development are daunting at the outset but the alternatives of low standards and stagnation are less attractive. The danger of re-inforcing the failure syndrome and poor self-image of many students is only too apparent. The economic as well as the personal and social costs to the individual and the community demand that we grasp the nettle when provision is made.

Neff proposed that "In a sense, adult educators discover a need for formal training only after they have been engaged in some action phase of the field".[15] We are moving to that point and the challenges posed by the needs of our staff to capitalise on existing skills and to maintain contact with the developing educational technology are paramount, if they

are to increase their professional autonomy and serve their students effectively.

NOTES

1 "Training Teachers for Adult Basic Education" - H. Hersey - Adult Leadership June 1968

2 "Teachers in Adult Basic Programs" - J. Mangano - in "Strategies for Adult Basic Education" - ed. J. Mangano - The International Reading Association 1968

3 "The State of the Art in Adult Basic Education Teacher Training" M. Neff - in "Adult Basic Education - The State of the Art" - ed. W.S. Griffith and Ann P Hayes - Dept. of Education, University of Chicago 1970

4 Ibid

5 "The Adult Basic Education Teacher: A Model for the Analysis of Training" - J. A. Niemi and Catherine Davison - Adult Leadership Feb. 1971

6 "In-service education in Adult Basic Education" - Alan B. Knox - Research Information Center-Florida State University.

7 See for example "Working with Non-Literate Adults" - R. J. Kedney and T. MacFarlane - Newton-le-Willows College of F.E. 1973 - Papers from a training course.

8 "Preparing Objectives for Programmed Instruction" - R.F. Mager-Fearon 1962

9 "The Management of Learning" - I.K. Davies - McGraw Hill 1971

10 "What's the Use of Lectures" - D.Bligh - Penguin 1972

11 "The Psychology of the Learning Group" - J.McLeish, Matheson and Park - Hutchinson 1973

12 See Note 3

13 "The Emerging Role of the Teacher" - W.S. Ames in "Strategies for Adult Basic Education" - J Pangano - The International Reading Association 1968

14. "Training Needs of Instructors in Adult Basic Education in British Columbia" Catherine Davison - Adult Education Research Centre - University of British Columbia 1970

15 See Note 3.

3. WHAT AND HOW?

Donald Moyle

It is of little use discussing the variety of approaches which can be used in teaching the early stages of reading to adults until we are quite clear as to what we hope to achieve. Is the aim to raise their reading to the UNESCO standard of semi-literacy, namely that of the average seven year old, or perhaps the supposed standard of literacy said to be that of a nine year old? Perhaps some would settle for providing simply a 'social' vocabulary or the mechanics to read the documents absolutely necessary for daily living and working.

This paper starts with the assumption that all the above mentioned objectives are inadequate and in any case if they are achievable then much broader aims are equally achievable. At the risk of being scorned as 'idealistic', 'over-optimistic' or simply 'daft' the present author asserts that the aim for the adult illiterate must be the same as that for the five year old school entrant. This aim is that of producing effective readers. The reason for this is not a misplaced belief that all will achieve this aim or even that all could have been effective readers had they grown up and been educated under more favourable conditions. Rather it is because limited aims produce limited results. Further the methods and materials we select are governed by our aims and there is considerable evidence that the narrower the aim for reading, the more mechanical and unrealistic is the teaching and the poorer the attitudes of the pupil towards reading as a pursuit.

What then are the traits of the effective reader? These can only be reproduced in the briefest of summaries here but Moyle (1973) provides a more detailed list.

1 He reads regularly and can read for any utilitarian purpose which he has and for personal pleasure.

2 He can select his own reading materials appropriate to his needs.

3 He is efficient in the use of all three groups of word attack skills, namely context, configuration and sound/symbol relationships.

4 He understands what he reads and is able to reflect upon the meaning in the light of experience and other reading, making judgements where these are needful.

5 He can make use of the results of his reading in any situation where they are applicable.

In pursuing these aims two issues are apparent which must be examined before any criteria can be set by which approaches to the teaching of reading can be evaluated. Firstly, is there any set order in which learning should take place and secondly, to what extent does learning in one situation transfer to other situations where that learning can be applied?

Certain materials for the learning of reading are based in a belief that there is a perfect order in the sub-skills and knowledge which go to make up the complex act which we term reading. In mathematics it is essential that the child has a concept of 'oneness' before he can understand the meaning of two. Equally it would be extremely difficult to teach multiplication until the child had some understanding of addition. Within the reading field however there do not appear to be such essential detailed steps but only generalised stages of development. Indeed to adopt a highly structured approach could be positively harmful to reading growth in the

long term. For example should the reader in the early stages follow a pre-conceived pattern in the order in which sounds are to be learned? Complexity of spelling patterns seems to be no criterion of ease or difficulty in respect of their mastery by children and much less so with adults. The most useful order seems to be determined by the frequency with which the patterns are being met at any moment in time. If we set the order of learning, then we may teach some spelling patterns which will not be met for some time; consequently the rule will be forgotten through lack of opportunity for application. Lists of spelling patterns therefore are perhaps better used as a tutor's check-list than as material for mastery by a pupil.

As noted above reading is not a skill but rather an amalgam of many skills, items of knowledge and thinking processes. Whenever we teach single steps of some skill, therefore, we must face the possibility that the skill will only be used within the situation where it is learned. The more we dissect reading into its components and teach via devised activities the more difficult it becomes to produce the effective reader who is able to draw on any aspect of his skills to suit the needs of any reading situation which he meets. This is not to say that such teaching must never take place, but rather that the tutor must always remember that any item learned in a devised situation must be practised in a realistic situation as soon as possible otherwise the whole point of it will escape the pupil.

The following criteria for effective teaching of reading might therefore be drawn from the foregoing discussion.

1 Wherever possible the approach should be via realistic rather than devised situations.

2 Where mechanical work must be undertaken the tutor must be able to ensure that practice in a realistic reading situation takes place immediately after the learning.

3 The approach should always open the door to more thoughtful reading and the growth of ability to use varying reading strategies according to the needs of the situations met.

4 The approach should include the opportunity for speedy success in the early stages.

5 The approach must fit the pupil.

In a teaching situation there are not merely items to be taught, methods and materials, but there are also pupils. How then is the adult beginner likely to differ from the five year old?

1 The adult pupil needs success rather more urgently for he will be labouring under a life-time of experience of failure.

2 He is likely to be reluctant to try anything new.

3 Frequently the task of distinguishing the small units of sound within words is more difficult for the illiterate adult.

4 Their ability to process and understand spoken language is usually higher than that of the young child.

5 Because of other responsibilities they cannot give as much time to the task of learning to read as is available for the young child and cannot immediately make use of their learning in a wider context.

6 Their individual learning characteristics are already established.

APPROACHES TO BEGINNING READING

The major groups of approaches to teaching the early stages of reading are reviewed below from the point of view of the adult non-reader. In each case the review is under three headings namely the advantages and strength of the approach, the weaknesses, limitations and constraints, and finally how each approach can be strengthened by additional work of a different type. This type of examination is essential for no two people learn to read in exactly the same way and no single approach to beginning reading will produce an effective reader.

WHOLE WORD APPROACHES

A. Advantages

1. Speedy learning of early words.
2. Capable of usage with any type of reading material and there is no restriction on the length or spelling patterns of the words used.
3. The effective reader reads by minimal clues presented by significant features of words which have been memorised.
4. Appears more realistic than the synthetic approaches.

B. Limitations

1. Places a heavy strain upon the memory and discrimination powers of the pupil as the number of words to be memorised grows.
2. Pupil must be told the new words or learn them by association with pictures.
3. Extensive repetition is essential.

C. Modifications

1. Materials which provide for adequate repetition are essential.
2. At some stage work in the phonic and context areas must be included if the pupil is to become an independent reader.
3. Some work in the area of visual discrimination may well be helpful in the early stages (e.g. Gibson's letter-like forms).

4. Use of equipment such as the Language Master for establishing new words.

5. A good deal of written work to consolidate the learning of new words.

PHONIC APPROACHES

A. Advantages

1. They help the pupil towards independence in the recognition of words not previously met in print.

2. Adds the scientific, rule-conforming aspects of language - appears logical to the pupil.

3. Facilitates ease of control of vocabulary from the point of view of spelling complexity.

4. Is helpful to overcoming spelling problems.

B. Limitations

1. Makes early reading vocabulary rather restricted and unreal.

2. Is difficult to relate directly to other areas of reading practice.

3. Places considerable weight upon both auditory and visual perception. (The pupil to use the traditional approach to phonics must be able to perceive the whole word and all its parts in the correct order in both auditory and visual aspects and their sequence the two together. It is highly questionable whether a phonic approach demands less visual perception than a whole word approach though the types of perception employed are slightly different).

4. The rules of English spelling are so complex that it is an impossible task to teach reading on the basis of the analysis and synthesis.

5. When overdone the method can produce a reader who is always slow and uneven in his reading.

C. Modifications

1. Every spelling rule learned should be immediately used in another context. It would seem better therefore to undertake phonic work as the need for a particular rule arises rather than following a set scheme.

2. It is essential to ensure that the pupil can in fact hear the sounds within words and similarities and differences between words.

3. The phonic-word approach whereby rules are extracted from the experience of whole words is somewhat easier to fit into the early stages for the adult than is the traditional approach to phonics.

READING SCHEMES

A. Advantages

1. The pupil usually expects to use this type of material.

2. As there is a controlled vocabulary the pupil feels secure and both tutor and pupil are aware of the progress made.

3. It is about the easiest method for a tutor to handle and for relatives to take a part in giving further practice.

B. Limitations

1. The early stages of reading schemes provide little relevant content from the point of view of the adult. The attitude could therefore be reinforced that reading is difficult and you get little out of it even when you have struggled to master the words.

2. The language patterns are not usually the ones the adult would use in conversation.

3. It is difficult to make early use of the learning in other reading situations.

C. Modifications

1. Parallel books can be used to gain extra practice.

2. The use of workbooks and games can act as a variant to reading from a book and help in consolidating the vocabulary learned.

3. A phonic scheme can be formed by an analysis of the words used in the reader. Care should be taken to select sound and rules which are common to a number of words. Usefulness is a far better criterion for selection than is complexity of sound/symbol relationships.

4. Hearing the pupil read aloud, though helpful, has limitations. It tends to direct attention to the words and away from meaning. In fact, it is often difficult to be certain that the text is being understood. In a story which took place in a jungle setting a pupil recently became adamant that the action took place at sea for the 'waves of pain' was used in describing a wounded animal. As he could read the words the tutor would not know the pupil's lack of understanding had he not discussed it with him.

On occasions therefore discussion of the content will be helpful. One way of achieving this discussion is to divide a short story into parts. A small group read it silently and after each part they have to predict what is going to happen and argue their point of view with the other members of the group. Three basic questions should direct the discussion.

What do you think will happen?

Why do you think that will happen?

What clues are there to suggest that might happen?

5. A record of errors should be kept and regularly analysed.

This is necessary for a good deal of time could be wasted by working on an isolated error. Specific teaching especially in respect of reversals, confusions and phonic errors should follow the discovery of a pattern of such errors.

Errors can be classified as the pupil reads under a variety of headings.

The actual mistake is then written in the appropriate column.

e.g.

Phonic	Syntactic	Semantic
angle for angel	run for ran	work for walk

Mispronunciations	Omissions	Reversals	Substitutions	Additions
	tree for three	saw for was or dig for big	thrush for thrust	black for back

The tutor will recognise the difficulty of being certain which type of error has been made and sometimes it will be worthwhile discussing the error with the pupil.

6. Some use of story method builds confidence and emphasises meaning. This can be achieved by reading alongside a taped version of a story in the first instance. Later a story previously heard can be presented in summary form with picture clues.

LANGUAGE - EXPERIENCE APPROACHES

A. Advantages

1. The actual language and interests of the pupil can be used and therefore the work appears realistic and helpful.

2. Independence in reading in the outside world can be achieved rather earlier.

3. It emphasises the content of reading rather than the learning of words.

B. Limitations

1. It is difficult to establish a growth structure.

2. In the early stages the ability to read a simple book or to attack unknown words will be limited.

3. Sufficient repetition of words to ensure memorisation is difficult to achieve.

C. Modifications

1. A recording system of words mastered is essential. If these can be arranged on some type of punched card system so the pupil can research them later they will be of immense value.

2. An analysis of words used can form the basis of phonic teaching.

3. Some valid reason for the writing out of the language is essential so that the importance and helpfulness of communication is realised. Exchanges of letters, information exchanges with another pupil elsewhere give impetus to the work.

4. In the early stages some of the difficulties of writing and spelling can be prevented from putting the pupil off if he can record what he wishes to say on a dictaphone or a tape recorder first.

KINAESTHETIC APPROACH

A. Advantages

1. Draws attention to the essential nature of the order of letters within words and so helps the perception of print and the beginning of phonic work.

2. Adds an extra sensory channel which helps the memorisation of words.

B. Limitations

1. If used as a sole approach it is slow and extremely laborious.

2. It emphasises words rather than the ideas expressed in language.

C. Modifications

It is very helpful as a part of a language experience approach where tracing words and writing are undertaken in a meaningful context.

The method can only be recommended in the early stages of reading for those who appear to have some visual confusion. For most pupils, writing is a sufficient kinaesthetic experience.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

It is obvious from the foregoing discussion that there is no single approach to reading which on its own will produce the effective reader. Modifications and the mixing of approaches will be essential. What is mixed and in what measures can only be decided by a knowledge of the traits of the effective reader on the one hand and of the needs and abilities of the individual pupil on the other. The only way of helping the tutor therefore is to provide a few examples of the activities which the writer has found to be of value.

Activities to encourage a speedy and successful beginning.

1. Use a 'foolproof' reader, e.g. one of the Remedial Supply Company's Pre-Reading Series (Dixon Street, Wolverhampton). Here the pupil, by examination of the picture, can read the single sentence caption below it.

2. Record some stories on tape and let your pupil read the book with the support of the tape.

3. Use story method where the pupil reads a summary of a very short story. (In the early stages this can be done by telling a joke and then asking the pupil to read it).

4. Always discuss everything that is read. Both meaning and the nature of a spelling can be discussed.

5. Introduce some writing activity which seems worthwhile to the pupil. The production of a poster, writing captions to a story from a comic for pupil's own children, a letter to a friend, filling in of a form, etc.

6. Keep a detailed record of all vocabulary used for the purpose of further practice and the structuring of a phonics programme.

7. Encourage 'performance' reading. If the pupil is shy let him undertake such activities when alone and record the results for later discussion.

Some continuation activities.

1. Employ a reading scheme or reading laboratory.

2. Work with the pupil on texts which give difficulty simply guiding the search for unknown words by questions - not by telling him the word.

3. Use newspapers, comics, magazines, forms, brochures etc., to relate reading as closely as possible to everyday life.

4. Use close procedure to ensure growth of the use of context as a word attack skill.

5. Employ group discussion among pupils as a means of stimulating thinking in relation to print.

4. SOURCES AND RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

Tom MacFarlane

To discuss sources and resources in an article of this length is to invite brickbats of a fairly massive weight and velocity: sins of omission will be nigh on unforgivable, and I have no doubt that I shall fall into the trap of making sweeping generalizations which, in other circumstances, I would want to qualify in all sorts of ways.

I will approach the problem three ways: 1) list sources for teachers, 2) sources for students, and 3) I will assume that I am being read by someone who is just starting an Adult Basic Education scheme and needs specific advice on a minimal budget.

Bibliographies for Teachers

Information For Reading Teachers ... ... United Kingdom Reading Association,
by T MacFarlane and D Lambley 63 Laurel Grove,
Sunderland

This bibliography costs 15p and gives a short book list, and a list of associations interested in reading at various levels. It was prepared with college of education students and probationary teachers in mind, but may well be found useful at an Adult Basic Education level.

Bibliographies of Student Material

An A-Z list of Reading and Subject Books ... National Association for Remedial Education.
9 Cranleigh Rise,
Eaton, Norwich NOR 54D

This bibliography costs 50p., is right up-to-date, and is most comprehensive. Not only does it contain a very thorough listing of books at all age levels, it is carefully graded, packed full of practical advice and, most important of all, includes Tom Pascoe's list of books suitable for use with adult illiterates.

These two booklets will provide much of the information needed by teachers, and, equally important, they will provide signposts as to the whereabouts of further information.

For those needing immediate short term advice, I would recommend the following:

Books for Teachers

Donald Moyle ... ... The Teaching of Reading ... Ward Lock Educational

J M Hughes ... ... Aids to Reading ... ... Evans Bros. Ltd.

Also please note that Edge Hill College are publishing my own short handbook for teachers of reading at an A.B.E. level.

Books and Materials for Students

1) Reading schemes:

Key Words Easy Readers Books 1 - 6 ... ... Ladybird Books.

I have chosen this series for two reasons: book one has a reading age level below $6\frac{1}{2}$ years, and secondly the series should be quickly obtainable from book shops. This, of course, is by no means usually the case with other books of this type.

Other useful schemes:

The Manxman Books 1 - 6	...	...	Dent
The Raft on the River 1 - 6		...	Dent
Trend Books	...	...	Ginn/Cheshire
Bulls Eye Books	...	...	Hutchinson Educational

2) Phonics, Spelling and Comprehension.

Spelling 0 - 5	...	...	Cassell
Sound Sense 1 - 8	...	...	E J Arnold
Oxford Colour Books	...	...	Oxford University Press

(Now will you please re-read the first paragraph!)

HARDWARE

If funds permit, the following could play a most useful role:

Language Master ... Bell and Howell, Alperton House, Bridgewater Road, Wembley, Middlesex

Audio Page ... ... E J Arnold, Butterly Street, Leeds.

The Language Master is a version of tape recorder which allows both teacher and pupil to record on a strip of white card which has a length of tape stuck to it. This enables the teacher to write a sentence, or a word list, above the tape so the student can see the words as he is hearing them. Headphones and junction boxes are also available.

The Audio Page is also a version of tape recorder, but in this instance a work card, or page of material, can be recorded; the back of the page being totally covered by tape. Here, up to four minutes can be recorded at any point. One word of warning: there is no erase facility built into the machine and I would strongly advise you to check availability of the electronic erase device before ordering.

Lastly, may I recommend the use of a cassette tape recorder. Such are vastly cheaper than either of the above but do not, of course, have the advantage of a built in audio-visual link. You have to provide this. Having said that, a cassette recorder could provide for a range of reading activities which time will not allow with the Language Master or the Audio Page - reading, and re-reading longer passages of text, for example. I must admit to a prejudice here, however. At the beginning stages of reading I think the Language Master is quite the finest audio-visual "hardware" available.

READABILITY

One of the problems facing all A.B.E. teachers is the two-fold assessment of the suitability of books. At one level there is the problem of interest level, and at another the problem of the technical reading difficulty, normally expressed by saying that such-and-such a book has a "reading age", or a "reading level", of so many years and months. In this area of work the two problems are crucially intertwined simply because so much reading material with a low reading age has a very low interest age. Whilst bibliographies will help you find books of low reading age and higher interest level, the fact still remains that many A.B.E. schemes are forced to use quite childish material simply for want of any alternative. This is not the place to discuss the eternal argument that goes on between the school of thought that argues that adults don't really worry overmuch about this problem, and the school of thought that argues that we need a good A.B.E. reading scheme. Nor is it my place in this article to argue that Paulo Freire's "Cultural Action for Freedom" may well provide a pointer to the way out of this dilemma.

Strictly on the matter of assessing the reading age/level of a text there are many formulae which concern themselves with sentence lengths, syllables, common words, and unusual words. Many of these would need a mathematical genius plus computer to work out. However, the Fry Readability Graph is a formula you could use quite easily providing you are aware of certain important qualifications. (See "Readability" J. Gilliland - U.L.P).

As stated at the outset, this subject is open to almost unending development, the intention here has been to merely offer guidelines.

PART THREE

ASPECTS OF ORGANISATION

1. STRUCTURES OF ADULT LITERACY PROVISION

Margaret BenTovim

As we become increasingly aware of the extent and nature of adult illiteracy in Britain and begin to make educational provision, we must be careful not to slot that provision too firmly into the traditional Further Education structures. Illiteracy is a specific problem and a specific disadvantage in a society theoretically predicated on mass literacy and with free universal basic education. Consequently, a special form of provision is necessary to meet it. For it is very unlikely that adults for whom the normal school structures have failed to provide the conditions necessary to acquire literacy will go on to acquire it in the normal further education structures, unless these are considerably and radically altered. In general, their inflexibility, formality and teacher-pupil ratios make them accessible to and suitable for only a fraction of the adult population in need of literacy education.

The underlying theme, then, of this article is the need for flexibility, experimentation and vision when trying to provide a learning situation where people, to whom failure has been a constant companion for years, can begin to succeed.

A Variety of Needs

Many theories are dogmatically advanced about the one possible method and structure which may be used successfully in teaching illiterate adults. But in the limited state of our current knowledge all such partisanship must be rejected. On the contrary, it is essential that as many different structures as possible be encouraged to emerge to enable assessment to be made of the

most effective learning situations.

We are not, however, operating with a completely clean slate. We know that the category "adult illiterate" contains within itself many significant sub-groups of adults with different problems, at different levels of literacy, and with varied and changing needs: "adult illiteracy" then should be seen as synonymous with a variety of needs for which a variety of provision is required.

This means that there is no single best situation in which to teach illiterate adults to read and write. Some people, generally those with high social confidence and already possessing considerable basic literacy skills, will function and learn in a small class held in Adult Education Institutes, or Colleges of Further Education. Others, while prepared to be taught in a group situation, will only attend classes in less formal surroundings - community centres, factories, working-mens' clubs, pubs etc.

Some people will require individual tuition because they are too embarrassed to admit their difficulty publicly: they have been conditioned into considering their illiteracy as something that is their own fault, rather than as an index of the failure of the social and educational system. This attitude must be changed over time so that these students eventually become equipped for the gains to be achieved from a more public learning situation. Indeed, one important function of literacy tuition is to enable students to see their individual problem as one capable of a collective solution.

Other students will require individual tuition because their hours of work are irregular, or coincide with class meetings, or because their problem is so basic that they need individual tuition if their progress is not to be intolerably slow. In the early stages of acquiring literacy skills, it is

known that frequent and regular individualised attention is essential for the making of substantial progress. In this respect, then, severe obstacles to success are created by the structure of the conventional adult or further education class, with its size, its inflexible hours and its long holiday breaks.

On the other hand, when the student has gained some of the basic skills and some confidence in his own abilities and intelligence, there is much to be gained from the small group or class situation: the privatisation of the individual-tuition relationship is broken down, so that the student is brought face to face with others who share his problem which then becomes less a guilty secret, more a public issue. The solidarity of the collective situation may greatly increase the student's motivation to learn and his general self-confidence, with the result that substantial progress may also be made in that type of structure.

The structures adopted are not simply technical questions, they also reflect the moral and political problems of whether literacy is seen as a right or a charity, and whether illiteracy is seen as an individual and private problem or a collective and public issue. From this perspective the structures and methods for overcoming illiteracy can act either to perpetuate the atomized alienation of contemporary society or else as a mechanism which can help to counter, for the individuals involved, the prevailing ideology which blames the victim for the deficiencies of his society.

In making provision then we must state the aims and objectives of that provision. We must analyse the strengths and weaknesses of it in relation to the aims and objectives, and at the same time be sensitive to the individual needs and abilities of a wide range of people. What emerges very clearly if

this discipline is applied to any one form of provision is that there is no one structure which is appropriate for every individual, nor is there a structure which is appropriate for any individual throughout his learning process. We must envisage a situation of utmost flexibility where at any given time in an adult illiterate's learning process he can slot into the most appropriate of a variety of provisions, and when his need changes he can move smoothly on to the next appropriate situation.

A Variety of Structures

We have argued so far that a variety of structures are necessary to meet with the variety of need. We must now look at some ways these structures can be organised, and at some of the problems involved.

(1) Classes

To avoid feelings of isolation and abnormality, classes arranged for adult illiterates in Colleges and Adult Education Centres should be an intrinsic part of the structure of the institution as a whole. None the less it must be understood that these classes will present the need for special organisational measures.

(a) Enrolment

Enrolment procedures need to take account of both the anxieties of illiterate adults and the very nature of their difficulty which prevents them from reading signs and filling in forms. It is best to interview each applicant individually so that basic information, knowledge of the student's expressed motivations and needs, and an assessment of literacy level can be collected prior to his allocation to the most appropriate class. A person who discovers the existence of an evening class in October will not want to wait until January before joining. It must

therefore be possible to join a class at any time during the year. If class numbers are kept small this should not present too much of a problem for the teacher.

(b) Class size and closure

Class sizes cannot conform to the minimum number requirements normally laid down for Adult Education classes. The teaching of reading and writing is really only effective if numbers are kept small, say a maximum of six students. This allows for a measure of individual teaching and increases opportunities for progress. Class closures must be prevented. This is particularly crucial for illiterates, who may have no alternative source of help and who, having come forward once, are unlikely to do so again.

(c) Terms

Experience shows that a most important requirement in learning to read and write is continuity. The term system presents an additional barrier to the acquisition of literacy skills. Thought needs to be given to the possibility of continuing literacy classes throughout the whole year, or at least to the provision of an adequate vacation work programme.

(d) Groupings

As has been discussed above, and in a previous paper, "Illiteracy" is a blanket term that covers a range of attainments from total illiteracy to problems with spelling. Three main groupings of illiterate adults may be distinguished, in terms of their literacy levels.

(A) Total beginners: those who cannot read or write anything beyond a few two or three letter words and possibly their own name and address.

(B) Intermediates: those whose basic reading ability is akin to that of an average 7-9 year old and who need help to master the skills of phonic analysis, synthesis, fluency and basic spelling.

(C) Poor Spellers: those who read quite fluently but can spell only the simplest words.

These three sub-groups manifest widely different reading problems calling for different approaches, methods and materials. Their differing needs must be reflected in the organisational structure of the classes. None of these people, however, should be confused with others in need of literacy help such as educationally subnormal adults, those seeking an "English" course or those requiring English as a second language. The presence of these other categories of people in the same class as the "normal" illiterate adults can often confuse both the illiterate adult and the teacher.

(2) Community Groups

As suggested above, many students' needs may be most satisfactorily met in the more informal surroundings of groups established away from the colleges and institutes. These may take the form of groups set up by community organisations, residents groups, political associations, trade unions etc., and may meet in Community Centres, pubs, factories, clubs or private residences. These groups have many positive features - they provide a flexibility, informality, and communal support that is

difficult to reproduce in a college-based situation, and through their roots in already existing social networks are likely to be more approachable and accessible than the statutory further and adult educational institutions which, in the whole field of adult education, have made very little impact on large sectors of the population, particularly in working class areas.

However, the establishment of such groups also present a number of problems. The dialectic of accessibility is fear of exposure, therefore alongside local facilities and the publicity about them must be developed a campaign to educate the community as a whole in the nature and causes of adult literacy. The students still need to be interviewed, the learning programmes planned out, the materials and equipment transported. Although informal, these community groups need in fact to be highly structured at the organisational level.

(3) Individual Tuition

Individual tuition is so far mainly given by volunteer tutors. This tuition can be organised directly by the local education authority or by the Colleges and Institutes that also run classes, or by broadly based literacy schemes that are often organised by voluntary bodies. Here, far from having to move away from an already established formal pattern of procedure, it is necessary to establish a structure and organisation that will enable this form of tuition to function efficiently. Tutors and students need to be interviewed and matched together with great care, the tutors need to be given an adequate training and preparation, a venue has

to be found, teaching programmes must be planned out, suitable materials and equipment have to be selected, and finally progress has to be constantly discussed and assessed.

This kind of teaching situation has the great advantage of individualised tuition, informality and flexibility. It has the drawback that unless very carefully structured, with the objective of enabling the illiterate adult to understand the nature and causes of his problems and to be able to eventually share them with others in similar situations, it can foster instead of challenge the shame and dependance which society has conditioned him to feel.

Conclusion - the need for co-ordination

We have been arguing the case for a variety of structures to meet a variety of needs. From this arises the importance of a co-ordination of all the different sorts of provision. A structure must be established in every district to facilitate the operation of different methods and situations, the transfer of students from one to another, the training of teachers and tutors, the collection and distribution of materials, equipment and personnel, the publicity and communications network. Above all it is necessary to continually assess and analyse the work that is being carried out, in order to measure the practice with the theory. At the moment we know very little about the effectiveness of any particular method or teaching situation. We can only increase our knowledge if we are concerned to make the best provision and are continually assessing, changing and improving our work.

The Local Education Authority needs to accept responsibility for co-ordinating and developing adult literacy work in the form of an

identifiable person or team, within the Authority, whose job is to make the best, most imaginative provision possible. An appreciation of this conclusion may help settle the disagreement and confusion that is frequently found over the role of statutory and voluntary bodies in making literacy provision. There is much voluntary enthusiasm for assisting in work with adult illiterates, and with careful organisation this can be utilised most effectively by any body making overall provision. There is no necessary contradiction between the statutory use of volunteer resources. If voluntary schemes are already established there should be close co-operation between them and the Local Education Authority. It seems unquestionable that in the final analysis the responsibility to provide facilities which will ensure that literacy skills may be acquired by everyone must rest with the Education Authorities. They are the only bodies to have the necessary resources to tackle the problem on a comprehensive basis. Voluntary bodies who have so far taken a prominent role in the provision of tutorial facilities may still need to play a powerful role in convincing the statutory bodies that the demand for tuition exists, and in ensuring that the provision made is flexible, relevant and extensive. But they must in no way take the place of the Local Authority as the basic providing and co-ordinating institution.

2 THE FUNCTION OF MANAGEMENT IN ADULT LITERACY PROVISION

Hazel Veall

This paper is written from the perspective of an experienced, remedial specialist who is faced with the totally unfamiliar problems of management and administration of a literacy scheme.

I do not propose to set out in this article fixed procedures whereby all management of Adult Literacy provision should operate but merely point out that, working on the premise that literacy in our society is a neutral skill that all require in varying degrees, it is the right of all adults to have access to learning this skill and at present there is a social stigma attached to being illiterate. Given these basic premises adult illiterates have a right to expect eificient teaching that meets their needs; to expect consistency and reliability in the tuition offered and to expect that their rights of privacy be respected. Hence in the following paragraphs I intend to set out some basic ideas that should lead to efficient teaching, responsive organizational structures and satisfaction for students and tutors.

The first aim of those organizing adult literacy provision should be the setting of objectives and policy as these will affect the type, size and function of the management and organization: e.g. a policy of limiting provision to those over 25 years of age will mean that there will be a gap in the provision where illiterate school leavers will lose those few skills they possess while waiting to fulfill the age requirements; a policy of only making provision in industrial situations will limit provision to

those at present in work and ignore the needs of the unemployed and housewives etc. Hence I would make a case (where resources are unlimited) for a policy of making provision for all those people who express a desire to learn. (The need for a variety of teaching situations is then obvious). Within the boundaries set by the initial objectives I think it is essential to set up structures that are responsive to student needs. This is not the place to air the 'old saw' of individual versus group tuition or LEA provision versus voluntary provision - all these and more are needed.

I would suggest that adult literacy provision should include the following as a minimum:-

1 individual tuition based on student needs

2 group/class tuition - including a) geographically based groups b) community based groups c) work situation based groups d) interest based groups - e.g. sports clubs, tenants associations, political organizations e) teaching method based groups e.g. spelling, self expression f) formal classes.

3 teaching via the mass media, including the use of local radio, television and newspapers (both local and national).

It is the function of management to set up these structures as well as providing an efficient teaching service within them (i.e. the teaching situations must be geared to student needs as above) and the tutor needs to be matched with the student/s as to geographical area, interest, and teaching skills. I would suggest also that the teaching needs to be sustained, consistent and structured, in that lessons need to be planned and given on a regular basis. To provide that efficient teaching-service, management must train the teachers in those skills they need. I would

suggest that these skills include diagnosis and assessment of reading skills, the methods of word attack, the teaching of spelling and writing, the use of hardware and books, the planning of learning programmes, the keeping of records as well as the perception of what is involved in the transfer of literacy skills. It is also the function of management to organize resources for students and tutors in the physical sense of rooms for teaching, books, hardware, duplicating facilities; to act as an information centre for both tutors, students and those working in similar areas; and to liaise between group-organizations-and students so that work is not duplicated. An efficient teaching service will also need advice and follow up procedures for the tutors so that In-service training courses, regular record keeping and regular standardized testing procedures will be needed (to ensure that the teaching is efficient). I am sure that contact with others working in the field is essential (techniques for this might include subject workshops, conferences, regular news-sheets, formal organizations and informal meetings) to provide the best use of all the information available. Naturally it is important to review all the teaching and training services and revise and add where necessary. The efficiency of the teaching service relies on not only the training of the teachers but also on the organizational structure.

Organizational structure based on student needs should be open, flexible and non-bureaucratic. But the basis of the structure must be an organized collection of the expressed needs of students. The simplest way to do this is to ask all students to come for an interview, ask them what type of provision they would like and combine this with the collection of standard reading tests and spelling tests. Once having been interviewed

there will be allocation of the teaching situation on the basis of interview. It is the function of management to design a working procedure for these interviews and allocation methods. Whether to allocate students to tutors before, during or after initial training; whether students will be graded according to ability, motivation or skills; on what basis one rejects a tutor or a student; the confidentiality of the information collected - all of these factors and more should be borne in mind as far as the collection of information goes.

I have said that an organizational structure based on student needs must be:

Open - that is, it should be possible for students to request a change (either of teaching situation, method, timing etc.) and have this responded to. I am aware that many teachers will say - "that means adult illiterates can get rid of me if they do not like me or feel I am being of no use to them." This is correct. The adult illiterate in my experience has enough social and verbal skills to be aware of the quality of teaching and make an assessment.

Flexible - that is, capable of internal change; if one system is inefficient and the information flow is poor, then the system should be reviewed and changed. There is no one correct way to provide adult literacy provision and the provision should respond to the needs of the teaching staff and management but above all the students. A policy such as this leads to the situation where adult literacy students go on to teach others, interview others and join the management.

Non-bureaucratic - that is, a) there should be no minimum entry requirements b) there is a smooth running system of referrals from local agencies, government departments, schools, employers, friends so that a student's records are easily transferred from one teaching situation to another, and on to other existing literacy provision. While one should think of privacy and of who has access to student records I would think there is much value in a central recording system on student information for at least each regional area - this central store should be open to students to read their own notes and interview schedule should they wish to. Students also have a right to know what information is going to their tutor.

Accessible to the student - that is, management has a duty to provide publicity geared to the illiterate. Information on adult literacy provision should not only be available by, let us say, 'letters in triplicate to the County Psychologist' but available through the mass media and word of mouth from such places as social services, charities, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Trade Unions, Schools, Personnel Officers, Clubs, Pubs, in short anywhere that acts as a community network centre.

A challenge to the social stigma - Many adult illiterates see the failure to achieve literacy as a personal failure rather than as a denial of a right to which they are entitled and an atmosphere is needed that conveys the accessibility of the structure, and is friendly and concerned without being intrusive. While one is aware that illiteracy has a stigma attached to it, if the whole of the attitude and structure of the provision is hole-in-corner and penny pinching the student can hardly expect to feel

that his needs are being catered for and that he has any say in what provision is being made. Positive encouragement to come forward and use the provision should be given. The atmosphere should be welcoming and non-punitive; if on going to a class at the local technical college the first requirement is to fill in an application form, pay the fees and then be handed a course syllabus, this would be a positive disincentive to come again as one might be reinforcing failure.

Conclusion:

I have tried to lay down one or two functions that management should undertake. I have deliberately avoided the thorny question of money, as this involves the policy making at the beginning - hence one works on a circular argument. The suggestions I have made assume unlimited resources and full co-operation of all government departments, professions etc., and only apply to adult illiterates in Great Britain who are not diagnosed subnormal or learning English as a second language.

3. INTER-AGENCY CO-OPERATION

Michael D Stephens

"Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication" (Marshall McLuhan).

In many instances the problems of our society could be solved if the apparently adequate resources could be effectively harnessed. We have the means to counter illiteracy without undue strain on our educational and related organisations, but we lack effective agency co-ordination and an allied sense of the eradication of illiteracy as a priority.

The approach to the organisation of illiteracy programmes must be seen in the context of the words of the Russell Report, 'Single initiatives can come from many sources, including voluntary bodies concerned with particular problems, and adult education should respond to them. But there is also a great need for co-operation between all the bodies concerned with the wellbeing of the disadvantaged'. Initiatives taken by such voluntary agencies as the Workers' Educational Association and the University Settlements in the field of work with the semi-literate or illiterate must, to progress after the initial period of enthusiasm, involve other bodies. Above all else it is usually inevitable that the local education authority must participate if a project is to be given any sort of permanence. In the education area only the local authority commands the volume of resources needed to meet a region's illiteracy needs. Too often some voluntary agencies have tried to carry out work that is unquestionably the responsibility of the local education authority, and thereby served neither the best interests

of themselves, nor of the local education authority, nor, above all else, the needs of the would-be consumer. There is always a danger that a programme mounted by a single organisation within a region will lead to complacency and disinterest amongst other agencies which should be participating. This usually tends to be particularly so regarding local education authorities which always view themselves as hard-pressed, but command resources beyond the wildest imaginings of voluntary bodies. Any organisation taking an initiative in the field of illiteracy must ensure they have an effective and regular means of communication with other organisations with relevant skills and resources, and central within this category is the local education authority.

A problem which is closely related to inter-agency co-ordination is that of ensuring that educational organisations keep to their education brief. Educational bodies are not well equipped to solve the social work problems often revealed by illiteracy initiatives. Those creating illiteracy programmes would be well advised to ensure that their lines of communication with agencies in such fields as social work and health are as effective as those with other educational organisations.

Adult Education has a long and notorious history of poor inter-agency or inter-individual co-operation and co-ordination. When dealing with 'Obstacles to the Development of Research' (Section 196) UNESCO Paper 4 for the 1972 Third International Conference on Adult Education ('A Retrospective International Survey of Adult Education') stated that such obstacles included '.... a lack of finance and trained investigators, the failure of researchers and practitioners to communicate with each other, the continuing hostility or indifference towards research of many practitioners and the lack of efficient procedures for collecting and

disseminating information'. Although the field of research is always liable to be the most quoted area to illustrate failures of co-operation, perhaps because a majority of professionals find it less central to their activities than it should be, it is no more at fault than other key contributions being made by agencies which are interested in the plight of the illiterate or semi-literate.

Work with illiterates in England has now become 'fashionable' and so, like the Community Education bandwagon before it, faces increasing danger of educational satraps who wish to boost their careers rather than enter an effective co-operative venture where the glory to the individual can take second place to the teamwork needed. The obvious way to avoid the creation of individual empires at the expense of the effectiveness of the effort on behalf of illiterates is the establishing of a Regional Co-ordinating Committee on Adult Illiteracy. This should be created at as early a date as possible so that it does not founder on the rock of entrenched vested interest. To ensure that no agency is seen to be dominant on such a Committee it must be independent of any institution and its membership as well-balanced a representation of an area's activists and clients as can be achieved without negating the effectiveness of the Committee. Defining the geographical region to be covered will prove somewhat easier than avoiding the handful of people in such an area who seem to spend all their waking hours on committees. Even more difficult is the need to have the clients' voices heard on such a Committee, but perhaps no greater strength can be found than to have regular access to the views of those for which the service is being created.

Once the key agencies in a region (e.g. local education authorities, social services, hospitals, universities and university settlements) have agreed to the creation of a Regional Co-ordinating Committee, then amongst the major problems to follow will be that of ensuring that mutually agreed policy is effectively implemented by the member institutions.

Although there is much in Ivan Illich's writings which does not survive well careful scrutiny he has brought to the notice of modern educationalists a number of 'discussion points' of overwhelming importance. One which is relevant to this short essay is that 'Converging self-interests now conspire to stop a man from sharing his skill' ('Deschooling Society' p.89); the same might be said about institutions. The problem of illiteracy in England can be eradicated with modest extra resources, but only if there is effective co-operation between those agencies which find this field a legitimate area of action.

Roger Bruton, Education Officer at Winwick Hospital, offers the following rider to Dr Stephen's comments.

Psychiatric hospitals are not required by law to provide education for their patients. At the same time the aggregate of their patients' needs in this field might well tax even the resources of a Local Education Authority.

Staff working in those hospitals which have voluntarily evolved education programmes sometimes encounter illiteracy as a factor in a person's illness. There is seldom time to eradicate the problem before that person leaves hospital. Where illiteracy is found as just another problem, as it were, the sheer weight of numbers limits the programmes success.

Clearly, the skills and resources which a co-ordinated approach could make available would have a major impact on both difficulties.

More generally, rehabilitation, with its emphasis on social and vocational skills, has received a great deal of attention recently, and would gain new dimensions as a result of effective co-operation between hitherto largely unco-ordinated bodies.

One can only conclude that, once 'consumer demand' in hospitals has been assessed, the increased potential which co-ordination can bring will result in an effective increase in the opportunities and help available to a badly disadvantaged group of people.

4. ADULT ILLITERACY: AN APPROACH TO A THEORY OF BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCE

W Connor

This brief paper seeks to outline some of the conceptual and methodological difficulties involved in research into adult illiteracy. It seeks particularly to present a somewhat tentative theoretical framework of Behavioural Competence, within which illiteracy may be interpreted as a state of relative literacy competence.

The key term in the previous sentence is 'relative'. If the ability to read or write to a certain level of competence is judged to be the criterion by which illiteracy is defined, then the relativity of such a criterion must be recognised, for then the specific requirements of certain intellectual skills or the demands of social roles and even of idiosyncratic needs can be construed as appearing somewhere along a projected 'adequate - not adequate' dimension of competence. The logical application of such a dimension would require that the term 'illiteracy' be translated as a level of literacy in almost the same way as the term 'colour-blindness' needs to be categorised according to the degree of colour anomaly experienced by the individual before an actual assessment of colour vision competency can be achieved. In this sense, the concept of literacy could be utilised to examine the content of systems found in small or primitive subcultures with elementary levels of symbolic communication and, at the opposite end of the cultural scale, modern technological societies such as our own which need to use complex language systems through complicated networks of communications.

Within this conceptual structure, those who are unable to read materials according to say a criterion of Reading-Age (R.A.) 7 yrs Burt, Schonell, Neale etc., are located fairly precisely along a dimension of competence. Theoretically and categorically, their common problem is a relatively simple one, the solution of which demands that a higher level of reading competence, as measured by the agreed criteria, be attained. The problem of literacy itself, construed in terms of effective levels of behaviour in dealing with the innovations of a technological society such as ours, is an immense one. The problem here is one of a symbiotic nature, in that relevant literacy levels (defined as above) are related to the degree of technological complexity. An example here may clarify the idea. Conrad (1967) has commented on the effectiveness with which subjects can utilise a communications system such as the Subscriber Trunk Dialling System. This system using all-figure coding would confound subscribers competent only in language or verbal symbols. The user needs also to be competent in digital codes, but as Conrad points out this is only one source of 'error'. The difficulties inherent in such systems range from those stemming from inappropriate designs (the human engineering factor) of handsets, dial-shape and directories etc., to organic deficiencies in the human user. The end result, produced by one or more of the difficulties, is that successful communication with another party may not be achieved without the aid of 'therapeutic' software e.g. 'Directory Inquiries'. A parallel consideration, of immense significance for the concept of literacy, is that the S.T.D. system makes cognitive demands on the human 'information processing system' which strains the 'capacity' of that system. The ability to remember

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Conrad, R: Beyond Industrial Psychology 2nd C.S.Myers Lecture. The British Psychological Society, 1967

('store') eight or nine digits is an information task requiring peak performance from the average adult. (Miller, George A.). In this sense, the S.T.D. system has an error factor built into it which affects a large proportion of the total population. Such systems are viable only in terms of a compromise - the compromise itself is concerned with the availability of 'hardware' at a certain level of technical development and the economic (and social) consequences of not putting it into operation at the time when its limited potential becomes functional. Telephone communication is only one example of 'compromise' systems which, in our present technological age, need to be considered almost as social systems - decimalisation, metrication and development of the 'cashless' society are other examples. It would not be a difficult task to fill this paper with other 'social' developments which have a decided relevance for the concept of literacy as outlined above. There is evidence derived from the United States experience which suggests that, where literacy is below the minimum level of competence necessary for participation in the national labour force, then literacy becomes a problem construed as an economic one (Charles, H. 1970) and is seen as a tremendous burden on the home economy. The Americans have this problem of a large unproductive labour force, consisting mostly of immigrants, which has caused them to bring in federal programmes of aid and retraining such as the Adult Basic Education Program.

The research programmes, large or small, which are instituted in this country will probably reflect the current emphasis on the nature of illiteracy and its potential for influencing society's conventional, educational, economic, ethical even political perspectives. Considering this aspect, it seems unfortunate that the Russell Report did not offer some concept of adult education (something like 'continuing education') within which adult literacy, at a low level of competence, could have been regarded as an 'educationally accountable' state, not, as is the case now, as merely a socially undesirable one. The consequence of this latter regard for illiteracy has meant that

little cohesive, integrated research with adults has been possible, apart from those social experiments which have taken place within the Educational Priority Area Projects where an awareness of the social isolation which illiteracy brings has caused sympathetic educationalists to try to ameliorate the condition.

The area of adult illiteracy has little specific research methodology - most of the conceptualisation and research approaches have been gleaned from the numerous research methodologies used in investigating the learning difficulties of children. This is an almost parallel example with the area of adult learning, where few specific (if any) qualitative differences in the actual learning process between the learning of adults and children can be shown. The main differences appear to be concerned with extrinsic variables such as the heterogeneity of the task, the time perspective of the adult and the motivational factors associated with maturity (Miller 1964). It is not easy, therefore, to extract factors of illiteracy relating specifically to adults. An examination of the literature on illiteracy collated from ERIC - Information Retrieval Center on the Disadvantaged (IRCD) reveals key concepts such as 'compensatory', 'disadvantaged','community', 'retarded', 'deprived', 'poverty', all of which can be found in the literature concerned with the learning difficulties of children. A large proportion of the literature on the educational 'dropout' is also expressed in similar terms. The researcher in adult illiteracy is therefore confronted by a formidably complex array of concepts, anyone or all of which, may impinge on his area of investigation.

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It would appear, following from the implications mentioned above, that feasible approaches to research in adult illiteracy could be modelled on the salient features of the researches into the learning difficulties of children. These group into three main areas:

A. Organic deficiencies - neurological impairment.

B. Cultural and environmental influences - disadvantaged - deprived.

C. Psychological - emotional - specific learning difficulties.

These categories are, very obviously, not exclusive ones and their practical isolation, for example those in (A),may require the skills of several disciplines extended over considerable periods of time. Individuals in this category do not always display the marked behavioural characteristics associated with jargon such as 'neurological impairment' and, since the aetiology of such states as Specific Dyslexia is in no way finalised, those concerned with groups of illiterate adults need to ascertain that visuo-perceptual or spatial organisational factors do not confound what has been designed as a learning experience.G. Allen in his paper on the diagnosis of illiteracy has shown that detection of such perceptual abnormality is none too easy. There are two important points to consider for the adult subject. First, the difficulties which such impairments might produce in 'captive' situations such as schools may be hidden, if not forgotten, by the adult illiterate - in any case, he may never have been aware of the nature of his difficulty and, additionally, he may not be able to articulate such difficulties; second, his movement away from the educational environment has probably reinforced any behaviour which alleviates his difficulty, so that behaviour patterns and attitudinal systems of a defensive, if not compensatory kind, will have developed to allow him some psychological ease. This last is an example of the interaction of the psychological state with the physical state. It can be seen that Category A factors present particular

difficulties to the adult educator since they require skills of diagnosis not usually acquired by them in their training (it may be in this area that the specialist skills available in universities can be used to advantage).

(B) This area has received most of the attention of researchers away from the specific organic disorders. The extent of the interest of researchers following this environmentalist approach can be attained by examining the I.R.C.D. Bulletins and bibliographies, or the literature classified under 'Educational Deprivation' themes. The assumption implicit in this conceptualisation of illiteracy is that depressed environmental conditions (usually associated with poverty) experienced in childhood, foster an impoverishment of the intellect. The investigations of Fraser, Douglas, Kelmer Pringle and Wiseman point to the relationship of the preschool and home environments on school achievement; the Plowden Report commented on the conditions which confront children in the E.P.A's;and Halsey has instituted research seeking to investigate the effects of compensatory educational programmes based on home-tutor/parental co-operation. Much of the research into the 'disadvantaged' has emanated from earlier American work on the educational 'dropout'. The term itself seems to have undergone a semantic metamorphosis in that it is now usually applied to the social 'opter-out'; the college student who does not complete his educational course is described as a 'non-persister'; American school children in depressed areas who fail to adapt to the imposed system are often described as 'disadvantaged', as are those ethnic groups whose economic plight places them at the bottom of the social ladder. The diversity of terminology needs to be considered carefully for their research implications. Semantically, the term 'drop-out'

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construed as 'disadvantaged' has greater emotive content since the latter term implies that external controls producing some social inequality have been responsible for the plight of those unable to make it in the educational systems. Researchers considering that adult illiteracy stems from such conditions of the environment might have to agree that the problem was one concerned with the stage of early childhood. In this sense adult illiteracy per se does not exist for it could only then be described as a state of illiteracy of 'n' years standing. This interpretation may influence the kind of approach which 'remedialists' could adopt for adult illiterates. For example, one approach might be to consider the state of illiteracy as constituting some kind of intellectual vacuum in the life experience of an individual, thus necessitating specific reading skills but also some progressive broad 'enrichment' programme of a non-verbal kind; the other approach might be to consider the earlier experiences as a 'write-off' and to equip an adult illiterate with the competencies (reading skills) that he needs immediately and allow the 'enrichment' to follow randomly. Research experience may establish the fact that no one substantive approach is educationally viable for the under-educated adult and that individually prescribed learning programmes within 'adult learning centres' (Mocker and Sherk, 1970) or counselling education projects such as Operation Mainstream (Pine & Horne, 1969) need to be developed. Ironically, it is here that modern technological developments such as computer-assisted learning installations could help to redress what could be regarded as a technologically inspired educational deficit. Generally, the enrichment techniques, for the

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reason of time especially, seem to be practically effective only with young children in 'captive' situations (home or school); adult illiterates, anyway, seem highly motivated to come to grips with what they regard as direct learning situations. This latter style of teaching could be construed as Re-Education; the enrichment approach to illiteracy could be regarded as Compensatory or Preventive. Here, the American experience provides a wealth of information in terms of research methodology, and the delineation of the practical difficulties of this research.

The compensatory programmes have been intended to introduce an enriching element into the pre-school environment of children. For example, the Infant Education Research Project in Washington D.C. tutored children, ranging in age from fifteen to thirty six months on a one-to-one basis, tutor and child. Project Headstart, dealing with children from three to five years old, attempts to prepare the underprivileged child for the school atmosphere he is likely to encounter. At the elementary school level, the Augmented Reading Project in California attempted to raise the reading competence of children in grades one to three. The disadvantaged here were primarily negro groups and considerable attention was given to teacher-training. Many other compensatory programmes have been instituted. The Upward Bound Project was designed to prepare disadvantaged students for post-secondary education. Other schemes such as The More Effective Schools Program (MES) in New York City have been instituted. MES was instituted by the two teacher organisations, the United Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers in 1963 as a counterproposal to the New York City Board of Education offer of $1000 "combat pay" to attract 2,000 experienced teachers in the ghetto schools. The Higher Horizons project was designed to identify able students from lower income groups and guide them toward college, though it was expanded to include schools of all levels.

Reading deficits were treated by holding special reading classes with a teacher-student ratio of 1:5, circulating libraries were started in schools, book fairs were held, an intensive counselling service was provided for students and parents. The students were also exposed to an intensive cultural programme and classrooms were made available to children after school hours.

The mammoth investment into the ever increasing compensatory programmes in the U.S.A. have been criticised from many quarters . Some criticisms have been aimed at the administration of projects and some at the theoretical structures on which the remedial aspects are based. Whatever the reasons for these apparently confused findings concerning enrichment techniques are large scale, the lesson for the researcher is that the empirical evidence for the effectiveness of the techniques has not yet been achieved.

SUMMARY

The writer sees the problem of illiteracy in terms of behavioural competence. In this sense the inability to read is one level of literacy competence. The problem of adult literacy needs to be considered as a function of the number and complexity of skills that a society demands of its members - the skill of reading is only one of these. Research is needed to ascertain the Basic Competence Levels necessary for effective social communication : the Reading-Age Level of newspapers or the "Word-Age" Level of radio and television communications are two suggested areas, q.v. Trenaman (1967), Peters (1967), Carroll (1967).

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A research model based on the contents of this paper could take the following structure:

1 Selection of Conceptual Criteria

e.g. Literacy Competence

Basic Competence Level.

2 Development of Appropriate Tests/Research Techniques.

3 Investigation of BCL in random population samples.

4 Evaluation of (2).

5 Isolation of Factors from research findings.

6 Re-assessment of conceptual criteria.

5. THE FUTURE

Lady Plowden

To-day we are spending many millions of pounds annually on education; a few years ago for the first time the educational budget was larger than that for Defence. Yet we are failing to give all those children and adolescents who go through our schools what has traditionally been the aim of basic education - the three Rs. Many are leaving school without competence in at least two out of the three.

This fundamentally is a problem the size of which the schools must find the means and the techniques to reduce. But even if an Utopian situation developed immediately and all our school leavers were fully literate - of which there is still no sign - the mass of the present adult illiterates would remain.

This is a national educational responsibility. It is already being accepted by some local authorities and by many voluntary agencies. Those who have failed during their school career to be educated according to their 'age, ability and aptitude' need a second chance, but tailored to their particular circumstances.

Fringe educational activities are provided to benefit the leisure of the majority of adults; educational opportunities for the minority of adult illiterates are of equal importance. Even in a time of financial stringency, the right of each individual to be fully literate cannot be denied. Many handicaps are incurable; illiteracy, given the means, can be cured or ameliorated.

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